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NEW DELHI, MONDAY JANUARY 27, 2020; PAGES 16 ₹3

LOVE IS
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Cultural diversity displayed on R-Day

In a first, the PM pays tributes to martyrs at National War Memorial

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Majestic Rajpath reverberated with clap as contingents and tableaux marched on Sunday with the nation celebrating the 71st Republic Day. The parade saw India showcasing its military might with strategic weaponry and exhibition of its history and its rich cultural diversity.

Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro, who was the chief guest for this year's ceremony, watched the dazzling parade at the historic avenue in the national capital as President Ram Nath Kovind took the salute, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and a host of other leaders in attendance.

This was the third time that a Brazilian President was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day.

There were several firsts in the celebration this year, including the PM paying homage at the National War Memorial, display of Chinook and Apache helicopters in the fly past and showcasing of the A-SAT weapons system.

The band played the national anthem with a 21-gun salute in the background when the Tricolour was being unfurled at the Rajpath before the start of parade. Earlier in the day, Modi took to Twitter



The tableaux of different States pass through the Rajpath during the 71st Republic Day Parade in New Delhi on Sunday

Pioneer photo

to extend his greetings to countrymen. "Wishing everyone a happy #RepublicDay. Jai Hind," he tweeted. After Republic Day parade, he waved at the cheering crowd while walked on the

Rajpath. Twenty-two tableaux were on display during the parade, of which 16 were of various States and UTs and six were of Ministries, departments and

the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

Jammu & Kashmir, which participated in the parade for the first time as a Union Territory, had the "Back to

Village" programme as the theme for its tableau.

While Goa's tableau highlighted its biodiversity and "save the frog", its anti-frog poaching campaign, Indian

Air Force's tableau was a scaled down model of Rafale aircraft, Tejas aircraft, Light Combat Helicopters, Akash Missiles System, and Astra Missiles against a sky blue background.

MANY FIRSTS

- 22 tableaux — 16 from States and Union Territories and rest from various Ministries and Departments
- An all-woman bikers contingent of 65 CRPF officers created history and performed nine stellar stunts on 18 Royal Enfield Classic 350s at the grand event
- Defence Research and Development Organisation was represented by an ASAT tableau in this year's parade for the first time
- Helicopters Chinook and Apache also made their debut in the parade
- Dhanush artillery — a towed Howitzer designed indigenously by the Ordnance Factory Board — too made it to the Republic Day parade for the first time
- Trishul formation was carried out by three Advanced Light Helicopters. For the first time, a "tri-service formation" also took part in a Republic Day parade. This was followed by a "Vic" formation of Chinook helicopters

The tableau of the Ministry of Jal Shakti showcased Government's new initiative "Jal Jeevan Mission" which aims to provide a functional tap connection to every rural household by 2024.

The National Disaster Response Force's tableau showcased the cutting-edge technology used by the agency during rescue operations in flood-hit areas and Delhi's Anaj Mandi inferno last year.

The "Dhanush" gun system, commanded by Captain Mrigan Bharadwaj, was part of the celebrations for the first time on Sunday. The gun with a maximum range of 36.5 km has the capability of automat-

ic gun alignment and positioning. Helicopters Chinook and Apache, both recently inducted in the Indian Air Force, also took part in the fly-past for the first time.

The Chinooks can airlift diverse loads in remote locations. It is a heavy lift, twin rotor helicopter which has enhanced IAF's lift capability across a range of military and HADR missions.

The Apache, on the other hand, is a versatile helicopter capable of firing air to air and air to ground missiles, rockets and front gun aided through fire control radar which can unleash havoc on the adversary.

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India in touch with China over 250 Indians stuck in Wuhan

Death toll due to coronavirus in China rises to 56

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Sunday said it is examining "all options" in consultations with the Chinese Government to address the concerns of over 250 stranded Indians, including students, in Wuhan, the epicentre of the fast spreading coronavirus. India has also stepped up vigil in districts bordering Nepal where a person has been found to be affected with the virus.

The death toll due to new coronavirus in China rose to 56 on Sunday with confirmed cases of viral affliction reaching 2,008, including 23 from abroad. The Indian Embassy in Beijing said India has opened a third hotline in view of "large number" of phone calls from the Indians who are mostly stu-



dents.

"In view of the large number of calls received in the two hotline numbers set up by @EOIBeijing in connection with the outbreak of coronavirus infection, @EOIBeijing has decided to open a third hotline number +8618610952903," the Embassy said in a tweet.

The other two hotline numbers are 8618612083629 +8618612083617, the Embassy said. The Embassy has also said it is "examining all options" and

holding consultations with the Chinese to provide relief to the Indians holed up in Wuhan.

"Over the last two days our hotlines have fielded nearly 600 calls to respond to concerns regarding this difficult situation. GoI and @EOIBeijing are also examining all options, including through consultations with the Chinese authorities, to provide relief to our affected citizens," another tweet by the Embassy said.

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FIR against the brains behind Shaheen Bagh stir for hate speeches

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has registered a First Information Report (FIR) on Sunday against Sharjeel Imam, an activist who came in limelight during the ongoing protest in Shaheen Bagh against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the planned National Register of Citizens (NRC).

According to the police, Imam, a resident of Bihar and former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student, delivered "very inflammatory and instigating speeches in his opposition to CAA and NRC". "He had previously delivered one such speech in Jamia Millia Islamia on December 13 last year and thereafter one even more inflammatory against the Government which is being widely circulated on social media," a senior police official said. These speeches have the "potential to harm the religious harmony" and the



unity and integrity of India, for which the case was registered against him, police said.

A sedition case was lodged against Imam on Saturday for a speech he delivered on the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) campus on January 16. The Assam Police has also filed an FIR under the anti-terrorism law UAPA against Imam for his speech.

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ULFA(I) owns up to 4 blasts in Assam on Republic Day

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Banned outfit ULFA (Independent) has claimed responsibility for the four powerful explosions in Assam earlier on Sunday prior to Republic Day celebrations in the State.

The ULFA(I), in a statement signed by Lt Joy Asom of its Publicity Department, claimed that all the four blasts were carried out by the outfit. The Paresh Barua-led ULFA(I), along with a few other militant outfits of the Northeast, had called for a boycott of the Republic Day celebrations in the region.

Three blasts had taken place in Dibrugarh and one in Charaideo districts of Upper Assam in a span of 10 minutes — between 8.15 and 8.25 am on Sunday, a police officer said. There has been no report of any casualty, as Republic Day being a holiday, people were mostly indoors, he said.

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94,000 personnel hit as in-red SSB puts on hold two months allowance

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Funds shortage has hit hard 94,261 officers and jawans of Sashastra Seema Bal, who guard the frontiers along Nepal and Bhutan borders. The SSB has decided to stop the payment of arrears and allowances for the months of January and February due to "paucity of funds." The SSB is barely able to pay the salaries minus the allowances and arrears.

Earlier, the CRPF had stopped ration allowance due to non-sanction of ₹800 crore sought by the force. However, the ration money allowance was said to be resumed subsequent to media reports about stoppage of the same. Allowances like Children Education Allowance, Leave Travel Concession (LTC), leave encashment and Modified Assured Career Progression (MACP) will not be paid to the SSB personnel and they will be entitled only to the salary for



January and February.

"It is informed that available funds under code head 1 salary is hardly sufficient to clear the regular salary bills for the month of January and February, 2020. Therefore, due to paucity of funds, it is requested that available funds under code head 1 salary be earmarked for regular salary bills for 2 months i.e. January and February-2020 only and no other arrears of pay & allowances, ACP/MACP and CEA/LTC/Leave Encashment claims should be preferred," reads the communication issued by the SSB headquarters here on January 23 and sent to all the formations of the force across the country.

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CAPSULE

PROPOSED ANTI-CAA MOVE IN EU HOUSE SLAMMED

New Delhi: The EU Parliament should not take actions that call into question the rights and authority of democratically elected legislatures, official sources said on Sunday ahead of a vote on a resolution against India's new citizenship law. The European Parliament is set to debate and vote on the CAA.

CONG SENDS COPY OF CONSTITUTION TO PM

New Delhi: On the occasion of the 71st Republic Day, the Congress on Sunday sent a copy of the Constitution to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and took a dig at him saying, "when you get time off from dividing the country, please do read it".

VIOLENCE, WEAPONS NOT SOLUTIONS: MODI

New Delhi: Violence never resolves any issue and no problem can be worked out by creating another. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday in his monthly "Mann Ki Baat" — the first of the year.

620-km serpentine anti-CAA human chain in Kerala

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/ KOLKATA / PATNA / LUCKNOW

After Shaheen Bagh like sit-in protests in different parts of the country, now human chains are coming up to oppose the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). On Republic Day, the ruling Left Front held a massive 620-km human chain in Kerala involving millions of protesters, while a 11-km long human chain was held in Kolkata. In Bihar, thousands of people, including a large number of women and children, formed a human chain to protest against CAA-NRC-NPR on Saturday.

The LDF organised the human chain from Kasaragod in north Kerala to Kaliyakkavilai in the southernmost part of the State. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and CPI leader Kanam Rajendran joined the protest in Thiruvananthapuram. The LDF leaders claimed that around 60 to 70 lakh people



Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan forms a human chain as he participates in an anti-CAA protest in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday

PTI

participated in the human chain. The human chain was formed at 4 pm, following which the preamble of the Constitution was read out.

Later, an oath was taken to protect the Constitution from the "attempts of the Central Government" to destroy it. CPI(M) polit bureau members S Ramachandran Pillai was the first link of the 620-km-long human chain at Kasaragod, while MA Baby was the last link at Kaliyakkavilai. Many prominent personalities from all walks of life participated in the human chain. In Kolkata, the United Interfaith Foundation India (UIFI), an inter-faith group organised 11 kilometer human chain from Golpark to Shyambazar.

"We have formed a human chain on Republic Day as we want to drive home the message that we — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains — are one. Everyone stands united as an

Indian citizen and we will never allow anyone to sow the seeds of discord among us," UIFI general secretary Satnam Ahluwalia told PTI.

He said leaders of different communities and members of their communities actively participated in the human chain, covering areas like Park Circus seven-point crossing, Mullick Bazar, Ripon Street-AJC Bose Road crossing, Nonapukur, Raja Bazar and Manikta.

The ruling Trinamool Congress continued its protest against CAA and NRC at four venues in Kolkata. At Rani Rashmoni Avenue, the women's wing on Saturday protested against the remark of Kailash Vijayvargiya, the BJP national general secretary and its Bengal minder, who had said on Thursday that he found the eating habits of some of the construction labourers working at his house in Indore "strange" as they were eating only "poha" (flattened rice).

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Delhi will vote for BJP on Feb 8, says Tiwari

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the political parties going all out to woo voters in the high voltage Delhi Assembly elections, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Manoj Tiwari took out a massive roadshow in support of Ghonda Assembly constituency BJP candidate Ajay Mahawar.

Appealing to the public to make BJP victorious in the upcoming Assembly elections, the star campaigners raised slogans in support of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and then toured the area in roadshow. Delhi BJP leaders, District and Mandal office bearers, Councilors along with thousands of BJP supporters and local citizens participated in the roadshow.

"The time has come when the Delhi will vote for BJP on February 8 to make it victorious. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, many positive changes have taken place due



Home Minister Amit Shah during a roadshow in Ghonda Assembly seat



Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari during a campaign

people of Delhi are ready to support BJP with the slogan Bahut Ho Gaya Dilli Ka Nuksaan, Ab Bhajapa Karegi Iska Samadhan," said Tiwari.

Replying to the questions on Twitter, Delhi BJP Chief said, "No one can win elections only on publicity. The party which solves the problems of the people will win the elections and BJP has solved the problems of the people and as a result BJP will get majority in Delhi Assembly Elections. Kejriwal spent crores on advertisements for his self promotion but did not do anything to curb pollution in Delhi."

Appealing to the people of Greater Kailash Assembly seat to vote for BJP, he said, "After coming to power, BJP will install 60 smog towers to curb pollution in Delhi. The cost of these smog towers is not very high. AAP only believes in making promises and when the time comes for fulfilling them then it makes more new promises. BJP is such a party which works for good governance and to win the trust of the people."

to which development works have been completed. BJP is reaching out to every house with the message Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and ensuring that the benefits of the Central Government schemes reached to the poorest person. BJP pledges to change Delhi after changing

the country," said Manoj Tiwari.

Tiwari further claimed that the AAP Government has failed to improve public facilities in the national Capital. Though Arvind Kejriwal failed to do anything, he issued advertisements of crores not only in Delhi but in other states to buttress his claim. Even the Congress Party tried to mislead the people and its leaders are busy supporting the people who are protesting against CAA and creating an atmosphere of anarchy. Whenever BJP has tried to solve the problems of Delhi, AAP played dirty politics and now Kejriwal Government

will have to pay for it. The way Congress and AAP playing dirty politics of appeasement, they will be defeated in this election too. They should not forget how they were rejected by the people municipal corporation and Loksabha Elections, Tiwari added.

Besides, Tiwari also held a Twitter Chaupal on Sunday in the Greater Kailash Assembly in a get together with the people of constituency. Talking and replying to the people, Tiwari said, 'Bhajapa Dil Mein, Bhajapa Dilli Mein'. People are now bored by the dramas of Kejriwal. "For the last five years,

Kejriwal used to accuse the Centre every morning and when he failed to attract the attention of the people, he sat on 'Dharna' at Lieutenant Governor (LG) house. But all these tactics of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government have failed because the people have completely rejected him. The

It's AAP vs BJP in Mehrauli

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Voters of South Delhi's Mehrauli Assembly seat, surrounded by villages and posh localities, gave mixed responses for Delhi Assembly election slated for February 8. The residents of constituency, which covers half of Saket, Mehrauli, Kishan Garh and Vasant Kunj localities were impressed with Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) developmental works especially water supply in their areas. The constituency which has most of the urban areas and some villages is a fight between Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and AAP candidates. Though due to works done by the AAP candidate is a clear advantage to him in this election.

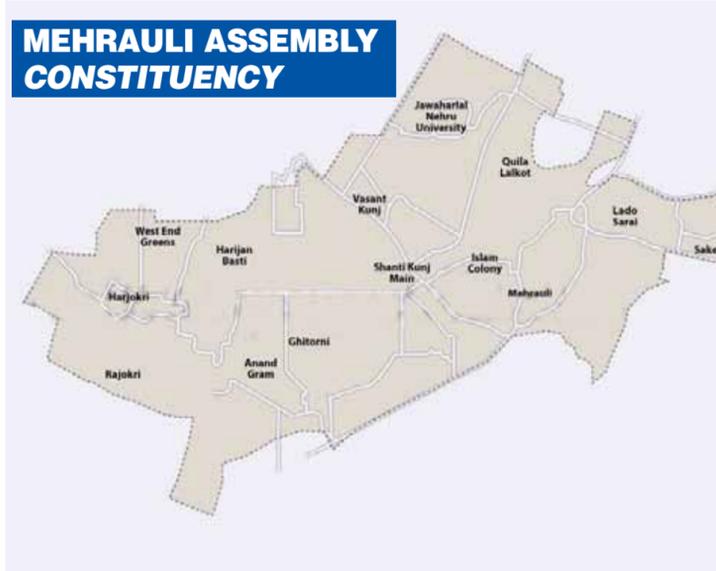
The AAP has once again fielded Naresh Yadav, a sitting MLA whereas BJP has fielded Kusum Khatri and Congress has brought Mohinder Choudhary, a Jat candidate to contest election in Mehrauli constituency.

Focusing his work on the lower-income groups, Yadav, a local from Rajokri village has a good vote bank of urban areas, JJ clusters and his village whereas Khatri, a Jat candidate have support of several villages including Lado Sarai, Kishan Garh, Masoodpur which have Jat population. The disadvantage to Congress and BJP is split of rural votes as both the candidates belong to Jat community.

As many as 1,13,366 are expected to exercise their voting rights from the Mehrauli constituency in the upcoming Assembly elections on February 8. There are around 16 per cent of Dalit voters



Cong's Mohinder Choudhary Photo: Ranjan Dimri



ELECTION	MEMBER	PARTY
1993	Brahm Singh Tanwar	Bharatiya Janata Party
1998	Brahm Singh Tanwar	Bharatiya Janata Party
2003	Balram Tanwar	Indian National Congress
2008	Balram Tanwar	Indian National Congress
2013	Parvesh Verma	Bharatiya Janata Party
2015	Naresh Yadav	Aam Aadmi Party

and 25000 Muslim voters in the area. From 1993 to 2003, the segment which covers half of Saket, Mehrauli, Kishan Garh and Vasant Kunj localities, was a BJP bastion under former MLA Brahm Singh Tanwar, a Gujjar by caste. In 2003, the constituency was taken over by the Congress for another six years following which the BJP's Pravesh Verma reinstated the BJP in the segment in 2013. Now, Naresh Yadav has been representing the AAP since 2015.

"Yadav has done works in the area especially 500 water connections in the houses. Sanitation has been improved in the area and the most

important, CCTVs has been installed in the area," said Rajesh Arora, a resident in ward no-8, Mehrauli.

"Our ward will vote for AAP again as they have solved most of the issues in the constituency and we hope there will be more development works if Yadav wins again. Our MLA was visible in the area," said Sunita, a resident of ward-8 Mehrauli.

Whereas, there was support for AAP in few wards in the areas some residents alleged that there are still bumpy roads and some open sewers which are inviting untoward incident anytime.

The posh Vasant Kunj, which comes in Mehrauli con-

stituency, has a mixed population, housing government employees and including many non-residents of Delhi.

"We will vote for Arvind Kejriwal due to his work on education and health services. Though a lot of development work which includes potholes on roads, leaking sewers, water logging is yet to be done in our constituency but we hope that AAP will resolve our pending issues in their next term," said Amresh Khanna, a resident of Vasant Kunj area.

Meanwhile in rural areas which come under the Mehrauli constituency, the votes are divided between Khatri and Choudhary as most of the villages are Jat domi-

nated and this clearly gives advantage to Yadav.

"Villagers always see the candidate and now it is a Jat who is contesting from BJP, so our vote will go for Khatri," said Dharamraj, a resident of Massodpur village.

Meanwhile, in Mehrauli, the villagers said that the votes will go for Choudhary as he will develop Mehrauli village which is being neglected by every government when it comes on development in the area.

Congress candidate, Choudhary who is a resident of Mehrauli village said that Yadav was not visible in the area and people don't know even his face.

"There is shortage of water in the area as water comes on weekly basis and Yadav has not even built a school or college in the area. The roads are broken and there are no street lights in several areas. Nothing has been done for the welfare for residents. There are still lots of work to be done in the area," alleged Choudhary.

Meanwhile, Kusum Khatri alleged that AAP MLA Yadav was not visible in the area and has done nothing in Rajokri, Mehrauli and Kishan Garh areas to resolve resident issues. Khatri also alleged that Choudhary is a gujjar by caste and to lure Jat votes, which are 30 percent in the area, he presents himself as Jat.

Raghav Chadha holds Jan Ashirwad Yatra

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Leaving no stone unturned to retain Rajinder Nagar Assembly constituency, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate Raghav Chadha has started 'aggressive' campaigning in areas falls under the constituency. The party workers are also visiting door to door in support of party candidate and making people aware of the development works being done by the AAP Government in last five year.

AAP's Vijender Garg had won from the seat in 2015 by defeating R P Singh of the BJP. The AAP had secured more than 53 per cent votes in 2015 Assembly election.

Chadha who also contested Lok Sabha polls from South Delhi said "Everyone agree that CM Arvind Kejriwal will come back and help the pace of development further."

On Sunday, party senior leader Bhagwant Mann accompanied Raghav Chadha in 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' held on Sunday in areas under the constituency. Hundreds of party supporters joined him and danced to the official campaign song 'Lage Raho Kejriwal'.

The rally started from campaign office in Rajinder Nagar and passed through Old Rajinder Nagar Market, DDA flats, Sindhi park towards 34 block, Super Market, Salwan Marg and finally ending at Shankar Road.

The rally saw upwards of

500 bikes, cars, E-rickshaws decorated in Aam Aadmi Party colours. The convoy was welcomed with flower showers when passing through residential areas, and the leaders were garlanded by supporters at various stops.

One of the volunteers who was part of the rally said, "We are doing aggressive door to door campaign and contacting people of various political spectrums. Everyone agrees that CM Arvind Kejriwal will return as CM and help further the pace of development that has started under his leadership."

Many local residents also joined the rally. Vinay Bansal, a resident of the area said, "I recognised Raghav bhैया from our neighbourhood and joined the rally. I am very glad that Rajinder Nagar has young and educated person who will become our MLA."

Addressing the gathering, Raghav said, "I am grateful to CM Arvind Kejriwal and the AAP leadership for placing their faith in me. I am overwhelmed with the love and support that I have been receiving during this election campaign. The love and blessings I am getting from people of the constituency is absolutely heartwarming. They are like my family and they are treating me like their son. Having been born and raised in Rajinder Nagar with familial ties across the constituency. I feel like serving the people here would be nothing short serving my own family," he said.

31 Delhi Police personnel awarded police medals

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Thirty one officers and personnel of Delhi Police have been awarded Police Medals for their services. While, 12 have been awarded Police Medal for Gallantry, two will receive President's Police Medal for 'distinguished service' and 17 will be awarded President's Police Medal for 'meritorious service' on the occasion of Republic Day.

The recipients of the Gallantry Medal are Omvir Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Pramod Singh Kushwah DCP (Special Cell), Dr Hemant Tiwari, ACP, Inspector Manish Joshi, Inspector Pooran Chandra Yadav, Inspector Sanjeev Kumar Yadav, Inspector Umesh Barthwal, Inspector Sunil Kumar, Inspector Amul Tyagi, Sub-Inspector (SI), Yashpal Singh, SI Mukesh Singh and Assistant SI Gulab Singh.

DCP (Special Cell) Kushwah and Inspector Amul Tyagi played instrumental role in arrest of most wanted ter-



Dinesh Keshav, ACP-PHQ



Hemant Tiwari ACP



Insp Sunil Kumar



Inspector Amul Tyagi



Inspector Manish Joshi



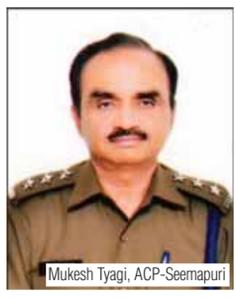
Inspector Sanjeev Yadav



Kumar Gyanesh, Addl. DCP 1-SE distt.



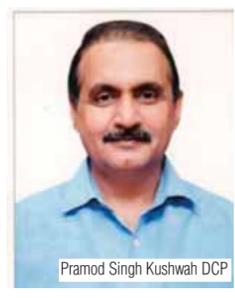
Mohammad Ali, Addl. DCP-Vigilance



Mukesh Tyagi, ACP-Seemapuri



Omvir Singh DCP



Pramod Singh Kushwah DCP



Ram Kuma Rathi, ACP-Sarai Rohilla



Ram Mehar Singh, ACP-Sadar Bazar



Tamang Hibu, Addl CP-Security

rorist, ex-cadre of SIMI and the brain behind creation of terrorist outfit Indian Mujahiddin (IM) identified as Abdul

Subhan Qureshi, after a daring face-to-face encounter, which took place on January 20, 2018 at Paper Market, Delhi's

Gazipur area. While, Hibu Tamang, Additional Commissioner of Police, who is posted in

Security Unit of Delhi Police and SI Chitra have been awarded with President's Police Medal for distinguished

service. Mohammad Ali, the DCP (Licensing), Kumar Gyaesh, Additional DCP (South-east),

ACP Mehar Singh, ACP Ram Kumar Rathi, ACP Mukesh Tyagi, ACP Dinesh Keshav and Inspector Manoj Kumar

Sharma are among the 17 who have been awarded with Police Medal for their meritorious services.

'CAA is BJP move to influence polls'



The brains behind the successful implementation of free coaching under Jay Bheem Mukhyamantri Yojana and many other social welfare schemes of Delhi Government, Social Welfare Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam is contesting election for the second time from Seemapuri seat. Gautam spoke to *The Pioneer's* Gayathri Mani on hosts of issues that AAP is banking upon to return to the power in Delhi.

Do you think Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) kept its promises with the youth that it had made in 2015 election manifesto?

Since day one, AAP has kept its promise and about 95 per cent of the promises made by party have been fulfilled. There are some promises which will be completed soon. More than 20,000 rooms have been constructed in public schools which are equal to 5,000 new schools, new engineering institute Netaji Shubhash Technical University has been opened, new education blocks have been opened in the already existing schools and faculties. There is a proposal to start 25 Skill Development Centres (SDC), seven are already functional.

What is your take on scholarships to poor students and free coaching to them?

Jai Bheem Mukhyamantri Pratibha Vikas Yojana, started for the Scheduled Caste (SC) / Scheduled Tribe (ST) students but has already been extended to all the students coming Economically Weaker Section. Another programme has been launched recently for the SC, ST students to study overseas in universities abroad. The online process to apply will take about six month to get completed, so we have started offline process so that more students can avail the facility.

What are the main issues in

this election?

Pollution is biggest issue in Delhi. I believe, this issue should not be politicised. Pollution will be curbed, if everyone comes together because it is crucial matter which is affecting everyone be it a member of BJP, AAP and common man. Centre and Municipal Corporations is led by BJP and Delhi Government is with AAP, irrespective of one political agenda, we should come together to curb pollution in the national capital.

Seemapuri is underdeveloped area and crime is a major issue here? Do you think Delhi Police has been successful in maintaining law and order in your constituency?

First of all, it is not underdeveloped. All the colonies except few streets and slum clusters are developed and are authorised colonies. Sewer, electricity and water pipeline are laid down including slum areas and sewer lines has been laid wherever is possible. The biggest issues in my constituency are snatching, theft, pick pocketing and selling of narcotics. The area is situated in border and theft incident is increasing and our initiative of CCTV installation has helped to control many incidents. But the police have done nothing, I submitted many representations and met both DCP and LG but no action has been taken to curb criminal activities in the area.

What are the promises that you want to make to your voters?

My promise is to make my constituency free from traffic congestion, pedestrianisation and waterlogging issue will be addressed. In the last five years, the police have not done much to curb drug menace in the area. This time we will involve public and take their suggestions to curb such incidents. Adult education will be provided for the drop outs and seminar and counseling will be provided for youths to lead a good life and focus on education.

Do you think AAP Government has done enough than any other previous Government regarding social sectors especially reaching out to the weaker sections?

If you see, the developmental and infrastructure work done in the authorized colony in the last five year, no government has done such work and initiatives. About ₹8,000 crore have been spent to lay road, sewer and water pipeline in the hundreds of un-authorized colonies. Free coaching

under Jay Bheem, Free Bus ride, CCTV is a historic initiative brought by AAP. Sewer cleaning machines to curb manual scavenging and initiatives to clean septic tank by Delhi Jal Board is also in process. No Government can compete AAP in terms of development.

How do you see the demolition of the Sant Ravidas Temple? You blamed BJP why?

Because, the BJP hurts the sentiments of the people by demolishing the ancient temple. When we protested, it allowed 400 meter plot but why it first demolished the temple by hurting the sentiments of people? The opposition did it on purpose to create unrest in the society.

How will the party perform in SC/ reserved seats? You replaced one from Bawana.

The performance of the party will be good and the party will win all the seats. The candidate Jay Bhagwan Upkar who has been given ticket from area is also a strong candidate and has been a counselor. No leader is replaced without a reason; the party sees the work done, takes people suggestion, conducts survey and decides. I welcome the party's decision and the party will perform well in all the reserved seats. Out of 70 seats, 68 plus is expected.

What is your opinion on NRC and CAA, because Home Minister Amit Shah said people who oppose it are Anti-Dalit?

First, the NRC and CAA is planned move by the BJP to impact Jharkhand and Delhi elections but it is BJP which will be losing voters. They demolished Saint Ravidas temple. During the protest against the protest, dalits were beaten and arrested and yet they call others anti-dalit. PM Modi says there will be no NRC and Shah says NRC will be initiated. People are scared of NRC more than CAA. There is no need of NRC and CAA. The people who are protesting are Indians not outsiders. BJP wants to take away the right to vote of people, if NRC is amended then dalits, minorities and labour class will be largely affected as they do not have papers to prove their citizenship. About 80 per cent of the people do not have papers and they will be called as refugees and their fundamental rights will be taken, thus CAA and NRC are anti-constitutional acts which should not be amended. It is a tool to divide Hindus and Muslims. Why BJP always creates unrest in the country during elections?

Kejriwal accuses Shah of insulting people of Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday accused Union Home Minister Amit Shah of insulting people of Delhi during his daily campaigning for the upcoming election.

Kejriwal said in the last five years, the people of Delhi have worked very hard to improve our city. "Two Crore people of Delhi got together to fix our schools, hospitals, electricity and water supply. But Amit Shah comes daily and makes fun of the hard work of the people of Delhi in the last five years," he said.

While campaigning a few days back, Shah said there is no CCTV cameras were installed in government schools. Other states of the country have results in the range of 40 to 50 per cent. People of Delhi are proud of their children's success," he added.

Referring the statement of Home Minister in which he said that the state of education in Delhi is very poor, he said "When children and teachers saw this statement on TV, they felt very bad. Many parents came to me and said that they felt very bad when they heard your statement. What would



parents of these children worked hard with the children staying awake all through the night. 65000 teachers of Delhi government worked hard on the children," he said.

"In the history of India, no state has ever had a pass percentage higher than 96 per cent in government schools. Other states of the country have results in the range of 40 to 50 per cent. People of Delhi are proud of their children's success," he added.

He claimed that his party has surveyed around 200 jhuggis of Choocha Bhatti and had prepared a report on it.

have been good politics is if you had learned from the people of Delhi and improved the schools of UP and Haryana as well. Why go so far? You should fix the school of MCD first," he added.

Hitting out at Home Minister, the Chief Minister said "Your people are saying that the people of Delhi are 'bikau' because Delhiites get free electricity, water, bus service, schools and hospitals. Due to the policies of your central government, there is so much inflation in the country. It has become difficult for a common man to survive. So if the government of Delhi made people's electricity, water free to give them some respite from inflation, does it make the people of Delhi 'bikau'? This is absolutely wrong."

Goel to hold padyatra, to stay in slums

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to garner votes and retain power in Delhi Assembly elections 2020, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Vijay Goel will conduct padyatra and do night stay in the slum clusters located around Mayur Vihar area on

Monday in support of BJP candidate Ravi Negi.

Goel had also recently stayed at Choocha Bhatti Jhuggi, Keerti Nagar. "Aam Aadmi party (AAP) has lied through its teeth and all these false claims fall apart when one visits these Jhuggis.

There is a lack of basic amenities such as proper facilities for water or toilets.

He claimed that his party has surveyed around 200 jhuggis of Choocha Bhatti and had prepared a report on it.





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CORONAVIRUS

29K fliers screened till Sunday: Health Ministry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 29,700 passengers from 137 flights screened for novel coronavirus infection at seven identified airports in the country till Sunday but no positive case was detected, the Union Health Ministry said.

"Total of 29,707 passengers from 137 flights screened. 4,359 passengers of 22 flights screened today. No case of #coronavirus found till date," the ministry tweeted.

Over 100 people have been kept under observation in Kerala and Maharashtra following screening for a possible exposure to novel coronavirus (nCoV) as the Prime Minister's Office on Saturday reviewed India's preparedness to deal with any situation amid mounting global concern over rising cases in China.

"In response to confirmed case of #nCoV2019 in #Nepal, India has stepped up vigil in

districts bordering Nepal. Health Teams deployed at BOP with Nepal at Jhulaghat and Jauljibi, Dist Pithoragarh, #Uttarakhand," another tweet by the Ministry said.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Saturday said samples of seven passengers have been sent to the ICMR-NIV laboratory in Pune.

One person each from Thrissur, Thiruvananthapuram, Pathanamthitta and Malappuram and three from Ernakulam are in isolation wards of various health centres in Kerala.

The Union Health Minister has directed multidisciplinary central teams to go to the designated airports in New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi where thermal screening is being done.

Vardhan, who held a review meeting to analyse the preparedness for prevention

and management of nCoV in India, also spoke to Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat and assured him of all support for screening at the border with Nepal.

Vardhan has urged the passengers who have a travel history to China since January 1, 2020, to report to their nearest health facility if they experience any symptoms such as fever, cough, respiratory distress, etc.

On Saturday, the Union Health Ministry also issued a fresh advisory asking the passengers to follow certain dos and don'ts if they are in China or travelling or returning from China. The advisory stated that during their stay in China, if they feel sick and have fever and cough, they should cover their mouth while coughing and sneezing, seek medical attention promptly and report to the Indian Embassy in China.

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT

Women read preamble to Constitution during protest rally

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Hundreds of women, accompanied by children, on Sunday took out a "tiranga yatra" against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) here in Gujarat during which they recited the Preamble to the Constitution.

The police had given permission for the protest march on the occasion of the 71st Republic Day on the condition that no man will participate, an organising member claimed.

The protesters started from the Ajit Mill compound in Rakhial locality, the venue of the anti-citizenship law demonstrations since the last two weeks, and marched till Vir Abdul Hamid Chowk, a distance of around 2 kms, before returning to the starting point.

"We had sought permission for the women-only tiranga rally to mark the Republic Day celebrations, which was granted by the police on the condition that men will not participate. Police had asked us to not mix the tiranga rally with the anti-CAA protest," activist Kalim Siddiqui said, adding

that a few men remained present as volunteers.

While the protesters didn't shout any anti-CAA slogans during the march, they chanted the preamble to the Constitution, he claimed.

"Women participants unfurled the tricolour and recited the preamble to the Constitution throughout the rally," he said.

Siddiqui further said that volunteers engaged children with various competitions at the site of the protest who also recited the preamble to the Constitution in Urdu.

Siddiqui said a sit-in to support the Shaheen Bagh gathering in Delhi has been going on at the mill compound where "90 per cent participants are women."

"We will wind up the protest when it is done so in Shaheen Bagh," he said.

Thousands of people, including women and children, have been protesting since December 15 at Shaheen Bagh and nearby Jamia Millia Islamia against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

European Parl to debate on anti-CAA resolution

London: The European Parliament is set to debate and vote on a motion tabled by a large chunk of its members against India's new citizenship law, which it alleges marks a "dangerous shift" in the country's citizenship regime.

A total of six resolutions have been tabled by groups within the European Union (EU), including the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D), Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) (PPE), Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Verts/ALÉ), European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR), Renew Europe Group (Renew) and European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) Group.

The resolutions have a similar theme with a number of them, such as the GUE/NGL Group, also making a reference to the revocation of Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. They are set to be debated in the European Parliament in

Brussels next Wednesday and voted on the day after.

Official sources in New Delhi on Sunday said the EU Parliament should not take actions that call into question the rights and authority of democratically elected legislatures.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is a matter entirely internal to India and the law was adopted through democratic means after a public debate in both houses of Parliament, they said.

The Indian government has stressed that the new Act does not deny any citizenship rights but has been brought in to protect the oppressed minorities of neighbouring countries and provide them citizenship.

PTI

that call into question the rights and authority of democratically elected legislatures, official sources said on Sunday ahead of a vote on a resolution against India's new citizenship law.

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The European Parliament is set to debate and vote on a resolution tabled by some of its members against the CAA which it says marks a "dangerous shift" in the country's citizenship regime. The resolution, tabled by the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) Group in Parliament earlier this week, is set to be debated next Wednesday and voted on the day after.

PTI

EU parl shouldn't take actions that question authority of democratically elected legislatures: Official sources

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PTI

PM Modi has taken steps to catapult India to 'Vishwa Guru' status: UP Min

Mathura (UP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi had taken several steps to catapult India to the status of "Vishwa Guru" (world leader), Uttar Pradesh minister Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary said on Sunday.

"Let us pledge to strengthen the hands of the prime minister, who has gone ahead to elevate India to the status of a world leader, as it would be a fitting tribute to those who laid down their lives for the country," the minister for dairy, fisheries and animal husbandry said while addressing police personnel and civilians at the Police Lines here, after unfurling the national flag.

Quoting Ati Bahari Vajpayee, he said the former Prime Minister had said if the word "mata" (mother) was taken out of "Bharat Mata", India too would become an ordinary piece of land.

Recalling the contributions of freedom fighter Roshan Singh, who hailed from Shahjahanpur district, Chaudhary said prior to the execution of his death sentence, when his mother expressed regret that his son was not even married, Singh had said the next day he would be married to the guillotine.

PTI

CM Yogi reminds people of their constitutional duties

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday reminded people of their constitutional duties.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the Foundation Day programme of the state at the Awadh Shilp Gram here, he said, "The Constitution has given us a lot. Therefore, we should feel proud of it. We talk about our constitutional rights, but not about our duties. Along with the rights, the Constitution tells us about our duties too."

India is among the few democratic countries in the world that gave voting rights to every adult citizen immediately after the Constitution came into force. "The welfare of the country and the society would be possible only when the citizens discharged their duties honestly, the chief minister said.

The three-day programme had begun on January 24, a statement issued by the Uttar Pradesh government said. "This programme was a platform for not only the artisans of Lucknow, but those from different regions of the state," Adityanath said.

Reminding the gathering that Uttar Pradesh was the land of civilisation and culture, he said, "We can give a lot to the country and the world. For this, the 23 crore people of Uttar Pradesh will have to discharge their constitutional duties with honesty. When every person uses his full potential, Uttar Pradesh will be among the leading states in the country."

PTI

BJP-TMC clash during rally in Bengal's Hooghly

PTI ■ SERAMPORE (WB)

Clashes erupted between activists of the Trinamool Congress and the BJP when the saffron party took out a rally in support of the Citizenship Amendment Act in West Bengal's Hooghly district on Sunday, police said.

The incident occurred when the BJP rally from Serampore reached Dankuni More, a police officer said.

Both the BJP and the TMC have claimed that three of their party cadres were injured in the clashes.

Chandernagore police commissioner Humayun Kabir said that both the parties have lodged FIRs against each other and an investigation into the incident is on.

Constitutional ethos and brotherhood under attack: MP CM

PTI ■ INDORE

Culture of brotherhood and Constitutional values is currently under attack in India, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath said here on Sunday against the backdrop of anti-citizenship law protests in various states.

Addressing the first conference on the Constitutional rights of indigenous people of Central India in Indore, which was also attended by NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Nath said the culture of India and the Congress is to foster brotherhood.

"The culture of India and the Congress is to bind hearts together and keep brotherhood intact. We bind people of all religions and castes. But today that culture of ours and the Constitutional values is under attack. You all have to protect it," Nath said in a veiled attack on the BJP-led Central government.

The veteran Congress leader expressed his gratitude to tribals for installing his party in power in Madhya Pradesh in December, 2018.

"We came to power in MP (after the assembly elections) with the help of the tribal community. We will create history in protecting the rights of tribals," he said.

Nath also said his government had taken steps to generate jobs for the tribal youth. "A new policy would be chalked out for tribal blocks," he added. Nath said tribals will start getting justice once they raise their voice for their rights. He also called upon the tribal community to keep their "traditional culture" alive in the age of social media.

Nath, who also heads the state Congress unit, paid tributes to martyred tribal freedom fighter Tantia Bhil to mark his 178th birth anniversary.

Rally: Cops resort to baton-charge, lob tear gas after stone-pelting

Jabalpur (MP): Stones were hurled at police personnel holding talks with a group of pro-CAA rallyists by some unidentified persons on Sunday evening in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur, prompting them to resort to baton charge and lob tear gas shells, a district official said.

The incident occurred in the evening near Anand Nagar bus stop when a pro-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 'Tiranga March' was moving towards Raddi Chowk in Gohalpur area, District Collector Bharat Yadav said.

"The Tiranga rally was permitted from Birsia Munda Square in Adhartal locality to Raddi Chowk in Gohalpur. However, the administration moved in to stop the rally ahead of Raddi Chowk as some minority community women were holding an anti-CAA protest there," Yadav said.

While authorities were asking the pro-CAA rallyists to not move ahead to Raddi Chowk, some unidentified persons hurled stones at the officials present there, leading to a melee, he said.

"Police resorted to lathi-charge and lobbed tear gas shells to restore order. CCTV footage of the area is being checked to identify the stone-pelters," the collector said.

The situation is under control now and extra police personnel have been deployed at the site of incident to maintain order, he added.

PTI

ULFA(I) owns up to 4 blasts in Assam on...

From Page 1

The first blast was reported outside a shop at Teokhat in Sonari police station area of Charaideo district.

Three explosions followed soon after in Dibrugarh district -- two at Graham Bazar and AT Road, beside a gurudwara, and another at the oil town of Duljiana Tinali, just 100 metres from the local police station. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Padmanabh Barua told PTI.

CCTV footages available at Duljiana Tinali showed two motorcycle-borne youths lobbing a grenade and speeding away, the ASP explained.

The blasts at Graham Bazar and AT Road were carried out with time-induced Improvised Explosive Devices, he stated.

Taking to Twitter, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal condemned the blasts and vowed to take strong action against the culprits.

"Strongly condemn the bomb blasts in a few places of Assam. This cowardly attempt to create terror on a sacred day only exhibits the frustration of the terror groups after their total rejection by the people. Our Govt will take the sternest action to bring the culprits to book," he tweeted.

620-km serpentine...

From Page 1

The Opposition parties, including the CPM and the Congress, also organised separate protests across West Bengal and took oath to uphold the Constitution.

On the occasion of the Republic Day, Left-wing students of universities and colleges in the city took out a rally from Nakhoda Masjid to Jorasanko, the birthplace of Rabindranath Tagore. Protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the proposed NRC, they took a pledge that "they will not allow the country to be divided again". "Nakhoda Masjid represents cosmopolitan and inclusive character of Kolkata on Eid and other festivals while Tagore began his 'padayatra' against partition of Bengal from Jorasanko to Baghbazar in 1905. Hence, in the troubled times, we chose the two places," Sayan Chakraborty, a student of Presidency University, said.

Anti-CAA protesters in Lucknow's Ghanatghar area celebrated the Republic Day by hoisting the Tricolour and reading out the preamble to the Constitution. Meraj Haider, a protester, said, "The day started with the hoisting of the flag at Ghanatghar (Clock Tower), which was followed by the rendering of songs by those gathered there. The preamble to the Constitution was also read out." He said it was a unique day as people from different walks of life gathered at Ghanatghar in large numbers to protest the CAA and the NRC. Rajiv Yadav, a member of the Rihai Manch that backed the protest, said the agitation against the CAA-NRC-NPR at the Ghanatghar have assumed an artistic dimension.

In Bihar, on Saturday five Left parties formed one-hour human chain in Patna and district headquarters demand withdrawal of CAA and protest on proposed NRC. CPI(ML) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, CPI state secretary Satya Narayan Singh, CPM leaders Subhashini Ali and Sarvoday Sharma joined the human chain in Patna. Leaders from Congress, Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) and Rashtriya Lok Samata Party and Vikasheel Insaan Party also joined the human chain organized from Buddha Smriti Park to Gandhi Maidan in Patna.

Cultural diversity...

From Page 1

Captain Tania Shergill, a fourth generation Army officer, led the marching contingent of the Corps of Signals. Keeping up with the pace of technical advancement in the 21st Century, the Corps of Signals has effectively achieved electronic and information superiority to empower the Indian Army against adversaries.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday paid homage to the fallen soldiers at the newly-built National War Memorial here on the Republic Day for the first time instead of the Amar Jawan Jyoti beneath the India Gate arch. The iconic memorial in the India Gate complex behind the canopy was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 25 last year.

Amar Jawan Jyoti is symbolised by an inverted bayonet and soldier's helmet over it with an eternal flame burning beside it. It was built in 1972 underneath the India Gate arch to commemorate soldiers martyred in the Indo-Pak War of 1971.

Spread over an area of approximately 40 acres, National War Memorial comprises four concentric circles, namely — the "Amar Chakra", "Veerta Chakra", "Tyag Chakra" and the 'Rakshak Chakra' with names of 25,942 soldiers inscribed in golden letters on granite tablets.

It also includes a central 15.5-m obelisk, an eternal flame and six bronze murals depicting famous battles fought by the Indian Army, Air Force and the Navy in a covered gallery (Veerta Chakra).

The memorial is dedicated to soldiers killed during the Indo-China War in 1962, Indo-Pak Wars in 1947, 1965 and 1971, Indian Peace Keeping Force Operations in Sri Lanka and in the Kargil Conflict in 1999, and also those in the UN peacekeeping missions.

The 42 m-high India Gate was built during the British Raj as the All India War Memorial Arch to honour the soldiers who died in the First World War (1914-1918) and the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919). The landmark has the names of soldiers inscribed on its surface.

Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal were among those who attended the celebrations.

Vijayan seeks suitable monetary compensation from Nepal Govt to kin of 8 deceased tourists

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, he said their untimely deaths has been a "severe blow to their families." "Prima facie, it is clear that there has been negligence on the part of the service providers and there appears to be failure of regulatory mechanisms which ought to have been in place," Vijayan said in the letter.

PTI

FIR against the brains...

From Page 1

Imam was seen in a video that has gone viral on the social media delivering inflammatory speeches against CAA and NRC outside Jamia. Imam was heard saying in an audio clip that Assam should be cut off from the rest of India and taught a lesson, as Bengalis — both Hindus and Muslims — are being killed or put into detention centres. He reportedly said if he can organise five lakh people, it would become possible to "perma-

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the share certificate nos. 6035 for 500 Shares having distinctive nos. 447382321-447382820 in Folio no. 5828 of Apollo Tyres Ltd., Registered in the name of Harkirat Mann & Parminder Mann is reported to be lost and the company has received application for issue of duplicate share certificates. If no objection from any interested person is received by the company within 15 days from the publication hereof the company will proceed to issue duplicate share certificates to the applicants.

Dated : 27.01.2020
Place : New Delhi

Name & Address of Shareholder
Harkirat Mann & Parminder Mann
3399, Pusa Gate,
New Delhi-110008

94,000 personnel hit as in-red SSB puts on...

From Page 1

The letter further said, "It is requested not to entertain RPT (repeat) not to entertain any other claims except regular bills of January 7 February-2020.

This issues with the approval of IG (Administration), FHQ (Force Headquarters), New Delhi."

Without denying the move, a peeved SSB Director General Kumar Rajesh Chandra said, "Write whatever you wish to, I don't care."

Earlier, Chandra did not respond to a text message seeking the reasons for the paucity of funds leading to the stoppage of the allowances and arrears of the force's personnel and a timeline for restoration of the dues under allowances and arrears of pay.

The copy of the letter has been sent to SSB formations in Lucknow, Patna, Guwahati, Tezpur, Ranikhet, Siliguri, Srinagar, Bhilai, Jammu and

India in touch with...

From Page 1

The reference to "all options" was seen as a pointer to explore the option to evacuate the stranded Indians. About 700 Indian students are believed to have been enrolled into several universities in the city and surrounding areas.

Wuhan along 12 other cities have been completely sealed by the Chinese authorities to stop the virus from spreading.

While the majority of the Indian students, mostly medical students reported to have left a few weeks ago to avail the Chinese New Year holidays, over 250 to 300 are still reportedly stayed put in the city causing concerns to them and their parents back home about their safety.

A number of Indian PHD students also studied in different universities in Wuhan and the surrounding areas.

Some students managed to leave before the city just before it was sealed off on January 23.

The Indian Embassy on Sunday also cancelled the Republic Day ceremony, owing to the rising concern of the

virus which has spread to all provinces except Tibet.

Meanwhile, Union Health Ministry issued a statement here saying that health teams have been deployed at border areas of Nepal at Jhulaghat and Jauljibi, district Pithoragarh.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO), which on Saturday reviewed India's preparedness to deal with any situation arising out of the outbreak, is keeping a close watch in the matter.

India has already issued travel advisories for Indians travelling to China as the fast-spreading coronavirus became a major cause of worry. The virus, which originated in Wuhan city of China in December, has spread in various cities around the world including United States, Australia and France. Around 2,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus have been reported in the east Asian country.

The outbreak also has struck at possibly the worst time for China, when hundreds of millions of people are travelling across the country or overseas to celebrate the Lunar New Year holiday, China's most important festival.

In India, 11 people in four cities have been kept under observation after they returned from China and showed mild symptoms of viral infection. But none has found to be tested positive so far.

PM appeals for peaceful solution to resolve crisis

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said violence and weapon are not at all solutions and peace and brotherhood should prevail citing the series of peace talks in the North Eastern region. Citing steep decline in insurgency in various parts of North East, Modi appealed that people should have faith in the country and must shed violence. He was addressing through the monthly radio programme — 'Mann ki Baat'.

"I appeal to everyone who is using violence and weapons to solve issues in any part of the country to return to peace and they should have faith that all their concerns will be addressed and they should have faith in the country," PM said.

Modi said that in the festive atmosphere of Bihu, Pongal, Lohri and Uttarayan, many might not have noticed that Delhi witnessed an historic event in which an agreement was signed to end the Bru-Reang refugee crisis. "With it, the close-to-25-year-old

MANN KI BAAT



Bru-Reang refugee crisis, a painful chapter, was closed for ever and ever." He spoke in detail about the crisis. The problem dated back to 1997 when the Bru community fled from Mizoram owing to ethnic tensions. They lived in camps in Kanchanpur in north Tirpura.

In his message for peace, Modi said that there is no place in the world where peace has been achieved through violence. "Have you heard of any place where violence has managed to solve differences? Have you heard of any place where peace and brotherhood

have become a cause of concern? Violence can never solve any problem," Modi said.

Modi said that there is a growing sentiment in the country among people that they can also contribute towards nation building and the sentiment of 'can do' is fast growing into a mass movement in the country.

PM said that the radio programme had become reflection of new Bharat and many issues that have been discussed in the programme have taken shape of a mass movement in the country. Talking about the various issues that have been discussed in the programme that have taken shape of a movement because of public involvement were selfie with daughter, use of Khadi, clean India campaign, digital economy, and fit India campaign.

"This is an opportunity for us to discuss the achievements of people. I urge everyone to contribute to any of the social issues so it gains greater strength. If 130 crore Indians take one step then the country will go 130 core step forward," added Modi.

Vardhan now writes to CMs on change in laws against leprosy patients

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry's appeal to the Law and Social and Justice and Empowerment Ministries seeking amendment in over 100 discriminatory laws against persons affected by leprosy more than six months ago is yet to see the light of the day.

Though the disease is now fully curable by Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT), there still exist 108 discriminatory laws against persons affected by leprosy including 3 Union and 105 State laws.

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan had in August last year written to his counterparts Ravishankar Prasad and Thawwarchand Gehlot, Ministers for Law and Social Justice and Empowerment respectively to look into the matter. India has more than half the world's leprosy cases. After claims that it was 'eliminated' in 2005, leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease is making a comeback. India still has over 800 leprosy colonies, where people live even after they have been cured.

Dr Harshvardhan had also written to the Chief Ministers of



various States requesting them to direct the concerned departments/officers to work for the amendments of the existing discriminatory legislations against the community.

Sources in the Union Law and Social Justice Ministries said that the matter is under consideration.

Dr. Vineeta Shanker, Executive Director, Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation (S-ILF) said: "Leprosy is a disease that which is entirely curable and among the least infectious of diseases. People need awareness and education about leprosy - that it is a bacterial disease which is eas-

ily treated with a simple regimen of antibiotics."

"It is indeed sad that there are 108 discriminatory laws against Leprosy patients in India. I urge the Central and State Governments to annul these laws which will help reduce stigma and

ensure equal rights and treatment to those affected by leprosy."

"Repeal of these discriminatory laws will help convince people that there is no need to fear and exclude those who have had leprosy. Ending stigma will help them regain their dignity and self-esteem," she added.

Weighing in on the existing discriminatory laws against the community, Yohei Sasakawa, WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination said on the World Leprosy Day on January 26, 2020, "We have not only to fight the disease, but also the prejudice and discrimination that have

'People need awareness and education about leprosy — that it is a bacterial disease which is easily treated with a simple regimen of antibiotics'

— Dr Vineeta Shanker

infected society." Alice Cruz, UN Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members too lamented that "Stigmatization remains institutionalized in the States' architecture and functioning: more than 50 countries in the world keep hundreds of discriminatory laws against leprosy-affected people. Discriminatory practices at the States' administration endure."

Brazil, Indonesia and India combine to account for 80 percent of the nearly 210,000 new cases of leprosy reported in 2018.



President Ram Nath Kovind (C) with his wife Savita (2R), Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu (R), Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2L) and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro attend the 'At-Home' reception, organised on the occasion of Republic Day, at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi on Sunday

SC upholds man's life term for killing wife days after buying insurance policy in her name

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has upheld the life imprisonment of a man for killing his wife in Uttarakhand in 2002, a few days after he had taken a life insurance policy in her name.

A bench of justices Ashok Bhushan and Navin Sinha held that "all the links in the chain of circumstances pointed to the guilt of the appellant alone".

The man had alleged that five persons had entered his house in the intervening night of March 24 and 25, 2002 to abduct him and that his wife was shot dead by them when she resisted their attempt.

But he had failed to mention any reason for his "attempted abduction" or name any person who tried to abduct him, the apex court noted.

"If the intruders had come to abduct him and his wife had been shot dead after she tried to prevent his abduction, it would have been all the more convenient for the intruders to take him away with them.

No explanation has been



furnished by him in this regard," the bench said.

The man was convicted by the trial court and the order was upheld by the high court. Thereafter, the convict had approached the Supreme Court.

The apex court further noted that the convict also could not provide any description of the intruders' physical features.

It said there were inconsistencies in the statements made by the convict before the police and the trial court.

"The appellant failed to

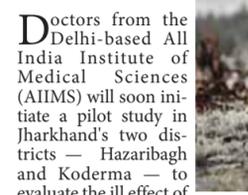
furnish any plausible defence," the bench said, noting that he tried to give false evidence by first raising alleged "extra-marital affairs" of his wife and later stating that five intruders had broken into his house to abduct him. It said there was no evidence to prove that people had barged into the convict's house as there were no footprints in the muddy courtyard.

The court further noted that the convict did not mention any reason for his attempted abduction or name any person on the suspicion of emni-

ty or otherwise. PTI

AIIMS to initiate study to evaluate ill effect of biomass fuels on tribal's health in Jharkhand

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI



Doctors from the Delhi-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) will soon initiate a pilot study in Jharkhand's two districts — Hazaribagh and Koderma — to evaluate the ill effect of biomass fuels (dung, agricultural waste and wood) on the overall health of the tribals, particularly women in the region.

Dr JS Titiyal, Chief investigator of the study and senior ophthalmologist from RP Centre, AIIMS said, "The biomass based cooking fuels that are commonly used in Indian households especially by the poorest socio-economic groups carry a lot of health related short-term and long-term hazards that were not systematically studied till to date."

Inhalation of these pollutants may cause deleterious effects on health, he added. Women are most affected due to direct exposure to such waste several hours every day. "The problem seems not restricted to just this. It has been found that smoke exposure also affects mental health and a link between mental health and air pollution seems a real possibility," he said.

The study will investigate affect on health from smoke and its short and long term consequences on cardiac and pulmonary functions, explained Dr Titiyal. The study spanning three years will also compare health of those using clean fuels such as LPG with those using conventional method, results of which will help the authorities in drawing long term policies for the welfare of the tribal people.

A pact has been inked between the AIIMS, Delhi and

the Jharkhand Government to conduct the study which is being funded by the Central Coalfields Ltd in the State.

According to various data, household air pollution (HAP) from combustion of solid fuels for cooking mainly coal and biomass fuels (wood, coal, crop residues, dung) has been ranked as the second global cause of disability adjusted life years (DALYs) and a major cause of reduced life expectancy in South Asia.

Globally, around 4.3 million deaths per year are attributed to household air pollution. Further the smoke from the biomass has been shown to cause cataract, eye dryness and other eyes diseases. The multidisciplinary team from the AIIMS comprising Rakesh Yadav, Professor of Cardiology, Dr Nand Kumar, Professor of Psychiatry, Dr Ramkishor Sah, Scientist, R P Centre and Dr Subhradip Karmakar, Assistant Professor of Biochemistry, all from the AIIMS among others will investigate blood based markers as well as vital organ physiology parameters to address the problem.

The doctors will also assess the tear proteomics and genomic profiling to understand the interaction between users and non-users of biomass fuels besides evaluating the risk factor of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack and stroke increased with more prolonged use of solid fuels.

Cong sends Constitution copy to PM Modi, asks to 'read it'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress raised the pitch against Citizenship Amendment Act on the 71st Republic day on Sunday by sending a copy of the Constitution to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and taking a dig at him saying, "when you get time off from dividing the country, please do read it."

The Opposition party also tweeted the videos of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former party chief Rahul Gandhi and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra reading the Preamble from a protest Assembly at Rajghat recently.

The Preamble of the Constitution describes India as 'Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic' with the Congress apparently seeking to emphasize the term 'Secular'. "Dear PM, The Constitution is reaching you soon. When you get time off from dividing the country, please do read it. Regards, Congress," the party tweeted along with the snapshot of an amazon receipt which stated that the copy of the Constitution was being dispatched to the Central Secretariat.

In another tweet, the Congress said a lesson the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has failed to understand is that all persons no matter creed, caste or gender are guaranteed equality before the law under Article 14 of the Constitution.

"It is this article that is com-

pletely violated by the Government's Citizenship Amendment Act," the party said.

"It is important to remember that it is enshrined in our Constitution that all persons are protected from discrimination of any form. Therefore, any attempt to draft laws based on discrimination are unconstitutional," it said.

Both Rahul and Priyanka extended their greetings to the people on the occasion of the Republic Day.

In a message on the eve of the Republic Day, Sonia Gandhi urged people on Saturday to rise above personal prejudices and stand united to protect the Constitution and its values, claiming that

they are being attacked through a "deep-rooted" conspiracy.

"A deep-rooted conspiracy has been hatched to set a discourse to divide countrymen based on religion, regionalism and language as also to subvert and undermine the Constitution. An unprecedented atmosphere of distur-

bance, fear and insecurity has been foisted upon the country.

"The common citizen is convinced that the constitutional values are no longer safe in the hands of the present dispensation," she had said.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram called for raising the 'level of protests', saying "as long as freedoms are denied to any number of people, the whole population is denied freedom".

Greeting the people on the occasion of 71st Republic Day, he said the soul of the Constitution lies in the freedoms guaranteed in part three of the document.

These freedoms were given by the people unto themselves

In a message on the eve of the Republic Day, Sonia Gandhi urges people to rise above personal prejudices and stand united to protect the Constitution and its values

and no Government can take them away, the former home minister said in a series of tweets. "Remember that today as we think of the 70 lakh people of the Kashmir valley whose freedoms have been taken away, including those in custody for over six months without charges. Add to that the outrageous charges, including sedition, slapped against hundreds of protesters by the authoritarian Government," he said.

"As long as freedoms are denied to any part of the people, the whole of the population is denied freedom," Chidambaram tweeted, adding, "As we raise the flag today, let us also raise the level of protest."

Parts of north India in grip of cold wave; heavy rain, snowfall forecast for Himachal

New Delhi: Parts of north India shivered under cold conditions on Sunday with the weather department issuing a warning for heavy rain and snowfall in Himachal Pradesh even as there was some respite for Kashmir where the mercury continued its upward trend.

The minimum temperature in Delhi recorded a rise of around two notches from that on Saturday, settling at 6.9 degrees Celsius while the maximum was recorded at 22.7 degrees Celsius. The relative humidity oscillated between 100 per cent and 59 per cent.

Cold conditions persisted in Himachal Pradesh with the meteorological department issuing a yellow weather warning for heavy rain and snowfall in the state for Tuesday.

The weather office issues colour-coded warnings to alert people ahead of severe or hazardous weather that has the potential to cause "damage, widespread disruption or danger to



life". Yellow, the least dangerous of all the weather warnings, indicates possibility of a severe weather.

Tribal district Lahaul-Spiti's administrative centre Keylong recorded the lowest temperature in the State at minus 9.3 degrees Celsius.

Kinnaur's Kalpa recorded a low of minus 5.6 degree Celsius and the minimum temperature in both Manali and Kufri was minus 0.8 degrees Celsius, he said, adding the minimum tempera-

tures in Dalhousie and Shimla was 1.5 degrees Celsius and 3.8 degrees Celsius respectively.

Una recorded the highest maximum temperature in the state at 23 degrees Celsius, Singh said.

The weatherman has forecast rain and snowfall in middle and high hills of the state from January 27 to 29 and on January 31. It issued the yellow warning of heavy rain, snowfall for January 28 only. PTI

Cong slams Modi Govt over Padma Shri to Sami

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday took strong exception to Modi Government bestowing the Padma Shri on singer-musician Adnan Sami and asked why Kargil War veteran Mohammad Sannaullah was declared a foreigner through the NRC for Assam, while the son of a Pakistan Air Force pilot has been conferred with one of India's highest civilian honour.

Sami, accorded Indian citizenship in the recent past, was one of the 118 people whose names were announced on Saturday for the Padma Shri awards, with the Ministry of Home Affairs list showing his home State as Maharashtra.

Sami, born in London to a Pakistani Air force veteran, applied for Indian citizenship in 2015 and became a citizen of the country in January 2016.

Lashing out at the Centre, Congress spokesperson Javeer Shergill said, "Kargil War veteran and retired Army officer Mohammad Sannaullah who fought for India declared 'foreigner' after NRC and Adnan Sami whose family fought against India honoured with Padma Shri — This is the magic of NRC and Government chamchagiri!" He also posed questions to the



Government over the issue, asking why an Indian soldier like Sannaullah is declared a foreigner via the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam and the son of a Pakistan Air Force pilot is given the Padma Shri.

"Is contribution 'Yogdan' to society or BJP Government 'gungan' (praise) new criteria? Is this New India? Shergill asked.

Sami, a noted keyboard player who gave music in some of the Bollywood movies and also sang a number of songs, has lived in Mumbai on temporary visa before applying for permanent citizenship. Unlike Sami, Bangladeshi rebel writer Taslima Nasreen, who is living in India on temporary visa, is yet to receive Indian citizenship.

People fail in general knowledge on nationalism

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was a "brave army general", Khalli is the Iron Man of India, there is a toss-up between Shreya Ghosal and Neha Kakkar for the title of Nightingale of India, the slogans Vande Mataram and Jai Hind were first coined by Amit Shah and Dilip Ghosh... And not the least January 26 is famous because India defeated Pakistan on this very day.

Your correspondent hit upon many more "inspiring" instances of national awareness and beat a hasty retreat after sampling the "nationalistic fervor" among the fellow citizens on the 71st Republic Day.

Regardless of the love and respect Bose commands among the people of Kolkata Arya Sundar Saha, a staunch campaigner of Citizenship Amendment Act, said Netaji was a "brave Army General led the freedom fighters to victory against the British."

Bipra Basu an architect and a proud owner of a swanky SUV craned out his neck of the driver's window to inform that Netaji was the "Father of the Nation" and also the "first Prime Minister of India," before rolling up the window and driving away nonchalantly.

At Howrah Station Krishnamohan Tewari a busy businessman from Patna broods for a while before dropping his reply and rushing away to catch his train. "Netaji was the founder of the Congress party," he said.

Cut to Elgin Road, near the house of the icon freedom fighter from where he fled in disguise to Germany. "Netaji was the founder of Jan Sangh," Dilip Agarwal said, adding Syama Prasad Mukherjee was his "close associate."

When asked about the importance of January 23 (Bose's birthday) half of the respondents said it was the day when the national hero died. At the busy Red Road where thousands of people had gathered to watch the Republic Day march past an MLA said the day was celebrated because "India was declared Independent on this auspicious day." When told that it was the day when the Constitution of India was adopted the politician said what he said was a "slip of tongue."

Akash Khurana working with the prestigious Information Technology sector who had come to watch the Republic Day parade said Shreya Ghosal was considered the Nightingale of India only to be instantly corrected by a colleague Tejas Kishore who said "it was in fact Neha Kakkar and not Ghosal. "History to be told Sorjini Naidu is called the Nightingale of India for her poetic brilliance.

The duo even ridiculed the "media wallas" for spreading false information about Citizenship Amendment Act which they said was aimed at providing citizenship to all the Indians.

Busy watching India-New Zealand tie on the mobile phone, Rohan Bhai Shah identified Khalli as the Iron Man of India. But when told that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is the right answer he corrected himself saying, "Yes! Yes! now I remember. I saw his stature in Gujarat. He is the founder of the RSS."

Smriti Biswas a college student loitering about with her boyfriend in the precincts of Victoria Memorial said the term Vande Mataram was coined by Home Minister Amit Shah. When reminded that the term is found for the first time in Anand Math of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay she shrugged dispassionately saying "may be!"

When asked as to who coined the term Jai Hind, Abdul Qader a builder said the term was a creation of Dilip Ghosh the State BJP president. The term was however introduced for the first time by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose during the training of the Indian National Army.

R-Day celebrated peacefully in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, for the first time, celebrated 71st Republic day celebrations 'peacefully' amid unprecedented security arrangements on Sunday.

The main function was organised here in newly refurbished Maulana Azad stadium where Lt-Governor GC Murmu unfurled the tricolour, inspected the parade and took salute at an impressive march past.

Before attending the official function, the Lt Governor went to the Balidan Stambh earlier in the day and paid tribute to the brave security personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty to the country.

The function at the Balidan Stambh in the heart of the city was organised by the Army as part of the Republic Day celebrations.

In Srinagar, Adviser to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan unfurled national flag and took salute at the march past presented by contingents of JK Police, JKAP, ITBP, BSF, CRPF, Fire & Emergency Services, Forest Protection Force, NCC cadets and students.

Deputy Commissioners, across different district headquarters, unfurled national flag and inspected the guard of honour.

Large number of common people participated in the celebrations and witnessed cultural and sports programmes by young boys and girls, and scintillating performance by local police's daredevils' motorcycle stunt team.

Leaders of different political parties also attended flag hoisting ceremonies at different places, including their party offices in Jammu. PDP leader, Muzaffar Hussain Baig, who was awarded Padma Bhushan

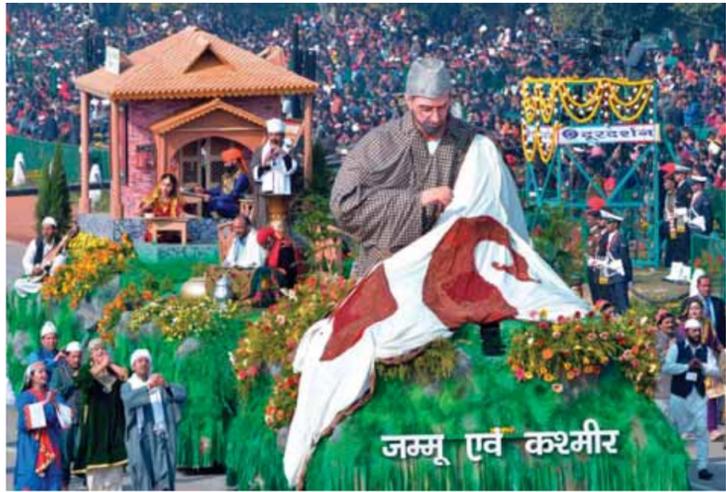


Tableau of Jammu & Kashmir pass through Rajpath on occasion of 71st Republic Day, in New Delhi on Sunday. Pioneer photo

on the eve of Republic day, hoisted the flag at PDP headquarters and recited National Anthem along with other PDP leaders.

National Conference, Provincial President DS Rana hoisted the flag at the National Conference party office in Jammu. Similarly, leaders of the congress party and state BJP unit hoisted tricolor at their party offices and several other places to mark the occasion.

Large number of local media persons boycotted the main function alleging harassment in the name of security arrangements.

To ensure peaceful celebrations, tight security arrangements were made on ground zero by spreading concertina wires and preventing smooth movement of traffic on main roads leading to the venue of the main function.

Patriotic fervor was visible across the city as local residents, including shopkeepers, were seen hoisting flags in their localities, while groups of enthusiastic youths, carrying tricolour, went around on their motorcycles and raised slogans in praise of the country.

Mamata, Governor Dhankhar break ice

PNS ■ KOLKATA

In what the critics called signs of improvement of relations between Nabanna (State secretary) and the Raj Bhavan Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday greeted each other at the Republic Day Parade at the historic Red Road and joined a tea party as a part of the day's celebrations.

The Sunday's development was a sharp departure from what the State had been witnessing for the past 4-5 months with the two dignitaries attacking each other for showing mutual disrespect.

The day started with the Governor hoisting the tricolour and the Chief Minister remaining present at the programme. Even as the two leaders exchanged greetings the Governor invited Banerjee to a tea party at the Raj Bhavan which the Chief Minister promptly accepted, sources said.

In late noon the Chief Minister visited the Governor's House where leaders of other parties too were present. The two leaders spoke to each other for sometime on a number of issues and "the exchanges were cordial," a Government source said.

The Chief Minister who earlier tweeted "On Republic Day, let us pledge to protect our Constitution and uphold the principles of sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, as enshrined in the Preamble," said she was happy to join the programme.

Banerjee had been critical of the Governor ever since he personally ignored the Home Department's advisory and personally went to Jadavpur University in September to rescue Union Minister Babul Supriyo who was gheraoed by the students of the university.

She also attacked him for allegedly trying to run a parallel Government in the State whereas the Governor accused her of not paying adequate respect to him.

R-Day: No exchange of sweets with Pak at LoC, IB

PTI ■ JAMMU

There was no exchange of sweets with Pakistani forces along the International Border (IB) and the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir on the occasion of Republic Day, officials said, amid the prevailing hostilities especially after the recent beheading of an Army porter by the enemy troops in Poonch.

Indian and Pakistani troops usually exchange sweets and greetings on their important national days and festivals. But the tradition has not been followed for the past few years due to Pakistan's continued support to terrorism in the Union Territory and frequent ceasefire violations, the officials said.

They said there was no exchange of sweets and greetings on Republic day this year as well.

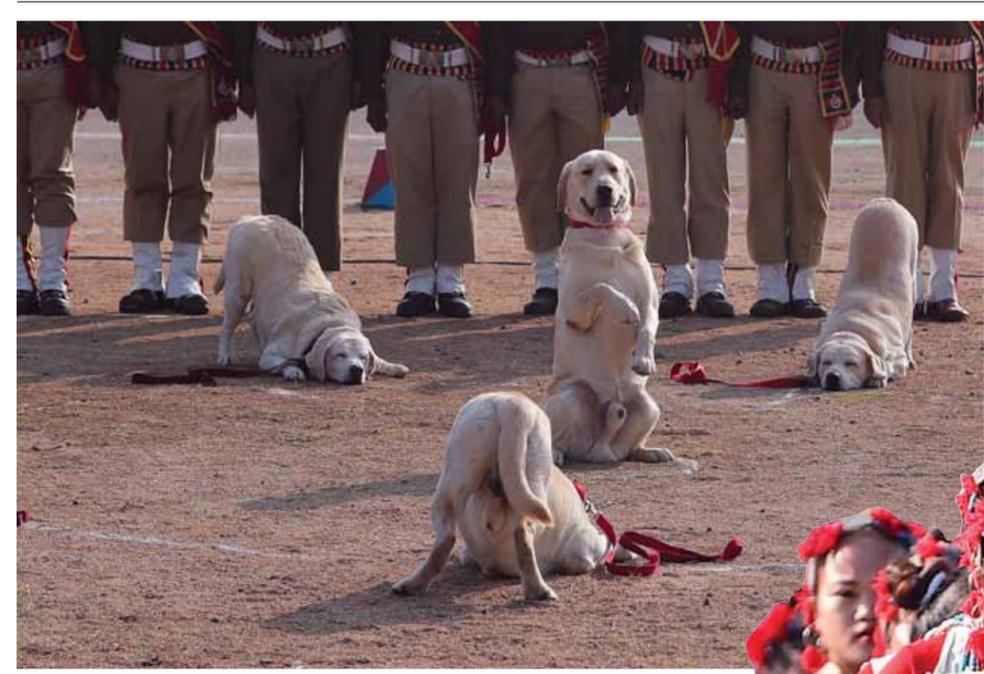
On January 10, Pakistan's Border Action Team comprising regulars and terrorists, beheaded army porter Mohammad Aslam (28) and injured three others in an attack along the LoC in Gulpur sector of Poonch district.

Meanwhile, police and other security forces unfurled the national flag at various camps along the border and in the hinterland across Jammu region to mark the occasions.

At a function, BSF Inspector General NS Jamwal hoisted the national flag at frontier headquarters here and conveyed his warm wishes to all the border guards serving at the International Border and the LoC.

He reminded the Bordermen about the supreme sacrifices made by the freedom fighters to liberate the motherland from foreign rulers and also asked them not to forget the sacrifices made by their colleagues. Jamwal later visited BSF hospital and distributed fruits and gifts to the patients, a BSF spokesman said, adding he wished them a speedy recovery and good health.

The spokesman said Republic Day was also celebrated by the BSF personnel deployed on International Border and LoC with equal enthusiasm.



Indian Railway Protection Force dog squad displays skills during Republic Day celebrations in Hyderabad on Sunday. AP

Tania Shergill, all-women CRPF motorcycle team give many girls goosebumps

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Captain Tania Shergill, who led an all-men contingent at the Republic Day parade on Sunday, gave many girls goosebumps in the huge crowd at Rajpath.

The all-women motorcycle team of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) also won hearts with their daredevilry and many young women felt pumped up and inspired after watching them.

Gill and the CRPF team, among others represented the 'Nari Shakti' at the ceremonial event, and the charm literally rubbed off on to many in the crowd.

Aarushi Goyal, 16, a class 12 student of the Delhi Public School, Indirapuram, said, she had "found her idol" in Capt Sher Gill, a fourth generation Army officer, who led the marching contingent of the Corps of Signals.

Wearing a khaki uniform and holding a ceremonial sword, as the 26-year-old trail-blazer officer of the Corps of Signals marched down the Rajpath, she was the cynosure of all eyes.

"The sight of her (Gill) leading the men, as she strode confidently, gave me goosebumps. I stood up, closed my eyes and held my breath...It was kind of surreal for me," Goyal said, adding that "from kitchen work to armed forces, women have come a long way."

The Hoshiarpur-born officer had recently created history by becoming the first woman Parade Adjutant to lead an all-men contingents during the Army Day function on January 15. A graduate of the Officers Training Academy (OTA), Chennai, she added another feather to her cap on Sunday, saying, it was a feeling of "immense honour and great pride, a sense of achievement and worthiness, and absolute blessing."

The CRPF team too drew loud applause and stunned looks from the crowd, as its members performed daredevil stunts on Rajpath. Diksha Chaudhary, 19, in the crowd, stood atop her chair, clapped and whistled when the all-women team zipped down the Rajpath in astonishing display of courage.

As women personnel formed human pyramid on Royal Enfield motorcycles, Chaudhary, shouted "Jai Hind", saluted the soldiers and murmured to her friend, "Yaar ye karna hai ha (I wish to do this)." "I am so moved and inspired...I am preparing for exams to join Haryana Police, but this has changed my mind. I will join CRPF now," said Chaudhary, who herself has driven a motorcycle to Delhi.

Mahima Chug, 16, captured the moments in her cam-

era as the team displayed its gravity-defying acrobatic skills on Bullet motorcycles towards the end of the ceremonial parade. Chug, a vice-captain in a Noida-based private school, said, "I will paste the photos I have taken today on the walls of my room and draw inspiration from them. There's nothing women cannot do."

The team was led by Inspector Seema Nag, who performed the 'VIP Salute' standing atop a moving motorcycle. Other members performed 'Pistol Position on Move', 'Rifle positions', CRPG Flag March', 'All Round Defence', 'Beam Roll', Ladder Climbing' and 'Human Pyramid'.

Punjab-born Gill, who holds a B.Tech in electronics and telecommunications from Nagpur University, said her great-grandfather had taken part in World War I.



Students perform on the occasion of 71st Republic Day celebration at the India-Pakistan Wagah-Attari border post on Sunday. PTI



Indian Army Corps of Signals contingent led by Captain Tania Shergill marches during the 71st Republic Day Parade at Rajpath in New Delhi on Sunday. Pioneer photo

R-Day celebrated with colourful parades across India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Colourful Republic Day parades capturing India's rich diversity were held across the country on Sunday as States listed out their achievements and outlined development agendas, but the occasion was marred in Upper Assam by four back-to-back explosions, claimed by the banned ULFA (I).

The celebrations were held amid tight security across the country.

Anti-CAA protesters at several places unfurled the tricolour, formed human chains and took pledge to "protect the Constitution".

Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and BJP MLA Angoorilata Deka were shown black flags by anti-CAA protesters at separate locations in the State when they were on their way to attend functions.

National carrier Air India

distributed 30,000 Indian flags made of eco-friendly seed paper among its passengers. It also put up a big hoarding at the historic Lal Chowk in Srinagar to congratulate the people on 71st Republic Day.

In Uttar Pradesh, 71 contingents comprising the army, paramilitary, police personnel and schoolchildren marched through the streets.

In Uttarakhand, Governor Baby Rani Maurya raised the issue of female foeticide in her address, terming it as the worst sin and said the safety of daughters is a collective responsibility.

Punjab, Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh also joined the nation in celebrating the day.

In the east and northeast parts of the country, governors in respective states, unfurled the tricolour and presided over the ceremonial parade.

Instead of **Meghalaya**

Governor Thagata Roy, who is on leave since December, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma presided over the main function in Shillong.

In Assam, Governor Jagdish Mukhi said the state government was committed to protect the political, cultural and linguistic rights of the indigenous people.

In Jharkhand, Governor Droupadi Murmu insisted that unemployment was a burning issue and the government would take initiative to fill vacancies at panchayat offices and State departments. At a separate function, Chief Minister Hemant Soren called upon people to work for the welfare of the state, rising above their cultural and religious identities.

Expressing concern over climate change, **Bihar** Governor Fagu Chauhan stressed on the importance of

environment conservation on the occasion and lauded the State Government for its efforts to generate awareness on the issue.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who was the guest of honour at the State capital's Republic Day programme, led by Governor Ganeshi Lal, exhorted people to work selflessly for the benefit of the State.

Nagaland Justice and Law Minister CM Chang, speaking at an event in Dimapur, said, "The Centre's negotiations with all Naga political groups have concluded successfully and we are now hopeful for an early solution."

Arunachal Pradesh Governor BD Mishra said satellite-based monitoring and geo-tagging technology would be employed to keep a tab on all development projects in the state. He urged people to

fight against corruption.

In Mizoram, Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai appealed to people to strive for excellence and make concerted efforts to usher in integrated development.

Enlisting the achievements of the **Tripura** Government, Governor Ramesh Bais said efforts were being made to boost trade connectivity with Bangladesh, which, in the long run, would benefit the entire region.

Meanwhile, four powerful explosions — 3 in Dibrugarh and one in Charaideo districts — rocked Upper Assam between 8.15 and 8.25 am, a police officer said.

But there has been no report of any casualty, he said. Banned outfit ULFA (Independent) claimed the responsibility for the powerful explosions.

In southern States, the day

was celebrated with pomp and show.

In Telangana, Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan said in her speech that the State stood first in many sectors, but it was lagging behind in literacy and the Government will soon announce an action-plan to make the state fully literate.

In Kerala, leading the celebrations, Governor Arif Mohammed unfurled the national flag at the state-level celebration. Mosques under the Wakf Board and the Latin churches hoisted the national flag and read out the preamble to the Constitution after the routine prayer.

Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit led the celebrations in the State, unfurling the national flag at the Marina.

Andhra Pradesh is poised to march on the path of inclusive growth through decentralisation of administration,

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan said.

The day was celebrated with fanfare in **Karnataka** with an eye-catching march past, cultural events and breathtaking stunts by the defence personnel.

In Gujarat, daredevil stunts performed by police personnel on motorcycles and horses, tableaux showing achievements of the state and cultural events marked the Republic Day event held at Rajkot in Saurashtra.

A group of senior citizens and children unfurled the tricolour by standing in sea water off Porbandar coast, while students of Jamnagar took out a 'tiranga yatra' holding 111-metre long national flag.

In Maharashtra, a horse-mounted police unit, introduced in Mumbai after 88 years, and tableaux on various themes, including environment and wildlife, were part of the

71st Republic Day parade held at Shivaji Park.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari hoisted the national flag at the official ceremony, where Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, state DGP Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Barve and others were present.

In Chhattisgarh, in her Republic Day address at the Police Parade grounds in Raipur, Governor Anusuiya Uikey said Naxal violence and other crimes have declined in the State due to vigilant police force and several initiatives in justice delivery.

In neighbouring **Madhya Pradesh**, Chief Minister Kamal Nath said connecting people's hearts is the culture of India as well as the Congress, and those trying to go against it and the Constitution will be dealt with firmly.



Many came from as far as Andhra to attend parade, failed to get entry despite long wait

New Delhi: Nitish Rao came all the way from Andhra Pradesh to attend the grand Republic Day Parade here on Sunday, but even after waiting for nearly two hours near the entrance gate of the venue in the chilly morning, he had to go back.

Sonu Singh, who came from Himachal Pradesh, suffered the same fate. Waiting in long, serpentine queues, huge crowds had gathered near the Rajpath, some of them having arrived in the early hours to ensure a seat.

But, Rao and Singh and many others like them could not get entry despite holding a seat pass.

Rao had come from Anantpur to attend the parade, but all he could contend with was watching a few aircraft flying above the Rajpath from outside the visitors' enclosure.

"I have never witnessed a Republic Day Parade. My friend arranged a pass for me and I arrived at gate no 23 around 6:30 am. A lot of pushing and shoving happened as it was a huge milling crowd, and more than two hours later I am remained outside as police did not allow entry.

"I pleaded to the police personnel but to no avail. All I could see was a few aircraft showering flower petals. I will try will luck next time," he rued. There was a massive gathering at the Rajpath to attend the annual celebrations and January 26 being a Sunday added to the crowds.

More than one lakh people had gathered near the India Gate for the Republic Day celebration, a senior police officer said. "Many people could not get entry, as the enclosure area

was already full," he said.

Poonam Kumari, who came from neighbouring Faridabad, along with her husband and their infant daughter, blamed authorities for not being able to attend the parade.

"I came here at 7 am and waited interminably long and then after reaching near the entrance to the enclosures, I was told by police personnel that entry is closed. They should have managed the crowd well. I saw one side of the street facing the entrance was quite thin, still all crowd was packed on one side," she said. Monsieur Derrier, a French tourist who came to India about a week ago to attend the Jaipur Literature Festival and Republic Day celebrations, could not get entry to the visitors' enclosure either.

PTI

87 toppers watch parade from PM's box

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 87 toppers from A CBSE and universities across the country on Sunday got the opportunity to watch the 71st Republic Day Parade from the Prime Minister's box.

The HRD Ministry seeks list of toppers from CBSE and various universities every year and then selects students from each CBSE region and universities across the country.

A total of 105 students — 50 from undergraduate, post-graduate or PhD programmes and 30 from Class 10 and 25 from Class 12 — were selected. However, only 87 of them attended the programme.

Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' later interacted with the students and awarded them with

the Certificate of Appreciation.

"The students are the future of the country and the responsibility of creating a new and prosperous India is on them. India has one of the world's largest education systems with over 1,000 universities, 40,000 colleges, 10,725 standalone institutes, more than 1 crore teachers, 16 lakh schools and 34.6 million students," Nishank said at the award function.

India has largest number of youth population and this strength can make the country a global superpower and an economic giant, he said.

The government has set an ambitious target of achieving a 50 pc gross enrolment ratio compared to the current 26 pc in higher education by 2030 to equip its working population with employable skills, he added.



INDIANS ACROSS WORLD CELEBRATE R-DAY

PTI ■ MELBOURNE/COLOMBO

Thousands of Indians across the world enthusiastically celebrated the 71st Republic Day on Sunday and participated in various cultural events with unfurling of the tricolour and singing of the national anthem.

Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu led the Indian community during the celebrations at the India House on Sunday.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, along with his wife Shiranthi Rajapaksa, joined the Indian diaspora to celebrate the day organised by the Indian High Commission at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall in Colombo on Saturday.

"I would like to wish the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) and people of India a very Happy 71st Republic Day," Rajapaksa tweeted.

The High Commission of India in Canberra, Australia, organised the event at the India House. Celebrations to mark the day were also organised by the Consulate Generals of India in Sydney and Melbourne.

"Consulate General of India Melbourne wishes you all a very #HappyRepublicDay2020. Big 'Thank You' to everyone for celebrating this day with us," it

tweeted.

The Indian High Commission in Pakistan celebrated the day with Charge d'affaires Gaurav Ahluwalia hoisting the tricolour and reading out President Ram Nath Kovind's address.

"High Commission of India in Pakistan celebrated the 71st Republic Day with great enthusiasm and joy," the Indian High Commission in Pakistan tweeted.

"A cultural programme presented by members of the High Commission of India in Pakistan enthralled the audience. The performances brought out the beauty, diversity and the idea of India contained in the Constitution," it said. Over 800 people in the Netherlands participated in the Republic Day celebrations organised at the residence of the Ambassador of India to the Netherlands Venu Rajamony in Wassenaar.

The program witnessed the largest gathering of the Indian diaspora, including members of the Surinam-Hindustani community and friends of India who came together to celebrate the day.

In Bangladesh, Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das unfurled the national flag and read out President Kovind's address.

"Young Children from the Indian Community presented

a cultural programme. Members of the Indian Community participated in large numbers," the Indian High Commission in Dhaka tweeted.

The Mahar regimental band of the Indian Army, which was specially flown in for the occasion, played the national anthem, a press release issued by the mission said.

In Nepal, members of the Indian community, friends of India and officials participated in the Republic Day celebrations at the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu.

Indian Ambassador to Israel Sanjeev Singla hoisted the national flag and read out the President's message as he joined the Indian community during the Republic Day celebrations at the Embassy in Tel Aviv.

"71st #RepublicDayIndia brings sunny weather to #TelAviv," the Indian Embassy tweeted.

"Amb Sanjeev Singla unfurled the tricolour, read the message of the President of India & spoke about growing #IndiaIsrael partnership in areas of #innovation #startups #agriculture #14f #tourism," it tweeted.

The Republic Day celebrations at the Indian High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa, started with unfurling of the national flag.

High Commissioner

Jaideep Sarkar read out President Kovind's message to Indians and friends of India who took part in the programme.

Indian Ambassador to Maldives on Sunjay Sudhir hoisted the national flag and led the Indian community to celebrate the day.

Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid took to Twitter to extend greetings on the occasion, saying may the special friendship between the two countries continue to prosper. Members of the Indian community in New Zealand took part in the Republic Day celebrations organised by the Indian High Commission in Wellington.

Hundreds of Indian expatriates took part in cultural events organised by the Indian missions in the UAE.

Indian Ambassador to the UAE Pavan Kapoor hoisted the national flag at the embassy premises in Abu Dhabi.

Consul General of India in Dubai Vipul hoisted the flag at the Indian Consulate.

The Indian Embassy in Japan also organised a cultural programme to mark the day.

Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in China on Friday cancelled the Republic Day ceremony in view of the coronavirus outbreak.

Maldives, Lithuania extend greetings to India

PTI ■ MALE

The Foreign Ministers of the Maldives and Lithuania on Sunday congratulated India on the occasion of 71st Republic Day.

Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid took to Twitter to extend greetings on the occasion, saying may the special friendship between the two countries continue to prosper. "Republic Day greetings to the government and people of India. May the special friendship between the Maldives and India continue to prosper," Shahid said.

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius posted his congratulatory message on Twitter in Hindi.

"I heartily congratulate the people of India on Republic Day. I am very pleased with the powerful and dynamic bilateral relations and cultural and spiritual ties between Lithuania and India," Linkevicius said, extending warm greetings to his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar and the people of India. Responding to the two leaders, Jaishankar thanked them for their warm wishes in separate messages.

India donates vehicles, ambulances to Nepal

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

India on Sunday donated 36 vehicles, including 30 ambulances, to various hospitals and charitable organisations of Nepal on the occasion of India's 71st Republic Day.

Members of the Indian community, friends of India and officials participated in the Republic Day celebrations at the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu.

Charge d' Affairs of Embassy of India, Dr Ajay Kumar, handed over keys of 30 ambulances and 6 school buses to the representatives of hospitals, schools and various charitable organisations amidst a special programme to celebrate the Republic Day celebration. Kumar felicitated 14 people, including widow and next of kin of deceased soldiers by presenting cash incentives amounting to a total of Rs 59.70

million (INR 3.73 crore).

The Indian embassy also gifted books to 51 libraries and educational institutions spreading across the country on the occasion. Later in the afternoon, Kumar hosted a reception at the India House, which was attended by Nepal's Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun, Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali, Minister for Labour Rameshwar Raya Yadav and leaders of various political parties.

NATIONAL FLAG HOISTED IN UAE

PTI ■ DUBAI

embassy said in a Tweet along with photographs of the celebrations.

Consul General of India in Dubai Vipul hoisted the flag at the Indian Consulate in Dubai.

"First Republic Day of India was celebrated in Indian Consulate Dubai with large number of Indian diaspora. CG Vipul @vipulifs unfurled the tricolour and read out President's message," the Indian Consulate in Dubai tweeted. Both the heads of the missions read President Ram Nath Kovind's address on the occasion. Hundreds of expatriate Indians attended the celebrations waving flags and sporting Tricolour attires.

Toxic war of words

The BJP seems to have lost the plot with its support to rabid statements by party leaders and is in no mood to engage



If the ruling BJP is indeed serious about its outreach to civil society, which it feels is an alien species and needs an education in *Bharat Parv*, then its methodology of hammering home truths is grossly and crudely misplaced. And at best ends up as an egoistic assumption of what a dialogue should be like — more and more force-feeding, treating questions like malignant spyware and blaming all of the nation's problems to either Pakistan or Bangladesh. How else does one explain the distasteful transgressions of the BJP candidate for the Delhi polls Kapil Mishra and Bengal BJP in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya? The former, clearly defying the party diktat to dispel fears on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), likened civil protest spots, like Shaheen Bagh, to mini-Pakistan. He even called the Delhi polls an Indo-Pakistan match, clearly implying Hindutva as India and lumping all sorts of otherness into one disposable basket. The Election Commission, which had overlooked incendiary remarks during the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls last year, has thankfully issued a notice and the Delhi police has lodged an FIR against him. Vijayvargiya, who is to drive the party's campaign in Bengal, has found out a simpler method of identifying infiltrators that does not need documents at all. He feels people eating flattened rice or *chidwa* are confirmed Bangladeshis, totally ignoring the fact that all Bengalis have this as a staple snack or that *poha* is a breakfast favourite even in his home State, Madhya Pradesh. At least, he seems to have dispelled the need to go for an elaborate process of compiling and sorting out the National Population Register (NPR). The point is such racist, misogynist and uncouth statements are not even funny any more. They are dangerously serious considering that they are given legitimacy, either because the party's top leadership stays silent or because fringe leaders of the Sangh, who were once kept under wraps by the old BJP, have been coopted and rewarded in proportion to their success in disseminating a divisive agenda. What else could explain how even a seasoned senior leader from the old school like Prakash Javadekar had to reduce the Delhi electoral battle to the binaries of who is more committed to Indianness and who is a traitor. He labelled the fight as one between "*Bharat Mata ki Jai*" and "*Jinnah wali azaadi*." One can understand that the BJP has nothing to show as a record of its performance unlike its key opponent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Can that, therefore, justify this dog-whistling politics? BJP leaders know that their party cannot match the hyper-localised agenda of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and are, therefore, countering that with an umbrella issue that can generate a swell of emotion, which in the current scenario of identity politics, happens to be the most virulent strain of nationalism. Having been out of power in the city for almost 20 years, most of which had seen high-performing regimes, the BJP can no more claim to champion anything revolutionary. Even its war room expert and Home Minister Amit Shah has not picked up any issues except pledging ₹1 lakh crore for bolstering infrastructure in the recently regularised colonies. And now that AAP deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has also publicly extended support to the women protesting citizenship laws at Shaheen Bagh, the BJP feels it has drawn out its opponent to an arena where civic issues become somewhat national.

What is frightening though is that in the process, the BJP is dictating the zeitgeist of contemporary politics. Worse, it is changing the DNA of political discourse with a mythologised sanctity of India's greatness that has been eaten away by all kinds of imposed viruses until the party rescued it. There was a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself reined in party motormouths and had advised them to stay away from media platforms. Now that same man is either painfully silent or sometimes guilty of playing to the gallery. Anyway, his restraint was just in the nature of an advisory and the fact that someone like Pragya Thakur is now a bonafide MP or that Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is allowed a free run with his religion-specific remarks, proves that they not only have the blessings of higher-ups but are deployed as their prize arrowheads. If the Modi of 2014 was about the ABCs of development, he himself has been rather brazen if his comments of green versus pink revolution (against meat-eaters) and *kabristan* versus *shamshan ghat* are any indications. So clearly, toxicity was not just limited to campaign rhetoric. And 2014 was just a stepping stone to get a hold of national consciousness in 2019. Now that the BJP has that at its command, it wants to replicate the Sangh's vision as a voluntary national will that has nothing to do with science, reason, history or culture. With a new obsession on whom we need to be as Indians, issues like the economy can be easily swept under the carpet or become a secondary concern. The saddest part is that this does great disservice to Hinduism and the tenets of an Indic civilisation.

Roger that

With his fightback at Australia Open, Federer is the first singles player to win 100 matches in two Grand Slams



Roger Federer is not just a sporting legend. He is a human story and an inspiration for everybody because he has demonstrated true grit that survival requires in our times, surprising us every time when we feel he has just gone over the hill. And at a time when individual power sports is all about burnouts, Federer has crafted lastability as a credo despite the competition and overcome challenge from millennials. He has produced several great performances over the years. One of those performances came in the match against Australia's John Millman during the third at the Australian Open 2020 on Friday where the former world number one was looking down and out in the fifth-set super tie-breaker after falling behind with the score of 8-4. However, he showed why he has won 20 Grand Slams in his career by picking up six consecutive points and cementing his spot in the fourth-round at the first Grand Slam of the year. And he did it in a thrilling match that began Friday night in Melbourne and ended after midnight Saturday. Who cares if he is 38 years old when he keeps finding new ways to redefine his greatness?

Unlike other tournaments — such as Wimbledon and the US Open, which play first-to-seven in a tiebreaker — the Australian Open has a first-to-10 format, and Federer fell behind 8-4 early on. So imagine the kind of rallying he had to do with six straight points to win the tiebreaker and the third-round match, 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (10-8). With this, he has also become the first singles player to win 100 matches in two different Grand Slams; his Wimbledon 100 happened last year. In his post-match interview, Federer joked that when Millman had that huge lead in the tiebreaker and was two points away from taking the match, he was already preparing himself to offer excuses during his press conference for why he lost. Now we know how he didn't let his doubts get the better of him. So tennis can still be an old man's game. Just like life itself.

You're what you say you're

In the midst of all the din created by parties that has earned India the dubious title of a divided nation, Delhi stands as a calm outlier. AAP has significantly changed perceptions



AJOY KUMAR

I was reading a piece on the popular online platform, *Medium*. In the said article, I came across an interesting tidbit about an American football coach, Bill Parcells. He has been listed in the "Pro Football Hall of Fame" and is one of the most successful football coaches in the US. While he has won many championships and brought great success to his team, most fans remember him for his famous quote rather than something he had done on the field: "You are what your record says you are." This is a lovely take on the classic adage, "You are what you say you are." Both phrases are rooted in real-life experiences. There can be no greater example of it than the prevailing political scenario in New Delhi.

Elections in the national capital are due in February. With the media's focus on the said polls, it is likely that one may have had a chance to hear about or must have come across the different political campaigns currently at play by various parties in the city. One of the favourite catch phrases for one of the political opponents of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has been "Pakistan." It's very hard to escape any mention about it. Whenever any panellist speaks against the AAP on a television debate or otherwise, it is almost inevitable that reference to "Pakistan" is made. This is in stark comparison to the catch phrase of the AAP, which reads: *Kaam Pe Vote*.

Why is there such a difference in the approach of both parties? To understand this, the phrase, "You are what you say you are" may be of help. When the AAP exploded into the Indian political landscape, it came up with a message that was entirely different from the prevailing political narratives at that time. There was no talk about division along religious or caste lines. Instead, the message of hope that was offered then was that the AAP is in politics to change the narrative and that of the politicians. Communalism or crony capitalism was not on the agenda. Instead, the focus was on "development" and to provide cheaper power and ample water supply to the people of Delhi.

At that time, this mandate was only based on "hope" because back in 2015, the AAP had no prior record in Indian politics. Fast forward it to 2019 and the story is quite different now. Just how different will be dealt in detail later in this piece. The reason why the AAP chose to speak about "development" and aimed to provide basic amenities to the people is simple. Its focus on these issues isn't one of "obsession" or "identity." On the contrary, AAP's belief is that most Delhiites, and for that matter most Indians, do not care as much about what makes them different but what can take them and their children forward. It's an aspirational view of politics that speaks to not only what it can be about but also



how a commitment to this basic principle can help the citizens move forward.

On the other hand, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has made "Pakistan" its main focus area. Party spokespersons speak little or do not even talk about development. But if one were to ask them about Pakistan, they can write a thesis about our neighbour. This is why BJP leaders have little or no idea about how to improve the state of education or to provide cheap electricity. The BJP's agenda is to focus on what divides us. Differences abound among Indians; we have different religions, eating habits, climates, spices and different colours. But just because we have differences doesn't mean that we must be divided.

Our greatest asset lies in "diversity" and Delhi is a microcosm of it where citizens from all across the country have come together to make it their home. I believe that as Indians, we are in unison about at least one thing: We want our children to see a better India than what we have seen until now. Citizens want affordable electricity, a corruption-free Government, good roads and an empowering education system. These formed the foundation of the AAP's 2019 slogan, *Kaam Pe Vote*.

While 2015 may have been an election about hope, in 2020, the AAP has asked for

SINCE 2015, AAP HAS REDUCED TEACHER VACANCIES BY OVER 70 PER CENT. THE FACT THAT 1.4 LAKH CHILDREN IN THE CAPITAL HAVE BEEN SHIFTED FROM PRIVATE TO GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IS A TESTIMONY TO THE FACT THAT PEOPLE APPRECIATED THE WORK DONE BY IT



votes only on the basis of the work done by it. This is a marked departure from the way its political opponents, who are obsessed with identities, have campaigned. The AAP is obsessed with "work." This is where Bill Parcells' quote comes into picture: "You are what your record says you are."

Since 2015, the AAP has reduced teacher vacancies by over 70 per cent. The party's focus, which is to improve Delhi's education system, has been recognised by the world. The fact that 1.4 lakh children in the national capital have been shifted from "private" to "Government" schools is a testimony to the fact that people have recognised and appreciated the work done by it. In the healthcare sector, too, the party has already set up 450 mohalla clinics till December 2019 and has served around two crore people in the city.

The power sector, too, has undergone a transformative change. Delhi is the only State where both domestic and commercial tariffs have reduced and where 24x7 electricity is a reality. Under previous Governments, an increase in tariffs was all but regular. To receive 24x7 electricity was a treasured rarity. Delhi is going the way most Indians want India to go. Its economy is growing and the AAP Government has managed a

surplus by reducing leakages and corruption at every level.

I can go on and on speaking about the efforts and results of the AAP in Delhi but this article is about something more than this. It's about how in 2010, the term, "India" was on everyone's lips. Great things were expected of us and the entire world looked upon the country to provide them "intellectual" and "human capital."

We were on the cover of international magazines as an emblem of hope. Now, we are on their covers as an example of a divided nation. A mixture of corruption, incompetence, entitlement from certain political parties and politics of hatred, division and communalism on the part of certain political parties has brought us to this unfortunate moment.

However, all is not lost. Amidst all this din, the fact is that Delhi stands as a calm outlier that has done actual work for the people. It has done so by leaving the task of talking to be done by those who are more adept at it. And when the AAP does speak, it's about *kaam* (work) not "Pakistan." The party believes in the phrase, "You are what you say." Does anybody not believe us? Have a look at our records and they will speak for themselves.

(The writer is a former IPS officer, a former MP and currently a member of the AAP)

SOUNDBITE

People in Bangladesh have taken several measures to mitigate the crisis. However, on our side of the border, there is very little awareness about climate change.



Author —Amitav Ghosh

Books have played a very big role in bringing me out of the darkest period of my life. I read copiously and indiscriminately. I read Russian writers like Dostoevsky.



Supermodel-actor —Lisa Ray

India's broadening strategic horizons over the past two decades have resulted in a shift away from a passive foreign policy to one that advances its interests more vigorously.



US official —Alice Wells

Some of our voters do not understand the importance of their franchise. In most democratic nations, common people had to agitate to get the franchise.



President —Ram Nath Kovind

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Widening gap

Sir — Recently, a study conducted by Oxfam revealed that one per cent of the richest people in India holds more than four-fold the wealth of the poorest 70 per cent of the population. In the Global Hunger Index, India ranked a middling 55th in 2014. In 2019, the country ranked 102nd. Yet, we are supposed to be a socialist country. It is, thus, crucial for lawmakers to ensure that basic resources such as food reach the marginalised sections of society. The Government must strive to uplift the poorest of the poor to a level of self-sufficiency where no person is deprived of the most fundamental requisites — food, clean water, clothes and shelter.

Shivanshu K Srivastava
Lucknow

Be alert and prepared

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Another deadly virus" (January 23). The spectre of coronavirus has caught the attention of the entire world, especially China, where as many as 40 people have

Address key issues to remain relevant

It's high time that the Government realises that a slew of gigantic projects launched by it in the name of development has failed to impress the common man. In fact, the *aam aadmi* has now come to terms with the state of affairs of the economy, which has shown little or no signs of recovery despite the tall claims made by the Government. The country is passing through harrowing times and the Modi *sarkar* is in no mood to even accept the stark reality. With the prices of almost all essential food items skyrocketing, citizens are not mistaken to feel that they have been let down by the Government.

With inflation and unemployment being the true indicators of the deteriorating economic situation, it is but natural for the people to be bothered. Surprisingly, in contrast to the popularity that Prime Minister Narendra Modi presumes he is enjoying among the masses, the agenda pursued by him so far has been anti-people. In an apparent bid to assert its will over the nation, the Government has diverted the attention of the people from pressing issues to dwell on debates on the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Here, too, it has not yet clarified all doubts. Rather, its statements have led to more confusion. It has by now become evident that if matters of national importance are dealt with bla-



tantly, as the Central Government has done with CAA, there will be some repercussions. The combined stance taken by various State Governments and a slew of petitions filed against it in the Supreme Court provide a glimpse of what could happen if a decision is taken without consent. The primary duty of any Government is towards the people. But when the welfare programmes envisaged for the masses pale in comparison to the larger machinations, the nation is in for troubled times ahead.

Pachu Menon
Margao

are worrying but they do give us an opportunity to prepare for the next threat. In the light of this, India must take all precautionary measures to prevent the entry of coronavirus into our country.

TK Nandan
Chennai

Reduce food wastage

Sir — This refers to the shocking reports about 25,000 *rotis* (bread) being wasted daily in Delhi's Tihar jail as the prisoners do not take their full diet due to mental pressure. The report revealed that the situation is more prevalent among under-trial prisoners who form the majority of the inmates, while the convicted and death row prisoners have a better diet. The system must be modified. Meals can be cooked on an average basis rather than the prescribed diet to avoid such large-scale wastage of food, including *rotis*. Further steps can be taken to utilise the surplus *rotis* to produce biscuits.

Madhu Agrawal
Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Endless protests and their fallout

For any protest to last beyond a small fraction of sustainable time, it needs the support of sponsors. The challenge is in keeping it free from vested interests



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

There's a feeling of disquiet among segments of the cross section of a news-aware people across the country. They consume news either in print or television, which is dominated by private players. This has led to a situation where financiers view their broadcasting channel to be a surrogate of their own political, social and economic inclinations. This is a fact of life that is seldom flagged. By and large, the so-called public is unaware of the political slant of the promoters and protectors of the medium who carry the news. Hence, the distinction between facts, comments and commentary often becomes dubious. Comments parade as facts and commentary often becomes the explanation thereof. This makes the job of the reader — to understand what is actually happening — even more complex. The result is that rabble-rousing often gets mistaken for a vibrant democracy.

The current atmosphere of agitations for and against an issue has raised some fundamental questions. One of them is: How significant are street protests as a counterfoil of a dominant majority of parliamentarians, who in their wisdom, took a decision on a given topic? It is generally assumed that given the total voting population of the country, a parliamentarian represents approximately 16 to 17 lakh voters. No single demonstration ever approximates that number. What makes a demonstration great is the media coverage it receives and how for hours, certain shots can be repeated over and over again. That some people get animated and get prone to posture in an excitable manner is no secret. Thus, it is that process give a slant to a situation represented by a selection of facts. Repetition of this approach across more than one forum serves as a drumming up. It goes far beyond the wildest dreams of the sponsors of that limited agitation on the crossroads.

Brigades of two types of professionals then descend upon the location. On January 23, an aspiring leader-to-be descended with a mike on the crowd of protesters in Shaheen Bagh to encourage them. He promised that he would create 500 or better still, 5,000 more Shaheen Baghs across the country. The same day, while delivering a memorial lecture, a now retired VVVIP lauded the very act of protest as something very encouraging. Whether it is encouraging or not is another matter. The bald truth remains that it raised several unanswered questions. For instance, protest is a desirable process in a democracy but the concurrent question is: What form should it take? How should the theme be chosen? What is the mode of protest? Is it disrupting the life of an average citizen, who is interested in nothing more than leading a normal, quiet and ordinary life? The questions are numerous but answers are few. At the end of the day, any protest that has to last beyond a small fraction of sustainable time needs the support of sponsors. Somebody has to promote it and that person would not do so without a vested interest.

Across world history, from Paris Commune to Bolshevik Revolution, lessons are easy to identify. The Paris Commune collapsed when organised sponsorship withdrew. Perhaps, there would have been no Bolshevik Revolution if the Germans had not smuggled Lennin into Czarist Russia. In such circumstances, serenading protest for the sake of it, especially by the young and distinguished professionals, who have no track record of having participated in a significant populist protest movement, can only be pandering to the gallery. Such episodes cannot be overlooked because they tend to feed upon themselves, get drummed up and projected. The ultimate spread effect cannot be a gain to anyone or any process. There are innumerable cases where protest movements have fizzled out because of the absence of a sustainable agenda. That, too, would be a tragedy because protests or any process should be an input to be more robust. The danger of throwing the baby in the bath water is too risky to sustain or even consider. It would have made sense if some leader of standing, credibility and past records made a headline by pointing out how protests can get out of hand.

Besides, there are ripple effects, too. Reports have it that a lady enumerator of a certain, totally a political social intervention, while dealing with a community of people of her own faith in Kota, was summoned back to the colony after she collected data of names and addresses. She was threatened not to use them. This kind of contagion is highly infectious. A little later, hundreds of miles away from Kota, a programme run in the aid of internet awareness by Google India and Tata Trust got into foul weather. The reason was that enumerators were asking for the names and addresses of the trainees. The upshot was that the programme, at the end of December 2019, was halted in all the five districts of West Bengal because the trainers faced trouble. Is this right?

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

KEJRIWAL HAD PROMISED TO BUILD 500 SCHOOLS. FAR FROM BUILDING NEW ONES, THE CONDITION OF EXISTING ONES REMAINS IN SHAMBLES.

—UNION MINISTER
AMIT SHAH



DON'T MAKE EDUCATION A PART OF YOUR DIRTY POLITICS. PLEASE TAKE OUT TIME AND COME WITH ME TO VISIT GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS.

—DELHI CHIEF MINISTER
ARVIND KEJRIWAL

Listen to the teenage zealot

One does not have to buy into Greta Thunberg's apocalyptic angst to see that something has to be done on climate change. Changing to a cleaner energy future is a good thing in itself



PHILIP JOHNSTON

An unfamiliar white patina covered our lawn recently, something seldom seen any longer, certainly not here in the South: A frost. For the first time this year, I considered digging out my heavy coat from the depths of the cupboard but it wasn't really cold enough. Where have our winters gone? I miss them. No doubt having written those words, the country will freeze for the next month but there is no sign of anything remotely wintry in the long-term forecast anywhere in the country, not just in London. It is hard to recall an old-fashioned winter where it would snow at least two or three times between December and April.

This mild pattern is noticeable across the entire European continent and has been for some time now. In Moscow, the authorities sprayed fake snow around the city centre over the New Year to give the residents a sense of the season. The temperature in the Russian capital last week was 4°Celsius; usually it is -10°Celsius or lower.

I remember visiting Moscow in late January and it was -25°Celsius, with the River Mosca frozen so solid you could drive across it. They used to call it General Winter — weather so ghastly that it was an integral part of Russia's defences, repelling Napoleon and Hitler, among others. Now it's not even Lance-Corporal Slightly Chilly.

All the great eastern and central European cities — Berlin, Warsaw, Vienna and St Petersburg — are exceptionally mild, though winter could yet have a sting in the tail. The so-called Beast from the East that arrived late in the season a few years ago temporarily shocked us out of our complacency but it was relatively short-lived and not that exceptional in any case. Mild Januaries are now the norm. We have a lovely old wooden toboggan that has hardly been put to use since the 1980s, which is the last time I can remember a succession of cold winters. Growing up in Kent in the 1960s and 1970s, heavy frosts and blizzards were an annual occurrence. Not now.

I am reluctant to attribute what might prove to be temporary weather glitches to long-term climate change but there is clearly something going on that cannot be ignored. We don't have to buy into the apocalyptic angst of Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg, on show again in Davos last week, to recognise that something has to be done. Whether or not you are a sceptic about the impact of carbon dioxide on the climate or question man's involvement in producing the greenhouse gas, our energy future is a non-carbon one, like it or not. Virtually every Government across the world has committed to this as an overt aspect of public policy and those that haven't, like China or the US, have a rapidly growing green energy sector poised to exploit the move to a carbon-free future.

If US President Donald Trump wants to be remembered for anything other than being impeached, he would throw his weight behind it because it is happening anyway, even in his



own backyard. American greenhouse gas emissions are falling despite his commitment to fossil fuels.

Perhaps Trump would be persuadable if he were to recognise there is a hard-headed economic imperative here. He should listen to someone like Marco Alvera, an oil and gas CEO who understands what is going on and has ideas to address it.

At a conference in Venice at the weekend, he said we should commit to the one clean energy source that is plentiful, easy to transport and getting cheaper to produce. It is all around us, does not have to be drilled out of the ground in parts of the world favoured with the right geology and does not pollute the atmosphere. It is hydrogen, the most widespread element in the universe. Like many businesses reliant upon carbon-based energy, Alvera's Italian energy infrastructure company, Snam, has no long-term future unless it adapts because its pipelines, compressors and storage tanks will be useless as oil and gas come under pressure from state actors around the world. They can be used for hydrogen instead.

However, this is more than just a commercial calculation. Alvera has published a book compellingly setting out the case for Governments, manufacturers and investors to get behind hydrogen now before they head off down other less-promising blind alleys.

Hydrogen can be burned to drive a turbine, can be piped into homes for boilers, cookers and air conditioners and converted into electricity using a fuel cell to power a car or a lorry. Unlike wind and solar power, it is easily stored and can generate the intense heat needed by industrial processes including manufacturing steel and cement. The only waste



“HYDROGEN CAN BE BURNED TO DRIVE A TURBINE, CAN BE PIPED INTO HOMES FOR BOILERS, COOKERS AND AIR CONDITIONERS AND CONVERTED INTO ELECTRICITY USING A FUEL CELL TO POWER A CAR OR A LORRY. UNLIKE WIND AND SOLAR POWER, IT IS EASILY STORED AND CAN GENERATE THE INTENSE HEAT NEEDED BY INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES INCLUDING MANUFACTURING STEEL AND CEMENT”

product is water.

True, there is nothing new about the concept. Fuel cells were developed in the mid-19th century and some buses were running on hydrogen in Germany and Britain in the 1930s. There are cars today that have been converted to hydrogen but they are expensive and there is no infrastructure to support them. Manufacturers like Toyota are developing hydrogen cars with their Mirai range but few others are following suit. They should.

In the past, hydrogen has been too expensive relative to fossil fuels but that will change as new taxes are loaded onto coal and gas to meet carbon dioxide targets and the cost of renewable energy continues to fall. No one pretends the transition will be straightforward but if there's widespread adoption of the technology and the necessary infrastructure, it will become increasingly affordable.

This is a reasoned, not a hysterical, approach. Alvera likes to adapt the argument known as Pascal's wager to our climate change conundrum. The 17th century French philosopher and mathematician asked what we should do if we had to bet our lives on the existence of God. Pascal posited that the rational response was to behave as though he did exist because we have nothing much to lose if it turns out that he doesn't but risk eternal damnation if he does.

Climate change is the same. If Greta is right then the consequences of doing nothing are calamitous. But if she is wrong, changing to a cleaner energy future is a good thing in itself and can even generate growth and prosperity. You do not have to be a teenage zealot to see sense in that.

(Courtesy: The Telegraph)

Students of a feather

What makes a university campus Left wing or Right wing? Fact is, both try to mould the ideological orientation of the students. They are actually endangering the whole idea of free speech and critical thinking



NADEEM PARACHA

Across India, protests have erupted against the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that was enacted in December last year. Even though the law is widely being deemed "anti-Muslim", many non-Muslim Indians, too, have participated in the protests. They see the law — passed by the Right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government — as an attack on the country's Constitutional secularism, first established in 1950.

At the centre of the protests are thousands of university and college students. One of the most active campuses in this respect has been Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University

(JNU). On January 5 this year, at least 40 JNU students were admitted to the hospital with injuries. According to a January 6 report by the BBC, masked men and at least one woman, allegedly belonging to the student wings of Hindu nationalist parties, attacked students of the JNU and vandalised university property.

For decades, JNU has been one of India's most politicised campuses. It is often described as a hot-bed of radical Left-wing politics. According to a study of politics in JNU, published in the March 2018 edition of *Economic and Political Weekly*, Jean-Thomas Martelli and Khlaq Pankar wrote that on 33 occasions, radical Left-wing student outfits have won JNU's student union elections.

Even though the student wings of the BJP and the paramilitary Hindu nationalist organisation the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) are also active there, only once have they won the presidential post in the university's union. The university's union has

remained in the hands of Left-wing student groups and alliances due to what Martelli and Pankar say is JNU's "dominant anti-establishment discourse."

The BJP and RSS student wings have lamented that anti-Left politics is suppressed at the university. There are also, of course, universities and colleges in India where Right-wing student outfits are dominant and Left-wing student groups accuse them of repression.

So what makes a university campus Left wing or Right wing? Recently, in the US, conservative think-tanks, academics and student outfits accused their Left-wing counterparts of blatantly repressing free speech by disallowing conservative groups to operate on various campuses. They accused "radical" Left-wing professors of "indoctrinating" students in the name of liberalism and socialism, while, in fact, turning them into "Left-wing fascists."

Such allegations are not entirely unfounded. In their 2005 essay for a journal called *The Forum*,

researchers Stanley Rothman, S Robert Lichter and Neil Nevetti wrote that Left-wing "ideologically-based discrimination in academic advancement deserves serious consideration." Even many "moderate" commentators in the US have not hesitated in pointing out the proliferation of "political correctness", purportedly formulated on "Left-leaning" US campuses as the reason behind the off-campus "backlash" that eventually put Donald Trump in the White House.

But again, what makes a campus Left or Right wing? In February 2017, the American journalist Scott Jaschik (in an essay for *Inside Higher Ed*) analysed four studies conducted between 2007 and 2016. The studies concluded that faculty members of most American universities leaned Left. Professors thus play a major role in shaping the students' ideological orientation and biases.

I shall briefly discuss cases of some specific universities to elaborate this. Locally, between the early 1960s and 1970s, the Karachi University (KU) was seen as a

vibrant bastion of diverse student political activity. But a former founder of the erstwhile Pakistani Left-wing student outfit, the National Students Federation (NSF), Husain Naqi, and another NSF luminary, the late Meraj Muhammad Khan often accused the university's Vice Chancellor — from 1961 till 1971 — Dr Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, of siding with Right-wing student groups to curb NSF's electoral influence in KU.

Naqi told *The News International* in June 2007 that NSF was popular among KU's students but Qureshi went the extra mile to change this. Therefore, by 1970, KU's student union had been won by the Right-wing Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT) and NSF broke into various factions.

In 1968, KU had been active during the largely Left-wing movement against the Ayub Khan regime. But in 1977, it went the other way by becoming the epicentre of a Right-wing movement against the "socialist" ZA Bhutto Government. Of course, there is more to this than

just a faculty turning Right and influencing the students but after 1977, it became tough for Left-wing groups to operate at KU without being harassed. The results were tragic. Another example in this context is of Tehran University. In his book, *Democracy in Iran*, the sociologist Misagh Parsa wrote that between the 1950s and 1979, student politics in almost all major campuses in Iran, especially the Tehran University, was a mixture of Left and Right groups.

Most of these groups were opposed to the Iranian monarchy. According to Parsa, after the monarchy was toppled in 1979, the Iranian clergy, under Ayatollah Khomeini, attempted to oust its former anti-monarchy allies on the Left. Protests against many of Khomeini's prescribed "Islamic laws" erupted at the Tehran University.

In June 1980, Khomeini ordered a "cultural revolution" to eliminate all "Western," "anti-Islam" and Leftist influences from Iran's universities. Leftist students were physically attacked by pro-Khomeini groups

and faculty members suspected of being Leftists or liberal were expelled, replaced by teachers and professors sympathetic to Khomeini.

Commentators perturbed by the Left-Right "cultural wars" that have erupted on US campuses have insisted that when faculty members — both on the Right and the Left — try to mould the ideological orientation of the students, they are actually endangering the whole idea of free speech and critical thinking.

They are blocking young minds from intellectually engaging with those who may hold different opinions. That's why the young Indian Hindu nationalists from "Right-wing campuses" decided to use iron rods to engage with their left counterparts at JNU. And that's why, in November last year, Left-wing students at California's Berkeley University went on a rampage and refused to allow a speaker from the other side of the ideological divide to speak at the university. The casualties in both cases were free speech and basic democratic norms.

(Courtesy: The Dawn)

Address policy issues stalling growth: Industry body to FM

Slash GST on Auto LPG: Industry body

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading industry body Indian Auto LPG Coalition has sought GST reduction on Auto LPG as well as on conversion kits for gaseous fuels to promote the adoption of clean automotive fuels.

LPG used as fuel in automobiles or Auto LPG, which is among the cleanest alternative fuels with a Global Warming Potential of 'zero' is currently

taxed at 18 per cent GST. Also, the GST rates on Auto LPG/CNG conversion kits stand at a prohibitive 2 per cent, IAC said.

High GST rates on clean fuels and conversions kits are in complete variance to the government's stated green mobility push, it said in a statement.

"We seek the attention of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman towards the imminent need for devising friendly policies to allow rapid growth of environment-friendly transport fuels such as Auto LPG. Auto LPG which is being promoted actively by governments across the world is fac-



ing discriminatory policies in India. It is taxed at a high GST slab of 18 per cent. Similarly, conversion kits for auto LPG and CNG are placed at the highest slab of 28 per cent which is meant for either luxury goods or demerit items like tobacco products," said Suyash Gupta, Director General, Indian Auto LPG Coalition (IAC).

IAC said LPG is the most widely used alternative fuel in the world, with a proven track record of improvement in air quality. The global consumption of Auto LPG has risen by over 40 per cent over the past 10 years, fuelled by environ-

mental concerns. Among the key nations that have successfully adopted this green fuel for their transportation requirements are South Korea, Turkey, Poland, Japan, Australia, Italy, Mexico and Russia.

The association said even as India plans a long-term shift to electric vehicles, it is missing out the environmental benefits that can be gained by adopting low hanging fruits like Auto LPG. Investing in a wider basket of clean alternative transport fuels that are more readily available can bring about an immediate improvement in air quality unlike EVs that are still a decade away from becoming commercially viable.

"Apart from the need to

lower GST, another critical intervention required is the reform of the Type Approval norms governing conversion to gaseous fuels. The Type Approval norms require companies to renew extremely cost prohibitive Type Approvals for Auto LPG and CNG conversions every three years. This acts as a major hurdle to the industry and has resulted in a rapid dwindling of players in the retro-fit market. The Type Approval regime must be made industry friendly and its validity must be made perpetual in line with European norms," Gupta said.

More than 26 million vehicles run on Auto LPG global-

ly, supported by close to 71,000 LPG Filling Stations with global Auto LPG consumption exceeding 26 million tonnes. Emissions of harmful nitrogen oxides (NOx) and harmful particulate matter PM 2.5 are almost negligible for Auto LPG, claimed IAC.

IAC is the nodal body for the promotion of Auto LPG in India. Members of the Coalition include the oil PSUs, private auto LPG marketers, kit suppliers and equipment manufacturers. The coalition works closely with the World LPG Association, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers and Automotive Research Association of India.

Banking sector is stressed, govt in no position to bail it out: Banerjee

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Nobel laureate and economist Abhijit Banerjee here on Sunday said the banking sector in the country is "stressed" and the Government is in no position to bail it out.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the 13th Jaipur Literature Festival, Banerjee said the demand slowdown in the automobile sector also shows that people are lacking confidence in the economy.

"Financial sector is the biggest stress point currently. There is no question that the finance sector is something we should worry about, the banking sector is stressed. The government really is not in a position to bail it out, so we are talking about a long process of attrition, that's going to be costly."

"We also know that due to a demand deficit in the economy, cars and two-wheelers are not selling, and those things are signs of a general fact that people lack confidence that the economy is going to grow fast so they are holding back, they



Nobel Laureate Abhijit V Banerjee speaks during the Jaipur Literature Festival at Digi Palace in Jaipur on Sunday PTI

are not spending," he said.

The author of "Good Economics for Hard Times" added that the slowdown in the economy will also adversely impact poverty alleviation in the country as urban and rural sectors are interdependent.

"Poverty alleviation has

been happening mostly on the strength of the fact that urban sector creates low skill jobs, and a lot of rural sector works in the urban sector and sends money back.

"That's the peak source of transmission of growth from urban sector to rural sector. And as soon as the urban sector slows down the rural sector, the people in construction work don't have as many jobs. All of that will feed back on the rural sector," the 58-year-old Indian-American economist said.

Answering to a question — how will economic policies work if people have a lack of trust in the data, he said the government "should worry about this issue" as foreign investors are getting "nervous".

"They don't know where they are going, what they are getting into, I mean those are real issues the government should look into. If it wants to have more investment and more involvement in the global economy, then I think it needs to provide the true data to people," he said.

Govt likely to soon allow Indian firms to list overseas

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is likely to soon decide on permitting Indian companies to list their equity shares overseas, according to an official.

Apart from providing an additional fund raising avenue for the corporates looking to expand and boost their business activities, overseas listing of shares would also help in bringing more capital into the country.

The official said many companies are interested in listing their equity shares in foreign countries.

Currently, quite a few Indian companies have American Depository Receipts (ADRs) that are traded in the US. Some other corporates have their Global Depository Receipts (GDRs).

The official said the corporate affairs ministry and markets regulator Sebi are in favour of allowing Indian com-

panies to list their equity shares in foreign countries. Other departments and regulators are also expected to be on board, the official added.

A decision is likely soon, the official said, adding that changes would need to be done in the companies law and Sebi regulations for permitting listing of domestic companies overseas.

Further, the official said that only public companies are likely to be given permission for overseas listing of equity shares.

Under the Companies Act, public companies should have at least seven shareholders and have no restriction on transferability of their shares, among other criteria.

A depository receipt is a foreign currency denominated instrument, listed on an international exchange, issued by a foreign depository to a domestic custodian and includes GDRs.

FPIs pour in ₹1,624 cr in Jan so far as US-China trade deal boosts sentiment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) have infused a net sum of ₹1,624 crore into the Indian capital markets in January so far, buoyed by the signing of the first phase of the US-China trade deal.

As per latest depositories data, FPIs invested a net ₹13,304 crore in equities and withdrew a net ₹11,680 crore from the debt segment between January 1-24. This translates into a total net inflow of ₹1,624 crore.

"After starting the year on a muted note, investments from FPIs has picked up pace and most of that flows came after US and China signed a trade deal putting the trade war between them on a pause," said Himanshu Srivastava, senior analyst manager research at Morningstar Investment Adviser India.

The latest investments came despite challenges such as enhanced geopolitical tension between the US and Iran and dwindling domestic economic growth, Srivastava noted.

Additionally, the RBI has also made relaxation in the voluntary retention route (VRR) for FPI investments in debt. The investment cap through VRR has been doubled to ₹1.5 lakh crore, the RBI said in another circular

On the domestic front, "there are some signs of India shaking away the slowdown with business activity picking up and this is reflecting in the investments coming into equities. Besides, after the limit to which FPIs can invest in debt instruments has been increased, more inflows into the debt category can be expected," said Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww.

The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday raised the investment limit for FPIs in government and corporate bonds, a move that is likely to bring in

more foreign funds in the country.

According to the current norms, short-term investments by an FPI should not exceed 20 per cent of the total investment of that FPI in either central government securities (including treasury bills) or state development loans. The same norms are applicable on investments in corporate bonds.

The short-term investment limit has now been increased from 20 per cent to 30 per cent in both the cases, the RBI said in a circular.

Additionally, the RBI has also made relaxation in the voluntary retention route (VRR) for FPI investments in debt. The investment cap through VRR has been doubled to ₹1.5 lakh crore, the RBI said in another circular.

Going forward, "all eyes will now be on the upcoming Budget to get further cues. This will play major role in terms of shaping up the investment views of foreign investors and decision to invest in the Indian equity markets," Srivastava added.

Gold imports dip 6.77% during April-Dec 2019

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold imports, which have a bearing on the current account deficit (CAD), fell 6.77 per cent to USD 23 billion during the April-December period of the current financial year, according to data from the commerce ministry.

Imports of the yellow metal stood at USD 24.73 billion in the corresponding period of 2018-19. The decline in gold imports has helped in narrowing the country's trade deficit to USD 118 billion during the period, against USD 148.23 billion a year ago.

Gold imports had been recording a negative growth since July this year. However, it recorded positive growth in October and November last year, only to contract by about 4 per cent in December last year.

India is the largest importer of gold, which mainly caters to the demand of the jewellery industry.

Telecom gear maker ITI to invest ₹150 cr to boost solar panel capacity

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Public sector electronics and telecom gear maker ITI Limited plans around ₹150 crore investment to scale up its solar panel manufacturing capacity to 90 MW in the next fiscal, a top company official said.

The company, which plans to raise ₹1,600 crore through a follow-on public offer (FPO), has a solar panel capacity of 18 MW currently.

"Given the kind of demand we are witnessing in the solar space, especially in the rooftop segment, from corporates and commercial establishments as well as the state governments, we want to be ready to tap that opportunity," the company's Chairman and Managing Director RM Agarwal told PTI.

He said the company will be investing ₹150 crore for scaling up the capacity, which it hopes to get from the budget allocated to the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications.

The company is expecting

The company, which plans to raise ₹1,600 crore through a follow-on public offer (FPO), has a solar panel capacity of 18 MW currently

at least ₹500 crore from the government in the next fiscal for meeting its various capital expenditure (capex) requirements. The company has a solar panel manufacturing facility at Naini in Uttar Pradesh.

When asked if the company would utilise the funds raised through the FPO for the capacity enhancement in case the funds from the government do not come, he said, "The FPO proceeds will have to be used towards partial repayment of loans, funding our working capital requirements and general purpose. For our capex, we will have to wait for the ministry to release the

funds."

Agarwal further said the company is banking on capacities tendered by discoms in various states to supply its panels as well as to set up rooftop projects on turnkey basis, along with the expected projects under the national solar mission.

The company has executed various turnkey orders for Bharatnet, telecom towers, and Uttar Pradesh police headquarters. ITI has also deployed 15 MW solar power project for the Solar Energy Corporation of India.

According to industry estimates, as of September 2019, cumulative installed solar capacity in India stood at 33.8 GW, of which rooftop solar installations crossed 4 GW.

Apart from solar panels, the company is also focusing on manufacturing of LED-based products like LED solar lantern and LED street lights for rural use and LED tube lights and decorative indoor lights for grid connected applications.

Three expressways/green corridors to be completed in three yrs, says Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government plans to complete three of the 22 expressways and green corridors in the next three years, including the flagship Delhi Mumbai Expressway being built at a new alignment, Union minister Nitin Gadkari has said.

These 22 projects comprising 7,500 km of greenfield expressways and corridors are planned to be completed by FY25 at a cost of ₹3.10 lakh crore.

"We will complete the flagship Delhi Mumbai Express Highway in the next three years. The work will be done in 51 packages and work has already been started on 18. This will be India's longest expressway at 1,320 km and will reduce travel time between Delhi and Mumbai from 24 hours to 13 hours," the road transport and highways minister said.

Of the projects, six are 2,250 km expressways to be built at a cost of ₹1.45 lakh crore.

The remaining 16 are greenfield corridors, including 5,250 km projects to be constructed at a cost of ₹1.65 lakh crore

Besides Delhi Mumbai Expressway, the minister said the trans-Rajasthan and trans-Haryana projects will be completed within the next three years.

About Delhi Mumbai Expressway, he said greenfield alignment has been selected to avoid habitation and optimise cost of land acquisition.

"We have saved about ₹16,000 crore on land acquisition front alone as land could be acquired at a cost of ₹80 lakh per hectare for the project," he said, adding that the expressway will unlock new economic opportunities in hinterland districts of Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

Sebi plans to rationalise margin system in derivatives segment to bring down trading cost

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi is planning to rationalise margin system in the equity and commodity derivatives segments as part of its effort to boost liquidity and bring down trading cost, industry officials said.

The regulator is expected to come out with the new margining system this week, they added.

The framework has been prepared on the basis of recommendations by the capital markets regulator's Risk Management Review Committee.

Margin, in market parlance, is the minimum fund or security an investor is required to pay to the stock broker before executing a trade. This is basically part of the money collected by bourses from brokerages upfront, before giving exposure for trading in equity and commodity derivatives.

Under the new framework, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is likely to lower margins for hedged position, which will benefit market participants, especially hedgers, officials said.

The new margin system will be based on standard portfolio analysis of risk-model, developed by NSE Clearing Corporation and International Organization of Securities Commissions' (IOSCO) principles, they added.

Market participants believe that currently margins are on the higher side as compared to those levied by global exchanges.

In addition, there are numerous margins levied by exchanges on members, which pushes up the overall cost of trading. These include initial, premium and assignment margins.

An initial margin paid by the broker is based on the 'standard portfolio analysis of risk' model. Also, it charges members a premium margin and an assignment margin, in addition to the initial margin.

Premium margin, charged to members, is the client wide premium amount payable by the buyer of the option and is

In addition, there are numerous margins levied by exchanges on members, which pushes up the overall cost of trading. These include initial, premium and assignment margins

levied till the completion of pay-in towards the premium settlement. An assignment margin is levied on assigned positions of members till the payment towards settlement obligations is complete.

As part of the margin rationalisation, Sebi is likely to lower margins, which will help market participants to transact more, eventually leading to improved liquidity situation and reduced impact cost.

In November 2019, Sebi had asked trading and clearing members to compulsorily collect upfront certain margins from their clients in the cash segment. The move became effective from January 1, 2020.

Under the guidelines, trading and clearing members need to report to the stock exchange about the about the actual short-collection or non-collection of all margins from clients.

From April 1, non-compliance of this would be penalised, which brokers would have to pass on to their clients, which in turn would impact trading volumes.

Derivatives in financial markets typically refer to the forward, future, option or any other hybrid contract of pre-determined fixed duration, linked for the purpose of contract fulfillment to the value of a specified real or financial asset or to an index of securities.

Broadly, there are two types of derivative contracts — futures and options.

A futures contract means a legally binding agreement to buy or sell the underlying security on a future date, while options contract gives the buyer or holder of the contract the right (but not the obligation) to buy or sell the underlying asset at a predetermined price within or at end of a specified period.

Earnings, global cues, pre-Budget expectations to drive markets this week, say analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Earnings from major companies such as HDFC, US Fed's interest rate decision and hopes of positive measures from the Budget would drive sentiment in the equity markets this week which may also witness volatile sessions amid derivatives expiry, according to analysts.

Participants would also keep an eye on the spread of the deadly coronavirus in China and other countries, they added. The lethal virus has claimed 56 lives in China, and spread to about a dozen nations.

"Going ahead, markets are likely to be volatile due to monthly F&O expiry just ahead of the Union Budget that would be presented towards the end of the elongated week. Also, stock-specific action is likely to continue with the ongoing results season which has been mixed so far. Apart from these,

investors would also watch out for the US Fed and Bank of England's monetary policy," Motilal Oswal Financial Services, Head - Retail Research, Siddhartha Khemka said.

He added that on the macro front, US Q4 GDP and India's fiscal deficit data would be released. Further, heavyweights like SBI, HDFC, HUL and Maruti Suzuki would be announcing their results this week which would also keep markets busy.

"The Q3 result had solid expectations but actual results are marginally below expectation for sectors like IT and banks, leading to cautiousness in the market. We feel that this cautious trend will be maintained in the near-term since a lot has been factored in about Budget wish-list and expectation of revival in earnings growth, but the actual Q3 results (has been) below par.

"Going ahead, market direction will depend on the actual Budget announcements and performance of Q3 result. Week ahead is eventful with Union Budget, US Fed and BoE policy meets," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

The US Fed interest rate decision is scheduled for Thursday.

"This week will be dominated by Union Budget but global cues and Q3 results will also have some impact on the market. Coronavirus is a key worry for the global markets because if the situation becomes worse from here then it could result in short-term slowdown in the global economy. In terms of earnings, ICICI Bank will react to its Q3 results on Monday whereas HDFC Ltd, Maruti, Bajaj Auto will be the key earnings for this week," Santosh Meena, Senior Analyst, TradingBells said.

Air India doubles flights on Tel Aviv-New Delhi route to tackle increase in passenger rush

PTI ■ TEL AVIV

In view of the increase in passenger traffic on the Tel Aviv-New Delhi sector, India's official carrier Air India will double the number of flights on the route to six per week from April.

The national carrier created history by becoming the first commercial flight to fly to Israel over Saudi Arabia and Oman in March 2018, seen by many as a diplomatic breakthrough and often presented by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a major achievement of his government signalling improving ties with Gulf countries.

The access to Saudi and Omani airspace shortens the flight path by almost two hours which lowers the fuel cost leading to reduction in fares. The announcement was made by Indian Ambassador in

Israel Sanjeev Singla during the Republic Day celebrations at the Indian Embassy here on Sunday.

"Direct Air India flight connectivity between New Delhi and Tel Aviv is a game changer in our bilateral relations reflecting the importance we attach to people-to-people linkages and connectivity. The direct flights have greatly enhanced movement of people between the two countries resulting in an increase in tourism and also facilitating the travel of the business community," Singla told PTI.

Air India started with 3 flights a week and within a span of two years has gradually increased it to six, starting from April 1 this year. It will not operate on the route on Friday when Israeli Jews observe Sabbath, a day of religious observance and abstinence from work.

Warehousing sector to add 40m sq ft space across top 8 cities this year, says report

Mumbai: As warehousing is fast becoming an integral part of integrated logistics network due to technological advancement and the reform-led policy measures, the sector is expected to add around 40 million sq ft space across the top eight cities this year, a recent survey said. According to the study by global property consultant Savills, warehousing space absorption across eight cities like Mumbai, Pune, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Kolkata, is expected rise to 35 million sq ft in 2020. In 2019, the total supply of warehousing space was 37.94 million sq ft.

"Warehousing industry in India has come a long way and it's going to continue to mature as a favourable real estate asset class," Savills India Managing Director, Industrial Warehousing and Logistics Srinivas N said. PTI

INDIA'S MIGHT ON DISPLAY

NEW DELHI | MONDAY | JANUARY 27, 2020



India celebrates its 71ST REPUBLIC DAY with a grand display of military prowess, vibrant cultural diversity and socio-economic progress on the majestic Rajpath where thousands of people, besides the country's top political and military leadership, and foreign dignitaries witnessed the annual parade on Sunday



China's coronavirus toll rises to 56, confirmed cases near 2K

Beijing: The death toll in the deadly new coronavirus in China rose to 56 on Sunday with confirmed cases of viral affliction reaching 1,975 and 324 of them being critical, Chinese health authorities said.

The new type of pneumonia, officially being described as 2019-nCoV, has resulted in 56 deaths, the National Health Commission said.

A total of 2,684 suspected cases have also been reported so far, it said.

While Wuhan and 17 other cities in Hubei province remained the epicentre of the viral disease outbreak with most of the deaths having taken place there, the cases have started rising steadily in most of the Chinese provinces and cities, including Beijing.

Hubei province added 323 new confirmed cases of infection on Jan 25. It also reported 13 new deaths.

A total of 1,052 cases of coronavirus were reported till Jan 25 in the province, with 129 being critical, besides 52 deaths, state-run Global Times reported.

Ten new coronavirus afflictions were reported till Saturday in Beijing, taking the number of cases to 51 in the city, the report said.

Shanghai, China's biggest city has reported 40 cases so far, it added.



Amid the situation becoming grim, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday said China is facing a "grave situation" but he exuded confidence that the country would "win the battle" against the coronavirus epidemic.

Stepping up all-round efforts to contain the fast spreading SARS-like virus, China on Saturday announced it would build another 1,300-bed makeshift hospital in Wuhan in the next 15 days in addition to another 1,000-bed hospital being built presently in the city and expected to be

completed in 10 days, to treat more cases of the deadly virus. The feverish pace at which the hospitals are being built indicates China is preparing to treat far more patients, considering the speed at which the virus is spreading.

The virus has spread to Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Nepal, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and the US as of Thursday. Japan on Friday had reported a second confirmed case.

The confirmed cases in China crossed the 1,000-mark for the first time on Friday, ris-

ing sharply to 1,287 with 237 people reported critical, the Commission had said on Saturday.

China's Communist Party has set up a leading group to manage the coronavirus epidemic, state media reported on Saturday.

The decision was made at a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee — the party's top leadership tier — chaired by President Xi.

In the meeting, Xi said people from different ethnic groups and sectors should work together to support efforts to

contain the spread of the deadly virus. The country is facing a "grave situation", he was quoted as saying by the South China Morning Post.

"As long as the nation has strong confidence and makes joint efforts with scientific and targeted measures, the battle of the prevention and control of the contagion will be won," Xi said, chairing meeting on the day of the Spring Festival or Lunar New Year.

Xi also called for all-out efforts to prevent and control the coronavirus-related pneumonia and extended his heartfelt gratitude to the frontline medical staff, struggling to control the outbreak.

He also called for strengthening the protection of medical staff, ensuring the steady supply of requisite materials and intensifying disclosure of related information to guide the public opinion and mobilise social forces to uphold the overall stability of society.

The CPC meeting urged concrete efforts to ensure access to adequate supplies of materials to Wuhan.

The participants of the meeting also urged to ensure all-out efforts to treat patients, and disclose disease-related information in an accurate, open and transparent manner to address concerns from both at home and abroad, it said. *PTI*

HK protesters torch planned virus quarantine building



First aid volunteers try to extinguish a fire set by local residents at a building of the Fai Ming Estate, in Fanling district of Hong Kong on Sunday

Hong Kong: Protesters threw petrol bombs on Sunday night at an empty public housing complex in Hong Kong that had been earmarked to become a temporary quarantine zone as the city battles an outbreak of the SARS-like Novel Coronavirus.

Hong Kong has declared the virus that first began in central China as a public "emergency" — the city's highest warning tier — and on Saturday announced ramped-up measures to reduce the risk of further infections.

Among them was a plan to turn a newly built but currently empty public housing block in Fanling into a quarantine facility.

The buildings would be used to house people who may have come into contact with carriers of the virus as they wait to get tested, as well as frontline medical staff worried about infecting their families.

The city has diagnosed six positive cases of the virus so far. Dozens of local residents and protesters opposed to the idea held rallies outside the complex on Sunday, with some setting up road blocks.

In the evening, police said assailants threw petrol bombs at

the buildings. An AFP photographer on the scene saw fierce flames coming from the entrance of two apartment blocks before firefighters got the blaze under control.

Riot police were on scene and protesters had left, although some local residents were arguing with officers who used pepper spray.

The Centre for Health Protection said the plan to turn the housing estate into a quarantine zone would be suspended.

The agency has already turned a holiday park in an isolated rural area into a working quarantine facility. Two other holiday parks located away from major housing estates are also ready to be used as similar facilities.

But officials say they have struggled to find hotels and spare rooms for doctors and nurses working on the isolation wards where patients are being treated.

The virus outbreak comes at a time when Hong Kong is already boiling with widespread anti-government sentiment after seven months of often violent pro-democracy protests. The

city's pro-Beijing leader Carrie Lam boasts record-low approval ratings while the police force is loathed in many neighbourhoods. The frequency and ferocity of protests have died down in the last six weeks, but sporadic clashes still take place. *AFP*

Health officials confirm new case in California

Santa Ana (US): On the heels of confirmed cases in Chicago and Washington state, a patient in Southern California was diagnosed with the new pneumonia-like virus from China, health officials said.

Just before midnight Saturday, the Orange County Health Care Agency announced the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed a traveler from the Chinese city of Wuhan — the epicenter of the outbreak — tested positive for the virus. The patient is in isolation at a hospital and in good condition, a release from the agency said. *AP*

1 confirmed case in Canada: Hospital

Toronto: A Toronto hospital said Saturday it has a confirmed case of the deadly virus from China, Canada's first.

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre said it is "caring for a patient who has a confirmed case of the novel coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China."

Officials said the man is his 50s and recently flew from Wuhan, China to Guangzhou, China and then on to Toronto on January 23.

"He really wasn't in Toronto very long. He wasn't feeling well. I think he was at home and the people that live with him are in self isolation," said Dr

Barbara Yaffe, Ontario's Associated Chief Medical Officer.

The outbreak of the new virus originated in China, where it has killed 56 people, and has spread worldwide.

Australia and Malaysia reported their first cases Saturday — four each — and Japan, its third.

France confirmed three cases Friday, the first in Europe, and the US identified its second, a woman in Chicago who had returned from China.

In Canada, while the case has been confirmed by a test in Toronto, officials said it has yet to complete separate testing by

the federal government's National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases in Winnipeg.

The illness will officially be fully confirmed once it completes that testing. Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, said they are 95 per cent sure it is the virus.

"This is the first presumptive confirmed case," said Williams. "While we are convinced our tests do demonstrate positivity there is confirmation at the national medical laboratory in Winnipeg and once that is done is a fully confirmed case." *AP*

China bans wild animal trade until viral outbreak eases

Beijing: China on Sunday ordered a temporary ban on the trade in wild animals as the country struggles to contain a deadly virus believed to have been spawned in a market that sold wild animals as food.

Raising, transporting or selling all wild animal species is forbidden "from the date of the announcement until the national epidemic situation is over", said a Government directive.

The ban was issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, the State Administration for Market Regulation, and the National Forestry and

Grassland Administration.

The lethal virus, which has caused 56 confirmed deaths and nearly 2,000 total infections in China, and spread to about a dozen countries, is believed to have originated in a market in the central city of Wuhan, where a range of wildlife was reportedly sold.

Conservationists have long accused China of tolerating a shadowy trade in exotic animals for food or as ingredients in traditional medicines, including highly endangered species such as the pangolin or tiger. *AFP*

Palestinians threaten to quit Oslo Accords over Trump peace plan

Ramallah (Palestinian Territories): Palestinian officials threatened Sunday to withdraw from key provisions of the Oslo Accords, which define relations with Israel, if US President Donald Trump announces his Middle East peace plan next week.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told AFP that the Palestinian Liberation Organisation reserved the right "to withdraw from the interim agreement", the concrete part of the Oslo deal, if Trump unveils his plan.

The Trump initiative will turn Israel's "temporary occupation (of Palestinian territory) into a permanent occupation", Erekat said. *AFP*

Lassa fever kills 29 in Nigeria

Lagos: Nigerian health authorities have announced stepped-up emergency measures to tackle a rise in Lassa fever cases after 29 people died this month.

"As at 24th of January 2020, 195 confirmed cases and 29 deaths had been reported in 11 states," the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) said in a statement Saturday.

A national emergency operations centre had been activated to coordinate the response "to the increasing number of Lassa fever cases" across the country.

Endemic to Nigeria, Lassa fever belongs to the same family as the Ebola and Marburg viruses, but is much less deadly.

The virus is spread by contact with rat faeces or urine. It starts with fever and can, in worst case scenarios, lead to severe bleeding and organ failure.

Nigeria declared an outbreak of Lassa fever a year ago and around 170 people died from the virus in 2019.

The number of cases usually climbs in January due to weather conditions during the dry season.

Almost 90 per cent of the recent confirmed cases have been in Edo, Ondo and Ebonyi states in southern Nigeria, but their have also been deaths in the north.

The NCDC said that compared to the same period last year the fatality rate had dropped from 23.4 per cent to 14.8 per cent.

It encouraged Nigerians to "practise good hygiene and take measures to protect themselves and their families".

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with a population of some 200 million, has five laboratories with the capability to diagnose Lassa fever. *AFP*

Trump lawyers argue Dems just want to overturn election

Washington: President Donald Trump's lawyers plunged into his impeachment trial defense Saturday by accusing Democrats of striving to overturn the 2016 election, arguing that investigations of Trump's dealings with Ukraine have not been a fact-finding mission but a political motivated effort to drive him from the White House.

"They're here to perpetrate the most massive interference in an election in American history," White House counsel Pat Cipollone told senators.

"And we can't allow that to happen." The Trump legal team's arguments in the rare Saturday session were aimed at rebutting allegations that the president abused his power when he asked Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden and then obstructed Congress as it tried to investigate.

The lawyers are mounting a wide-ranging, aggressive defense asserting an expansive view of presidential powers and portraying Trump as besieged by political opponents determined

to ensure he won't be reelected this November.

"They're asking you to tear up all the ballots across this country on your own initiative, take that decision away from the American people," Cipollone said. Though Trump is the one on trial, the defense team made clear that it intends to paint the impeachment case as a mere continuation of the investigations that have shadowed the president since before he took office — including one into allegations of Russian election interference on his behalf.

Trump attorney Jay Sekulow suggested Democrats were investigating the president over Ukraine simply because they couldn't bring him down for Russia. "That — for this," said Sekulow, holding up a copy of special counsel Robert Mueller's report, which he accused Democrats of attempting to "re-litigate." That report detailed ties between the 2016 Trump campaign and Russia but did not allege a criminal conspiracy to tip the election.

From the White House, Trump tweeted his response: "Any fair minded person watching the Senate trial today would be able to see how unfairly I have been treated and that this is indeed the totally partisan Impeachment Hoax that EVERYBODY, including the Democrats, truly knows it is."

His team made only a two-hour presentation, reserving the heart of its case for Monday.

Acquittal appears likely, given that Republicans hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate, and a two-thirds vote would be required for conviction and removal from office.

Republican senators already eager to clear Trump said Saturday that the White House presentation had shredded the Democratic case.

Several of the senators shook hands with Trump's lawyers after their presentation.

The visitors galleries were filled, onlookers watching for the historic proceedings and the rare weekend session of Senate. The Trump attorneys are

responding to two articles of impeachment approved last month by the House — one that accuses him of encouraging Ukraine to investigate Biden at the same time the

administration withheld military aid from the country, and the other that accuses him of obstructing Congress by directing aides not to testify or produce documents. *AP*

House impeachment manager says threatened by Trump tweet

Washington: Democratic lawmaker Adam Schiff, who is leading the prosecution in the impeachment trial of Donald Trump, said Sunday he felt threatened by a tweet from the president.

Schiff is now the lead impeachment manager, the most prominent of Trump's accusers in the Senate trial, which resumes Monday after a brief recess.

Schiff has long been a target of Trump's particular wrath. The president mocks him as "Liddle" Adam Schiff, says the congressman has a "pencil neck," and, more than once, has rendered his name as "Schitt." But Sunday's tweet seemed to go a step further. *AFP*

oversaw weeks of hearings that fleshed out the charges that led to the House vote December 18 to impeach Trump.

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Jihadist attack on Mali military camp leaves 19 dead: Army

Bamako: Nineteen members of the security forces died and five were wounded on Sunday in a major assault by suspected jihadists at a military camp in central Mali, the army said.

"The provisional toll is 19 dead, five wounded," Malian Armed Forces said on Twitter.

A local lawmaker said all those killed at Sokolo military camp were gendarmes, or paramilitary police officers.

"The terrorists arrived on motorcycles," said the official, who asked not to be named for security reasons.

Sokolo resident Baba Gakou told AFP: "There were more than 100 attackers."

"They arrived at five in the morning. They cut off any withdrawal by the gendarmes. "The firing stopped at seven am," he said, adding that the assailants left with all the weapons and vehicles at the camp. "They picked up all their

dead. They did not touch anyone in the village," he told AFP.

A local humanitarian source who managed to enter the camp after the suspected jihadists had left, described the scene as "complete chaos".

"It looked like the attackers knew what they were doing," the source said. Sokolo is located in the central Segou region where jihadist groups linked to Al-Qaeda are known to operate.

The armed forces tweet said troops were combing the area backed by a military aircraft following the assault. Mali has been struggling to contain an Islamist insurgency that erupted in the north in 2012 and has claimed thousands of military and civilian lives since. The Bamako Govt announced Wednesday it would hold legislative elections in late March, after repeated postponements prompted by insecurity and political infighting. *AFP*

Germany warns of 'mass exit' of Jews if hatred persists

Frankfurt Am Main: Foreign Minister Heiko Maas warned Sunday that Jews could leave Germany on a "massive" scale if urgent action was not taken to stem rising anti-Semitism.

Writing in Der Spiegel weekly on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp, Maas said anti-Jewish insults and attacks, in real life and online, had become "a daily occurrence".

Almost one in two Jews has considered leaving Germany, he said, a country that has long taken pains to confront its Nazi past.

"We need to take urgent counter-measures to make sure that such thoughts do not turn into a bitter reality and lead to a massive departure of Jews from Germany," he wrote.

The fight against anti-Semitism would be a priority when Germany takes over the rotating EU presidency in July

and the chairmanship of the Council of Europe, the bloc's leading human rights body, in November, Maas vowed.

Germany will push for tougher legal consequences for anti-Semitic acts, he said, and for more EU nations to take Holocaust denial a crime -- currently illegal in over a dozen member states including Germany, Belgium and Italy.

Berlin will also step up the battle against anti-Jewish hate speech and disinformation on social media, Maas wrote, saying perpetrators "should feel the full force of the law across Europe".

An anti-Semitic attack in the eastern German city of Halle in October — in which a gunman tried but failed to storm a synagogue before killing a passer-by and a customer at a kebab shop — showed that "Jewish sites and communities" needed better protection "everywhere in Europe".

To help make that happen, Germany will contribute 500,000 euros (USD 550,000) to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) this year, Maas said.

The diplomat stressed the importance of educating young people about the horrors of World War II, when six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis.

Research had shown that "a third of young Europeans indicated knowing little to nothing about the Holocaust," he said.

The comments came on the same day a YouGov survey found 56 per cent of Germans were in favour of making a school visit to a concentration camp mandatory.

Elderly Holocaust survivors will gather in Auschwitz on Monday to mark 75 years since Soviet troops liberated the camp, while world leaders held a sombre remembrance ceremony in Jerusalem last Thursday. *AFP*

Rockets hit near US embassy in Baghdad: Security sources

Baghdad: A volley of rockets landed near the US embassy in the Iraqi capital Baghdad on Sunday, two security sources told AFP, in the latest unclaimed attack on American installations in the country.

AFP reporters heard loud thuds emanating from the western bank of the Tigris, where the US embassy and most other foreign diplomatic missions are located.

One security source said three Katyusha rockets hit near the high-security compound while another said as many as five struck the area.

Later Iraq's security forces said in a statement that five rockets hit the high-security Green Zone with no casualties. It did not mention the US embassy.

The rocket fire comes two days after thousands massed in Baghdad in response to a call

by populist cleric Moqtada Sadr for a rally to demand the ouster of US troops from Iraq.

America's military presence has been a hot-button issue in Iraq since a US strike killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and a top Iraqi commander outside Baghdad airport on January 3.

Around 5,200 US troops are in Iraq to lead a global coalition fighting the Islamic State group, but Iraq said the strike against Soleimani violated that mandate.

Sunday's attack was the latest in a series of rocket fire this month targeting the Green Zone, where the Iraqi parliament is also located.

Parliament earlier this month urged the departure of US troops from Iraq, which has been gripped by anti-government protests since October. *AFP*

Death toll from Brazilian rainstorms rises to 37

Rio De Janeiro: The death toll caused by record rainfall in southeastern Brazil rose to 37 on Sunday, with thousands of people forced from their homes.

Civil defense officials said that in addition to the dead, 25 people were missing in the state of Minas Gerais.

The state capital, Belo Horizonte, recorded 171 millimeters (6.7 inches) in one 24-hour period from Thursday to Friday, the highest rainfall in 110 years.

State Gov. Gustavo Zema declared a state of emergency in 47 cities, a measure meant to facilitate a federal disaster aid.

He also decreed three days of official mourning for those killed in the floods and landslides.

Officials earlier said 38 had died. *AP*

Trend
Slazer

Being in love is important: Tahira

Filmmaker-author **TAHIRA KASHYAP**, whose actor-husband **Ayushmann Khurrana** plays a gay protagonist in the forthcoming *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*, says it is important to be in love, irrespective of gender.

"I am proud of the films that he (Ayushmann) is doing, and even this one," said Tahira.

"I feel the idea is to celebrate love, and the day we stop thinking about whether it's a love story between a boy and a boy or between a girl and a girl, we will be developed as a nation. It is important to be in love irrespective of gender and I am happy that he did this film," she added.

Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan is a romantic comedy drama, themed on homosexuality. It is the second instalment of 2017 film *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan*.



'I was pinching myself. I mean I was that girl who would watch Anil sir

(Kapoor) again and again in Mr India, how he and Mogambo would talk and so on. The next thing happening is Mr. India sitting next to me and I am working with him. My Mr India looks the same even after so many years. I have to mention that I have learned the importance of discipline from him.'
—Disha Patani

Actor **Pooja Bedi's** daughter **ALAYA F** feels her colleague **Ananya Panday** doesn't have a good answer on nepotism.



Alaya will be making her debut in Bollywood with *Jawaani Jaaneman*, which stars **Saif Ali Khan** and **Tabu**.

In a chat show, she was asked about the one thing she has that **Ananya Panday** doesn't. To which, she said, "Ananya Panday doesn't have a good answer on nepotism but I do."

Jessica got hooked to diet pills

Singer **JESSICA SIMPSON** has revealed that she was body shamed to such a level that she was almost pushed to the edge and started hearing voices.

Simpson got hooked on to diet pills at the age of 17 after she was ordered to lose weight by record executive **Tommy Mottola**. She dropped to 46.72 kg after she was told to shed 6 kgs in order to get signed to a record label, she said in excerpts of her new memoir *Open Book* obtained by people.



In a digital and increasingly paperless age, fans of paper planners remain enthusiastic and steadfast.

"There's something comforting about using a planner. It's very personal, and apart from the cacophony of screens," says **Jennie Tung**, executive editor at *Martha Stewart Living*, adding that paper planners have "a retro appeal."

"The act of writing things down by hand slows you down and makes you more mindful. A paper planner becomes a personal record, and for some people it's almost like a diary," she says.

Many paper planners today are so well-designed that they become a way to make a statement. "They are beautifully designed objects that are a joy to hold and use," she says.

And contrary to what one might imagine, many of the

A RETRO APPEAL

Fans hold on to paper planners, citing comfort and creativity



biggest fans of papers planners aren't older people who grew up with them but a younger generation embracing their comfortable vibe. According to **Stephanie Fleming**, co-founder of **Me & My BIG Ideas**, which makes **The Happy Planner**, "the age demographic is around 25 to the early 40s range, with a lot of movement toward college-age women."

"I had imagined younger people preferring digital planners because they really want to slow down a bit. Having everything at their fingertips is not necessarily making people happy. There's something about going back to

basics. A lot of people are looking for some digital detox," Fleming says.

Tung notes that paper planners now come in an array of designs and can be carried around all day. A few brands noted by the pros at **Martha Stewart Living** as chic and well-designed include **Smythson**, **Appointed**, and **Sugar Paper**, as well as the "bare bones but gets the job done" paper planners from **Rollbahn**.

All the planners offered by **The Happy Planner** feature encouraging words and positive messaging for those working towards health wellness, career or financial goals, for example. And with their accompanying planner stickers and customisable extension packets, they can be a creative outlet akin to scrapbooking.

"A planner is not just about

being a calendar. It's about so much more than that. There's the aspect of focus and creativity, in addition to productivity," Fleming says.

She admits that "digital calendars are nice because they keep your desk uncluttered," but adds, "people engage more when they write things down."

Paper planners range from minimalist versions costing a few dollars to fancy planners for over \$100. And there's always the option of using both digital and paper in some combination.

In the meantime, paper still has a place with many people trying to keep a complicated life in order. Says Fleming: "When I sit down on a Sunday and plan my week in my planner, it's registering things in a way it doesn't if it's on my phone or computer."

—AP

'More Indians are choosing Washington'

ELLIOT FERGUSON, CEO and president of **Washington DC Tourism, Destination DC**, says that the seamless air connectivity between **New Delhi and Dulles** is helping more travellers plan visits. By **TEAM VIVA**

What kind of Indian travellers are you catering to through this city-specific programme called Destination DC?

We are looking at a combination of business and leisure travellers and looking to make Washington a top bleisure destination. Which means that we get aware and selective visitors. They will be here only if they've businesses in the US, especially Washington DC. We are mainly targeting travellers who are looking for a high-end experience while on the go.

What of the festival circuit that you are consciously developing, like the Cherry Blossom and the International Jazz festivals? Do they have something in store for Indian travellers?

Yes, a lot of them are free and have been developed around seasons. For instance, in July, you should visit Washington because of the spectacle and scale of Fourth of July celebrations, the Independence day. The weather might be warm but there are a lot of outdoor attractions like great fireworks and some amazing cultural walks. On the birth anniversary of **Martin Luther King**, Washington witnesses a special parade — something unmissable if you're in the city. There are all kinds of activities lined up for tourists to celebrate his life and legacy. This way we are even making people across the globe aware of him in a new way.

Fortunately, we have over 170 international embassies in Washington DC. Many cultural-based events are happening through these embassies. For instance, we celebrated the Chinese New Year, which is a major event in various parts of Asia as well.

I would say that DC's food scene is very underrated. We have some of the best-rated Indian restaurants in the US and that's an amazing and compelling reason to not only stay in the city but experience a slice of its nightlife.

Latest data suggests that people like to plan their own vacations through



online aggregators and do not rely on travel agents so much. How do you take advantage of this shift in preferences?

Most Americans travel on their personal time without consulting a travel agent. We do our own research. I think there's sophistication and technology tied to this and we provide the most comprehensive website with cross-linkages so that you can research and make your own itinerary online. If you go to our website, you will find elaborate recommendations and itinerary suggestions for the number of days that you want to spend in DC. When you select the dates, you will also see which festivals or cultural or sports events are to take place on those dates in the city. Indians are technologically

very astute and are an aware community. And now with an increasing number of millennials, they're more likely to go out on their own. We have to hence study the patterns of each country to decide what would be the best for which kind of travellers. But the bottom-line is that the easy access to technology today and fixed budgets are making people smarter in making travel choices.

The number of Indian tourists travelling to Washington DC is increasing day by day. What are the reasons?

Yes, India is Washington DC's third overseas market and its visitation to DC has more than doubled in the last five years with 11,700 visitors in 2018. And that's because of non-stop flights. Such seamless connectivity makes a big difference. Indian travellers are very attract-



ed to New York and what it has to offer. If you are using a travel agent or even if you are doing your own research, you'll know that Washington is two hours 45 minutes by train from New York. You can tie into an itinerary and visit other major cities. In between you get **Philadelphia** and **Baltimore**. I think that's the kind of flexi combination that is working for us.

What are the other major attractions for Indian travellers?

We are promoting the shopping scene. We tend to think that the traditional Indian community may know about our great museums but they do not know about our other assets. There are various "things to see and do" lists. We have good tie-ins with international conferences and so are aware of varied tastes and customisation.

There are many Indians living in the US. What's in store for them?

We recognise the Indian community that's in Washington DC which is pretty large. They also have their families coming and visiting them. So we have worked out tight itineraries.



TECH TALK

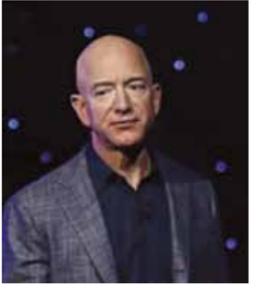
Anyone can be a target

WhatsApp is generally considered secure but it, too, can act as a conduit for malware. The lesson comes from Amazon CEO **Jeff Bezos'** recent hacking episode

Friday, Sen. **Ron Wyden**, an Oregon Democrat, said he is asking the National Security Agency to look into the security of White House officials who may have messaged the crown prince, particularly on personal devices. **Jared Kushner**, a White House aide and President **Donald Trump's** son-in-law, is known to have done so using WhatsApp.

Wyden called reports of the Bezos hack "extraordinarily ominous" and said they may have "startling repercussions for national security."

But they could resonate at the personal level as well. As the cost of hacking falls while opportunities to dig into peoples' online lives multiply, more and more people are likely to end up as targets, even if they're not the richest individuals in the world. Ultimately, that boils down to



a simple lesson: Be careful who you talk to — and what you're using to chat with them.

"People need to get out of the mindset that nobody would hack them," said **Katie Moussouris**, founder and CEO of **Luta Security**. "You don't have to be a specific target or a big fish to find yourself at

the mercy of an opportunistic attacker."

WhatsApp, owned by Facebook, is generally considered a secure way of trading private online messages due to the fact that it scrambles messages and calls with encryption so that only senders and recipients can understand them. What many people may not have realized is that it, like almost any messaging service, can act as a conduit for malware.

That encryption, however, is no help if a trusted contact finds a way to use that connection to break into the phone's operating system. In fact, an infected attachment can't be detected by security software while it's encrypted, and apps like WhatsApp don't scan for malware even once files are decrypted.

WhatsApp users can disable the automatic downloading of photos, videos and other media,

which happens by default unless the user takes action.

Other messaging apps are likely also vulnerable. "It just so happens that this one was a vulnerability in WhatsApp," said **JT Keating**, of Texas-based security firm **Zimperium**. "It could have been in any one of any number of apps."

Prince Mohammed exchanged numbers with Bezos during a U.S. trip in spring 2018. On the same visit, the prince also met with other tech executives, including the CEOs of Google, Apple and Palantir, as well as sports and entertainment celebrities and academic leaders. **Virgin Group** founder **Richard Branson** gave the Saudi delegation a tour of the **Mojave Air and Space Port** in the desert north of Los Angeles.

Google and Apple didn't respond to emailed requests for comment this week on whether their executives shared personal contacts after that trip. Palantir Technologies confirmed that its CEO **Alex Karp** met with the prince but said they never shared personal messages. **Virgin Group** said it was looking into it.

UC Berkeley cybersecurity researcher **Bill Marczak** cautioned that there's still no conclusive evidence that the Saudi video was malicious, adding that it might be premature to jump to broader conclusions about it. Many other security experts have also questioned the forensics report upon which U.N. officials are basing their conclusions.

But Marczak said it is generally good advice to "always be on the lookout for suspicious links or messages that sound too good to be true."

Even caution about avoiding suspicious links might not be good enough to ward off spyware — especially for high-profile targets like dissidents, journalists and wealthy executives. Hackers-for-hire last year took advantage of a WhatsApp bug to remotely hijack dozens of phones and take control of their cameras and microphones without the user having to click anything to let them in.

In such cases, said Marczak, "there doesn't need to be any interaction on the part of the person being targeted."

—AP



Bridging the gap

Modern society might have surpassed many crossroads but real progress can only be attained when science and spirituality go hand in hand, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI



Without religion, science is lame and without science religion is blind, Albert Einstein once said. Most of us would agree with what he said. Undoubtedly, the modern society has surpassed many crossroads but real progress can only be attained when both science and spirituality travel together.

Though science has advanced vastly but it cannot answer why; instead it answers how on the basis of additions and subtraction. These form the root of all mathematical explanations. For example, why did Newton's apple come down and did not go up? Science answered that gravity of the earth pulled it towards its centre. It explained the mechanism of falling, hence, it answered how, but not why. Similarly, if an object is pushed by another object, it moves forward and science explains the phenomenon as: applied external force causes the movement of objects. Again science answers the mechanism of separation. Hence, it answers how, not why. Why the application of force causes movement? Science cannot answer this. Two stones when rubbed together produces heat. But why? Science says that the haphazard movement of atoms and electrons generates heat. Here also the reasons for mechanism of heat production are not explained.

Now, think for a while that what could be the answer to this why? Well, the answer is that whatever comes in this material world is fixed or pre-determined. So the roles that we all are playing in this world is prefixed. One might ask that what is the proof about it? To begin with, we exist only in the present and not in the past or the future. The anticipated future might soon

become the present. And the present turns into the past within a stipulated time period. The past is not physically but it is subtly existent. The future is neither physically nor subtly existent but is merely an imagination.

We all have experienced the magic of films on a celluloid where the series of pre-built pictures touch the light beam of a projector machine chronologically and ultimately, live and animated pictures are produced on the screen. Fixed and ready-made past goes animated and returns as a live and existent present. Anything that has a beginning must have an end. It proves that the world drama is fixed. If it runs ahead and does not stop after the end, the past will appear as the present.

In spiritual parlance, one complete cycle of world drama is called a *Kalpa* in which the almighty plays the role of a director and the body takes different births and re-births in this world drama.

What each one is doing is fixed in the world drama and what is fixed is being done by each one. God, being the director, advises every actor (human beings) to think good, do good and play their role in the best manner possible so that it becomes glorious and memorable in entire cycle of life.

KEEP GROWING

Pruning serves a variety of functions, including shaping, removing dead matter and preventing the plants from sagging or drooping, say experts

Houseplants are quick to tell you when they need help. They display discoloured leaves, drooping stems and little or no growth. That usually gives you enough time to make things right. "Plants send signals simply by the way they look," said Dawn Pettinelli, an Extension educator at the University of Connecticut. "If they aren't getting enough light, the leaves will yellow or turn brown and they'll be slow to develop."

Off-colour leaves also can be the symptom of root problems, insect infestations, irregular soil moisture or unsuitable light conditions or temperatures.

African violets, one of America's most popular houseplants, don't like to be cold but also get stressed when it's too warm. "They'll start wilting if they're chilled and they won't bloom if they're hot," Pettinelli said. "Their buds will fall off."

A good way to rejuvenate many kinds of tired houseplants is by pruning or giving them what some growers dub "horticultural haircuts." Pruning serves a variety of functions, including shaping, removing dead



matter, and cutting back to reduce stem loads and keep the plants from sagging or drooping, said Diana Alfuth, a horticulturist with University of Wisconsin Extension.

But don't prune too soon. "Pruning can be helpful but it causes growth, so it's best done in late winter when the days start getting longer and the plants become more active," Alfuth said. "Pruning then results in strong new growth. Pruning is helpful to keep a plant bushier or to rejuvenate a plant, especially if it has vining-type growth."

Slow-growing or tree-type houseplants are less tolerant of major trimming, she said. Avoid pruning palms, pines and orchids. It also provides an opportunity to take cuttings — segments from the stems, leaves or roots — to develop new plants.

Some houseplants are more tolerant of neglect and need less maintenance than others. "Succulents are great because they can go without water for long spells and they grow slowly so rarely need pruning or re-potting," Alfuth said.

A houseplant's diet is important and so is the timing of fertiliser applications. "Houseplants should not be fertilised during winter when days are short," Alfuth said. "Fertilise in late winter as days get longer and plants wake up and will need fertiliser to put on growth during spring."

Houseplant maintenance doesn't need to be confined to spring cleaning. "It can be done any time of the year but a good way to remember it is by making it a New Year's resolution," Pettinelli said.

Don't forget to dust. "When plants start touching the floor, they start collecting dust," Pettinelli said. "If covered with dust, photosynthesis is reduced and the plants start losing some of their chemical energy for growth."

Be careful not to overwater, which is one of the leading causes of houseplant losses. "Plants lose oxygen when they get too much water," Pettinelli said. "Especially the roots. They'll drown."

Check to see if your plants are root-bound and need re-potting. If so, then buy larger containers and fill them with loose potting soils mixed with perlite or peat moss. Be sure the pots have holes cut in the bottoms so any excess water can drain out.

—AP

Money, it's a gas. Unless you need to borrow some from your parents. Then it's a conversation many adults will avoid at all costs, even if it means paying for groceries with couch nickels.

That's not the only money conversation we avoid. More than 60 per cent of millennials have never asked for a raise, largely because they don't feel comfortable doing so, according to the salary data site PayScale. In many couples, partners hide debt, sometimes to the detriment of their relationship.

Avoiding these conversations often yields worse results than simply facing them head on. These tips will help you get through tough money talks, like asking your parents for money, negotiating your salary and talking to your partner about money.

ASKING YOUR PARENTS FOR MONEY

Even bonafide adults need help from the bank of mom and dad sometimes. In fact, 70 per cent of young adults (ages 18 to 34) received financial support from their parents in the past year, according to a 2018 survey by Merrill Lynch.

Asking your parents for money

Master the awkward financial talk

Avoiding conversations around managing money with family often yields worse results than simply facing them head on. Here are some tips that will help you get through such discussions

can be humbling, but swallowing your pride is better than letting your car insurance lapse. Here's how to approach the conversation.

— **Be specific.** Tell your parents where you could use their help, whether it's covering some (or all) of your rent, paying your car insurance, or buying groceries. Say upfront if you need ongoing help, rather than going back to them each month for more money.

— **Own your mistakes.** This will play better than blaming other people or circumstances, says Nathaniel Ivers, an associate professor in the department of counseling at Wake Forest University.

— **Present a plan.** Create a budget to show your parents that you are trying to get your finances under control. Ask for their input and avoid get-



ting defensive if they scrutinize your spending.

Taking this advice into account, Ivers suggests you ask could sound something like this: "I was wondering if you could help me with my rent this month. I had a lot of unforeseen expenses (give examples) and, honestly, I didn't manage my expenses as well as I could have. I have already started a budget to monitor things more closely. Would you be willing to go over it with me? It's kind of tight, but if I cut down on some of the extra things, I will definitely have enough to cover things next month."

TALKING WITH YOUR PARTNER ABOUT DEBT

Debt is a reality in most relationships, so it's wise to disclose any you carry when things get serious. Ripping off the debt Band-Aid may be terrifying, but it can ultimately

strengthen your bond, says Marla Mattenson, a relationship expert.

"The more comfortable you get about talking about your finances together, the easier it will be for you to discuss all the challenges that arise in a relationship," Mattenson says.

Ask your partner to set aside time to chat and give them a heads up on where the conversation is heading, she adds. Keep it simple, something like: "Can we set aside 30 minutes sometime this week to talk about my personal finances?"

Be transparent during your conversation about how you got into debt, whether it's student loans, credit cards or a combination of the two, and articulate your plan to pay off your debt. You should also share with your partner any fears you have about how this might affect your relationship.

NEGOTIATING SALARY

Your salary serves as the basis for future raises and job offers. That's why negotiating your salary — at the outset and throughout your tenure — is critical. Here's how to approach the conversation.

— **Research industry salary.** Use

sites like Glassdoor to research salaries by city and company and ask people in your network what someone with your experience can expect to earn. If you're comfortable, talk to current coworkers about their compensation when angling for a raise.

— **Bring a list of wins.** Come to the conversation armed with tangible examples of how you've added value to the company (if you're asking for a raise). Prepare a list of business you've brought on, successful campaigns you've run or other metrics you've moved. If you're negotiating for a new job, articulate how your skills and experience will add value to your new employer.

— **Be prepared for a 'no.'** If your boss declines your raise request, ask for an explanation. Welcome any recommendations for how to improve your performance and set the expectation that you would like to revisit the conversation in the coming months. When negotiating for a new job, find out if there is any wiggle room and consider negotiating for benefits like more vacation time in lieu of a higher starting salary.

—AP

Give the ones you love wings to fly, roots to come back and reasons to stay.
—Dalai Lama XIV

POLLUTION LEADS TO CHANGES IN KIDS' BRAINS

Exposure to high levels of traffic-related air pollution at age one may lead to structural changes in the brain at the age of 12, which can influence the development of various physical and mental processes, warns a study.

Gray matter includes regions of the brain involved in motor control as well as sensory perception, such as seeing and hearing. Cortical thickness reflects the outer gray matter depth. The study, published online in the journal PLOS One, found that specific regions in the frontal and parietal lobes and the cerebellum were affected with decreases on the order of three to four per cent.

"The results of this study, though exploratory, suggest that where you live and the air you breathe can affect how your brain develops," said lead author of the study Travis Beckwith, PhD, a research fellow at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in the US.

"While the percentage of loss is far less but may be enough to influence the development of various physical and mental processes," Beckwith said.



HIGH-PROTEIN DIETS UP HEART DISEASE

High-protein diets may help people lose weight and build muscle but there is a downside to it — a greater heart attack risk. Researchers now report that high-protein diets boost artery-clogging plaque.

The research in mice showed that high-protein diets spur unstable plaque — the kind most prone to rupturing and causing blocked arteries. More plaque buildup in the arteries, particularly if it's unstable, increases the risk of heart attack.

"There are clear weight-loss benefits to high-protein diets, which has boosted their popularity in recent years. But animal studies and some large epidemiological studies in people have linked high dietary protein to cardiovascular problems. We decided to take a look at whether there is truly a causal link between high dietary protein and poorer cardiovascular health," said senior author Babak Razani, associate professor at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri.



AUTONOMY AT WORK CUTS LOW BACK PAIN RISK

While physical factors such as incorrect posture or sitting for too long are generally related to chronic low back pain, new research has found that employees with more job control are less likely to suffer from the disease.

The research, published in the journal BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders, indicates that not only physical but also psychological and social factors exert considerable influence on the development of the pain disorder.

"People with a high workload suffered more frequently from chronic low back pain. Employees with more job control were less affected," explained social psychologist Anne Tomaschek from Dresden University of Technology (TU Dresden) in Germany.

It was also shown that back pain was lower when people received social support at work from their superiors and colleagues. Worldwide, more than 23 per cent of the population suffers from chronic low back pain (CLBP).



EATING YOGURT MAY CUT BREAST CANCER THREAT

Eating natural yogurt daily may lessen breast cancer risk owing to lactose fermenting bacteria which reduces inflammation triggered by harmful bacteria, say researchers.

Yoghurt contains beneficial lactose-fermenting bacteria commonly found in milk, similar to the bacteria or microflora 00 found in the breasts of mothers who have breastfed. Scientists from Lancaster University said their idea, as yet unproven, is supported by the available evidence, which is that bacterial induced inflammation is linked to cancer.

"There is a simple, inexpensive potential preventive remedy, which is for women to consume natural yoghurt on a daily basis," the authors wrote in a paper appeared in the journal Medical Hypotheses.

The researchers suggest that lactose-fermenting bacteria in the breast is protective because each year of breast-feeding reduces the risk of breast cancer by 4.3 per cent.



102 GENES RELATED TO AUTISM DISCOVERED

In the largest genetic sequencing study of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to date, researchers have identified 102 genes associated with risk for autism.

The discovery shows significant progress towards teasing apart the genes associated with autism from those associated with intellectual disability and developmental delay, conditions which often overlap.

According to WHO, one in 160 children has an ASD.

"This is a landmark study, both for its size and for the large international collaborative effort it required. With these identified genes we can begin to understand what brain changes underlie ASD and begin to consider novel treatment approaches," said Joseph D Buxbaum, Director of the Seaver Autism Center for Research and Treatment at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.



Coco's run end in tears

Kenin halts 15-year-old Gauff's bid to become youngest Slam winner in Open era; Novak, Federer blast into quarters

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer swept into the Australian Open quarter-finals but 15-year-old Coco Gauff exited in tears on Sunday after her quest to become the Open era's youngest Grand Slam winner came screeching to a halt.

As Melbourne marked Australia Day with formation jets and a 21-gun salute, world number one Ashleigh Barty had home fans celebrating before crowd favourite Federer dismantled Marton Fucsovics in the night match.

Djokovic, hunting his eighth Melbourne title, was remorseless against Argentina's Diego Schwartzman, crushing the 14th seed 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 to book an 11th appearance in the last eight.

The Serb's reward is a match-up with big-serving Canadian Milos Raonic, who is back in form after a run of injuries and dismissed 2018 finalist Marin Cilic 6-4, 6-3, 7-5.

"I've got to be ready for missiles coming from his side of the net," said Djokovic, the 16-time Grand Slam winner.

Gauff's giant-killing Australian debut generated hype dubbed *Cocomania* as she attempted to become the youngest Major winner in the post-1968 Open Era, breaking the record set by a 16-year-old Martina Hingis in 1997.

Gauff beat seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams in round one and title-holder Naomi Osaka in the third, but she came unstuck against a determined Sofia Kenin.

ARAB FIRST

Gauff raised hopes by edging the first set but then her fellow American took control and it was one-sided at the finish as Kenin won 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-0.

"The thing I'm most proud of myself is how I handled it on the



Coco Gauff reacts after losing a point to Sofia Kenin during their 4th round match

Kenin, already on the best after her defeat. "Even though today I lost a set 6-0, I was still believing I could win it."



Roger Federer, right, is congratulated by Marton Fucsovics after winning their 4th round

Paes-Ostapenko reach 2nd round

MELBOURNE: Making a winning start at the Australian Open, veteran Leander Paes reached the mixed doubles second round with partner Jelena Ostapenko while Rohan Bopanna progressed to the quarterfinals.

Paes and Ostapenko, erased a one-set deficit to edge out local wild cards entrants Storm Sanders and Marc Polmans 6-7(4), 6-3, 10-6 in the opening round which lasted one hour and 27 minutes.

Paes is competing in his last Australian Open, having announced that 2020 is his final year on the Pro circuit.

They will next face American Bethanie Mattek-Sands and Briton Jamie Murray, who



knocked out top seeds Marcelo Melo and Barbora Strycova 3-6, 6-4, 10-7 in their opening round.

Bopanna and his Ukrainian partner Nadiia Kichenok defeated the team of Nicole Melichar and Bruno Soares 6-4, 7-6(4) in their second round.

PTI

become the first Arab woman to reach a Major quarter-final.

Wang stunned Serena Williams in the third round but the 27th seed ran out of steam against Jabeur, who fought back from a break down in the first set to win 7-6 (7/4), 6-1.

Jabeur, the highest-ranked Arab woman in history — she reached a career-high 51 last year — is the first Tunisian woman to win a main-draw match at the Australian Open.

"I'm really shaking right now, it's unbelievable, I can't describe how I feel," said the 25-year-old.

Australia's Barty had some nervy moments against American Alison Riske, dropping the second set and briefly losing her way before recovering to win 6-3, 1-6, 6-4.

She now has an improving chance of becoming the first home-grown winner since Chris O'Neil in 1978 after six of the top 10 seeds exited in the previous round.

"I just had to hang in there and try and give myself a chance," said Barty, who next plays Petra Kvitova, after the two-time Wimbledon champion beat Maria Sakkari 6-7 (4/7), 6-3, 6-2.

Later, Federer sent ripples of consternation around Rod Laver Arena when he dropped the first set against Hungary's Fucsovics, the world number 67.

But the 38-year-old Swiss, pushed to a fifth-set tie-breaker by Australia's John Millman on Friday, came alive in the second set as he rattled through the match 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2.

"It just took me some time, I tried to mix it up a bit and just had to figure it out. From the beginning of the second set it got a little bit easier," Federer said.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion's quarter-final is against unseeded American Tennys Sandgren, who upset Italian 12th seed Fabio Fognini in four tough sets, 7-6 (7/5), 7-5, 6-7 (2/7), 6-4.



Ng Ka-long in a file picture BWF/Twitter

Ng nabs Thailand Masters title

AFP ■ BANGKOK

Hong Kong shuttler Ng Ka-long snatched the men's Thailand Masters title on Sunday after a shaky start against Japan's Kenta Nishimoto, whose compatriot Akane Yamaguchi beat Korea's An Se-young in a hard-fought women's final.

World number nine Ng clinched victory after Nishimoto took the first game in a 16-21, 21-13, 21-12 duel.

But missteps in the second and third game by the 25-year-old Japanese player allowed Ng to move forward in a decisive victory — coming back swiftly after a five-point low.

His win in the \$150,000 tournament is his first in a long time — Ng's last victory was at the Malaysia Masters in 2017 and the Hong Kong Open the year before.

Another rivalry came to a head in the women's finals when Japan's Akane Yamaguchi conquered her teenage opponent An Se-young in two games.

Yamaguchi went point-for-point in the second game, the 22-year-old Japanese pulling through with a 21-16, 22-20 victory after an intense volley that had both players diving for the shuttlecock.

In women's doubles Chinese pair Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yi Fan beat Korea's Baek Ha-na and Jung Kyung-eun in a 17-21, 21-17, 21-15 match.

Malaysia's Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi claimed victory in the men's doubles after defeating China's Huang Kai Xiang and Liu Cheng 18-21, 21-17, 21-17.



Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola mocks Liverpool's manager Jurgen Klopp during Premier League match between two sides

'Phenomenal' Liverpool too good for City: Pep

MANCHESTER: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola conceded the Premier League title to Liverpool and believes no team in the world would be able to stay with the European champions this season.

Liverpool are well on course for a first league title in 30 years as they lead City by 16 points with a game in hand after winning 22 and drawing one of their 23 games.

City have won back-to-back titles with a combined 198 points, denying Liverpool last season despite Jurgen Klopp's men posting 97 points — the third highest tally in top-flight English football history.

"Liverpool obviously will be champions of the Premier League, but they would be champions in Spain, champions in Italy, champions in Germany," said Guardiola.

"They would be champions everywhere after 23 games, 22 victories, 1 draw."

City have lost five league games this season, but Guardiola defended their record by pointing out it would still be good enough to mount a title challenge in Europe's other top leagues.

"In the recent past when Chelsea won the league, the next season, they didn't qualify for the Champions League, Leicester the same and Chelsea again the same. When we won the league we repeated the league," added Guardiola.

"In Spain with the points we have we would be there, one or two points behind the leader, in Germany we would be there, one or two points behind the leader, in Italy as well.

"But Liverpool are just fantastic, phenomenal, overwhelming. So we have to accept it and learn from that." Guardiola won three league titles in a row at Barcelona and Bayern Munich, but believes the mental strength to bounce back of his current squad is just as good as any he has coached before.

And City could still end the season with three trophies as they look to defend the FA Cup and League Cup and take on Real Madrid in the last 16 of the Champions League next month.

"Honestly, it is one of the best I have ever handled or faced in my career for how they react in the bad moments," he said.

"The numbers, the results, not just in this season, I think are good. Even in the previous seasons I think it was phenomenal. That is why I am so proud."

AFP

7 up

Ilicic hits hat-trick as Atalanta humiliate Torino; Cagliari hold Inter

AFP ■ TURIN

Josip Ilicic hit a hat-trick, including a sensational strike from the halfway line, as Atalanta crushed Torino 7-0 in Serie A on Saturday, inflicting the worst home defeat ever on their northern rivals who finished the match with nine men.

The Slovenian forward opened the scoring on 17 minutes, adding two more in quick-fire succession eight minutes after the break.

Substitute Luis Muriel also bagged a late brace to add to first-half goals by Robin Gosens and Duvan Zapata.

The hosts played the final quarter of an hour a man down after Armando Izzo was sent off, with Sasa Lukic joining him with just a minute to go.

Torino coach Walter Mazzarri blasted an "indefensible performance".

"All we can do is apologise," he said. "In so many years of my career I had never had such a game."

But the Torino coach ruled out quitting.

"Resignation? No, in difficulties I never leave."



Josip Ilicic (72) celebrates with Duvan Zapata (91) after scoring

Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta hit back after last weekend's shock defeat to lowly SPAL, following a draw against Inter Milan.

They now join Roma in fourth place on 38 points.

MARTINEZ SEES RED

MILAN: Radja Nainggolan grabbed the equaliser in a 1-1 draw for Cagliari to dent the title ambitions of his parent club Inter Milan, who struggled to a third consecutive stalemate on Sunday.

Tensions reached boiling point in the San Siro as Inter's goal scorer Lautaro Martinez was sent off in injury time for arguing with the referee.

The Argentinian risks a long suspension as he roared, kicked the ball and punched the plexiglass at the side of the pitch, after being dragged away by his teammates.

Antonio Conte's second-placed Inter are now three points adrift of leaders Juventus, who travel to 13th-placed Napoli.

The northerners can also be caught by Lazio, in third,



Inter's Ashley Young in action during his maiden Serie A appearance

who are three points behind before their derby clash against fifth-placed Roma.

A win would see Simone Inzaghi's Lazio join Inter in the standings, with a game in hand to be played in February against Hellas Verona.

Martinez's frustration mirrored that of his team who have now been held to three consecutive 1-1 draws — at home against Atalanta and Cagliari and at Lecce.

Inter had gotten off to a promising start with Ashley Young having an immediate impact on his debut after arriving from Manchester United, providing the cross which allowed Martinez to head in just before half an hour.

But the hosts failed to build on the momentum and the Sardinians stayed in the match until Nainggolan's long-range equaliser which took a deflection into goal on 78 minutes.

Atletico goal drought continues

AFP ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid's goalscoring troubles resurfaced as they drew 0-0 at home to a struggling Leganes side that finished with a defender in goal after the dismissal of Ivan Cuellar.

Atletico crashed out of the Copa del Rey in midweek after losing to third-tier Cultural Leonesa, and Sunday's latest setback would appear to rule Diego Simeone's team out of title contention.

They are now winless in four games and could finish the day 10 points behind city rivals Real, who travel to Real Valladolid later, ahead of next week's Madrid derby at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Having sold French striker Antoine Griezmann to Barcelona,



Hector Herrera battles for ball possession with Leganes player

scoring goals has been Atletico's fundamental weakness this season. They have managed only 22 in 21 league games, the same number as Real Mallorca in 17th.

Angel Correa and Alvaro Morata both tested Cuellar in the first half while Recio went close for Leganes with a curl-

ing strike that was deflected over by an Atletico Madrid defender.

Substitute Ivan Saponjic headed over for Atletico in stoppage time before Leganes were forced to play the final minutes with left-back Jonathan Silva in goal after Cuellar was shown a second yellow card for time wasting.

Bayern cut Leipzig's lead

AFP ■ MUNICH

Robert Lewandowski hit his 21st league goal of the season as Bayern Munich thrashed Schalke 5-0 to cut RB Leipzig's lead at the top of the Bundesliga to one point on Saturday.

After Leipzig had crashed to a 2-0 defeat at Eintracht Frankfurt, Bayern seized the chance to trim the advantage with an emphatic win over David Wagner's young Schalke side.

"The Leipzig match beforehand didn't interest me, the main thing is we took three points and had a stability in our game which is very important," said Bayern coach Hansi Flick.

Lewandowski and Thomas Mueller scored first-half goals, then both had efforts disallowed for offside by VAR.

However, Leon Goretzka, Thiago Alcantara and Serge Gnabry netted second-half strikes as Bayern dominated at the Allianz Arena.

With less than six minutes played, Schalke goalkeeper Markus Schubert failed to deal with a cross and Lewandowski was on hand to hook the ball into the net.

The Polish star moved one clear of Leipzig's Timo Werner at the top of the Bundesliga scoring charts.

Schalke's Welsh forward Rabbi Matondo hit the crossbar soon after, but it was all Bayern after that. Mueller fired home Goretzka's



Robert Lewandowski celebrates after scoring Bayern Munich's first goal against Schalke

header two minutes into first-half stoppage time.

It was Mueller's 100th goal at the Allianz Arena.

The hosts came out flying after the break as Goretzka volleyed home against his former club on 50 minutes.

Lewandowski served up a simple tap-in for Alcantara eight minutes later as Schalke offered precious little resistance before Gnabry came on and marked his comeback from injury with a late fifth goal.

"It wasn't fun for us and it wasn't nice, but we'll learn from that," said Wagner.

Walk in Eden Park

Indian bowlers trap Kiwis in slow track and win 2nd T20 by 7 wickets to go 2-0 up in five-match series

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

India tightened their grip on the T20I series with a seven-wicket drubbing of New Zealand in the second match after their bowlers stifled the hosts on a pocket-sized Eden Park on Sunday.

Boasting a formidable batting line-up, chasing 133 proved to be a cakewalk for the visitors on a pitch that was slightly on the slower side.

The very short boundary ensured the match ended with as many as 15 balls to spare.

The trio of Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami allowed no respite to Kane Williamson's team after New Zealand surprisingly chose to bat, restricting them to 132 for five.

K L Rahul then scored 57 not out off 50 balls while Shreyas Iyer scored 44 off 33 balls, the duo adding 86 runs for the third wicket and after Rohit Sharma's twin failure.

Tim Southee took 2-20 as India had to do without major contributions from both Sharma and skipper Virat Kohli.

Sharma (8) was out caught at slip in the first over off Southee. New Zealand's new ball bowlers were compact and didn't let the Indian top order get away unlike the first T20I on Friday.

Even so, Rahul and Kohli added 31 runs for the second wicket. The latter then was caught behind off Southee in the sixth over with Tim Seifert taking a brilliant diving catch.

Kohli scored 11 off 12 balls and the wicket's slow nature was starting to impact proceedings. New Zealand held back their spinners too, but Rahul-Iyer settled down in this passage of play.

They rotated strike well and added 50 in 55 balls by minimising risks. Rahul brought up his 11th T20I half-century off 43 balls.

Couldn't play like first game as pitch was different: Rahul

AUCKLAND: Indian batsman K L Rahul on Sunday said he had to change his approach in the second T20I due to the slightly slow nature of the pitch at Eden Park.

Rahul, who had smashed 56 off 27 balls to set up India's six wicket win in the first T20I, produced an unbeaten 50-ball 57 to anchor the visitors' seven-wicket victory in the second game.

The 27-year-old said he had to make some changes to his game as the pitch was different than the one India played during the opening match.

"Obviously different circumstances, the target was different, the pitch was a little different from what we played on a couple of days ago. So I knew I couldn't play the same way I played a couple days ago," said Rahul, who was adjudged the *Man*

of the Match.

"I had a different responsibility today. We lost our senior players Rohit and Virat early so I had to stay in there and make sure I finish the game."

Rahul, who has been in sizzling form in white ball format, said he has improved in his shot selection and reading of the game.

"I think the understanding of my game and how I'm reading the situation and reading the game has gotten better for me. That's helped me be more consistent and I've always put the team ahead and thought about what the team requires at that moment," he said.

"More often than not I've come up with the right shots and right answers so that's been the mantra for my success in the last several T20s." **PTI**

Overall, Rahul hit three fours and two sixes, while Iyer hit one four and three sixes.

India crossed 100 in the 15th over after which Iyer cut loose to approach the finish line. He fell just prior, holing out off Ish Sodhi (1-33).

But Rahul stuck around while Shivam Dube finished the job with a six over midwicket. This was after Indian bowlers made good use of a slower pitch.

Opting to bat, the Black Caps couldn't generate enough momentum in the middle overs and finished with a sub-par total.

Martin Guptill top-scored with 33 off 20 balls, while Tim Seifert was unbeaten on 33 not out off 26 balls.

Guptill and Colin Munro (26) provided a measured start to New Zealand putting on 48

runs for the first wicket.

Surprisingly, India held back Jasprit Bumrah (1-21) as Shardul Thakur (1-21) and Mohammed Shami (0-22) bowled four overs in the power play. The tactic worked as Thakur got rid of Guptill at end of six overs.

India then used the slow nature of the used-wicket to put brakes on the New Zealand middle order. Wickets came at a regular interval as the Black Caps struggled to get the big shots out.

Yuzvendra Chahal (0-33) and Shivam Dube (1-16) combined well after the powerplay, while Ravindra Jadeja was the stand out bowler with figures of 2-18 from four overs.

Overall, India also raised their fielding effort barring a bizarre drop from Virat Kohli late in the innings.



KL Rahul raises his bat after completing his second consecutive half-century against New Zealand

KL/Instagram

Bowlers stood up & took control: Kohli



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson on his way back to pavilion after being caught out by Yuzvendra Chahal off Ravindra Jadeja's bowling

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

India captain Virat Kohli lauded his bowling unit for taking control of the proceedings from the onset after an emphatic seven-wicket victory against New Zealand in the second T20.

"I think we had another good performance today, especially with the ball. The bowlers stood up and took control of what we wanted to do out there. Sticking to one side of the wicket was a very good feature for us as a team to restrict a good New Zealand team to 132 which I think was below par," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

The low target led to India chasing down the total with 15 balls to spare.

"The low total led us to bat in that manner but we thought the pitch was good for 160 in the first half. We understood the angles of the field better, how the pitch was playing and I had to think on my feet as a captain," he added.

Kohli's opposite number Kane Williamson reckoned that the pitch was tough for batting compared to the first match and that they were 20 runs short.

"It was a tough day. The wicket was quite different from the first game. I think as a batting unit we needed another 15 or 20 to make it a little bit more competitive. But credit to the way India bowled," Williamson said.

He termed India as a "class side" which put them under constant pressure.

"They're a class side in all departments and they put us under pressure in that middle period. Even though we only had 130 on the board on a small ground, we still knew if we were able to take early wickets and build pressure like they did, then you never really know."

"But they showed their experience and took the game much deeper than we were able to in the first innings and they were very clinical."

Iyer learnt art of chasing watching Kohli bat

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

There is no one better than Virat Kohli when it comes to chasing down totals in white-ball cricket, something that India's newest No 4 Shreyas Iyer wants to emulate on a consistent basis in coming days.

With a half-century and 44 off 33 balls in the successful chases in the first two T20 games, Iyer is fast becoming another viable option for the Indian team apart from its talismanic skipper when it comes to tricky run-chases.

"I personally feel that you have a fair idea how many runs you are going to chase and at what run-rate you have to chase them. Virat Kohli is the perfect example when he goes out to bat and the way he plans his innings. I learn a lot from him personally, the way he grinds out and he tries to finish the game. That's the best part about him," Iyer told mediapersons.

He also learns a lot from his senior Mumbai teammate Rohit Sharma, who can demolish any attack on his day.

"(I) Also (learn from) Rohit Sharma, whenever he's given an opportunity, he makes the best use of it. All these amazing characters in the team set a really good example for us youngsters."

"There's a lot to learn from them and that's what I try to apply whenever I go out there. I think that I have to stay not out and it really helps me grind throughout that middle period and when the time comes, I take on the bowlers. That's how you plan your innings when you are chasing," Iyer said.

The 25-year-old is known for his penchant for hitting big sixes but he also understands the value of rotating the strike as a middle-order batsman.

"You have to play all sorts of shots and take singles. As well as when you want to hit sixes, you have to be aware of the fact that you have to create that moment for yourself. You have to give yourself that time to get set. That's what I usually do."

He has now played 34 white-ball games for India (15 ODIs and 19 T20Is) and realises that staying at the crease an important virtue.

"I have realized playing so many matches that as long as I stay on the wicket, I tend to see the ball really well and I can take on the bowlers," he opined.

Pitch became hard for batting as game progressed: Guptill

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Senior New Zealand opener Martin Guptill blamed the sluggish Eden Park track for their flop show with the bat in an absolute surrender to the Indian side.

Guptill scored a quickfire 33 off 20 balls but Indian bowlers kept a tight leash on the Black Cap restricting them for 132 and then reaching the target in only 17.3 overs.

"We certainly felt that the pitch was getting slower and slower when we were batting. It got harder and harder to bat as the game progressed. We need-

ed one of the top three-four to bat majority of the innings. We weren't able to get partnerships to add up the total," Guptill told reporters after his team lost second successive game.

The surface was slower compared to the first game where New Zealand scored 203.

"It was a slightly different wicket. Earlier on, it was coming nicely. Colin (Munro) and I were off to a reasonable start. We lost momentum thereafter the sixth over, and we had to sort of rebuild from there," he said.

The target was not a tough one to chase down admitted

Guptill.

"We probably knew we were light on runs. But we had to try and defend that, and get early wickets upfront. Thought the bowlers did well in the front six overs, we needed more wickets after Virat got out. Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul batted very well and we were not able to break that partnership," he added.

Guptill and Colin Munro put up 48 for the opening stand after 80 in the first game.

"Our role in the team is to be aggressive and we go out there to do that. One of us would have been good to bat 15 overs to set the innings up and

have guys bat around us. It was not supposed to be today and we have time to try to do that in the next game and do a better performance," he added.

The opener felt that India once again out-batted them on a difficult track.

"They played very well, as hard as they did the other night. They built partnerships to put pressure on us. We were not able to do that and got out-batted tonight. India have got some great players and match winners. It is hard for the boys to go out there and try their best. Sometimes you come up short," Guptill further added.



Martin Guptill hits a six off Shardul Thakur's bowling during second T20I

AP

India A suffer five-run defeat

CHRISTCHURCH: Ishan Kishan was left stranded on an unbeaten 71 as India A lost four wickets in nine balls to suffer a narrow five-run defeat in the deciding third ODI against New Zealand A on Sunday.

Chasing 271 for a series-win, India A needed seven runs from the final over with two wickets in hand but wicket-keeper batsman Kishan took a single off the second ball after playing a dot to

expose the tail.

It proved quite costly as pacer Kyle Jamieson (4/49) knocked off Sandeep Warrier and Ishan Porel off consecutive balls to end the match with two balls to spare.

In the 49th over, India A lost well-set Axar Patel (32) and Rahul Chahar (0) to left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel, as New Zealand snatched the momentum when it mattered the most.

India had got off to a good

start with young opener Prithvi Shaw (55) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (44) putting on a confident 79-run stand for the opening wicket. Skipper Mayank Agarwal (22) got a start but could not convert it into a big knock.

After the top three, only Kishan and Axar offered resistance as Suryakumar Yadav (5) and Vijay Shankar (19) could not last long.

New Zealand A's left-arm spin duo of Ajaz Patel (3/44)

and Rachit Ravindra (2/43) did considerable damage to India's middle and lower order.

It was Mark Chapman, who got New Zealand back into the match with an unbeaten 110-run knock.

India had reduced the host to 68 for four and then 105 for six at one stage with dismissals at regular intervals but Chapman and Todd Astle (56) raised a 136-run partnership for the seven wicket to put up a fighting total. **PTI**



Mark Chapman in a file picture NZ/Twitter

England close to series win

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Joe Root made a patient half-century as England set South Africa a world record target of 466 to win the fourth and final Test at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

The England captain scored 58 and played an anchor role before he was last man out as England were bowled out shortly before the close for 248.

Root decided not to enforce the follow despite England leading by 217 runs on the first innings.

Fast bowler Mark Wood took five for 46 as South Africa were bowled out for 183 in their first innings.

Quinton de Kock (76) and Dwaine Pretorius (37) kept England in the field for most of the morning and probably made sure England would decide to bat again.

De Kock and Pretorius put on 79 for the eighth wicket and prevented England



from wrapping up the innings early.

De Kock scored his fourth half-century of what has been a poor series for the South African batsmen.

His team-mates have contributed

only five other 50-plus scores between them.

Vernon Philander was out to the sixth ball of the day, reducing South Africa to 93 for seven, at which stage a follow-on seemed a strong possibility.

It was an unhappy day for Philander, who will be retiring from international cricket at the end of the match as he pulled up with a hamstring injury after bowling just nine balls in the second innings.

He left the field immediately and was sent for a scan.

Despite the loss of their leading bowler, South Africa bowled and fielded better than in the first innings when England scored 400.

Left-arm seam bowler Beuran Hendricks claimed a five-wicket haul on debut, finishing with five for 64 when Root was last man out to a sensational diving catch by South African captain Faf du Plessis at a wide slip.

Philander fined for Buttler send-off

JOHANNESBURG: South African opening bowler Vernon Philander, who is playing in his final Test, has been fined 15 percent of his match fee after a send-off of England batsman Jos Buttler during the second day of the fourth Test at the Wanderers Stadium.

The International Cricket Council announced on Sunday that Philander had been found guilty of a level one offence for using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal in an international match.

Buttler was fined 15 percent of his match fee after the second Test in Cape Town where he was caught on camera swearing at Philander. **AFP**

SINGLES

B'DESH TO HOST ZIM IN FEB-MARCH

DHAKA: Bangladesh will host Zimbabwe in an int'l series in Feb-March, B'desh Cricket Board said on Sunday. The series will kick off with a one-off Test in Dhaka on Feb 22, and will also include three ODIs and two T20Is. The three ODIs will be held in the port city of Chittagong on March 1, 3 & 6. The tour will wrap up with two T20Is in Dhaka on March 9 & 11.

YUVRAJ, AKRAM TO PLAY IN RELIEF MATCH

SURABY: Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh and Pakistan fast bowling great Wasim Akram on Sunday became the first players outside Australia to confirm their availability for the charity cricket match organised to raise funds for the bushfire victims. Australia's prolific Test opening duo of Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden are also set to reunite after the latter's name was added to the squad list. They'll be joined by Australian men's team greats Andrew Symonds, Brad Haddin, Mike Hussey, Ponting, Warne, Adam Gilchrist, Brett Lee, Langer, Michael Clarke, Shane Watson and Alex Blackwell.

FED CUP MATCHES MOVED OUT OF CHINA

NEW DELHI: The Indian Fed Cup team on Sunday heaved a sigh of relief after the ITF shifted the Fed Cup matches from the coronavirus-hit China to Kazakhstan but the side is likely to compete without Sania Mirza, who has aggravated a calf-injury. Concerned for its players' health due to a medical emergency in China, AITA had written to the ITF, requesting the world governing body to consider either shifting the venue or postponing the tournament, originally scheduled in Dongguan from February 4. After rejecting their request twice, the ITF finally shifted out of China.

INDIAN MEAN'S TT TEAMS OLYMPIC BID ENDS

GONDOMAR: The Indian men's table tennis team's quest for an Olympic berth ended in disappointment after it suffered a 1-3 defeat to Czech Republic in a play-off match of the qualifying event. The loss significantly reduced India's chances of qualifying for the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo. The Indian team will now hope to make the cut during the Asian Olympic qualification tournament to be held in Bangkok, Thailand from April 6 to 12. **AGENCIES**