

OPINION 8 ILLOGIC AND THE SHOWMAN

WORLD 11 DEMOCRATS FACE RISKS AND LIMITS IN TRUMP'S IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

SPORT 15 JUVENTUS BEAT ROMA 3-1 IN COPPA ITALIA

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY JANUARY 24, 2020; PAGES 16 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



ANIL KAPOOR DEBUTS ON TIKTOK 14 VIVACITY

Peaceful stirs aid democracy: Pranab

Ex-Prez deftly avoids naming CAA, but says protesters' belief in Constitution is heartening

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Weighing in on the ongoing protests across the country, former President Pranab Mukherjee on Thursday said the present wave of largely peaceful protests that have "gripped" the country will once again help deepening India's democratic roots. Addressing the first Sukumar Sen Memorial lecture series at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra on Thursday, former President said the last few months have witnessed people, particularly the youth, come out on the streets in large numbers to voice their views on issues "which in their view are important". "Indian democracy has been tested time and again. Consensus is the lifeblood of democracy. Democracy thrives on listening, deliberating, dis-

ussing, arguing and even dissent. Their assertion and belief in the Constitution of India is particularly heartening to see," he said. While Mukherjee did not name the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA, in his address, his remarks, particularly his reference to belief of the youth in upholding the Constitution of India, have come against the backdrop of protests against the CAA. Incidentally, at several places protesters, mainly youths, grabbed headlines by simply reading the Preamble of the Constitution. The Modi Government has faced several protests during its second term across the country on issues such as CAA/NRC/NPR, abrogation of Article 370, and Triple Talaq. Mukherjee's daughter Sharmistha Mukherjee, a

Congress leader, has supported the ongoing protests against the CAA and she was detained. This is not the first time that he has spoken out on issues of national importance. Mukherjee had raked up a major controversy by visiting the RSS headquarters in Nagpur two years ago. At that time even people within his own party, the Congress, criticised him for showing proximity to the ruling BJP at the Centre. On December 19 last year, speaking at the second Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Lecture at the India Foundation, Mukherjee had cautioned against a "majoritarian Government" against the backdrop of pan-India protests against the CAA. "A numerical majority in the elections only gives a political party the right to form a



Indian democracy has been tested time and again. Consensus is the lifeblood of democracy. Democracy thrives on listening, deliberating, discussing, arguing and even dissent PRANAB MUKHERJEE

stable Government and not a majoritarian one. A numerical majority in elections gives you the right to make a stable government. The lack of popular majority forbids you from (becoming) a majoritarian government. That is the message and essence of our parliamen-

tary democracy," Mukherjee said. The former President also pointed out that while people have given "strong majorities" to various parties since 1952, not a single one has been elected with over 50 per cent vote. Similarly, delivering Rajendra Mathur Memorial

Lecture, organised annually by the Editors Guild of India in December last year, Mukherjee had emphasised that a democracy without a free press is like a "blank piece of paper". "Selective, orchestrated, one-sided, out of context, or motivated reporting and display, aimed at pushing the partisan agendas of one group or the other cannot or should not ever be the nature and character of journalism," he had said. In October last year, Mukherjee pressed on the importance of dialogue in a democracy while delivering the North East Institute of Advanced Studies Foundation Day lecture in memory of Justice (Retd) KN Saikia in Guwahati, Assam. Mukherjee stated that the soul of India resides in pluralism and celebration of its diversity. Continued on Page 6

Jail readies noose, Nirbhaya convicts' lawyer plans delay



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With nine days left for their execution, the four death-row convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape case are yet to inform the Tihar jail authorities about when they want to meet their families for the last time or whom they want to will their assets and the money that they have earned during their incarceration. Delhi Prisons authorities have begun preparations for the execution of the four convicts on February 1 and have contracted Pawan, the hangman from Meerut who would be paid ₹15,000 for each hanging. Meanwhile, the counsel for the convicts, AP Singh told The Pioneer that options are there before him as Akshay Singh and Pawan Gupta's curative petitions are yet to be filed before the Supreme Court. Once the petitions are filed, the hanging will be stayed till the petitions are decided. The four convicts, Vinay Shrama (26), Akshay Singh (31), Mukesh Kumar (32) and Pawan Gupta (25), who are lodged in separate cells of jail No 3 where the execution will take place, are scheduled to be hanged at 6 am on February 1, in case they fail to file the curative petition. According to AP Singh, Pawan and Akshay still have options to file curative petitions in the Supreme Court. Pawan and Akshay are yet to request for the "Presidential pardon". A petition of Pawan claiming to be juvenile at the time of crime was rejected by the

Supreme Court recently but the advocate said Pawan is still left with option to move a curative petition in the Supreme Court. The lawyer also claimed that Akshay is also left with option to file curative petition. Meanwhile, a senior jail official while elaborating about the procedure before executing death-row convicts said after the death warrants were issued, the convicts were asked when they would like to meet their respective families for the last time and if so, who all do they wish to meet. But none of them have responded yet. The official said the convicts were also asked if they would want to prepare their will, but they have not responded yet. "The families of all the four convicts are allowed to meet them twice a week but the last date of meeting has not been fixed because they still have not responded," he said. "Dummy execution of the four death-row convicts was performed in the prison last week. The officials recorded the weights of the convicts and then prepared the dummies accordingly with sacks filled with debris and stones," a senior jail official said. The execution will take place in Jail No 3, the official said, adding that the Uttar Pradesh Prison authority has confirmed that Pawan Jallad from Meerut will be sent to hang the four convicts. All the four are likely to be hanged simultaneously. Continued on P6

Coronavirus locks down 5 Chinese cities

In rare move, Wuhan among five cities sealed to contain infection

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Thursday locked down five cities, including Wuhan, suspending all public transport in an unprecedented move to contain the coronavirus that has infected over 630 people and left 17 others dead, dampening the celebrations of the Lunar New Year. On Thursday evening, Chinese officials announced suspension of public transport in five cities — Huanggang, Ezhou, Zhijiang, Qianjiang and Wuhan in Hubei province — official media reported. Wuhan, the city of 11 million people where the virus is believed to have first emerged, has no trains or planes in or out. Nationwide, a total of 17 people have died, all of them in and around Wuhan. The vic-

tims' average age was 73, with the oldest 89 and the youngest 48. So far 631 cases have been confirmed in 25 provincial-level regions in the country. The Government has sealed Wuhan and Huanggang, a prefecture level city with over 7.4 million people, in an unprecedented effort to curb the spread of the deadly novel coronavirus. The other three cities too have substantial population. From 10 am on Thursday, all public transportation, including city buses, subways, ferries and long-distance coaches in Wuhan were suspended, and outbound channels at airports and railway stations closed until further notice. The city officials have asked people in both the cities not to leave. Continued on Page 6



Travellers wearing masks enter the arrival area at Beijing Capital International Airport in Beijing on Thursday. AP

India berates Pak for spewing venom, false narrative on Kashmir

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

Brushing aside Prime Minister Imran Khan's plea for global intervention to prevent a showdown between "two nuclear armed" nations, New Delhi on Thursday rejected President Donald Trump's offer of "help" to resolve the matter insisting that Kashmir issue was a bilateral issue. India also asked Pakistan to take verifiable action against terror groups active there and blamed it for "spewing venom and false narratives" in the United Nations, saying it takes to hate speech like "a fish takes to water" on the Kashmir issue. Addressing the media along with the Pakistan Prime Minister in Davos on Tuesday,

Trump said the US was watching the developments related to Kashmir "very closely" and repeated his offer to "help" resolve the matter. Reacting to Khan's call to the global community, the External Affairs Ministry Spokesman Raveesh Kumar said Pakistan efforts would be better spent in taking verifiable action against terror groups on its territory than trying to "distract" the global community. In an interview on the sidelines of the Davos meet, Imran Khan had urged international powers — including the UN and the US — to help de-escalate tensions between India and Pakistan before things get to a point of no return. Continued on Page 6

Kerala nurse in Saudi infected

New Delhi: An Indian nurse working at a hospital in Saudi Arabia tested positive for the coronavirus when she and nearly 100 of her Indian colleagues, mostly from Kerala, were screened, the Government said on Thursday. The nurse is being treated at Aseer National Hospital and is recovering well, Minister of State for External Affairs V

Muraleedharan said. In a tweet, he said, "Update from @CGJeddah: About 100 Indian nurses mostly from Kerala working at Al-Hayat hospital have been tested and none, except one nurse, was found infected by coronavirus. Affected nurse is being treated at Aseer National Hospital and is recovering well." Detailed report on P5



A two-seater aircraft used by the NCC made an emergency landing on the Eastern Peripheral Expressway on Thursday following engine failure, officials said. The incident took place around 1.45 pm on the highway near Sadarpur village, Ghaziabad Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kalandidhi Naitani said. "The plane had two pilots onboard and both of them are safe," Naitani said. The aircraft made an emergency landing following engine failure, a Directorate General of Civil Aviation official said. (In picture) Security personnel stand beside the two-seater aircraft, which made an emergency landing on the Eastern Peripheral Expressway following engine failure. PTI

Nitish dares Pavan Varma to quit party for rebelling against JD(U)-BJP tie-up

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday lashed out at party leader and former diplomat Pavan Varma for publicly questioning the JD(U)'s tie-up with the BJP for Delhi Assembly elections and raising his differences with the party over the citizenship issue, saying he was "free to go" wherever he likes as the latter reacted saying he would decide on the next course of action after receiving a reply from Kumar to his letter. The Chief Minister also expressed his strong displeasure and objection over Varma, a national general secretary of the party, sharing on the social

media a letter wherein he had made mention of the Chief Minister having expressed apprehensions "in private" about the BJP's "divisive" agenda. "He is a learned man for whom I have a lot of respect even if he may not have similar sentiments for me. But is it proper to share such things in public and not on a party forum? What if I start sharing what he said to me in public?" Nitish told reporters in Patna. On Varma's repeated demands for "ideological clarity", Nitish said, "The JD(U)'s stand is very clear...He is free to go wherever he likes." Continued on Page 6

Yogi flags off Ganga Yatra



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath flagging off two 'Ganga Raths' in Lucknow on Thursday. Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said that people not only reposed faith in river Ganga but the economy was also linked to the Holy river. Flagging off two 'Ganga Raths' on Thursday, Yogi said, "With Prime Minister's inspiration, the state government is starting 'Ganga Yatra'. Ganga is the symbol of river civilisation of India. Civilisations have developed on its bank and traditions have moved forward. It is our responsibility to make people aware of the cleanliness of Ganga." On the occasion, the Chief Minister also said that Ganga was a symbol of faith and Indians considered it as a part of its heritage and tradition since Sanatan period. Recounting PM Modi's statement in Varanasi in 2014 where he had said that he had come there for Maa Ganga, Yogi said that the PM vindicated his faith towards 'Ganga Maa' by implementing 'Namami Gange' project in the country. The Chief Minister said that Ganga covered 2525 km in five

states, of which, 1025 kilometres were in Uttar Pradesh and hence, the responsibility of its cleanliness rested with the people of the state. "For this, the state government has taken several steps to make Ganga clean and ever-flowing, he said. The Chief Minister pointed out that 14 crore litres of sewage was falling in Ganga through Sisama's drain in Kanpur and this had been going on for 128 years. "Due to Namami Gange project, today not a single drop of sewage is flowing into the river. There was a time when there was not a single aquatic animal left after Jajmau drain in Kanpur. Due to Namami Gange project today, big fishes are again in the river," he said. The CM said that the government had decided that 21 municipal bodies and 1038 gram panchayats through which Ganga Yatra would pass, will practice organic farming in coming years. "Ganga Park, Ganga Talab and Ganga Maidan will be constructed on the banks of Ganga," he said. "Without the cleanliness of Ganga river, a grand Kumbh

Mela was not possible in Prayagraj last year. During Kumbh, around 25 crore devotees took bath at the Sangam," he said. Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, Jal Shakti Minister Dr. Mahendra Singh, Sugarcane Minister Suresh Rana, Tourism and Culture. Of the two raths flagged off on Thursday, one will go to Bijnore where Ganga enters Uttar Pradesh, while the other Rath will go to Ballia from where the river exits into Bihar. Yogi will participate in the Ganga Yatra from Bijnore on January 27 and travel through Muzaffarnagar to Hastinapur. The following day, he will travel from Hastinapur to Hamir to Garh Mukteshwar to Amroha and then Bulandshahr. Later on January 29, he will go to Aligarh, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur and will reach Farukhhabad in the evening. The following day, the Yatra will head to Kanpur through Kannauj and Hardoi. On the other hand, the Yatra from Ballia will travel to Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Pratnagarh, Unnao and culminate in Kanpur.

CAPSULE

DEATH SENTENCE CAN'T REMAIN OPEN-ENDED: SC New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday said the finality of death sentence is extremely important and a convict should not be under the impression that it remains open-ended, which leads to its questioning. **DELAY IN PROJECTS UNACCEPTABLE: GADKARI** New Delhi: Terming delays in projects as "unacceptable", Highway Minister Nitin Gadkari asked officials and developers to strictly adhere to schedules. **SC: WILL CONSIDER GIVING RAM SETU HERITAGE TAG** New Delhi: The SC on Thursday said it will consider after three months the plea of BJP leader Subramanian Swamy seeking a direction for declaring 'Ram Setu' as a heritage monument.

Projects shelved to save Chambal ecology

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has put on hold the Madhya Pradesh Government's proposal for laying of freshwater pipe and construction of inland wells in the Chambal river citing threat to endangered species such as crocodiles, gharials, turtles and dolphins found in the region. The project was red-flagged by the State Chief Wildlife Warden due to threat to the river ecology and wildlife, but it was cleared by the State board for wildlife. In a recent meeting, the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife (SC-NBWL) noted that the proposal required diversion of 1.267 hectares from the National Chambal Sanctuary for the construction of intake



well in the Chambal river and for laying of drinking water pipeline to meet the demand of the locals from Sheopar district. The members also noted that the State Chief Wildlife Warden didn't clear the proposal on the ground that construction of intake well is in close proximity of the habitat of crocodile, gharial, Indian skimmers, turtle and dolphin. The board also took cog-

nizance of the Wildlife Institute of India's (WII) past stand that the minimum flow required to sustain the ideal habitat for gharial in Chambal river is 151-165 m³/sec and for the dolphin 266.42 - 289.67 m³/sec. But in December 2017 when the Dehradun-based agency again monitored the discharge of the Chambal river, it found the flow had receded to 67 m³/sec. "So taking water from the

Cong plans agitation over farmers' issues after Delhi polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the aim to marginalise Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party on people's issues and to take the ruling BJP head-on before the next assembly polls, the Congress under Priyanka Gandhi Vadra would launch a state-wide agitation over farmers' problems after the Delhi polls.



Sources in the Congress claimed that the party would organise 'Kisan Jan Jagran Abhiyan' under the banner 'Kisan Bachao' at the village-level every month to highlight farmers' problems in Uttar Pradesh. "In the second phase, 'nukkad sabhas' will be organised at block level and later, pad yatras will be taken out at tehsil and district headquarters," the sources said.

Priyanka will also address five rallies, to be attended by senior-most leaders of the Congress. The strategy for the agitation was chalked out during the four-day training camp of state leaders at Bhumeau guest house in Rae Bareilly and the programme will be formally announced soon.

When it actualises, this will be the first major movement led by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in UP.

Congress MLC, Deepak Singh said the party would take on the Yogi Adityanath government on issues like stray cattle, payment of cane dues to farmers, non-availability of fertilisers, irregularities in procurement of paddy, no increase in minimum support price of foodgrains and rising cases of farmer suicides in the state, specially in Bundelkhand.

"Congress workers will reach out to farmers and get their problems in writing in a form. These forms will then be handed over to tehsildars/district magistrates and also sent to the state government," Singh said.

The Congress workers would also distribute leaflets in which farmers' plight would be compared during the United Progressive Alliance and National Democratic Alliance regimes. The party will also seek loan waiver for farmers, waiver of half of the power bills, cowshed, and watchdog allowance in every village.

Late on Wednesday, Priyanka had taken a dig at Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav by saying that some leaders did not think it prudent to move out of their homes to support the protests against the new citizenship law.

Meanwhile, Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra met the families of those who were killed in a road accident in Amethi on Thursday.

The mother-daughter duo, who are on a two day visit to Sonia Gandhi's constituency Rae Bareilly for a training camp organised for party workers, visited Pure Bharetha, Pure Ganesh Lal, Gungwachh and Hathkila villages to express condolences to the bereaved families.

Six persons were killed when a car collided with a fertiliser-laden truck in Baramasi area of Amethi on Jagdishpur-Gauriganj-Pratapgarh national highway late Monday night.

Till recently, Amethi was represented by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha and was considered a stronghold of the party and the Gandhi family.

Bhagwat in Gorakhpur on 5-day visit

Gorakhpur (PTI): RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday reached Gorakhpur for a five-day visit. During his stay here, Bhagwat will hold meetings with RSS workers of eastern Uttar Pradesh on Friday and Saturday and offer them guidance on their work, said Sanjit Kumar, 'Prant Karyawah'

of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The RSS workers of eastern UP will present their annual work report to Bhagwat. After a flag-hoisting ceremony on the Republic Day, Bhagwat will discuss the issues of 'Shakha' level and on January 27, he will hold meetings with district 'pracharaks',

SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CO. LTD.
 Corporate Office : 425, Udyog Vihar Phase IV, Gurgaon-122015 (Haryana)
 Ph : 0124- 4212530/31/32, E-Mail: customercare@shubham.co website : www.shubham.co

POSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Whereas the undersigned being the authorized officer of the Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited (hereinafter called Shubham) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice calling upon borrowers to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described hereinafter in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited for an amount detailed below and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Details are as below:

S. No.	Loan No/Borrower(s), Co-Borrower	Demand Notice Amount	Date of Demand Notice	Secured Asset	Date of Affixation
1.	OALB170900005908085, Rahul Jaiswal, Raj Bahadur Lal Jaiswal	Rs. 15,47,733/-	04-11-2019	House No-240-A/218, Garwan Tola, Khuldabad, Pang & Tehsil-Sadar, Distt. Allahabad Uttar Pradesh -211003	22.01.2020
2.	OLKW180500005012627, Dharendra Kashyap, Kalavati	Rs. 7,77,976/-	04-11-2019	Khasra No 309A, Kakauli, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	20.01.2020

Place : Gurgaon Date : 23-01-2020 Authorized Officer, Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Ltd.

कार्यालय : अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-3 जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, लखनऊ

पत्रांक-2457/EE-3/ दिनांक-23-01-2020

अति-अल्पकालीन निविदा-सूचना

जोन-3 के अन्तर्गत कार्य हेतु जलकल विभाग जोन-3 द्वारा अति अल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 31.01.2020 को अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक शुल्क जमा करके केश काउन्टर से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है तथा दिनांक 31.01.2020 को अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक निविदा डाली जा सकती है तथा प्राप्त निविदायें उसी दिवस को अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे निविदादाताओं अथवा उनके प्रतिनिधि के समक्ष खोली जायेंगी। निविदा विवरण निम्नानुसार है :-

क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	निविदा शुल्क	EMD	अनुमानित लागत (लाख में)
1	Laying & Interconnection of PVC pipeline 100 mm dia 300 metre pipeline at Faizullaganj Third Kesav Nagar Paschim, Lucknow.	Rs.200/-+ GST 12%	Rs.4000.00	Rs.206812.00 + 12% GST

जमानत राशि अधिशासी अभियन्ता जलकल विभाग, जोन-3 लखनऊ के नाम बन्धक होगा, जमा करना अनिवार्य है। सभी निविदादाताओं का रजिस्ट्रेशन, जी0एस0टी0 नं0 की छायाप्रति निविदा के साथ संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा। बिना जमानत धनराशि के व निर्धारित तिथि व समय के उपरान्त किसी भी निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। किसी एक व समस्त निविदा को बिना कारण बताये निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी अथवा महाप्रबन्धक जलकल विभाग नगर निगम को सुरक्षित होगा। अन्य शर्तें निविदा प्रपत्र में उल्लेखित हैं।

अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-3 जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम

गौरवशाली संस्कृति अनवरत विकास...

उत्तर प्रदेश को बनाते हैं खास

उत्तर प्रदेश दिवस 24-26 जनवरी, 2020

का आयोजन

मुख्य अतिथि

आनंदीबेन पटेल

राज्यपाल, उत्तर प्रदेश

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

केशव प्रसाद मौर्य

उप मुख्यमंत्री उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. दिनेश शर्मा

उप मुख्यमंत्री उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. नीलकंठ तिवारी

राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार), पर्यटन, संस्कृति धर्मार्थ कार्य, प्रोटोकॉल (MOS), उत्तर प्रदेश

दिनांक: 24 जनवरी, 2020 | समय: पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे | स्थान: अवध शिल्पग्राम, लखनऊ

मुख्य कार्यक्रम

₹4,228 करोड़ की विकास परियोजनाओं का लोकार्पण/शिलान्यास

- गणतंत्र दिवस/उत्तर प्रदेश के इतिहास पर प्रदर्शनी
- गंगा यात्रा पर प्रदर्शनी
- विकास पर आधारित प्रदर्शनी
- राम की विश्व यात्रा पर प्रदर्शनी तथा पावर प्वाइंट प्रजेन्टेशन
- कृष्णोत्सव/दीपोत्सव पर प्रदर्शनी
- कृष्ण/महाभारत पर प्रदर्शनी
- गुरु नानक देव जी की 550वीं वर्षगांठ को समर्पित कार्यक्रम
- दीपोत्सव व काशी विश्वनाथ मंदिर कॉरिडोर पर आधारित फिल्म का प्रदर्शन
- एक जनपद-एक उत्पाद (ओडीओपी) पर लघु फिल्म, सेमिनार एवं अन्य कार्यक्रम
- जल संरक्षण एवं पर्यावरण प्रदूषण नियंत्रण पर प्रदर्शनी
- राज्य स्तरीय सर्वश्रेष्ठ इकाइयों/उद्यमियों का सम्मान समारोह
- खेल पुरस्कार वितरण
- खादी एवं ग्रामोद्योग बोर्ड की लघु फिल्म का प्रदर्शन
- सांस्कृतिक पर्यटन की संभावनाओं पर संगोष्ठी
- मूक-बधिर बच्चों का कार्यक्रम
- छात्रवृत्ति वितरण
- हास्य-व्यंग्य (श्री राजू श्रीवास्तव, मुम्बई द्वारा)
- भोजपुरी/अवधी/ब्रज/बुन्देली सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम
- उत्तर प्रदेश के लोकनृत्य
- अवधी गायन, कथक नृत्य व जुगलबन्दी
- अभिलेखीय पुस्तक का विमोचन

सबका साथ-सबका विकास-सबका विश्वास

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I, Anil Kumar Jaiswal S/o Lal Ji Jaiswal R/o Derwa Pratapgarh, Mob. 9889102300 inform that I have lost original receipt no. GDN/CRB/00015/0812, GDN/CRB/00198/0613, GDN/CRB/00239/039/0113, GDN/CRB/100070, 0716 For my DLF plot no. C-32

NOTICE

By Error my name Zahid Ali Ansari Endorse in my passport. But other Documents are My Real name Zahid Ali. Please Correct My Name As Zahid Ali. Zahid Ali S/o Tahir Ali R/o 369/114 G, Near Rahmania Masjid, Bibi Ganj, P/o Sadatganj, Lucknow.

NOTICE

I, Anita Devi spouse of No. 2993141F, Rank-HAV, Name Ramsanehi Singh, resident of Vill. Chakdeiya, Post - Helmi-pur, Tahsil-Kasia, Distt. Kusinagar (U.P.) have changed my name from Smt. Anitha Devi to Anita Devi vide Affidavit dated 20.01.2020 before Distt. Magistrate / Tehsildar - Lucknow.

NOTICE

In another mishap, a jeep rammed into a stationary truck in Chitrakoot district, killing two people and injuring six. The deceased were identified as Santosh (40) and Hari (55).

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Nadda, Yogi slam oppn over CAA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that everyone had the right to speak in a democratic way but those who created chaos should not be under any illusion as the government had a solution to every problem and it would recover losses from those who damaged public property.

Yogi was addressing a public meeting at Kothi Meena Bazaar in Agra on Thursday.

Addressing the meeting, Bharatiya Janata Party national president JP Nadda said that there was no need to be afraid of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. "This is a law of the people. The country has suffered in the last several years because of decisions taken after Independence," he said. Nadda slammed the Congress for opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, saying the leadership of the grand old party was suffering from "mental bankruptcy".

"The Congress has lost all hopes. Its leadership is suffering from 'maansik diwaiyapan' (mental bankruptcy). The statements issued by the party in the last eight months will



BJP national president JP Nadda (center L) and UP CM Yogi Adityanath (center R) wave at supporters during a pro-CAA rally in Agra on Thursday. UP Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya (2R) is also seen

reflect that these are intended to help Pakistan," he said.

In an apparent reference to the leaders of the Bahujan

Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party, Nadda said, "These days Dalit leaders are opposing the CAA. These Dalit leaders and

the Congress hardly know anything about the CAA and are only spreading canards to mislead people." The BJP president said the political innings of the two parties was over and they had understood that times had changed and the country was marching rapidly under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The chief minister said that those who, on the signal of PFI and SIMI, destroyed public property, had now realised that their assets would be confiscated. "Now, these people are trying to vitiate the atmosphere by pushing their women and children to the fore," he said.

"Previous governments used to plead with miscreants but politics of all opposition parties has come to an end. That is why they are trying to spread confusion. These parties created their vote banks on these issues, but under Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, all issues have been resolved," Yogi asserted. The chief minister said that it was the government's responsibility to make people aware of the reality so that they could connect themselves with the programme of 'Rashtriya Punarnirman' and 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

"The opposition is upset with abrogation of Article 370 that provided special status of the then state of Jammu and Kashmir and was hence speaking the language of Pakistan," he said. Yogi stressed that Citizenship (Amendment) Act was connected to India's heritage which has been that of protecting people who come for shelter. "The CAA is a law for granting citizenship, not for taking away citizenship. The opposition must understand its reality," the chief minister said.

Details of Magh Mela-2020 Special Trains

North Central Railway warmly welcomes you to Magh Mela-2020

On the auspicious occasion of Mauni Amavasya Time tabled Mela Special Trains are being run for the convenience of passengers.

Mauni Amavasya 24 January 2020, Friday
Special Train running from Allahabad Jn. to Kanpur Central

S. I.	Special Train No.	From	Departure Time	To	Arrival Time	Stoppages
1	00101	Allahabad	05:00	Fatehpur	07:10	Subedarganj-Bharwari-Sirathu-Khaga
2	00102	Allahabad	06:30	Kanpur Central	11:30	Subedarganj-Bharwari-Sirathu-Khaga-Fatehpur-Bindki Road
3	00103	Allahabad	10:15	Fatehpur	12:20	Subedarganj-Bharwari-Sirathu-Khaga
4	00104	Allahabad	16:45	Kanpur Central	21:30	Subedarganj-Bharwari-Sirathu-Khaga-Fatehpur-Bindki Road

Spl. Train running from Allahabad Jn. to Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn./Chunar/Chopan

S. I.	Special Train No.	From	Departure Time	To	Arrival Time	Stoppages
1	00201	Allahabad	07:30	Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.	13:00	All stations between Allahabad-Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.
2	00202	Allahabad	12:00	Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.	16:00	Naini-Meja Road-Manda Road-Vindhyachal-Mirzapur-Chunar
3	00203	Allahabad	15:00	Chopan	23:10	All stations between Allahabad-Chopan
4	00204	Allahabad	18:30	Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.	23:00	All stations between Allahabad-Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.

Spl. Train running from Allahabad Jn. to Manikpur/Banda/Jhansi

S. I.	Special Train No.	From	Departure Time	To	Arrival Time	Stoppages
1	00301	Allahabad	08:30	Jhansi	21:30	All stations between Allahabad-Manikpur-Jhansi

Spl. Train running from Allahabad Chheoki to Manikpur/Satna/Itarsi

S. I.	Special Train No.	From	Departure Time	To	Arrival Time	Stoppages
1	00304	Allahabad Chheoki	19:30	Itarsi	15:30	All stations between Allahabad Chheoki-Manikpur-Itarsi

25 January 2020, Saturday
Special Train running from Allahabad Jn. to Kanpur Central

S. I.	Special Train No.	From	Departure Time	To	Arrival Time	Stoppages
1	00101	Allahabad	05:00	Fatehpur	07:10	Subedarganj-Bharwari-Sirathu-Khaga
2	00102	Allahabad	06:30	Kanpur Central	11:30	Subedarganj-Bharwari-Sirathu-Khaga-Fatehpur-Bindki Road
3	00103	Allahabad	10:15	Fatehpur	12:20	Subedarganj-Bharwari-Sirathu-Khaga
4	00104	Allahabad	16:45	Kanpur Central	21:30	Subedarganj-Bharwari-Sirathu-Khaga-Fatehpur-Bindki Road

Spl. Train running from Allahabad Jn. to Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn./Chunar/Chopan

S. I.	Special Train No.	From	Departure Time	To	Arrival Time	Stoppages
1	00201	Allahabad	07:30	Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.	13:00	All stations between Allahabad-Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.
2	00202	Allahabad	12:00	Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.	16:00	Naini-Meja Road-Manda Road-Vindhyachal-Mirzapur-Chunar
3	00203	Allahabad	15:00	Chopan	23:10	All stations between Allahabad-Chopan
4	00204	Allahabad	18:30	Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.	23:00	All stations between Allahabad-Pt. D.D. Upadhaya Jn.

Spl. Train running from Allahabad Jn. to Manikpur/Banda/Jhansi

S. I.	Special Train No.	From	Departure Time	To	Arrival Time	Stoppages
1	00301	Allahabad	08:30	Jhansi	21:30	All stations between Allahabad-Manikpur-Jhansi

Spl. Train running from Allahabad Chheoki to Manikpur/Satna/Itarsi

S. I.	Special Train No.	From	Departure Time	To	Arrival Time	Stoppages
1	00304	Allahabad Chheoki	19:30	Itarsi	15:30	All stations between Allahabad Chheoki-Manikpur-Itarsi

Note : In addition to the above tabled Mela Special Trains, other additional Mela Special Trains will be operated as per need.

Pay Attention For going towards Varanasi, Mau, Gorakhpur & Ballia approach Jhansi & Allahabad City (Rambagh) Stations. For going towards Lucknow, Pratappgarh, Sultanpur Faizabad, approach Prayag & Phaphamau Stations.

For the information regarding MAGH MELA download the Mela Rail Seva 2020 app, from google play store link: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=app.ncr.maghmeal>

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
MOBILITY IS OUR HALLMARK
106/20 (I)
North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

TEENAGER KNOCKED DOWN BY TRAIN

Lucknow (PNS): A teenager, identified as Qurban Ali (15) of a slum area at Salim Nagar

crossing in Jankipuram, was fatally knocked down by a train around 9 am on Thursday. Reports said Qurban Ali had gone to the railway tracks along with his goats when the

tragedy struck. "As Qurban was hard of hearing, he could not hear the noise of the approaching train and met the mishap," his father Ghufuran was quoted as saying by the police.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD DIVISION
Welcomes you in
MAGH MELA 2020

Direction wise Mela Special Trains on Main bathing days of Magh Mela 2020

Direction of Special Train	Nominated Station
Towards Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn. (Mughalsarai)	Allahabad Jn. and Naini Station
• Vindhyachal, Mirzapur, Chunar, Tata, Ranchi, Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn. (Mughalsarai), Patna, Gaya, Howrah, Aara and onward stations.	
Towards Kanpur	Allahabad Jn. Station
• Fatehpur, Kanpur, Etawah, Tundla, Agra, Mathura. Aligarh, Meerut, Delhi and onward stations.	
Towards Manikpur	Allahabad Jn., Allahabad Chheoki and Naini Station
• Shankargarh, Manikpur, Banda, Chitrakootdham Karvi, Jhansi, Gwalior, Bina, Satna, Maihar, Katni, Jabalpur, Itarsi, Bhopal, Raipur, Bilaspur, Durg, Nagpur, Mumbai and onward stations.	
Towards Lucknow	Prayag and Phaphamau Station
• Amethi, Pratappgarh, Unchahar, Raibareilly, Lucknow, Bareilly, Moradabad, Saharanpur, Haridwar and onward stations.	
Towards Ayodhya	
• Phulpur, Faizabad, Ayodhya, Jaunpur, Lalganj and onward stations.	
Towards Varanasi	Allahabad City (Rambagh) and Jhansi Station
• Ramnathpur, Madhosingh, Bhadohi, Gyanpur Road, Manduadih, Varanasi, Aunrihar, Ghazipur, Bhatni, Siwan, Belthara Road, Gorakhpur, Raxaul and onward stations.	

Reach to Allahabad City (Rambagh) and Jhansi station for boarding trains towards Varanasi, Mau, Gorakhpur and Ballia.
Reach to Prayag and Phaphamau station for boarding trains towards Lucknow, Pratappgarh, Sultanpur, Faizabad.

Important : For the convenience of passengers during Magh Mela, Ticket booking counters for both reserved and general tickets have been opened at Triveni Road in the Sangam area. Passengers can obtain tickets from there also.

Download Mela Rail Seva 2020 App from Google Play Store for all information related to Magh Mela
link: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=app.ncr.maghmeal>

108/20 (I) North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

Elderly woman robbed of ornaments by impostors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Two impostors robbed an elderly woman of her ornaments in Jankipuram. As the issue went viral in social media groups, police registered a case in this connection and started investigations. Lajwanti Agarwal (60) of Janki Vihar Colony was going for some work around noon when the bike-borne miscreants masquerading as cops stopped her. "They howled at me, asking why I am wearing gold ornaments when it has been banned by the government. They also told me that women wearing gold ornaments were being attacked and murdered. One of them asked me to put off all the ornaments and keep it inside the purse, but I objected. They snatched my gold chain, a gold ring and a diamond-studded ring, kept it in a sachet and asked me to sign on a register. In the meantime, they replaced the sachet with another one and gave it to me," the woman told the police.

She said she reached out to a shop-owner for his help after the miscreants sped off. "When I opened the sachet, I found stones inside," said the woman, whose son Dhanesh is a contractor. Inspector, Jankipuram, said a case of fraud was registered against the accused and the police were searching for them. "We are scanning footages of the CCTV cameras installed at the crime scene and nearby areas," he said.

Meanwhile, in Chinhat, a 33-year-old labourer, identified as Nitin Kumar of Budh Vihar Colony in Chinhat died of electrocution while working at an under-construction house in Matiyari locality on Thursday. Reports said Nitin was lifting building material when he inadvertently touched the 33KV overhead line. Fellow labourers said Nitin's body turned blue instantly after he suffered the electric shock. "We rushed him to hospital where he was declared brought dead," they said.

A police spokesman said sub-inspector Bhupendra Singh has been tasked with investigating the case.

2 easy steps for visually impaired persons to identify the denomination of a currency note.

- Download and install the MANI App
- Open the App and point the camera of the mobile phone to the currency note

RBI launches the MANI App (Mobile Aided Note Identifier) Empowering the visually impaired persons.

- Identifies denomination of Mahatma Gandhi Series and Mahatma Gandhi (New) series banknotes
- Identification by audio notification in Hindi and English and vibration mode
- After downloading, internet is not required and works in offline mode
- Available on both Android Play Store and iOS App Store without any charges/payment

The mobile application does not authenticate the note as genuine or counterfeit

For more details, give a missed call to 14440 or visit www.rbi.org.in/MANI
For feedback on this advertisement, write to rbikehtaha@rbi.org.in

RBI Kehta Hai... Jaankaar Baniye, Satark Rahiye!

Issued in public interest by भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक RESERVE BANK OF INDIA www.rbi.org.in

Women protesters booked for violating prohibitory orders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Taking a strong note of the protest against CAA by women in Gomti Nagar on Wednesday night, the Lucknow police registered a case against over 125 protesters for violating prohibitory orders and also booked them under Section 120B of IPC (criminal conspiracy). The police said they had identified some of the women and identifying other unnamed protesters.

A police spokesman said the case was registered on the complaint of sub-inspector Husain Abbas of Gomti Nagar police station. "Some of the women were identified as Shanno, Asma Siddiqui, Baby, Bushra and Rubina Ayaz (all of Gomti Nagar)," he said, adding that those named in the case would be served notices.

The case was registered over 125 women as they were guilty of violent protest in Ujariaon where hundreds of women assembled on Wednesday to raise their voice against CAA. The ongoing anti-CAA stir has become a tough task to handle for police. Besides, the protesters at Clock Tower in Hussainabad are in non mood to budge. Sources said different NGOs and social workers were joining the protest. They said a huge number of people were joining the protest and making sure there is no violence.

"Peaceful protest has put the Lucknow police in a fix as they are unable to initiate any action against the protesters," the sources said. They said hundreds of women reached Ujariaon around 11.44 pm on Wednesday even as the cops had no clue about their protest.

On the other end, the protest at Clock Tower entered seventh day on Thursday with supporters from Sikh community also thronging the venue. Some famous poets also reached the venue in support of the protesting women.

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड विद्युत 400 केबी0 उपकेंद्र खण्ड कसारा, मऊ

निम्नलिखित ई-निविदाये अधिकृत एवं अनुमती संस्थाओं/फर्मों से जो जीएफटी में पंजीकृत तथा सरकारी/अर्धसरकारी प्रतिष्ठान में क्रय/कार्य को संतोषजनक रूप से पूर्ण करने का अनुभव रखती हों, ई-टेंडर के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा हेतु धरोहर धनराशि/निविदा शुल्क अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत 400 केबी0उपकेंद्र खण्ड, कसारा मऊ के पंजाब नेशनल बैंक, संस्कृत पाठशाला के पास शाखा मऊनाथ भंजन के खाता सं. 0316002100027406, IFSC Code-PUNB0031600 में आरटीजीएस/एनईफटी के माध्यम से जमा कराई जाये तथा बैंक में जमा किए जाने का साक्ष्य यथा योज्य यूटीआर संख्या, खाते का नाम, निर्गत कर्ता बैंक अधिकारी द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित एवं निविदा दाता द्वारा प्रविष्टाक्षरित पे-इन रिलिफ की स्कैन कापी, ई0एमडी0 के लिए बैंक गारण्टी को स्कैन कापी, जारी कर्ता बैंक के कन्फर्मेशन मेल की प्रति ई-टेंडर प्रपत्रों के साथ ऑन लाइन अपलोड की जायेगी। निविदाओं को ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड किया जायेगा। नियत तिथि एवं समय पर ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड ई-निविदा की वेबसाइट पर खोला जायेगा। ई निविदा भाग-2 (ब्राइस पार्ट) को ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट पर खोलने हेतु तदनुसार वेबसाइट पर ही सूचित किया जायेगा। विस्तृत विवरण प्रविष्टित समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशन के साथ-साथ ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in एवं विभाग की वेबसाइट-www.upptcl.org पर उपलब्ध रहेगा। ई-निविदा संख्या, कार्य का विवरण, खोलने का दिनांक, ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट पर अपलोड करने एवं खोलने का समय धरोहर राशि एवं निविदा का मूल्य क्रमानुसार निम्नवत है। **अल्प कालिक ई-निविदा सं-02 ति 400केबी0(म)/2019-20** - विद्युत 400केबी0 उपकेंद्र खण्ड कसारा, मऊ के अन्तर्गत 400 केबी0 उपकेंद्र कसारा पर पेल फंसिंग के स्विचिंग एवं पेंटिंग एवं 63 केबी0ए0 स्टेशन परिवर्तक के पेंटिंग का कार्य। दिनांक 05.02.2020 12:00 बजे प्रात 15:00 बजे (तकनीकी भाग-पार्ट-1 खोलने हेतु) रू 2000.00 रू 236.00 (सी0एस0टी0 सहित) नोट-उपरोक्त तिथि को अधोहस्ताक्षर के कार्यालय से अनुपस्थिति अथवा सर्वर समस्या की दशा में निविदाये दूसरे कार्य दिवस को खोली जायेगी। (राजेश प्रसाद) अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत 400केबी0 उपकेंद्र कसारा मऊ पत्रांक-68 दिनांक-23.01.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाय"

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड विद्युत 400 केबी0 उपकेंद्र खण्ड कसारा, मऊ

निम्नलिखित ई-निविदाये अधिकृत एवं अनुमती संस्थाओं/फर्मों से जो जीएफटी में पंजीकृत तथा सरकारी/अर्धसरकारी प्रतिष्ठान में क्रय/कार्य को संतोषजनक रूप से पूर्ण करने का अनुभव रखती हों, ई-टेंडर के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा हेतु धरोहर धनराशि/निविदा शुल्क अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत 400 केबी0उपकेंद्र खण्ड, कसारा मऊ के पंजाब नेशनल बैंक, संस्कृत पाठशाला के पास शाखा मऊनाथ भंजन के खाता सं. 0316002100027406, IFSC Code-PUNB0031600 में आरटीजीएस/एनईफटी के माध्यम से जमा कराई जाये तथा बैंक में जमा किए जाने का साक्ष्य यथा योज्य यूटीआर संख्या, खाते का नाम, निर्गत कर्ता बैंक अधिकारी द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित एवं निविदा दाता द्वारा प्रविष्टाक्षरित पे-इन रिलिफ की स्कैन कापी, ई0एमडी0 के लिए बैंक गारण्टी को स्कैन कापी, जारी कर्ता बैंक के कन्फर्मेशन मेल की प्रति ई-टेंडर प्रपत्रों के साथ ऑन लाइन अपलोड की जायेगी। निविदाओं को ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड किया जायेगा। नियत तिथि एवं समय पर ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड ई-निविदा की वेबसाइट पर खोला जायेगा। ई निविदा भाग-2 (ब्राइस पार्ट) को ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट पर खोलने हेतु तदनुसार वेबसाइट पर ही सूचित किया जायेगा। विस्तृत विवरण प्रविष्टित समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशन के साथ-साथ ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in एवं विभाग की वेबसाइट-www.upptcl.org पर उपलब्ध रहेगा। ई-निविदा संख्या, कार्य का विवरण, खोलने का दिनांक, ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट पर अपलोड करने एवं खोलने का समय धरोहर राशि एवं निविदा का मूल्य क्रमानुसार निम्नवत है। **अल्प कालिक ई-निविदा सं-01 ति400केबी0(म)/2019-20** - विद्युत 400केबी0 उपकेंद्र खण्ड कसारा, मऊ के अन्तर्गत कालोनी परिसर में स्थापित 2 नग टाइप-प्रथम के विद्युतीकरण का कार्य। दिनांक 05.02.2020 12:00 बजे प्रात 15:00 बजे (तकनीकी भाग-पार्ट-1 खोलने हेतु) रू 2000.00 रू 236.00 (सी0एस0टी0 सहित) नोट-उपरोक्त तिथि को अधोहस्ताक्षर के कार्यालय से अनुपस्थिति अथवा सर्वर समस्या की दशा में निविदाये दूसरे कार्य दिवस को खोली जायेगी। (राजेश प्रसाद) अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत 400केबी0 उपकेंद्र कसारा मऊ पत्रांक-68 दिनांक-23.01.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाय"

Opposition assails CM for warning protesters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The opposition parties on Thursday slammed Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for warning anti-CAA protesters that "azadi" slogans raised by them will be treated as sedition. While the Samajwadi Party drew an analogy with the British rule, the Congress termed it "a language of dictators". The chief minister in a rally in Kanpur on Wednesday had said, "If azadi slogans are raised here like they used to be raised in Kashmir, then it will come in the category of sedition and

stringent action will be taken by the government." Reacting to it, senior SP leader Ram Govind Chaudhary said the British too "had described freedom fighters as terrorists". "Now their successors or those who had sided with them are terming those raising azadi slogans traitors," he said. Chaudhary said there was no need to get "perturbed" by such warnings. "Their (BJP's) countdown has started and that is why they are ranting," Chaudhary said.

The SP leader alleged that the chief minister was threatening

women against those hell bent on dividing the country. "Azadi is the birthright of all countrymen and those denying it will have to depart in the same manner as Hitler," the SP leader said. SP spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary too said the dissent against the CAA was being dubbed as treason by the chief minister, which was against the very essence of democracy. "The chief minister is threatening women who are demanding their rights," Chaudhary asserted. When asked about the chief minister's allegation that the SP was funding anti-CAA

protests, Chaudhary said, "This amounts to making a mockery of people's emotions." Protests are on in all the states, including north-eastern region. Are we distributing money in all states," Chaudhary wondered.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' said the chief minister was speaking "a language of dictators". "If raising voice against the government's oppression and politics of hatred is treason, the government should first arrest me," Lallu said, adding that since the protests

had rattled the government, it was accusing the Congress of sponsoring them. "If people are on agitation path over this issue, why is the government not addressing it," Lallu said. At a public meeting in Kanpur, the chief minister had said, "...I would like to say from the soil of India, and especially the soil of Uttar Pradesh, that in the name of protests, if azadi slogans are raised here like they used to be raised in Kashmir, then it will come in the category of sedition, and stringent action will be taken by the government."



Preparations in full swing for the Defence Expo to be held in Lucknow next month

Pioneer

Guv, CM to inaugurate UP Diwas today

Lucknow (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Governor Anandiben Patel will inaugurate UP Diwas at Awadh Shilp Gram on Friday. A senior government official said the celebrations will take place from January 24 to 26. He said a number of schemes will be launched and cultural programmes organised in the evening. UP Diwas commemorates the formation of UP on January 24.

The Chief Minister will inaugurate an exhibition based on the history of Republic Day. It has been curated by State Archives. Another exhibition will be 'Ram Ki Vishwa Yatra' by Ayodhya Shodh Sansthan. There will also be an exhibition on Mahabharata, a 100-foot canvas with water conservation and air pollution prepared by State Lalit Kala Akademi, an exhibition by Tourism department on Krishna Utsav, and Deepotsav & exhibitions by Information department and the other departments. In the evening the cultural programmes will showcase the folk of Uttar Pradesh and performance by stand-up comic Raju Srivastava. The closing ceremony will be held on January 26 and it will also be attended by CM Yogi Adityanath and Governor Anandiben Patel.

BJP govt has failed on all fronts: CPI

Lucknow (PNS): Communist Party of India (CPI) state secretary Girish said the Rashtriya Swyamsevaks Sangh-controlled Bharatiya Janata Party governments at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh had failed on all fronts and now they were trying to suppress the voices of dissent to cover up the failures.

Speaking at a function at party office here on the occasion of birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on Thursday, Girish said the police in UP were "torturing" the anti-CAA protesters and the government had given a green signal to them for it.

CPI (M), leader Heera Lal Yadav said the BJP was trying to destroy the Constitution, democracy and secular values of the country. "But we will not allow them to do so. Twenty parties have agreed to launch a 'Save Constitution, Save Secularism' campaign," he said. Yadav said on January 26 (Republic Day) and January 30 (the day Gandhi was martyred) the CPI (M) would administer oath to save the Constitution and secularism and the party workers would visit villages to make people aware of the faulty policies of the BJP governments at centre and in UP.

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, दक्षिणांचल कालोनी, गोविन्द नगर, कानपुर -208006 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित विवरण के अनुसार कार्य हेतु अनुमती व सक्षम निविदादाताओं द्वारा निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है, निविदा सम्बन्धी पूर्ण सूचना वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है। **क्र.सं. 1 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 78 / वि0वि0मं0का0 / 2019-20 विवरण** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर के अन्तर्गत कन्दोला रूम के संचालन हेतु 03 नग कुशल श्रमिक (कम्प्यूटर ऑपरेटर) की आपूर्ति का कार्य। **क्र.सं. 2 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 79 / वि0वि0मं0का0 / 2019-20 विवरण** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-द्वितीय, चौबेपुर के अन्तर्गत विद्युत उपखण्ड बिल्डर हेतु 11 केवी एवं 33 केवी केविल बाक्सों को बनाने का कार्य। **क्र.सं. 3 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 80 / वि0वि0मं0का0 / 2019-20 विवरण** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-द्वितीय, चौबेपुर के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड चौबेपुर हेतु 11 केवी एवं 33 केवी केविल बाक्सों को बनाने का कार्य। **क्र.सं. 4 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 81 / वि0वि0मं0का0 / 2019-20 विवरण** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-प्रथम, कानपुर के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड नर्वल हेतु 11 केवी एवं 33 केवी केविल बाक्सों को बनाने का कार्य। **क्र.सं. 5 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 82 / वि0वि0मं0का0 / 2019-20 विवरण** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-प्रथम, कानपुर के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड कानपुर हेतु 11 केवी एवं 33 केवी केविल बाक्सों को बनाने का कार्य। **क्र.सं. 6 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 83 / वि0वि0मं0का0 / 2019-20 विवरण** विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-तृतीय, घाटमपुर के अन्तर्गत 11 केवी एवं 33 केवी केविल बाक्सों को बनाने का कार्य। **अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल द.वि.वि.नि.लु. कानपुर-06** पत्रांक 4111 दिनांक 21.1.2020 राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाय।

SCHOOLSCAN

ANNUAL PARENTS' DAY City Montessori School, Rajendra Nagar Campus III, celebrated 'Annual Parents' Day' at Kanpur Road auditorium on Thursday. The programme began with the lighting of lamp. Students presented all-religion and world peace prayer, spreading the message of world peace and divine unity, followed by a series of educational-cultural items. The students showed a glimpse of unity in diversity, cooperation, collaboration and togetherness.

CITYBRIEFS

INDIAN FOOD EXPO
Brazil will be country partner for 'India Food Expo-2020' to be organised in Lucknow in November this year. An IIA member said that Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who will be the chief guest at Republic Day in Delhi, is leading a delegation of manufacturers, exporters, processors, and associations from the Brazilian meat and poultry and processed food sector to the national capital. "The primary aim of the delegation is to promote trade ties between India and Brazil in agriculture, food processing, meat and poultry sectors."

NETAJI'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY
Bondhu Mahal on Thursday celebrated the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as participants vowed to follow the path shown by the freedom fighter. Bondhu Mahal distributed blankets among the poor and planted saplings in remembrance of Bose. At a function held at Rajendra Singh Park in Indira Nagar (B-Block), floral tributes were paid to Bose after which speakers underscored the need for younger generations to get motivated by his bravery, courage and patriotic zeal. Former UP DGP AL Banerjee spoke about Bose's organisational and leadership skills. Local counsellor and BJP leader Dilip Srivastava was also present on the occasion.

ADMISSIONS OPEN
Shiv Nadar University announced admissions open for its MBA programme for the academic session commencing from July this year. The university also offers undergraduate and doctoral programmes in Management Studies. Applicants will have to fill in the online common application form available at the website (www.sme.snu.edu.in) by February 15.

Gangrape victim, husband attempt self-immolation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

An alleged gang-rape victim and her husband made self-immolation bid in front of Lok Bhawan here on Thursday. The couple said that they tried to end their lives as the Unnao police were not initiating action against the accused. The security force present at the spot rescued both but the husband received minor burn injuries and was admitted to SPM Hospital (Civil Hospital). Further investigations are on.

Additional Superintendent of Police in Unnao, Vinod Kumar Pandey, denied allegations of police inaction and claimed that a case had been registered and they were trying to record the statement of the victim woman before the magistrate under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

However, he said that the complainant and the accused had old an dispute and had lodged reports against each other several times earlier also. Pandey said that directions had been given to the investigating officer to take action according to evidences. According to reports, a woman hailing from Morawa locality of Unnao was working in the fields on January 9 last when three local goons came and held her husband at gunpoint. They later raped the

woman one by one and escaped after threatening the couple with dire consequences. The victim claimed that she handed over her complaint to the local police but they took no action. Upset with police inaction, the couple came to the state capital on Thursday and poured kerosene on themselves tried to set themselves ablaze in front of Lok Bhawan. The clothes of the woman's husband caught fire before the security personnel could rescue them.

Meanwhile, in another incident, a man identified as Lala Ram (35) of Pilibhit, along with his wife Kanti Devi, reached La Martiniere College crossing (close to lane leading to CM residence) and the couple attempted to immolate themselves. However, they were overpowered by police and taken to Gautampalli police station where they were quizzed. A police spokesman said Lala Ram is suffering from renal disease and doctors asked him to arrange huge sum for treatment. "The couple told us that they could not afford the medical expenses and took the step to highlight their sufferings," he said. He added that the police were finding out if the couple sought help from the district administration or the department concerned.

4 held for ATM cloning

Lucknow (PNS): A team of Special Task Force of UP Police arrested four persons from Gomti Nagar, for being involved in cloning ATM cards and withdrawing money from bank accounts on Thursday. The team recovered from those arrested a card reader, a scanner, 27 ATM cards, a laptop and other gadgets used for cloning cards. They were identified as Mohammed Waseem, Aziz Ahmad, Anand Bahadur Singh alias Sohan Singh and Sanjay Yadav. The cyber crime cell is conducting a detailed probe into the matter.

An STF official said that the accused used to trick people into handing their ATM cards to them, retrieve security codes and then empty their bank accounts after cloning cards.

The accused told the STF sleuths that they used to target crowded ATM kiosks. Meanwhile, body of an unidentified man was recovered from Sharda Canal in Chinhat on Thursday. Police said the body appeared to be over ten-day-old. As per reports, a local resident, Amit Kumar, spotted the body in the canal and alerted the police. A team led by sub-inspector DB Singh was sent to the place. He said the deceased was aged around 35 years. "He was completely dressed. Prima facie, there were no injury marks detected on the body. We have sent details to police stations of neighbouring districts. We are also collecting details regarding persons reported missing in the past few days," he said.

The accused told the STF sleuths that they used to target crowded ATM kiosks. Meanwhile, body of an unidentified man was recovered from Sharda Canal in Chinhat on Thursday. Police said the body appeared to be over ten-day-old. As per reports, a local resident, Amit Kumar, spotted the body in the canal and alerted the police. A team led by sub-inspector DB Singh was sent to the place. He said the deceased was aged around 35 years. "He was completely dressed. Prima facie, there were no injury marks detected on the body. We have sent details to police stations of neighbouring districts. We are also collecting details regarding persons reported missing in the past few days," he said.

जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, जोन-4 गोमती नगर, लखनऊ		दि 22.01.2020
पत्रांक सं.-1062/LJS/EE-4	अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना	
जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम लखनऊ में कार्यरत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु मुहरबन्द निविदायें दिनांक 30.01.2020 के सायंकाल 3:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र किसी भी कार्य दिवस में दिनांक 30.01.2020 को 2:00 बजे तक निविदा मूल्य का नगद भुगतान केश काउन्टर पर प्राप्त करके प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। भरी हुई सील्ड निविदाएं उसी दिन अधोहस्ताक्षर के कार्यालय में सायंकाल 3:00 बजे तक निविदा बाक्स में प्राप्त की जायेगी। निविदा बाक्स से प्राप्त सभी निविदायें उपस्थित निविदादाताओं के समक्ष सायंकाल 4:00 बजे खोली जायेंगी।		
क्र. सं.	कार्य का विवरण	निविदा का मूल्य
1	गोमती नगर जोन-4 के अन्तर्गत तृतीय जलकल कटौता के क्लियर वाटर पम्पिंग स्टेशन पर लगे 750 के0वी0ए0 के डी0जी0 सेट नं 0 1 की सर्विसिंग का कार्य कराने हेतु।	500.00
2	गोमती नगर जोन-4 के अन्तर्गत तृतीय जलकल कटौता के क्लियर वाटर पम्पिंग स्टेशन पर लगे 750 के0वी0ए0 के डी0जी0 सेट नं 0 2 की सर्विसिंग का कार्य कराने हेतु।	500.00
3	गोमती नगर जोन-4 के अन्तर्गत तृतीय जलकल कटौता के क्लियर वाटर पम्पिंग स्टेशन पर स्थापित 750 के0वी0ए0 के डी0जी0 सेट नं 0 1 की ए0वी0आर0 व पावर कमाण्ड कार्ड व साथ ही माइक्रोप्रोसेसर बेस्ड स्टार्टर पैनल को ठीक कराने हेतु।	500.00
4	गोमती नगर जोन-4 के अन्तर्गत तृतीय जलकल कटौता के क्लियर वाटर पम्पिंग स्टेशन पर स्थापित 750 के0वी0ए0 के डी0जी0 सेट नं 0 1 डी0जी0 सेट के स्टैटर की रिवाइडिंग, स्टैगिंग व स्टैगिंग कार्य कराने हेतु।	500.00
5	गोमती नगर जोन-4 के अन्तर्गत तृतीय जलकल कटौता के क्लियर वाटर पम्पिंग स्टेशन पर स्थापित 750 के0वी0ए0 के डी0जी0 सेट नं 0 1 मेन रोटर, एक्चुवेटर, इन्साइटर, क्वाइल इत्यादि ठीक कराने हेतु।	500.00
नियम एवं शर्तें निविदा प्रपत्र में दी गई हैं, जिन्हें देखा जा सकता है। विस्तृत जानकारी अधिशासी अभियन्ता जोन-4 के कार्यालय में सम्पर्क कर किसी भी कार्य दिवस में प्राप्त की जा सकती है। उसके साथ निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य का बैंक ड्राफ्ट संलग्न कर प्रेषित किया जा सकता है।		
अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-4 जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम		

RaGa to address rallies, first in Jaipur on January 28

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will hold public rallies and meetings across the country starting with Jaipur on January 28 to highlight the country's "economic problems" including rising unemployment.

A Congress office bearer said Rahul's address in Jaipur will focus on the youth and students who are facing problems because of lack of jobs and rising unemployment due to the prevailing economic situation in the country. The public rally comes ahead of the Union budget scheduled to be presented on February 1.

Party sources said the former Congress chief also intends to address a rally in Madhya Pradesh, where he will focus on issues confronting the farmers, tribals and rural workers. Further, he is likely to address a meeting of small and medi-



um industrialists, traders and professionals at Mumbai, the party leaders said. Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi is likely to join her brother Rahul in any one of them to address the rally.

There are other places being worked out for similar rally focusing particular segments. "The Jaipur rally will give a message in the country and will attract attention of Centre on the burning issues of country," said the party sources

pointing the success of Bharat Bachao Rally held last month which saw a huge turnout.

A senior Congress leader alleged the Modi Government was not taking any concrete step on the issues of public interest and the economy, but was busy "diverting" public attention by bringing laws which are unnecessary.

"For the first time, protests are happening in different parts of the country against a law passed by the Parliament.

P Chidambaram attacks Modi Govt over Democracy Index

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday targeted Modi Government over India slipping 10 ranks on the Democracy Index, saying democracy has been eroded and democratic institutions debilitated under the 'tukde tukde gang' in power, and this should alarm every Indian.

Senior party leader P Chidambaram said, "Anyone who has closely observed the events of the last two years knows that democracy has been eroded and democratic institutions have been debilitated those who are in power are the real 'tukde tukde' gang."

"The world is alarmed by the direction INDIA is taking. Every patriotic INDIAN should be alarmed too," he said

on Twitter.

For his part, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said it is natural that every proud Indian will deeply feel hurt and pained on finding that India has slipped 10 ranks from 41 to 51 on the Democracy Index which is computed by a well-known renowned and a very objectively known entity.

The index for India should be rising as it is one of those few countries who have solid democracy, he said, adding that it is the first time since 2006 when it has declined to this figure.

"This is a red-flag which should remind us every minute of our existence that Diminishing Democracy is what we have to be eternally vigilant against. This is our proud heritage, it is our proudest

possession.

We can't allow it to dilute or diminish even by one millimetre," he told reporters. Singhvi said democracy has been vibrant, alive and kicking in a big measure only in India, unlike in several other colonial countries.

He said that one parameter was of fear. "Is there not fear palpable in this country? Whether within the ruling party or outside it, whether it is because of misuse of government's power and agencies or of snooping and surveillance. I don't think

we need a thermometer to measure that. We all understand and we all know it. Well, that diminishes democracy. This DD factor is what we are talking about - Diminishing Democracy," he said.

INSHORT

KERALA FAILS TO PROVIDE UTILISATION CERTIFICATES

New Delhi: The Kerala Govt has failed to provide utilisation certificates for at least half of the over ₹3,000 crore given to it a year ago as relief for the 2018 floods that claimed around 488 lives and caused major devastation, officials said on Thursday. The State Govt has sought ₹2,000 crore more from Centre for flood damages in 2019, despite its inability to show spending in reconstruction works after 2018 deluge, they said.

NEW ARMY VICE CHIEF TO TAKE OVER ON JAN 25

New Delhi: Lt Gen YK Joshi has been appointed as the new Northern Army Commander while Lt Gen CP Mohanty has been appointed as the next Southern Army Commander where he would replace Lt Gen SK Saini. Saini is taking over as Vice Chief of Army Staff on January 25. Joshi will replace Lt Gen Ranbir Singh who is superannuating on January 31.

Delays in projects are unacceptable: Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday asked officials and developers to strictly adhere to project schedules. "Delays in projects are unacceptable. Adhere strictly to project schedules," Gadkari told officials and developers on the first day of two days review meeting of projects worth ₹3-lakh crore.

Gadkari told that any inter-Ministerial issue holding up a project may be brought to the notice of the Ministry for intervention to expedite resolution. Projects from southern and central zones, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry, Telangana, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, were on review on Thursday.

A total of 500 highway projects worth ₹3 lakh crore are being taken up for review on Thursday and Fri with a view to fast-track them. All devel-

opers, contractors and officers of NHAI are linked to portal and it will help sharing of all project-related information for speedy implementation.

The projects from north-eastern States, Maha, Uttarakhand, Punjab, J&K, Ladakh, Haryana, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal and UP will be reviewed Friday. Issues related to projects in north-eastern States and under National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd have already been reviewed in a separate meeting held on Jan 7.

Gadkari, along with Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways VK Singh, launched online web portal 'GATT', which has been created by the National Highways Authority of India on the lines of PRAGATI.

An official said "Gadkari will also personally monitor the projects". The portal 'GATT' can be accessed from NHAI's website, and contractors and concessionaires can raise any pro-

ject-related issues on the platform, according to a statement by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

"The issue will immediately come to the notice of everyone...HQ NHAI including top management, and immediate action will be taken by the concerned officer duly updating on the portal," it said.

The issues raised on 'GATT' will be daily monitored by a team of NHAI officers and will be constantly reviewed by the senior officers of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the statement said. This will bring transparency and speed up the decision making in highway construction, it added.

During the meeting the new union territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu has been assigned new vehicle registration mark 'DD' under the headquarters of the merged union territories of Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

CBI conducts searches in Radical Foods Ltd case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After registering a case against city-based Radical Foods Ltd and its directors for allegedly duping a consortium of 10 banks led by SBI to the tune of ₹820 crore, the CBI on Thursday conducted searches at the residence of the accused persons.

The agency claimed to have recovered incriminating documents after the searches. The agency has booked the accused persons and the entity under Indian Penal Code charges relating to criminal conspiracy, cheating.

Forgery of documents and presenting forged documents as genuine besides relevant provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act on a complaint from State Bank of India (SBI), leading the consortium of banks.

"It was alleged that the said company availed credit facilities to the tune of ₹732 crore (approximately) and cheated the complainant bank and other consortium banks by

way of forgery and using forged documents as genuine," the CBI said in a statement.

An alleged loss of ₹819.48 crore as on April 1, 2018 was caused to the banks. The consortium banks consisted of 10 banks-State Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Exim Bank, Bank of India, IDBI

Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, CSB Bank, Vijaya Bank (now Bank of Baroda) and UCO Bank.

The accused entities and persons include Delhi-based Radical Foods Limited, Directors of the accused firm Siddharth Chaudhary and Anju Chaudhary besides unknown public servants.

CBI takes over killing of Rama Lengaw Natesan in UAE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has taken over the probe into the killing of a man named Rama Lengaw Natesan in the United Arab Emirates allegedly by a fellow Indian over some money dispute in 2008.

The case has been taken over after a request from the UAE Government under the extradition treaty between the two countries. Article 5 of the

treaty prohibits extradition of own nationals by requested state, subject to the condition that the requested state shall prosecute the accused under its own law.

In accordance with the provision, the UAE Government had written to India on October last year seeking prosecution of Indre Jeet Singh, who is accused of killing Natesan in 2008 in that country.

CORONA VIRUS

Over 100 Indian nurses tested; one infected

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of State for External Affairs, V Muraleedharan on Wednesday said that about 100 Indian nurses mostly from Kerala who are working at Al-Hayat hospital in Saudi Arabia have been tested for Corona virus, which has killed at least 17 people in China and none except one was found to be infected with the pathogen.

He tweeted that the affected nurse is being treated at Aseer National Hospital and is recovering well. The virus has killed at least 17 people and infected over 570 people in China. The virus has also spread to other countries, including South Korea, Japan, Thailand etc.

A senior Union Health

Affected nurse is being treated at Aseer National Hospital

Ministry said that Indian Mission in China is in touch with Indians in Wuhan and relevant Chinese authorities. "We are closely monitoring the evolving situation. We have also started hotlines (+8618612083629/+8618612083617) for those who wish to get in touch with the Mission.

As on 22nd January, 2020, 12,828 passengers from 60 flights have been screened for Novel Coronavirus symptoms, and no passenger has been detected in India so far, said the official.

Shah-led GoM to look after disposal of over 9.4K enemy properties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Group of Ministers (GoM), headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, will monitor the disposal of over 9,400 enemy properties, which are likely to fetch about ₹1 lakh crore to the exchequer.

According to an official order, two other high-level committees, one to be headed by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba and other to be co-chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, will also be set up for disposal of immovable enemy properties vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property for India under the Enemy Property Act.

Enemy properties were those left behind by the people who took citizenship of Pakistan and China. The order said an Inter-Ministerial Group will be constituted for the disposal of enemy properties and it will be co-chaired by the Union Home

Secretary and the Secretary of the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management. Representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs, dept of economic affairs, dept of expenditure, dept of public enterprises, dept of legal affairs, ministry of corporate affairs among others will be members of the inter-ministerial group.

The order sai central Govt may constitute an alternative mechanism comprising Home Minister Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari. There are 9,280 properties left behind by Pakistani nationals and 126 properties left behind by Chinese nationals.

Among the 9,280 properties left behind by Pakistani nationals, the highest 4,991 properties are located in UP followed by West Bengal which has 2,735 such estates. There are 487 such properties in Delhi.

Former IPS KM Singh to be awarded Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre in Uttarakhand and former IPS officer KM Singh have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their commendable work in disaster management, the Home Ministry announced on Thursday.

While the Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre (DMMC) in Uttarakhand, an organisation working in the field of natural calamity relief, has been selected in the institution category and will be given a certificate and a cash prize of ₹51 lakh, Singh, who has been working in the same area, has been selected for the individual category and will be given ₹5 lakh along with a certificate.

The award is given in order to recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in the country in the field of disaster management, according to a Home Ministry

Award is given in order to recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in the field of disaster management

statement.

The award is announced every year on January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

The award scheme for the year 2020 was given wide publicity, and nominations for the award were solicited from August 1 last year onwards. The last date for receipt of nominations was October 15, 2019. The response to the award scheme was overwhelming, with about 330 nominations from institutions and individuals. For the selection of award, the nominations were scrutinised by the two high-level committees.

The DMMC in

Uttarakhand discharges the functions of the State Disaster Management Authority under the Government of Uttarakhand. Since its establishment in 2006, it has coordinated various post-disaster functions relating to coordination, requisition, information exchange and media briefing, including those after 2010, 2012 and 2013 major disaster incidents.

M K Singh was appointed founder member of the NDMA in 2005, following his commendable work during 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. In the NDMA, Singh envisioned and had taken painstaking efforts to establish, one of its kind specialist response force, the 'National Disaster Response Force' from scratch to today's strong force of 14,000 personnel comprising of 12 battalions.

Under the superintendence and directions of Singh, the NDRF delivered commendable response in its nascent phase itself during the devastating 2008 Kosi floods, the statement said.

Brazilian envoy: CAA, Kashmir internal issues of India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The amended citizenship law and the situation in Kashmir are internal issues of India and the country with its dynamic democracy will find solutions to these "challenges", Brazilian envoy Andre Aranha Correa do Lago said on Thursday. The envoy told PTI in an interview that his country was following developments on the two issues "with great interest".

His comments on the two issues comes a day ahead of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's maiden visit to India after he assumed power in January last year following a sweeping electoral victory.

Lago said over 15 agreements will be signed during the Brazilian president's visit, including one on the investment protection and facilitation treaty.

"These (Citizenship (Amendment) Act and

Kashmir situation) are two internal issues of India that obviously we are following with great interest.

Naturally, in the conversations probably the Indian government will bring elements about this but we see this very clearly as internal questions of India," he said.

"India being such a dynamic democracy with such fantastic institutions and civil society, we know that with this a very open society, you will discuss and you (will) go ahead with solutions for these challenges," the Brazilian envoy said.

His remarks comes days after envoys of 15 countries, including the US, visited the Kashmir valley where they interacted with select political representatives, civil society members as well as military top brass.

Brazilian envoy Lago was also scheduled to visit Jammu and Kashmir, however, he had backed out because of his pre-

occupation here.

Brazilian President Bolsonaro will on Friday begin a four-day visit to India, primarily as the chief guest on Republic Day and also to explore ways to boost trade ties at a time both the large economies are hit by slowdowns.

On whether the slowdown of the Indian economy was a matter of concern, the Brazilian envoy said it was not as India will probably grow at above five per cent.

"We are struggling to grow at 2 per cent. We are the country that has been facing more difficult times.

We had two years of recession and two years of very low growth, but we have a very good perspective of growing above 2 per cent this year," Lago asserted.

"So, it is not a question of concern, it has to be interpreted as an opportunity because India wants to grow," he said.

PM Modi to pay homage at National War Memorial this R-Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Breaking away from tradition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay homage to fallen soldiers at the newly-built National War Memorial here on the Republic Day instead of Amar Jawan Jyoti beneath the India Gate arch. Modi had inaugurated the War Memorial in the India Gate complex behind the canopy 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 India-Pakistan war of 1971. The three Services



chiefs pay respect on occasions of national importance at the Amar Jawan Jyoti.

Before commencement of the Republic Day parade this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the nation in paying homage to the fallen soldiers by laying a wreath at

the National War Memorial, the flame of the immortal warrior, at India Gate, Major General Alok Kacker, Chief of Staff Delhi Area said here on Thursday in an interaction with the media.

This will also be the first time, Chief of the Defence

Staff (CDS) will take part in the Republic Day celebrations. Former Army chief General Bipin Rawat on January 1 had taken charge as the country's first CDS.

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 India-China War in 1962, Indo-Pak Wars in 1947, 1965 and 1971, Indian Peace Keeping Force Operations (IPKF) 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.

Over 80,000 Indian laid their lives in those campaigns and India Gate bears names of 13,516 etched over its surface. Amar Jawan Jyoti was built to commemorate India's

victory in the Indo-Pak War of 1971. So, both flames will have their own importance, officials had said ahead of the inauguration of the National War Memorial.

Meanwhile, 16 marching contingents this year including six from the Army and 22 tableaux from various states and departments will take part in the Republic Day parade at Rajpath, Kacker said. The Army will be represented by a Mounted Column of 61 Cavalry, eight mechanised columns, six marching contingents and a fly past by Rudra and Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters of Army Aviation, he added. The Army's Signal Corps contingent will be led by woman officer Captain Tanya Shergill.

Hymn 'Abide with me' back on list of Beating Retreat tunes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The traditional Christian hymn 'Abide with me', a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi is back on the list of tunes for this year's Beating the Retreat ceremony at Vijay Chowk here on January 29. The tune was part of the annual ceremony every year since 1950. Beating the Retreat is performed every year marking the end of the Republic Day celebrations.

Two weeks back the Defence Ministry had

dropped 'Abide with me' from the tunes to be played this year which officials said was part of an "annual review to introduce new tunes." However, the move drew sharp criticism from various quarters as the ceremony this year was end with the national song Vande Matram instead of 'Abide with me'.

There are about 30-35 tunes played at the ceremony every year some of which are changed but 'Abide with me' has always been there. "

Deport all illegal Pak, B'desh immigrants: Raj Thackeray

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray said here on Thursday that more than the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Citizens Register (NRC) which would happen in due course, the Centre's top priority should be to 'deport' all illegal Muslim immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh to their respective countries and his party would extend its full support to the Modi Government in this task.

Addressing his party workers at a State MNSO convention held at the NESCO grounds at Goregaon in north Mumbai, Raj said: "Like other countries, India should also become very strict in enforcing immigration laws. We may be in inconvenient a bit, but it is okay. Mind you, our country is sitting on a volcano or live bombs. We have no idea what

will happen when. Things like CAA and NRC will happen. But, the Centre's top priority should be to throw out illegal Muslim immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh. For the purpose, I will extend my full support to the Union Government."

Raj said that he had received some "explosive information" which he would pass onto Union Home Minister Amit Shah and state chief minister Uddhav Thackeray.

"I do not know about other states. But, there are some places in Maharashtra moulvis from different govt. We do not know what they do there. We do not get know anything there because even the police are not allowed inside these places. The hunch of the police officials is that a big conspiracy is being hatched at these places. I do not want to talk about it here. I will meet them and pass on the information to the Union Home Minister and

state chief minister," Raj said.

The MNS chief announced that his party would take out a massive march to the Azad Maidan on February 9 to demand immediate deportation of illegal Muslim immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh to their respective countries.

Extending his indirect support to CAA and NRC, Raj said: "There can be a debate on CAA and NRC. ... But, suddenly there are so many morchas against CAA and NRC. Thousands of Muslims have come on the streets. Some people told me that the Muslims are venting out their pent up anger against the revocation of Article 370 in Kashmir and the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram Janmabhoomi. I would like to know as to how many Indian Muslims participated in these morchas and how many are from outside. If so many Muslims from outside are participating in

these morchas, why should we support these morchas?" Alluding to the speculation that his party was changing his party's ideology, Raj indirectly hinted at the possibility of his party getting closer to Hindutva ideology. said: "I am both Marathi and Hindu. I have not changed my religion. If some people try to undermine Marathi, I will go after them. Similarly, if someone tries to undermine Hindu religion, he would not retaliate."

Raj said that he would support all the honest Muslims in the country. "Muslims like late President Abdul Kalam, former test cricketer Zahir Khan and lyricist Javed Akhtar are ours. I am not opposed to Muslims practising their religion quietly. But, why do the Muslims need to use loudspeakers at Masjids while offering Namaz. When we Hindus do not disturb you through our aaratis, why there should be a disturbance to us

because namaz. Please offer namaz but why do you need loudspeakers for that?," the MNS chief asked.

The MNS chief took an indirect pot shot at Shiv Sena by saying: "I am not the one who change my colours to be a part of a government? (in reference to the Sena joining hands with the NCP and Congress to form a government in the state). I am the same that I was. My opinions have not changed. I am not the one who changes my colour and becomes a part of a government."

"I am not the one to criticise someone for the sake of mere criticism. I had criticised Prime Minister Narendra whenever necessary. There have also been occasions when I have congratulated him on the issues like abrogation of Article 370 from the Constitution and Supreme Court verdict on the Ram Mandir issue," the MNS chief said.

PM fulfilling 'anti-Muslim agenda' of Jana Sangh, Mahasabha: Gowda

Bengaluru: JD(S) patriarch HD Deve Gowda on Thursday called on secular regional parties and Congress to fight against the "divisive policies" of the Central Government like the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens with a Common Minimum Programme.

The former Prime Minister also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of fulfilling the "long standing anti-Muslim agenda" of Jana Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha, and leading the country to the margins of danger.

Gowda said that during these trying times, regional parties and the Congress still believing in secular principles have to fight with a CMP "to

avert the disaster that may explode anytime."

It was a matter left for bigger leaders to decide, but the JD(S), being a small party, should be ready to fight these acts at any level and be ready to go to jail if such a situation arose, he said, addressing a JD(S) convention here.

Alleging that attempts were being made to treat Muslims as second grade citizens of the country, he accused Modi of "fulfilling the nearly 70-year-old anti-Muslim agenda" of the Jana Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha, after his party won over 300 seats in the Lok Sabha in the 2019 parliamentary polls.

Pointing to nationwide agitations, he said "this govern-

ment has led the country to the margins of danger."

Noting that Congress and JD(S) as "secular parties", had formed a coalition Government in Karnataka that eventually collapsed, the regional party's national President said he would not discuss who was right or wrong and reasons for the Government to fall. "But somewhere we have stumbled," he said. "How the BJP Government was formed in Karnataka, how long will it survive, where did we stumble...Let's not discuss about it.

Let's concentrate on strengthening our organisation...Be prepared for everything. Only then will the party survive," he added. **PTI**

इलाहाबाद बँक ALLAHABAD BANK
A tradition of trust

ZONAL OFFICE: LUCKNOW, 2nd Floor, New Building Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001

PREMISES REQUIRED
Allahabad Bank Zonal Office, Lucknow invites offers for engagement of premises preferably ground floor having frontage more than 20 ft on rent in following locality for shifting of its branch
1. Aishbagh, Lucknow - Area-1800 Sq.ft. - (Carpet Area)
(Near Naka Chauraha to DAV College & Gurudwara)

The application form & other details in the matter may be obtained from Bank's, Zonal Office, 2nd Floor, New Building Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001 or can be downloaded from Bank's, website at www.allahabadbank.in.

Fully filled up application in prescribed format along with required information & documents are to be submitted in sealed envelope as detailed in website "AD" at Zonal Office, latest by 3.00 P.M. on 10.02.2020
Date: 23.01.2020

Zonal Head

लखनऊ नगर निगम
खिलौवाली मार्ग, लखनऊ, लखनऊ टेली-केंद्र: 0522-2622440 ई-मेल nko@ulp.nic.in

ई-निविदा न्यून: 186 न्यून, 2019-20 तिथि: 23.01.2020

ई-निविदा प्रणाली के अन्तर्गत निविदा सूचना

ई-निविदा प्रणाली के अन्तर्गत दिनांक 06.02.2020 को कुल 02 कार्य हेतु इलिकॉन्फरेंस प्रणाली पर ई-निविदा पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है, पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर निविदा के साथ जमानत धनराशि FDR/NSC/TDR एवं निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य को धनराशि RTGS/NEFT द्वारा नगर निगम के ई-निविदा के एक्सिस बैंक इन्टरनेट लखनऊ के खाता संख्या 913020000308994 IFSC कोड UTIB0000355 की प्रतिलिपि अपलोड की जाती है, इलाही ग्रीब निविदा का पोर्टल से प्रिंट करा कर मूल FDR/NSC/TDR प्रिन्टआउट के साथ संलग्न कर दिनांक 06.02.2020 तक जमा की जा सकनी तथा ई-निविदा दिनांक 06.02.2020 को अपराह्न 3.00 बजे तक ई-निविदा पोर्टल पर प्राप्ति को स्वीकार एवं अस्वीकार करने का अधिकार सख्त अधिकारी में निहित होगा। अन्य समस्त नियम/शर्तें तथा कार्य का नाम, आगमन धनराशि, निविदा प्रपत्र की धनराशि एवं जमानत धनराशि तथा निविदा प्रपत्र पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध हैं।

मुख्य अधिकारी

Office of the Principal B.R.D. Medical College, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh
Ph. & Fax No. 0551-2501736, Website: brdmc.ac.in
Email Id: brdmcgkp1969@gmail.com

Tender Notice No. 145/SPS/20/250 Lac Dated: 16 January, 2020

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

On behalf of Govt. of Uttar Pradesh E-tender is re-invited from the "high quality manufacturing firms (Indians/Foreign) or their reputed Indian distributors, in two parts (Technical Bid and Financial Bid) for the supply and installation of the following equipments/items for the different department of B.R.D. Medical College, Gorakhpur as per tender terms and condition.

S. No.	Equipment Name	NAME OF DEPT.	Qty	Earnest money	Cost of Tender	Last date of bid submission	Date of technical bid opening
1	Bipap Machine (3rd Time)	Medicine	04 No.	24,000	Rs. 1180.00	01.02.2020	03.02.2020
2	CR System (2nd Time)	Radiology	01 No.	32,000	Rs. 1180.00	10/02/2020	11/02/2020

After publication of E-Tender Notice in News Paper the detailed advertisement and Tender document can be downloaded from www.etender.up.nic.in from 25.01.2020 at 12.00 PM. E-Tender should be submitted online at the 'etender.up.nic.in' portal only. Number of quantity may be increased or decreased.

The Principal reserves right to cancel or reject in full or in part of all e-tenders received without assigning any reason in lieu thereof.

UP-147958 Date 22.01.2020 डिजिटल वेबसाइट www.upgovt.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

Principal

पावरग्रिड POWERGRID

Approval under regulation-86 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations 1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations 2019 for i) Revision of Transmission Tariff for 2001-04 tariff block, 2004-09 tariff block, 2009-14 tariff block, ii) Truing up of Transmission tariff for 2014-19 tariff block and iii) Determination of Transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff block for **Petition No. 1:** system associated with Combined Asset - Asset-I: L.L.O of 400kV Rishikesh-Muzaffarnagar Transmission line at Roorkee along with associated bays at Roorkee Sub-Station (DOCO 01.04.2009), Asset-II: 315 MVA 400/220kV ICT-I along with associated bays at Roorkee Sub-Station (DOCO 01.04.2009) and Asset-III: 315 MVA 400/220kV ICT-II along with associated bays at Roorkee Sub-Station (DOCO 01.04.2010) associated with System Strengthening Scheme in Roorkee in Northern Region **Petition No. 2:** Combined Assets consisting of Asset-I: 400kV D/C Twin Conductor Kanpur-Ballabgarh Transmission Line alongwith its Associated Bays (DOCO 01.11.2010), Asset-II: 40% FSC at Ballabgarh on 400kV D/C Kanpur-Ballabgarh Transmission Line (DOCO 01.07.2011) for Transmission System Associated Northern Region System Strengthening Scheme-IX in Northern Region.

1. The beneficiaries for Combined Assets of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (1) Rajasthan Rajya Viduyt Prasaran Nigam Limited, (2) Ajmer Viduyt Vitran Nigam Ltd. (3) Jaipur Viduyt Vitran Nigam Ltd. (4) Jodhpur Viduyt Vitran Nigam Ltd. (5) Punjab State Electricity Board, (6) Haryana Power Purchase Centre (7) Power Development Deptt., Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir, (8) Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (9) Delhi Transco Ltd. (10) BSES Yamuna Power Ltd. (11) BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd. (12) North Delhi Power Ltd. (13) Chandigarh Administration, (14) Uttaranchal Power Corporation Ltd. (15) North Central Railway (16) New Delhi Municipal council. (17) Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board.

2. Tariff details: a) 2009-14 Block (₹ in Lakhs)

Petition No.	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12 (Pro-rata)	2012-13	2013-14
Petition No. 1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Petition No. 2	0.00	0.00	5278.93	7053.09	7049.08

b) 2014-19 Block

Petition No.	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Petition No. 1	1993.44	1991.86	1963.21	1935.40	1909.76
Petition No. 2	6874.49	6754.60	6620.00	6453.25	6293.09

c) 2019-24 Block

Petition No.	Notional DOCO	Tariff for 2019-24 block				
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Petition No. 1	01.09.2009	1478.18	1428.55	1201.72	1189.50	1177.93
Petition No. 2	01.07.2011	5738.79	5568.86	5399.39	5230.67	5062.75

4. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at www.powergridindia.com.

5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3rd & 4th floor, Chandrakol Building, Janpath, New Delhi - 110 001 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place: Gurgaon Sd/-
Date: 17.01.2020 Senior General Manager (Commercial)

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Corp. Office: "Saudamini", Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram-122001, (Haryana), Tel:-0124-2571700-719
Reg. Office: B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110016, Tel:-011-26560112, 26560121
www.powergridindia.com, CIN: L40101DL1989GOI038121

A Maharatna PSU

Davinder case: NIA raids many Srinagar locations

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency, probing the case of arrested Jammu & Kashmir Police DSP Davinder Singh, on Thursday carried out searches at multiple locations in Srinagar.

The searched locations include one residence of Dr Murtaza at Gulshan Nagar area in Srinagar where Singh allegedly used to provide shelter to the terrorists including Naveed Babu of Hizbul Mujahideen.

Preliminary probe has revealed that Singh not only used his residence at Indiranagar but also houses at Chanpora and Sanat Nagar for providing shelter to the terrorists who were facilitated by the disgraced police officer. Besides owing a house each in Indiranagar and Sanatnagar, Singh also had a home in Jammu which are suspected to have been built from the "proceeds of crime" of

Six serving senior police officers are under the scanner of the probe agencies for their suspected collusion with Singh

facilitating the terrorists' movement in and out of the Valley.

A five-member NIA team is stationed in Srinagar for further probe even as senior supervisory officials have returned to the national Capital.

Background checks of Singh by the federal probe agency has revealed that in 1997 he was accused in a theft of a Amul butter van owned by the family members of a former Deputy CM.

However, he was said to have been taken off the hook at the behest of his then boss and SSP despite an FIR being registered in connection with the incident, sources said. In 1992, Singh had allegedly sold the drugs seized from smugglers and the police department had suspended him and recommended his

dismissal from service. However, an Inspector General of the Jammu & Kashmir police had saved him from adverse departmental action, sources said.

They said about six serving senior police officers are under the scanner of the probe agencies for their suspected collusion with Singh.

Meanwhile, the NIA on Thursday produced Singh before a designated court in Jammu that granted his 15-day NIA custody along with four other accused in the case.

"Today, five arrested accused namely Davinder Singh, Syed Naveed Mushtaq Shah, Irfan Shafi Mir, Rafi Ahmad Rather and Syed Irfan Ahmad in case RC-1/2020/NIA/Jammu, were produced before the NIA Special Court, Jammu. The Court has granted 15 days' custody of the accused to NIA till February 6, 2020," the NIA said in a statement. All the five accused will be subjected to custodial interrogation by the NIA.

Kashmiri leaders seek release of political detainees on R-Day

Jammu: Two prominent Kashmiri leaders on Thursday advocated the release of all political detainees, including three former Chief Ministers, as a goodwill gesture on the Republic Day.

Ghulam Hassan Mir and Mohammad Dilawar Mir, both former ministers, also demanded the restoration of broadband services to mediapersons and traders besides compensation to those involved in the agriculture and horticulture sectors.

"The country is celebrating the Republic Day (January 26) and the tradition has been the release of some detainees. Even some convicted persons used to get relief in the country on the occasion," they said.

"People are in preventive detention and it would be good if all of them, including the former chief ministers, are released as a goodwill gesture," Hassan, who is the president of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Party Nationalist, told reporters here.

He said some of the people, who are lodged in jails outside the Union Territory, should be brought back if their detention is imperative on security reasons.

The duo, who was part of a group of former ministers and legislators led by Altaf Bukhari who met the Lt Governor G C Murmu early this month, also called for the restoration of broadband services to mediapersons and businessmen.

"At a time when the country is celebrating the Republic Day, the people of Jammu and Kashmir should be freed from the curb. We want to live a normal life," Hassan said. Referring to their meeting with the Lt Governor on January 7, Hassan said the delegation submitted a memorandum on socio-political and economic interests of people.

"After our meeting, we noticed some positive headway on some of our demands like the release of some political leaders and the youth lodged in

outside jails," he said.

"The restoration of the Internet is the demand from both regions of Kashmir and Jammu and it should be made fully functional," he said, adding reports of the restoration of the facility in Kashmir is not a reality.

The leaders also asked the Union government to tell the positives that have emerged following the scrapping of the special status of J-K in August last year.

In response to a question on the week-long public outreach programme by the BJP, he said, "We should not feel obsessed with it. If they have come on a visit, it is good and they will themselves see the ground situation. The question will be raised what they have done after their visit."

On the possibility of assembly elections, he said it is premature to talk about it at the moment because the assembly seats have to be increased in accordance with the reorganisation act. **PTI**

Army chief visits forward posts along LoC

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane on Thursday visited forward areas along the Line of Control in Jammu region to review the prevailing security situation with field commanders on ground zero. Army Chief was briefed and updated by Lt Gen Harsha Gupta, General Officer Commanding, White Knight Corps and commanders on ground.

Before heading for the field visit, Army Chief was briefed by Lt Gen Ranbir Singh, Army Commander Northern

Command on the prevailing situation along the Line of Control and also in the hinterland at Udhampur based Northern command headquarters.

Ministry of Defence PRO in Udhampur, in a press statement said, "The Army Chief was appreciative of the efforts put in by Northern Command to meet the challenges posed by inimical elements.

Defence PRO said, during his visit to the forward location Army Chief also interacted with the soldiers and lauded them for their unwavering dedication to duty, selfless devotion and high standard of professionalism. "The need to remain prepared

for all contingencies was also reinforced by COAS during his interaction with the troops", Defence PRO said.

Army Chief also commended the standard operating procedures institutionalized to ensure safe-secure environment and mission readiness of the troops. He conveyed his satisfaction on the people friendly measures undertaken in quick time frame.

In the evening, Army Chief Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane along with Lt-Gen Ranbir Singh called on Girish Chandra Murmu, Lieutenant Governor, J&K and discussed prevailing security situation.

केन्द्रीय माध्यमिक शिक्षा बोर्ड
CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

CENTRAL TEACHER ELIGIBILITY TEST NOTICE

The Central Board of Secondary Education will conduct the 14th edition of Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) on 05-07-2020 (Sunday). The test will be conducted in 20 (Twenty) languages in 112 cities all over the country. The detailed Information Bulletin containing details of examination, syllabus, languages, eligibility criteria, examination fee, examination cities and important dates is available on CTET official website www.ctet.nic.in w.e.f. 24-01-2020 and the aspiring candidates are requested to download the Information Bulletin from the above mentioned website only and read the same carefully before applying. The aspiring candidates have to apply online only through CTET website i.e. www.ctet.nic.in. The online application process will start from 24.01.2020 and the last date for submitting online application will be 24.02.2020. The fee can be paid upto 27.02.2020 till 03.30 PM.

The application fee applicable for CTET July 2020 is as under:

Category	Only paper I or II	Both Paper I & II
General/OBC	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 1200/-
SC/ST/Diff. Aabled Person	Rs.500/-	Rs. 600/-

Director (CTET) & Secretary, CBSE

केन्द्रीय अध्यापक पात्रता परीक्षा एकक, पी० एस० 1-2 इन्स्टीट्यूशनल एरिया, आई० पी० एक्सटेंशन, पटारगंज, दिल्ली-110092
CTET Unit, PS, 1-2 Institutional Area, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092
फोन / Telephone: +91-11-22235774, 22247154, 22247176 वेबसाइट Website: www.ctet.nic.in
davp- 21107/11/0017/1920

DHFL DEWAN HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED
National Office: HDIL Towers, B-Wing, 6th & 8th Floor, Anant Kanekar Marg, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 051.
Branch Office: DHFL, Dreams Mall, first Floor, L.B.S Marg, Bandhup (West), Mumbai - 400078.

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.(DHFL) under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to DHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to DHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount With NPA date	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
(LC No. 00000889 of Karkarduma Noida Branch) Pawan Sharma (Borrower) Shikha Sharma (Co Borrower) Amit Kumar Mittal (Guarantor 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 36,29,901/- (Thirty Six lakh Twenty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred One) NPA (01-11-2019)	Flat No. 402 Fourth Floor Block - 07 Panchsheel Primrose Village - Haron Ghaziabad. Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh- 201010
(LC No. 00000521 of Raj Nagar Branch) Mohammad Haroon (Borrower) Jahida Haroon (Co Borrower 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 15,26,786/- (Fifteen lakh Twenty Six Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Six) NPA (01-11-2019)	Flat No. F-F-9 (front Rhs Corner Flat At Second Floor Plot No. A-1, Shalimar Garden Extn-II, Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh- 201010
(LC No. 00001128 of Kanpur Branch) Ashish Kumar Singh (Borrower) Arti Singh (Co Borrower 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 13,42,132/- (Thirteen lakh Forty Two Thousand One Hundred Thirty Two) NPA (01-11-2019)	Pvt. Plot No. 41 & Part Of 42, Part Of Arazi No. 189 MI, Ishwar Dham, Baikunthpur, Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh- 208001
(LC No. 00005310 of Lucknow Branch) Ashish Shivharey (Borrower) Urmilla Shivharey (Co Borrower 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 23,20,687/- (Twenty Three lakh Twenty Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Seven) NPA (01-11-2019)	Plot No A- 26 Gram Khasra No- 803 Marti Pargana Dewa The Nawabganj Barabanki Barabanki Uttar Pradesh- 225001
(LC No. 00006100 of Lucknow Branch) Shailendra Mani Tripathi (Borrower) Gayatri Tripathi (Co Borrower 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 17,03,590/- (Seventeen lakh Three Thousand Five Hundred Ninety) NPA (01-11-2019)	House On Plot Being KH. No 2223 Vill-Hanskheda Majra Para Ward Alam Nagar Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh- 226020
(LC No. 00006099 of Lucknow Branch) Anwar Ali (Borrower) Shabbir Ahmad (Co Borrower 1) Ameen (Co Borrower 2)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 28,35,680/- (Twenty Eight lakh Thirty Five Thousand Six Hundred Eighty) NPA (01-11-2019)	House With Land Constructed On Plot No 10, Part Of Khasra No. 16 & 18, Naka Kot Bagh, Ward- Dabulganj Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh- 226020
(LC No. 00003784 of Haldwani Branch) Shailesh Kumar Jha (Borrower) Rubee Jha (Co Borrower 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 5,02,054/- (Five lakh Two Thousand Fifty Four) NPA (01-11-2019)	Part Of Khasra No. 1277 Aa Min Plot No. 47 Village Babarkhera Jaspur Moradabad Uttar Pradesh- 244712
(LC No. 00042636 of Noida- Sector 2 Branch) Himanshu Maithul (Borrower) Laxmi Devi (Co Borrower 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 17,79,323/- (Seventeen lakh Seventy Nine Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Three) NPA (01-11-2019)	Plot No- 4/A, Second Floor, KH No- 296m Ganesh Vatika, Govind Purm, Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh- 201001
(LC No. 00002674 of Agra Branch) Sunny Sharma (Borrower) Babita Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 12,20,619/- (Twelve lakh Twenty Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Nine) NPA (01-11-2019)	House, on Plot No A 98, On K No 320,321, Maharshi Puram, Mauza Kakretha, Agra Agra Uttar Pradesh- 282001
(LC No. 00008615 of Lucknow Branch) Divakar Singh (Borrower) Meena Singh (Co Borrower 1)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 37,12,905/- (Thirty Seven lakh Twelve Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Five) NPA (01-11-2019)	Plot No. 804, 8th Floor, Tower No. 04 Valley View Estate, Gwal Pahari Gurgaon Faridabad, Haryana Gurgaon Haryana- 122001
(LC No. NOD35704 of Noida- sector 2 Branch) Gajendra Pal Singh (Borrower)	19-12-2019/ ₹ 9,15,208/- (Nine lakh Fifteen Thousand Two Hundred Eight) NPA (01-11-2019)	H/ Flat No. F-204, Floor No. 2nd Floor, Plot No. B5- 06, Rail Vihar, Sector- 05, Village- Vasundhara Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh- 201012
(LC No. 00000976 of Rohini Branch) Shiv Shakti Traders (Borrower) Rupesh Aggarwal (Co Borrower 1) Ompal Singh (Co Borrower 2) Rajni Aggarwal (Guarantor 1) Gaurav Aggarwal (Guarantor 2)	27-12-2019/ ₹ 35,25,723/- (Thirty Five lakh Twenty Five Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Three) NPA (01-10-2019)	Flat No.104, 1st Floor, Dattani Shelter Opps. Oshiwara Bus Depot, Off. Link Road Oshiwara, Goregaon West, Mumbai Mumbai Suburban Maharashtra- 400067
(LC No. 00002214 of Agra Branch) Perminder Poptani (Borrower) Sumit Aggarwal (Co Borrower 1) Ramesh Kumar (Co Borrower 2) Deepa Devi (Guarantor 1)	29-10-2019/ ₹ 2,12,09,892	

A really bad year

India slips on the global democracy index from 2018 even as Thailand goes up. We are losing the war of perception



As the world's largest democracy, no matter how grudging an admission this might be by assessors of the Western world, we should at least be held up as tolerable and accommodative if not the best. So India dropping by 10 places to 51st on *The Economist's* Democracy Index 2019, is a cause for worry rather than an easy example of Western bias. Simply because the publication has earned global respect and acceptability as least biased and careful about facts. And as a member of the Fourth Estate, it fulfils its

responsibility of upholding what global regimes are flawed at, in political, economic and social liberalism. So it is considered credible enough. Also, it has never rated India so harshly or lowly ever since it began the index 12 years ago. So what is alarming? India's decline in its overall score from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.9 last year and its classification as a "flawed democracy," just two steps away from being called an authoritarian regime. Given our much-claimed vibrancy, we should have scored at least eight or thereabouts on all counts. The index termed the erosion of civil liberties as the primary cause of our democratic regression. Which means that even by the Modi regime's own standing since 2014, the last six months have severely damaged perception. Except for pluralism and electoral processes, where we scored 8.67, there has been a drastic slide in the perception of governance, political culture and civil liberties. In short, it is the functionality and leadership of the Government that has clearly been put under the scanner. Before we dismiss these observations as part of a worldwide conspiracy hatched by a minuscule group of "urban Naxals", "funded academics" or give in to the compulsive urge to generate counter-propaganda, we must stop to think that the idea of democracy suffering in India has never been a talking point. This is simply because it has always been seen as a descendant of its civilisational moorings, its liberal ethos and, therefore, incapable of forced human constructs of oppression and supremacy. This is the reason why the world supported the abrogation of Article 370 only because the Government argued it as an issue within our constitutional space and never thought that it would be followed by authoritarian clampdowns or adventurism. That acceptance was followed by a significant review of citizenship laws and a renewed impetus on re-establishing majoritarian Hindu pride through the Ram temple. Considering their upending tectonics and the monolithic aggression that went against our grain of consensus politics, dissent was but natural. But the Government, instead of sizing up its destructive potential and neutralising it through a process of dialogue, went about hammering it with mindless brutality. Contentious politics cannot be force-fed in a democracy and for a Government that rests on a valid people's verdict, undermining it would only backflush on its true intentions.

The countrywide internet shutdowns on dissenting voices and protests have given us the dubious distinction of authorising over 67 per cent of the world's internet shutdowns. Holding up the information highway has become the latest tool for authoritarian governments around the world to control the political narrative on their terms and carpet-bomb any opinion or emotion against it. We are guilty of it while claiming to be a democracy. The otherisation and ghettoisation of politics, perpetuated through citizenship laws and a census based on profiling, are clearly divisive in intent and end up playing a nation's people against each other. The crackdown on students and civil society protests have been the proverbial last straw. The restrictive and biased media has relegated itself to being the Government's official propagandist than a conscience-keeper. The discourse in the country has been polarised to such an extent that we fail to realise that every argument is justified on its axis and needs to be heard, judged and then decided on its merit or demerit. That is the democratic process, which is now being dumped as a liability than an asset. And if free speech is under threat, then obviously the estimation of India as a democracy will be called into question. Going by the study, almost one-half (48.4 per cent) of the world's population lives in a democracy of some sort although only 5.7 per cent reside in a "full democracy." As the world's largest democracy, imagine the diplomatic sweep India can harness for the future. Critics might draw some solace from the fact that the US had also been demoted from a "full democracy" to a "flawed democracy" in 2016. But then the number of "full democracies" increased to 22 in 2019, with Chile, France and Portugal joining the top-ranked countries. Even Thailand, for long considered running a faux model, had the biggest improvement in score. Should we still be defending ourselves?

An astronaut's friend

ISRO is using a half-humanoid robot to smoothen out creases for Gaganyaan, our manned mission



So what if we have to wait awhile to send an Indian woman into space, we have a half-humanoid robot in the shape of one doing so. And she will test-pilot drills for our first manned mission as part of the Gaganyaan project. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be sending Vyommitra to mimic humanistic functions in the spacecraft, even converse with intended astronauts and respond to their queries. This preparatory drill is being done to ensure that Indian astronauts can complete their historic manoeuvre without a glitch. India though is not the first nation to send a robot into space to ensure safety of manned flights. NASA had sent Robonaut 2 to the International Space Station (ISS) in 2011 and Japan's Kirobo had landed there in 2014. Advanced versions are being developed to do a recon for human settlements. Post the failed lunar mission last year, ISRO seems to have learnt its lessons well and is proceeding with extreme caution with AI-aided dry runs.

While the nation would rather not talk about Chandrayaan 2 simply because its rover failed to land on the dark side of the moon, it has had its own success. Forget the lost rover, at the end of the day, it is indigenously developed and manufactured and is testimony to not only R&D and innovation but the ability of home-grown companies to expand capabilities. The Gaganyaan is a logical follow-through of this mission. India has already set a benchmark in PSLV and GSLV launches. It recently launched the high-power communication satellite GSAT-30. This is expected to provide improved coverage and will enable Indian broadcasters to air content in the Middle East, Australia and other parts of Asia, widening the arc of our soft diplomacy. The commercial satellite launch market is estimated to be \$30 billion by 2025 and ISRO is certain to be a top player in it. With Vyommitra, ISRO hopes to expand its ability to analyse data and ensure trajectory and payload optimisation for bigger missions. NASA is using AI for its next rover mission to Mars, too. But then a word of caution here. Robots aren't heroes. As much they promise a new era in space exploration, they must ascend the curve with utmost care.

Illogic and the showman

The US under the Trump administration typifies the reckless decision-making of military imperatives without prior experience, counsel or professional advice



BHOPINDER SINGH

Traditionally, the US administration has benefited from the military experience that resides in the "White House." Prior to their political ascendancy, around 29 of the 45 US Presidents have held military experience. However, the incumbent President Donald Trump has been an exception. He has had a controversial past of medical deferment that purportedly kept him out of military enrollment during the Vietnam War. Post the World War II, in the midst of the cold war era, nine successive US Presidents were former combatants till the tenures of Bill Clinton, Barack Obama and now Trump. Even the US Congress and Senate have had a substantial presence of veterans (they represented more than half of Congress for much of the late 20th century), who have debated and drafted security policies in pursuance of national objectives.

Given that the post World War II period entailed bloody American military involvement in places like Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, Somalia and Afghanistan as well as other covert wars and operations, the reassuring presence and understanding of the accompanying security sensitivities added the necessary nuance, steel and perspective on governance. But the last 12 years have seen a gradual reduction in the representation of veterans (till very recently) in both Houses. Trump though has displayed himself with misplaced enthusiasm for military trappings, bravado and parades to posit his own surrogate muscularity in pursuit of politics.

Most of his interventions, allusions and invocation with military imperatives have been high on instinctive showmanship and theatrics but have been low on efficacy. He started his tenure by appointing the iconic Marine Corps General James Mattis as the Secretary of Defence. The latter was found to be too rational, grounded and a well-read professional for Trump's boorish and fickle preferences. The US President authorised the usage of the "mother of all bombs" (GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast, the most powerful non-nuclear explosive) in Afghanistan. Today, he is negotiating "peace talks" with the Taliban, which has already accounted for well over 2,000 US casualties. He got the US military to rashly rain 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles (each costing approximately a million and a half dollars) on a dilapidated airbase and then another hundred on an industrial site in Syria, among other military commitments. Today, most Syrian lands have been lost to his *bête noire*, Bashar al-Assad's Syrian Government.

Units of the US Special Forces, in conjunction with allies — Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — conducted operations along with supporting militias in the Yemen theatre. As a result, a ragtag Army of Iran-supported Houthi rebels have been cocking a snook at the much larger, affluent and better armed forces of the US and



its allies. While he did get to "take out" a past his prime Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and more recently the Iranian Commander of Quds Force, Major General Qassem Soleimani, the essential American foothold in the Middle East remains shaky and is desperately in need of a "pull-out" to limit further damage.

Taking militaristic decisions is inevitable for a superpower that is mired in protecting its hegemonic interests across the globe. However, recent decisions and the fate of the Trump-led US military's involvement across the globe warrant serious introspection. It's not that "team" Trump did not have competency but his impatience with reason and restraint has ensured that the likes of Mattis have left, got fired, joined his echo chamber or, as mentioned in the famously anonymous Op-ed in *The New York Times*, are part of the silent "resistance working within the Trump administration." The Op-ed, authored by a senior person in the Trump administration, evocatively noted his leadership style to be "impetuous, adversarial, petty and ineffective." Further, it went to express the conundrum of the hapless staff, who would "privately admit their daily disbelief at the commander-in-chief's comments and actions."

A thoroughbred professional, Mattis became a typical suf-

ferer of Trump's foolhardiness when he refused to carry out killing orders of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad, to make war plans to attack Iranian facilities and opposed the decision of the US' troop withdrawal from Syria. On Mattis' resignation, the former combatant was hailed as the "last adult" in the Trump administration. Questions now abound if Soleimani would have been "taken out" today if Mattis was still around.

The decision to up the ante with Iran did have the backing of some veterans like four-star general Jack Keane and former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency David Petraeus among others. But as Congressman Adam Smith said, "Trump has no idea what he's doing but isn't afraid to do it." This unheeding trait has led to multiple forms of military adventurism with little to show on the ground at a time when Trump is in the last leg of his first tenure.

The usual phenomenon of spectacular military actions, resulting in a bipartisan "rallying around the flag" and, thereby, bumping up the crucial presidential approval ratings, is an old hat (in all democracies). After the Gulf War, former US President George H.W. Bush's approval ratings went up from 58 per cent to 89 per cent. His son, George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq got a similar spike from

85 per cent to 71 per cent. Barack Obama's elimination of Osama bin Laden took his ratings from 44 per cent to 51 per cent. But Trump's Soleimani action did not result in any noticeable jump. He continues to languish in the mid-40 approval percentages. Clearly, Trump has politically abused the "military card" too often and it no longer resonates. On the contrary, his embarrassing description of "beautiful weapons" in the serious business of deploying the "last resort" responsibly diminishes the statesmanship and restraint required of his position.

What deliberately polarising politicians like Trump also achieves is that they dangerously "divide" perceptions within the veteran community, which is usually bipartisan on security matters and goes by military "facts." This sort of brazen politics has alienated the likes of Trump's fellow Republican and former combatant Senator John McCain, whose professional integrity as a soldier was affronted by usurpers like him.

Matters of military need to be spared from political appropriations. Else, the required institutional ethos and perceptions are weakened. Following this, the overall national security preparedness, too, would stand diminished.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands)

SOUNDBITE

The Congress leadership is suffering from *manasik divaliyapan* (mental bankruptcy). Statements issued by it in the past months reflect that these are intended to help Pakistan.



BJP chief — JP Nadda

They (Government) are asking those who have been living here for four generations to prove that they are Indians. This is sad. I think everyone should speak up.



Actor — Nandita Das

When I was playing cricket, India was seven times our size but we regularly quashed them. In hockey and so many other games also. We were great.



Pakistan Prime Minister — Imran Khan

Netaji had opposed the Hindu Mahasabha's divisive politics. He had fought for a secular India. Now efforts are on to oust those who follow secularism.



West Bengal CM — Mamata Banerjee

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Change of guard

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "BJP's new chief" (January 21). With the advent of JP Nadda as the BJP president, the party may see a change from the diktat-style of the earlier dispensation to one of consultation, if not consensus.

Voices of the BJP cadre from the State as well as district levels may yet get a chance to be heard. And that should prove useful after a string of recent poll reverses, equally attributable to a failing economy, consolidation of the Opposition, protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and amorphous ideologies clouding local issues.

That said, the policy approach that ran the party till now is getting transplanted to Home Affairs in the national canvas. Federalism is losing currency and an unfamiliar brand of nationalism is being sought to be implemented. As unease of the States and the common man gets palpable by the day, the future does not augur well. Nadda will have an important role in deciding what the party must focus on next.

R Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

CAA: Flawed on several counts

Nobody expected the Supreme Court to stay the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). And it did not, on the presumption that the law passed by Parliament is constitutionally valid until it hears both the petitioners challenging its constitutionality and the Central Government — "presumption" being the operative word. Hence, there is no cause for the Government to celebrate prematurely. Before going ahead with the implementation of the CAA, the Government will do well to remember the apex court's observation that "nothing is irreversible." When the Sabarimala case was referred to a larger Constitution Bench, the original ruling, allowing entry of women of all ages into the temple, was held in abeyance or at least its implementation was not favoured by the BJP even in the absence of any stay on the ruling. Similarly, the Government can put on hold the implementation of the CAA till the top court's final ruling.

Home Minister Amit Shah has refused to make a gesture towards the opinion of the anti-CAA protesters



and ruled out a repeal of the law. Critics of CAA plead the case for the inclusion of Muslims as the seventh religious group to make the law "religion-neutral." Secular India cannot and should not discriminate between a Hindu from Pakistan, a Rohingya Muslim from Myanmar and a Sri Lanka refugee of any faith on granting citizenship.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Silent killer

Sir — In a shocking tragedy, eight Indian tourists from Kerala, including four children, died this week due to a possible gas leak from a room heater at a resort in Daman in Makwanpur district of Nepal. They were part of a 17-member tourist group who had checked into Everest Panorama

resort at Daman, a popular tourist destination in Nepal.

According to the SP of District Police Office, Makwanpur, the tourists turned on the gas heater in the room and later suffocated due to some defect in the device, leading to carbon monoxide leak resulting in death.

The group — travelling to Pokhara from Kerala — were returning home. On the way,

they had stopped at Everest Panorama Resort in Daman. Gas heaters that are not installed correctly or have become faulty over time can cause a carbon monoxide leak. As carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas, it becomes difficult to detect it. To prevent such hazards, hotels should inspect and rectify such appliances regularly. The tourism Ministry in Nepal, too,

should have mechanisms to avoid such mishaps. Also, tourists staying in hotels in cold places should be aware of such silent dangers.

M Pradyu
Kannur

No, thank you

Sir — At a time when he is embroiled in impeachment proceedings, US President Donald Trump has once again expressed his desire to "help" India and Pakistan resolve their dispute. With elections round the corner, it is all but common for politicians to intensively work towards improving their image.

However, New Delhi must be complimented for beating off another unwanted diplomatic advance by making it clear that there is no scope for mediation by anybody. Now, the ruling Government must refrain from gaining unwanted attention on the Kashmir issue. It must strike a conversation with all stakeholders and leaders in the Valley.

Aditi
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Aim for green industrial growth

Centre, States must create a sustainable business environment and impactful economy while integrating with global benchmarks and practices



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The world is moving towards sustainable businesses to tackle the challenges of climate change, empowerment of communities, health, education and other social causes to ensure the survival of life on the planet. From Davos, where the world's most powerful people gather, to a humble policy document emerging from a bureaucrat's desk, the theme is sustainability. In the midst of the clamour for making the blue planet a safer, healthier zone, lies the underlining theme of slowing the world order and tightening cross-border flows of goods, services and people. India, with its goal of a \$5 trillion economy by 2024 in the middle of ominous forecasts of slow GDP growth, is facing a double challenge of sustainable growth vs a steroid shot of booster measures to put the economy on the fast track. While the full Union Budget 2020 will deliver parts of the promise and create hopes for more, the door is ajar for two important policies under consideration by the Government — the industrial policy and the e-commerce policy.

The proposed industrial policy (third after 1956 and 1991) ought to be a North Star for making India a global innovation, R&D and manufacturing hub, thereby achieving the \$5-10 trillion target in the next decade. However, it must be kept in mind by lawmakers that this policy is coming at a time when the world has shifted towards Industry 4.0 and the global economy determinants are increasingly sinking into computing prowess of latest chips and bots while facing tremendous ecological challenges. This policy has a slated objective to develop and sustain global competitiveness for India; increase technology depth of the industry; increase employment avenues; increase share in global merchandise exports and reduce the environmental footprint. The stated vision is a one trillion gross value addition in manufacturing by 2025, (even though with right policy measures this target can be moved up). The Government at this stage is in focussed stakeholder consultations to devise the right strategy for pushing India up in the world economic order.

The key questions being asked under the stated targets are how to bring the cost of capital expenditure in large-scale manufacturing in value terms for land, electricity and money at par with the globe benchmarks? How to reduce regulations and promote ease of doing business? How to develop India as a research, design and innovation hub by removing hurdles which are fully-integrated with the new asks from a connected digital economy? How to promote skills and workforce education as well as upskilling of the existing workforce to be able to function in the new industrial arena? How to focus on quality checks, testing and standards practices while recognising that we need to align with global benchmarks? Also, how to increase India's global share in exports with a focus on our policy? Assist and put all industries on technology-aided platforms to enjoy the true benefits of a connected global economy? Achieve a stable, predictable, industry, consumer and economy-friendly policy framework to foster higher growth? Increase foreign direct investments? Promote sustainability as the core objective of all businesses in the country?

All these are commendable strategy directions which ask the right questions for an increasingly coagulating global order where technology innovations are diminishing physical barriers in fractions of seconds while protective Governments are putting iron fences around their economies and reducing global agreements to pieces of paper.

It is in this context that the new industrial policy seeks to achieve significance, as it comes at a time when every citizen is feeling the impact of the crumbling economy, job losses and more important, climate change. From extreme weather conditions being reported around the globe, to rising costs of providing basics to humans, not to forget, extinction of species, are a real danger today.

India needs to walk the tightrope of creating a sustainable business environment and impactful economy while getting more integrated with global benchmarks and practices. The new industrial policy needs a series of deliberations and clause by clause analysis of the vision, objectives before being drafted.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has formulated a working group to finalise the policy which includes a couple of key State Governments. Nobody can deny the role States are likely to play in shaping the next economic growth for India. State Governments in the past have organised successful roadshows or "invest inwards" summits, promising big ticket businesses free land, cheap electricity and fast Government clearances for new projects. However, now they need to align with the Central Government and put in their key demands, challenges and proposed solutions towards developing their States which are sustainable, long-term and more importantly can survive changing regimes. It is a long shot but in the spirit of federalism, States need to get their records straight on power subsidies, clamp down on existing businesses using local administration and similar regulatory challenges. The deliberations so far have been behind closed doors. For a global "outward"-looking industrial policy, there should be an open consultation process, especially at the State Government level.

(The writer is Country Manager, India, ITC Council)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I'M HERE TO TELL ALL OF YOU. MAMATA BANERJEE, RAHUL GANDHI, COME AND DEBATE CAA WITH ME. I HAD PILOTED THE BILL IN THE PARLIAMENT.
 —UNION HOME MINISTER
AMIT SHAH



YOU SHOULD DEBATE WITH ME. WHY DEBATE WITH THEM? THE DEBATE SHOULD BE WITH A BEARDED MAN. I CAN DEBATE WITH BJP ON CAA, NPR AND NRC.
 —AIMIM CHIEF
ASADUDDIN OWAIISI

List of expectations

As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gears up to present the Union Budget on February 1, India Inc shares its hopes and concerns

MSMEs need more incentives



RACHIT CHAWLA

At a time when the economy of India is experiencing a slow-down, the country is hoping for a balanced Union Budget by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1. The middle-class is anticipating relief in income tax and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are looking for incentives. It is also crucial for the FM to formulate policies which ascertain 6.5 per cent real GDP growth for the fiscal year 2020-21.

Time to revamp MSMEs: While the economy is still facing a liquidity issue and MSMEs are bearing the brunt of the deceleration, achieving 6.5 per cent growth is a challenge but not impossible. If the Government could save Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and MSMEs, the scenario would turn favourable within a few months. Recently, the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) requested the Government to change the definition of MSMEs in response to alterations in the economic environment of the country in the last couple of years. MSMEs are the backbone of the Indian economy and the country cannot compromise with their health. Hence, a changed definition will help the sector enhance its contribution to employment-generation, poverty-alleviation and resource improvisation. A large number of MSMEs are struggling with financial challenges and without subsidies their sustenance is difficult. It is shocking that out of the 6.33 crore MSMEs in the country, only 0.05 lakh are medium enterprises. They are usually deprived of the Public Procurement Policy which mandates 25 per cent procurement from the micro and small enterprises. They are also barred from availing delayed payment reliefs through facilitation councils.

Need for sector-specific measures: Besides considering the problems of MSMEs, Sitharaman must also address the issues of underperforming sectors such as real estate, energy and telecom. There is an urgent need to reinforce sectors which strengthen the infrastructure of the country but are reeling under the impact of the downturn. Last year, Sitharaman relieved large businesses by cutting corporate tax to 22 per cent, but businesses cannot flourish until MSMEs become secure and stable. The Government should also lower the tax burden on MSMEs by slashing the Goods and Services Tax in key sectors. The real estate sector, which is one of the growth propellers of the economy, has been struggling for almost a decade. To infuse life into this sector, the Government must consider its long-pending demands such as getting industry status, a single-window clearance mechanism, dropping the circle rate section from the Income Tax Act, elimination of taxes on vacant property, reduced land acquisition cost and tax rationalisation on Real Estate Investment Trusts.

Telecom, yet another crucial sector is hopeful that the Government will take measures to resolve the burgeoning debt issues in the Budget. Telecom companies are also demanding reduction in licence fee, Spectrum Usage Charges and relief in levies.

No compromise with liquidity: The next big challenge before Sitharaman is increasing liquidity in the market because it is directly proportional to the growth of MSMEs, especially start-ups. The IL&FS and DHFL fiascos had drastic repercussions on the financial markets, and one of the main reasons for the huge impact is the lack of availability of alternative options to bank funding. Now, Public Sector Banks have decided to cut their Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rates (MCLR) which will be beneficial for the economy as it will improve liquidity in the market. Lower MCLR will mean that NBFCs can borrow from banks at lower rates and the NBFCs that operate in SME lending and housing will benefit the most. It will strengthen the capitalisation structures of HFCs and help revive the real estate sector. Also, to bring back positive sentiments in the market and to counter the decelerating growth, better liquidity is needed and a lower MCLR would help meet this to a great extent. Industry pundits believe that stability in the sector will be regained by the first quarter of 2020. They are optimistic about increased demand for credit because urbanisation is taking place at a fast pace. Plus, there is a thriving start-up culture in the country and retail and e-commerce sectors have high penetration even in semi-urban areas. The Government should also keep inflation under control and it must not go beyond six per cent for at least three quarters. If all these issues are addressed, making India a \$5 trillion economy will be a realistic goal.

(The writer is founder, CEO, of an investment management firm)

Give IT sops to boost EV sales



PANKAJ MUNJAL

The Union Budget announced in 2019 was in many ways a landmark one for pushing e-mobility. Not only was the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on electric vehicles slashed to five per cent, the Budget also offered major incentives for buyers of electric vehicles (EVs) in the form of income tax rebates on loan. These measures were designed to push the sale of EVs, which have been on the top of the Government's priority list in recent years. These incentives were additional to the major commitment announced under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME-II) scheme to boost EV infrastructure. However, the sale of EVs remained lukewarm with an analysis suggesting that just 1,309 units of e-cars were sold between April and November 2019. With the economic slowdown and falling demand hitting the auto sector hard, the industry needs a slew of measures that will address concerns on both the demand and supply sides. With the Union Budget round the corner, there are hopes that the Finance Minister (FM) will announce measures to revive consumption, put more disposable income into the hands of the people as well as more sops for EVs. Importantly, the FM must give a policy push to e-bicycles which have the potential to be at the forefront of an e-mobility revolution.

Revive demand: In its annual review, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that the declining consumption and investment, accompanied by falling tax revenue have arrested India's GDP growth. The IMF also called for "urgent" policy actions to reverse this slowdown. Falling demand has been at the centre of the current slowdown and the country needs measures that can put more incomes into the hands of people and revive consumption. Cutting income tax rates and readjusting income tax slabs might be a tough call at a time when the Government's revenues are shrinking but it might also be the bitter pill the economy needs. An income tax exemption on income up to ₹5 lakh can positively impact salaried taxpayers and boost consumption. It can also spur buying among people who have deferred automobile purchases in view of the deceleration. However, just monetary measures will not be sufficient. The economy also needs a major fiscal policy push to increase employment and income. The Government must announce broad measures to infuse expenditure in strategic sectors like manufacturing and infrastructure and create income-generating avenues in the rural economy. This also includes revisions in GST slabs to create a low tax economy.

Institute a supportive scrapping policy: Earlier this year, the FM announced a scrap page policy aimed at shunting out old vehicles and increasing production. The policy is aimed at serving the twin objectives of reducing emissions and boosting consumer demand. The Government must ensure a quick rollout of the scrap page policy to encourage the replacement of older vehicles and must also lay down positive incentives for customers to push the disposal of older vehicles. The incentives may include exemption on road taxes for consumers and low interest loan schemes for purchase of new commercial vehicles. According to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), the commercial vehicle industry suffered a decline of 22 per cent in sales between April and November 2019. We hope a supportive scrapping policy can help revive some of this lost demand.

Extend FAME II benefits to E-bicycles: E-bicycles have recently been categorised under EVs to get tax benefits. However, they do not get the benefits designated under the FAME-II scheme. We hope the Government recognises the need to promote e-bicycles as much as the need to promote e-cars. While e-cars address the concern of pollution, they do not solve the problem of traffic congestion. E-bicycles are both eco-friendly, space-friendly and also offer a viable solution to the anxiety that comes with lack of charging infrastructure as they can be easily pedalled back in case of battery loss.

Policy measures to reduce viability gap of EVs: More measures might be needed to reduce the viability gap of EVs. The Government must support the sector in different ways to make EVs more affordable and viable. These measures can include exemption on road tax, lower power tariffs for charging EVs, exemption of parking fees for EV users and exemption of permit costs among other measures.

(The writer is Chairman and MD of a leading motor company)

Formulate retail policy soon



RAVINDER SINGH

India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world and the drivers of this growth can be credited to the burgeoning millennial population, growing middle-income households and an increasing representation of women in the workforce. All these factors contribute to economic growth by boosting retail consumption, thereby providing a highly positive outlook for businesses in the country. Meanwhile, as far as the market potential is concerned, the retail industry provides a robust platform for multiple stakeholders, including the consumers, distributors, manufacturers and additional sectors like transportation, logistics and so on. In fact, according to the Retailers Association of India (RAI), around 43 million people in the country are employed in the retail sector and the industries that support those businesses. In fact, the sector is generating employment at a fast pace, taking the second position after agriculture in terms of creating direct as well as indirect employment opportunities.

Despite the retail industry's positive contribution towards the country's economy, 2019 witnessed many players struggling to sustain the growth chart. Even though they are expecting growth to rebound in 2020, it will all depend on factors like the recovery in the manufacturing and other sectors, availability of finances in the hands of consumers to make easy retail consumption decisions and of course, the forthcoming Union Budget 2020 that will be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1. This will be her second Union Budget and the retailers have many expectations from the Modi Government in its second term.

Accelerating the process of national retail policy: It is a harsh reality that India to date has been unable to develop a robust manufacturing sector despite two decades of economic and trade liberalisation. Structural issues like scarcity of resources in the form of raw materials and trained labour force, lack of capital and credit facilities and inadequate infrastructure are causing major hindrances in the operations of small retail traders. This is also affecting the export-competitiveness of a large number of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). So, in this year's Union Budget, these players want the Government to speed up the formulation and implementation of the National Retail Policy, as this would provide a significant boost to the development of 65 million small traders in the country's retail sector and expedite/promote the ease of doing business in the country.

Promotion of digital and modern retail: The Indian retail industry is currently dominated by e-commerce and it is expected to grow to \$200 billion by 2026 driven by rising smartphone penetration, the launch of 4G networks and increasing disposable incomes. That said, the competition is only increasing day by day. Bearing in mind the new-age consumers' speedy adoption of technology, offline retail players must also modify their strategies to keep their brands relevant, the brand experience even and their products and services accessible across multiple channels. They are expecting the Government to modernise its retail by upgrading the use of Point of Sale Machines that would help retailers to access the customers' information and efficiently manage their inventory, thereby improving their revenue-generation and profitability.

Boosting the consumption story: Due to the deceleration in the economy, retailers both small and premium ones, are bearing the brunt of a consumer class that has become careful in its purchasing decisions. This slowdown in consumption has dampened the demand in the retail segment. Retail players are hoping that the Union Budget will be pro-consumption and will come out with a slew of measures that will make small-ticket credit and additional cash accessible in the hands of the middle class. This will positively impact the retail industry by increasing demand and also provide a much-needed boost to the economy.

GST on clothes: Clothes are subject to five per cent GST if the taxable value of the goods is less than ₹1,000 per piece, whereas, the sale value of clothing that exceeds ₹1,000 is subject to 12 per cent GST. Retailers expect the Budget to focus on increasing the threshold for the five per cent slab to ₹2,000 from the ₹1,000 that is levied at present to give a fillip to the sector.

(The writer is Founding Director of a chain of value retail stores)

Derivatives are a double-edged sword

Used both for hedging and speculation, the derivatives markets worldwide have grown to a humongous level, reaching about \$1.2 quadrillion. However, their use has also brought giant corporations to their knees, hence investors must exercise caution



HIMA BINDU KOTA

The term "financial weapons of mass destruction", coined by billionaire Warren Buffett for derivatives, is not without reason. They can be used both for hedging and speculation and their markets worldwide have grown to a humongous level, reaching about \$1.2 quadrillion, almost 10 times that of the world GDP.

However, the use of derivatives has also brought giant corporations to their knees during past global financial meltdowns. One cannot forget the bankruptcy of corporations like Enron and Barings Banks due to wrong speculative moves involving

derivatives. Since they are a double-edged sword, one has to be extra cautious while using them.

What are derivatives anyway? These are instruments that derive their value from any underlying asset, which could be either a stock or a commodity.

Any investor or corporation can put money in any one of the popular derivatives for hedging or speculative purposes. Corporations use them for hedging if they want to reduce an existing risk or protect themselves from any volatility in the price of an underlying asset by taking an offsetting position, whereas speculation is trying to make profit due to any price changes.

Several analysts believe that the Indian stock markets are set to rise further in 2020 and may end higher by at least 13 per cent. It is being predicted that Nifty might end above the 13,000 mark. Similarly, the expectation for the BSE Sensex is that it will go above the 46,000 level. So, if we consider a bullish market for this year, what are the derivative strategies that

an investor can use in this type of market where the prices of underlying assets are set to rise? Although the general belief is that stock markets will be bullish, there will certainly be variations as is natural.

In case the markets are extremely bullish, investors should go ahead with a long-call strategy. This is one of the simplest approaches and can be used by beginners in the derivatives market. There is only one transaction involved, i.e., buying call options. It helps investors use the power of leverage and make potentially unlimited profits and at the same time cap their losses. In the worst case scenario, when the markets do not behave as anticipated, loss is limited to the price of buying the call options.

A reverse call ratio spread is also an extremely bullish strategy where an investor can sell an option at a lower price, usually in-the-money or at-the-money and buy more options at the higher strike price, which is out-of-the-money, of the same underlying asset. So if an investor sells one

option and buys two options with a higher strike price, a reverse call option strategy is created.

When the market outlook is moderately bullish and the investor is expecting some upward movement in the underlying asset, a long-call ladder strategy could be initiated. This strategy has the potential of earning from time decay if it expires in the range of the strike price. This strategy is created by buying one in-the-money call, selling one at-the-money call and selling one out-of-the-money call of the same underlying asset with the same expiry. Experiments can also be made with different strike prices.

Another income-generating strategy that can be initiated in a moderately bullish market is a covered call option which can be created by using a stock and an option. This strategy is created by purchasing a stock and simultaneously selling a call option, which is out-of-the-money, usually on the higher side.

When the markets are becoming more neutral, buying a long-call

would not be the best strategy to use. In a moderately bullish market, investors could take a short put option strategy, wherein they go short on a put position, i.e., they are obliged to buy the underlying asset in future at a predetermined price if the buyer wishes to exercise his option. This strategy will be helpful for investors if the price of the underlying asset increases moderately or even remains at the same level. In a flat market, this strategy will be beneficial as it gives investors a chance to earn some upfront money in the form of premium which can be adjusted against some margins.

Another strategy for a more neutral or flat market with a bullish view is bull put spread option, which involves two put options, both short and long. It is created by one short put with a higher strike price and one long put with a lower strike price. But here the expiration date remains the same. This strategy has a higher potential of being profitable as it is beneficial in situations when the prices are steady or are rising.

In case an investor has suffered any losses due to price fall, a stock repair strategy is there and can help the investor recover their losses even if the prices of the underlying asset show slight improvement.

This strategy is created by buying one at-the-money call and at the same time selling two out-of-the-money call, of the same underlying asset with the same expiration. The trick here, though, is that the strike price of the sale should be very close to the buying price.

As one can see, there are different derivative strategies for different market outlooks. However, taking a bet with derivatives can be very dangerous as by paying a small premium, investors can end up initiating very large transactions and if the markets do not move the way the investors anticipated, the losses can be huge. These transactions should only be undertaken by an expert with knowledge about stock markets and in particular, derivatives.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)



WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...

The world turned a blind eye to Saudi Arabia's behaviour because it suited it. Now the costs are clearer as an investigation found billionaire Jeff Bezos had his mobile phone hacked after receiving a WhatsApp message apparently sent from the account of the Saudi crown prince. A year after journalist Khashoggi's death, many of those who had pulled out of the 2018 investment summit were present. Yet many of them are doubtless in urgent talks with their digital security consultants.

(The Guardian editorial)

Sensex rises 271 pts on value buying, L&T up 3 pc

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Snapping its three-day losing run, market benchmark index Sensex rose by 271 points on Thursday following gains in banking and energy stocks despite a massive sell-off in global equities.

The 30-share BSE Sensex settled 271.02 points, or 0.66%, higher at 41,386.40. It hit an intra-day high of 41,413.96 and a low of 41,098.91.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 73.45 points, or 0.61%, to end at 12,180.35, ending its four-day losing streak. Larsen & Toubro (L&T) was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising by 2.98%, after the company reported a 15 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit at ₹2,560.32 crore for quarter to December 2019.

Bharti Airtel, which is facing ₹35,586 crore demand for AGR dues, rose by 1.8% after the telecom firm said it would wait for the outcome of modification petition listed for hearing before the Supreme Court next week. Sources also said that the DoT has advised its departments to not take any coercive action against the telcos for failing to pay AGR dues by the January 23 deadline set by the Supreme Court.

Banking stocks also recovered after recent losses. SBI rose

by 2.26%, Axis Bank by 1.41%, Kotak Bank by 1.14% and ICICI Bank by 0.96%.

ONGC gained 1.12% amid a fall in global crude oil prices. Other gainers included M&M, Titan, Infosys, and Ultratech Cement.

Tech Mahindra, PowerGrid, TCS, Bajaj Auto, Reliance Industries and Maruti ended in the red.

According to experts, despite carnage in other Asian equities amid fears of contagion after a deadly virus emerged from China, stock-specific action kept domestic benchmarks buoyed.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, "The market is marginally up today due to the bounce back by banks, auto, and mid & small caps after a mild consolidation during the week. We feel that a cautious trend will be maintained in the near-term since a lot has been factored in the market about budget wish list and revival in earnings growth, while the start to Q3 result is below par."

Hemang Kapasi, portfolio manager (equity investment products), Sanctum Wealth Management, said, "Nifty snapped a four-day losing streak on the back of short covering. While, the performance of headline index is not very

spectacular over couple of weeks, the midcaps are gaining traction."

Midcaps have delivered 8% return over last one month while Nifty has given marginally negative return, he added. All sectoral indices ended on a positive note, with BSE capital goods, realty, oil and gas, telecom, consumer durables, industrials and utilities settling up to 2.33% higher.

Broader BSE midcap and smallcap rallied up to 1.06%. Modest fall in crude oil price and sharp upsurge in Larsen & Toubro stock post the results helped bulls maintain positive sentiment in the market. Shrikant Chouhan, Senior vice-president (equity technical research), Kotak Securities, commented,

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul declined up to 2.75%. European markets were also trading on a negative note in their early sessions. Brent crude oil futures fell 1.22 per cent to USD 62.44 per barrel.

The rupee depreciated depreciated by 7 paise to close at 71.26 against the US dollar on Thursday. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened on a weak note at 71.21. During the day, it swung between a high of 71.16 and a low of 71.35 and finally settled at 71.26.

CII for higher tax benefits for home buyers to boost demand in real estate sector

PTI ■ DELHI

Industry chamber CII on Thursday urged the government to increase tax benefits for home buyers to boost demand in the liquidity-hit real estate sector. The chamber said that in order to meet a minimum GDP growth target of 6 to 7 per cent, it was important to have a definitive plan for boosting the demand in the sector. The sector needs more liquidity support and steps to boost demand, it said in a statement.

"CII has urged the government to increase the tax benefits to home buyers and extend income limit under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana to boost demand in the sector which is battling stress and liquidity issues for the past year," it added.

It has also proposed a focused action plan to boost the sector as part of its pre-budget suggestions. "To meet a minimum GDP growth target of 6 to 7 per cent it is very important to have a definitive plan for boost-

ing the demand in the real estate sector, which will have significant impact on job creation in both formal and informal sector, as well as a multiplier effect on overall demand," Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General of the Confederation of Indian Industry said.

"The maximum available deduction on interest payment of home loan taken for all the property/(ies) should be increased from ₹2,00,000 to ₹25,00,000," it said.

The government should also consider increasing the income criteria under PMAY scheme to ₹18 and ₹25 lakh from the current ₹12 and ₹18 lakh in the MIG I and II categories, respectively. "This would allow a wider section of the society to benefit from the scheme pushing demand," it said.

Further, the CII said granting infrastructure status to integrated townships and overall housing sector, would help developers access priority funding at a lower cost.

QUARTERLY RESULTS

NIPPON LIFE INDIA ASSET MANAGEMENT Q3 PAT UP 36% AT ₹149 CR

New Delhi: Nippon Life India Asset Management on Thursday reported a 36 per cent jump in profit after tax (PAT) at ₹149 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2019. The company had posted a PAT of ₹109.62 crore in the year-ago period, Nippon Life India Asset Management said in a regulatory filing to the stock exchanges. The company's total income dropped to ₹360.64 crore during the October-December quarter of the current financial year from ₹403.97 crore in the same period last fiscal. Nippon Life India Asset Management, formerly known as Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management, said its asset base stood at ₹3,10,100 crore at the end of December 2019. "Post rebranding, overall feedback from our customers and distributors has been very positive. This is also reflected in our AUM (assets under management) inflows, we have seen return of several leading corporates, SMEs and HNIs," Nippon Life India Asset Management ED and CEO Sundeep Sikka said. During the quarter, digital purchase transactions rose to 11 lakh, an increase of 38 per cent from the year-ago period. Digital contribute over 40 per cent to total new purchase transactions.

CANARA BANK'S NET PROFIT RISES 3.8% MUMBAI

Mumbai: State-owned Canara Bank on Thursday reported a 3.8 per cent rise in its net profit to ₹329.62 crore in the third quarter of the current financial year, mainly due to a decline in proportion of bad loans. The bank's profit was ₹317.52 crore during the December 2018 quarter. Its total income stood at ₹14,001.63 crore during the quarter ended December 2019, up from ₹13,513.35 crore in the year-ago period, Canara Bank said in a stock exchange filing. The net non-performing assets (NPAs) as a percentage of total assets stood at 5.05 per cent, down from 6.37 per cent a year ago. Similarly, the percentage of gross NPAs also narrowed to 8.36 per cent from 10.25 per cent. In absolute terms, the net NPAs stood at ₹21,337.74 crore, down from 26,591.07 crore. The

bank made a provisioning of ₹1,802.91 crore during the quarter under review, compared with ₹1,977.34 crore a year ago.

OBC Q3 PROFIT JUMPS 39.11%

Mumbai: State-owned Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) on Thursday reported a 39.11 per cent jump in net profit at ₹201.66 crore for the quarter ended December 2019, mainly due to reduction in bad loans. The bank, which is going to be merged with another state-run lender Punjab National Bank, had reported a profit of ₹144.96 crore in October-December quarter a year ago. The bank's total income during December quarter stood at ₹5,642.61 crore as compared with ₹5,127.98 crore a year ago, it said in a regulatory filing. Income from interest stood at ₹4,659.93 crore as against ₹4,561.12 crore during October-December quarter of previous fiscal. The ratio of net non-performing assets (NPAs) reduced to 5.98 per cent during the quarter under review from 7.15 per cent in the year-ago period. Gross NPAs also fell to 12.64 per cent from 15.82 per cent. In absolute terms, net NPAs stood at ₹9,507.53 crore, down from ₹9,972.61 in the corresponding period during the last financial year.

DHFL POSTS NET LOSS OF ₹6,641 CR IN JULY-SEPTEMBER PERIOD

New Delhi: Debt-ridden housing finance firm DHFL on Thursday has reported a consolidated net loss of ₹6,640.62 crore for the quarter ended September 30, 2019. It had posted consolidated net profit of ₹439.51 crore in the year-ago period. Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL) said in a filing to BSE. The company said that the net loss/profit after tax was "fully attributable to the owners of the parent". The consolidated total revenue from operations of DHFL in July-September period dropped to ₹2,106.71 crore over ₹3,483.32 crore in the year-ago period. Pursuant to an order dated December 3, 2019 of the National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai Bench, Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process has been initiated against the company as per the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	12123.75	12189.00	12094.10	12179.90	73.00
YESBANK	38.55	41.40	38.35	41.00	2.55
IOC	115.10	120.90	115.00	120.30	6.65
GAIL	125.70	130.70	125.20	129.45	3.55
L&T	457.00	478.00	457.00	467.95	12.55
BPC	139.50	143.80	139.00	143.25	3.75
M&M	516.50	567.40	516.50	566.20	12.60
SBI	313.00	324.80	314.15	323.15	7.00
TITAN	1176.00	1206.65	1175.00	1203.00	25.35
BHARTIARTL	515.00	526.00	512.35	525.45	10.95
GRASIM	785.00	811.95	783.00	809.60	16.70
AXISBANK	725.05	737.55	719.40	723.90	11.30
INFY	777.10	785.50	776.70	782.35	42.15
TATAMOTORS	186.75	190.40	183.80	188.10	2.50
KOTAKBANK	1588.00	1608.40	1581.30	1606.90	21.80
HEROMOTOCO	2397.00	2434.85	2380.00	2431.00	31.95
ULTRATECH	4470.00	4540.00	4446.05	4535.00	58.05
WIPRO	246.45	249.10	245.35	248.95	3.10
NTPC	112.60	114.45	112.30	113.55	1.40
HCLTECH	590.10	599.95	587.00	598.00	7.35
TATASTEEL	475.90	481.85	473.15	479.95	4.90
ICICIBANK	521.40	530.25	517.05	527.45	4.90
ONGC	117.25	118.95	116.40	117.40	1.00
SUNPHARMA	447.20	452.20	445.00	450.00	3.70
VEDL	153.60	155.40	152.35	154.10	0.90
BRITANNIA	3103.85	3122.90	3068.10	3122.90	16.55
HDPC	2032.00	2036.40	2024.35	2029.00	12.40
HINDALCO	202.60	205.35	200.25	204.50	0.90
ADANIPORTS	384.45	386.75	380.75	385.00	1.40
INDIACEM	1240.00	1246.85	1231.00	1245.35	4.50
HINDUNILVR	2051.75	2060.85	2035.00	2057.00	5.30
INDUSINDBK	1330.00	1339.80	1320.10	1330.20	2.80
JSWSTEEL	266.00	268.95	264.10	266.20	0.35
INFRAEEL	239.20	243.75	235.45	241.20	0.20
NESTLEIND	15500.00	15625.00	15455.00	15550.00	1.30
BAFINANCE	4123.00	4163.85	4085.00	4142.00	-0.20
MARUTI	7145.40	7220.00	7123.15	7132.95	-2.65
ITC	238.10	238.75	236.90	237.95	-0.10
ASIANPAINT	1779.00	1789.00	1757.10	1778.10	-1.15
RELIANCE	1536.50	1541.95	1520.70	1529.60	-3.75
COALINDIA	192.05	195.20	189.85	191.40	-0.50
BAJAJAUTO	3072.00	3089.95	3051.10	3068.00	-8.40
BAJAJFINSV	9547.50	9596.00	9484.15	9509.40	-38.10
TCS	2298.80	2217.75	2183.70	2188.00	-13.90
DREDDYT	21070.00	21196.00	20780.50	20905.00	-195.00
ECH	3055.30	3078.70	3024.00	3032.10	-29.95
TECHM	777.25	780.45	766.90	769.50	-9.25
POWERGRID	196.75	207.40	193.90	197.55	-2.50
CPIA	464.50	475.85	459.35	465.60	-6.60
UPL	560.00	564.55	540.30	540.50	-22.45
ZEEL	295.10	297.00	278.70	278.70	-21.65

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	2863.85	2893.75	2860.95	2887.85	304.85
PFCE	109.00	116.15	108.10	115.20	6.35
IBULHSGFIN	296.65	317.60	296.60	314.15	17.15
IDEA	5.60	6.10	5.60	5.90	0.30
PEL	1610.00	1699.80	1595.50	1686.55	78.60
HAVELLS	600.50	621.00	619.00	619.00	19.00
NIACL	160.50	167.90	158.20	163.50	4.35
BERGEPAINT	540.55	555.50	538.50	554.30	14.45
GICRE	249.95	263.60	246.15	255.05	6.10
PETRONET	271.00	277.50	270.85	277.00	6.15
ICICIGI	1320.00	1350.75	1303.00	1343.00	29.40
DIVISLAB	1855.00	1942.00	1854.00	1895.20	40.65
BOSCHLTD	14709.00	15200.00	14652.00	14960.00	297.45
NHPC	26.55	29.00	24.85	26.65	0.50
GODREJCP	2590.00	2799.00	2750.00	2739.40	13.30
PAEIND	25390.00	25900.00	25300.00	25877.55	449.35
ACC	1526.25	1554.90	1525.00	1550.00	25.60
AMBUJACEM	210.00	214.95	209.00	213.65	3.30
L&TFH	117.00	119.85	116.80	118.90	1.75
MOTHERSUMI	138.40	141.45	138.00	140.80	2.05
PNB	61.05	62.35	61.00	61.85	0.85
HDPCAMC	3171.40	3240.00	3171.40	3218.00	40.25
DABUR	486.70	492.00	482.75	492.00	5.20
BANKBARODA	94.20	96.25	94.00	95.25	0.95
PDLFINTD	1429.05	1447.00	1420.00	1441.50	12.95
DIF	258.10	262.00	257.10	260.45	2.35
COPAL	1477.90	1522.00	1476.95	1491.00	13.00
ASHOKLEY	85.60	87.00	85.60	86.60	0.70
OFSS	2955.00	3004.15	2940.00	2976.00	22.00
HDCLIFE	614.30	621.90	616.00	619.95	4.20
SRTRANSFIN	1081.75	1088.95	1075.50	1082.00	6.95
DMART	1920.00	1929.05	1910.00	1926.00	11.30
BIOCON	294.00	296.80	291.25	294.30	1.65
SBLIFE	985.40	1004.00	980.20	986.50	4.80
CONCOR	549.05	555.35	547.30	552.50	2.20
SIEMENS	1578.35	1594.80	1569.15	1583.80	6.15
SHREECEM	23016.00	23200.00	23100.00	23100.00	83.30
HINDPETRO	248.00	251.25	244.30	245.00	0.35
CADILAC	269.20	272.00	268.60	269.10	-0.10
LUPIN	738.40	743.95	736.00	737.90	-0.50
BAJAJHLDRG	3353.20	3372.90	3333.05	3348.00	-5.20
PGH	11156.00	11347.00	11110.00	11225.00	-21.25
MARICO	334.70	335.80	332.00	333.90	-0.75
BANDHANBNK	476.80	480.30	474.00	475.00	-1.45
ICICIPRULI	509.00	514.65	504.85	504.85	-1.65
UBL	1268.50	1272.25	1257.10	1263.00	-5.10
HINDZINC	210.25	210.70	207.50	208.35	-0.85
INDIGO	1485.00	1485.00	1471.30	1461.30	-6.80
MCDOWELL-N	588.90	590.70	580.20	581.70	-7.00
AUROPHARMA	498.75	499.60	487.35	491.50	-6.45
NMDC	131.90	139.70	127.00	129.65	-2.45

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	SUNTV	487.30	499.00	486.95	495.00	IDFC	38.55	39.00	36.85	37.10	LEMONTREE	52.35	52.35	50.00	50.40	BAYERCROP	4080.00	4100.00	4023.95	4066.00
HDPC	2415.00	2436.80																						

Democrats present case against President Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Led by Congressman Adam Schiff, House Democrats on Wednesday began making a strong case before Senators to remove President Donald Trump in the third ever impeachment trial in the American history.

Knowing that they are unlikely to succeed in ousting Trump from the White House as Republicans enjoy a 53-47 majority in the 100-membered Senate, the managers of the House, wherein Democrats enjoy a majority, had their arguments on the Senate floor with an eye on the November elections.

Making a strong plea before Senators, Democratic Congressman Schiff, who is the chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, accused Trump of using his power to cheat in

the elections. "Today we will begin our trial with the factual chronology. The facts are damning. We're going to lay them out in great detail in our chronology today," Schiff told reporters before he went to the Senate to argue against the president.

In his opening argument, Schiff quoted founding father Alexander Hamilton who imagined a scenario in which future president would put personal interest ahead of that of the nation.

"We are here today in this hallowed chamber, undertaking this solemn action for only the third time in history, because Donald J Trump, the 45th President of the United States, has acted precisely as Hamilton and his contemporaries had feared," he asserted.

"President Trump solicited foreign interference in our democratic elections, abusing

the power of his office by seeking help from abroad to improve his reelection prospects at home. And when he was caught, he used the powers of that office to obstruct the investigation into his own misconduct," Schiff said.

The 435-member House on December 18 charged Trump with "high crimes and misdemeanors" and impeached him for pressuring Ukraine to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden, a potential Democratic rival for the current president in the 2020 elections.

The days proceedings on Wednesday began with Senate Chaplain Barry Black prayer.

"Help them remember that patriots reside on both sides of the aisle, that words have consequences, and that how something is said can be as important as what is said. Give them a civility built upon integrity

that brings consistency in their beliefs and actions," Black said.

The impeachment trial is being presided over by the Supreme Court's Chief Justice John Roberts. As per the ruled of the trial passed by the Senate Tuesday, House managers and lawyers on behalf of Trump will have 24 hours to present their cases over the three days.

As per the decorum guidelines, during the impeachment trial, Senators are supposed to stick to their seats and not talk to others, and not bring cell phones or tablets to the floor.

But a number of Senators on both sides were seen breaking this decorum.

"I am not somebody who is very good at sitting at one place," said Senator Pat Thune.

On the Senate floor, Senators were allowed to drink only water and milk. A large number of Senators were seen drinking milk.

Trump's lawyers led by Pat Cipollone and Jay Sekulow are planning to make a strong defense for the president. Based on their multiple television interviews and interaction with reporters they are likely to paint Trump as a victim of a partisan charade.

"We will challenge aggressively the case that they're putting forward based on what we're hearing, and we also have an affirmative case as well," Sekulow told CNN on Wednesday.

"They're not here to steal one election. They're here to steal two elections. It's buried in the small print of their ridiculous articles of impeachment. They want to remove President Trump from the ballot," Cipollone said.

Soon after Trump returned to the White House after attending the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, the

White House alleged that Schiff's one-sided impeachment report — the document that serves as the basis for Democrats' entire case — is nothing but a partisan hatchet job.

"Rather than drawing more attention to their flimsy, fake 'investigation,' Schiff chose to deflect and make up more lies about President Trump," it said.

Senate Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein said the case made by the House impeachment managers is a fact-based case that lays out how Trump tried to trade nearly USD 400 million in appropriated funds for Ukraine in exchange for its interference in our upcoming presidential election.

"We also continue to hear from the House managers about why we need to have access to documents and witnesses," she said.

Putin's constitutional proposals OK'd in first Duma reading

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia's parliament has approved a package of constitutional amendments in a first reading Thursday, in a move widely seen as an attempt by President Vladimir Putin to stay in on power past the end of his term in 2024.

Putin submitted the amendments to the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, on Monday, just several days after presenting them in the annual state-of-the-nation address last week.

He suggested that lawmakers could name prime ministers and Cabinet members, proposed a greater role for the State Council, an obscure consultative body of regional governors and federal officials, and sought to prioritize the primacy of Russian laws over international law.

The proposed changes, he argued, would bolster democracy. The Kremlin-controlled Duma unanimously voted for the amendments on Thursday, after discussing them for two hours.

Putin, a 67-year-old former KGB officer, has led Russia for more than 20 years — the longest since the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. According to the Russian Constitution, he will have to step down in 2024, having served two consecutive terms.

Putin said that the constitutional changes need to be approved by the entire nation, but it remains unclear how such a vote would be organized.

Russian opposition members condemned the reform as a "constitutional coup" and called for a rally against it on Feb. 29.



Pavel Krashenninikov, lawmaker and co-chair of the constitutional reform working group, centre, talks to his colleagues prior to a session at the Russian State Duma, the Lower House of the Russian Parliament in Moscow, on Thursday. AP

Iran uses violence, politics to try to push US out of Iraq

AP ■ BEIRUT

Iran has long sought the withdrawal of American forces from neighbouring Iraq, but the US killing of an Iranian general and an Iraqi militia commander in Baghdad has added new impetus to the effort, stoking anti-American feelings that Tehran hopes to exploit to help realize the goal.

The January 3 killing has led Iraq's parliament to call for the ouster of US troops, but there are many lingering questions over whether Iran will be able to capitalize on the sentiment.

An early test will be a "million-man" demonstration against the American presence, called for by influential Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and scheduled for Friday.

It is not clear whether the protesters will try to recreate a New Year's Eve attack on the US Embassy compound in Baghdad by Iran-supported militias in the wake of US airstrikes that killed 25 militiamen along the border with Syria.

Iran might simply try to use the march to telegraph its intention to keep up the pressure on US troops in Iraq.

But experts say Iran can be counted on to try to seize what it sees as an opportunity to push its agenda in Iraq, despite an ongoing mass uprising that is targeting government corruption as well as Iranian influence in the country.

"Iran is unconstrained by considerations of Iraqi sovereignty, domestic public opinion, or legality when compared to the Western democracies," said David Des Roches, an expert with The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

"This is Iran's strategic advantage; they should be expected to press it."

A withdrawal of US troops from Iraq would be a victory for Iran, and Tehran has long pursued a two-pronged strategy of supporting anti-US militias that carry out attacks, as well as exerting political pressure on Iraqi lawmakers sympathetic to its cause.

Despite usually trying to keep attacks at a level below what might provoke an American response, Iran-backed Kataib Hezbollah fired a barrage of rockets at a military base in Kirkuk in December, killing a US contractor and wounding several US and Iraqi troops.

The US responded first with deadly airstrikes on Iran-affiliated militia bases in western Iraq and Syria, then followed with the January 3 drone attack that killed General Qassem Soleimani, Iran's most powerful military officer, along with Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as they left Baghdad's airport.

The severity of the US response surprised Iran and others, and it had the unanticipated result of bolstering Tehran's political approach by prompting the Iraqi parliament to pass the nonbinding resolution pushed by pro-Iran political factions calling for the expulsion of all foreign troops from the country.

In response, President Donald Trump has threatened sanctions on Iraq.

"What they want to do is get rid of US troops in what they see as a legitimate political manner," said Dina Esfandiari, a London-based expert with The Century Foundation think tank.

"If Iraqis themselves are voting out US troops, it looks a lot better for Iran than if Iran is a puppet master in Iraq trying to get rid of them — and on top of that it would be a more

lasting decision."

The legitimacy of the resolution is a matter of dispute. Not only was the session boycotted by Kurdish lawmakers and many Sunnis, but there also are questions of whether Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi has the ability to carry it out.

Abdul-Mahdi resigned in November amid mass anti-government protests but remains in a caretaker role.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo bluntly rejected the call for the troops' removal, instead saying Washington would "continue the conversation with the Iraqis about what the right structure is."

Abdul-Mahdi strongly supported the resolution, but since then has said it will be up to the next government to deal with the issue, and there are indications he has been working behind the scenes to help keep foreign troops in the country.

After closed-door meetings with German diplomats last week, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said the prime minister had assured them that he had "great interest" in keeping the Bundeswehr military contingent and others part of the anti-Islamic State coalition in Iraq.

Trump agrees US-Iraq 'security partnership'

AFP ■ DAVOS (SWITZERLAND)

President Donald Trump and his Iraqi counterpart Barham Saleh agreed on Wednesday on the need for a continued US military role in the country, the White House said. In Davos, Switzerland, the two presidents held their first meeting since the United States killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad, sparking an Iraqi parliament call for expulsion of US troops.

"The two leaders agreed on the importance of continuing the United States-Iraq economic and security partnership, including the fight against ISIS," the White House said.

"President Trump reaffirmed the United States' unwavering commitment to a sovereign, stable, and prosperous Iraq." Tensions between Washington and Tehran boiled over onto Iraqi soil this month, with the US killing top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad and Iran striking back at an Iraqi base hosting American soldiers.

Furious at the US hit, Iraq's parliament voted January 5 to oust all foreign troops, including some 5,200 American soldiers deployed alongside local

forces. A source from Saleh's office told AFP he had discussed with Trump the US drone strike as well as the withdrawal of forces. Trump told Saleh that he "does not want to stay in Iraq," the source said, and would draw down forces in an "unprecedented way."

Saleh told world leaders in Davos the parliamentary vote was "not a sign of ingratitude or hostility," but a response to a violation of his country's sovereignty.

"It is not in our interest to choose to ally with one side at the expense of others, as long as both respect our sovereignty and independence." He added that "no country should seek to dictate to Iraq" the nature of its relationships.

Saleh condemned acts of violence against the months-long protests movement rocking Baghdad and Iraq's Shiite-majority south, which has left hundreds dead since October.

He met Trump on the Davos sidelines, hosting a brief press conference but brushing off questions on parliament's vote Trump left the annual World Economic Forum together in Davos later Wednesday to return to Washington.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, centre, shakes hands with Yaffa Issachar, mother of Israeli citizen Naama Issachar who is jailed in Russia for drug trafficking, during the meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 2nd right, in Tel-Aviv, Israel on Thursday. Putin arrived to attend the World Holocaust Forum, which coincides with the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp. AP

UN court orders Myanmar to prevent Rohingya genocide

AP ■ THE HAGUE

In a sweeping legal victory for members of the Rohingya Muslim minority, the United Nations' top court on Thursday ordered Myanmar take all measures in its power to prevent genocide against the Rohingya people.

The court's president, Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, said the International Court of Justice "is of the opinion that the Rohingya in Myanmar remain extremely vulnerable."

The court added that its order for so-called provisional measures intended to protect the Rohingya is binding "and creates international legal obligations" on Myanmar.

At the end of an hour-long sitting in the court's wood-paneled Great Hall of Justice, judges also ordered Myanmar to report to them in four

months on what measures the country has taken to comply with the order and then to report every six months as the case moves slowly through the world court.

Rights activists immediately welcomed the unanimous decision.

"The ICJ order to Myanmar to take concrete steps to prevent the genocide of the Rohingya is a landmark step to stop further atrocities against one of the world's most persecuted people," said Param-Preet Singh, associate international justice director of New York-based Human Rights Watch.

"Concerned governments and UN bodies should now weigh in to ensure that the order is enforced as the genocide case moves forward."

The world court order for what it calls provisional mea-

sures came in a case brought by the African nation of Gambia on behalf of an organization of Muslim nations that accuses Myanmar of genocide in its crackdown on the Rohingya.

At public hearings last month, lawyers for Myanmar's accusers used maps, satellite images and graphic photos to detail what they call a campaign of murder, rape and destruction amounting to genocide perpetrated by Myanmar's military.

The hearings drew intense scrutiny as Myanmar's former pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi defended the campaign by military forces that once held her under house arrest for 15 years.

Suu Kyi, who as Myanmar's state counselor heads the government, was awarded the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for championing democracy and human

rights under Myanmar's then-ruling junta. She wasn't present in court for Thursday's hearing.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar has long considered the Rohingya to be "Bengalis" from Bangladesh even though their families have lived in the country for generations. Nearly all have been denied citizenship since 1982, effectively rendering them stateless. They are also denied freedom of movement and other basic rights.

In August 2017, Myanmar's military launched what it called a clearance campaign in northern Rakhine state in response to an attack by a Rohingya insurgent group. The campaign forced more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee to neighboring Bangladesh and led to accusations that security forces committed mass rapes, killings and burned thousands of homes.

World leaders rally in Jerusalem against anti-Semitism

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Dozens of world leaders descended upon Jerusalem on Thursday for the largest-ever gathering focused on commemorating the Holocaust and combating modern-day anti-Semitism.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron, Britain's Prince Charles, Vice President Mike Pence and the presidents of Germany, Italy and Austria were among the more than 40 dignitaries attending the World Holocaust Forum, which coincides with the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp.

Pence and Putin arrived Thursday morning within less than an hour of each other and both were scheduled to meet

Israeli leaders before and after the main event.

The three-hour-long ceremony at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial — called "Remembering the Holocaust: Fighting Antisemitism" — looks to project a united front in commemorating the genocide of European Jewry amid a global spike in anti-Jewish violence in the continent and around the world. But the unresolved remnants of World War II's politics have permeated the solemn assembly over the differing historical narratives of various players.

Poland's president, who's been criticised for his own wartime revisionism, has boycotted the gathering since he wasn't invited to speak while Putin was granted a central role

even as he leads a campaign to play down the Soviet Union's pre-war pact with the Nazis and shift responsibility for the war's outbreak on Poland, which was invaded in 1939 to start the fighting.

On the eve of the gathering, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin implored world leaders assembled for a dinner at his official residence to "leave history for the historians."

"The role of political leaders, of all of us, is to shape the future," he said.

The event marks one of the largest political gatherings in Israeli history, as a cascade of delegations including European presidents, prime ministers and royals, as well as American, Canadian and Australian representatives, arrived at Ben-Gurion Airport.

More than 10,000 police officers were deployed in Jerusalem and major highways leading to it. Large parts of the city were shut down ahead of the event. For Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu it offered another opportunity to solidify Israel's diplomatic standing and boost his profile as he seeks re-election on March 2.

He was hoping to use his meetings with world leaders to bolster his tough line toward Iran and rally opposition to a looming war crimes case against Israel in the International Criminal Court.

"Iran openly declares every day that it wants to wipe Israel off the face of the earth," he told Christian broadcaster TBN.

"I think the lesson of Auschwitz is, one, stop bad things when they're small ...

and, second, understand that the Jews will never ever again be defenseless in the face of those who want to destroy them." For historians, though, the main message is one of education amid growing signs of ignorance and indifference to the Holocaust.

A comprehensive survey released this week by the Claims Conference, a Jewish organisation responsible for negotiating compensation for victims of Nazi persecution, found that most people in France did not know that 6 million Jews were killed during World War II.

Among millennials, 45 per cent said they were unaware of French collaboration with the Nazi regime and 25 per cent said they weren't even sure they had heard of the Holocaust.

The World Holocaust Forum is the brainchild of Moshe Kantor, the president of the European Jewish Congress, an umbrella group representing Jewish communities across Europe. The group recently reported that 80% of European Jews feel unsafe in the continent.

Kantor established the World Holocaust Forum Foundation in 2005 and it has held forums before in Auschwitz, the killing fields of Babi Yar in Ukraine and at the former concentration camp Terezin. Thursday's event is the first time it is convening in Israel.

The official commemoration marking the 75th anniversary of Auschwitz's liberation will be held next week at the site itself in southern Poland.

Nepal ends search for missing South Korean trekkers

AP ■ KATHMANDU

Nepalese authorities decided Thursday to end the search for four South Korean trekkers and three Nepali guides who were buried by an avalanche on a popular trekking route.

Despite several attempts to locate them, including digging deep through snow at several spots on the Mount Annapurna Circuit trail, crews have not been able to find any clues of their whereabouts.

Nepal army spokesman Brig. Gen. Bigyan Dev Pandey said. Rescuers have been searching since an avalanche swept the South

Korean team and their guides on Friday. Fresh snowfall and smaller avalanches on the trail have made the operation difficult. Authorities had mobilized army experts, mountaineering guides and local villagers to help in the search. Attempts were being made to pull out the rescue team from the avalanche site but weather conditions were delaying the effort. It could take weeks or months for the snow to melt and for the bodies to surface.

The missing South Koreans were two women in their 30s and 50s and two men in their 50s, all teachers who were doing volunteer work in Nepal.



People walk past the closed Hankou Railway Station in Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province on Thursday. Overnight, Wuhan authorities announced that the airport and train stations would be closed, and all public transportation suspended. Unless they had a special reason, the government said, residents should not leave Wuhan, the sprawling central Chinese city of 11 million that's the epicenter of an epidemic that has infected nearly 600 people. AP

Indian economy poised to take off: Goyal

PTI ■ DAVOS

Asserting that the Indian economy is well-poised to take off, Union minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said there is a lot of enthusiasm for making investments in the country. Speaking at a session at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual summit here, the Commerce and Industry Minister also said the government will hold discussions with Britain and European Union on free trade agreements. Britain is set to leave the European Union by end of January. "... Things have once again started showing an upturn... Economy is well poised to take off from here," Goyal said.

According to him, the enthusiasm to make investments in India is infectious. At least four or five companies have said that more than 50 per cent of their total workforce would operate out of India in the coming years. Some of them are big names, he noted.

On RCEP, Goyal said it was an "unbalanced trade agreement, which was really not fulfilling the guiding principles on which RCEP started about eight years ago, therefore India chose not to participate in it".

Out of the RCEP countries India already has bilateral trade agreements with ASEAN 10



'If I were not a Minister today, I would be bidding for Air India'

PTI ■ DAVOS

As the Government works on divesting debt-laden Air India, Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said if he was not a minister, he would be bidding for the airline. Air India has been in the red for long and the government is now in the process of finalising the contours for its disinvestment.

Responding to a query about proposed disinvestment of Air India, BPCL and other companies, Goyal said in the first term, the Government had inherited an economy which was in pretty terrible shape.

Steps were taken to put the economy back in shape and if

the government had looked at divesting these jewels, it would not have got a great value.

He was talking at a session on 'Strategic Outlook: India' at the WEF 2020 here.

"If I weren't a minister today, I would be bidding for Air India. It has some of the best bilaterals the world over... A well managed and efficient Air India with lot more good aircraft put in using these bilaterals is nothing short of a gold mine to my mind," Goyal said.

Bilaterals refers to an agreement between two countries that allows each other's airlines to operate services with a specific number of seats.

with Japan and Korea, we are close to concluding negotiations with Australia which we have restarted now and in the next 6 to 8 months we are can close a bilateral trade partnership with Australia, he said.

"RCEP was effectively becoming a free trade agreement between China and India. I don't think India is ready to engage unless we see open government, better transparency, regulatory practices being followed, and a greater market access for Indian goods and services on a reciprocal basis," he said. Speaking at a session on 'Strategic Outlook: India' at the WEF 2020 here, Goyal said "trade negotiations are very complex issues. You do not negotiate trade with deadlines and in a hurry".

Asked about the credit crunch in the Indian economy, State Bank of India Chairman Rajnish Kumar said he believes the credit market will be back to stability and normalcy soon.

"There has been a series of steps... Bank recapitalisation has happened, PSU banks, which control about 60 per cent of the assets in the country are returning to profits...," he said. He added the course correction that was required has happened and banks are much more cautious than what we were earlier. He further stressed that "we are ready to lend".

India flays UN delay in tackling terrorism comprehensively

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

India has criticized the UN's inability to agree on a common definition of terrorism and its failure to craft a "coherent and well-coordinated" policy to tackle the global scourge, saying the international community has failed itself by procrastinating on the long-pending CCIT's conclusion.

India proposed a draft document on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the UN in 1986 but it has not been implemented as there is no unanimity on the definition of terrorism among the member states.

India's Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador K Nagaraj Naidu, speaking at a ses-

sion of the General Assembly on 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization' here on Wednesday, said: "... Fires continue to blaze on our horizon, demanding from us 'collaboration not competition?, innovation not inertia'.

He stressed that the global community's inability to seriously address terrorism - the most dangerous of scourges faced by states and societies since the World War II - "casts doubt on the relevance of this Organisation to the very people whom the Charter obliges us to protect".

"The UN is yet to agree on a common definition, let alone craft a coherent and well-coordinated policy to tackle terrorism and dismantle its enabling networks. We have failed ourselves

by continuing to procrastinate on concluding the "Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism?," he said.

Naidu also lamented the lack of progress in reforming the UN Security Council, saying the organisation faces a crisis of legitimacy if it does not reform itself to represent the contemporary realities.

"In an increasingly contested world, the credibility of the United Nations will hinge on its ability to 'navigate the faultlines' and shape the 'rules of the game' for a secure and prosperous future. This requires continuous attention and active engagement, not just a one-time push forced by the latest 'crisis of the day'," the Indian diplomat said.

Naidu underscored that

from the oceans to outer-space and cyber-space, the global commons require ethical and normative principles to guide their equitable, responsible and sustainable use.

"What holds the UN back from truly invigorating action on issues of pressing global concern? The answer lies in something that unfortunately does not find mention in the report.

"The effectiveness, relevance and longevity of any institution lies in its dynamic character and its 'ability to adapt itself to the changing times. As long as the key organs of this Organisation remain 'anchored in a governance architecture that is frozen in a bygone era,' the crisis of legitimacy and performance will persist," he said.

Brexit bill crosses UK Parliament finish line in time for Jan 31 exit from EU

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK's so-called divorce agreement with the EU has crossed the Parliament finish line, setting in motion the final stages for Britain's exit from the 28-member economic bloc on January 31. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed in a statement on Thursday that the European Union (EU) Withdrawal Agreement Bill has cleared its parliamentary stages and is now awaiting Royal Assent by Queen Elizabeth II before it goes on for EU ratification.

"Parliament has passed the Withdrawal Agreement Bill, meaning we will leave the EU on January 31 and move forwards as one United Kingdom.

At times it felt like we would never cross the Brexit finish line, but we've done it," said Johnson, who won a landslide victory in last month's general election on the platform that he will 'Get Brexit Done'.

"Now we can put the ratour and division of the past three years behind us and focus on delivering a bright, exciting future - with better hospitals and schools, safer streets and opportunity spread to every corner of our country," he said.

Downing Street said it expects European Council President Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen to sign the agreement in Brussels on Friday, following which it comes back for

Johnson's signature in the UK. The European Parliament is set to hold its consent vote on the Bill next Wednesday.

Once the legal processes have been completed, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab will sign the UK's "instrument of ratification", which will then be deposited in Brussels ahead of the exit day. In Brussels, the EU will do the same in order for the UK to formally leave at 23:00 GMT next Friday.

From February 1, the UK enters into an agreed 11-month transition period in which it will continue to follow EU rules but without representation at any of the economic bloc's institutions.

This arrangement will

come to an end on January 1, 2021, by which time the two sides hope to have completed negotiations on their future economic and security partnership as part of a new agreement.

The bill crossing its parliamentary threshold marks a landmark moment after the UK voted in favour of Brexit in a referendum in June 2016.

A lack of government majority proved a stumbling block to getting any Brexit agreement over the line for Johnson's predecessor Theresa May. The landscape transformed after the December 2019 snap poll, which handed Boris Johnson a thumping 80-seat majority largely on the back of his Brexit agenda.

Pakistan says trade with India plunges significantly

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's central bank has said that trade between Islamabad and New Delhi plummeted significantly this fiscal, apparently due to the ongoing tensions with India over the Kashmir issue.

The State Bank of Pakistan data in the first half of 2019-20 fiscal starting from July 1 showed that Pakistan's exports to India during the period came in at an insignificant USD 16.8 million as compared to USD 213 million in first half of 2018-19, Dawn news reported.

But the declining trade across the border had not affected the balance of trade which was still heavily skewed in favour of India, it said.

Meanwhile, imports from India also fell to USD 286.6

million as against USD 865 million in the same period. As a result, Pakistan's trade deficit with the eastern neighbour amounted to USD 269.8 million.

India on August 5 revoked the special status to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two Union Territories, evoking strong reactions from Pakistan which has been trying to internationalise the issue.

Pakistan reacted by downgrading diplomatic ties with New Delhi and banning trade with India.

The ties have not recovered from the jolt and trade and commercial activities have suffered.

The central bank data showed that imports from China - the country's largest trade partner - fell to USD 4.8

billion during July-December versus USD 5 billion in same period last year.

However, exports slightly rose to USD 936 million, up from USD 889 million in the first half of 2019-20. This meant a trade balance with China at a negative USD 864 billion.

With the second largest partner, the United Arab Emirates, there was some improvement as exports to the Gulf country increased to \$827m in the period, from USD 638 million. This was driven by a significant decline in imports to USD 3.6 billion, down from USD 5 billion.

Pakistan has succeeded to drastically reduce the current account deficit mainly through cut in imports bill, which is also reflected in the above-mentioned two cases.

Pak court comes to the rescue of Hindu girl after forced conversion, marriage

PTI ■ KARACHI

A 15-year-old Hindu girl, who was forcibly converted to Islam and married to a Muslim man in Pakistan's Sindh province, has been sent to a women protection centre following a court order, officials said.

Mehak Kumari, a class IXth student, was allegedly abducted from Jacobabad district on January 15 by Ali Raza Solangi who later married her.

Her father Vijay Kumar filed an FIR, claiming that Solangi had abducted and married her forcibly. He also said that her daughter was 15-year-old when she was abducted. Kumari and Solangi were produced before a court on Tuesday from where she was sent to the women police protection centre, according to court officials.

The court also directed the Chandka Medical College Hospital to submit a report about her age by February 3.

The Express Tribune reported that Sindh Minorities Affairs Minister Hari Ram Kishori Lal has assured Kumari's family of full support.

In a telephonic conversation with the

leader of a Hindu group of Jacobabad district on Wednesday, the minister said that the Sindh government fully supports the stance of the family and the Hindu group.

Lal said that forced conversion of minor Hindu girls has become a common issue, adding that Hindus of Sindh are its oldest inhabitants, and their lives and deaths are linked deeply with the soil of the province.

He appealed to the authorities to take notice of the brutality and injustice being committed against Hindu girls and take measures to ensure security for the minority community.

Lal, pointing out that Kumari could not marry until she was 18 under the legislation of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, said that her marriage was a crime as per the law.

The minister praised the court's decision to send the girl to the women police protection centre, saying that girls in such cases should not be handed over to those who were involved in their abduction.

Abduction and conversion of Hindu women has been a major issue in Sindh province where the majority of Pakistani Hindus live.

Firefighting plane crashes in Australia

AP ■ SYDNEY

Three American crew members died Thursday when a C-130 Hercules aerial water tanker crashed while battling wildfires in southeastern Australia, officials said.

New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian confirmed the crash deaths in the state's Snowy Monaro region as Australia attempts to deal with an unprecedented fire season that has left a large swath of destruction.

Coulson Aviation in the US state of Oregon said in a statement that one of its Lockheed large air tankers was lost after it left Richmond in New South Wales with retardant for a firefighting mission. It said the accident was "extensive" but had few other details.

"The only thing I have from the field reports are that

the plane came down, it's crashed and there was a large fireball associated with that crash," said Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons. He said all three aboard were US residents.

"Unfortunately, all we've been able to do is locate the wreckage and the crash site and we have not been able to locate any survivors," he said.

The tragedy brings the death toll from the blazes to at least 31 since September.

The fires have also destroyed more than 2,600 homes and razed more than 10.4 million hectares (25.7 million acres), an area bigger than the US state of Indiana. Coulson grounded other firefighting aircraft as a precaution pending investigation, reducing planes available to firefighters in New South Wales and neighboring Victoria state.

Stopped reading papers, watching evening chat shows on TV: Imran

PTI ■ DAVOS

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday said he has stopped reading morning newspapers and watching evening chat shows on TV due to extreme negativity targeted at him in the media.

He also said it was a painful process which Pakistan has to go through to reap the benefits of deep institutional and governance reforms being implemented by his government and asked everyone to 'be patient' for results.

"It's like you want to go to heaven, but don't want to die. This might be a bad example, so I'll say you want a tumour

to be removed but don't want the pain of surgery," Khan said here at a breakfast session aimed at showcasing his vision for Pakistan and its economic potential before the global business leaders as well as overseas Pakistanis.

Khan, who is here to attend the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2020, said his vision is to make Pakistan a "humane, just and welfare society" as was envisioned by the founding fathers of the country.

"I am used to criticism, being in public life for 40 years, but the last one and half years I've been hammered in media.

"The best I could do was I



stopped reading newspapers and don't watch evening chat shows. Problem is my officials do watch them and then tell me what they are saying," he said. "All I want to say is be patient. It will take a lot of polit-

ical will and courage to take on all this criticism and succeed eventually," he said.

"It is going to be difficult. There is some short term pain and struggle ahead but be assured we have good times ahead for Pakistan," Khan said.

The prime minister also said that when you are going through reforms and especially governance reforms, it is not possible for results to reflect immediately.

"You can destroy an institution immediately but it takes time to restore it. We have so many bloated institutions and many of people there are without work and also without even the right background," he said.

FATF: China says Pak made 'visible progress' to curb terror financing

PTI ■ BEIJING

China, which hosted a key meeting of the international terror financing watchdog in Beijing, said on Thursday that Pakistan has made "visible progress" to strengthen its counter terrorism financing system, which should be encouraged by the world community.

The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Asia Pacific Joint Group met in Beijing this week to scrutinise Pakistan's progress report to adopt stricter laws against terror financing and money laundering. China is the President of the FATF and co-chair for Asia Pacific Joint Group.

A Pakistani delegation led by Minister for Economic Affairs Division Hammad Azhar is in Beijing to brief the financial task force about the steps taken by Islamabad to implement the recommendations made by the FATF.

Asked how China viewed Pakistan's progress, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told the media in Beijing that he has no information on the proceedings which is still going on but praised Islamabad's efforts.

"Pakistan has made great efforts to strengthen its domestic counter terrorism financing system with visible progress. Its political will and active efforts should be recognised and

encouraged by the international community," he said.

"We hope the FATF will continue to offer constructive support and assistance to Pakistan in its continued efforts to improve the counter terrorism financing system and effectively fighting the terrorist financing," he said.

"As FATF president and co-chair for Asia Pacific Joint Group, China will continue to uphold an objective, just and constructive attitude and participate in relevant discussions," he said.

The FATF in October last decided to keep Pakistan on its 'Grey' list for failure to curb funnelling of funds to terror groups Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-

e-Mohammad and others. If not removed off the list by April, Pakistan may move to a blacklist of countries that face severe economic sanctions, such as Iran.

Pakistan has submitted a 650-page review report to the FATF on January 8. The report was submitted in response to 150 questions raised by the FATF regarding new Pakistani policies on money laundering. The report outlined the steps taken by Pakistan between October 2019 to January 2020 to implement the group's recommendations.

The FATF meeting scrutinises whether Pakistan has complied with an earlier agenda presented to it.



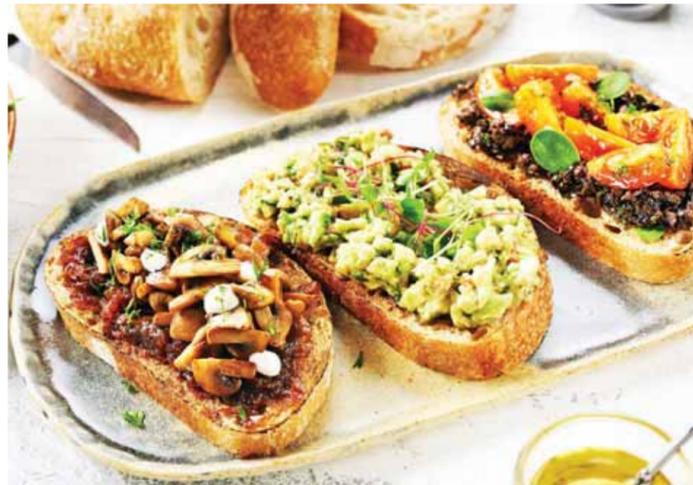
It's a warm winter afternoon. The sun is shining bright. The birds chirp in the distance. The plants rustle as the wind blows through them. The ambience, filled with rustic wooden chairs and tables and green plants around me, seems to be the perfect setting for a lunch date with myself. Fig@Museo in Gurugram lets you sink in the warmth of mother nature and reconnect with yourself as easily as a phone connects with the home WiFi. Located in Asia's largest photography museum, there are some elements of both cosy and chic in the café. While one can enjoy the cosyness and relish the aroma of the bakery indoors, the outdoor seating makes for a fresh atmosphere, perfect for ambling conversations during a winter date.

Jumping to grabbing something to sip on, I order two smoothies — Kale and avocado, and Wild berry (vegan, no dairy). While the former seems to match with the greenery around me, the latter derives its hue from the red anthuriums. Well, the taste turns out to be quite similar to their colour comparisons too. The kale and avocado smoothie is leafy in its texture but absolutely refreshing and delicious. The wild berries smoothie is sweet and sour, that leaves a perfect tanginess on my tastebuds. Though sweeter than the former, there can't be any probable comparison between both.

While I am still relishing the fresh smoothies, the Chipotle chicken soft taco makes its way to my table. The tacos, served in a thin ceramic plate that resembles the colour of soil, are filled with the chipotle chicken while the dollops of sour cream and guacamole round it off. One bite into the taco and I realise that its shell is very soft and gets pulled apart very easily. Even though the sweetness

NATURE'S PILL

If you think the words healthy and tasty are diametrically opposed to each other, Fig@Museo will make you change your mind, says SHAMBHAVI SURI



as well as the sourness of the tomatoes come through very well, I wish the tacos would have been crispier.

While the chipotle sauce makes for some spiciness, towards the end, the sour cream, doing its job perfectly, cools off this rollercoaster of flavours. Another plate of the vegetarian tacos is served. These tacos replicate

the taste of the chipotle chicken ones, the only difference being that the meat is replaced with kidney beans here. These are sweet and satisfying.

The next dish arrives and turns out to be probably one of the healthiest breakfast dishes and also a trendsetter. It is the avocado toast or as they call it, *Trio tartines*. A toasty and crunchy sourdough bread

is the base of the dish. It is topped with a thick layer of hass avocado and garnished with goat cheese and sundried cherry tomatoes. The combination tastes as heavenly as it sounds. It begins from the crunchiness of the sourdough toast paired with the creaminess of mashed avocado and ends with the sweet and tart taste of the tomatoes. I must say, it is earthy and lip-smackingly delicious. The dish is such that I could savour it for an entire lifetime.

Next up is the Quinoa, roasted potato and poached beetroot salad (gluten-free).

The salad, almost replicating all the elements found in a garden, tastes amazing. The topping of pumpkin seeds and a pinch of lemon olive oil make all the difference, giving it a more refreshing taste.

For the main course, I order the Pumpkin massaman curry and the Thai *krpao* (gluten-free). The former is a vegetarian curry filled with roasted pumpkin and boiled potatoes. It has flavours of peanut and red chilli, which also give it a vibrant orange colour. Served with jasmine rice on the side, this luscious, thick gravy is nutty and a little spicy but makes sure that it leaves you wanting for more.

The Thai *krpao* is a non-vegetarian curry made with Thai basil chicken in soy and jaggery sauce, which lends it a velvet, dark brown texture. And like any other Thai dish, this curry too is spicy. The jaggery's sweetness is felt towards the end, relieving the taste-buds of all the spices. Undoubtedly, the two are the tastiest and healthiest meals of the day. And I can't draw a comparison between them. They're equally comforting!

However, there is always room for some dessert. To end the healthiest meal on an even healthier note, the Bailey's Tiramisu (gluten-free) is served. I can't figure out whether it is the Bailey's that is adding to its taste (and my excitement) or the dish completely replicates the flavour of the traditional tiramisu. It is This is even though the savoiardi (low density, dry, egg-based, sweet sponge biscuit) is gluten-free.

The place will make you believe what it stands by — healthy is happy. If you're looking to spend the day wherein you can relax, rejuvenate and feel healthy, this is the place for you — a day where you can concentrate on yourself.

Ditch that extra bite

Here are some ways of sticking to healthy food resolutions

For many of us, January is all about giving things up: Maybe we're going to stop eating meat and embrace a plant-based diet. Or we're ready to kick excess sugar to the curb after a holiday season awash in sweets. Or we're committed to avoiding fast food.

Starting the year with noble goals for eating well is a modern rite of passage. But it's just as common to ditch those grand plans within a few weeks. This year, how can we do it right? If we're pledging to make better food choices, which strategies can help us stick with them?

START SMALL

The consensus among experts is clear: It's tempting to begin with dramatic gestures, but the key to lasting change is setting goals that are small enough we won't scrap them by Valentine's Day.

Manageable, measurable goals can create long-term change, says Leila Azarbad, associate professor of psychology at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois. When people set lofty goals, they can get discouraged after a couple weeks. "Our self-efficacy, that belief in our own ability, tanks. And that's a huge predictor: If you don't feel confident in your ability to make the change, you're going to discontinue trying," she says.

Picture this, says Dana White, a sports dietitian and clinical associate professor at Quinnipiac University: You want to lose 20 pounds and you know that every afternoon you visit the office vending machine for a snack to boost your energy. So begin packing a healthy afternoon snack — not something punitive, but something healthier that you'll enjoy — and have that instead of a vending machine candy bar.

It's a measurable, specific change that won't be unpleasant. And if it eliminates 200 calories, that shift will make a difference over the coming weeks and months. Once that new behaviour is in place, you can add another small but meaningful change.

The same thinking works if you're eliminating animal products: Rather than going cold turkey (cold tofu?), begin by replacing one dinner per week with a vegetarian meal. Plan it for a night when you won't be rushed and can make an appealing recipe, or budget for going out once a week to a vegetarian restaurant.

Then track that change for



three weeks, says Anna Baker, assistant professor of psychology at Bucknell University, who researches the connection between behavioral factors such as self-management and health outcomes.

"You hear that it takes 21 days to create habit. There's debate about whether it's 21 exactly, but you need a certain amount of time of continuing to do something before it becomes a habit. Once you do kind of get used to that change and you're doing it regularly, then you can add in another thing," Baker says.

If you make that one good shift for three weeks, congratulate yourself. Then maintain that behaviour and add another small change, like drinking more water.

It's tempting to try making a half-dozen changes all at once, White says. But by focusing on individual, small, unhealthy behaviours and "really identifying what the triggers are that lead to those behaviors," she says, people "can have a tremendous amount of success without torturing themselves."

BE PATIENT

If your goal is to lose 20 pounds, for example, it really will take four or five months — and it should, says Alex Montoya, assistant professor of clinical exercise physiology at Alma College in Alma, Michigan.

Losing a pound a week is "really the maximum sustainable weight loss," Montoya says. Much as it surprises people, "2 pounds a week is pretty extreme."

So aim to lose 5 pounds over the next six weeks through small behavioral shifts, and measure your behavior along the way. Apps and fitness track-

ers can help, as can a notebook where you list what you've eaten.

Researchers have found "that we are notoriously bad at estimating how many calories we're taking in," Azarbad says. "We tend to underestimate what we're eating, because we forget. When we're cooking, we taste the pasta sauce a few times and those are calories. Or we walk past our colleague's desk and they had a jar of M&M's and we took a few, but those add up. That can be the difference between you losing a pound a week and you not."

DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF

Accept that mistakes are a normal part of building a new habit. If you know an event is coming up where you'll want to divert from your eating goals, accept that you may slip a bit then. Aim for "consistency, not perfection," says Baker. "You have to plan in advance that you're going to screw up. We're not perfect."

ENLIST FRIENDS

Lastly, "tell everybody you know that you're doing this because social support is huge," Azarbad says. "If you're going out to eat and they know you're trying to change your diet, they can help choose a restaurant that will accommodate you," she says.

And the need to save face may keep you on track. "Once you put it out there on social media and you tell everybody that 'I'm going to do this. I'm going to lose 10 pounds by spring break, you feel that people are watching,' Azarbad says. "We don't want other people to see us fail."

—AP

gorge us

On this Republic day, The Lalit Mangar offers a speciality brunch with organic food served in sakuras to give a rustic feel. There will be engaging activities, board games, magician, pottery making, camel rides and more. Eat healthy, stay fit and enjoy a memorable time amidst nature and youthful celebrations. **Time:** 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm **Date:** January 26 **Price:** ₹2,000 plus taxes (per person) **Venue:** The Lalit Mangar, Camp Wild Road, Dera Mandi, Faridabad.



The Westin Gurgaon is giving a patriotic flavour to its dishes. For the Republic Day there will be a special brunch with more focus on traditional Indian specialities. It features delicacies like *Gilawat ke kebab*, *Tiranga-chicken tikka*, *Murg malai tikka* and *Haryali kebab*, *Murg changezi*, *Ker sangri*, *Gatta curry*, *Sarson ka saag* and *Makki ki roti*, *Chole kulchey*, *Idiyappam* with stew and many other all-time favourites. **Time:** 12:30 pm to 4 pm **Date:** Every Sunday (Till February 2) **Price:** ₹2,537 per person **Venue:** Seasonal Tastes, The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi.



One8 Commune has a specially curated menu for the Republic day. It offers refreshing smoothies, shakes and mocktails at ₹71 to mark the 71st Republic Day. On the menu are passion fruit and greens smoothie, oats and berries smoothie, chocolate and mango shakes along with watermelon and guava freezer and much more. **Date:** January 26 **Venue:** One8 Commune, Worldmark 2, Aerocity.



Celebrate this Republic Day at Imperfecto Patio with their tricolour drinks. It includes Tricolour virgin mojito, Rise of republic, Constitution of India by corporate mixologist Mahendar Manne. **Date:** January 25 and 26 **Time:** 12 pm to 9 pm **Price:** ₹225 per drink (plus taxes) **Venue:** Imperfecto Patio, Sector 51, Gurugram.



Glasshouse, Hilton Garden Inn celebrates Republic Day with Tricolour salad, Republic day macarons, *Tirangaa paneer tikka*, *Tirangaa pulao*, *Tricolour rasgulla* and much more, specially curated by chef Manoj Rawat. **Date:** January 26 **Time:** 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm **Price:** ₹2,000 (per person) **Venue:** Glass House, Hilton Garden Inn, Gurgaon Baani Square.



The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel is celebrating Republic day at their outdoor patio Frangipani. They will offer delicacies like *Tiranga barfi*, tricolour rice and much more. There will also be a live band to enhance the festivity mood. **Date:** January 26



RECIPES

TRICOLOUR VIRGIN MOJITO

WHAT YOU NEED

- Mint leaves
- Lime wedges: 5
- Lime juice: 25 ml
- Coco mint syrup: 20 ml
- Orange marmalade: 1 bar spoon
- Orange juice: for topping

METHOD

- Muddle lime wedges and then put mint leaves on it.
- Add lime juice and mojito syrup at the base of the glass and mix it well.
- Put crushed ice in the glass and add soda.
- Put more crushed ice and finally add the orange marmalade mixture.
- Top it with orange juice.
- Garnish it with a slice of orange on the glass.

Courtesy: Corporate mixologist, Mahendar Manne at Imperfecto Patio.



TRICOLOUR IDLI

WHAT YOU NEED

- Idli rice: 175 gm
- Urad dal: 75 gm
- Salt: 10 gm
- Carrot puree: 25 gm
- Boiled spinach puree: 25 gm

METHOD

- Soak rice and dal for two hours and then grind it until smooth.
- Add salt and mix well.
- Keep for fermentation for 12 hours at room temperature.
- Divide the batter into three parts.



- Mix carrot and spinach puree separately for red and green colours.
- Place the red batter in a round mould followed by the white then the green in the end.

- Steam in oven for 20 minutes or till it's done.
- Serve with tomato, coconut and green coriander chutney.

Courtesy: Ajay Kumar, executive chef, Jaypee Vasant Continental.

TACOS WITH TOMATO SALSA, SOUR CREAM AND GAUCAMOLE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Flour tortilla:**
 - Refined flour: 125 gm
 - Maze flour: 25 gm
 - Salt to taste
 - Sugar: 2 gm
 - Baking powder: 2 gm
- Tomato salsa:**
 - Tomato: 50 gm
 - Onion: 10 gm
 - Green chilli: 2 gm
 - Fresh coriander: 4 gm
 - Tomato juice: 10 ml
 - Tabasco sauce: 2 ml



Sour cream:

- Hung curd: 25 ml
- Fresh cream: 25 ml
- Salt: 2 gm
- Fresh coriander: 2 gm
- Lemon juice: 3 ml
- Guacamole:**
 - Avocado: 80 gm
 - Salt to taste
 - Pepper: 1 gm
 - Lemon juice: 3 ml
 - Onion: 4 gm
- Other ingredients:**
 - Apple wedges: 80 gm
 - Bread crumb: 100 gm
 - Salt to taste
 - Pepper: 1 gm
 - Spinach julienne: 10 gm
 - Radish julienne: 10 gm

- Carrot julienne: 10 gm
- Turnips slice: 5 gm
- Bell pepper: 3 gm

METHOD

- Mix all the ingredients of flour tortilla and knead well.
 - Separately mix all ingredients of tomato salsa, sour cream and guacamole.
 - Make four flat sheets of flour dough on skillet and cook slightly from both sides.
 - Boil apple wedges in cinnamon and lemon-flavoured water.
 - Add salt and pepper in apple wedges.
 - Serve tacos with salsa, sour cream and guacamole.
- Courtesy: Avinash Kumar, executive chef, Novotel Imagica Khopoli.

Trend Blazer

Anil debuts on TikTok

Actor ANIL KAPOOR has joined the "fun outlet for creativity" — TikTok.

The *Welcome* actor is quite active on social media and often takes to different digital platforms to share updates about his projects or hilarious videos, the recent one on coffee addiction, which was in response to his *Malang* co-star Disha Patani.

He has now made his debut on TikTok. The app is the destination for short-form mobile videos that saw Anil making his first appearance during *The Kapil Sharma Show*.

He was on the TV show to promote *Malang* along with its cast Aditya Roy Kapur, Disha and Kunal Kemmu.



'I would like to wish the entire nation a Happy Republic Day. This day is extremely important as it stands for unity in India. I would urge everyone to participate in this and be a part of the flag hoisting ceremony. Indians need to know about their glorious past. We are a very young country and we have to empower the women in India even more.'
—Shama Sikander

Actor ANGAD BEDI has started shooting for Ekta Kapoor's web series *MumBhai*. He has been preparing for his role of a Mumbai police officer in the series by spending time with senior cops of the Mumbai Police Force.



"Meeting cops and hearing their stories have been the most exciting part of my preparation. These men have lived life on the edge. I wouldn't try to romanticise that but their energy is infectious," Angad said.

Damon to play detective in his next

Actor MATT DAMON is reuniting with his *Ford v Ferrari* director James Mangold for a film titled *The Force*. He will be essaying the role of a detective.

Mangold has been developing the Don Winslow bestseller since 2017. *The Force* centers on corrupt NYPD officers with Damon set to play detective Denny Malone, who runs an elite crime fighting squad but becomes ensnared in a corruption scandal.

Damon recently wrapped up the drama *Stillwater*, directed by Tom McCarthy. He is starring with Jodie Comer, Adam Driver and Ben Affleck in *The Last Duel*, with Ridley Scott serving as a director.



Saving the Lion King

From shooting during monsoon to following certain rules and regulations of not entering the restricted areas, producer and director UPMA BHATNAGAR tells AYUSHI SHARMA that wildlife filming demands a lot of patience, perseverance and attention

Can you recall the news-flash of 1994 when approximately 30 per cent of the lions living in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania, died from an outbreak of Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)? The virus, which is normally associated with dogs, wasn't till then thought of as deadly enough to threaten big cats until epidemic history among other species in sanctuaries suggested otherwise. In 2018, the disease broke out in India killing Asiatic lions in the Gir forest sanctuary in Gujarat. It became an alarming concern for conservationists. Filmmaker and executive producer of Optimum Television, Upma Bhatnagar will take viewers to the forefront of India's battle with the deadly virus through her 10-part series, *The Lion Kingdom*. The epidemic threatened to wipe out the last of the surviving Asiatic lions in the world living in the wilds of the Gir National Park.

The Lion Kingdom is a story of how the forest department of Gir National Park worked round the clock to try and save the king of the jungle while battling heavy rains and flooding and dealing with a sudden increase in the number of crocodiles in the area. Not only will the audience get to witness the functioning of the veterinarian hospital in Gir but they will also get to marvel at the transformation of Gir during the monsoon as this is the first time ever the national park has been filmed during the rains. Upma discusses the highlights of her latest series.

What drove you to the world of wildlife? How did you conceptualise the series?

It was the most serious alarm not only in Gir but in India's entire conservation history since independence. At stake was the existence of an entire species of Asiatic lions that does not exist anywhere else in the world. When I heard scientists and conservationists expressing fears that the Indian lion may not be able to come out of this crisis, I was really worried. Gir is very special to me. This is where I had filmed my first TV series, *The Lion Queens of India*. I enjoy a special bond with the land, its people and its majestic animals.

We spoke with Discovery India who sensed the gravity of the situation and gave us their full creative and logistic support. Early in 2019, we started our research. We wanted to film during the monsoon and usually the forest department does not permit shoots at that time as it is almost impossible to conduct safaris. Gir is closed from June to October. But we managed to get through despite the outbreak of the disease. The series features renowned veterinary surgeon Steve Leonard as the host. He has worked with other species and he knows how the lions were treated in Tanzania.

How did the virus come to India?

A major way diseases mutate is by jumping between species. Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome, Ebola, and the H1N1 Swine Flu... all jumped from animal to animal before crossing into humans. Similarly, there is a chain of other species in between. Domestic dogs living in areas surrounding the national park were respon-

sible for the continued presence of the disease. It is transmitted through the air and infected body secretions. The symptoms generally include a high fever, inflammation of the eyes and nose and coughing. Now that they know that something like this can happen, they are taking measures to vaccinate the cattle around the area. Healthy lions from the Gir forests were also shifted to an alternative location. Shots of CDV vaccine were also imported from the US. They regularly monitored the moves of lions.

Does filming in proximity with the animals in the jungle disturb them? What were the rules and regulations that you had to follow?

I have been filming wildlife for a decade now and yes, we are not supposed to disturb the animals. There are certain rules that as a filmmaker I must follow. The first one is that you are not supposed to go very near to their respective habitats. We never go beyond the restricted area. As a result, it gets difficult to capture the animals but thanks to technological advancements, we have various types of camera lenses — wide angle, zoom, telephoto and many such. It gets easier to get all the close up shots without disturbing them. For instance, if they are roaming around in groups or the cubs are headed to play, we use long lenses to capture their everyday activities. We are told to not make too much of noise, otherwise it would scare them.

What were the on-ground challenges and how difficult was it to manage the crew

members?
The biggest challenge was that we were shooting during the monsoon. The rain poured thrice a day and the cameras' visibility was heavily affected. It's not always necessary that animals (lions) would come out of their dens during heavy rainfall. Our filming equipment were very expensive so we didn't want it to get wet or damaged because of rain. We could get wet but not the equipment, of course (laughs).

I am lucky that I have a young crew of camera persons. The toughest thing about wildlife filming is that you have to get up at very odd hours because the best time to shoot is either early morning or evening, before the sun goes down. During the day, it gets difficult because the animals are usually resting. No movement can be seen. Wildlife filming is very demanding in that sense. It takes a lot from your soul. There have been so many days when we were just waiting for the rains to stop so that we could start shooting. As a producer, you start worrying about your crew, the project that you started but then suddenly one day, you get the perfect shots. There are never any fixed schedules, so it requires a lot of patience, attention and hard work. I am really thankful for the support and cooperation from my team.

What are the ground realities in national parks that lead to the extinction of various species? What can a common man do to help in conservation?

The biggest challenge in India is the shrinking habitat for

our wildlife because India is growing at such a fast pace. You want your conservation efforts to become a success story and you are also happy to see the increasing number of particular species but then the question is — where is the space? Our country has history, mythology, culture, and everything has taught us to be tolerant of other living beings. We would not deliberately want to harm the wildlife but when conflict happens, it's basically learning to co-exist with it, which our ancestors have done fantastically so far. We need to make corridors for animals so that they can have safe passages.

As a filmmaker, I can raise awareness among the common public and tell them what are the challenges that they face. We need to start inculcating certain values in the young generation and let them know about the wonderful forest diversity that India has.

Can you share some of your anecdotes?

We were shooting with a specific tribe, so we got to know them well. Over a period of time, we were following a lioness who had just given birth to cubs. And there were other male lions who wanted to take over the area. The lioness tried very hard to hide her cubs and keep the place safe but eventually the cubs were killed. That was a heart breaking moment for all of us. We couldn't do anything about it as we could not interfere with the ways of the habitat. Such incidents always stay with you.

(The series premieres on January 27 at 9 pm on Animal Planet and Animal Planet HD.)



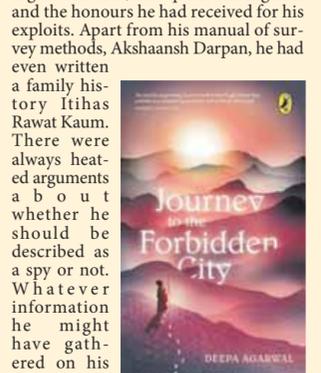
JLF welcomes a breeze of ideas

As the pleasant winters wrap up paving way for spring, the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) makes a comeback here in Diggy Palace to bring in fresh breeze of ideas, debates, dialogues and perspectives on subjects ranging from Kashmir to Indian Constitution, to climate change to artificial intelligence among many others, which have been discussed on the global map.

The festival will continue till January 27 witnessing interesting sessions a few of which include *Kashmir: Of Barbed Wires And Almond Blossom*, *The People, By The People: The Indian Constitution and Vivekanand, Savarkar And Patel: Echoes From The Past*.

Puffin also announced the release of author Deepa Agarwal's latest book, *Journey to the Forbidden City*. The book is a fascinating account of Nain Singh Rawat, an unsung Kumaoni hero, who mapped Tibet in disguise in the 19th century. Simple and accessible, this is one of the only books on Nain Singh, whose contribution was recognised by institutions like the Royal Geographical Society and Paris Geographical Society.

Deepa said, "This is a book I have dreamt of writing for many years. I had heard of my grandfather's uncle Pundit Nain Singh's achievements from childhood. Stories were told about his daring adventures, his quick intelligence and the honours he had received for his exploits. Apart from his manual of survey methods, Akshaansh Darpan, he had even written a family history Itihās Rawat Kaum. There were always heated arguments about whether he should be described as a spy or not. Whatever information he might have gathered on his journeys, Nain Singh's extraordinary contribution to the map of the world remains most important to me."



Namita Gokhale, co-director of Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF), said, "As many as 550 speakers will be participating in the festival. Out of these, 120 are award winning speakers. Once again, the world visits Jaipur and Jaipur visits the world."



Few vehicles have been so anticipated in the Indian market as the Kia Carnival has been. Not so much for the car itself but for the competition it will supposedly bring. So is it the Innova beater everyone wants it to be?



A big tent

The Toyota MPV in all its forms — Qualis, Innova and Crysta — has been an unqualified success story in India. There are enough people out there that are on their second, third and fourth purchase. This success has been built on a bedrock of extreme reliability, amazing resale value and just a bit of boredom. And somehow no one has managed to knock the Japanese off their perch, and they have tried. You had the Nissan Evalia, which sank with little trace and then the Chevrolet Tavera, which was well, inadequate. But buyers in this segment have been clamouring for more choice. Toyotas are expensive and despite the price, they are a bit light on features, particularly on the technology front — still no native smartphone interface like Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. If you want to guess why the Liva and Yaris didn't have the sales that some expected, this is one reason why.

But this isn't a story about Toyota, this is about the Kia Carnival, the white knight that some motoring journalists would have you believe has come to slay the evil Toyota dragon. At the very outset let me get something straight, the Carnival is a fabulous

product in its own right and while it might take away some Innova sales, particularly at the top of the range, it is not an Innova "killer". There are very compelling reasons to consider the Carnival, if you're someone who spends a few thousand kilometres on the road every month, going to the interiors of the country and want a degree of comfort. That is, if you're a politician, this is possibly the best vehicle you can get. Heck, I believe that the Carnival can challenge the Fortuner as India's political wagon of choice.

There are a couple of reasons for this, first and foremost, the Kia Carnival will not challenge the Innova's dominance in fleet sales, at least initially. The Carnival is available with a 2.2 litre 200PS engine driving the front wheels mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission, and while these are good things, they will limit its appeal in the taxi market. That is because this is clearly not a taxi, Kia

would like you to believe that this is a luxury liner and well in limousine trim, it certainly is quite luxurious indeed. The Carnival, which will have seven, eight and nine seat variants, is a large car with immense amount of space as well as, and this is critical, easy to manipulate seats. In addition, it has a boatload of features that marks it out as far more luxurious. But all of this comes at a price, not just a real price, which is that even entry-level variants of the Carnival are expected to cost ₹25 lakh at the very minimum. The top-spec limousine variant will top out at close to ₹35 lakh, according to market buzz.

Make no mistake, for that kind of money you get a lot. Not only are the second row seats "captain" seats, they can be adjusted six ways. It would have been a nice touch if both second-row seats were electronically controlled but that is nit-picking. The optional technology packet sees 10-inch



Android touchscreens installed on the back of the headrests, which you can use in a pinch to watch a movie that can be played back through a USB drive. What is nice is that Kia is providing a lot of charging points, including one 220V two-pin point on the second row, which is really appreciated. And multiple points to charge your phones, from a wireless induction plate in the front, to multiple USB points on three rows in addition to regular 12V points. This coupled with the fact that the rear

sunroof also opens makes the Carnival a great place to sit in. It would be nicer still had Kia installed ventilated seats on the second row as well, but that might be asking for too much.

How is the Carnival to drive? When you see the size of the car and hear about the smallish motor coupled to a front-wheel drive, you might think it is sluggish and you would be partially right. Well, the eight-speed gearbox mitigates that to a certain degree and once you are at speed, it can cruise comfortably

at the speed limit without any hesitation. And this is not a performance car by any stretch, it is meant to be a comfortable vehicle. With excellent ride as well as the fact that body roll has been minimised, the Carnival is a great car to sit in.

Let's be honest, nobody who buys the Carnival will buy it to drive themselves. It is going to be a vehicle that you get driven around in and on that front, the flat floor, the sliding doors and the adjustable seating options make this a winner if you have a large family or just want to move around in a large vehicle. If you're a politician or a chief executive, the Carnival makes sense. It does have issues, it may not fit into some parking slots in Indian malls, it certainly can't replace the Innova as a camera car — the shoots for the Carnival used the Innova as the camera car. And the Carnival will not be cheap. Base versions will cost as much as the top-end of the Innova range. So as I said earlier, this is not an Innova (and Fortuner) killer — it will take some sales away — but this is a unique vehicle in its own right and should make its own mark on the market.

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

RAFA TRIUMPHS

World No.1 defeats Federico to reach AO third round for 14th time

Rafael Nadal and Nick Kyrgios reached the Australian Open third round on Thursday after the weather-disrupted tournament faced a new challenge: dirty rain which left courts muddy and unplayable.

After a day of clean-up operations and delays, Australia's Kyrgios fought his way past Frenchman Gilles Simon in four sets and Wimbledon champion Simona Halep stamped her class with a win over Britain's Harriet Dart.

Nadal, a 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-1 winner over Argentina's Federico Delbonis, miscued a shot that hit a ballgirl in the head, but he melted hearts when he apologised and gave her a kiss on the cheek.

"I was so scared for her, honestly," the 19-time Grand Slam winner said. "The ball was quick and straight on the head. She's a very brave girl."

Kyrgios, increasingly popular with home fans after his fundraising efforts for Australia's bushfire crisis, was cruising at two sets up when he dropped the third set and with it, his composure.

But just when it looked like he would suffer one of his trademark implosions, he rallied for a 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 victory.

"I definitely lost my way a little bit... but I decided to refocus," Kyrgios said of his mini-meltdown in the third set. "I could have gone to a very dark place in the fourth set but I put it away."

Kyrgios and Nadal stay on course for a fourth-round clash and the next instalment in their grudge match after the Aussie hit back at criticism from the "super salty" Spaniard last year.

Their victories followed a day of upheaval caused by the dirty rain, the latest weather problem at a tournament which has contended with bushfire smoke, heavy downpours and strong wind.

Rain mixed with a dust storm coated the Melbourne Park facilities in a fine layer of mud which took hours to clean and made many outside courts temporarily unusable.

'I WAS FREAKING OUT'

As action resumed Alexander Zverev, another man who has a running feud with Kyrgios, showed signs of a return to form as he downed Egor Gerasimov 7-6 (7/5), 6-



Rafael Nadal hands a ball girl his bandana after a ball hit her during his second round match against Federico Delbonis

4, 7-5. The German seventh seed has been practising up to seven hours a day after a winless ATP Cup and the hard work paid off as he safely reached the third round.

"Definitely much better than the ATP Cup. Now in the third round, I'm very happy about that," said the 22-year-old, who beat Italy's Marco Cecchinato in round one.

However, fifth seed Dominic Thiem had a scare as he was taken to five sets by Australia's 140th-ranked Alex Bolt before recovering his composure to win 6-2, 5-7, 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 6-2.

"It was all of a sudden a really tight third set that shouldn't happen. That's why I was freaking out inside and also outside today," said the two-



Simona Halep reacts after defeating Harriet Dart

time French Open finalist.

A nosebleed was one of Daniil Medvedev's biggest challenges in his win over Spanish qualifier Pedro Martinez, while Gael Monfils, who injured his racquet hand playing computer games before the tournament, downed Ivo Karlovic.

In the women's draw Halep beat Dart 6-2, 6-4, while Belinda Bencic knocked out former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko — she was playing despite the sudden death of her father this month.

Two-time Major winner Garbine Muguruza, who scaled Mount Kilimanjaro in the off-season as she searches for a return to form, dispatched home hope Ajla Tomljanovic 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Injured Sania exits with calf injury



MELBOURNE: Sania Mirza's first Grand Slam outing after maternity leave ended with an early exit as the Indian ace retired mid-way into her women's doubles first-round match due to a calf injury.

Sania and her Ukrainian partner Nadiia Kichenok, who came into the major after winning the doubles title at the Hobart International, were trailing 2-6, 0-1 against the Chinese team of Xinyun Han and Lin Zhu when the Indian called it quits.

Sania has injured her leg during practice. Her right calf strapped heavily, Sania struggled to move freely on the court. It also affected her serve.

Kichenok was also struggling at the net, often missing easy put-away volleys.

Serving at 2-4, Sania was broken by the Chinese and they served out the set easily.

The Indian took a media timeout after the first set. Soon after, the Indo-Ukrainian pair was broken in the first game of the second set and Sania found it difficult to continue.

Sania had also pulled out of the mixed doubles event, forcing compatriot Rohan Bopanna to pair with Kichenok.

Also representing India in the mixed doubles is veteran Leander Paes, who has teamed up with Jelena Ostapenko, who had won 2017 French Open.

They are open against local wild card entrants Storm Sanders and Marc Polmans. PTI



Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, left, and Burnley manager Sean Dyche watch from the touchline during Premier League match at Old Trafford

'Embarrassing' Utd suffer fresh woe

Pressure mounts on Solskjaer after 0-2 home defeat against Burnley

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United were labelled an "embarrassment" as pressure mounted on Ole Gunnar Solskjaer following Burnley's shock 2-0 victory, while Tottenham boosted their top four prospects with a 2-1 win over Norwich on Wednesday.

Solskjaer's side suffered a third defeat in their last four Premier League games to put the United boss's job security back under the microscope.

Burnley's first top-flight win at Old Trafford since 1962, secured by Chris Woods's 39th minute opener and a Jay Rodriguez thunderbolt after the break, exposed the flaws in a lacklustre United side who have made their worst start to a season since 1989-90.

The majority of Old Trafford was on its feet when chants of "stand up if you hate Glazers" echoed around the ground in reference to United's owners.

Executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward was also subjected to many other abusive chants, while those few fans who remained in the stadium booed Solskjaer and his players at full-time.

Former United defender Rio Ferdinand, a Premier League and Champions League winner with the club, slammed the performance and called for the US-based Glazer family to take action to stop the rot.

"I can't defend this," Ferdinand told BT Sport. "These young kids now in schools around the country, they are not going to be wearing Manchester United shirts."

"Fans are walking out after 84 minutes! It's an embarrassment. People at the top need to look and see this and make changes, put a plan in place that people can sit there and see where we are going now. I don't see it."

Fifth placed United are six points behind fourth placed Chelsea as they battle to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top four finish.

Solskjaer admitted United had only themselves to blame, but he claimed the youngsters in his side deserved some patience. "The boys have given everything they've got. They are expe-

riencing this period for the first time in their lives, some of them," he said.

"Of course I'm going to back them. I'm going to be here to help them get through this. When you're at Man United there's always going to be criticism."

"We can't do anything but hold our hands up and say 'this isn't good enough for this club'. Of course we're disappointed in the points tally and performances, we're still fifth in the table."

Tottenham needed a late winner from Son Heung-min to snap a four-game winless streak in the league and breathe new life into their push for a top-four spot.

ALLI ENDS DROUGHT

Dele Alli's opener had ended a three-game run without even scoring in the league for sixth placed Spurs before Teemu Pukki's penalty 20 minutes from time for bottom-of-the-table Norwich.

South Korea forward Son's stooching header 11 minutes from time hauled Jose Mourinho's men within six points of Chelsea.

Elsewhere, Ayoze Perez scored twice as third placed Leicester ended their two-match winless league run with a 4-1 victory over West Ham that was marred by an injury to their leading scorer Jamie Vardy.

Vardy limped off just before half-time at the King Power Stadium with his side 1-0 ahead thanks to Harvey Barnes' 24th-minute opener, with the winger then setting up Ricardo Pereira to fire home the second in added time.

Five minutes after the interval, Wilfred Ndidi was adjudged to have bundled Sebastian Haller over in the area and Mark Noble scored from the penalty spot.

However, Leicester earned a debatable penalty of their own when Kelechi Iheanacho was deemed to have been brought down by Angelo Ogbonna and Perez made no mistake from 12 yards.

The former Newcastle player then swept home his side's fourth goal to lift them back within three points of second-placed Manchester City.



Nianzou Kouassi celebrates with Neymar after scoring Paris Saint-Germain third goal against Reims

Neymar sets final showdown

PARIS: Neymar set up the first two goals with curling set pieces as Paris Saint-Germain won their French League Cup semi-final 3-0 away to Reims on a chilly Wednesday night.

PSG will face Lyon, who beat Lille on penalties on Tuesday, in the final at the Stade de France on April 4.

This was PSG's second cup match in three days and coach Thomas Tuchel continued to shuffle his squad.

Neymar and Kylian Mbappe, who were unused substitutes as PSG won in the French Cup at Lorient on Sunday, started while Mauro Icardi and Angel di Maria who began that game, shivered on the bench on a below-freezing evening in Champagne country. Neymar set up the first goal for his fellow Brazilian Marquinhos, another star brought back after a coach-enforced rest, after nine minutes.

Marquinhos, playing in central defence and as captain, raced in to meet an outswinging Neymar corner.

He outleaped the static Reims defenders and his powerful downward header had rebounded into the roof of the net before goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic could get close to it. After 31 minutes, Neymar again aimed for Marquinhos with an in-swinging free kick.

When the centre-back missed the ball it caught the man marking him, Alaixys Romao, by surprise and he nodded it toward goal where fullback Ghislain Konan sliced the ball into his own net.

Neymar, who produced a combative display, and Mbappe, booked for a late handball, played the full 90 minutes even though the game was settled by the 77th minute.

After 73 minutes, Reims midfielder Marshall Munetsi received a straight red card for scything down Marco Verratti. Four minutes later, substitute Nianzou Kouassi forced a rebound over the line to put PSG, eliminated in the quarter-finals last year, three up and sure of a place in the final. AFP

AFP ■ MADRID

Liga's heavyweights were both given a scare by third tier opponents in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday as Barcelona needed two late goals to beat Ibiza and Real Madrid dug deep for victory over Unionistas de Salamanca.

Barca sit 44 places ahead of Ibiza and Madrid 56 above Unionistas but the lowly duo both came close to extraordinary upsets, only for Ibiza to lose 2-1 and Unionistas 3-1 in front of their jubilant home fans.

With Lionel Messi rested and not even on the bench, Antoine Griezmann proved the saviour for Barcelona, scoring twice in the second half, including a 94th-minute winner, after Pep Caballe had given the hosts a fairytale lead at Can Misses.

"Scoring gave them confidence," said Barca coach Quique Setien. "We were a bit sloppy, we gave the ball away and that gave them life. It wasn't easy."

Discomfort was more fleeting for Madrid, who conceded an equaliser in the second half following a brilliant run and finish from Unionistas' Alvaro Romero, only to restore their advantage five minutes later.

Third division scare

Barca, Madrid made to sweat by Ibiza and Unionistas



Antoine Griezmann celebrates after scoring winner for FC Barcelona

Juan Gongora turned the ball into his own net after Gareth Bale, back from injury and illness, scored his first goal for his club since September 1.

Bale's celebrations were notably muted and he had to go off in the second half.

"He sprained his ankle a little," said coach Zinedine Zidane. "I don't think it's much but tomorrow we'll see."

At the end, Unionistas fans were waving their scarves with pride just as Ibiza's supporters had applauded their team off, even though Griezmann had dashed their hopes just moments before.

Elsewhere, holders Valencia beat Logrones 1-0 while Segunda strugglers Tenerife knocked out La Liga's Real Valladolid with a surprise 2-1 win.

Seven for CR7 against Roma

Cristiano headlines Juventus 3-1 win



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring Juventus opening goal

AFP ■ TURIN

Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri complimented Cristiano Ronaldo's mother as the Portuguese star extended his scoring streak in a 3-1 win over Roma to advance to the Italian Cup semi-finals on Wednesday.

The Portuguese star picked up a Gonzalo Higuain cross after 26 minutes, finishing off from an angle in the Allianz Stadium.

It was the 34-year-old's 12th goal in eight consecutive games in which he has played in all competitions for the



Cristiano Ronaldo's Juventus jersey

AFP ■ TURIN

Indian TT teams a win away from Olympics



Indian Table Tennis team players pose for a group photo

PTI ■ GONDOMAR

Indian men and women are just one win away from securing their maiden qualification for Olympics, following their contrasting victories against Luxembourg and Sweden respectively in the Team Qualifier here on Wednesday.

India's men's highest ranked player G Sathyan took some time adjusting to the pimped rubber of Luka Mladenovic but other than that it was a straight forward tie for the fifth seeds who play 11th seeds Slovenia in the all-important round of 16 clash today.

A quarterfinal finish guarantees qualification for the Tokyo Olympics. India has never qualified as a team in Olympic history, limiting its participation to individual events.

Sharath Kamal and Harmeet Desai got India off to a winning start, beating Gilles Michely and Eric Glod 11-9, 16-14, 116 in the opening doubles.

In the subsequent singles, world number 30 Sathyan lost the first two games against Mladenovic before fighting back to prevail 8-11, 9-11, 11-3, 13-11, 11-6.

Veteran Sharath, ranked 33, conceded a game to Glod but eventually won 11-3, 11-3, 12-14, 11-5 to complete a 3-0 vic-

tory. The seedings suggest that India are a much better side than Slovenia but Sharath said it will be 50-50 contest.

"They have a pretty balanced team," he said, referring to the presence of 40th ranked Darko Jorgic and 62nd ranked Bojan Tokic in the Slovenian camp.

Slovenia beat Iran 3-1 in their round of 32 match.

Like the men, the Indian women too are a win away from creating history. The 17th seeds pipped 11th seeds Sweden 3-2 after Archana Kamath saved a match point to beat Linda Bergstrom in the fifth and deciding rubber. She won 11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 11-7, 13-11.

However, the foundation of the memorable victory was laid by top-ranked Indian Manika Batra, who won both her singles, beating Bergstrom and Christina Kallberg 3-1 and 3-2 respectively.

The Indians will have to produce something special if they are to down a much stronger Romania in the pre-quarterfinals.

Manika, ranked at 61, is the sole Indian in the top-100 while Romania boast of 19th ranked Bernadette Szocs and 31st ranked Elizabeta Samara.

Yet to decide when to hang up boots: Chhetri

PTI ■ PUNE

Indian football team captain Sunil Chhetri on Thursday made it clear that he is yet to decide when to hang up his boots though he did not have many games left for the country.

The 35-year-old Chhetri recently said that he did not have too many games left to play with the national side and that is the reason why he won't set himself any long-term goals going forward.

"I am on the other side of my career. I have already played 112 games for my country and I am not going to play 250 games. That is what I meant that I do not have many games left. I do not know when I am going to stop but I love this game," Chhetri, said.

Chhetri, the second highest international goal-scorer among active players after Cristiano Ronaldo said, "I feel really energetic. So I will keep going as much as possible. But the fact is, I am on other side of my career and not going to play 100 games more for my country. So, whatever it is, 10, 20, 30, 40, 60, I



Sunil Chhetri in a file photo

don't know how many, but as many as I can, I will give my best," he said.

He also said that Indian football was going in the right direction but there was a long way to go.

"We have improved a little bit and have to go a long way. I think everyone who is involved with it, corporate houses, players, coaches, government, AIFF, fans, media have to come together and put the best foot forward to take it to a different level. We are going in the right direction, but the goal is far. We have to work really hard," he signed off.

Black & Blue

Upbeat India take on injury-struck Kiwis as build-up to T20 World Cup continues

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Preparations for the World Cup on top of their agenda, India will take on an injury-hit New Zealand in a rare five-match T20 International series starting today during which seam-friendly wickets would be a major challenge for the visitors.

Unlike most overseas tours, this will be a quick start for the Indian team. The team arrived in Auckland on Tuesday and Thursday was when they hit the nets ahead of the tour-opening game.

On the plus side, this hectic schedule helps the team management maintain consistency in team selection as they continue experimenting across the available squad in a World Cup year.

Despite injury issues to key white-ball personnel like Shikhar Dhawan, Hardik Pandya, Deepak Chahar and Bhuvneshwar Kumar this past home season, the bench strength has come across adequate and raring to go for challenges ahead.

It begins at the top where KL Rahul has stepped up as a key part of India's white-ball plans.

Skipper Virat Kohli dropped hints that Rahul's newfound confidence in his dual role as batsman-keeper has given vital options to the team.

According to Kohli, Rahul will continue to keep wickets in both ODIs and T20s, but will open in the shortest format while returning to the middle-order in the 50-over format.

It could mean that Prithvi Shaw is being primed for an ODI debut and a potential pairing with Rohit when the three-match series begins on February 5.

The skipper also indicated a change in middle order plans. With Rahul keep-



Indian captain Virat Kohli and New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson pose with the T20 trophy on the eve of 1st game at Eden Park in Auckland

ing wickets, the fit-again Rishabh Pant could lose his spot in the playing eleven.

Manish Pandey is expected to play as the fifth specialist batsman and Shreyas Iyer will regain his spot at number four.

Pandey, Iyer and Pant batted together in the nets on Thursday, while Sanju Samson hung around, only to pad up later on. The Kerala batsman didn't seem to be in contention for the first T20.

Pant and Pandey could both fit into the playing eleven should India opt for five bowlers and leave out the sixth option in Shivam Dube. Washington Sundar and Ravindra Jadeja are the other two all-round options.

The Yuzvendra Chahal-Kuldeep Yadav combination is yet to play a game together since the 2019 ODI World Cup, and it remains to be seen if things will change in this aspect.

In the pace department, Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah are assured

starters, while the toss-up will be between Shardul Thakur and Navdeep Saini.

New Zealand had beaten India 2-1 in the T20I series last year. The Black Caps also won 2-1 in the T20I series during their Sri Lankan tour, and then drew 2-2 at home against England in a five-match series.

Despite the recent good record in the shortest format, there is a downbeat mood in the hosts' dressing room thanks to the 3-0 shellacking received in Australia over the past month.

It hasn't helped matters that the disappointing loss to their trans-Tasman rivals has raised questions about Kane Williamson's future as captain.

For the moment, New Zealand's leading batsman is happy to lead the side across all formats, but his position is up for review after the shattering defeat to Australia.

As always, they have a dearth of all-rounders to choose from but need to balance with pickings in the pace department,

which is missing the services of Trent Boult, Matt Henry and Lockie Ferguson owing to injuries.

It remains to be seen if the Black Caps opt for two spinners in Ish Sodhi and Mitchell Santner given the really short boundaries at Eden Park, venue for the first two T20Is.

TEAMS

India: Virat Kohli (capt), Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul (wk), Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur, Navdeep Saini, Washington Sundar.

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (capt), Martin Guptill, Ross Taylor, Scott Kuggeleijn, Colin Munro, Colin de Grandhomme, Tom Bruce, Daryl Mitchell, Mitchell Santner, Tim Seifert (wk), Hamish Bennett, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Blair Tackner.

No revenge in mind against 'nice guys'



Virat Kohli during India's nets session

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

The loss still rankles him but Virat Kohli on Thursday said he can't really bring himself to think of revenge when India take on New Zealand for the first time after the Kiwis sent his side packing from the ODI World Cup last year.

The Black Caps defeated pre-tournament favourites India by 18 runs in the semifinals of the showpiece in England and today's tour-opening T20I is the first clash between the two sides since then. Kohli has spoken repeatedly about how devastating the loss was for him personally.

"Even if you want to think of revenge, these guys are so nice you cannot get into that zone," said Kohli at the pre-match press conference.

"We get along really well with these guys and it's all about being competitive on the field. As I said in England, they are probably one side that has set the example for teams to play international cricket," he reasoned.

Williamson and his men had drawn effusive praise for their grace in the aftermath of a heartbreaking World Cup final loss to England, a game that was decided on boundary count after scores were tied.

"It is not about any kind of revenge — it is two quality sides playing good cricket. It is a challenge to beat New Zealand here and we are totally up for it," Kohli said.



Indian U-19 players celebrate after win

India U-19 side look for hat-trick

PTI ■ BLOEMFONTEIN

India vs NZ (U-19 WC) Live from 1:15pm IST STAR SPORTS 2 NETWORK

Already through to the quarterfinals after two resounding wins on the trot, defending champions India will be keen to maintain their unbeaten run when they face New Zealand in the final Group A tie of the ICC U-19 World Cup here today.

India, who are atop their group with four points, had cruised to a 90-run victory over Sri Lanka in their opening encounter before outclassing debutants Japan by 10 wickets with disciplined bowling effort. The Priyam Garg-led side will start as favourites against New Zealand.

New Zealand, on the other hand, were unlucky to share a point with Japan after their match was washed out in Potchefstroom last week. However, they managed to clinch a late winner against Sri Lanka and book a place in the last eight.

New Zealand, who had finished eighth on home soil in 2018, will be looking to follow a similar trajectory as their senior counterparts, who reached the finals of the men's World Cup last year, in this edition of the U-19 showpiece.

Having won the warm up matches against Zimbabwe and Afghanistan and the quadrangular series, the Indian team would not want to lose the rhythm at any cost.

In their previous outing, India leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi (4/5) took four wickets while pacers Kartik Tyagi (3/10) and Akash Singh (2/11) shared five scalps among themselves to help the four-time champions bundle out Japan for 41.

Also on the batting front, Jaiswal (59), Garg (56) and wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel (52 not out) impressed with half centuries against Sri Lanka while Tilak Varma (46) and Siddhesh Veer (44 not out) also provided useful contributions.

However, the Indian team is yet to be tested against a strong opposition.

SINGLES

BFI OFFERED TO HOST OLY QUALIFIERS

NEW DELHI: The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has offered to host next month's Olympic Qualifying Tournament, which has been cancelled in the Chinese city of Wuhan following the outbreak of coronavirus. The qualifiers are scheduled from February 3 to 15 but the schedule has now become uncertain following the health crisis in Wuhan, which has so far claimed 17 lives and infected over 550 people. "...Due to any reason, if the event is to be shifted to a different country, BFI would be willing to host this Asian and Oceania Qualification Event 2020." BFI President stated in a letter to the Chairman of the IOC's Task Force (Boxing).

SHIVA, SONIA ENTER STRANDJA S/F

NEW DELHI: Former world medallists Shiva Thapa (63kg) and Sonia Lather (57kg) assured themselves of medals at the 71st Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament by advancing to the semifinals. Joining them was Mohammed Hussamuddin (57kg). He outpunched Ireland's Kurt Walker 5-0 to make the medal rounds. Former world silver-winner Lather (57kg) clinched a 3-2 triumph over Michaela Walsh in a hard-fought contest to enter the last-four stage. Thapa got the better of George Bates in his quarterfinal clash.

WORLD ARCHERY LIFTS SUSPENSION ON INDIA

KOLKATA: In a big boost to Indian archers' preparations for the Tokyo Olympics, the world body on Thursday conditionally lifted the suspension on India, less than a week after the embattled national federation held its elections. While lifting the ban, World Archery instructed AAI to make changes in its constitution regarding athlete membership, resolve governance issues and develop a strategic plan. It also asked AAI to furnish a quarterly progress report on these issues.

RFI LIFTS BHOKANAL'S BAN

NEW DELHI: Rower Dattu Bhokanal's two-year suspension on charges of tanking a race during the 2018 Asian Games was lifted by the national federation (RFI) after the intervention of the IOA Narinder Batra. Bhokanal was a member of the Indian quartet that won a Gold in the men's quadruple sculls event in the Asian Games but later left the single sculls race midway. He was banned by the RFI in March last year. In his explanation, Bhokanal had said that he fell off the boat as it overturned and he was also not well on that day. But after Batra asked the RFI to review its decision, they informed Bhokanal's suspension has been lifted.

CM TO GIVE SPORTS AWARDS

LUCKNOW: On the occasion of Uttar Pradesh Diwas, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will give away the Laxman and Rani Laxmibai awards to the sportspersons of the state for their outstanding performances at national and international level.

AWARD WINNERS:

LAXMAN AWARD: Shreyansh Kumar (Soft Tennis), Chaman Singh (Archery), Abhishek Yadav (Table Tennis), Shivpal Singh (Athletics), Rajeev Tomar (Wrestling), Satyendra Kumar (Shooting), Saurabh Chaudhary (Shooting), Diwakar Ram (Hockey), Rahul Dubey (Handball)

RANI LAXMIBAI AWARD: Parul Chaudhary (Athletics), Shiva Singh (Handball), Maryam Khan (Soft Tennis), Amrita Pandey (Shooting), Rajni Joshi Dixit (Hockey)

CASSELL JOINS RR AS BOWLING COACH

MUMBAI: Rajasthan Royals on Thursday appointed former Australian first class cricketer Rob Cassell as their new fast bowling coach for the upcoming Indian Premier League. Cassell has had success of working with, and developing fast bowlers during his previous coaching and development roles at South Australia and Ireland men's cricket team. The Australian represented his country at the 2002 U-19 World Cup.



India ODI skipper Mithali Raj along side NZ players

Christchurch will host 2021 WWC final

AUCKLAND: Christchurch's Hagley Oval will host the summit clash of next year's Women's Cricket ODI World Cup, it was announced on Thursday.

The 50-over tournament which will run from February 6 to March 7 will be played across six cities.

Auckland will host a bumper opening weekend at Eden Park, before the focus shifts to matches in Wellington, Hamilton, Tauranga, Dunedin and Christchurch.

The tournament, featuring 31 matches between February 6 and March 7, will be capped by a final in Christchurch under lights at the Hagley Oval, one of New Zealand's main Test venues.

Handling pressure will be key in T20 WC: Harmanpreet

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian women's cricket captain Harmanpreet Kaur in her pre-departure press conference for T20 World Cup on Thursday said handling pressure would be crucial in the upcoming ICC Women's tournament in Australia, something that her side couldn't do in the last two global showpieces.

India made a semi-final exit from the last T20 World Cup and in the previous ODI World Cup, they had finished as runners-up.

"We were quite close in the last two World Cups, the only thing is we have to keep in mind how to handle pressure in the tournaments, last two World Cups we lacked in handling pressure," Harmanpreet said.

"This time we want to enjoy rather than taking more pressure on ourselves, thinking that it is a big tournament. We have to avoid thinking like that and focus on giving our best," she added.



Indian skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and coach WV Raman answer to media queries

The 30-year-old batswoman, who has played 104 T20s, said the team needs focus on enhancing skills instead of thinking about the pressure of being at a big stage.

"Last few World Cups, we put ourselves under too much pressure of playing in a big tournament. This time

rather thinking that we are going for a big tournament, we just want to focus on our skills, how we should play and how to make the team win," she said.

"That will be very important for us and when we focus on these things, we (will) produce better results," she added. She counted spin bowling as one of

the strengths of her team.

"...They always give us breakthroughs. So I am looking forward to how our spinners perform there (in Australia) and see what they do for the team," said the skipper.

India will, in all likelihood, open with the experienced Smriti Mandhana and young Shafali Verma and according to Harmanpreet, the duo will have a crucial role to play.

"They both (Smriti and Shafali) are very important for the team and they always give their best...The first six overs are going to be important for us.

"Good start is important for the team and whenever they get a good start, we never look back. They both have very big role to play," she said.

Asked what will be her message for new players like Shafali and the 16-year-old Richa Ghosh, Harmanpreet said they would be encouraged to play their natural game.

"...Don't take any pressure because if we play freely without any pressure, you will give your 100 per cent," she said.

Root facing 'good selection headache'



Joe Root in action during third Test

SA vs Eng (4th Test, Day 1) Live from 1:30pm IST SONY ESPN NETWORK

JOHANNESBURG: England captain Joe Root on Thursday was looking forward to the prospect of two of the world's fastest bowlers operating on a pace-friendly pitch in the fourth and final Test against South Africa, starting at the Wanderers today.

Root said Jofra Archer had bowled with "good pace" in practice on Wednesday after recovering from an elbow injury which kept him out of the second and third Tests — both of which England won.

He said that if Archer had no lingering signs of injury or soreness, England would have a "really good

selection headache".

Mark Wood startled several of the South African batsmen in the third Test in Port Elizabeth, bowling bouncers at around 150kmh.

Archer is also among the world's small club of 150kmh bowlers.

"It would be nice to see how they go together," said Root. "I think they would be a relentless barrage of pace which is exciting, especially on a surface such as you typically get here at the Wanderers."

He also said that it would be "a very big achievement" if England could complete a series win.

Meanwhile, South African skipper Faf du Plessis said his side needed to dig deep to salvage a series draw.

"How strong are we mentally in this last hurdle? We know where we have been a little bit poor in our game plans," he said.

Du Plessis said Temba Bavuma would replace Zubayr Hamza in the XI, but there would also be a change in the batting order, with Rassie van der Dussen moving up to number three, the position filled by Hamza in the first three Tests.

He is also hoping that Vernon Philander, who will retire from international cricket after the match, would finish his Test career "with the storybook ending he deserves" on a pitch where he has done well in the past.

Pak need Malik & Hafeez's experience

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's T20 skipper Babar Azam has defended the decision to recall veterans Shoaib Malik and Mohammad Hafeez, saying the experienced duo's presence will help the team in its pursuit of retaining the number one spot in the shortest format.

Desperate to hold on to its numero uno status in T20 rankings, Pakistan has recalled Malik and Hafeez in the team for the three-match series against Bangladesh.

"I felt that we needed these two (Malik, Hafeez) seniors. They were part of the number one team last year," he said.

The 25-year-old bats-



Shoaib Malik in practice session

"I gave my opinion to the selectors and they heard me. Their presence will help me and the team. I will learn from them on captaincy as well," Babar added.

The 25-year-old bats-

man also said Pakistan is under no pressure in the series against Bangladesh, especially after the thrashing in last T20 series against Sri Lanka at home.

"No there is no pressure for us because what is done is done but we will not try to repeat the same mistakes we did against the Lankans," Babar said.

He made it clear that they were not taking Bangladesh lightly.

"Bangladesh have a good combination of youngsters and seniors and it will be a good competitive series. Their players have the advantage of having come here fresh out of the BPL (Bangladesh Premier League)," he said.

Lakmal sets up Sri Lanka win

HARARE: Suranga Lakmal took four for 27 to set up Sri Lanka for a 10-wicket win over Zimbabwe in the first Test on Thursday.

Resuming on 30 without loss and needing 157 to make Sri Lanka bat again, Zimbabwe recovered from the loss of three early wickets to Lakmal to reach lunch at 120 for three.

The tall pace bowler struck again immediately after, removing Brendan Taylor for 38, and Zimbabwe slumped to 170 all out, losing their last seven wickets for 50.

Sri Lanka needed just 14 to win and the openers Oshada Fernando and Dimuth



Karunaratne knocked off the runs in three overs. Angelo Mathews was named man of the match for his 200 not out in Sri Lanka's first innings of 515 for nine declared.

Sivaramakrishnan in fray for National selector's post

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India leg-spinner Laxman Sivaramakrishnan has applied for a position in the national selection panel along with former off-spinner Rajesh Chauhan and left-handed batsman Amay Khurasiya.

All the three former India internationals have confirmed that they are offering their candidature for a place in the selection committee. The last date for applying is today, January 24.

The other two confirmed applicants are former junior selector Pritam Gandhe and current junior selection committee member Gyanendra Pandey but both have completed their four-year tenure in one committee and are unlikely to be considered as per Lodha norms.

It is understood that among applicants, the "senior most Test cap" will become the chairman and if Sivaramakrishnan gets the nod, he will be the senior-most having made his Test debut in 1983 (vs West Indies in Antigua) as a 17-year-old.

The BCCI will be replacing MSK Prasad (South Zone) and Gagan Khoda (Central Zone) from the current committee.

Former junior chairman of selectors Venkatesh Prasad and former India batting coach Sanjay Bangar could also throw their hat in the ring, which will make it an interesting three-way battle for the chairman's position. It is learnt that both players are undecided. Also there is no clarity whether former India speedster Ajit Agarkar will apply or not.