

HRITHIK'S
KNPH MARKS
20 YEARS
13 VIVACITY

India to invite Pak for SCO meet

MEA decries China after UNSC rejects Beijing bid to raise Kashmir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India-Pak relation may witness some thaw after a prolonged hiatus when New Delhi will be inviting Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan later this year to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) heads of Governments meeting. India will invite all eight members and four observer states of the SCO for the regional summit to be held in Delhi.

The important announcement on Thursday came hours after Pakistan's effort to raise the Kashmir issue at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) through China failed on Wednesday as most members of the UNSC said it was not the place to discuss the issue.

This was China's third initiative to hold a closed-door meeting to discuss Jammu & Kashmir at the UNSC. The Government has condemned the move by Pakistan, calling its



Russia, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan had attended the SCO summit in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek last June where Modi had said countries sponsoring, aiding and supporting terrorism must be held accountable. He had urged strengthening co-operation in the fight against terrorism and favoured a global conference to combat it.

The SCO is an eight-member economic and security bloc to which India and Pakistan were admitted in 2017. The group was founded in 2001 by Russia, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Meanwhile, India took strong exception to China helping Pakistan in trying to raise the Kashmir issue at the UNSC saying Beijing should seriously reflect on the global consensus and refrain from such actions in the future.

Pakistan has repeatedly tried to raise the Kashmir issue at the UNSC with China's help, but it failed again to find any support. The latest attempt failed as other countries of the 15-member council felt Kashmir is a bilateral matter

between India and Pakistan.

The overwhelming majority of the UNSC was of view that it was not the right forum for such issues, Raveesh Kumar said at a briefing when asked about the developments in the UNSC.

An attempt was made by Pakistan to mislead the UNSC, he said, adding Islamabad has a choice to avoid such a global embarrassment in the future. Pakistan's attempt to peddle baseless allegations and show an alarming scenario failed as

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said here, "India will be hosting the heads of Governments summit later this year. As per established practice and procedure, all eight members and four observer states and other international dialogue partners will be invited."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan had attended the SCO summit in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek last June where Modi had said countries sponsoring, aiding and supporting terrorism must be held accountable

it lacked credibility, he said.

Noting that the meeting concluded without any outcome, Kumar said, "China should seriously reflect on this global consensus, draw proper lessons and refrain from taking such action in future," while replying to a question on why India has not reacted strongly to Beijing raising the Kashmir issue at the UNSC. "I suggest that this question should be posed to the Chinese side as well," he said.

Court seeks status of Nirbhaya convicts' scheduled execution

L-G recommends MHA to reject mercy plea

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After the Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to stay the death warrants of the Nirbhaya's rapists-killers, a city court on Thursday directed Tihar Jail authorities to file a proper report by Friday about the status of the scheduled execution of convicts.

Taking cognisance of the issue, Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Anil Baijal recommended the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to reject the mercy petition of one of the convicts, Mukesh Kumar, who filed it a few days ago.

Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Satish Kumar Arora, who had issued death warrants against convicts Mukesh, Vinay Sharma, Pawan Gupta and Akshay Thakur, passed the directions after the jail authorities said they have written to the Delhi Government on the issue of scheduled execution on January 22 in view of pending mercy plea.

The court was hearing a plea by one of the four death row convicts were shifted to Tihar prison complex's jail number 3 where their hanging is set to take place, a jail official said.

Nirbhaya's father on Thursday said, "We have not lost hope. There is no law for the victim's family but there are legal remedies available to the convicts, which is why the problems are arising," he said.

However, he added, "Justice is not far and their (convicts) hanging is not far.



They should prepare themselves for the hanging. They might delay it, but it will happen."

AAP Govt behind delay: Javadekar

New Delhi: The BJP on Thursday blamed the AAP Government's "negligence" for the "delay" in the hanging of Nirbhaya gangrape case convicts. Senior party leader and Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters that had the AAP Government given notices to all convicts within a week of the SC order, they would have been hanged by now and the nation would have got justice.

P3

CAPSULE

5 JeM ultras nabbed, major attack averted

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Jammu & Kashmir Police on Thursday foiled a major attack plan ahead of Republic Day by busting a terror module of Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), responsible for series of grenade attacks in the recent months in Srinagar.

Five operatives, associated with the JeM terror group, have been arrested by the police. A huge cache of incriminating material and explosive substances, including gelatine sticks, explosives, detonators, arms, explosive body vests, batteries and nitric acid, were recovered following searches based on their disclosures.

VK Birdi, DIG, Central Kashmir Range, told the media in Srinagar that the five men, who were working towards executing sensational incidents like terror attacks and causing IED explosions, were nabbed in two phases.

Giving details of the arrests,



Police present JeM terrorists who were arrested after grenade attacks, during a Press conference in Srinagar on Thursday

PTI

Birdi said a grenade explosion on January 8 near Hazratbal crossing near Hazratbal area of the city led to minor injuries to a few civilians.

Police launched investigations into the incident and nabbed two suspects — Ajaz Ahmad Sheikh, a driver by profession, and Umar Hameed Sheikh, a street vendor, both residents of Hazratbal.

Continued on Page 4

Venal J&K DSP aided terrorists to fly high

UT Police strips Davinder Singh of gallantry award

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Interrogation of suspended Jammu & Kashmir Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh has revealed that he used to facilitate air travel of several terrorists out of the Valley in lieu of money.

The probe so far has also revealed that the disgraced cop used two email accounts and saved messages in the "draft" and deleted them after the recipient accessed his accounts and read them. This has led to suspicion that Singh might be compromised by hostile intelligence agencies and this aspect is also being probed in detail, sources privy to the joint interrogation said.

Meanwhile, the Jammu & Kashmir administration has stripped Singh of his Sher-e-Kashmir gallantry medal in view of his "disloyalty" and conduct bringing disrepute to the police force.

Singh was booked by the Jammu & Kashmir Police at Wanpoh Police Station in Kulgam when he was ferrying



two Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists — Syed Naveed, alias Naveed Babu, and Altaf — in his private vehicle.

The arrested DSP has been lodged at a camp of the Special Operations Group (SOG) in Srinagar for joint interrogation by the agencies.

After his arrest, the police had recovered one AK-47 assault rifle and some grenades from the residence of Singh in Srinagar.

Before the arrest from the Srinagar-Jammu Highway, the Singh was on the way to Chandigarh along with Naveed Babu and Altaf.

Preliminary probe has revealed that Singh had negotiated an amount of ₹12 lakh from the nabbed terrorists to safely transport them to Chandigarh.

Agencies are also suspect-

ing that the nabbed terrorists could be involved in some insidious activities for Khalistani groups under the patronage of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence which has shifted its strategy to use some Sikhs from Jammu region for its nefarious agenda to foment

trouble in India, sources said.

Singh is also suspected to have passed on "secret" information to terrorist groups from time to time and further grilling is continuing to establish the level of such compromises, the sources said.

Continued on Page 4

CBI books Adani firm for cheating

New Delhi: The CBI has booked Adani Enterprises and former officials of National Cooperative Consumer Forum in a case of cheating, criminal conspiracy and graft in supply of imported coal to Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation in 2010.

Detailed report on P6

North, S Blocks to reflect pre-&-post-1857 history

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The iconic North and South Blocks will be turned into grand museums under the proposed redevelopment plan of Parliament and revamp of Central Vista. The National Museum will also be moved into these buildings.

As per the initial plan, South Block will reflect the country's history till 1857 while North Block will showcase the history after 1857. At present, the South Block houses the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of External Affairs, while the North Block has offices of Home Ministry and Finance Ministry.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is yet to take a final decision on the proposal, which is part of the new plan prepared by the HCP Design Planning and Management.



sitation on the redevelopment of Parliament and revamp of Central Vista in Lutyens' Delhi.

North and South Blocks are the symbol of British Raj and it reflects the Central Government authority since their inception. North and South Blocks were built on top of Raisina Hill in 1931. Designed by Herbert Baker,

one of Britain's most distinguished architects of the early 20th Century, the two impressive Secretariat buildings flank Rashtrapati Bhavan on each side. South Block is an intricate labyrinth of vaulted staircases and high ceiling passages. Colonades and flat roofs, dominated by huge domes, are striking features of the building. Both these buildings have

four levels, each with about 1,000 rooms, in the inner courtyards to make space for future expansions. In continuation with the Viceroy's House, these buildings also used cream and red Dholpur sandstone from Rajasthan, with the red sandstone forming the base. Together the buildings were designed to form two squares. They have broad corridors

between different wings and wide stairways to the four floors and each building is topped by a giant dome, while each wing ends with colonnaded balconies.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and residence and the Vice President's house will have to be shifted to make space for the proposed Central Vista redevelopment plan. The plan also envisages a new triangular structure for the new Parliament, which will come up beside the existing one.

The PM's residence will move from 7 Lok Kalyan Marg to near the Rashtrapati Bhavan.



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124 FIRs REGISTERED

109 kg drugs seized since Jan 6

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

About 109.65 kg of narcotics and drugs have been seized by the Delhi Police since the imposition of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections on January 6. Also, a total number 124 First Information Report (FIRs) have been registered under Arms Act, in which 137 persons are arrested till date.

As per the official data shared by the office of Delhi Electoral Officer (CEO) Ranbir Singh, Wednesday i.e., 15th January 2020, a total of 87 entries have been lodged (82 FIRs/5 Daily Data (DD) entry), out of which, six were against Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and two against Congress and about

VIOLATIONS OF MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT (MCC)

Cash	78,43,020
FIR	126 FIRs have been registered under Arms Act, 137 arrested
Narcotics/Drugs seized	109.65 Kg.
Unlicensed arms, explosives, bombs	350
FIR and persons arrested under Excise Act	339 FIR's & 347 arrested
Illegal banners and hoardings removed	4,46,602

79 were filed under the heads of others/non-political.

The data shows that till date five cases are recorded against the violation in other cases (misuse of vehicles, violation of loudspeakers, illegal meetings and gratification of electors,

etc.). Further, 47 bottles, 318 Half, 25681 quarters of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and 502 bottles, 194 Half, 89,391 quarters of Country liquor and 107 bottles beer were seized. A total number of 339 FIR's have been registered

in Excise Act and 347 persons are arrested in Excise Act.

"About 146 unlicensed arms and weapons and 204 cartridges, explosives and bombs have been seized. Whereas, 3,095 licensed arms deposited, 1,640 persons have been booked under various sections of CRPC and 36,015 persons booked under the Delhi Police Act, as preventive action measures and cash of ₹78,43,020 has been seized by the police," said a poll body official.

Besides, the municipal bodies have removed a total of 4,46,602 hoardings, banners and posters from across the city under Defacement of Properties Act by the local bodies.

2 houses cave in; 14 cars gutted

2 girls hurt as house collapses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In separate incidents, two houses collapsed at different localities in the city on Thursday, leaving two girls injured. The incidents were reported from Delhi's Janakpuri and Mukundpur areas. Meanwhile, 14 cars were gutted in a fire in an open ground opposite Vivek Vihar police station during early hours of Thursday.

According to Atul Garg, the Chief Fire Officer, Delhi Fire Services (DFS), "In the first incident two people were injured after the terrace of a house collapsed in Delhi's Mukundpur area on Thursday.



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

We received a call about the house collapse at around 12.44 pm after which two fire tenders were rushed to spot. Two persons sustained injuries and they were taken to Babu Jagjeet Ram hospital with help of the police," said Garg.

"The injured identified as Saloni (13) and Naaz (18) sustained minor injuries and were discharged from the hospital

after treatment. During initial investigation, it came to light that the terrace of the wall had collapsed and further reason behind wall collapsing will be ascertained after detailed enquiry is done," said a police official.

In second incident reported from West Delhi's Janakpuri area, an under-construction house has collapsed. "The call

regarding the incident was received at around 3:30 PM on Thursday following which two fire tenders were dispatched for the spot," said Garg. "There was no one in the building at time it collapsed," said a DFS official.

In third incident, 14 cars were gutted in a fire at an open ground opposite Vivek Vihar police station early Thursday. "The fire department received a call about the fire at 2.25 AM after which three fire tenders were rushed to the spot," said Garg.

The cars parked on an open ground opposite Vivek Vihar police station caught fire. The old cars were kept for sale-purchase purpose. A dealer who is into the business had parked the vehicles there," said a DFS official adding that the fire was brought under control by 3 am.

JNU semester registration deadline extended

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Jawahar Lal Nehru University (JNU) on Thursday once again extended the registration deadline for the next semester till January 17. The second semester registration date has been extended for the second time in the university. The first extension of the registration date was done from January 13 to January 15. With late fees, students can register till February 9.

"The registration deadline for ongoing winter session has been extended up to January 17 without late fees. However, registration will continue till February 9 by paying late fees up to Rs 500," stated the JNU administration in its circular issued on Thursday.

"After that deadline, the VC may consider written



65 per cent of students staying in the hostels on the campus have cleared their hostel dues by paying the new hostel charges," said Kumar.

"Many of the remaining hostel residents are returning to the campus from their homes. Since January 15 was the last date for registering in the winter semester, there was a last-minute rush yesterday. Several students approached us to extend the last date for winter registration by another two days," the VC said.

According to M Jagdeep Kumar, out of the about 8,500 students in JNU, on-campus accommodation in different hostels is provided to about 6,450 and the remaining students are day scholars.

"Nearly 95 per cent of day scholars have cleared their semester dues and more than

"The university has been doing everything possible to help the students continue their academic activities. A great number of faculty members are actively working to make sure that the academic interests of the students are addressed," Kumar added.

Earlier on January 5, 2020, the last date for the registration, masked mob barged into the JNU campus and attacked students and faculty, thus creating chaos. Several students including JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh got injured.

Delhi Police on the basis of complaint given by JNU administration had also registered First Information Report (FIR) against some students who had vandalised server rooms in the campus and did not let students fill the exam registration form.

Anti-CAA protesters detained at Turkman Gate

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Several protests were witnessed against the newly introduced Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) and proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the national Capital. About 10 protesters, including students, were detained in Central Delhi's Turkman Gate on Thursday.

Scores of Delhi University students also came together to voice their dissent against the amended Citizenship Law outside the Arts faculty of the university.

The protest at Turkman gate started from Wednesday night. The detainees were taken to Rajinder Nagar police station and were later released in the evening.

The students of Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) and some locals had started protesting at



Turkman Gate at 3 pm on January 15 and were there till around 7 am on Thursday. "We were about to leave from the protest site when the police crackdown happened," said a protester.

Sara Javed Chawla, one of the protesters, said police detained some of the demonstrators on Thursday morning. "I was in Khurej last night when I got to know about the protest at Turkman Gate. Several

women were protesting here and I rushed to join them."

The shopkeepers in the area closed their establishments and came out to form a human chain. The protesters said they will again come out on road in the evening.

The students alleged that their phones were snatched and the police have manhandled them. "All the detainees were at the Rajinder Nagar Police Station and will be released by

4 pm," said Advocate Tanvi Sharma, part of the legal aid team that rushed to the police station. There were reports that around 30 students had been detained but Tanvi said that only 10 people have been detained and only a few among them are students.

At Delhi University hundreds of students came together to voice their dissent against the amended citizenship law outside the Arts faculty of the varsity.

Anju Simon, a law student, said, "Change is happening and people are coming out to protest. It gives us positivity."

Sehmat KP, another law student, said, "I am a law student and it scares me whether I will have this Constitution after I finish my studies. It is important to study in classrooms but it is important to protest also."

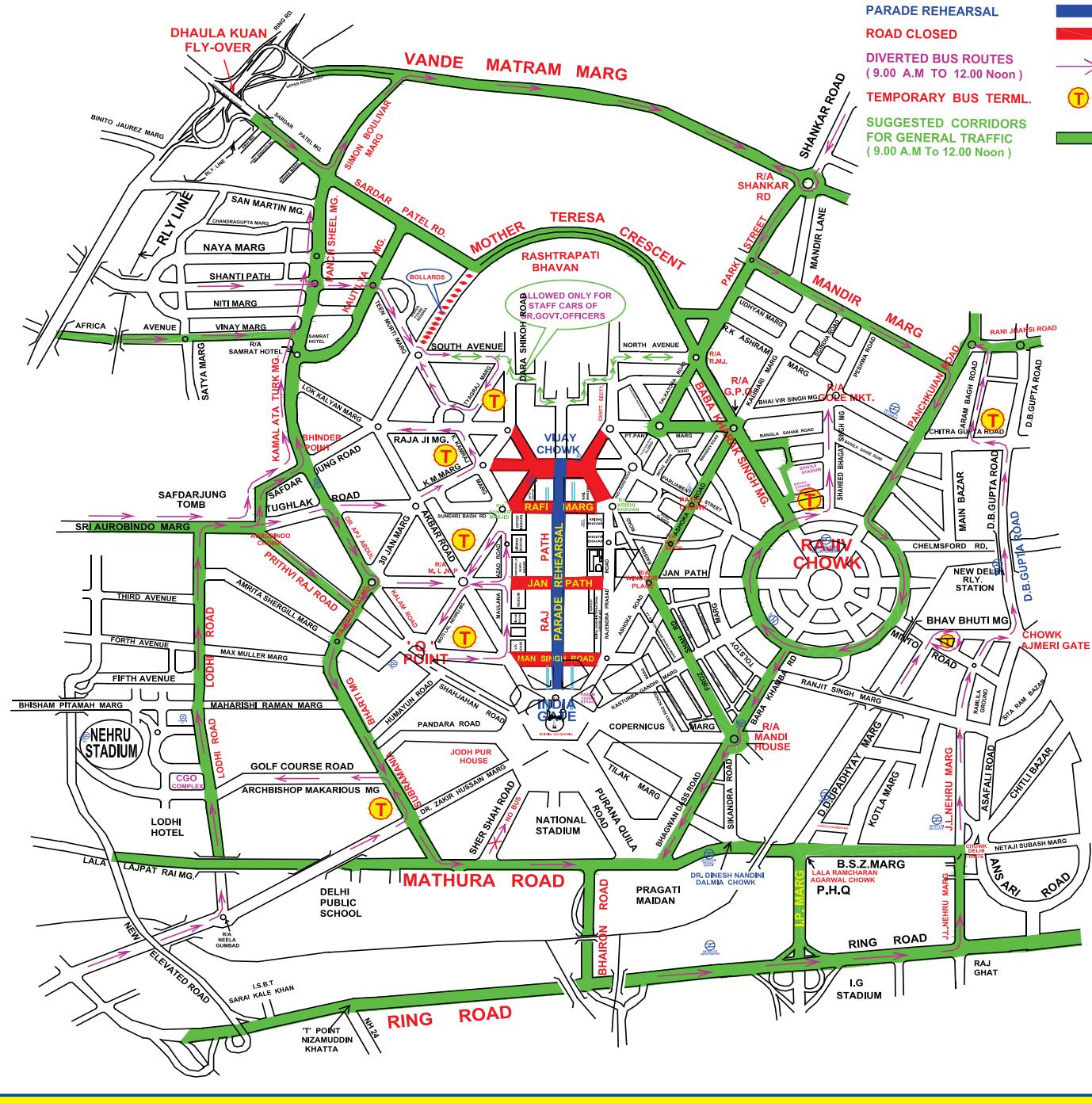
TRAFFIC ADVISORY REHEARSALS OF REPUBLIC DAY PARADE

17th, 18th, 20th & 21st JANUARY, 2020

**Route of Parade:- Vijay Chowk → Rajpath → 'C'-Hexagon**

In order to facilitate the uninterrupted movement of Parade on Raj Path, there will be restrictions on the movement of traffic at Rafi Marg, Janpath and Mansingh Road from 0900 hours to 1200 hours on these dates.

Rajpath from Vijay Chowk to India Gate will also remain closed for traffic.

**SUGGESTED ROUTES****NORTH TO SOUTH AND VICE VERSA:**

- Ring Road i.e. Ashram Chowk-Sarai Kale Khan - I.P. Flyover - Rajghat.
- Lajpat Rai Marg - Mathura Road - Bhairon Road - Ring Road.
- Aurobindo Marg - Safdarjung Road - Kamal Attaturk Marg - Kautilya Marg - Sardar Patel Marg - Mother Teresa Crescent - R.M.L. - Baba Kharak Singh Marg to reach New Delhi.
- Pritivi Raj Road - Rajesh Pilot Marg - Subramaniam Bharti Marg - Mathura Road - Bhairon Road - Ring Road.
- Burkhana - Azad Mkt - Rani Jhansi Flyover - Panchkuian Road - Hanuman Murti - Vande Matram Marg - DhaulaKuan

EAST TO WEST AND VICE VERA

- Ring Road - Bhairon Road - Mathura Road - Subramaniam Bharti Marg - Rajesh Pilot Marg - Prithvi Raj Road - Safdarjung Road - Kamal Attaturk Marg - Panchsheel Marg - Simon Boliver Marg - Upper Ridge Road/Vande Matram Marg.
- Ring Road - ISBT - Chandgi Ram Akhara - Mall Road - Azad Pur - Ring Road.
- Ring Road Bhairon Road - Mathura Road - Lodhi Road - Aurobindo Marg - Safdarjung Road - Teen Murti Marg - Mother Teresa Crescent - Park Street - Shankar Road - Vande Matram Marg.

FROM EAST TO SOUTH WEST SIDE DELHI

- Ring Road -Vande Matram Marg & vice versa.

SOUTH TO CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL SECTT

- Mother Teresa Crescent - Park Street - Mandir Marg/Baba Kharak Singh Marg
- Ring Road - Vande Matram Marg - Link Road - Panchkuian Road.
- Ring Road - Sardar Patel Marg - 11 Murti - Mother Teresa Crescent - R/A RML - North Avenue or Baba Kharak Singh Marg.

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- From North Side:** North Avenue-Brassy Avenue-North Sunken Road through R.P. Bhawan and reach North/South Block.

Motorists coming to Vinay Marg, Shanti Path and going to New Delhi and beyond should take Sardar Patel Marg - Mother Teresa Crescent - R/A RML - Baba Kharak Singh Marg or Park Street - Mandir Marg and proceed further to North Delhi/New Delhi.

BUSES FROM SOUTH SIDE DESTINED FOR CENTRAL SECTT. SHALL BE CURTAILED AT:

- (i) VishwaYuvak Kendra, Chanakyapuri
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- (iii) Krishna Menon Marg
- (iv) Maulana Azad Road

Other buses going to New Delhi Railway Station shall take route via Sardar Patel Marg-Simon Boliver Marg-Upper Ridge Road-Shankar Road-Park Street/Mandir Marg.

Because of diverted traffic, congestion is likely to take place on these roads. Motorists are requested to have patience, observe traffic rules & road discipline and follow directions of Traffic Police personnel deployed at all intersections. People are requested to plan their journey to avoid inconvenience.

Note:- Flying of sub conventional aerial platforms like para-giders, para motors, hang gliders, UAVs, UASs, microlight aircrafts, remotely piloted aircrafts, hot air balloons, small size powered aircrafts, quadcopters or para jumping from aircraft etc. are prohibited over the jurisdiction of national Capital Territory of Delhi from 18.01.2020 upto 31.01.2020 (both days inclusive).

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CM seeks spl green Budget

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

Urging the Centre to keep politics away and present a Budget that is "good" for the national Capital, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said he would write to the Centre and request to allocate special fund for tackling pollution and ensuring cleanliness in the Union budget.

Addressing the media, the Chief Minister said that with the model code of conduct in place for the upcoming Delhi Assembly election, no Government is permitted to make any fresh announcement for Delhi. However, the Union Budget is set to be announced on 1st February by the Central Government, he said.

"I am under pressure from all corners to write to the Election Commission and object to the Budget being announced during the period of the model code of conduct but I am not in favour of stalling the announcement of the Budget merely for the election," he said.

Kejriwal further said "The Central budget must provide adequate funds for the

would like to appeal to the central Government to make new announcements for solving problems that the people of Delhi face. There are so many problems that need to be solved like pollution, Yamuna cleaning, sewerage, etc. The Centre should make announcements on all these issues. Politics should not come in the way of Delhi's development".

The Chief Minister said, "I believe the progress and development of Delhi should not stop at any cost. We would want the budget to include policies and schemes for the progress and development of Delhi."

"The Central budget must provide adequate funds for the

reduction of pollution in Delhi. Adequate funds should also be provided to the State Governments of Punjab and Haryana to take preventive measures on the pollution caused by stubble burning in these states," he said.

To bring the transportation sector in Delhi at par with the international standards, the Government must provide funds to improve the transport infrastructure in Delhi, he said, adding that adequate funds must be provided to the Delhi government for cleaning up of river Yamuna, to provide sewer connections to each household, expansion of metro routes in the city, and for the cleaning of

Kejriwal said "Even if we do not receive adequate support from the Central Government, we will not let the development of Delhi stop. More funds will accelerate the development process of Delhi but we will keep on working for the people".

Delhi, "We want this for the welfare of our state so that any party that forms the government in the state can utilise those funds efficiently," he added.

The Chief Minister also pointed out the inadequacy of funds provided to the municipal corporations by the Central Government. "We also want the MCD to get adequate funds from the Central Government.

The budget from the central Government to the MCD will pass through the Delhi Government, but we have time and again requested funds for the MCD and have assured the centre that the funds will be transferred to the MCD on the same day," he said.

"Irrespective of who wins the election on February 8, whichever party comes to power will then be able to utilise those funds for the people of Delhi," he added.

Kejriwal said "Even if we do not receive adequate support from the Central Government, we will not let the development of Delhi stop. More funds will accelerate the development process of Delhi but we will keep on working for the people".

NIRBHAYA CASE

AAP delaying convicts' hanging, alleges BJP

Sisodia hits back, says BJP misleading people ahead of polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Hitting back at the BJP for holding responsible for the delay in hanging of Nirbhaya gang rape case convicts, senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia said that law and order of national Capital comes under the Centre and the saffron party is lying to mislead the people as they have no issue to raise in upcoming Assembly election.

His statement came after Union Minister Prakash Javadekar on Thursday blamed AAP Government's "negligence" for the "delay" in the hanging of Nirbhaya gang rape case convicts, saying it took more than two and a half years for the Arvind Kejriwal dispensation to give notice to convicts after Supreme Court rejected their appeal against the death sentence in 2017.

Terming the statement of Javadekar shocking, Sisodia said the matter is very sensitive and the Minister should avoid making cheap allegation on this issue. "The BJP has no issue to raise in the election so it is making such statement to mislead people. This is a clear attempt to instigate people," he said, adding that if you cannot handle it, give us Delhi Police for just two days, we will hang the convicts.

"I was shocked to see that a Cabinet Minister is lying to the country. It is very sensitive matter and whole the country including the parents of

Nirbhaya was waiting for the decision in this case. Delhi Government is in favour of execution of the convicts as soon as possible," he added.

Earlier, refuting the claim of Javadekar, senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said it is an "insensitive and uninformative lie" as the law and order is completely under the Centre. "Whatever delay is taking place, the BJP is responsible and that is why instead of misleading people, the Union Minister should apologise for ignoring such a sensitive matter," he said.

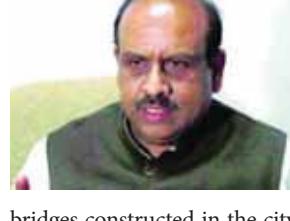
The AAP government told

the Delhi High Court on Wednesday that Mukesh Kumar Singh (32), Vinay Sharma (26), Akshay Kumar Singh (31) and Pawan Gupta (25) — the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case — will not be hanged on January 22 as scheduled because one of them has moved a mercy plea and according to the prison rules, they cannot be executed till they exhaust all of their remedies under the law.

The four rapists were to be hanged on January 22 at 7 am in Tihar jail. A Delhi court had issued their death warrants on January 7.

Govt didn't build flyover, bridge on its own: Gupta

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



With Assembly elections scheduled to be held on February 8, the senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Vijender Gupta on Thursday said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi Government has created a record in its five year tenure and they have conceived and constructed bridges and corridors of just 0.255 kilometer on its own during its five year tenure.

Gupta alleged that the AAP Government did not build even a single full length flyover or bridge on its own.

"All other flyovers and

BJP's 'Meri Dilli, Mera Sujhav' gets 11L feedback

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



PTI

bridges constructed in the city are those which it inherited at different stages of construction from the previous Government. The AAP Government cannot take credit for completing the left over part of flyovers. It did not deem it necessary to design and construct any flyover or over bridge to reduce traffic congestion," Gupta said.

The party will prepare a 'vision document' after analysing all the suggestions to solve the issues of people. The feedback campaign — 'Meri Dilli, Mera Sujhav' — was launched by Union Minister Smriti Irani and other BJP

leaders on January 3.

Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari on Thursday said that the major sujhav (suggestions) includes dirty water supply,

campaign 'Meri Dilli, Mera Sujhav' to make a vision document for the upcoming Assembly elections 2020. We hoped that about 10 lakh suggestions will be received but we received more suggestions than the expected suggestions from the public," said Tiwari.

In last 15 days, the party conducted campaign through video van, door to door, missed call and ballot box where people shared their experience and suggestions to improve the streets, roads and the city. About 5,000 public meetings were held across the city. Out of the total suggestions received, 3,56,520 suggestions received via video van, 2,66,000 suggestions received from missed calls and 1,18,362

through websites. Besides, a 5,83,054 received from ballot boxes.

From the number of suggestions received, we have understood that how people are unhappy with the Government. Among all the suggestions were water logging, pollution, transport and employment.

The promise of the State Government to provide employment and absorption of contract employees were also mentioned in the suggestions in majority from the people," said the BJP chief. "People also expressed about the poor quality and dirty water. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is lauding about education system and development done in schools but the people are cry-

ing over vacancies in schools, large numbers of teaching post are lying vacant in schools and even many the positions of Principal in schools also lying vacant," he said.

Replying to a question, Tiwari also said that the party has also received suggestions and anger over Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and traffic hurdles and closure of the road due to Shaheen Bagh protest also there. There are lakhs of suggestions, we will analyse and make vision government to look after the problems of people.

The meeting was also attended by other senior BJP leaders and MP such as Meenakshi Lekhi and Vijay Goel.

BJP may give JD(U) 3 seats in Delhi polls

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will contest Assembly elections with its alliance Janta Dal United (JDU).

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, BJP leaders in central office said that Delhi has big numbers of Purvanchalis and calculations with respect to number of purvanchali voters have been done. "There are strong indications that JDU will contest Delhi elections on three seats which are — Sangam Vihar, Badarpur and Burari," said a BJP insider.

Meanwhile, JDU official also agreed on the news of BJP - JDU alliance in Delhi. "Yes, there is strong possibility of alliance", JDU leader confirmed.

Cong offers 30 paise cashback on saving 1 litre water if voted to power

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



The Delhi Congress on Thursday said that it will give '30 paise cashback' for each litre of water saved by Delhi residents and 20,000 litres of water a month free after coming to power in the February 8 Assembly elections.

Delhi Congress president Subhash Chopra said that those households who save water from the present 20,000-litre free water per family will be benefited from this scheme.

Chopra said that the cash-back scheme will be introduced as part of the Congress' 'Paani Bachao-Dilli Bachao' campaign. He said that the Supreme Court had warned the Delhi Jal Board in 2018, saying that if the water situation remains precarious in Delhi, then there was the pos-

sibility of a "water war" in future," he said.

Chopra also alleged that the water mafia was active with the connivance of the Kejriwal Government and was misusing the free water scheme. "There is a steep rise of 40 per cent in the rates of water tankers. The tanker mafia was selling drinking water many times more than the DJB rates with the tacit support of the Kejriwal Government," he alleged.

The DJB has no data regarding how much water is being used by each consumer, he said, adding that if the Congress scheme is implemented, a family could save up to 5,000 litres of water for which they will get cash back of ₹1,500.

Sisodia files nomination from Patparganj



AAP leader and Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, along with supporters, on his way to file nomination papers from Patparganj Assembly constituency in New Delhi on Thursday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia on Thursday filed his nomination from the Patparganj constituency for the Delhi Assembly elections.

Before filing his nomina-

tion he participated in a road show and bike rally to seek the blessings of the people. He started his roadshow from Talab Chowk with thousands of his supporters who chanting "Lage Raho Kejriwal".

Sisodia is the first candidate to file his nomination

from the AAP.

Addressing the gathering after filing his nomination, Sisodia said "In the past five years, not only the Patparganj constituency was developed but the entire city of Delhi has witnessed the benefits of our good work and now the time



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JNU VIOLENCE

Ready to join probe: ABVP member

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ABVP member Komal Sharma, who has been called for questioning by the Delhi Police in connection with the January 5 violence at the JNU campus here, wrote to the head of the investigation team, saying she was ready to join the probe.

"It is being claimed in the media and social media that I am absconding, which is false, so I write to you to join the investigation," she said in a letter to DCP (Crime) Joy Tirkey.

"I can join in for questioning either at the office of the National Commission for Women or at a place and time appropriate to you, which may be communicated to me through this e-mail," she said, adding that her family was

concerned about her security. She said her name with photos has been circulated on social media, "which made things very tough" for her.

"I started receiving threat calls on my number because of which I have switched off my number. My social media accounts were also filled with abuses and threats and so I have deactivated those as well," she said in the e-mail. Sharma, who is a student of Delhi University's Daulat Ram College, said a TV channel claimed that she was involved in the violence and used "all forums to defame her", subjecting her to "mental violence".

Meanwhile, the RSS-affiliate Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad said the "smear campaign" against them by some media houses is unfortunate



and they have been co-operating with the special investigation team (SIT).

Two ABVP members appeared before the SIT on Thursday. Sidharth Yadav, state secretary, ABVP Delhi, alleged, "The misinformation being spread by some media houses and members of the press with respect to the ongoing investigation in the JNU violence case is unfortunate. These media houses have even been tweaking the statements of the Delhi Police to propagate the false narrative that the ABVP has not been cooperating with the SIT."

He claimed that the allegation against Komal Sharma that she was the masked girl involved in the JNU violence are baseless as police had not said "anything to this effect".

movement for the "removal" of M. Jagadesh Kumar as the Vice Chancellor of JNU.

It said that JNUSU will take up various programmes and campaigns in support of public education and against the violence that JNU has had to face. Over 4,000 registrations have been done in JNU for the new semester so far, said a source.

The registration process got hampered after some students of the varsity had allegedly barged into the server room and disrupted Wi-Fi services on the campus in an attempt to prevent students from getting registered for the new semester. This had forced the administration to stop the registration process for three days. IANS

JNUSU requests students to boycott registration

New Delhi:

Days after the registration process for the new semester in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was made functional again, Jawaharlal Nehru University Student's Union (JNUSU) on Thursday requested the students, especially those who have not registered, to continue to boycott the process.

The JNUSU, keeping in mind the opinion of various centre level GBMs (general body meetings), is expediting an immediate legal challenge to the IHA manual seeking interim relief. Therefore, we request the student community, especially those who have not registered, to continue to boycott the registration process in the light of such a move. Our unity

at this juncture is very critical," said a JNUSU statement.

The classes for the next semester cannot happen unless the backlog of the previous semester is cleared, said the statement, adding that the JNUSU will coordinate with the JNTUA (JNU Teacher's Association) to undertake parallel classes on various topics immediately.

The JNUSU will undertake all manner and means of struggle to see to it that the students facing proctorial enquiries and punitive actions like suspension/eviction are not victimised and their registration is completed on a priority basis," the statement said.

In the meeting, the student body decided to intensify its

I am not a rubber stamp, says Kerala Governor

IANS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Making his stand very clear, Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Thursday said that he is not a rubber stamp and will apply his own mind.

Khan was reacting to the media after reports surfaced that he refused to sign an ordinance approved by the Kerala cabinet to increase the number of members in local bodies.

"I make it very clear that the Constitution does not expect me to be a rubber stamp. I have to apply my own mind. I will need time to go through what the ordinance is all about. With the assembly session soon to be convened what was the need. I have raised some questions and I need to get the answers and

back, "who said so, there is nothing like that."

Khan of late has been putting his foot down and has taken a tough position in the manner the Pinarayi Vijayan government has been taking positions on the Citizenship Amendment Act.

He also attacked the Vijayan government for challenging the CAA in the Supreme Court.

"There is a legal maxim, neither me nor anyone is above the law. Clearly I am not against anyone approaching the judiciary. But, with me being the Constitutional head of the state, they (the state government) should have informed me about it, but I came to know through the newspapers. Some people here, think they are above law," said Khan.

In reply to a question that the government will return it to him if he won't sign, Khan shot

CBI transfers officers probing Saradha, Rose Valley and Narada scams

Kolkata: The CBI on Thursday said it has transferred from the city four officers, three of them deputy superintendents of police and one inspector, who were involved in the investigations into the Saradha and Rose Valley ponzi scams and Narada tapes scandal, from the city.

Those transferred are CBI deputy superintendent of police Ranjit Kumar, who was probing the Narada tapes scandal, DSP Tathagata Bardhan,

involved in the Saradha ponzi scam probe and DSP Chojom Sherpa investigating the Rose Valley chit fund scam, a CBI spokesman said. The fourth CBI officer to be transferred is Inspector Bratin Ghoshal, a former investigation officer probing the Rose Valley chit fund scam, sources said. PTI



A woman holds a poster as she participates in a rally to protest against CAA, NRC and NPR in Kolkata on Thursday

Cong-DMK alliance should continue in interest of TN people: Thirunavukkarasar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As fissures remained in the Congress-DMK alliance in Tamil Nadu, former AICC secretary S Thirunavukkarasar wanted the tie-up to continue in the interests of people of the state and both the parties.

"This alliance had proved its strength by winning 38 out of 39 Lok Sabha seats during last year's poll. Assembly poll in TN is also not far. Both the parties should forget their differences and move on in unity," he said. The Congress leader, a Lok Sabha member from Tiruchi in TN, added that the parties should continue to work hand-in-hand and devise strategies to oppose the ideologies and policies of the AIADMK-BJP alliance. "Everything can be resolved if the leaders of both the parties sit together and talk," he said.

Thirunavukkarasar, who is also a former TNCC president, said he was hopeful that the alliance would continue and pointed out that there was no difference of opinion between Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi with DMK president MK Stalin.

Talking to PTI over phone on Thursday, he said the two parties should forget critical statements and counter-statements made by their leaders as "bad experience" and move on. The trouble in the alliance started when Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president KS Alagiri and Congress legislative party leader KR Ramasamy charged the DMK leadership of violating the "coalition dharma" in the distribution of seats for the just concluded rural local bodies election.

The DMK took objection to this and boycotted an all-party meeting convened by Congress president Sonia Gandhi in Delhi on Monday.

DMK leader Durai Murugan even said that his party was least bothered if the Congress left the alliance.

WESTERN RAILWAY MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction) II, Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390 004, invites e-tender as per the details given below : Tender No. : Dy.CE/C/II/BRC/MYG-DB-SMLA/22. Name of the work: Laying and linking of BG/NG for Main & loop lines including points & crossing at various yards, Transportation of P-way materials, spreading of ballast, tamping of track, dismantling of existing BG/NG track & Points & Crossing, flesh butt / SKV welding and other incidental miscellaneous works between Miyagam (including Yard) and Dabhol (Including Yard) in connection with "Gauge Conversion of existing NG track to BG track between Miyagam-Dabhol-Samyla section". Approx. cost work ₹83.65 Lakhs. Availability of online

Tender for bidding: From 27.01.2020 at 10.00 Hrs To 10.02.2020 up to 15.00 Hrs. Date of opening & time: 10.02.2020 up to 15.30 Hrs. Regarding detailed notice containing cost of tender document (non-refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, Similar Nature of work, tender conditions, please visit www.reps.gov.in. Manual offers will not be considered.

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From Page 1

BJP top leaders, rallies to galvanise support for CAA

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

With the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) made effective from January 10 and the Opposition set to harden its stance against it, the ruling Modi Government is scaling up its efforts to galvanise counter-support for the law

from this Saturday by organising major public rallies and deploying top central leaders and Union Ministers across the country.

The first of such public rallies, described as "carpet bombing" by senior party leaders, would be organised in Uttar Pradesh from January 18 to

January 23. In the light of Congress-led opposition's attempts to put Modi Government on the mat and the rising protests around the campuses and on other forums, the BJP has decided to raise the decibel of its offensive substantially, beyond collecting "missed call support" on the citizenship issue.

Party President Amit Shah, Working President J P Nadda, Union Minister Smriti Irani and BJP Vice President and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will address public rallies to garner mass support for citizenship law vis-à-vis Congress' alleged attempt to create a domestic and international opinion against it. These leaders would visit politically key state of Uttar Pradesh for four days from this week



onwards.

An internal survey of the party maintained that the BJP has ground support of 80 per cent people in several states who are largely "silent" and the party needs to work on them.

"The protest is sponsored by the Congress and Left which has no other issue to gain its

lost political ground all over the country," said BJP General Secretary Anil Jain, who maintained that regional parties have already realized the Congress-Left plan and quit their company. DMK, BSP, TMC and SP did not join Congress-led anti-CAA meet in the national Capital on

Monday. Another senior BJP leader pointed to DMK's absence from the Congress meet claiming that in states like Tamil Nadu CAA was not a local issue and referred to party's "success" in local elections in the state.

Jain, who is overseeing BJP's campaign for CAA, said a majority of institutions and university campuses have not witnessed disturbances or anti-CAA protests. He said the party has received support of about two crore people in its mass contact programme in different states.

Asked whether continuing anti-CAA protests have also disrupted economy in the country, the BJP General Secretary said that may not have a direct link between the two subjects. The BJP leader said there was no question of

stepping back on the CAA and it would be their plank for coming years.

Without giving the numbers of persecuted minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, to be given Indian citizenship in India, he said most of them were already in India and alleged that agitation against CAA is part of "opposition conspiracy". He said citizenship would be accorded to with a cut-off date of December 31, 2014.

Persecuted minorities from these three countries who move to India beyond the cut-off date will have to spend six years before being eligible for the citizenship.

In his public rallies in Bihar, Shah has accused opposition parties of "misleading minorities" on the CAA and discounted rumours of discord within NDA on the issue.

IN SHORT

FARM SECTOR MAY GROW AT 3.1%; NITI AAYOG

New Delhi: NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand said on Thursday that farm sector growth is likely to be higher at 3.1 per cent in the current fiscal compared with 2.9 per cent in 2018-19. More competition and private investment is the need of the hour, he said, adding that the role of private sector in Indian agriculture sector has come in a big way. "India's farm sector growth for the current fiscal is expected to remain higher at 3.1 per cent," Chand said.

EC FREEZES KC(M)'S 'TWO LEAVES' SYMBOL

New Delhi: The Election Commission (EC) has temporarily frozen the 'two leaves' symbol of the Kerala Congress (Mani) as it is inquiring into the dispute between two factions claiming ownership of the party. "Based on the representation received from one of the factions of KC(M) led by Jose K Mani, which apprehended that the other faction led by P J Joseph may misuse the symbol for the ensuing polls, the EC has decided to freeze the symbol till January 20 when the next hearing is scheduled," an EC official said.

MANDATORY HALLMARKING FOR GOLD FROM JAN 2021

New Delhi: The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has notified the mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts, which will come into force from January 15, 2021. Till then, jewellers have been given time for implementation of this notification, violation of which will be punishable under the provisions of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016. As per the notification, only a registered jewellers will be allowed to sell the hallmarked gold articles through certified sales outlets.

GLOBALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION DISCUSSED

New Delhi: To deliberate upon some of the key challenges and opportunities faced by the universities in the subcontinent, Times Higher Education (THE) India Universities Forum in partnership with Amity University witnessed a host of national and international educators from higher education, industry and Government on Thursday to discuss about the globalisation of higher education in India and its future. Phil Baty, THE - Chief Knowledge Officer, Dipit Sharma, Hiring Solutions Sales Executive amongst others addressed the gathering.

VIGYAN SAMAGAM WILL BE HELD HERE FROM JAN 21

New Delhi: With an aim to showcase the mega-science projects undertaken by Indian scientists here as well as abroad, a three-month long exhibition, Vigyan Samagam will be held here from January 21, 2020 at the National Science Centre (NSC), Pragati maidan. It is a science communication platform for policymakers, young minds and community, said Arun Srivastava, Secretary, AEC and Head, Institutional Collaboration & Programs Division (ICPD), Nuclear Control and Planning Wing (NCPW), DAE, addressing a curtain-raiser press conference here. Vigyan Samagam exhibition is showcasing India's contribution to international collaborations on fundamental science and research, and providing a common interactive platform for mega-science Projects, industry, academia and institutions.

Rawat for hardline approach to tackle terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat on Thursday called for global action against States sponsoring terrorism and said there is a need to take a hardline approach in dealing with this scourge. He also said children in the age group of 10-12 were getting radicalised in Kashmir and called for steps to wean them away by isolating them and putting them in de-radicalisation camps.

Making these comments here during the ongoing Raisina Dialogue, he also said security forces cannot be blamed for injuries caused due to pellet guns and the radicalised stone pelters are "more dangerous" than the pellet guns. "The pellet guns are

non-lethal weapons which are now used very rarely and only aimed below the legs," he said.

Defending the security forces for using pellet guns for crowd control, the newly appointed CDS said the non-lethal weapon is "sparingly used" in Kashmir and even then they are aimed at the legs.

He said those throwing stones face action. "Stones can cause death. Now we cannot be throwing stones back at them. Pellet guns are non-lethal weapons and are fired at the legs," he said.

Explaining the most likely cause of injuries suffered in the face, Rawat clarified that most of the eye injuries are caused because those pelting stones bend to the ground to pick up stones and because pellet guns are fired at the legs they get hit them in the eyes.

Touching upon the issue of radicalisation, Rawat said children as young as 10-12 years are being radicalised in Kashmir and there is need to isolate those completely radicalised and put them in deradicalization camps.

He said radicalisation can be countered by looking at where it is happening and who are behind it. "What we saw in Kashmir, we saw radicalisation happening. Today we are seeing radicalisation being undertaken even amongst young people. Girls and boys as young as 10-12 are now being radicalised. These people can still be isolated from radicalisation in a gradual way, but there are people who have been completely radicalised. These people need to be taken out separately and possibility taken into some deradicalization camps," he

said. We have deradicalization camps going on in our country, he added.

He 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 radicalization programme by identifying people who have been radicalised, to what degree..."

On combating terrorism, the CDS said there is a need to take the bull by its horn and strike at the root cause and called for a hardline approach in dealing with terrorism, the way the US went after terror groups after 9/11 terror attacks.

RISING GULF TENSION

Jaishankar holds talks with Iranian counterpart Zarif

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of tension between Iran and US, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif on Thursday held extensive talks here on the situation in the Gulf region. India reiterated Indian interests in the region and support for efforts to maintain peace, security and stability there.

Zarif, who is here to attend the Raisina Dialogue, on Wednesday said, Iran was interested in diplomacy but not in negotiating with the US and said killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani showed ignorance and arrogance of the US.

Asserting this, he also said 430 cities in India witnessed protests against the killing. He met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval besides Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and

apprised them of the situation in the Gulf region. The Russian Minister is also attending the Raisina Dialogue.

In the parleys with Jaishankar on Thursday here, the Iranian Minister apprised him of the overall situation and Tehran's position on it in the meeting held over breakfast, officials said.

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In a statement, the External Affairs Ministry said the two sides exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, including the recent developments in the region.

It said the two sides also deliberated on the Iran nuclear deal of 2015, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The US had pulled

out of the JCPOA in 2018. The Ministry said Jaishankar reiterated Indian interests in the region and support for efforts to maintain peace, security and stability there. The issue of development of the Chabahar port also figured in talks between Zarif and Jaishankar.

Both leaders recalled positive outcomes of the External Affairs Minister's recent visit to Tehran for the 19th Joint Commission Meeting, especially for strengthening bilateral trade and promoting connectivity initiative through Chabahar port," the Ministry said.

Jaishankar on Wednesday here had referred to tensions between the US and Iran and said they are two individualistic countries and what finally happens will depend on the players involved. He made this observation while addressing the ongoing Raisina Dialogue.

Zarif had said on Wednesday India can play a role in de-escalating tensions in the Gulf region as it is an important regional player.

Draft plan on road safety: Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■



The Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Nitin Gadkari, at the 18th meeting of National Road Safety Council (NRSC) and 39th meeting of Transport Development Council (TDC), in New Delhi on Thursday

the larger public. Work on improving road engineering will be undertaken with available resources worth Rs 14,000 crore," said Gadkari.

The Minister said that black spots are being identified and repaired at a fast pace. District-level committees have been formed to examine and suggest such spots which need immediate attention, he added.

He stressed on including NGOs and engineering students in conducting road audits.

Transport ministers and senior officials from various states participated in the meeting and discussed different road safety aspects, including the MV

(Amendment) Act 2019; tourist vehicles authorisation and permit rules 2019; bus port guidelines; digitisation of transport and abolition of border check posts and inter-state transfer of vehicle registration and driving licenses among others.

The Minister also exuded confidence that the number of accidents will decline sharply on the back of stringent traffic rules post-enactment of the new Motor Vehicles Act and massive steps undertaken to curb accidents including correction of "black spots" or accident spots at a cost of ₹14,000 crore.

"Road accidents cause a loss of 3 per cent to the GDP... I

am hopeful that the accidents should decline by 50 per cent in five years on the back of stringent traffic rules after the implementation of Motor Vehicles Act... At the same time officials behind faulty road engineering and DPRs (detailed project report) will not be spared," the minister said.

The issues regarding harmonisation of road tax across States - One Nation One Tax; vehicle scrapping policy; guidelines for setting up, authorisation and operation of vehicle scrapping facility and implementation of vehicle tracking platform under Nirbhaya framework were also discussed.

Underlines the importance of

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COP 26 IN GLASGOW

India's approach positive about climate change, says Javadekar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■

NEW DELHI

India is positive and constructive in its approach when it comes to climate change and will make all efforts to make the 26th UN Climate Change Conference, slated for year-end a success, said Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on Thursday.

Speaking shortly after holding a meeting with UK's former Energy Minister Claire O'Neill, who is also the President of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP 26, to be held in Glasgow later this year, Javadekar said several issues were discussed which will be the focal point in the confer-

"There is no dearth of resources for infrastructure development in the country and the need is only for a coherent approach to serve

the larger public. Work on improving road engineering will be undertaken with available resources worth Rs 14,000 crore," said Gadkari.

The Minister said that black spots are being identified and repaired at a fast pace. District-level committees have been formed to examine and suggest such spots which need immediate attention, he added.

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PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■

NEW DELHI

In a matter of pride for Indian scientists, the WHO Global TB Programme has included an indigenously developed TrueNat tuberculosis technology, developed by them, to detect TB and multi-drug resistant TB in view of its high diagnostic accuracy. TrueNat gives results within an hour while the conventional TB tests take at least 24 to 48 hours.

According

Adani Ent, NCCF officials booked for graft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked Adani Enterprises and former officials of National Cooperative Consumer Forum (NCCF) in a case of cheating, criminal conspiracy and graft in supply of imported coal to Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation (APGENCO) in 2010.

Adani Enterprises is alleged to have got undue favours in the supply contract.

APGENCO had floated a limited tender enquiry for the supply of six lakh MTs of imported coal from sea ports to Nalanda Tata Rao Thermal Power Plant in Vijaywada and Rayalaseema Thermal Power Plant (RTPP) in Kadapa on June 29, 2010, according to the FIR.

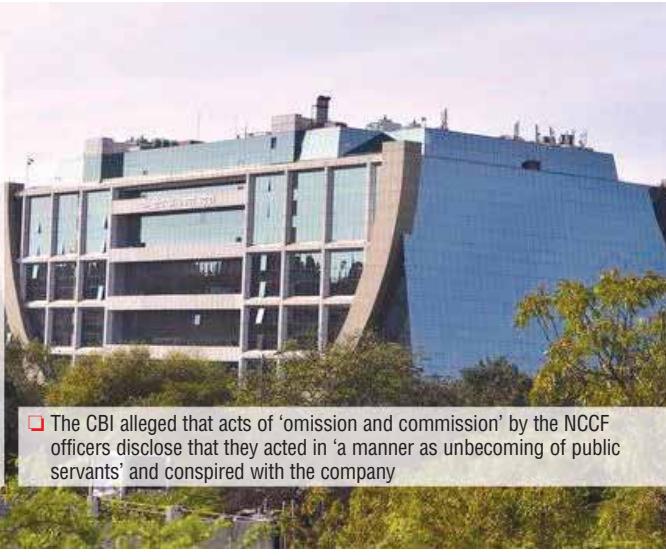
The tender enquiry was forwarded to seven PSUs including National Co-operative Consumer Federation India Ltd (NCCF), a multi-State cooperative under Union Consumer Affairs Ministry having 78 per cent Government stake.

The CBI alleged that acts of "omission and commission" by the NCCF officers disclose that they acted in "a manner as unbecoming of public servants" and conspired with the company.

Besides, Adani Enterprises, the CBI booked then NCCF chairman Virender Singh, then Managing Director of NCCF

■ Adani Enterprises is alleged to have got undue favours in the supply contract

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GP Gupta and its senior adviser SC Singhal for allegedly favouring the Ahmedabad-based company in the tender and violation of guidelines.

The CBI alleged that acts of "omission and commission" by the NCCF officers disclose that they acted in "a manner as unbecoming of public servants" and conspired with the company.

The FIR said the officers "committed irregularities by

the way of manipulation in the selection of the bidders, thereby giving undue favour to Adani Enterprises Ltd in award of work for supply of imported coal to APGENCO despite its disqualification.

Giving details of alleged criminal conspiracy and corruption, the CBI alleged that NCCF, Hyderabad unit which had received the APGENCO tender enquiry on June 29, 2010 had forwarded it to its head-

quarters in Delhi to Singhal. The same day the head office selected a single party — Maharishi Brothers Coal Limited (MBCL) — to transport the coal at a margin of 2.25 per cent instead of initiating the process for floating an open tender to call for bids from the competitive bidders citing lack of time as the deadline was July 7, according to the FIR.

Six days later on July 7, APGENCO informed NCCF,

Hyderabad that the date of tender has been extended to July 12 following which allocation to MBCL was cancelled and open tender was floated.

Six bidders Adani Enterprises, MBCL, Vyom Trade Links, Swarana Projects Gupta Coal India, and Kyori Oremi responded to NCCF Tender on July 10, 2010 whose details and bids were tabulated and sent to the headquarters by Hyderabad unit on the same day, it said.

Gupta Coal had quoted 11.3 per cent NCCF margin while MBCL had kept it at 2.25 per cent but remaining companies had not quoted any NCCF margin, it said.

"Instead of cancelling the bid of Adani Enterprises Ltd, Senior management of NCCF conveyed the offer margin of NCCF to the company through one of its representatives Munish Sehgal who was sitting in the NCCF head office on July 10, 2010 in the evening..." the FIR alleged.

Subsequently, Adani Enterprises Ltd on the same day informed NCCF that they agree to pay minimum margin charge of 2.25 per cent to NCCF.

Davinder Singh stripped of gallantry award by J&K admin

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh — being interrogated by multiple intelligence agencies to probe his terror links with terror outfits in Kashmir Valley — has now been stripped of his gallantry award by the Jammu & Kashmir administration.

A formal order, dated January 15, 2020, issued by the Home Department stated, "Consequent upon the arrest of Davinder Singh on January 11 while trying to assist terrorists to travel outside J&K and recovery of arms and ammunition in case FIR no 05/2020 u/s 7/25 A. Act, 3/4 E.S ACT, 18/19/20/38/39 of ULA (P) Act P/S Qazikund, the Sher-e-Kashmir Police Medal for Gallantry, is hereby forfeited".

As per the official order, Singh's act amounted to "disloyalty and conduct that has brought upon the force into disrepute".

Earlier, DGP Dilbagh Singh had also refuted media reports claiming Davinder Singh had been awarded the President's Police Medal for



The newly constructed residential house of J&K police officer Davinder Singh at Indra Nagar in Srinagar on Thursday PTI

Meritorious Service on August 15, 2019.

The J&K Police spokesman also issued a statement in this regard which read, "It is to clarify that DySP Davinder Singh

is not awarded any Gallantry or Meritorious Medal by MHA as has been reported by some media outlets/persons. Only gallantry medal awarded to him during his service is by the erstwhile J&K State on Independence Day 2018".

Soldier killed, three injured as avalanche hits Army post in Kargil

PTI ■ JAMMU

A soldier was killed and three others were injured when an avalanche hit an Army post in Drass belt of Ladakh's Kargil district on Thursday, officials said.

The avalanche hit the army post in Mushkoh valley in which four soldiers were buried, they said.

One soldier died while three injured were rescued, they added.

A woman sells vegetables on the roadside after heavy snowfall in Srinagar on Thursday. Jammu-Srinagar National Highway has been closed for last five days due to heavy snowfall that caused shortage of essential stocks PTI



Cold wave conditions persist in north India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cold wave conditions persisted in northern India as rains soaked several areas in the region and snowfall was recorded in Kashmir and Ladakh. The cold wave conditions will continue till January end except January 21, 22 and 23.

Widespread rain in the national Capital brought the maximum temperature down, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said, adding the city recorded a high of 16.4 degrees Celsius, which was three notches below normal, after rains in the afternoon.

The minimum temperature increased to 9.5 degrees Celsius from 6.4 degrees on Wednesday due to a cloud cover. It was two notches above normal, the IMD said. The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides official figures for the city, recorded 4 mm rainfall. The weather stations at Lodi Road, Ridge, Ayanagar and Palam recorded 6.4 mm, 2.8 mm, 1.7 mm and 0.8 mm precipitation.

Most parts of the Kashmir Valley received snowfall overnight. Low visibility and accumulation of snow at the Srinagar airport led to cancellation of 15 flights on Thursday



morning, officials said.

Flight operations have been affected at the airport for the past few days. All flights were cancelled on January 12 and 13, but few operated on January 14. However, flight operations did not take place on Wednesday as well due to continued snowfall.

Most plain areas in the valley received moderate to heavy snowfall on Wednesday which continued during the night, officials said. The higher reaches of the Valley, Jammu region and Ladakh Union Territory

In 2 days, IAF rescues 107 people stranded during 'Chadar Trek' in Ladakh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IAF helicopters in the last two days have helped rescue 107 people, including foreign nationals, who got stranded during the 'Chadar Trek' in the Union Territory of Ladakh, officials said on Thursday.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) also tweeted about the rescue operation which it carried out with Ladakh's newly-formed civil administration, nearby Army units and local disaster relief teams.

"IAF helicopters successfully airlifted nine foreign nationals (two French & seven Chinese) with other stranded trekkers on Thursday afternoon. An unwell woman passenger from Ladakh was provided required medical care on ground & during flight by IAF medical personnel," the IAF tweeted.

The IAF in a statement said, its helicopters have helped rescue 107 individuals during the last two days.

"The rescued trekkers include one man and one woman from France, and four men and three women from China, who as per information were rescued from Padum. The IAF will continue the ongoing

rescue operation till all the stranded trekkers, guides and porters are evacuated and brought to safety," it said.

The trekkers, including foreign nationals and almost an equal number of local guides and porters, were part of the ongoing 'Chadar Trek', and got stranded when some portions of the frozen Zanskar River melted, the IAF said.

"The melting caused the flow of the water to become too strong, for the trekkers to continue across the river on foot. The stranded trekkers managed to move to Niraq, a small camp site upstream and were awaiting to be rescued," it said.

To carry out the rescue operation by helicopters, a makeshift helipad was prepared along the river bank. Advanced Light Helicopters were immediately pressed into action from Air Force Station Leh, the IAF said.

To provide medical facilities to the stranded trekkers a medical officer and a medical assistant were also flown from Air Force Station Leh to Niraq.

The team has set up a medical assistance camp at Niraq and are providing basic medical assistance to the stranded trekkers, it said.

'Elephant Pongal' in TN celebrated at rejuvenation camp

Coimbatore: Even as 'Mattu Pongal' dedicated to cattle was celebrated across Tamil Nadu as part of the harvest festival of Pongal, elephants too got the taste and feel of the celebrations near here on Thursday

The 'Elephant Pongal' was celebrated at the rejuvenation camp near Mettupalayam in Coimbatore district, where 28 elephants from temple and mutts across the state were being provided the much-needed rest. The animals were given a shower in the river Bhavani and decorated with flowers. Sugarcane, bananas and coconuts and, of course, sweet pongal were offered to the elephants.

PTI

cerned authorities and file complaints against those accused in land grabbing.

The relation between the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister of the union territory is at its lowest ebb as the latter had submitted a memorandum to President Ram Nath Kovind during his visit to Puducherry asking for recalling Bedi.

Narayanasamy was upset over Kiran Bedi's refusal to the former's proposal to open casinos in the former French colony for boosting the economy of Puducherry. In a statement Narayanasamy alleged that the lieutenant governor was a "woman without conscience" and alleged that she was adopting a revengeful attitude against his Government.

The new year eve saw Bedi dispatching a strongly worded rejoinder to Narayanasamy and she shared the letter with the media.

She said the Chief Minister had been "Calling me and the Constitutional office of the Lt Governor all kinds of derogatory names and heaping unfounded accusations over a considerable period."

Particularly over the last few days the Chief Minister "has crossed the line of decorum, dignity and decency," she said.



PTI ■ MADURAI

Jallikattu, the popular bull taming sport of Tamil Nadu lived up to its reputation of being huge crowd-puller as the contest unfolded on Thursday at Palamedu here and Suriyur in Tiruchirappalli district.

As thousands of spectators continued to flock both the events, the tamers were awed by several bulls which were determined to not allow anyone to even come anywhere near them.

Interestingly, at Suriyur, a huge bull not only allowed none to go near it, but also

vessels kept the participants on their toes to dominate the animals and emerge victorious.

Bull owners were also anxious that their animals should evade the tamers and run over to the end point so that they could bag prizes.

Perfect nail-biting moments were witnessed when a tamer — who hung over the hump of a fierce bull that proved to be a running machine — slid through its shoulder and fell right in front of its legs.

As luck would have it, the participant escaped unhurt as the animal effortlessly jumped across and sped past.

Verbal spat between Bedi, Narayanasamy reaches next level

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The Pongal festivities in the union territory of Puducherry initiated by Thursday as Chief Minister V Narayanasamy challenged Kiran Bedi, the lieutenant Governor to substantiate her allegations that the former and his family members were engaged in land grabbing.

I challenge Kiran Bedi. If me or any of my family members are proved guilty in any land grabbing case, I'll resign. But will Kiran Bedi quit if its not proved? She is wrongly trying to malign me. She no longer deserves to remain as lieutenant governor," Narayanasamy said while addressing a Press meeting at Puducherry on Thursday.

What upset the Chief Minister was a social media posting by Bedi about a complaint she received from one of the MLAs who had called on her recently.

The legislator told the Lieutenant Governor that he was in possession of documents which proved that the Chief Minister and his family members were engaged in land grabbing.

Bedi, who is having a running battle with the chief minister told the law maker that he was free to approach the con-

Bru tribals to permanently settle in Tripura

Tripartite agreement signed



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Tripura Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb during signing of an agreement for permanent settlement of Bru tribals in Tripura, in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

More than 30,000 displaced Bru tribals from Mizoram, who have been living as refugees in Tripura since 1997, will permanently settle in Tripura and a tripartite agreement was signed in this effect on Thursday.

The agreement was signed by representatives of Bru and the central and Mizoram and Governments in presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah here at North Block. Under the pact, over 30,000 Bru tribals will live in Tripura permanently, Shah said.

The Bru tribals have been living in Tripura in different relief camps after they fled Mizoram in 1997 following ethnic clashes between Bru and Mizo communities. An agreement signed in July 2018 for repatriation of the Bru tribals to Mizoram did not materialise as majority of the community members refused to go back to Mizoram.

Tripura Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb, Mizoram CM Zoramthanga, Assam Finance Minister Himanta

PM MODI HAILS AGREEMENT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the agreement to permanently settle the Bru-Reang refugees in Tripura on Thursday, saying it will "greatly help" them.

He also said the Bru-Reang refugees will benefit from numerous welfare schemes of the Government.

"A special day indeed," Modi wrote on Twitter.

Cong slams Centre, calls 36 Mins' J&K visit 'propaganda'

New Delhi: Against the backdrop of the Government's decision to send 36 Union Ministers to Jammu & Kashmir, the Congress on Thursday asked the ruling dispensation the need to send "propagandists" if everything was "normal" there.

"Amit Shah says all is normal in Kashmir. If so, why send 36 propagandists to Kashmir? Why not allow non-propagandists to go and understand the situation prevailing there?" tweeted senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal.

A group of Union ministers will visit Jammu and Kashmir later this month to spread awareness about the positive impact of abrogation of Article 370 provisions and the development measures taken by the government for the region.

The schedule for the visit of the ministers to the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir is likely to be finalised at a meeting of the Union Council of Ministers on Friday.

Thirty-six Union ministers will visit different districts in both the divisions of the Union Territory starting from January 18 to January 24 and the Home Ministry is coordinating it.

"36 Ministers running around J&K in 6 days is a sign of Panic not normalcy. Abrogating Article 370 was a blunder & no quick fixes will work Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;

All the king's horses and all the king's men Couldn't put Humpty together again," tweeted Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari. PNS

Source: PTI Date: 17/01/2020 Authorised Officer Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Office of the Chief Engineer, Mechanical Engineering Department, Jammu
Pin No: 19140309, e-mail: mechjmu@gmail.com Website: www.mechjmu.co.in

CORRIGENDUM - 3

Due to poor response the e-NIT no. CE/MEDJ/Tech/2019-20/06 Dated :- 09-12-2019 Due on :- 24-12-2019 extended upto 02.01.2020 and again upto 10.01.2020 for the Supply of 01 no. Truck Chassis with Cabin for Mechanical Division, Rajouri of Mechanical Engineering Department, Jammu is hereby further extended upto 17-01-2020 and shall be opened on 18-01-2019. The revised critical dates can be seen / downloaded from the J&K Govt. Website www.jktenders.gov.in and e-portal website www.mechjmu.co.in, rest all terms and conditions of e-NIT shall remain the same.

No. DIP/J-12254/19 Sd/- Technical Officer to Chief Engineer, Mechanical Engineering Department Jammu

Dated: 14.01.2020

Technical Officer to Chief Engineer, Mechanical Engineering Department Jammu

It is hereby informed to public in general that we have taken physical possession of our secured asset address-Officer ad measuring 189 sq.yds., bearing Property No.C-411, out of Khasra No.361, situated at village Ghonda Gurha Khadar, in the abadi of C Block, Gali No.17, Bhajan Pura, Shahdara, New Delhi. Borrower name-Bharat Bhushan, Agreement no.-XOHDHE00001322517, XOHEDHE00001322529 Through the order of the court. In the said premises, some belongings of the borrower is lying the persons concerned is hereby informed to remove it with in seven days from the publication of this notice failing which we shall dispose of the belongings as unidentified and unclaimed property without any further notice.

Place: Delhi/NCR

Date: 17/01/2020

(Authorised Officer)

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited

Branch Office: Plot No.6, 2nd Floor, Opp. Metro Pillar No.81, Pusha Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110009

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Death of justice

As the hanging of Nirbhaya's rapists gets stalled, we must ask if we can get real about women's safety or just float a bogey



All concerns and campaigns for women's safety sound vacuous and patronising when the commitment to it, by virtue of honouring and implementing the law, falters. We lose faith in a system that is exploited routinely and remains imprisoned in a maze of technicalities to deny closure. Even if it is as gruesome and indelible a case as that of the rape of Nirbhaya, which has taken seven long years to be taken to its logical end and is still stopping short of answering to our national conscience. Worse, the system is oblivious

and impervious to what this travesty means to women in general and to Nirbhaya's family and friends in particular. Now, the hanging of the four rapists, convicted for one of the most heinous of crimes in India, has been stalled due to procedural drags, simply because all the convicts need to be given time to file mercy pleas and each of them would have to be heard following due processes. This should have been initiated earlier given the Supreme Court's ruling and clarity on the death sentence in a case considered "rarest of rare." So a case which ushered in special laws, a fast-track mechanism and well-intended course correction is now being denied the same privileges. Yes, due processes of law have been followed but the undue stress caused by delays in punishing the offenders is the reason that people talk about overriding the system with vigilanism. In the end, women lose confidence in society at large, whose mindset is set by precedents and examples, and predators are emboldened simply because they think they can get by. Considered a cut-and-dry case, the Nirbhaya verdict should not have been long in coming but it took four-and-a-half years for the trial court, the High Court and the Supreme Court to pass their judgments, with the lawyers of the convicts using every trick in the book to delay the inevitable. As per the law, once the apex court handed out the death sentence on May 5, 2017, the four convicts should have filed a review petition within 30 days, but the men exploited a legal provision for condonation of the delay if the convict gives a convincing reason. Hence all four filed their review petitions at different times after long, deliberate delays, in their bid to thwart the justice system. Under prison rules, if death sentence has been handed out to more than one person in a case and if even one of them moves a mercy plea, the execution of the others, too, has to be postponed till the plea is decided. Hence, as one of the four convicts, Mukesh Kumar, has a mercy petition pending before the President, all cannot be hanged. What is appalling is that these oversights have been made by responsible arms of the administration, in this case the Delhi Government and prison authorities. The Delhi High Court, therefore, slammed the Delhi Government for sitting on the case for a year and not issuing a notice on the mercy plea to convicts. The court also castigated the Delhi prison authorities for not informing the convicts that they could move mercy pleas before the President. This is not the first time that the convicts have exploited loopholes to thwart justice. Right from false alibis, to buying time by getting pages and pages of trial court proceedings translated from English to Hindi, they have done it all.

No wonder then that in a country where the conviction rates for rapes are as low as 32.2 per cent, despite laws dealing with sexual assault being made stringent in the aftermath of the incident, crimes against women have been on the rise. They have spiralled from 329,243 cases in 2015 to 338,954 in 2016 and 359,849 in 2017. From 2013 onwards, over 30,000 women/girls have been raped. That there is no seriousness about building in deterrence is revealed by a dismal 11 per cent utilisation of the Nirbhaya Fund allocated to States/Union Territories for ensuring the safety and security of women/girls. Any reform — police, judicial, infrastructural — will have no meaning till we reform the attitude towards law enforcement, implement it instead of negating it. Of course, there is the monster of politicisation even in tragedy. The BJP promptly blamed the AAP Government for delaying notices to convicts considering the Supreme Court rejected the appeal against their death sentence in 2017. AAP claimed that while the Delhi Government's recommendation was swift, the Centre had been in hibernation mode. While the point-scoring over who pushed Nirbhaya's rights rages on, what both forget is that each had agency and powers to do what could have been done in days, not years. Both, as representatives of people, look emaciated by the criminals who help them keep their talk points rolling. After all, there is no political capital to be made out of Nirbhaya's deathly silence.

Putin's Russia

The resignation of the Russian Cabinet has paved the way for his plans to stay in power beyond 2024



Vladimir Putin has now become the longest serving Russian leader since Joseph Stalin. No matter what opinion one may have of the current Russian leader with regard to the way he has ridden roughshod over any and all opposition, *prima facie* he is a lot nicer than Stalin, a man revered by the Communists in India, who was also one of the greatest mass murderers in history. Unlike Stalin, Putin also has to worry about a small thing called a Constitution. But after a shock decision by the Russian Cabinet to resign

on Wednesday, it is clear that Putin will remain in charge well beyond 2024 when his second eight-year stint as Russian President will come to a close. And to do so, he will need to reform the Constitution. It's worth noting that his Cabinet resigned not in a manner of protest but to make his life easier. After all, his long-time aide, former President and newly-resigned Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, was not expected to do anything but that. How Putin will structure his continued reign remains to be seen. Will he become the head of the State Council or amend the Constitution to ensure he remains President indefinitely?

However, unlike Chinese President Xi Jinping, who, too, made a power grab and changed the rules in the People's Republic of China, Putin's task is far tougher. First, unlike China, Russia is at least a quasi-democracy. The past three years have seen constant protests against Putin as Western sanctions against Russia have begun to bite. His claims that he is hearing the clamour for reforms within the country and that is what is prompting these "reforms" is, therefore, debatable. But more Putin also means that he will remain a major figure on the global stage. His intervention in Syria and Iran are of grave concern to the US and other Western nations. At the same time, he has made it very clear that he wants to see a revival of Russia's international power, wants it to be a nation with the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons in the world and one that continues to develop new weapons technology. Russia punches well above its economic heft in the world. With Putin in charge, it possibly punches a weight category even higher. While many in Washington DC, London and other Western capitals would be glad to see the back of the man, these new reforms mean that he is not going away anytime soon unless the Russians want him to.

A new air quality agenda

An efficient traffic signal management can not only help maintain the flow of traffic but also drastically reduce air pollution levels and save fuel



KK PAUL

Air pollution in our country, particularly in some of the urban centres, has become a major public health issue. Depending on the region and climatic conditions, there are several contributory factors that add to the pollution levels but vehicular emissions in metropolitan cities have emerged as a major source. According to official estimates, the number of vehicles in the national capital surged to over 1.20 crore, including over 80 lakh two-wheelers. The number of vehicles per thousand population, too, increased considerably — from 317 in 2006 to over 550 in 2016 — leading to visible congestion on the roads.

That vehicular emissions contain carcinogenic material needs no emphasis. But what has now come to light is that the inhalation of toxic airborne particles emitted by diesel and petrol vehicles can weaken bones and speed up the ageing process. This finding, based on a fairly large sample size taken from the vicinity of Hyderabad, quantifies on the basis of X-Rays and other studies and determines the extent of osteoporosis i.e., the weakening of bones, in all age groups.

Besides, the World Health Organisation (WHO), too, concluded that each year, thousands of children succumb to acute infections in their lower respiratory system caused by polluted air. Health hazards from air pollution due to vehicular emissions are, thus, manifold. Traffic police personnel and professional drivers, who face maximum air and noise pollution exposure on the roads, have to bear the brunt of this situation.

Last autumn saw Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) shooting beyond 1000, making it one of the most polluted cities in the world. Stubble burning by farmers in some of the States adjoining Delhi, combined with vehicular emissions, were major contributors to the deteriorating quality of air. In the following months, the situation somewhat improved but with people becoming used to witnessing "hazardous" levels of air pollution, even the current "severe" category appears to be taken in stride without much hue and cry.

With the capital witnessing hazardous air quality, schemes like Odd-Even were introduced to limit the number of four-wheelers on the roads. This scheme did show a dip in pollution levels, however small it might have been. Despite it being known that emissions from two-wheelers, which include benzene, are far more hazardous, the Odd-Even scheme could not be made applicable for some reason or the other. As a result, a more significant dent in pollution levels could not be achieved.

After April 1, when the Bharat-VI norms come into play, the level of auto emissions is bound to show a downward trend.

But the geometry of roads in Delhi has mostly evolved as a result of unplanned



organic growth and the lack of norms surrounding urban planning. This has resulted in a very large number of intersections where vehicles have to necessarily give way and accommodate other traffic streams. This has led to a situation where the number of signalised intersections is quite high and drivers have to stop their vehicles every now and then. Waiting time at a traffic signal depends on the timing of the microprocessor, which should ideally be determined after a careful study of traffic load and pattern on a particular arm of the road on an hourly basis. However, this is always not the case.

As vehicles have to often wait at signalised intersections in an idle running mode, they emit very large amounts of pollutants. It is well-known that an idle engine is far more polluting than when a vehicle is in motion. Similarly, slower moving vehicles on the streets, largely two-wheelers, are more polluting than those at a higher speed.

The accumulated traffic at intersections awaiting a green signal is a major source of pollution. This can be handled through appropriate signal management. It is known that traffic signals contribute

towards orderly and well-regulated movement of traffic, besides increasing the waiting capacity of the intersection. Under favourable conditions, they can be coordinated to provide for continuous or near continuous movement of traffic at a given speed. Such coordinated signals lead to reduced fuel consumption and bring down emissions by minimising stops and consequent delays. They can bring down the journey time, too.

In this context, it can be observed that in Delhi there are quite a large number of busy intersections where the pattern of signals has undergone a change over the last few years. The flow pattern at these intersections allows the traffic to move forward only from one carriageway, while all others are static. Such road-by-road clearances not only enhance the waiting time at intersections but also lead to more emissions as at any given time, a large number of vehicles have to wait for their turn to make the move. The delay in journey time is built in and is currently being experienced by all road users.

On the other hand, the flow pattern, which enables a straight-straight movement and

which is simultaneously followed by right-right, can definitely reduce the waiting period at intersections and may even reduce the journey time. It can also impact air pollution in a positive manner. Most Delhites would recall that such a system was indeed being followed until a few years ago.

It has also been observed that on account of a perception-reaction time loss, some time at the beginning of each green period remains underutilised, leading to building up of congestion over a period of time. The use of reverse timers at all points can help overcome this and ensure maximum flow of traffic with complete utilisation of the green phase. This would mean a reduction in journey time as well as air pollution levels.

Given the severity of the air pollution problem in Delhi, measures that can lead to a reduction in the levels of pollution must be attempted at. An appropriate scheme to manage traffic signals can make a significant contribution not only to the flow of traffic but also bring down the levels of pollution.

(The writer is a retired Delhi Police Commissioner and former Uttarakhand Governor)

SOUND BITE

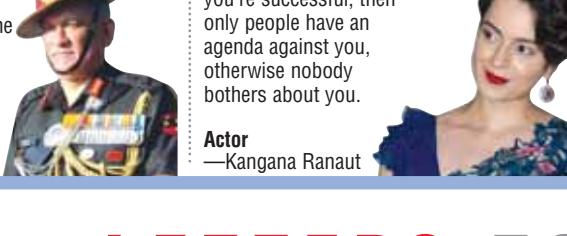
As long as there are States which sponsor terrorism, we will have to live with the menace. We need to take the bull by its horns and strike at the root cause.

Chief of Defence Staff
—Gen Bipin Rawat



I feel that only when you're successful, then only people have an agenda against you, otherwise nobody bothers about you.

Actor
—Kangana Ranaut



India has been a tremendous contributor to Afghanistan, but the impact that Pakistan can make in Afghanistan is a lot greater than any other country.

Former Afghan President
—Hamid Karzai



In a world that is seeking to break free from mindless hate, violence, conflict and terrorism, the Indian way of life offers a ray of hope.

Prime Minister
—Narendra Modi



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Focus on the economy

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "SC to the rescue" (January 16). Protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) have continued for over a month now and there appears to be no end in sight to the confrontation. While the Union Government refuses to budge, various segments of the country are not willing to give up. To top it all, now Chief Ministers of various States are knocking the doors of the Supreme Court to oppose the Government's move.

The time for the Union Government to act is now. If confrontations reach magnanimous proportions, it may be too late for it to make any meaningful contribution towards its resolution. As it is, much damage to the country's image has already been done. Of much larger concern for the Government should be the state of the economy. Demand has evaporated from almost all sectors of the economy, unemployment figures continue to break multi-year lows and the banking sector refuses to show any sign of revival. More than the CAA, the Government's focus

When movements are politicised

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has called for unity among Opposition parties to support the ongoing protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and force the Government to roll back the law. Though most Opposition parties did not attend the meeting called by the Congress to discuss the political situation in the country in the wake of violence in the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus and protests over the CAA, the fact is that only a united front can provide the organisational backbone to the movement and make a difference.

Protests against the CAA must be complemented by a strong political pushback through a combined and strong Opposition. The refrain by the media that "a people's movement" has been hijacked by certain political parties and leaders is but an attempt to delegitimise the protests led by the students, civil society activists and women. Congress leaders like Shashi Tharoor, Mani Shankar Aiyar and student leader Kanhaiya Kumar must not be criticised for being on the "protest stage" simply because they stand opposed to the Hindutva brigade. They are not piggybacking on the protest but just extending their support to the protesting students. May be it is a dictate of "patriotism" that BJP leaders can organise and take part in pro-CAA campaign and rallies and Opposition leaders must not take part in anti-CAA protests. Aiyar's rhetorical flourish, "Let us see who is powerful — we or the *kaati*!" was blown out of proportion to see if this can help arrest the declining in the BJP's support base. With protests continuing for over a month now, what is clear is that no sacrifice is too great to win the "political" battle for a liberal, secular India.

G David Milton
Maruthancode



must be on the Union Budget, which must be used to re-invigorate the Indian economy and provide the much-needed stimulus.

Harminder Singh Gumbhir
Uttar Pradesh

come to the rescue of democracy. Though delayed, it is laudable that the top court came down heavily on the Union Government. It minced no words in stressing that "Internet free-

Better late than never

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "SC's conscience call" (January 11). Once again, it was the Supreme Court which had to

dom is part of the freedom of expression and cannot be curbed."

Rightly so, freedom of information is an extension of freedom of speech and, thus, a fundamental human right. The top court's order has raised question marks over the validity of the curbs imposed by the Government in Jammu & Kashmir since August last year. Although the Government's decision to abrogate Article 370 and 35(A) were landmark, the curbs on internet access and landline services appeared to be too strident.

Devendra Khurana
Bhopal

Flagging issues

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "SC to the rescue" (January 16). The Delhi High Court has given a strong and factual statement, rebuking the police for its failure in handling protests and presenting the required evidence. This calls for a re-look at the way public services departments work.

Shubham
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopeople@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN**A crippled campaign**

Accessible India intended to take measures to secure the right to an accessible environment for people with disabilities. But it failed



ARMAN ALI

The enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 has ensured the domestic transition of the social model adopted under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006 and ratified by the Government in 2007. The principles stated to be implemented for empowerment of persons with disabilities (PWD) are respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices and independence of persons. The Act lays stress on non-discrimination, full and effective participation and inclusion in society, respect for difference and acceptance of disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity, equality of opportunity, accessibility, equality between men and women, respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities. The principle reflects a paradigm shift in thinking about disability from a social welfare concern to a human rights issue. However, the rights-based vision of the Act has not been translated into reality as yet. This is because of the lack of the Government's efforts to ensure that measures are taken for which it has been made responsible under the Act. Accessible India has been one of the most visible campaigns of the Narendra Modi Government which intends to take measures securing the right to an accessible environment for PWDs in the country. Launched before the enactment of the 2016 Act, it seeks to ensure a Built Environment Accessibility, Transportation System Accessibility and Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility in India, the three of its basic components. It is a matter of great misfortune that India's biggest campaign has failed miserably in its effort. The failure can be basically attributed to the ingenuity shown in its vision, as ambiguous and over-ambitious targets were made without any measure of accountability. The campaign thus serves more in rhetoric than in action.

Ambiguous and over-ambitious targets: The campaign under Built Environment Accessibility targeted 50 most important buildings in Tier-1 cities and 25 most important Government buildings in Tier-2 cities, to be made fully accessible within a period of six months by July 2016. The revised guidelines have extended the deadline to March 2020. The numbers and time period were too ambitious for the reach of the Department of Persons with Disability. The deadlines were missed and extended consecutively and targets under it are yet not achieved even as three years have passed since the campaign was launched. Moreover, there was no study done on the number of Government websites or the quantum of public documents, which makes it impossible to assess the Government on the targets it envisaged as they were mostly made in percentage terms i.e. to make 50 per cent of all Government websites and public documents accessible by March 2018. Such ambiguous targets make it easier to extend the deadline as it becomes impossible to measure the true progress of the work done.

Lack of accountability framework: The department has only released partial information in terms of the total number of buildings and websites that were made accessible but greater details about these buildings have not been provided. This information is not only necessary for awareness but also necessary for accountability purposes. No verification study has been conducted or is currently under process by technically qualified Government or non-government agencies to assess the progress made in built environment or Information and communications technology in terms of accessibility. With respect to public buildings under the State Government, the department issues utilization funds under the campaign. Data can be easily found on the huge amount of funds disbursed under the scheme. However, no accountability is ensured on the State Government as no post-verification study is done to check the proper use of funds. No training or workshop has been conducted to train engineers in the task of retrofitting. Untrained professionals are unable to understand the reports provided to them post accessibility audits.

Social audit: The campaign did include a component of "social audit" to ensure implementation in the form of a website, a mobile-based application where one could report inaccessible buildings and action could be taken on it. However, the objective completely failed because of sluggish implementation of this measure as both the website and the application have been unmanned and thereby lying defunct since 2016.

The failure of the campaign to properly formulate its target and include accountability in its practice has reduced it to a utopian status without any real ground-level impact. This failure is for the lack of technical experts on the subject of accessibility involved in the formulation process. There is a sincere need for the Department for Persons with Disability to diverge from this erring process and hire a permanent officer trained in universal design and accessibility so that proper measures can be taken to address the issues of PWDs.

(The writer is Executive Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People)

IN THE BJP-LED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, POVERTY, ANARCHY, VIOLENCE AND TENSION HAVE EXCEEDED THAT DURING THE CONGRESS REGIME.

—BSP CHIEF
MAYAWATI

POINT COUNTER POINT

MISUSE OF POWER HAS BEEN DONE BY THE BSP, AND THE BSP-SUPPORTED CONGRESS GOVERNMENT, WHICH WAS AT THE CENTRE.
—BJP LEADER AND UTTAR PRADESH MINISTER SHRIKANT SHARMA

Budget a litmus test

Sitharaman would be presenting her second Budget at a time when the middle class and the industry's expectations from it would be high given the economic turmoil in the country



ABHISHEK RAJA

The economic turmoil that India is currently going through is unprecedented. The performance of Modi 2.0 has been below par on various fiscal indicators. Rising unemployment, industry-specific pangs, reduced demand, falling industrial output, higher inflation and lower-than-expected tax collections are a few areas of concern. As Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman gears up to present the Union Budget 2020 on February 1, it is expected that she would try her best to accelerate the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth which is estimated at five per cent for 2019-20, the lowest of the decade. Sitharaman would be presenting her second Union Budget at a time when the industry's expectations from it would be somewhat high considering the slowdown in various sectors, though the Government took necessary steps last year to shore up the economy through stimulus packages, including the slashing of the corporate tax. However, the Government's move to slash corporate tax has raised the hopes and expectations of the salaried class for a similar relief in income tax. While the middle class wants the Modi Government to provide income tax relief, the FM has very little fiscal room to dole out such largesse and this makes the Union Budget 2020 very interesting. The general expectations for the Union Budget 2020 are as follows.

Reduction in individual income tax rates: In the Interim Budget, presented in February 2019, income tax relief was provided that primarily benefitted individuals with an annual income below ₹5 lakh. In another sop for the salaried class, the standard deduction of ₹40,000, which was introduced in the Union Budget 2018, was raised by ₹10,000 to ₹50,000 per year. But last year we had the economic slowdown brought on by the weakness in demand. Therefore, to create demand the Government may reduce income tax rates and may create some more sub-slabs in the current slabs. For example, the current tax rate is 20 per cent for a slab of ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh. This could be reduced to 10 per cent and a further new slab, say for example ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh, could be created with a 20 per cent tax rate.

Increase in deduction under Section 80C: At present, the deduction under Section 80C is available up to ₹1,50,000 and eligible investments include life insurance policies, Public Provident Fund (PPF), National Savings Certificate (NSC), five-year notified tax-saving bank deposits, three-year Equity Linked Saving Schemes (ELSS) mutual funds, repayment of housing loan, tuition fee and many more. One can put the entire ₹1,50,000 in one investment or in more than one instrument. Practically, the overall limit of ₹1,50,000 does not offer any major benefit in real terms, as various investments are clubbed under one single provision. With an increase in the inflation rate, there is a need for an increase in the threshold limit of the Section 80C deduction, too. It is recommended that this deduction should be increased to a minimum of ₹2 lakh or even ₹2.5 lakh. Thus, if the threshold limit of Section 80C is increased by the FM in the Budget, this will not only boost investments, but also provide a majority of taxpayers the much-needed relief.

Infrastructure Bonds: The Government is tight on funds and needs money to finance the country's infrastructure, so it may consider rein-

duction of Infrastructure Bonds.

THE GOVERNMENT'S MOVE TO SLASH CORPORATE TAX HAS RAISED THE HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE SALARIED CLASS FOR A SIMILAR RELIEF IN INCOME TAX. WHILE THE MIDDLE CLASS WANTS THE MODI GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE INCOME TAX RELIEF, THE FM HAS VERY LITTLE FISCAL ROOM TO DOLE OUT SUCH LARGESSE AND THIS MAKES THE UNION BUDGET 2020 VERY INTERESTING

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Thisation of Infrastructure Bonds. These bonds were good for people who need a fixed income. This investment was over and above the investment limit under Section 80C. They offered a decent rate of interest and tax benefits. The maturity of these bonds is often between 10 to 15 years with an option to buy back after a lock-in of five years.

Debt-linked saving schemes: The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) had last year requested for introduction of debt-linked tax saving schemes or DLSS similar to Equity Linked Savings Schemes (ELSS). The basic argument for introduction of DLSS is that many conservative people do not invest in ELSS to claim tax deductions under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act because they are scared of putting money in stocks. The industry believes that these people would happily invest in a debt scheme like DLSS to save taxes under Section 80C. The mandatory lock-in period in these schemes can be five years like tax saving bank deposits.

Direct Tax Amnesty Scheme: The Government, which is hard-pressed for revenue, may come up with a Direct Tax Amnesty Scheme (DTAS) in this Budget. Last year they announced Sabka Vishwas (Legacy Dispute Resolution) Scheme, 2019 for Indirect Taxes through which the Government collected more than ₹35,000 crore. Direct tax collection is facing a severe shortfall in the current financial year. After refunds, it saw a growth rate of 0.7 per cent till December 15, 2019 against the Budget target of 17.3 per cent.

Advance tax collection after the third instalment stood at ₹2.51 trillion, compared with ₹2.47 trillion in the corresponding period last year, posing a 1.6 per cent growth.

DTAS may allow assessee to declare

the additional income of the previous five-six years without penalty or prosecution. The proposal, being examined, will allow assessee to revise declared income with no fear of past cases being opened up, or prosecution. It will help improve compliance, besides raking in revenues for the Government. People who want to declare more income from the previous year do not do so because the moment they do, they are taken up for scrutiny, investigation and prosecution and penalties are imposed upon them. This scheme will also help in prevention of litigation. In August last year, the Government increased thresholds for tax litigation, below which the I-T Department was directed not to file appeals and withdraw cases that related to the ones under those. The limits were revised from ₹20 lakh to ₹50 lakh for appeals before the tribunal, from ₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore for appeals before High Courts and from ₹1 crore to ₹2 crore for appeals before the Supreme Court. A large number of pending appeals have been withdrawn/dismissed following the order.

Setting up of a Development Finance Institution: The Government may announce the setting up of a Development Finance Institution (DFI) in this Budget. This could be created to cater to core sector project financing. India is going through the rarest of rare economic conditions where economists — who often call for fiscal prudence over anything else during the Budget season — have become more realistic, conceding that there is a need to breach the fiscal deficit target. The DFI could be one of the triggers where the FM would take a decision, even breaching the fiscal deficit target. To improve sentiments and growth, India is in dire need of infra-

structure spending. But for the Government, which is in the process of generating revenues through disinvestment of various PSUs including Air India, BPCL, CONCOR, the SCI and so on, any commitment to such projects would be considered to be an audacious act.

Infrastructure push: The Government may announce a massive push for all forms of physical connectivity through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, industrial corridors, dedicated freight corridors, Jal Marg Vikas and UDAN schemes. Major commitment for ambitious projects like Bharatmala and Sagarmala is also expected. The Bharatmala project would help develop national road corridors and highways, while Sagarmala would enhance port connectivity, modernisation and port-linked industrialisation.

Micro irrigation funds: In 2017, then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced a dedicated Micro Irrigation Fund with NABARD under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana. The objective of the fund was to achieve the goal of "per drop more crop." A whopping ₹5,000 crore was sanctioned for this in 2018. Considering climate change, which has led to drought in some areas and floods in others, a new corpus would be allocated to this scheme in the forthcoming Budget.

This year's Union Budget comes with more expectations than ever because of socio-economic conditions. For the first time the FM has the leeway to breach fiscal deficits and come up with real reforms, both for taxation and the economy, but the challenge is whether the Government is ready for such action.

(The writer is an author and GST and economics specialist)

The joys and perils of the gig economy

The nature and quality of jobs generated for women in the freelance workforce need to be examined so that appropriate policy suggestions can be put forward for policymakers to make informed decisions

BALWANT MEHTA SIMI MEHTA ARJUN KUMAR

The participation of women in the workforce in India is one of the lowest in the world at around 21 per cent compared to the global average of 48 per cent. And it has been declining steadily over the last two decades mostly on account of the agricultural sector. Some of the key reasons for low work participation of women in the country are a disproportionate burden of care-giving and domestic duties, rising income of households, absence of suitable jobs, patriarchal social norms and poor working conditions. In fact, women's participation in care-giving and domestic duties in the country is highest among all the nations across the world.

The labour force participation rate (LFPR) of women declined more in rural areas, while it was almost stable or marginally up in urban areas in the last few years. Over the years, the rural and urban gap in the LFPR of women narrowed and then converged in 2018. Agriculture distress, low payment in unorganised sector jobs and rising participation of women in

higher education are leading to increasing migration to urban areas in pursuit of better jobs and opportunities. These trends could have significant implications in the Indian context as women in urban areas are increasingly participating in new-age jobs, particularly those that are technology-based such as flexible work on information technology and other digital platforms called the gig economy.

This is helping women maintain a work-life balance and accommodate disproportionate care activities by reducing reliance on physical space and presence and giving them the option to choose their own working hours and tasks.

This phenomenon has been brought about by technological innovation. The ownership and access to computers, tablets with internet and smartphones — some of the prerequisites for active participation of people in the gig economy — has increased manifold in India in recent years. This has encouraged more women to participate in the gig economy, particularly from urban and peri-urban areas.

According to the *Employment Outlook Report*, by staffing platform TeamLease, women gig workers accounted for about 68,000 jobs in the country in 2019 and the

gig economy is expected to generate more jobs in the future. It is estimated that it will comprise half of the urban workforce by 2025 and as much as 80 per cent by 2030.

The increasing participation of women in the gig economy will not only empower them financially but also steer the economic growth of the country. As reported by the McKinsey Global Institute, if India increased the workforce participation rate of women by ten percentage points by 2025, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) could rise by as much as 16 per cent as compared to the business-as-usual scenario. A recent report on the *Future of Work Anywhere-Gig Worker* by Noble House revealed that men and women have almost a 50:50 participation in the gig economy against the traditional workforce where the ratio is about 70:30.

About 86 per cent of women gig workers in India believe that this kind of arrangement gives them an opportunity to earn equal to their male counterparts. The *2019 Employment Outlook Report* reflected that the new-age internet companies were seeing more women in frontline roles. It is easy to see why, given the lower attrition rates, better ratings for delivery women and improved productivity at

warehouses. This has led to greater demand for women at delivery hubs and fulfilment centres.

Another study done by BetterPlace (2019) reveals that the number of women entering the gig economy is rising. Online companies such as Amazon and Flipkart that have begun to hire women in delivery roles have also seen better acceptability by customers. Besides, food-delivery apps such as Swiggy and Zomato have also employed several thousand women employees in cities like Kochi, Jaipur, Pune and other Tier 2 cities.

However, the much-debated issue in the gig economy is the growing concern regarding availability of decent work and violation of fundamental rights of workers. Under the gig economy, the demand for workers and supply of opportunities are matched online or via mobile applications. Though the gig economy provides good job opportunities and allows for flexible working schedules for women, it can also pave the way for severe commoditisation of work that forces people to choose transient work in the absence of better options. They are also vulnerable to attacks and exploitation.

Flexible work and the possibility of

combining paid and unpaid work could provide opportunities to women involved in care-giving activities but could also lead to the deterioration of their working conditions and increase in working hours, given the requirement of constant availability to both duties of care-giving and paid work.

While more women are joining the gig economy, they are paid less than men for the same jobs. As much as 60 per cent of the jobs are in food technology, 30 per cent in e-commerce and courier services and 10 per cent in hyper-local delivery. Another study done by BetterPlace (2019) reveals that challenges remain when hiring them for frontline roles, especially with regard to their safety.

The Fairwork Project Initiative shows that app-based service companies such as Ola, Uber, Uber Eats and Zomato have some of the worst working conditions among Indian start-ups. These companies were ranked on five principles of fairness and score only two-four out of 10. The only positive is that they paid at least a local minimum wage including employment costs incurred by the workers. It is also argued that the new work culture within the gig economy is not activity regulated

and women face the possibility of being disadvantaged all over again.

The nature and quality of jobs generated for women under the gig economy need to be examined so that appropriate policy suggestions can be put forward for policymakers to make informed decisions. It would further provide an improved understanding of the realities of flexible work arrangements in both crowd work (digital marketing, online tuitions, content writers, translators, graphic designers, freelance recruiters, software development, accounting, data analytics, legal work, medical transcription, health workers and social work) and on-demand service work (such as personal transport services offered by Uber, Ola, food delivery services provided by Zomato, Swiggy and e-commerce services of Amazon, Naukri.com that require a direct interface between workers and those requesting for gig services) to fill the critical knowledge gap.

(Balwant Mehta is a Fellow at the Institute for Human Development and a Visiting Fellow at the Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI), while Simi Mehta is CEO and Editorial Director and Balwant Kumar is Director at IMPRI)

No SC relief for telcos on ₹1.47L cr dues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed review petitions of top telecom firms including Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea seeking review of its earlier order asking them to pay ₹1.47 lakh crore in past statutory dues by January 23 saying it did not find any "justifiable reason" to entertain them.

The apex court had on October 24 ruled that the statutory dues need to be calculated by including non-telecom revenues in what is known as adjusted gross revenues (AGR) of telcos.

A Bench comprising

Justices Arun Mishra, SA Nazeer and MR Shah in-chamber hearing did not find merit in the review plea and dismissed it.

an in-chamber hearing.

"Applications for hearing in open Court/oral hearing are rejected. Having perused the Review Petitions and the connected papers with meticulous care, we do not find any justifiable reason to entertain the review petitions. The Review Petitions are, accordingly, dismissed," the bench said.

The apex court had on October 24 last year upheld the AGR definition formulated by the DoT and termed as "frivolous" the nature of objections raised by telecom service providers.

Bharti Airtel, in its plea, had sought review of the direc-

tions on aspects of levy of interest, penalty and interest on penalty relating to AGR.

Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had told Parliament in November that Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and other telecom companies owe the Government as much as ₹1.47 lakh crore in past statutory dues.

He had added that there is no proposal at present to waive interest and penalties on such dues.

In replies to separate questions in the Lok Sabha, Prasad had said telecom companies owe the government ₹92,642 crore in unpaid licence fee, and another ₹55,054 crore in out-

standing spectrum usage charges.

In an affidavit filed earlier in the top court, the DoT said Airtel owed ₹21,682.13 crore as licence fee to the government and dues from Vodafone totalled ₹19,823.71 crore, while Reliance Communications owed ₹16,456.47 crore. BSNL owed ₹2,098.72 crore, and MTNL ₹2,537.48 crore.

Holding that interest and penalty have rightly been levied on the telecom companies, the apex court had made it clear that there would be no further litigation on the issue and it would fix a time-frame for calculation and payment of dues by the telecom companies.

Survival of internet firms under threat, duopoly not good for market: ISPAI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Internet service providers on Thursday exhorted the government to step in immediately to review the definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) for the survival of the telecom sector as the Supreme Court dismissed a plea by telcos seeking review of its verdict on recovery of ₹1.47 lakh crore.

"It is going to be a disaster for the telecom industry. Dismissal of review petition will lead to duopoly situation which is not good for consumers. Small ISPs will not be able to survive unless government steps in to review AGR definition," Internet Service Providers Association of India President Rajesh Chharia told PTI.

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the plea of telecom majors, including

Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, seeking review of certain directions of the apex court on recovery of past dues amounting to ₹1.47 lakh crore from telecom service providers.

The recovery of past dues by the government was based on adjusted gross revenue (AGR) of about ₹92,000 crore.

The apex court on October 24 last year upheld the AGR definition formulated by the DoT and termed as "frivolous" the nature of objections raised by telecom service providers.

A Bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra, SA Nazeer and MR Shah did not find merit in the review plea.

Vodafone Idea Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla has already announced that the company will shut its business in India if it does not get any

PMC BANK SCAM

SC stays HC order allowing shifting of HDIL promoters from jail to their residence

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday partially stayed the Bombay High Court order allowing shifting of HDIL promoters Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan, accused in the multi-crore Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC) scam, from Mumbai's Arthur Road Jail to their residence.

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate, that he was assaulting the high court order to the extent of allowing the release of two promoters from the prison and this needed to be stayed.

"Until further orders, there shall be a stay of the directions given by the (Bombay) High Court in paragraph 15 (xv) and (xvi) (which deals with release of accused from prison) of the impugned order dated January 15, 2020," said the Bench, which also comprised Justices BR Gavai and Surya Kant.

The law officer said the

other aspects of the high court order such as sale of assets of the accused promoters under the supervision of high court appointed committee should be allowed to remain operative and the sole objection was with regard to their release from Arthur Road Jail.

The top court agreed with the submissions of the ED and also issued notice to the respondents of the case and sought their replies within four weeks.

"Issue notice returnable in four weeks. Dasti, in addition, is permitted. Let the copy of this order be communicated to the respondents by e-mail through the Registry of this court," the top court said in its order. Earlier during the day the apex court had agreed to consider the plea of enforcement agencies against the high court order to release them from jail and keeping them in their residence under the constant watch of prison guards.

Mehta mentioned before the bench that the PMC Bank scam involved ₹7,000 crore and the high court had on Wednesday passed a very

"unusual order" while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL).

Mehta told the bench that the father-son are presently lodged in Arthur Road Jail in judicial custody and if they are shifted to their residence as per the high court's order, it would be like bail to them.

The high court had on Wednesday set up a three-member committee for valuing and sale of encumbered assets of Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL) to expeditiously recover dues payable by the firm to PMC Bank.

It had directed the superintendent of Arthur Road Jail to shift both the accused to their residence under the supervision of two jail guards to ensure their cooperation to the committee.

The high court had passed the order while hearing a PIL seeking direction for expeditious disposal of HDIL assets and properties attached by the Economic Offence Wing and the Enforcement Directorate and repaying PMC Bank depositors at the earliest.

Goyal: India, US in advance-stage talks to resolve trade issues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said India and the US are in an "advance stage" of dialogue to resolve some of the pressing trade issues.

He said that both the countries can expand their trade relations which in future may result in a preferential or a free trade agreement.

"With the US, we are in an advance stage of dialogue to sort out some of the pressing issues," he said here.

The remarks assume significance as both the countries are negotiating a trade package to boost two-way commerce.

The minister said that both the nations are big trading partners and can further expand trade.

"...I would believe that going forward both countries will like to further expand that engagement which could lead to PTA (preferential trade agreement) and FTA (free trade agreement) in the years ahead," he added.

BUSINESS CORNER

SAIL LAUNCHES STORY WRITING COMPETITION

New Delhi: The nation's largest steel producing Public Sector Company Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has launched a story writing competition on the theme of "SAIL creates a meaningful difference in people's lives". As a part of better people engagement initiative, SAIL is organising this country wide competition to motivate people to pen down stories on SAIL's contribution on making a meaningful difference in a person's or generation's or community's lives. To invite participations, SAIL has issued a notice in its website www.sail.co.in and is also promoting through social media.

AP MAHESHWARI, IPS, ASSUMED CHARGE AS DG CRPF

New Delhi: AP Maheshwari, IPS, on Thursday assumed charge of the Director General of CRPF — the lead force for maintenance of internal security of the country. Prior to his charge assumption as DG CRPF, Maheshwari was posted as Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Ministry of Home Affairs. An IPS officer of 1984 batch of UP cadre, Maheshwari has a wide ranging experience in senior positions in sister police forces. He has served as DG, Bureau of Police Research and Development and also as Spl. DG (Operations) in the Border Security Force, besides serving as IG (Operations) and IG (Srinagar Sector) in CRPF itself. "It is home coming for me" — quipped Maheshwari to the inquisitive officers while interacting with them at the Directorate. "Helming such a gallant force as CRPF is a matter of great pride and satisfaction for me. It's quite an opportunity to serve the country, its people and of course, the members of the Force itself." — said Maheshwari.



CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF VISITS NCC R DAY CAMP

New Delhi: General MM Naravane, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, ADC, Chief of Army Staff, visited the NCC Republic Day Camp 2020, at Delhi Canton on 16 Jan 2020. On arrival, he was received by the DGNCC, Lieutenant General Rajeev Chopra, AVSM. The versatile NCC cadets, presented a spectacular Cultural Programme in the NCC auditorium, which included group dances and a band, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of our Nation. Speaking on the occasion, The Chief of Army Staff said that NCC is a premier youth organization, which is single-mindedly engaged in grooming the youth and empowering them to don the mantle of country's leadership, as well as excel in all walks of life. He appreciated the contribution of NCC Cadets towards Nation Building and their indomitable spirit and support during calamities. He also appreciated the efforts in pursuit of social activities. The COAS urged the cadets to put their heart and mind in everything they undertake and become role model for the youth of our nation.



DRIVE SMART DRIVE SAFE ORGANISES CAMPAIGN

New Delhi: To Arrest Alarming Road Deaths on Indian Roads, during The Road Safety Week 2020, as announced by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, a Nationwide Citizen's Campaign being organised by NGO Drive Smart Drive Safe had its campaign proceeding with mass pledge of Code of Conduct at Delhi Aerocity at GMR Square on 14th January, where more than 2000 people joined and observed a minute silence in the memory of Road Victims, participated in short walkathon and made Safety Human Chain. NGO, Drive Smart Drive Safe alongwith SIAM & many other likeminded organisations has launched the campaign titled #IndiaAgainstRoadCrash #IARC2020 during the 31st National Road safety week. The campaign started on 11th January 2020, as part of the Road Safety Week announced by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways from Attari/Wagah Border where around fifty thousand people took the safety pledge in one go which itself is a record. Never ever has such large number of people have taken a safety pledge collectively. Lacs of people are expected to join the campaign from all over the country in more than 70 Locations.



India, Bangladesh hold discussions on joint study for proposed free trade pact

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and Bangladesh on Thursday held discussions on a joint study for the proposed free trade agreement and harmonisation of standards with a view to boost two-way commerce, the government said on Thursday.

"Both sides held extensive discussions on a variety of issues of mutual interest, like Border Haats, joint study for the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), CEOs'

Forum, sharing of trade data, regional connectivity initiatives, harmonization of standards, upgradation of border trading infrastructure and facilitation of business visas," the commerce ministry said in a statement.

The CEPA is a free trade agreement under which two trading partners significantly reduce or eliminate imports duties on maximum number of goods traded between them.

They also liberalise norms to promote trade in services sector and boost investments.

Mega job mela in Kandhamal

Tumudibandh, Baliguda, K. Nuagaon, Daringbadi, Raikia, G. Udaygiri, Tikabali, Chakapada, Phirringia, Khajuripada block and Phulbani Municipality area of Kandhamal district, Ganja, Daspara and Nuagaon block of Nayagarh district, Bhanjanagar and Jagannath Prasad of Ganjam district attended the job mela and out of them 10,000 registered their name for placement. As many as 6,300 youth were selected for placement. Out of them, 5,000 youth were selected on the spot and 1300 were selected for placement after completing training.

On 10th January 2020, the mega job mela was organized at Boudh where 2,000 youth from Kantamal and Boudh Block registered their name for placement. Total 21 companies participated, selecting 700 youth. Samanta has been trying his best for last 6 months to bring more companies to the mega job mela to ensure maximum placement. Steps were taken to aware more and more youth of Kandhamal parliamentary constituency to participate in the mega job mela and proper training was given for placement before the job mela. District administration and staff of the MP tried their very best for this.

Amazon not doing favour to India by investing a billion dollars: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

they make a loss of a billion dollars every year, then jolly well will have to finance that billion dollar. So, it is not as if they are doing a favour to India when they invest a billion dollars," he said at the Raisina Dialogue here.

The USD 1 billion investment by Amazon.Com to help bring small and medium businesses online is on the top of \$5.5 billion funding it had previously announced.

The minister wondered why an e-commerce market place model, where a firm provides an IT platform for buyers and sellers, incurring huge losses adding that it needs to be looked upon.

"They are investing money over the last few years also in warehousing and certain other activities, which is welcome and good. But if they are bringing in money largely to finance losses and those losses in an e-commerce market place model," Goyal said.

India does not allow foreign investment beyond 49 per cent in multi-brand retailing and has not yet approved any application of overseas retailers.

"They (Amazon) may have put in a billion dollars but if

Phase-1 trade deal with US 'addressed' mutual concerns, 'good' for both sides: China

PTI ■ BEIJING/WASHINGTON

phase of the trade deal is signed.

The trade deal, considered as major political and diplomatic victory for President Trump, came on a day when the House voted to send his impeachment trial to the Senate.

Trump, who has used tariff as a leverage in trade talks with major economic powers of the world, mainly China, asserted that he will continue with his policies on tariffs. He also said that there will be no phase 3.

Briefing the Chinese media after signing the deal, Liu said the phase-1 trade agreement has "considerably addressed the concerns" of both sides.

It has both economic and political significance with bearing on world peace and prosperity, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Liu as saying.

The deal has injected positive energy into the stability and development of the world economy, he said.

Banks loan growth at 7.5% in fortnight to Jan 2: RBI data

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Banks credit grew by 7.5 per cent to ₹100.44 lakh crore while deposits rose by 9.77 per cent to ₹132.10 lakh crore in the fortnight to January 2, according to the Reserve Bank data. In the year-ago period, banks loans stood at ₹93.37 lakh crore while deposits at ₹120.33 lakh crore.

In the previous fortnight ended December 20, credit had grown by 7.10 per cent to ₹89.47 lakh crore and deposits had increased by 10.09 per cent to ₹130.08 lakh crore.

On a year-on-year basis, banks' credit growth slowed to 7.2 per cent to ₹86.73 lakh crore in November 2019 from 13.8 per cent to ₹80.93 lakh crore in the year-ago period.

For the industry, loan growth fell to 2.4 per cent at ₹27.72 lakh crore in November

from 4 per cent in the corresponding month of 2018.

During the month, credit to agriculture and allied activities slowed to 6.5 per cent from 7.7 per cent last year.

Advances to the services sector decelerated sharply to 4.8 per cent from 28.1 per cent last year. Personal loans grew at a marginally lower rate of 6.5-7 per cent in November 2019 as compared with 17.2 per cent, according to the RBI data.

Rating agency Icra in its recent report had said credit expansion may plummet to a six-decade low of 6.5-7 per cent in 2019-20 compared to 13.3 per cent in the previous financial year.

The Mega Job Mela was a resounding success with rural youth, mostly having under matric qualifications, getting jobs with salary ranging from ₹10,000 to ₹20,000 in well established companies. The companies will provide other facilities, in addition to salary. Over 14,000 youths from Kandhamal parliamentary constituency participated in the job mela, while 12,000 youths registered their name for placement.

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On 9th January 2020, the mega job mela was conducted at Phulbani, the district headquarters of Kandhamal. More than 12,000 youths from Phulbani, Kotagarh,

Tumudibandh, Baliguda, K. Nuagaon, Daringbadi, Raikia, G. Udaygiri, Tikabali, Chakapada, Phirringia, Khajuripada block and Phulbani Municipality area of K

Sensex, Nifty fail to hold life highs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmarks Sensex and Nifty on Thursday eked out gains but retreated from record highs touched in early trade as optimism over US-China trade deal short-lived after investors weighed macroeconomic issues like higher bank NPAs and a spike in retail inflation.

Starting off on a bullish note, the 30-share BSE Sensex went on to hit its life-time high of 42,059.45 in early deals. It, however, briefly moved into the negative territory before staging a recovery. The index finally settled at 41,932.56, up 59.83 points, or 0.14 per cent.

Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty also touched its all-time intraday high of 12,389.05 in early trade. It, however, closed at 12,355.50, showing a gain of 12.20 points, or 0.10 per cent.

Nestle India was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 3.23 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, HUL, Bharti Airtel, RIL, TCS, PowerGrid and Titan. On the other hand, NTPC, Hero MotoCorp, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra and Axis Bank finished in the red.

Bourses in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended higher. While Shanghai closed in the red, European markets too started.

Sectorally, BSE realty, consumer durables, healthcare, telecom, FMCG, energy and auto indices ended up to 0.97 per cent higher. On the other hand, metal and oil & gas were among the losers.

In the broader market, BSE midcap and smallcap indices gained up to 0.78 per cent.

"The main indices are seeing a mild pause in the trajectory after the solid performance in the last one-month.

It may wait and analyse the upcoming key companies' Q3 results. Globally, the completion of the US-China deal and sudden jump in consumer inflation and NPAs in India are impacting the main indices. But broad market is still very solid in expectation of re-rate in valuation supported by revamp in earnings growth," Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Globally, investors heaved a sigh of relief after the US and China on Wednesday signed the first phase of a trade deal, concluding more than a year of tough negotiations between the two largest economies of the world.

The United States on Wednesday signed the first phase of a trade deal with China, which President Donald Trump described as historic, concluding more than a year of tough negotiations between the two largest economies of the world.

ed on a positive note.

Brent crude oil futures rose 0.52 per cent to USD 64.33 per barrel.

RUPEE FALLS BY 11 PAISE

The Indian rupee pared early gains and settled lower by 11 paise at 70.93 against the US dollar on Thursday amid steady rise in crude oil prices and dollar demand from importers.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic currency opened on a strong note at 70.80 a dollar. But during the day it lost momentum and touched a low of 70.98 against the American currency. The rupee finally settled the day at 70.93, showing a fall of 11 paise over its previous close.

Foreign traders said the rupee pared its early gains despite the US-China signing the phase-1 trade deal, as huge uncertainty still remains, which might make it difficult for China and the US to reach a comprehensive trade deal.

The United States on Wednesday signed the first phase of a trade deal with China, which President Donald Trump described as historic, concluding more than a year of tough negotiations between the two largest economies of the world.

"Unless we increase corporate sector's investment and

Farm sector growth may reach 3.1% in this fiscal, says NITI Aayog member

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Farm sector growth is likely to be higher at 3.1 per cent in the current fiscal compared with 2.9 per cent in 2018-19, government think-tank NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand said on Thursday.

More competition and private investment is the need of the hour, he said, adding that the role of private sector in Indian agriculture sector has to come in a big way.

"India's farm sector growth for the current fiscal is expected to remain higher at 3.1 per cent," Chand said while addressing an industry body Assocham event here.

The overall farm sector growth stood at 2.9 per cent in the 2018-19 fiscal. It was 2 per cent and 2.1 per cent in the first and second quarter of the 2019-20, respectively.

Emphasising on private investment, Chand said the face of agriculture from traditional to modern, and movement of agriculture from present stage to higher evolution will not happen without active involvement of private sector.

"Unless we increase corporate sector's investment and

involve them from seed and continuing it up to sale, it would be difficult to cause a breakthrough in growth of agriculture and doubling farmers' income," he said in a statement.

Chand also said that the NITI Aayog was trying to convince the Central government to make up its mind in drafting a Model Land Lease Act.

With regard to the implementation of the model Agriculture Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act and contract farming law, he said, "I think we need to persuade the states, we are already trying to do it that those two acts are adopted by the states."

In his keynote address, National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) CEO Ashok Dalwai said: "To avoid food wastage, we need to build an infrastructure to store what we cannot consume".

Horticulture Commissioner BN Srinivasa Murthy said that India could easily compete with any western country in food value chain partnerships if the country focused on micro-level products like coconut, honey, wine and more.

India's palm oils import dipped over 8 pc in Dec 2019: SEA

New Delhi (PTI)

India's import of palm oils declined by 8.64 per cent to 7,41,490 tonnes in December 2019, Industry body Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) said on Thursday. India, the world's leading vegetable oil buyer, had imported 8,11,700 tonne palm oils in December 2018.

Chand also said that the NITI Aayog was trying to convince the Central government to make up its mind in drafting a Model Land Lease Act.

With regard to the implementation of the model Agriculture Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act and contract farming law, he said, "I think we need to persuade the states, we are already trying to do it that those two acts are adopted by the states."

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Amfi pitches for debt-linked saving schemes with tax benefits in Budget proposal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mutual funds industry body Amfi has requested the government to allow low cost debt-linked saving schemes, with tax benefits, to deepen bond market, and lower holding period in gold and commodity ETFs to one year from existing three years for LTCG Executive NS Venkatesh said.

Some of the proposals are also aimed at bringing parity with comparable investment avenues and making mutual funds more retail investor friendly, he added.

In its Budget proposals to the Finance Ministry, the industry body has also demanded that the government recognise mutual funds (MFs) as specified long-term assets, qualifying for Long-Term Capital Gains (LTCG), as well as bring ULIPs of life insurance companies and equity MF schemes on par.

The mutual fund body has also asked for dividend distribution tax (DDT) exemption for EPFO, NPS and insurance companies investing in MF schemes and pass-through status for income tax purpose to those Category III AIFs which make 65 per cent investments in listed equities.

"Amfi's suggestions have been in the Budget proposal list for few years. We are hoping this time our long-pending submissions get addressed, which would help take the Indian MF industry not only to the next

level of growth but also help in contributing to making economy stronger, especially with deepening of bond market, making long term availability of funds for infrastructure growth, and reducing the fiscal deficit by shifting investments from pure gold to gold ETFs," Amfi Chief Executive NS Venkatesh said.

The Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) said that mutual funds should be allowed to introduce low-cost, lower-risk tax-exemption-linked debt-linked savings schemes (DLSS) on the lines of equity linked saving schemes (ELSS). It further proposed that investments up to ₹1.5 lakh under DLSS be eligible for tax benefit, subject to a lock-in period of 5 years. At present, equity-linked savings schemes qualify for tax benefits under Section 80 CCC of the Income Tax Act for an investment limit of up to ₹1.5 lakh in a fiscal year.

In order to make gold and commodity ETFs more attractive, the industry body has proposed to lower the holding period for LTCG purposes to 1 year.

NIFTY 50

SCRIPT	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	12477.10	12389.05	12315.00	12356.25	12.95
EICHERMOT	2069.90	2160.00	2065.00	2159.05	884.25
NESTLEIND	14851.00	15398.00	14848.10	15368.45	508.25
ZEEL	273.00	280.50	277.75	280.40	7.60
KOTAKBANK	1678.90	1705.60	1678.90	1703.05	27.45
BHARTIARTL	469.20	476.95	468.00	473.90	6.05
HINDUNILVR	2022.00	2054.70	2016.10	2046.00	24.35
BRITANNIA	3116.00	3160.00	3115.00	3151.00	36.80
POWERGRID	1520.00	1543.35	1528.00	1538.70	14.85
WIPRO	194.10	197.70	194.10	196.00	1.75
YESBANK	40.15	40.90	39.75	40.10	0.35
DREDDY	248.00	252.60	247.00	250.30	2.05
TITAN	1184.85	1195.50	1174.10	1192.25	7.40
TCS	2262.95	2249.00	2215.00	2240.00	13.10
BAJAJFINSV	9590.00	9640.00	9565.00	9635.00	45.85
HDPCBANK	1282.00	1291.00	1279.35	1287.50	3.25
BAJAJFINSV	410.00	422.95	418.00	421.75	9.90
ICICIBANK	533.90	540.00	533.20	536.80	1.20
UPL	587.10	591.80	582.10	587.10	1.30
ADANIPORTS	392.00	394.60	389.80	391.00	0.20
ONGC	125.00	125.20	124.05	124.65	0.00
INFY	770.70	772.50	760.23	767.20	-0.35
MARUTI	7456.50	7521.00	7421.20	7469.90	-13.05
ASIANPAINT	1835.90	1848.00	1828.75	1838.90	-3.35
HCLTECH	597.00	598.30	586.75	594.65	-1.10
SUNPHARMA	452.25	456.35	447.40	448.20	-0.85
HDPCBANK	2486.00	2495.75	2471.00	2481.45	-7.15
CIPLA	484.00	487.45	479.00	480.00	-4.00
COALINDIA	212.45	212.70	207.10	210.20	-2.25
M&M	569.25	569.80	564.05	566.60	-3.15
BAJAJ-AUTO	3129.80	3150.00	3101.55	3104.55	-19.00
ITC	242.50	243.90	240.10	240.45	-1.95
CIPLA	484.00	487.45	479.00	480.00	-4.00
SHARPE	193.00	195.70	181.10	198.00	-11.15
BPCL	468.00	469.50	460.15	461.10	-6.85
TATAMOTORS	199.50	200.60	196.90	197.25	-3.10
HEROMOTOCO24749	2474.95	2474.20	2473.00	2473.00	-39.30
TATATEL	502.00	504.05	492.10	493.80	-8.30
HINDALCO	214.00	214.75	209.00	209.60	-4.05
GAIL	132.95	133.35	128.35	129.00	-2.65
JSWSTEEL	282.50	282.85	275.15	276.75	-5.75
INFRAFET	247.00	249.15	247.20	247.75	-1.50
NTPC	123.40	123.40	120.95	121.00	-2.85

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIPT	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	2968.20	2910.55	2889.25	2889.25	22.30
PAGEIND	24379.70	25580.00	24161.05	25441.00	1144.55
ICICIGI	1367.00	1424.75	1365.00	1412.00	52.50
CADILAH2C	280.20	271.70	262.10	270.00	7.25
MOTHERSUMI	139.90	144.20	139.50	142.95	3.80
TECHM					

Trump impeachment: US House sends historic case to Senate

Washington: The US House of Representatives passed a resolution and submitted the articles of impeachment against Donald Trump to the Senate for a historic trial to remove him from office, a move described by the unfazed President as "another con job" by the Opposition Democrats.

The House, controlled by the Democratic Party on Wednesday voted to send articles of impeachment against President Trump to the Senate, in a major development to remove him from office for his alleged abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.

In a 228-193 vote, which was mainly on party lines, the House appointed seven impeachment managers who will argue the Democrats' case for removing Trump from the office of the US President.

The managers were named by House Speaker Nancy



The Senate side of the Capitol is seen in Washington early on Thursday AP

Pelosi.

"We are here today to cross a very important threshold in American history," Pelosi said, addressing the House before the vote.

"This is what an impeachment is about," she said earlier, announcing the seven-member prosecution team led

by Congressman Adam Schiff, chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

"So sad, so tragic for our country, that the actions taken by the president to undermine our national security, to violate his oath of office and to jeopardize the security of our

White House 'violated law' on Ukraine aid: Watchdog

Washington: The White House budget office "violated the law" by freezing military aid to put political pressure on Ukraine, a US congressional watchdog announced on Thursday as Trump's impeachment trial looms.

The damning report from the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office says it "issued a legal decision concluding that the Office of Management and Budget violated the law when it withheld approximately \$214 million appropriated to DOD (Department of Defense) for security assistance to Ukraine."

Washington: The White House budget office "violated the law" by freezing military aid to put political pressure on Ukraine, a US congressional watchdog announced on Thursday as Trump's impeachment trial looms.

elections, has taken us to this place," Pelosi remarked, before using several ceremonial pens to sign the articles.

While Pelosi's press conference was in progress, Trump weighed in on Twitter: "Here we go again, another Con Job by the Do Nothing Democrats.

All of this work was supposed to be done by the House, not the Senate!"

The 435-member House, where Democrats enjoy a majority, on December 18 charged Trump with "high crimes and misdemeanors" and impeached him for pres-

suring Ukraine to investigate former US Vice President Joe Biden, a potential Democratic rival for the current president in the 2020 elections.

The Senate, controlled by Trump's Republican Party, will decide whether to con-

vict and remove him from office.

PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE

Mrs Lilamani Prasad W/o Late Maj Gen Niranjan Prasad R/o D-117 Sector-40, Noida died on 10/06/2019. As per her Last WILL and Testament dated 04.12.2009 which is duly registered with the office of the Sub-Registrar, Noida at No-1146, Book No.3, Vol. No. 158 on pages 591 to 600 on 04.12.2009, Property residential Plot No D-117, Sector-40, Noida are being transferred to Lt. Col. Bishan Dutt (Retd) S/O Shri Narotan Phulara R/o D-117, Sector-40, Noida. Anyone having any objections may inform to Residential Plots Division, New Okhla Industrial Development Authority, Sector-6, Noida within 30 days of publishing of this notice with relevant documents.

Lt. Col. Bishan Dutt

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Prince Gupta, W/o Mr. Deepak Gupta, R/o E-51, Sector-51, Noida, Distt Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) 201301 hereby declare that The Prince Gupta & Princy Gupta is Same Person. In Future I will be known as Prince Gupta.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that ID Card of Mr. Pravesh Kumar issued by ICICI Bank Ltd having ID card no. 09434 held in the name of Mr. Karkari more Delhi. Any anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to ICICI Bank Ltd, ICICI Bank Service & Management, Ground ICICI Bank Ltd, SD TOWER SECTOR 8 ROHINI, DELHI - 110088. Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorized person holding the same said ID card no. 09434.

Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card should do so at his/her own risk and panel Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

Date : 08/01/2020 For ICICI Limited Place New Delhi SD TOWER ROHINI

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that the flat and shares more particularly described in the schedule hereunder written is being transferred in name of Mrs. Gurkush Kaur legal heirs of Mr. Jagir Singh all persons having any claim in respect thereof by way of sale, exchange, gift, mortgage, charge, trust, inheritance, possession, lease, let or otherwise however are requested to inform the same in writing to the undersigned having their Sanjhan Bal & contact no. 999904604 within 10 days from the date hereof failing which, the claim(s) if any, of such person(s) will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and the transfer shall be completed.

SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO Property No. 1215/13 (Old No. 1215/10) measuring 140 sq. yds. under Khasra No. 93 at Govind Puri, Kalakaji, New Delhi-110019 S. K. Gupta (Advocate)

EARTHWORK ETC.

E-Tender Notice No. CON/2019/Dec/14. Open tender through e-tendering system is invited from experienced and reputed Contractor(s)/firm(s) for the following works:- Tender No. CEIC/CON-A/G/EMB/2019/23. Name of work: Earthwork in filling to construct embankment including blanketing, construction of minor bridges, RUB/LHS, trolley refuges and other ancillary works of Y-connection from field Ch. 0.46 Km to 3.80 Km between Araria and Rahmatpur in connection with construction of New BG line from Araria to Galgalia of N.F. Railway Approx. Value: ₹ 16,34,72,128.56. E-tender will be closed at 14:30 hrs. on 07-02-2020 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 07-02-2020. For Details Please visit www.ireps.gov.in

For Chief Engineer/Con/3, Malaigaon NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY (Construction Organisation) "Serving Customers with a smile"

WESTERN RAILWAY

OUTSOURCING OF COOKING OF FOOD Chief Engineer, Western Railway, Churchgate invited the following E-Procurement Tender No.: W641/22/19/4. Description of Works: Tender: Outsourcing of Cooking of food including serving and up keeping of kitchen in each camping coach / rest room (33 nos.) for track machines working in BCT/BRCT/RMT/ADIR/JT divisions of Western Railway. Total Tender Value: ₹ 2,10,07,530/- EMD: ₹ 25,500/- Date of Closing of e-Tender Box at 15:00 Hrs: 11.02.2020. Date of Opening of e-Tender Box at 15:15 Hrs: 11.02.2020. Note: The complete information along with tender document of above e-Procurement Tender is available in website on https://ireps.gov.in upto the due date of tender opening.

Like us on: facebook.com/WesternRly

COMMISSIONING OF TUNNEL LIGHTING, POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM ETC.

E-Tender Notice No. DYCEE/CON/SCL/02/2020; Dated: 07-01-2020. Open tender through e-tendering system is invited from experienced and reputed Contractor(s)/firm(s) having valid electrical contractor and supervisor license for the following work. Tender No.: EL/CON/SCL/14/2019/B-S. Name of work: Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of tunnel lighting & power supply system and lighting & socket system for technical building cum power house for tunnel no. 1, 6, 8, 10, 12, 21, 23 in connection with Bharat-1: Sairang New BG line project. Tender value: ₹ 5,78,83,705.50, Earnest money: ₹ 5,78,900.00, Completion period: 180 days. E-tender will be closed at 14:30 hrs. on 05-02-2020 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 05-02-2020. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in & www.nrlconstruction.org

Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/CON/3, Malaigaon NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY (Construction Organisation) "Serving Customers with a smile"

Iran's president says 'no limit' to nuclear enrichment

Tehran: Iran's president said on Thursday that there is "no limit" to the country's enrichment of uranium following its decision to abandon its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal in response to the killing of its top general in a US airstrike.

In a speech before the heads of banks, Rouhani said the nuclear program is in a "better situation" than it was before the nuclear agreement with world powers.

President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear agreement in May 2018, in part because it did not address Iran's support for armed groups across the region and its ballistic missile program. The US has since imposed "maximum" sanctions on Iran's economy.

Iran continued to abide by the agreement until last summer, when it began openly breaching some of its limits, saying it would not be bound by the deal

if it saw none of its promised economic benefits. After the January 3 airstrike that killed Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the architect of Iran's regional military operations, it said it would abandon all restrictions in the nuclear deal. Thus far, however, it has only modestly increased its nuclear activity.

In recent months it has boosted its enrichment of uranium to 4.5 per cent — higher than the 3.67 per cent limit set by the agreement but far from the 20 per cent enrichment it was engaged in before the deal. Uranium must be enriched to 90 per cent to be used in a nuclear weapon.

Britain, France and Germany have spent months trying to salvage the deal, but have not found a way to continue trading with Iran amid the tightened US sanctions.

Earlier this week, they triggered a dispute mechanism in the nuclear deal to try to bring Iran back into compliance. That process could lead to the snapback of international sanctions.

Putin cements power as Russian Duma votes for new PM

Putin proposed sweeping changes to the constitution.

Medvedev served as president in 2008-2012, keeping the seat warm for Putin who continued calling the shots as prime minister when he was forced to step down from the top job due to term limits.

Under Medvedev, the constitution was amended to extend the presidential term from four years to six, although it limits the leader to two consecutive terms.

Putin has kept his longtime ally Medvedev in his close circle, appointing him to the newly created post of deputy head of the presidential Security Council.

The 53-year-old Mishustin is a career bureaucrat who has worked as the tax chief for the past 10 years, keeping a low profile and showing no political ambitions.

He has won a good reputation among experts who praised him for boosting tax collection and streamlining Russia's rigid tax administration system.

HK leader says city could keep freedoms if it 'stays loyal'

Hong Kong: Hong Kong may be allowed to keep its unique

freedoms beyond their 2047 expiry date, its leader said on Thursday, but only if inhabitants remain loyal to Beijing's vision of how the city should be run.

Chief executive Carrie Lam, a pro-Beijing appointee, made the comments during a fiery session in the city's legislature, where she was frequently interrupted by opposition lawmakers -- many of whom were ejected.

Hong Kong has been battered by seven months of pro-democracy protests, which Lam and Beijing have taken a hard line against.

The protests are fuelled by fears that the city is losing freedoms under an increasingly authoritarian Beijing.

Under a "one country, two systems" deal agreed ahead of the city's 1997 handover, authoritarian China has allowed Hong Kong to keep key liberties and its cap-

italist system for fifty years.

But protesters say Beijing is already renegeing on that promise, while uncertainty swirls around what might happen when the deadline expires.

On Thursday Lam said the city's continued freedoms were contingent on the city not challenging Beijing.

"Only if we insist on implementing the one country, two systems' principle and practice it continuously and fully ... Then I think there will be enough grounds for 'one country, two systems' to move ahead smoothly and there would be no change after 2047," Lam said during Thursday's appearance in the legislature.

She then called on the city's youth not to damage the principle because of "temporarily misunderstandings".

"Otherwise, what they are worried about will be brought about by themselves," she added.

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorized person holding the same ID card no. 09434.

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Date : 08/01/2020 For ICICI Limited Place New Delhi SD TOWER ROHINI

Intense fighting in Syria's Idlib kills 39: Monitor

Beirut: Intense fighting between pro-government forces and jihadist-led fighters in Syria's Idlib province killed at least 39 fighters overnight, a war monitor said on Thursday.

The violence, which saw air strikes, shelling and ground combat, further buried a ceasefire announced by Russia on Sunday in Idlib, the last major opposition bastion in the country.

Government and allied forces took two villages in their advance towards the key town of Maaret al-Numan, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

According to the Britain-

based war monitor, the fighting flared late on Wednesday in areas south of Maaret al-Numan, the key target of the Syrian government's latest military offensive.

At least 22 anti-government fighters were killed, most of them members of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a group that includes fighters from the former Al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria.

Seventeen Government troops and allied militia were also killed in the fighting, said Rami Abdel Rahman, the head of the Observatory.

He added that govern-

ment forces were now just seven kilometres (less than five miles) from Maaret al-Numan, a town that was one of the bastions of the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's rule.

Nearly nine years into the conflict, protests against the government are still held in some of the province's towns.

In the city of Idlib itself, 18 civilians were killed in air strikes on Wednesday, shattering the truce brokered by Moscow and rebel backer Ankara.

The fighting has prompted hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee their homes in recent weeks, exposing them to a harsh winter.

HIGH TREASON CASE

Musharraf approaches Pak SC to suspend death sentence ruling by special court

Islamabad: Pakistan's self-exiled former dictator Pervez Musharraf on Thursday approached the Supreme Court to challenge the ruling of a special court that had handed him death sentence on charges of high treason.

The special court in Islamabad on December 17 last handed down the death penalty to the 74-year-old retired general, now based in Dubai, after six years of hearing the high-profile treason case against him.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) gov-

ernment led by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had filed the treason case against the former army chief in 2013 over the imposition of an extra-constitutional emergency in November 2007, which led to the confinement of a number of superior court judges in their houses and sacking of over 100 judges.

On Monday, Musharraf submitted the 90-page petition challenging the special court verdict in the top court. In the petition, the former president urged the Supreme Court to declare the special court ruling null and void.

Amy chief. In a huge reprieve for Musharraf, the LHC declared that the formation of the special court was "unconstitutional" and that the treason case against the former president was not prepared in accordance with the law.

Barrister Salman Safdar, the counsel for Musharraf, submitted the 90-page petition challenging the special court verdict in the top court. In the petition, the former president urged the Supreme Court to declare the special court ruling null and void.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis had announced Sakellaropoulou's candidacy in a surprise televised address on Wednesday. "The time has come for Greece to open up to the future," Mitsotakis said, emphasising that the selection breaks with tradition not only because Sakellaropoulou is female, but also because she is not a member of a political party. He said the choice "embodies unity and progress". A total of 200 votes is required to elect the new president for a five-year term.

Sakellaropoulou, a French-educated expert in constitutional and environmental law, is on track to secure over 260 votes.

AFP

Sakellaropoulou's candidacy in a surprise televised address on Wednesday. "The time has come for Greece to open up to the future," Mitsotakis said, emphasising that the selection breaks with tradition not only because Sakellaropoulou is female, but also because she is not a member of a political party. He said the choice "embodies unity and progress". A total of 200 votes is required to elect the new president for a five-year term.

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Trend Blazer

Hrithik's KNPH marks 20 years

Bollywood superstar **HRITHIK ROSHAN** recently posted a few emotional lines on social media to mark the completion of 20 years of his debut film *Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai*.

Sharing a video clip of his two characters, Rohit and Raj from the film, which turned him into a superstar overnight, Hrithik wrote: "I think the two emotions which best describe my journey of the past 20 years since KNPH is simply 'Fear' and 'Fearless,' both existing simultaneously and one is never devoid of the other. I feel terribly bad for fear. Cause it tries so hard. Fearless is a smart cookie, it only follows one rule. To keep going..."

Directed by his father Rakesh Roshan the film released on January 14, 2000.



'A lot of people have achieved so much more than me. I have earned love of friends. I feel that I still have to do a lot of work. I can do a lot of things. I can write much more poetry, lyrics and scripts. I can associate myself with causes in which I believe in. I can speak my mind at different panel discussions, so that I can bring in change in people's mindset.'

—Javed Akhtar

Actors **SARA ALI KHAN** and **KARTIK ARYAN** recently shared the first poster of their forthcoming film *Love Aaj Kal*.

Both of them shared the poster at Instagram. Introducing the two main characters — Zoe and Veer — director Imtiaz Ali wrote: "Meet Veer & Zoe, captured in their element. It's in these simple, candid moments that love plays peekaboo, right? #LoveAajKal." The poster shows two different timelines, 2020 and 1990.

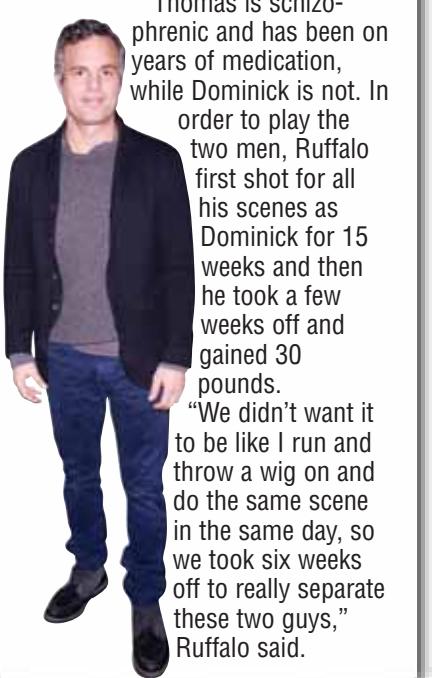
Ruffalo gains 30 pounds in few weeks

Actor **MARK RUFFALO** is playing twins in *I Know This Much Is True* for which he had to take five weeks off to gain 30 pounds.

He's playing identical twins who look completely different, because they've lived different lives for 40 years.

Thomas is schizophrenic and has been on years of medication, while Dominick is not. In order to play the two men, Ruffalo first shot for all his scenes as Dominick for 15 weeks and then he took a few weeks off and gained 30 pounds.

"We didn't want it to be like I run and throw a wig on and do the same scene in the same day, so we took six weeks off to really separate these two guys," Ruffalo said.



Kyla Gill had never so much as touched a sewing machine or picked up a crochet hook two weeks ago. Now, she's hooked on crafting for critters 10,000 miles (16,000 km) away, to the point of temporarily putting aside her floor refinishing business in Pittsburgh. "I do hard labour so I'm rough with my hands. Sewing, knitting — that's just completely out of my realm," she said and added, "But to go to work the next day knowing that there are animals and people suffering? I just pretty much wiped my schedule clean and put my projects on hold."

Hoping to help the wildlife harmed in the Australian wildfires, thousands of crafters worldwide are churning out swaddling wraps for bats, hanging enclosures for kangaroos, and cozy pouches for wallabies and other animals. But confusion abounds about whether the items actually are needed or will be used.

The Animal Rescue Craft Guild, based in Australia, and associated groups have told their

members to pause work while they take stock of donated items.

And some wildlife organisations say what they need most is money, not handmade goods,

which can help pay for cages,

medical supplies, specialised animal feed and other critical items, said Megan Davidson, CEO of Wildlife Victoria.

"While we have been overwhelmed by the kindness of people wanting to donate items for wildlife, physical donations of clothes, knitted items and food are very difficult for relief agencies to sort through, distribute and store — especially during peak periods like the current bushfire crisis," she said. "It is so lovely that people want to help. The most practical way to help right now is by a direct donation."



The unprecedentedly fierce fires in southeast Australia have claimed the lives of at least 28 people since September, destroyed more than 2,600 homes, mostly in New South Wales state. The area burned is larger than the US state of

Indiana. Half of the money will go to front-line responder groups, with the other \$25 million funding an advisory panel to analyse affected areas and plan for long-term habitat restoration.

A donor, Anna Key gathered together a bunch of sewing, knitting and crochet patterns approved by wildlife rescue groups and posted them on social media, due to which multiple Facebook groups popped up to collect donations.

Key, who lives in Yamba in New South Wales, called the response to what she's dubbed the #globalcraftmovement overwhelming but said participants should not be discouraged. "Rescuing our animals is a marathon, not a sprint," she said.

In Lee, New Hampshire, 10-year-old Gibson Griffith organised an event at his church to sew dozens of bed liners for crates and cages. About 15 people donated fabric and more than a dozen showed up to help make the liners.

In Haverhill, Massachusetts,

Kimberly McCullough had cut fabric for about 50 pouches and was about to start sewing when the confusion erupted.

McCullough has reached out to local animal shelters to see if they could use the items. "It really opened my eyes to ways crafters can help other animal rescue organisations," she said. "So, it felt better to realise. I cut all this stuff out and maybe it's not going to make it to Australia, but it might just make it to the Boston Animal Rescue League."

Similarly, Gill has no regrets about her efforts, which included staying up until 2 am one night, getting to the fabric store before it opened the next morning, sewing more than 60 pouches with her partner and learning how to crochet bird nests. They've become online friends with a woman in Australia, who has invited them to stay with her next year. "It's uplifting for her, and it made her feel better to see the humanity," she said. "It makes me cry. It really touches me."

—AP

Finding the right value

Thousands of crafters worldwide are creating goods in a bid to help the wildlife caught in the Australian fires. But will they be judiciously used?



Next up, artist Pritam Mehta's medium of art is wood. This is an "unusual and rare" art form in India as the artist believes he hasn't come across anyone else doing it. It's followed in some Western countries. "Painting or colours have no role to play in pyrography since it's the fire flames which do the wonder here. They are used to create different pieces of art. There's a pen with a tungsten metal tip, which you can connect to a small machine and plug in to get the electric current. It then gets heated up, after which one can start creating artworks. There's also a small temperature control button on the machine," says the artist.

Through pyrography, Mehta creates different works of animals, birds and leaves. The artist also tries his hands on coffee table logs, wall hangings and sandalwoods. It is the wildlife and nature mostly that appeals him. "I have recently started making portraits of human beings too. We don't use any colour in this but just control the temperature and create images," he adds.

Talking about the difficulties of such an artform, he tells us that the biggest challenge of painting with fire is "guiding the flame" and trying to make it leave the kind of trace you want. He adds, "The second biggest challenge is preservation of the work. The soot is very fragile and sensitive to touch. I'm always holding my breath when working with a piece because anything that touches the surface will leave a trace. So it really demands a lot from you, including both your patience and attention at the same time."

Artist Sandeep Chhatraband, who is also a part of the exhibition, portrays the ghats of Varanasi through water colours and acrylics on canvas, which he sees as "unique, tranquil and full of energy."

(The exhibition is on till January 24 at DLF Mall of India.)

AN ODE TO TRANQUILITY

Art exhibition, *Arth - Tribute to Shades of India*, features various traditional and contemporary artists whose works showcase the ghats of Varanasi, bring forth the nostalgia of Kolkata and the rare artform, pyrography. By SAKSHI SHARMA

Yellow and blue trams amid a vintage background, black and white trees and grey railway lines, a faded red abstract work, the meaning of which one fails to figure out in the first glance, *ghats* of Varanasi and visuals of nature and wildlife... these are some of the landscapes brought to life on various canvases. The series, *Arth - Tribute to Shades of India*, clearly holds up our cultural mosaic at a time it is most under threat.

The exhibition features many traditional and contemporary artists showcasing different artforms made through diverse media.

Artist Arpan Bhownik, who is known for his *Monochrome Kolkata* series, highlights a few aspects of the city he grew up in via *A Journey Through Kolkata*. "Through this, I want to tell people about the nostalgia I feel for Kolkata. Its yellow taxis, trams, hand rickshaws lend a special identity to the city. So my paintings usually have a black and white background and these elements are coloured so that they remain the focal point," says he.

He uses the African canvas for most

of his works to use the water colour wash technique. His paintings have a water splash effect which makes the scenery look like a photograph of a city taken right after a rain shower. However, it is an acrylic which he has developed using the same technique in the past 20 years which lends it such a filter. He describes it as a "difficult artform but a serious medium" that lasts for over 100 years.

Next in line is Chennai-based con-

temporary Indian artist, A Viswam. Usually based on hues of yellow, burning red, cool green, deep blue and quiet grey, Viswam's paintings are either monochromes or come out in vibrant combinations.

He says, "I work on unidentified elements of time and space through different combination of colours. The use of monochrome and colour varies with what I want to display. For instance, if I want to depict a morning

scene, it has to be filled with colours, while for evening, I would use black and white."

There's hardly any art exhibition in the South where the national award-winning artist hasn't been invited. But in North, he still has a long way to go to become a recognised face. And *Arth...* is also an attempt to make people aware about such artists and talent that is prevalent across our country, adds he.

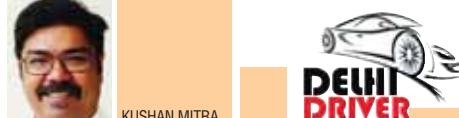
Art actually feels proper and the voice activation works. Believe me, try and use voice activation on some newly launched cars in India and you will get where I am coming from.

I drove (a bit) but the traffic in the United States is so well-behaved that I let the car drive. Tesla's "Autopilot" genuinely has to be experienced to be believed. I have used automated lane-tracking and radar-assisted cruise control systems on BMWs, Mercedes-Benz, Audis and Volvos in Europe and the Middle-east. Nothing comes close to Tesla's camera controlled system, which actually "sees" cars in and around you using an array of cameras mounted all over the car including the B-pillar between the front and rear doors. No other commercially available car has a system where the car decides to change to the fastest lane. And acceleration was stunning, even in the single-motor model I drove (there is a four-wheel drive dual-motor model as well).

Yes, range is an issue. Even on the long-range version that I experienced, both, not just with my brother-in-law but also other friends in Seattle. The stated 300 miles (approximately 500 kilo-

The land of tech

Make no mistake, the future of car technology will be driven by the United States. Tesla has made sure of that



Cultures that Tesla is having and the Twitter tirades of "wannabe" Bond villain and Tesla chief executive Elon Musk, it is only when you experience the Model 3, you realise that some European carmakers have a serious problem. I did not take a car from Tesla, instead I drove and was driven around in my brother-in-law's Model 3 in and around the Seattle Metropolitan Area in the Northwestern US. The excitement that he showed with his car made it obvious that he was a brand evangelist. But after driving around for a while, not just someone like me, who is plugged into the automotive industry, but anybody would understand why the Tesla Model 3 is such a game-changer.

The vehicle is the electric carmaker's "cheap" car, priced at around \$50,000-60,000 (₹36 lakh to ₹45 lakh) on the road. It is a lot more affordable than the Model X Sports Utility Vehicle and the Model S large sedan, both of which cost upwards of \$100,000 (₹75 lakh), and competes against



cars like the BMW 3-series, Mercedes-Benz C-Class and Audi A4 in terms of size, functionality and price. And when you get into a Tesla for the first time, you realise how basic it is inside. This is nowhere near the luxury and the button-heavy nature of the current BMW 3-series. There are a couple of rotary dials on the steering wheel, power window switches and painfully small buttons to open the door and that is it. Oh yeah, there is a giant touchscreen as well, and the most intuitive voice-activated controls on any

car. Sure, other cars have touchscreens as well but Tesla's system is the smoothest and best system I have ever used, and for this I have to praise their software and user experience engineers. The user inter-



Salaam-e-Dilli
brings the traditional flavours of Old Delhi to your candle-lit tables at Le Meridien, Gurugram, says SHAMBHAVI SURI

DELHI-6 ON MY PLATE

Old Delhi has captured the imagination of food lovers for centuries. The best time to experience the wide variety of food that it has to offer is during the winters when the warmth of the sun, peeping from the winding lanes of Delhi-6, reaches you. It is only then one can enjoy hot and authentic Indian meal, dripping with ghee. #ComfortFood.

Bringing this experience outside of Delhi-6, Le Meridien, Gurugram, has introduced its first pop-up restaurant, Salaam-e-Dilli. In an open area, its ambience of a lavish but limited seating looks warm and welcoming. The lanterns and candlesticks seem romantic and exclusive, as though making promises to the customers of a memorable evening. And to make the bitterly cold weather a tad bit cosy and bearable, tall patio heaters are provided near each table. "The idea of going to Old Delhi during peak winters to enjoy the widespread Mughlai cuisine, so that the food doesn't make one sweat but warm, is what inspired us to have an outdoor restaurant," says chef Talat Mehmood Khan.

With the aroma of the tandoor in the air and the thought of kebabs on my mind, the first two plates arrive. The two kebabs — Chicken gilafi and Gosht seekh — are brought in a rustic-coloured plate with different oils laying around it and served with some finely-chopped onion and green coriander chutney. After my first bite of the chicken gilafi, I realise the kebab is packed with spices. Well, it would be fair to call the dish a paradise of flavours. Though sharpness of the green chilli is quite evident in the kebab, the richness of the ghee aptly balances the level of spiciness, leaving behind a subtle heat on the palate. If the spices are too much to handle, a dip in the coriander chutney adds a freshness to the seekh, bringing the spice quotient down. While the Chicken gilafi is punched with spices, the Gosht (mutton) seekh kebab goes milder. It made me won-



EVEN THOUGH I CANNOT STOP SAVOURING BIRYANI, TO END THE EVENING ON A SWEET NOTE, DELHI-6'S FAMOUS DESSERT, SHAHI TUKDA IS SERVED. DOING JUSTICE TO ITS NAME, IT IS ROYAL AND DECADENT. TOASTS, DIPPED IN SUGAR SYRUP, ARE LAYERED WITH RABRI AND PISTACHIOS, AND ARE SERVED HOT



ger captivate my senses. The dish is garnished with finely-sliced ginger and green chillies that act as major flavour enhancers. The mutton is so tender, it melts in my mouth at once. The rich flavour of the bone marrow is packed in the gravy of the nihari. And the fried onion adds a rustic flavour to it. And as always, the ghee reduces the heat of the chillies, leaving a mesmerising flavour on my tastebuds. The dish, cooked to perfection, represents what the culinary wizards of Old Delhi are famous for — bringing the heartiest food that leaves you in awe of it.

A whiff of cardamom comes through and before I realise, the Gosht biryani is served. The colour of the rice is saffron and the fragrance of the aromatics in the biryani is breathtaking. The mutton, like the previous one, falls off the bone and has the flavour of the spices infused in it. Every grain of this biryani has

the flavour of the khada masale (a combination of the essential whole Indian spices) — star anise, cinnamon sticks and cardamom — used to prepare the dish. Cooking a biryani with such delicacy and perfection is truly an art.

Even though I cannot stop savouring the biryani, to end the evening on a sweet note, Delhi-6's famous dessert, Shahi tukda is served. Doing justice to its name, it is royal and decadent. Toasts, dipped in sugar syrup, are layered with rabri and pistachios, and are served hot. This is an all-time classic and a specialty of Old Delhi. Certainly, the perfect way to end my evening too, making me realise that just as Old Delhi ensures that nobody will go home without a taste on their lips that one would remember for the rest of their life. Salaam-e-Dilli has been quite successful in replicating the experience.



Bake it till you make it

The perfect baked potato begins with russets

A fluffy baked potato is a glorious thing, but too often you slice into the potato and it is shiny and waxy, not light and creamy in texture.

Baking a potato is the easiest thing in the world, right? Then why are so many potatoes lacking in texture and flavour?

First, for the traditional baked potato that is going to be loaded with toppings, you must buy a Russet potato. Russets have a thicker skin and a beautiful starchy, snowy — almost meaty — interior that soaks up all your butter, cheese and sour cream. I love making smashed potatoes with red new potatoes or baby Yukon gold potatoes, but only a Russet will do for a "baked" potato.

For my latest cookbook, *Steak and Cake*, I tested several popular ways of baking potatoes. I have friends who swear by wrapping the potato in foil before baking. I have always baked the potato without the foil but I tried both ways. I baked them at 350 degrees Fahrenheit and at 400 degrees too. The potatoes took a bit longer to bake at 350 but they were fluffier, and had a better crust and interior texture. Generally, when you cook anything at a higher temperature, the outside gets done before the inside. That means you risk an overdone exterior by the time the interior is cooked through. Potatoes are no exception. That's why I prefer a lower temperature. But if you like to bake your potatoes at a higher temp, do so. It is all about what works.

The potato wrapped in foil was waxy and had a hard texture even when fully cooked. The foil also prevents the skin from becoming crusty, which I think is the best part of a baked potato. If you are a fan of twice-baked potatoes, you have to bake them unwrapped or the skin/shell will be too soft to re-stuff.

When I bake potatoes, I preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and place a sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil on the bottom shelf of the oven in case any of the juices drip. After washing and drying the potatoes, I coat them with either a little regular Crisco shortening or olive oil — both work well. Next, I prick them four or five times with a fork to let steam escape while they are baking. Sometimes, I sprinkle them with a little kosher salt to add to the skin's flavor, but it doesn't affect the interior. I place the potatoes in the centre of the oven, directly on the oven rack set over the foil. Drips are generally not an issue for Russet potatoes, but they are a big issue for sweet potatoes, which I bake exactly the same way.

After an hour of baking, I stick the end of a paring knife into the potato to gauge its doneness. It generally takes another 20 minutes to be perfect, but it depends on the potato's size.

A little tip for those who like to make twice-baked potatoes: Always bake three potatoes for two finished potatoes, so you can mound the filling over the top. I make them often for dinner parties since they are best made in advance and reheated just before serving.

—AP

gorgeous



Infinity, Crowne Plaza Mayur Vihar presents Delhi Darbaa Food Festival which brings back the traditional food from Chandni Chowk Ki Galiyan. The festival offers delicacies like Changezi murgh, Murgh korma, Dal gosht, Panera taka-tin, Anjeer akhrot ka kofta, Murgh ki chaap, Palak patta chaat, Kalami wada chaat, Aloo tikki, Matar kulcha, Golgappa and many more. Time: 7 pm to 11 pm Date: Till January 25 Price: ₹1,999 plus taxes (per person) Venue: Infinity, Crowne Plaza, Mayur Vihar, Noida.



a Roca, Aerocity, offers delicious and heart-warming food along with delectable handcrafted cocktails. It offers delicacies like Baked Asian cottage cheese roll, Kala murgh tikka, Malabar fish tikka, Baked chicken and sundried tomato puffs, Lamb meatballs with crispy noodles, Veg Massaman curry with burnt garlic rice, Fettuccini with olive cream, Grilled fish. Time: 12 am to 12 pm Date: Till January Price: ₹1,200 plus taxes (for two).

Enjoy the juiciest strawberries at Foodhall's strawberry market, conceptualised specially to get your hands on the best of the produce of the season. The objective of the market is to offer guests the best of the seasonal picks of the year in a marketplace format. Date: January 18, 19 Time: 11 am to 9 pm Venue: Foodhall, DLF Promenade.



Ardor 2.1 has come up with a delectable Delhi menu that offers dishes like Japani samosa, nagori along with cocktails like Halwa aaj manu bhai Chivas pilayega, Modi vs Mamta, Starbucks VA Sardabaksh and India's first winter beer, Delhi 6. Time: 12 am to 12 pm Price: ₹245 onwards (plus taxes) Venue: Ardent 2.1, Outer Circle, Connaught Place.



TK's Oriental Grill at Hyatt Regency marks its silver jubilee by offering an array of Japanese, Thai and Indonesian specialties along with champagne or sake. The restaurant also presents perfect amalgamation of authentic Far East cuisine and culture. Date: Every Tuesday Venue: TK's Oriental Grill, Hyatt Regency Delhi, Bhikaji Cama Place.



Koolchas presents its new winter menu which has been designed keeping the concept of bites-on-the-move in mind. It offers Vada koolcha and fusion koolchas, which can be accompanied with the beverages like Coffee wali chai, a distinct hot tea with the aroma of coffee flavour mixed with spices and herbs. Price: ₹510 for two Venue: Sushant Lok-1 & Sector 14, Gurugram.



CHOCOLATE STORY WITH CHILLI POPCORN

WHAT YOU NEED

- Chocolate brownie: 200 gm
- Pop corn: 50 gm
- Chilli powder: 1 /4tsp
- Chocolate sauce
- Melted butter: 1 tsp
- Chocolate ice cream: 2 scoops

METHOD

- Microwave the pop corn kernels.
- Add melted butter and chilli powder.
- Then crush the brownie and drizzle chocolate sauce.
- And now plate it with chocolate ice cream and serve.

Courtesy: Chef Nishant Chaubey at Street Storyss.

SPINACH KOFTA CURRY

WHAT YOU NEED

- For kofta stuffing:
- Oil: 5 ml
- Black cumin seeds: 1 gm
- Ginger (chopped): 3 gm
- Green chilli (chopped): 1 gm
- Spinach (blanched): 50 gm
- Dried fenugreek: 1 gm
- Salt to taste
- Apricot: 10 gm
- Almond (chopped): 10 gm
- Cashew nut (chopped): 7 gm
- Prunes (chopped): 12 gm
- Peanuts (roasted): 13 gm

METHOD

- For kofta stuffing:
- Heat oil in a pan, add black cumin seeds and allow them to splutter.

Now add chopped ginger and chilli. Then add spinach and sauté and cook it for three minutes.

Now mix rest of the ingredients and keep it for a while.

For kofta:

- Make paste of all the ingredients except ghee, ginger, garlic and chopped onion.
- Heat ghee in a pan, add chopped garlic and onion and sauté till onion turn light brown.
- Now add chopped ginger, the paste of roasted spices and cook on slow heat.
- Now add 500 ml of water and allow it to simmer for 25 minutes.
- Now add koftas in the sauce and serve hot.

Courtesy: Chef Aditya Jha at Inq.

BADAMI KESARIYA SABUDANA KHEER

WHAT YOU NEED

- Boiled soaked sabudana: 100 gm
- Low fat sweetened milk: 220 ml
- A pinch of saffron
- Australian almond flakes: 10 gm

- Desiccated coconut: 5 gm
- Fresh mint leaves: 1 gm

METHOD

- Boil low fat sweetened milk in a small stock pot and add sabudana until it softens and becomes starchy.
- Add saffron (kesar) for flavour and mix.
- Add Australian almond flakes, desiccated fresh coconut, silver balls and fresh mint on top for garnishing.
- Served the kheer in a glass jar as it keeps the flavours intact and reduces the chances of getting spoiled.
- Serve hot or chilled as per preference.

Courtesy: Chef Anshu Raj, Caterspoint.



SPINACH KOFTA CURRY

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- Prunes (chopped): 12 gm
- Peanuts (roasted): 13 gm

METHOD

- For kofta stuffing:
- Heat oil in a pan, add black cumin seeds and allow them to splutter.

- Now add koftas in the sauce and serve hot.

Courtesy: Chef Aditya Jha at Inq.



Rashford limps off injured in United's 1-0 win

DEVILS CATCH PACK OF WOLVES

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer admitted his decision to risk Marcus Rashford as a second half substitute "back-fired" despite seeing his side progress to the fourth round of the FA Cup with a 1-0 win over Wolves on Wednesday.

Rashford lasted less than 15 minutes on the field due to a back injury and is now a doubt for the trip to runaway leaders Liverpool in the Premier League on Sunday.

The brief cameo from United's top goalscorer coincided with the only goal of the game as Juan Mata's clinical finish ensured United will travel to either Watford or Tramere on January 26th.

"That backfired, but you've got to go for them," Solskjaer told BT Sport.

"He's got a knock and couldn't run. Let's test him for Sunday and see how he goes."

"He's had a few knocks with his back lately and he got another one." Wolves put United out of the FA Cup last season and were unbeaten in five previous meetings between the sides since returning to the top flight in 2018.

"We are delighted to finally beat Wolves," added Solskjaer. "We have had a few goes."

Nuno Espirito Santo signalled his intent by making just one change from his side's Premier League clash with Newcastle at the weekend as John Ruddy replaced Rui Patrício in goal and Wolves looked like-



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Raul Jimenez is tackled by Manchester United's Harry Maguire, right, during the English FA Cup third round replay soccer match AP

RASHFORD LASTED LESS THAN 15 MINUTES ON THE FIELD DUE TO A BACK INJURY AND IS NOW A DOUBT FOR THE TRIP TO RUNAWAY LEADERS LIVERPOOL IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE ON SUNDAY

Rashford had come off on Saturday after scoring twice in a 4-0 thrashing of Norwich, with Solskjaer admitting the England international is carrying "quite a few knocks."

The Norwegian still ran the risk of introducing his star striker 25 minutes from time and within three minutes United led.

A rare moment of defensive disorganisation from Wolves allowed Anthony Martial to play Mata through on goal and the Spaniard coolly dinked the ball

over the advancing Ruddy. Rashford then went down holding his back and was replaced by Jesse Lingard.

His absence could be a huge blow to United's fight for a top-four finish in the Premier League and in three cup competitions with Solskjaer's side also still in the League Cup and Europa League.

Cardiff set up a fourth-round visit to Reading by edging a seven-goal thriller against fourth-tier Carlisle United 4-3.

and Dybala converted the penalty.

Dybala scored a in the 58th minute, clipping the ball over Nicolas from the right edge of the box. Two minutes later Douglas Costa converted Juve's second penalty after Bram Nuytinck handled.

In Milan, Krzysztof Piatek, who is reportedly on the verge of a move to Tottenham Hotspur, outpaced the sluggish SPAL offside trap to give the home team the lead after 20 minutes.

Samuel Castillejo curled a precise left-foot shot inside the far post just before half-time.

Fullback Theo Hernandez added a third in the 66th minute, surging upfield and smashing home a left-foot shot from just outside the penalty area.

In Tuscany, Spaniard Pol Lirola collected Erik Pulgar's long pass before charging towards goal and slotting home his first Fiorentina goal six minutes from time, winning the tie for the hosts despite German Pezzella's sending off 14 minutes earlier.

Patrick Cutrone also scored his first goal for the club when he put Fiorentina ahead in the 11th minute of his first start since arriving on loan from Wolverhampton Wanderers last week.

The away side scored a deserved leveller when former Fiorentina man Ilicic turned in a superb Ruslan Malinovskiy cross.

HD QUALITY

Dybala, Higuain combine in Juventus 4-0 Coppa Italia win



Gonzalo Higuain celebrates after scoring during the Italian Cup soccer match AP

AFP ■ MILAN

Cristiano Ronaldo was too ill to play, while Zlatan Ibrahimovic spent the evening resting on the bench, but even without their biggest stars, Juventus and AC Milan cruised into the last eight of the Italian Cup on Wednesday.

Juventus beat visiting Udinese 4-0 in the late game, after Milan had dispatched SPAL, 3-0.

In the first game of the evening, 10-man Fiorentina beat Atalanta 2-1.

Ronaldo was sidelined after suffering an attack of sinusitis in the afternoon, but he is not the only one in the Juventus pack.

After 16 minutes, Paulo Dybala carved through Udinese with a series of quick one-twos, finishing with a couple of exchanges with centre forward Gonzalo Higuain.

When his Argentine compatriot played a pass one little behind him, Dybala spun and floated the ball onto Higuain's chest and he strode forward and scored.

"That was a goal of rare beauty, to see three or four exchanges like that at high speed. It was worth the price of the ticket," said Juve coach Maurizio Sarri.

"I love to see goals like that with fast passing, but they can only work with players of great technical quality." Ten minutes after the opener, Udinese goalkeeper Nicolas tripped Federico Bernardeschi



Kylian Mbappe, center, celebrates with teammates after scoring goal AP

ONE STEP AWAY

Prajnesh enters final round, Nagal crashes out of Australian Open qualifiers

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India's top-ranked singles player Prajnesh Gunneswaran is one win away from sealing a place in the Australian Open main draw after progressing to the final round of the qualifiers but it was curtains for compatriot Sumit Nagal here on Thursday.

Prajnesh, ranked 122 in the world, had to battle it out for one hour and 22 minutes to get past Yannick Hanfmann of Germany 1-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Prajnesh, seeded 17th in the qualifiers, will take on Ernests Gulbis of Latvia in the final round.

Gulbis defeated Argentina's Federico Coria 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 in another second round qualifying match.

Prajnesh defeated local wild card Harry Bourchier 6-2, 6-4 in his opening round.

Earlier in the day, Nagal suffered a straight-set loss in the first round to crash out of the men's singles qualifiers.

Prajnesh defeated local wild card Harry Bourchier 6-2, 6-4 in his opening round.

Earlier in the day, Nagal suffered a straight-set loss in the first round to crash out of the men's singles qualifiers.

The fifth-seeded Indo-Ukrainian combination will now lock horns with the Slovenian-Czech pair of Tamara Zidansek and Marie Bouzkova.

Zidansek and Bouzkova got the better of Canada's Sharon Fichman and Ukraine's Kateryna

Sindhu out of Indonesia Masters

PTI ■ JAKARTA

World champion shuttler P V Sindhu suffered a quarterfinal defeat at the hands of Sayaka Takahashi of Japan in a closely-fought women's singles contest to bring curtains on the Indian challenge in the Indonesia Masters here on Thursday.

Sindhu frittered away a one-game lead to lose 21-16, 16-21, 19-21 in a thrilling quarterfinal match that lasted one hour and six minutes.

World number six Sindhu



PTI/File Picture

had a 4-2 head-to-head record against the 14th ranked Japanese before Thursday's match.

Takahashi had defeated another top Indian, Saina Nehwal, in the second round.

With the defeat of Sindhu, India's campaign in the BWF Super 500 tournament came to an end.

World championships bronze medalist B Sai Praneeth, Kidambi Srikanth and Sourabh Verma crashed out of the tournament in the second round on Wednesday.

Indians thus continued their

poor form after making early exits in the Malaysia Masters last week. Sindhu and Saina had reached the quarterfinals in Kuala Lumpur but none of the men's singles players could cross the second round.

Sindhu began well, breaking away 11-6 in the first game. The Japanese later caught up with the Indian and took the score line to 11-12. But Sindhu was in no mood to allow her opponent to claw her way back and she was 16-15 up. She took the remaining five points with ease to take the first game.

Sania in Hobart semis



Bondarenko 6-3, 3-6, 10-4 in their last-eight stage clash.
Sania and Kichenok made a strong start and broke their opponents twice to take the lead. They also did well to save four break points in the opening set.
The second set went on serve till the eighth game before King and McHale broke Sania and Kichenok to draw level in the contest.
However, the third set was a stroll in the park for Sania and her partner as they dominated their opponents with superior serves.
The 33-year-old Sania is returning to WTA circuit after two years. During her two-year

break, she battled injury breakdowns before taking a formal break in April 2018 to give birth to her son Izhaan. She is married to Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik.

Before the ongoing event, Sania last played at China Open in October 2017.

A trailblazer in Indian tennis, Sania is a former world No.1 in doubles and has six Grand Slam titles to her credit.

She retired from the singles competition in 2013 after becoming the most successful Indian woman tennis player. In 2007, she attained a career-high 27th position in the WTA singles chart.

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited

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2.	XOHEEDL0001660999	1. AMAN GAGNEJA (Borrower), 2. GAURAV GAGNEJA (Co-Borrower), 3. RUPRIKA GAGNEJA(Co-Borrower), 4. SUMEDHA GAGNEJA(Co-Borrower)	HOUSE NO-9,ROAD NO-11, PUNJABI BAGH EXTN, PUNJABI BAGH,NEW DELHI-110026. ALSO AT- PROPERTY NO. 2519-2520, GROUND FLOOR, GAL, MAIN AJMAL KHAN ROAD, BEADON PURA, KAROL, NEW DELHI - 110005	31-10-2019	Rs. 1,79,569.78/- (Rupees One Crore Seventy Nine Lakhs Seventy Five Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Five & Paise Seventy Eight Only)	Property Admeasuring- Ground Floor Admeasuring 48.77 Sq.mtrs... With Out Roof /terrace Rights (Said Portion) Part Of Property Bearing New MCD No. 2519/20, Gali No.7, Khasra No.212/297, Admeasuring 83 Sq.yds, Ward No.XVI Beadon Pura, Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005.	Symbolic	16-01-2020

Place : Delhi / NCR

Date : 17.01.2020

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AFP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappe scored twice to take his season tally to 20 as the French World Cup winner shone in Paris Saint-Germain's 4-1 rout of his former club Monaco on Wednesday.

The victory kept PSG eight points clear at the top.

They also registered their 50th goal of the league campaign from 20 matches.

Monaco came away from PSG with a point in a thrilling 3-3 draw in the capital last weekend but they posed no similar threat just three days later.

Mbappe was on target in the 24th and 90th minutes with Neymar tucking away a penalty in first-half stoppage time.

Pablo Sarabia added another in the 73rd minute, just seconds after coming on as a substitute.

Ibrahima Bakayoko grabbed a late consolation for Monaco, beating the impressive Kaylor Navas in goal.

"In every area, we were better than Sunday," said PSG coach Thomas Tuchel.

"It's a deserved victory, we had lots of possession," Tuchel fielded his 'Fab Four' attacking stars in Mbappe, Neymar, Mauro Icardi and Angel Di Maria.

It was a decision which paid dividends when Di Maria floated over a cross for Mbappe to score the opener.

Monaco goalkeeper Benjamin Lecomte denied Mbappe on two further occasions in the first half.

Adrien Hunou scored the winner in the 64th minute to ensure a sixth win in the last seven games.

Nimes are second bottom, three points behind Amiens who drew 1-1 at home to Reims.

Sarabia's goal was set-up by fellow

KOHLI TO BE BACK AT NO 3

PTI ■ RAJKOT

skipper Virat Kohli is set to be back at his regular number three position after the strategy of coming two-down boomeranged in the lung-opener as India take on a resolute Australia in the must-win second ODI here on Friday.

India go into the game 0-1 down after Australia registered a 10-wicket win in the lung-opener at Mumbai, courtesy David Warner and Aaron Finch, who hit unbeaten hundreds.

In a bid to field all three in-form players — Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan and KL Rahul —, Kohli dropped himself down the order but the plan backfired spectacularly as he was unable to convert his start.

Opener Dhawan later said he was ready to bat at number three if asked to by the team management, but since Kohli has been successful at that position, the skipper would be more than willing to walk in one-down.

Kohli batting at three also provides stability to the middle-order.

With a concussed Rishabh Pant out of the second game, Rahul is a certainty as he will keep wickets.

So, like in the last game, Rohit and Dhawan, who made a dogged 74 off 91 balls in Wankhede, could open, and there could be a toss-up between Rahul and young Shreyas Iyer at number four. Iyer had a rare failure on Tuesday.

Pant's absence could pave the way for the inclusion of Karnataka batsman Manish Pandey, who made optimum use of the opportunity that he got in the third T20 against Sri Lanka in Pune.

It would also be interesting to see which among the experienced Kedar



India's captain Virat Kohli bats during a practice session AP

Jadhav and rookie Shivam Dube makes the squad.

Rohit, who had a phenomenal 2019, failed in the first game, but given the form he is in, the opener is expected to bounce back strongly here.

Ditto for Kohli, who is just one hundred short of equalling cricket

icon Sachin Tendulkar's record of most hundreds on home soil for India.

The bowlers led by Jasprit Bumrah had a forgettable outing at the Wankhede and they would be more than eager to make a strong comeback and prove their mettle.

Bumrah, since his comeback,

has not been as effective as earlier and he would like to change the perception.

It would be interesting to see whether India play Delhi speedster Navdeep Saini or persist with Shardul Thakur, who gave away 43 runs in Mumbai.

Ravindra Jadeja looks a certainty and so the choice would be between chinaman Kuldeep Yadav, who conceded 55 runs in the first ODI and Yuzvendra Chahal as the lead spinner.

On the other hand, a high on confidence Australia will be looking to seal the issue to register back to back series wins in India, a rare feat for any visiting team. The Finch-Warner combination will look forward to carry the momentum.

Their middle-order comprising the experienced Steve Smith, inform Marnus Labuschagne, Ashton Turner and Alex Carey looks more or less settled.

If all of them fire in unison, along with the openers, then it will hard for the opposition bowlers.

However, it will be quite a test of their middle-order at the Saurashtra Cricket Association stadium.

Australian bowlers also showed at the Wankhede, why they are considered among the best.

Led by pace spearhead Mitchell Starc, they bundled out India for a sub-par 255 and Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins would be raring to go once again.

Spinners Adam Zampa and Ashton Agar, not only contained the runs, but provided crucial breakthroughs and are expected to play a similar role again in the middle overs.

The track here is expected to be

Bhuvneshwar undergoes sports hernia surgery in London, rehab in NCA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Injury-plagued Indian pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar has undergone a sports hernia surgery in London and will begin his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) after returning to the country, the BCCI said on Thursday.

The Board did not specify any timeline for his recovery but it is learnt that he will return to action during the Indian Premier League (IPL), which is scheduled to start on March 29. Bhuvneshwar plays for Sunrisers Hyderabad in the T20 event.

Their middle-order comprising the experienced Steve Smith, inform Marnus Labuschagne, Ashton Turner and Alex Carey looks more or less settled.

"Fast bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar travelled to London on 9th January and underwent a successful sports hernia surgery on 11th January. He was assisted by Team India physiotherapist Yogesh Parmar," read a statement from Board Secretary Jay Shah.

"Bhuvneshwar will now return to India and commence his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru," it added.

He was not named in the T20 squad for the upcoming tour of New Zealand due to the injury.

a belter and India can draw confidence from the home series against New Zealand in 2017, when they won 2-1 after losing the opener, co-incidentally in Mumbai.

In current situation, you should be ready to bat anywhere: Iyer



Shreyas Iyer celebrates with Virat Kohli BCCI/Twitter

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Shreyas Iyer on Thursday said the current competition in the Indian team demands one to bat at any number after he did not get to play at his usual number four spot in the first ODI against Australia.

Iyer returned to India's limited overs set-up following the 2019 World Cup and has done well at number four.

"In this situation, you should be ready to bat at any number because it is really important to play in the team," said Iyer.

(considering) the competition which we have now right now," 25-year-old Iyer told reporters ahead of the second ODI here.

The stylish batsman also said that the team is looking forward to more experimentation.

"We can't give any reasons of batting at any particular number. Yes it is really important for us to be focused and not to cry about why we haven't been batting at a similar position. Experimentation is something we are looking forward to. Hopefully, we will get a good number for each batsman."

"This is the time we should try and experiment things and hopefully it will work-out in the future," said the Mumbaikar.

A middle-order collapse in Mumbai exposed India's weakest link but Iyer said that it was part and parcel of the game.

"Well it happens sometimes and you are not prepared. The country was not prepared to see us collapsing in such situations but it is a part and parcel of the game," said Iyer.

You have to take it in your stride and move forward. As a team we have been doing really well throughout the season and it was just one of the matches where you completely collapsed... There is lot of learning from there," said Iyer.

Need to have a strong character to get better of Kohli: Zampa

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Australian leg-spinner Adam Zampa on Thursday said one needs to have a "strong character" to get the better of a class act like India captain Virat Kohli, who has dismissed six times in limited overs cricket so far.

Zampa said despite enjoying an upperhand over the Indian captain in limited-overs, Kohli is a hard nut to crack.

"It's going to be an attacking approach. I think if you're on the back-foot and have a defensive mindset then that's when he (Kohli) can get on top of you. The most important

thing playing in places like India against these guys is to have a little bit of character," said Zampa ahead of Friday's second ODI here.

Zampa has dismissed Kohli four times in ODIs and twice in T20s.

"You probably know you're going to get hit for boundaries but it can really get worse if you make that affect you. I have got him a few times now but I don't think there is anything in it. He still scores at over 100 (strike rate) against me," the 27-year-old spinner said.

"He is a very hard guy to bowl to. He's one of the toughest guys I've ever had to bowl



Adam Zampa kicks a ball during a practice session AP

to. After game one (first ODI), he will be even more switched on. It will be a big challenge," said Zampa, who has 66 ODIs wickets from 49 games.

Steve Waugh had said in the past that Kohli has not shown enough respect to Zampa, but the leggie disagreed with the former Australia skipper.

"I don't think he (Kohli) doesn't respect me. I don't think that's correct (referring to Waugh's statement)."

Zampa said Australia has managed to find out Kohli's weak point.

"We basically just found that Virat finds leg-spinners

hard to line up early in his innings. He's such a great starter, even the other day he was 16 off 14. How much energy he brought to the crease, his running between the wickets, some of the cover drives he played off the quicks," he said.

"I think it's important to try and have a game plan against him. So we figured out before the last game that it would be good to start with leg-spin to him."

"I've got him out four times in the last year or so it's nice to have that confidence to bowl to him at the start of his innings," said Zampa, who is on his third tour to India.

'India to fight back hard in second game'

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Australia captain Aaron Finch has no doubts that India will "fight back" in the second ODI here Friday after being battered in the series-opener in Mumbai.

Australia gave the hosts a reality check with a crushing 10-wicket win in the lung-opener on Tuesday, riding on David Warner and Finch's unbeaten hundreds.

But Finch said it would be silly to take India lightly as they boast of world-class players.

"That was a pretty good performance. I think our fielding was a little bit sloppy but all in all we are really happy with



Aaron Finch bats during a practice session AP

"They (India) will fight back no doubt. They are a great side, got some world-class players," Finch said talking about what to expect from Friday's match.

Asked about his opening partner's batting display, the Australia skipper said: "He (Warner) is playing unbelievably well I think. It's so hard to bowl to him once he gets in. He hits the ball all around the ground, so stopping him from scoring is so hard."

"He is so clear with how he is going to bat, his footwork is pretty good. His mental state is unbelievable when he is out in the middle. He is so clear with his thoughts and his game. He is in top shape."



Runaway favourites Ind ready for High Five

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

A few precocious talents, a hardworking teenagers and a chunky lot which might fall by the wayside in times to come will form an eclectic 16-team mix in the melting pot called ICC Under-19 World Cup starting on Friday.

Defending champions India will be overwhelming favourites to win the junior global meet for the fifth time with at least six players, including skipper Priyam Garg having played senior cricket (first-class, List A or T20).

Not to forget four players — Yashasvi Jaiswal, Garg, Ravi Bishnoi, Kartik Tyagi—who have already landed fat contracts in the IPL.

India have been the team to beat on the junior cricket circuit since Virat Kohli's team dominated the proceedings in the 2008 edition.

While there will be future stars in Pakistan, Australia, England and New Zealand teams, the presence of Japan and Nigeria will certainly have its own curiosity value.

In fact Japan are clubbed with India, New Zealand and Sri Lanka in group D.

The Japanese team mostly

has South Asian expats with names like Tushar Chaturvedi, Yugandhar Retharekar, Ishan Fartyal, Debasish Sahoo helping out the likes of Kazumasa Takahashi, Masato Morita and Shu Noguchi.

The Nigerian team, which is clubbed in a difficult group comprising Australia, West Indies and England, has more local flavour in the presence of Sylvester Okpe, Oche Boniface, Ifeanyichukwu Uboh and Olayinka Olaleye.

The tournament starts with hosts South Africa taking on Afghanistan in the 'Diamond City' of Kimberley on Friday, followed by Australia's big-ticket game against West Indies on the very next day.

Australia like India have a number of players, who have already played senior level cricket with one prominent name being former death over specialist Ian Harvey's nephew McKenzie Harvey, who has played 2 List A and 13 T20 games.

Similarly England have Ben Charlesworth with an experience of 11 first-class games to his credit while a few of his teammates have also played for their respective counties.

Ireland stun WI by four runs

AFP ■ ST. GEORGE'S

Ireland rode a career-best 95 from opener Paul Stirling before keeping their nerve in a nail-biting final over to pull off a four-run win over world champions West Indies in the first of a three-match Twenty20 series on Wednesday.

The burly Stirling steered Ireland to 208-7 in their 20 overs.

However, the home side appeared comfortably on course for victory — bringing up their hundred inside 10 overs with just two wickets down — until the game was decided in the last over.

Needing 15 to win, all-rounder Josh Little (3-29) got rid of the dangerous Dwayne Bravo, one of two wickets to fall in the last over.

With five needed off the last ball and seven wickets down, Hayden Walsh could only wave his bat into thin air in a desperate attempt to win the game.

It was only Ireland's second victory in T20 cricket over the West Indies who went into the game having swept the ODI series 3-0.

"Everyone is ecstatic, we came so close in that second ODI (lost by one wicket) and it maybe affected us in that third ODI, so to show the bottle and come out against one of the top teams in T20 cricket and get a win was great for the vibe of the team," said Ireland skipper Andrew Balbirnie.

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PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mahendra Singh Dhoni was on Thursday dropped from the BCCI's list of centrally contracted players, raising fresh doubts on the future of the former India captain who has not played since the World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand last year.

The BCCI announced the central contracts for the period of October 2019 to September 2020. The 38-year-old Dhoni was in the A category, which fetches a player Rs 5 crore as annual retainership, until last year.

Skipper Virat Kohli, his white-ball deputy Rohit Sharma and top pacer Jasprit Bumrah were retained in the highest A+ bracket of Rs 7 crore.

Dhoni's contract not being renewed is not exactly a surprise as he has not played a competitive game since that World Cup semifinal on July 9. He has been on a sabbatical and has refused to divulge his future plans.

Head coach Ravi Shastri had recently said that Dhoni may soon end his ODI career but could be in contention for a spot in the T20 World Cup squad provided he does well in the IPL.

Among others, batsman K L Rahul has been promoted from B grade to A. Having lost his place in the Test side

PTI ■ PORT ELIZABETH

World cricketer of the year Ben Stokes survived three reviews by South Africa as he and Ollie Pope regained the initiative for England on the first day of the third Test at St George's Park on Thursday.

England were 224 for four at the end of an attritional day during which South Africa had briefly claimed the advantage.

England were 148 for four when Stokes and Pope came together, in danger of failing to capitalise on batting first on a placid pitch on a hot, sunny day.

But the pair added 76 without being parted and were able to lift a slow scoring rate after England were able to score only 117 for two in 58 overs before tea. Stokes was unbeaten on 38 at the close while Pope made 39 not out.