

**WORLD 5**  
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**OPINION 6**  
A NEW AIR QUALITY AGENDA

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RAIPUR, FRIDAY JANUARY 17, 2020; PAGES 12-13



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# India to invite Pak for SCO meet

## MEA decries China after UNSC rejects Beijing bid to raise Kashmir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

The SCO is an eight-member economic and security bloc to which India and Pakistan were admitted in 2017. The group was founded in 2001 by



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

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



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

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

The SCO is an eight-member economic and security bloc to which India and Pakistan were admitted in 2017. The group was founded in 2001 by Russia, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said here, "India will be hosting the heads of Governments summit later this year. As per established practice and procedure, all eight members and four observer states and other international dialogue partners will be invited". Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan had attended the SCO summit in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek last June where Modi had said countries sponsoring, aiding and supporting terrorism must be held accountable.

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

# Court seeks status of Nirbhaya convicts' scheduled execution

## L-6 recommends MHA to reject mercy plea

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The court was hearing a plea by one of the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya case, Mukesh, seeking postponement of the date of his execution on the ground that his mercy petition is pending with the President.

In a related development, senior MHA officials said the L-G's recommendation to reject the mercy petition has been received. "The petition is being examined and an appropriate



decision will be taken soon," they added. The Delhi Government on Wednesday recommended rejection of the mercy plea filed by Singh in the 2012 gangrape and murder case and forwarded it to the L-G.

Meanwhile on Thursday, all the four death-row convicts were shifted to Tihar prison complex's jail number 3 where their hanging is set to take place, a jail official said.

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

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

## AAP Govt behind delay: Javadekar

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

## CAPSULE

### TRUMP IMPEACHMENT CASE SENT TO SENATE

Washington: The US House of Representatives passed a resolution and submitted the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump to the Senate for a historic trial to remove him from office, a move described by the unfazed President as "another con job" by the Democrats. P12

### JNU AGAIN EXTENDS SEM REGISTRATION DATE

New Delhi: Amid registration boycott by a section of students, the JNU said the deadline to register for the next semester has been again extended, this time till January 17.

### DHONI NOT GIVEN BCCI CENTRAL CONTRACT

New Delhi: Mahendra Singh Dhoni was on Thursday dropped from the BCCI's list of centrally contracted players, raising fresh doubts on the future of the former India captain.

### CDS: INDIA HAS CAMPS TO TACKLE RADICALISATION

New Delhi: In the first such disclosure, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat on Thursday said de-radicalisation camps are operating in the country as it was necessary to isolate people who are completely radicalised.

# 5 JeM ultras nabbed, major attack averted

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Jammu & Kashmir Police on Thursday foiled a major attack plan ahead of Republic Day by busting a terror module of Pakistan-based terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), responsible for series of grenade attacks in the recent months in Srinagar. Five operatives, associated with the JeM terror group, have been arrested by the police. A huge cache of incriminating material and explosive substances, including gelatine sticks, explosives, detonators, arms, explosive body vests, batteries and nitric acid, were recovered following searches based on their disclosures.



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

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

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

Continued on Page 4

# Venal J&K DSP aided terrorists to fly high

## UT Police strips Davinder Singh of gallantry award

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Singh was booked by the Jammu & Kashmir Police at Wanhpol Police Station in Kulgam when he was trying



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

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

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

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

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

Agencies are also suspect-

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

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

Continued on Page 4

# CBI books Adani firm for cheating

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

Detailed report on P6

# Opp boycotts Gov's address at spl session

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

In an unprecedented event, the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly witnessed a boycott of the Governor's address by main opposition parties on Thursday.

Governor Anusuiya Uikey, who was in BJP before her elevation as first citizen of the state, addressed the House while inaugurating the special one-day session to ratify Constitutional amendment for 10 years' extension of reservations to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The House ratified the amendment before adjournment.

The BJP was joined by Janta Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC) MLAs in the boycott. BJP leader Brijmohan Aggarwal said, "We had sought extension of time to discuss the Governor's address which was not granted. That is why all BJP

MLAs walked out". Former Chief Minister Ajit Jogi said a wrong precedent has been set with no discussion being allowed on Governor's address. The Governor finally read her Address despite the walkout.

The Opposition resented the fact that the Governor's address being included in two sessions. It was not being done as per constitutional provisions. With the ratification of the Constitutional amendment being the key issue on the agenda, there is no scope for discussing the Governor's address before a motion of thanks. Like Madhya Pradesh the Chhattisgarh assembly should have also provided for another day's sitting. Parliamentary Affairs



Minister Ravindra Choubey called the boycott a 'political stunt'. Former Chief Minister Raman Singh has said an important tradition of the House has been broken. "We could not be a party to this".

Last Sunday, the BJP Legislature Party met Governor Anusuiya Uike and Speaker of the Assembly Dr. Charandas Mahant and presented its objections. The MLAs argued that a one-day session could

not do justice to the agenda with no discussion taking place on the Governor's address. It has never happened before, they claimed. The Governor said the Chhattisgarh Assembly has established a good reputation in a short time with its functioning. She said on her first visit to the assembly, she is quite emotional and energised.

The Governor said, "I am very happy to say my government has given better life to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Chhattisgarh". The state is ruled by the Congress government headed by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.



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# BJP top leaders, rallies to galvanise support for CAA

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

January 23.

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

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



An internal survey of the party maintained that the BJP has ground support of 80 per cent people in several states who are largely "silent" and the party needs to work on them. The protest is sponsored by the Congress and Left which has no other issue to gain its

Monday.

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

Jain, who is overseeing BJP's campaign for CAA, said a majority of institutions and university campuses have not witnessed disturbances or anti-CAA protests. He said the party has received support of about two crore people in its mass contact programme in different states. "First we need to get to the nerve of who is radicalising people. You can start isolating these people gradually and then start a

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

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

Persecuted minorities from these three countries who move to India beyond the cut-off date will have to spend six years before being eligible for the citizenship. In his public rallies in Bihar, Shah has accused opposition parties of "misleading minorities" on the CAA and discounted rumours of discord within NDA on the issue.

## All States, except WB, to participate in meet on Census, NPR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Except West Bengal, all States are expected to attend the Union Home Ministry-convened meeting on Friday to discuss the modalities for the 2020 Census and the National Population Register (NPR).

Union Minister for Home Nityanand Rai will chair the meeting which will be attended by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla and Chief Secretaries and Census Directors of all states.

The meeting will discuss the modalities for the house-listing phase of the census and the NPR, to be carried out from April 1 to September 30, a Home Ministry official said. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has already announced that representatives from her state will not attend the meeting. A few state governments, including West Bengal and Kerala, have declared that they will not participate in the NPR exercise now as it is a prelude to a country-wide National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Officials said the objective of the NPR is to create a com-

prehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country. The database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars, they said. Home Ministry officials said most states have notified provisions related to the NPR, which is a register of usual residents of the country. It is being prepared at the local (village/sub-town) sub-district, district, state and national levels under provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003. The rules have a provision for fine of up to Rs 1,000 on those violating it.

The data for NPR was last collected in 2010 along with the house-listing phase of the Census 2011. Updating of this data was done in 2015 by conducting door to door survey. While updating the register in 2015, the government had asked for details like Aadhaar and mobile numbers. This time, the information related to their driving licence and voter ID card may also be gathered, the officials said, adding that PAN card details will not be collected as part of this exercise.

## Rawat for hardline approach to tackle terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Defending the security forces for using pellet guns for crowd control, the newly appointed CDS said the non-lethal weapon is "sparingly used" in Kashmir and even then they are aimed at the legs. He said those throwing stones face action. "Stones can cause death. Now we cannot be throwing stones back at them. Pellet guns are non-lethal weapons and are fired at the legs," he said.

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

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

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



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

He also said radicalization is happening in schools, universities, religious places and sites and then there are people spreading this. "First we need to get to the nerve of who is radicalising people. You can start isolating these people gradually and then start a

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

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

## Prepare roadmap on road safety: Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Centre has asked the State Governments to prepare a roadmap to develop and reorient road infrastructure within their administrative limits so that fatalities and accidents on road can be curbed.

Peeved by the number of road accidents across the country, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari has called upon Transport Ministers from all States to prepare the roadmap without bothering about expenses. Gadkari also warned that officials behind faulty engineering and road designs will not be spared as road accidents are causing a loss of 3 per cent of the GDP of the country every year. More people in India die annually in road accidents than those killed in militant operations or extremism which is unfortunate, the minister said addressing the 18th Meeting of National Road Safety Council (NRSC) and 39th Meeting of Transport Development Council (TDC).

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



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

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

The Minister said that black spots are being identified and repaired at a fast pace. District-level committees have been formed to examine and suggest such spots which need immediate attention, he added. He stressed on including NGOs and engineering students in conducting road audits.

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

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

The Minister also exuded confidence that the number of accidents will decline sharply on immediate attention, he added. He stressed on including NGOs and engineering students in conducting road audits.

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

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

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

## IRISING GULF TENSION

### Jaishankar holds talks with Iranian counterpart

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

Zarif, who is here to attend the Raisina Dialogue, on Wednesday said, Iran was interested in diplomacy but not in negotiating with the US and said killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani showed ignorance and arrogance of the US. Asserting this, he had also said 430 cities in India witnessed the protests against the killing. He met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval besides Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and

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

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



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

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

out of the JCPOA in 2018.

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

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

Jaishankar on Wednesday here had referred to tensions between the US and Iran and said they are two individualistic countries and what finally happens will depend on the players involved. He made this observation while addressing the ongoing Raisina Dialogue. Zarif had said on Wednesday India can play a role in de-escalating tensions in the Gulf region as it is an important regional player.

## COP 26 IN GLASGOW

### India's approach positive about climate change, says Javadekar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



Glasgow this year. The COP 26 President Claire O'Neil met today. We had a very healthy discussion. India is always positive and constructive in its approach. We will make all efforts to make this COP fruitful. "I suggested to the COP 26

President to make issues specific marathon discussions a focal point in COP 26 so that the world sees concrete outcomes coming out of COP 26. India put forth matters related to the market mechanism and carbon credits, climate finance, technology transfer and we discussed ways and means to make COP 26 a success," Javadekar said.

According to sources, in the closed door meeting held between both the countries, several issues were raised including climate finance and providing technology to developing nations at an affordable cost.

He had said that developed world had promised USD 1 trillion support in the last 10 years for climate change and not even 2 per cent has materialised.

## WHO endorses India's TB test TrueNat for more accuracy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

According to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Dr Balram Bhargava, the endorsement of the technology by WHO would enable low and middle-income countries to procure TrueNat for tuberculosis and Rifampicin resistance, thus supporting elimination of the disease in developing countries.

The endorsement of the technology by WHO would enable low and middle-income countries to procure TrueNat for tuberculosis and Rifampicin resistance, thus supporting elimination of the disease in developing countries.

It is highly cost-effective compared to GeneXpert and can be used in peripheral



centres without an air conditioned laboratory as it runs on battery which can be solar powered

Based on the interim analysis of data, WHO included TrueNat as test to diagnose TB, replacing sputum smear microscopy, and to sequentially detect rifampicin resistance in view of its high diagnostic accuracy

Supported by the Department of Health Research (DHR), Union Ministry of Health and Department of Biotechnology (DBT), various indigenous technologies developed by Indian scientists and companies for detection of multi-drug resistant (MDR)/extensively drug-resistant (XDR) TB were



reviewed, said the official. The most promising kits were selected by an expert group and those were subjected to a double-blind validation in comparison to standard tests at four national reference laboratories of the country.

After a stringent review, a series of validation, subsequent feasibility studies and continu-

ously follow-up, the TrueNat MTB & Rif assay was found to be on par with the internationally recognised molecular assay Gene Xpert in terms of sensitivity and specificity and detection of rifampicin resistance.

The Government aims to rid India of TB by 2025, five years ahead of the target set under the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## INSHORT

### FARM SECTOR MAY GROW AT 3.1%: NITI AAYOG

New Delhi: NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand said on Thursday that farm sector growth is likely to be higher than 3 per cent in the current fiscal compared with 2.9 per cent in 2018-19. More competition and private investment is the need of the hour, he said, adding that the role of private sector in Indian agriculture sector has to come in a big way. "The farm sector growth for the current fiscal is expected to remain higher at 3.1 per cent," Chand said.

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

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

### MANDATORY HALLMARKING FOR GOLD FROM JAN 2021

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

### GLOBALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION DISCUSSED

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

### VIJAY SAMAGAM WILL BE HELD HERE FROM JAN 21

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

# Guv urges legislators to contribute towards 'Nava Chhattisgarh'

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Governor Anusuiya Uikey in her address to the one-day session of the fifth Legislative Assembly of Chhattisgarh state said that Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly with its excellent work culture has set an example that would be included as a golden chapter in the history.

In her address to the first assembly session of the 2020, Uikey said, "This is the first time I am attending a session of this legislative assembly, and it is such a pleasantly overwhelming feeling. I strongly believe that together we can take the



glory of Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly to new heights."

She motivated the members of the legislative assembly to make their contribution towards manifestation of 'Nava Chhattisgarh' with full dedication and sincerity, and extended best wishes to them in this journey.

Governor Uikey said that she is happy and proud about Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha 'beginning its official works in New Year as a special occasion, as an opportunity to express commitment, respect and confidence in our great Indian Constitution.'

She congratulated the members of the assembly for their participation and contribution in completion of the procedure for extension of the time-limit of reservation for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.

Governor said that it feels great to acknowledge that the government has given a better life to the people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes of Chhattisgarh.

She further said that she strongly believed that Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha will accept the challenge of empowering and strengthening democracy.

# Hardcore Naxal carrying cash reward of ₹1L held

STAFF REPORTER ■ DANTEWADA

A hardcore Naxal carrying a cash reward of ₹1 lakh on his head was arrested by security forces during an intelligence-based operation in Maoist-hit Dantewada district, police said here on Thursday.

"The held Maoist was identified as Muchki Masa (30), a resident of Jagargunda in Sukma district. He was President of Maoist DKAMS (Dandakaranya Kisan Adivasi Majdor Sangh)," Superintendent of Police Dantewada Dr Abhishek Pallav said.

He was arrested by a joint team of security personnel consisting of STF-16 camp in Arapur and Arapur police station staff, the officials said.

According to police, the

**"The held Maoist was identified as Muchki Masa (30), a resident of Jagargunda in Sukma district. He was President of Maoist DKAMS (Dandakaranya Kisan Adivasi Majdor Sangh)"**

held ultra was involved in setting up a live wire in Arapur wherein on Jawan was injured in October 2018, police said.

In September 2019, he was part of Maoist team that had detonated an IED and opened indiscriminate fire on police party in Sameli Kurum Nullah, police added.

# Elected members of urban local bodies to be felicitated today



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

State Congress is going to felicitate elected mayors, chairpersons of urban local bodies of state at a function to be held at state capital on Friday.

Chhattisgarh in-charge of the AICC, P.L. Punia and Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will specially be present at the function to be held at Sardar Balbeer Singh Juneja Indoor Stadium, Chhattisgarh State Assembly Speaker Charandas Mahant, Deputy Speaker Manoj Mandavi, AICC's secretaries-in-charge Dr Chandan Yadav and PCCO Chief Mohan Markam as well as all the members of the state cabinet will also attend the programme.

# C'garh assembly ratifies bill to extend SC/ST Quota

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh assembly on Thursday ratified the Constitution Amendment Bill (126th) to extend quota to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) in Lok Sabha and state assemblies by another 10 years.

A special one-day session of the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly was convened to ratify the Constitution Amendment bill, which was passed in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on December 10 and 12 respectively. The bill requires consent of 50 percent state assemblies. The last date was January 25, 2020.



Chhattisgarh Thursday also joined the league of states giving its nod to the bill. Chhattisgarh's law minister Mohammed Akbar moved the resolution to ratify the bill in the

House. Concluding the discussion, he said it was the Congress government that returned to tribals the land acquired for Tata Steel in Bastar region. The previous BJP government did

not take any initiative in the interest of tribals, he added.

Chhattisgarh Congress Committee Chief and senior legislator Mohan Markam said the Congress government had ensured reservation for ST, SC and Other backward class. The state government had ensured 32 per cent, 13 per cent and 27 per cent reservation for ST, SC and OBC. He however expressed his concern over discontinuation of quota for Anglo-Indian.

Participating in the discussion former Chief Minister Raman Singh said instead of 10 years, the members of SC and

ST should be given life-long reservation. "This was necessary in the interest of social justice," he added.

Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik recalled contribution of former BJP government and laid stress on filling the vacant posts of SC/ST community mainly in Bastar region along with creation of new posts.

JCC (J) member Devvrat Singh suggested for ensuring reservation in all private sector operating in Chhattisgarh limits.

The House later unanimously passed the resolution to ratify the bill.

# Light showers likely in Northern Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR: Light showers are expected in the northern parts of the state in next 48 hours according to the predictions of meteorological department.

Although the minimum temperature was on nominal rise in almost all parts of the state on Thursday, the regional centre of Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had hinted that temperature in Surguja region may once again dip with the light showers.

The Ambikapur city of the region already recorded minimum temperature across the state on Thursday with a minimum temperature of 11.9 degrees Celsius.

As per its prediction the light to medium showers are going to lash many parts of the northern Surguja regions. After a break of a couple of days, cloudy weather would again be witnessed in the northern region of the state, the regional centre of meteorological department predicted.

# Assly passes motion of thanks on Guv's address

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh State Legislative Assembly on Thursday passed the motion of thanks on Governor Anusuiya Uikey's address in the special one-day session.

The session was called to ratify the bill to extend reservation for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.

The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha had passed the bill last month that required approval from at least 50 percent states. The deadline ends on January 25, 2020.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said, "Considering the urgency of the situation, the special session of the assembly was called with consent of Opposition

leader, but it seems the opposition is divided as others were making call for boycott, which is their right. But, it is most unfortunate. It is not a healthy tradition. Had the bill been passed earlier, it could have been passed during the winter session."

He pointed out that the copy of the bill was received in December last after which the special session was called.

Recalling the Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, he said, they built public sector units which provided job to reserved communities but during the NDA government under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee separate ministry of investment was formed and privatisation began.



Minister for Scheduled Caste and Tribal Welfare Prem Sai Singh on Thursday inaugurated the state-level Gharu Ghasidas Folk Art Festival at Mangal Bhawan in Bhalai-3. Glimpses of folk artists performing 'Panthi' dance are captured here. Pioneer Photo

# 'Madhur Gud Yojana' launched for eradication of malnutrition and anemia

STAFF REPORTER ■ JAGDALPUR

At the behest of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, 'Madhur Gud Yojana' has been launched as a step ahead under Suposhan Abhiyan.

This scheme will play an important role in eradication of malnutrition and anemia. In the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Baghel on July 3, 2019, a decision to launch the scheme for eradication of malnutrition and anemia in seven districts of Bastar Division was taken.

In a programme organized at Mission Compound Ground of Jagdalpur, Food Minister Amarjeet Bhagat, Tribal Caste and Scheduled Caste Development Minister Dr Prem Sai Singh Tekam and Excise Minister Kawasi Lakhma inaugurated the 'Madhur Gud Yojana'.

Under this scheme, more than 6.59,000 poor families of Bastar division will be benefited. Every year nearly ₹50 crore will be spent on distribution of jaggery under the scheme. Under this scheme, each poor family will be provided 2kg jaggery every month at the rate of ₹17 per kg.



In his address to the inaugural programme, Food Minister said that on instructions of Chief Minister this jaggery distribution scheme has been started in Bastar division for malnutrition eradication.

On the occasion, Food Minister flagged off Madhur Gud and Malaria Mukh Bastar Prachar Rath and said that to prevent anemia and malnutrition, it is necessary to prevent malaria. Bhagat also distributed 'madhur gud' to the beneficiaries and ration cards to APL consumers. He congratulated the newly-elected mayor, speaker and all the public representatives present in the programme.

In-Charge Minister of Bastar district Dr Prem Sai Singh said that eradication of malnutrition in women and children will lay the strong foundation of healthy families and strong society, which would further manifest the vision of 'Strong Chhattisgarh'.

He said that state government is implementing various schemes to provide proper nutrition to the children, teenage girls and pregnant women.

Lakhma said that Chhattisgarh has become the first state to provide rice and jaggery to BPL families on minimum rates. Government has also taken the initiative to distribute eggs in schools and anganwadis.

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

**RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI**

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

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

The Ministry of Housing

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

The firm has made a presentation on the redevelopment of Parliament and revamp of Central Vista in Lutyens' Delhi.

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

Designed by Herbert Baker, one of Britain's most distinguished architects of the early 20th Century, the two impressive Secretariat buildings flank Rashtrapati Bhavan on each



side. South Block is an intricate labyrinth of vaulted staircases and high ceiling passages.

Colonnades and flat roofs, dominated by huge domes, are striking features of the building.

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

They have broad corridors between different wings and wide stairways to the four floors and each building is topped by a giant dome, while each wing end with colonnaded balcony.

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

The PM's residence will move from 7 Lok Kalyan Marg to near the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The PMO, too, will move from the Central Secretariat to a place closer to the proposed new residence of the PM. The main purpose is to reduce the distance between the PMO and PM's residence and also make for efficient VVIP security arrangement besides avoiding traffic bottlenecks.

Arun Sood to be declared next BJP president of Chandigarh unit

**Chandigarh:** Former mayor and councillor Arun Sood will be formally declared as new president of Chandigarh unit of Bharatiya Janta Party on Friday.

After BJP's central leadership approval, Arun Sood on Thursday filed nomination for the post of Chandigarh BJP chief.

Arun Sood has remained close to outgoing city BJP chief Sanjay Tandon and also enjoys the support of city MP Kiran Kher.

Among others who were in the race for the top post included party leaders Satinder Singh, Ranveer Bhatt. PNS

## After resigning as Speaker, Bindal set to be Himachal BJP president

**PNS ■ SHIMLA**

With the resignation of Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Rajeev Bindal on Thursday, stage is set for him to take over as the new President of the State unit of BJP.

Bindal submitted his resignation to Deputy Speaker Hans Raj, a day ahead of the filing of nominations for election to the Himachal BJP President's post. Sources said Bindal's appointment will be announced on Saturday.

He is considered close to BJP's working president J P

**Nadda.**

Bindal would replace sitting incumbent Satpal Satti, who got appointed in February 2012. His second term ended in January 2019 but he remained in office following the Lok Sabha elections.

BJP State Vice-President Ram Swaroop Sharma said nominations for the President's post can be filed within a 24-hour period. Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal said BJP's national secretary Sunil Doodhla will come to the State as observers for the election, he added.

## No incidence of locust attack in Punjab: Agriculture Dept

**PNS ■ CHANDIGARH**

Punjab Agriculture Department on Thursday categorically said that as per its survey, no case of locust entering the State had been reported so far.

At the same time, the State Agriculture Secretary Kalyan Singh Pannu advised the farmers not to be panicky as the officials of Department are in constant touch with the agri-experts of Rajasthan and the Central Government, who are monitoring the situation day in and night out in Rajasthan.

Besides, the State Government has already made elaborate arrangements to combat any unforeseen exigency in

this regard. Divulging the preparedness plans, the Agriculture Secretary informed that there was absolutely no danger regarding locust attack. "However, the Department has already pressed into service several monitoring and survey teams to keep a close tab over the situation and constantly surveying the border districts of Bathinda, Sri Muktsar Sahib and Fazilka," he said.

Notably, locust pest, popularly known as 'Tiddi Dal', is a group of locusts, which devours the vegetation wherever it settles.

The locust attack has been reported since past several days in parts of Rajasthan which has emanated from the desert area in Pakistan.

## Policy push for environment in MP

**STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL**

Amid global efforts to arrest the scourge of climate change, Chief Minister Kamal Nath is leaving no stone unturned to reduce the carbon footprint in Madhya Pradesh.

Investigating policy ways a vision for the future, the state government, under Kamal Nath, has launched a raft of schemes and measures to maintain and nurture the fragile ecological balance in this biodiverse region.

Leading from the front the state government has banned single use plastics at public functions and ceremonies, and set a target to totally phase out this disposable packaging material by the year 2022.

Putting in place a robust action plan for 22 polluted river stretches in the State, the Kamal Nath Government has constituted a river rejuvenation committee to oversee the restoration of water quality in these areas.

Implementation, steering and monitoring committees have been set up to ensure an improvement in ambient air quality in the six non-attainment cities in the state.

In addition to curtail pollution caused by industries using furnace oil, the new policy makes it mandatory for such units to have an effective control over sulphur dioxide emissions before earning requisite permissions for use of the fuel.

Sulphur dioxide is a major air and water pollutant known to pose health risks to all forms of life. In humans, the pollutant causes various respiratory disorders.

Assessment of water quality of River Narmada is currently underway. Water from the river is being analysed along a 50-point index chart for the purpose.



The State Government is also analysing water quality of rivers along the inter-State borders and water intake points.

Change Vulnerability Assessment Study in the state. EPCO was further adjudged the winner for the Leadership in Urban Climate Action' category under the Earth Care Award for conservation of Traditional water structures in Indore City.

Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) have been established in five major cities and several districts in the state. 52 district headquarters have also been provided with apparatus to map ambient air quality.

In a bid to heighten awareness and transparency, the state government provides accurate air, water and industrial pollution statistics to citizens through its website and a mobile application developed for the purpose.

Bringing in innovation, arrangements have been made for disposal of recyclable plastic waste in cement kilns. The move will result in cost saving benefits as it helps save huge amounts of coal.

The state government expects to dispose at least

2270 metric tonnes of plastic waste through this method.

The State Government has also rolled out new provisions for monitoring the tracking and disposal of industrial waste, hazardous waste and e-waste.

A well-equipped microbiology laboratory has been established in the State Capital to study the efficacy of various pollution control schemes.

Speaking of the developments, activists say robust and timely pollution control measures are imperative to not just human health but also the forest cover in the state which is home to an astounding array of flora and fauna, animal and avian life.

The Forest Survey of India (FSI) in its recently published India State of Forest Report (ISFR) recorded an increase in the total forest cover in Madhya Pradesh.

The current forest expanse stands at 77,482.49 sq km or 25.14 percent of the total land area in the state while the previous forest cover measured at 77,414 sq km or 25.11 percent.

## FODDER SCAM

# Lalu's statement recorded in court

**PNS ■ RANCHI**

Former Chief Minister of Bihar and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) president, Lalu Prasad Yadav, convicted in four cases of Fodder Scam, was produced before a special court of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to record his statement on Thursday for the fifth case of the scam. He answered 32 questions in the court.

After recording his statement, Prasad returned to Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS). He congratulated the new Government in Jharkhand under the leadership of Hemant Soren. The next hearing in this case will be held on January 20.

His statement was recorded



in court room number 313. After a long time, people saw Lalu Prasad in public. On Thursday, when Lalu Prasad came out from the paying ward of RIMS, a large number of his supporters accompanied him.

Prasad's statement for the fifth case of fodder scam was recorded in the court of Special CBI Judge SK Shashi. District Administration arranged a very

tight security when Prasad was going to court for the fifth case of fodder scam, his party leaders and supporters accompanied him.

The RJD President wore a sky coloured sweater.

It may be mentioned here that former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad had to record his statement in the court of Special CBI Judge SK Shashi in Case Number RC-47A / 96 filed in the case of large scale irregularities in the Animal Husbandry Department. Lalu Prasad has been convicted in four cases related to animal husbandry scam.

Currently he is serving

sentence in RC- 68 A / 96 case and admitted in RIMS. The four cases in which he has been convicted include CBI Case Number RC-20, 38, 64 and 68 A / 96. In these cases, he has been sentenced from three and a half years to a maximum of 14 years. The biggest case related to animal husbandry scam is scandal number RC-47A / 96.

The case is about the illegal withdrawal of about ₹ 139 crore from Doranda treasury. In this case, along with Prasad, there are 113 accused including the then Animal Husbandry Minister, Vidyasagar Nishad, former MP Jagdish Sharma, several IAS officers and suppliers, now the statement of few accused in this case is yet to be recorded.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, CIRCLE NO-1 RAIPUR (C.G.)**

**Tender Notice**

Contractors, Registered appropriate class in Unified Registration System [e-Registration] invited Online tenders for the following works:-

Sl. No./System	Name of Work	Probable amount of contract	Last date of tender Download
205/59416	B.T. RENEWAL WORK OF MOHARA BAZAR TO HIRAPUR ROAD (1.00KM) & B.T. RENEWAL WORK OF TATIBANDH TO ATARI ROAD. (2.50KM) (1* Call)	Rs. 98.24 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
214/59418	B.T. RENEWAL WORK OF UNIVERSITY GATE TO TATIBANDH ROAD CH I TO 900 & 900-1800 L = 1.8 km (1* Call)	Rs. 139.24 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
215/59419	B.T. RENEWAL WORK OF UNIVERSITY GATE TO TATIBANDH ROAD CH II (900-1800 & 1800-1800 L = 1.8 km (1* Call)	Rs. 140.14 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
217/59423	WIDENING & STRENGTHENING OF APPROACH ROAD AT AMANAKA THANA BELOW ROR, BOTH SIDE UNDER BRIDGE IN DISIT RAIPUR (1* Call)	Rs. 134.43 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
218/59424	CONSTRUCTION OF CEMENT CONCRETE INTERNAL ROAD AT VILLAGE 4/8A, BLOCK-DHARWATA, RAIPUR (C.G.) (VILLAGE ROAD) LENGTH = 1.00 KM (1* Call)	Rs. 118.17 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
219/59425	N.T. SCHEDULE FOR MISCELLANEOUS ANNUAL PERIODIC (Repairing and Painting of Call & Midspan) WORK OF RAIPUR-BILASPUR ROAD FROM FAZHDI TO DHANELI (1* Call)	Rs. 30.00 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
220/59426	SPECIAL REPAIR, MOW, OTHER DEPOSIT & WORK FOR DEVENDRA NAGAR SECTION UNDER CONSTRUCTION SUB DIVISION NO-1 RAIPUR (1* Call)	Rs. 50.00 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
208/59427	Construction of internal roads on C.R.P.F. Camp at Thanod, Under sub-Division Abhanpur Distt.-Raipur (C.G.) (2* Call)	Rs. 48.92 Lakh	up to 28.02.2020 17:30 PM
184/59415	ROAD MARKING, PAINTING, SIGN BOARD, RPM AND VARIOUS ROAD DIVIDER UNDER SPECIAL AND NO-1 RAIPUR (C.G.) (3* Call)	Rs. 50.00 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
207/59417	REPAIRING WORK OF 36 NOS. GOP QUARTER AT OLD PENSION BADA RAIPUR (C.G.) (1* Call)	Rs. 12.95 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM
200/59420	S.R. MOW, DEPOSIT AND OTHER WORKS UNDER SPECIAL AND SUB-DIVISION RAIPUR (C.G.) (1* Call)	Rs. 50.00 Lakh	up to 03.02.2020 17:30 PM

● **NOTE** - All eligible/interested contractors are mandated to get enrolled on the e-Procurement portal (<https://eproc.cpsc.state.gov.in>) in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

**Superintending Engineer B.W.D. Raipur Circle No-1 Raipur (C.G.)**

G- 6252/4 Ryp/Dtd 16.1.20

**SOUTH EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED "A MINI RATNA COMPANY"**

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

**NT No: SECL/BSP/CMC/e-Tender/ 375 Date 11.01.2020, Tender ID: 2019\_SECL\_161693\_1, Estimated Cost: NA, Description of Work: Selection, empannelment and appointment of internal auditor for a period of 3 years from FY 2020-2021 to FY 2022-23 for SECL. Start Date & Time for Submission of bid: 18.01.2020 at 10:00 AM, Last Date & Time for Submission of bid: 03.02.2020 at 05:00 PM Date & Time for Opening of bid: 05.02.2020 at 11:00 AM.**

**General Manager (CMC) SECL, Bilaspur**

Note: For details and submission of bid please visit website [www.eproc.state.gov.in](http://www.eproc.state.gov.in) and e-procurement portal of CIL, <http://www.coalindiaenders.in/cil> & [www.secl-in.in](http://www.secl-in.in) In Case of any Misprinting/Error, details as per website document will be considered as final.

**COAL - PRIME SOURCE OF ENERGY**

**पावरग्रिड POWERGRID**

**NOTICE**

1. Approval under regulation-86 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations 1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations 1999 for i) Truing up of Transmission tariff for 2014-15 for assets and ii) Determination of Transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff for assets under WRSS IX Transmission scheme in Western Region.

2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (a) Madhya Pradesh Power Management Corporation Ltd. (b) Electricity Department, Administration of Daman & Diu, Daman, (c) Gujarat Uja Vias Nigam Ltd., Vadodra, (d) Electricity Department, Government of Goa, Panaji, (e) Electricity Department, Administration of Odisha Nigam, Bhubaneswar, (f) Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd., Mumbai, (g) Chhattisgarh State Electricity Board, Raipur, (h) Madhya Pradesh Atyojyog Kendra Vikas Nigam (Indore) Ltd., Indore.

3. Tariff details: (₹ in Lakhs)

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
2967.28	3035.38	3069.53	3050.88	3030.98

**a. 2019-24 Block:**

Effective DOCO	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
01.10.2021	2,575.39	2,521.61	2,492.51	2,462.68	2,432.87

4. A copy of the application as well as determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at [www.powergridindia.com](http://www.powergridindia.com).

5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 37-A, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Chandrababai Building, Jangpoh, New Delhi - 110001 (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 Date: 16.01.2020 Dy. General Manager (Commercial)

**POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED**  
(A Government of India Enterprise)  
Corp. Office: 'Sudhakar', Plot No. 2, Sector 29, Gurgaon - 122001, (Punjab), Pin: 0124-2577100-718  
Reg. Office: 5A, Qasab Industrial Area, Kirti Nagar, New Delhi - 110016, Pin: 011-26392112, 26392171  
[www.powergridindia.com](http://www.powergridindia.com) L1/04/01/199500002021  
A Maharashtra PSU

## Venil J&K...

From Page 1  
The arrested DSP had transported terrorists out of Valley in the past, too. During his questioning, it has also emerged that Singh had managed air travel of several terrorists out of valley since his postings at Srinagar airport, they said.

The agencies are also probing whether he was working for covert agencies of other countries. He had provided shelter to terrorist Imtiaz Babu for two months in lieu of ₹ 8 lakh.

During interrogation he has also taken the name of another police official involved in his racket who has risen from the rank of Assistant Sub Inspector and retired as a Deputy Inspector

General and this claim is being further verified, the sources further said.

In its order issued by the Home Department of J&K Government, it said, "Consequent upon the arrest of Singh on 11.01.2020 while trying to assist terrorists to travel outside J&K and recovery of arms and ammunition in the case FIR No 05/2020.... P/S (Police Station) Qazigum, which amounts to disloyalty and conduct that has brought the force into disrepute, the Sher-e-Kashmir Police Medal for Gallantry, awarded to him vide Government Order No Home-1050 of 2018 dated 14.08.2018, is hereby forfeited." The order issued by Principal Secretary Shaleen Kabra also said it has been issued "by order of the Lieutenant Governor."

## Bansidhar Bhagat elected U'khand BJP prez unopposed

**PNS ■ DEHRADUN**

Khalduhngi MLA and former Cabinet Minister Bansidhar Bhagat was elected unopposed as the new Bharatiya Janata Party State president on Thursday. The BJP central observer for the election and Union minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal made this announcement after the procedure was completed on Thursday. After being elected to the post, Bhagat said that this was a very important day in his life.

He thanked the central and state leadership of the party along with the party workers for the important responsibility given to him. He said that his main priority on assuming this position will now be to boost the morale of party workers to ensure a bumper victory for the party in the 2022 Vidhan Sabha elections.

## 5 JeM...

From Page 1  
During the investigation, they admitted their role in the incident and provided leads to a similar attack near Kashmir University on November 26 last year, the officer added.

More raids were conducted and three more persons were apprehended - Imtiyaz Ahmad Chikias Aklas Iman, a sports shop owner, Sahil Farooq Gojri who has a private job and Naseer Mir, a businessman. All are residents of Hazratbal, the DIG said.

Further investigation indicated they were active cadres of the JeM. "The investigation has revealed their motive to enforce shutdown and paralyse normal life in the city and further plans to execute sensational incidents like terror attack and causing IED explosions," Birdi said.



## Death of justice

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



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

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

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

## Putin's Russia

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



Vladimir Putin has now become the longest serving Russian leader since Joseph Stalin. No matter what opinion one may have of the current Russian leader with regard to the way he has ridden roughshod over any and all opposition, *prima facie* he is a lot nicer than Stalin, a man revered by the Communists in India, who was also one of the greatest mass murderers in history. Unlike Stalin, Putin also has to worry about a small thing called a Constitution. But after a shock decision by the Russian Cabinet to resign on Wednesday, it is clear that Putin will remain in charge well beyond 2024 when his second eight-year stint as Russian President will come to a close. And to do so, he will need to reform the Constitution. It's worth noting that his Cabinet resigned not in a manner of protest but to make his life easier. After all, his long-time aide, former President and newly-resigned Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, was not expected to do anything but that. How Putin will structure his continued reign remains to be seen. Will he become the head of the State Council or amend the Constitution to ensure he remains President indefinitely?

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

# A new air quality agenda

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



KK PAUL

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

That vehicular emissions contain carcinogenic material needs no emphasis. But what has not got enough light is that the inhalation of toxic airborne particles emitted by diesel and petrol vehicles can weaken bones and speed up the ageing process. This finding, based on a fairly large sample size taken from the vicinity of Hyderabad, quantifies on the basis of X-Rays and other studies and determines the extent of osteoporosis, ie, the weakening of bones, in all age groups.

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

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

With the capital witnessing hazardous air quality, schemes like Odd-Even were introduced to limit the number of four-wheelers on the roads. This scheme did show a dip in pollution levels, however small it might have been. Despite it being known that emissions from two-wheelers, which include benzene, are far more hazardous, the Odd-Even scheme could not be more applicable to some extent or the other. As a result, a more significant dent in pollution levels could not be achieved. After April 1, when the Bharat-VI norms come into play, the level of auto emissions is bound to show a downward trend.

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



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

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

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

“ROAD-BY-ROAD CLEARANCES NOT ONLY ENHANCE THE WAITING TIME AT INTERSECTIONS BUT ALSO LEAD TO MORE EMISSIONS AS A LARGE NUMBER OF VEHICLES AT ANY GIVEN TIME HAVE TO WAIT FOR THEIR TURN. THE DELAY IN JOURNEY TIME IS BUILT IN AND IS CURRENTLY BEING EXPERIENCED BY ALL ROAD USERS”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOUNDBITE

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

Chief of Defence Staff  
—Gen Bipin Rawat



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

Actor  
—Kangana Ranaut



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

Former Afghan President  
—Hamid Karzai



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

Prime Minister  
—Narendra Modi



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Focus on the economy

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

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

### When movements are politicised

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

Protests against the CAA must be complemented by a strong political pushback through a combined and strong Opposition. The refrain by the media that "a people's movement" has been hijacked by certain political parties and leaders is but an attempt to delegitimise the protests led by the students, civil society activists and women. Congress leaders like Shashi Tharoor, Mani Shankar Aiyar and student leader Kanhaiya Kumar must not be criticised for being on the "protest stage" simply because they stand opposed to the Hindutva brigade. They are not piggybacking on the protest but just extending their support to the protesting students. May be it is a dictate of "patri-



tism" that BJP leaders can organise and take part in pro-CAA campaign and rallies and Opposition leaders must not take part in anti-CAA protests. Aiyar's rhetorical flourish, "Let us see who is powerful — we or the kaatil" was blown out of proportion to see if this can help arrest the declining in the BJP's support base. With protests continuing for over a month now, what is clear is that no sacrifice is too great to win the "political" battle for a liberal, secular India.

G David Milton  
Maruthanadoc

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

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

Devendra Khurana  
Bhopal

### Flagging issues

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

Shubham  
Via email

### Better late than never

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

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

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

**A crippled campaign**

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



ARMAN ALI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—BSP CHIEF MAYAWATI

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**



MISUSE OF POWER HAS BEEN DONE BY THE BSP, AND THE BSP-SUPPORTED CONGRESS GOVERNMENT, WHICH WAS AT THE CENTRE.

—BJP LEADER AND UTTAR PRADESH MINISTER SHRIKANT SHARMA

**Budget a litmus test**

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



ABHISHEK RAJA

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

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

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

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

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



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

**Debt-linked saving schemes:** The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) like last year requested for introduction of debt-linked tax saving schemes or DLSS similar to Equity Linked Savings Schemes (ELSS). The basic argument for introduction of DLSS is that many conservative people do not invest in ELSS to claim tax deductions under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act because they are scared of putting money in stocks. The industry believes that these people would happily invest in a debt scheme like DLSS to save taxes under Section 80C. The mandatory lock-in period in these schemes can be five years. The demand has been catered to core sector project financing. India is going through the rarest of rare economic conditions where economists — who often call for fiscal prudence over anything else during the Budget season — have become more realistic, conceding that there is a need to breach the fiscal deficit target. The DFJ could be one of the triggers where the FM would take a decision, even breaching the fiscal deficit target. To improve sentiments and growth, India is in dire need of infra-

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

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

**Micro irrigation funds:** In 2017, then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced a dedicated Micro Irrigation Fund with NABARD under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana. The objective of the fund was to achieve the goal of 'per drop more crop'. A whopping ₹5,000 crore was sanctioned for this in 2018. Considering climate change, which has led to drought in some areas and floods in others, a new corpus would be allocated to this scheme in the forthcoming Budget. This year's Union Budget comes with more expectations than ever because of socio-economic conditions. For the first time the FM has the leeway to breach fiscal deficits and come up with real reforms, both for taxation and the economy, but the challenge is whether the Government is ready for such action. (The writer is an author and GST and economics specialist)

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

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

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

**The joys and perils of the gig economy**

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

BALWANT MEHTA SIMI MEHTA ARJUN KUMAR

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

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

higher education are leading to increasing migration to urban areas in pursuit of better jobs and opportunities. These trends could have significant implications in the long run. The increasing participation of women in the gig economy will not only empower them financially but also alter the economic growth of the country. As reported by the McKinsey Global Institute, if India increased the workforce participation rate of women by ten percentage points by 2025, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) could rise by as much as 16 per cent as compared to the business-as-usual scenario. A recent report on the *Future of Work Anywhere-Gig Worker* by Noble House revealed that men and women have almost a 50:50 participation in the gig economy against the traditional workforce where the ratio is about 70:30. About 86 per cent of women gig workers in India believe that this kind of arrangement gives them an opportunity to earn equal to their male counterparts. The 2019 *Employment Outlook Report* reflects that women were seeing more women in frontline roles. It is easy to see why, given the lower attrition rates, better ratings for delivery women and improved productivity at

warehouses. This has led to greater demand for women at delivery hubs and fulfilment centres. Another study done by BetterPlace (2019) under the gig economy, the demand for workers among supply of opportunities are matched online or via mobile applications. Though the gig economy provides good job opportunities and allows for flexible working schedules for women, it can also pave the way for severe commoditisation of work that forces people to choose transient work in the absence of better options. They are also vulnerable to attacks and exploitation. Flexible work and the possibility of

combining paid and unpaid work could provide opportunities to women involved in care-giving activities but could also lead to the deterioration of their working conditions. Under the gig economy, the demand for workers among supply of opportunities are matched online or via mobile applications. Though the gig economy provides good job opportunities and allows for flexible working schedules for women, it can also pave the way for severe commoditisation of work that forces people to choose transient work in the absence of better options. They are also vulnerable to attacks and exploitation. Flexible work and the possibility of

combining paid and unpaid work could provide opportunities to women involved in care-giving activities but could also lead to the deterioration of their working conditions. Under the gig economy, the demand for workers among supply of opportunities are matched online or via mobile applications. Though the gig economy provides good job opportunities and allows for flexible working schedules for women, it can also pave the way for severe commoditisation of work that forces people to choose transient work in the absence of better options. They are also vulnerable to attacks and exploitation. Flexible work and the possibility of

and women face the possibility of being disadvantaged all over again. The nature and quality of jobs generated for women under the gig economy need to be examined so that appropriate policy suggestions can be put forward for policymakers to make informed decisions. It would further provide an improved understanding of the realities of flexible work arrangements in both crowd work (digital marketing, online tuitions, content writing, translators, graphic designers, freelance recruiters, software development, accounting, data analytics, legal work, medical transcription, health workers and social work) and on-demand service work (such as personal transport services offered by Uber, Ola, food delivery services provided by Zomato, Swiggy and e-commerce services of Amazon, Naukri.com that require a direct interface between workers and those requesting for gig services) to fill the critical knowledge gap. (Balwant Mehta is a Fellow at the Institute for Human Development and a Visiting Fellow at the Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI), while Simi Mehta is CEO and Editorial Director and Balwant Kumar is Director at IMPRI)

# Adani Ent, NCCF officials booked for graft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Adani Enterprises is alleged to have got undue favours in the supply contract. APGENCO had floated a limited tender enquiry for the supply of six lakh MT of imported coal from sea ports to Narla Tata Rao Thermal Power Plant in Vijaywada and Rayalaseema Thermal Power Plant (RTPP) in Kadapa on June 29, 2010, according to the FIR.

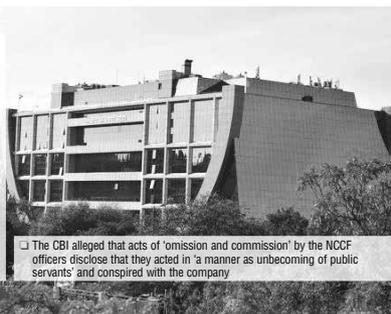
The tender enquiry was forwarded to seven PSUs including National Co-operative Consumer Federation India Ltd (NCCF), a multi-State cooperative under Union Consumer Affairs Ministry having 78 per cent Government stake.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The FIR said the officers "committed irregularities by

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

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

quarters in Delhi to Singhal.

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

Six days later on July 7, APGENCO informed NCCF

# Davinder Singh stripped of gallantry award by J&K admin

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

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

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

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

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



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

Meritorious Service on August 15, 2019.

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

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

# Son of former J&K Minister Hilal Rather arrested by ACB

PNS ■ JAMMU

Hilal Rather, son of a former Jammu & Kashmir Finance Minister Abdul Kahim Rather, was arrested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in a case related to the alleged misappropriation of crores of rupees from the term loans running into 177 Crores.

The loan was sanctioned by Jammu & Kashmir Bank for his ambitious township project known as 'Paradise Avenue' at Narwal Bala Jammu in the year 2012.

According to the Press statement issued by the ACB, Jammu, "Hilal Rather, who also owns Simula Group of Companies, was being questioned for the last few months by the Bureau in connection with the siphoning off crores of rupees from the loan amount sanctioned by the New University Campus Project J&K Bank for the construction of Flats under the name of 'Paradise Avenue'."

According to the statement issued by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, "Hilal Rather was evaluated for the property raised & others transaction related to siphoning of funds meant for construction".

"Hilal Rather has been taken into custody for further questioning," the ACB



File pic of under construction Paradise Avenue at Narwal Bala in Jammu

Pioneer photo

statement said.

According to official sources, during the course of investigations in the case it has been revealed that funds diverted have been used to purchase huge properties abroad, holidaying abroad with family and friends and also for other entertainment activities.

"All the loan amounts sanctioned by Hilal Rather to tune of Rs 177 crore have become NPA".

According to ACB statement, "Paradise Avenue, a Partnership Concern of Hilal Rather, Dr Rizwan Raheem

Dar of Sanant Nagar Srinagar, and Dr. Bhatt, Bhatt Baramulla Kashmir, Daljeet Wadhwa and Deepshikha Janwal of Jammu was sanctioned a term loan of Rs 74.27 crore in the first phase.

According to ACB, without following the credit policy of the bank, which restricts loan to a partnership firm at Rs 40 crore, the loan was approved by the Board of Directors of the J&K Bank when Hilal Rather had already entered into a OTS with the State Financial Corporation in the past. The remaining loan amount were granted by the Board despite the fact that the repayments of the first loan taken was not complete" the ACB statement said.



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

PTI ■ JAMMU

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

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

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

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

# Cold wave conditions persist in North India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



Vehicles ply on a road amid rain in Lucknow on Thursday

received heavy snowfall.

He said there are chances of light snowfall at isolated to scattered places of J&K over the next 24 hours.

"No major snowfall is expected for the next five days. Another spell of lesser intensity is likely from January 21 to 24," he added.

Cold weather persisted in most parts of Punjab and Haryana and a thick blanket of fog reduced visibility in the morning, affecting normal life.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To provide medical facilities to the stranded trekkers a medical officer and a medical assistant were also flown from Air Force Station Leh to Niraq. The team has set up a medical assistance camp at Niraq and are providing basic medical assistance to the stranded trekkers, it said.

# Verbal spat between Bedi, Narayanasamy reaches next level

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

cerned authorities and file cases against a number of those accused in land grabbing.

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

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

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

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

# 'Elephant Pongal' in TN celebrated at rejuvenation camp

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

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

PTI

PTI



# Bulls awe tamers, Jallikattu events in TN continue to be crowd-pullers

PTI ■ MADURAI

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

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

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

stood boldly on the sporting arena for a while refusing to move on. When a team of men arrived on a mini-truck to drive it away, it kept charging towards the vehicle.

Despite gentle prodding and honking, the animal did not budge and kept staring at tamers several of whom climbed the barricade to avoid the bull's fury.

Eventually, a man well trained in cattle-rearing managed to throw a rope around its neck and led it away.

At Palamedu, which is more popular, announcements of a variety of prizes like gold coins, gift packs, cycles, and

vessels kept the participants on their toes as the dominant animals and emerge victorious.

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

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

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

# Bru tribals to permanently settle in Tripura

## Tripartite agreement signed



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

More than 30,000 displaced Bru tribals from Mizoram, who have been living as refugees in Tripura since 1987, will permanently settle in Tripura and a tripartite agreement was signed in this effect on Thursday.

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

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

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

Biswa Sarma and Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalwal were also present in the function. During the meeting, Shah said approximately 30,000 Bru refugees will be settled in Tripura and the Centre has approved Rs 600 crore package for this purpose. He added Bru refugees will get a 40 by 30 feet plot along with a fixed deposit of Rs 4 lakhs, cash assistance of Rs 5000 per month for 2 years and free ration.

## PM MODI HAILS AGREEMENT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the agreement to permanently settle the Bru-Refugees in Tripura on Thursday, saying it will "greatly help" them. He also said the Bru-Refugees will benefit from numerous welfare schemes of the Government. "A special day indeed," Modi wrote on Twitter.

# Nitish will lead NDA in Bihar polls: Shah

## Home Minister seeks people's support to CAA

PTI ■ KHARAUVA (VAISHALI, BIHAR)

Hailing Bihar for giving "the best response" to amend the Citizenship Act, BJP president Amit Shah on Thursday appealed to the people to pledge their support to the new law by giving a missed call to a designated number from their mobile phones.

He urged the crowd attending a pro-CAA rally at Kharauva in Vaishali district,

about 75 km from capital Patna, to give a missed call to the 8866288662, pledging their support to the legislation which has triggered country-wide protests.

Shah also sought to dispel "rumours" of discord within the NDA in the State, asserting that the upcoming assembly polls in Bihar will be contested under the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Shah slammed the Opposition for misleading minorities about the Act in pursuance of their "vote bank" politics and engineering victory that had erupted in the aftermath.

Underlining that the law provided for granting citizenship and not snatching it away

from anybody, he said the party was organising rallies across the country with a view to busting the misinformation campaign.

He faltered in support of the CAA, but did not mention NRC or NPR (National Population Register) in his speech. Opposition JD, Congress and their Grand Alliance partners in Bihar have been campaigning among the people against the CAA, proposed NRC and NPR. Lalu Prasad's RJD has been targeting Chief Minister Nitish Kumar over these issues.

Shah was expected to see voted in favour of Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in the Parliament to help it become an

Act, has said a country-wide implementation of National Register of Citizens was "needless" and had "no justification".

On NPR, he said in state assembly on Monday last that his Government agreed in principle to it as they did likewise when such an exercise was last conducted 10 years ago.

He, however, had emphasised that the census should be caste-based. Shah sought support of the people to the Modi governments measures like CAA as also abrogation of Article 370 and construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

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# SC clears deck for Goa airport construction

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday cleared the decks for construction of an international airport at Mopa in Goa by lifting the suspension on environmental clearance (EC) granted for the project, which would be spread over 2,131 acres.

The top court in March last had suspended the EC granted for the greenfield airport and directed the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) to revisit the decision in light of its impact on the ecology there. For construction of a new airport was buttressed as the passenger traffic at Goa was expected to rise in the upcoming financial years -- 12 million passengers by 2021 to 17.9 million by 2025 -- and the existing airport at Dabolim is a defence estate which is closed to area traffic between 8.30 am and 1.30 pm daily.

Though Goa is one of the most sought after international tourist destinations in India, international charter flights are not granted parking facilities at night at Dabolim airport due to capacity constraints.

While lifting suspension on EC, bench of justices DY Chandrachud and Hemant Gupta noted assurance tendered on behalf of concessionaire GMR Go International Airport Limited that it will adopt "zero carbon programme" both in the construction and operational phases of the airport.

"We accept undertaking of concessionaire and issue a direction for compliance," the bench said, adding, "The suspension on the EC shall accordingly stand lifted."

The top court appointed the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to oversee compliance with the directions issued by it in the matter and said the "project proponent shall bear the costs, expenses and fees of NEERI".

# Raj panchayat: Months after getting citizenship, Pakistan migrant set to fight polls

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Nita Kanwar, who migrated to Jodhpur from Sindh in Pakistan nearly a decade back, chasing her dream of a good education and a marriage partner, is now all set to test the electoral waters.

The 36-year-old, who became an Indian citizen only last September, is contesting for the post of the sarpanch from Natwara gram panchayat in Rajasthan's Tonk district.

The elections are on Friday. Her candidature comes in the backdrop of the row over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The amendment makes it easier to get citizenship for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who entered India before 2015 following religious persecution in three neighbouring countries.

"I know only that CAA is good for those who want a better education and life in India," Nita Kanwar said.

She said she is a Sodha Rajput whose members "cannot marry within their own

36-year-old is contesting for the post of the sarpanch from Natwara gram panchayat in Rajasthan's Tonk district

caste". That is one reason for many members of the community to migrate to India, mostly Jodhpur.

"I had migrated in 2001 for college education and later on found a perfect match," Kanwar said. She said she had to fight for three years to receive Indian citizenship and it was last September when the Tonk district administration handed over the papers.

"Now, I am contesting for sarpanch from Natwara, a gentleman reserved for women candidates. I will work for promoting gender equality, women empowerment and development of villages," she said.

Nita Kanwar migrated in 2001 and got her BA degree from Sophia College in Jaipur in 2005 and married Punya Pratap Karan in 2011.

She had migrated with her sister Anjana Sodha, who is also married and settled in Jodhpur.

# RAUT'S INDIRA GANDHI-KARIM LALA REMARK ROW

## Balasaheb had lot of respect for Indiraji: Aditya gets into damage control mode

### Raut says his remarks 'twisted' out of context, he always had respect for Indira, Nehru, Rajiv

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As the Shiv Sena's relations under strain over its spokesperson Sanjay Raut's claim that late Indira Gandhi used to meet Underworld Don Karim Lala, its leader Aditya Thackeray on Thursday went into a damage control mode saying that his grandfather and party's founder-chief Bal Thackeray had a lot of respect for the late Prime Minister, while Raut himself clarified that his statement had been "twisted" and "misinterpreted" by a section of the media.

Hours after Raut clarified that he always had huge respect for the Gandhi-Nehru family, especially late Mrs Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi, Aditya said: "Raut has already clarified that whatever he said was in a different context. Late Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray had a lot of respect for Indira Gandhi. Hence, no

Shiv Sainik will speak ill-about late Mrs Gandhi. Raut's intentions are clear."

Earlier, talking to media persons, Raut issued a detailed clarification on the controversy over the remarks made at a public interview of him held in Pune on Wednesday, wherein he had reportedly said that late Mrs Indira Gandhi used to meet Karim Lala at the latter's residence at Pydhonie in south Mumbai.

"The kind of respect I have shown towards Gandhi-Nehru family repeatedly since Indira Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi even while in the Opposition, no one has done that. You may have heard or read me earlier in 'Saamana'. Whenever there used to be a meeting with Indira Gandhi, I used to attend her stand. Please tell this to those who are putting out tweets on my yesterday on Indira Gandhi's respect," Raut said.

He, however, had emphasised that the census should be caste-based. Shah sought support of the people to the Modi governments measures like CAA as also abrogation of Article 370 and construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Shah was expected to see voted in favour of Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in the Parliament to help it become an Act, has said a country-wide implementation of National Register of Citizens was "needless" and had "no justification".

On NPR, he said in state assembly on Monday last that his Government agreed in principle to it as they did likewise when such an exercise was last conducted 10 years ago. He, however, had emphasised that the census should be caste-based. Shah sought support of the people to the Modi governments measures like CAA as also abrogation of Article 370 and construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir... CORRIGENDUM - 3... Due to poor response the e-NIT No. FINE/ET/IT/2019/2018... 09-12-2019 Due on: 24-12-2019 extended upto 02.01.2020 and again upto 10.01.2020 for the Supply of No. Truck Chassis with Cabin for Mechanical Division, Rajouri...

# Javadekar: AAP Govt's negligence behind delay in hanging of Nirbhaya convicts

New Delhi: Union Minister Prakash Javadekar on Thursday accused the AAP Government for negligence behind inordinate delay in hanging of Nirbhaya gangrape convicts. The Union Minister said it took more than two and a half years for the Arvind Kejriwal dispensation to give notice to convicts after Supreme Court rejected their appeal against the death sentence in 2017.

Union BJP leader and newsmen that had the AAP government give notices to all convicts within a week of the Supreme Court order, they would have been hanged by now and the nation would have got justice.

The Delhi government on Wednesday recommended rejecting the mercy plea filed by Mukesh Singh, one of the four death row convicts in the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case, and forwarded it to the LG at "lightning speed", Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said.

It also informed the high court during a hearing that execution of the convicts will not take place on January 22 as a mercy plea has been filed by one of them - Mukesh (32) Vinay Sharma (26), Akshay Kumar Singh (31) and Pawan Gupta (25) -- were to be hanged on January 22 at 7 am in Tihar jail. A Delhi court had issued their death warrants on January 7.

# BJP accuses Cong of protecting those involved in 1984 anti-Sikh riots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Citing the SIT report, the BJP on Thursday accused the Congress of protecting those involved in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and alleged it never showed interest in providing justice to the victims with its leaders even "justifying" the violence against the community.

BJP leader and Union minister Prakash Javadekar said the Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by retired Delhi High Court judge Justice SN Dhingra has brought to fore the truth and said what happened in 1984 was not just riots but "worst kind of genocide" against Sikhs.

The Modi government, he asserted, stands for giving justice to Sikhs and has already told court that it will act on the SIT's recommendations.

Javadekar said Congress leaders like the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi "justified" the violence with their comments. A Congress leader named as accused by victims has become chief minister, he said in an apparent reference to Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath. However, Kamal Nath has always

BJP leader and Union minister Prakash Javadekar said the Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by retired Delhi High Court judge Justice SN Dhingra has brought to fore the truth and said what happened in 1984 was not just riots but "worst kind of genocide" against Sikhs. denied his involvement and had received a clean chit in investigations carried out earlier.

The SIT report shows that the hands of the Congress are with "the exacting probe. In fact, it did exactly opposite and protected accused," he said, adding that over 3000 Sikhs were burned alive in a matter of days in the national Capital following the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

There should be minimum experience criteria for lawyers to appear before SC: CJJ

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice SA Bobde mooted an idea before the Bar on Thursday that there should be a minimum experience criteria for lawyers to appear before the Supreme Court.

A bench comprising the CJJ and justices BR Gavai and Surya Kant expressed its view on fixing some experience criteria for lawyers to appear before the top court when senior advocate and Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Dushyant Dave raised the issue of difficulties being faced by lawyers in getting the matters listed for urgent hearing.

"My lords, the Bar is facing problems in getting the matters listed for urgent hearing before the mentioning officer," Dave told the bench. He said at times lawyers are unable to persuade the mentioning officer about the "grave urgencies" of the matters which needed urgent hearing.

The CJJ, who has been consistently saying that the mentioning officer should be done before the mentioning officer and not before the first court, today said, "We do not want to start the day like this. The idea of urgency in the mind of Bar is different."

# Dilip Ghosh re-elected as Bengal BJP chief

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Under a leader like Dilip Da who is famous for his no-nonsense words. He always speaks the truth and talks like a brave person. This is the reason why they will listen," Sayantan Basu said. Ghosh on Thursday said under a leader like Dilip Da who is famous for his no-nonsense words. He always speaks the truth and talks like a brave person. This is the reason why they will listen," Sayantan Basu said.

With the BJP doing considerably well during his tenure by not only expanding its organisational base in Bengal but also winning a record 18 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats in the April-May general elections the saffron outfit has once again reappointed Dilip Ghosh as the president of its state unit for the period between 2020-2023.

Ghosh has been famous for courting controversies with his notorious statements. He was recently slammed by the opposition and also his party colleagues and Union Minister Babul Supriyo for his controversial remark that the BJP had shot the agitators protesting against Citizenship Amendment Act like dogs in Assam and Uttar Pradesh.

"We are proud to work under a leader like Dilip Da who is famous for his no-nonsense words. He always speaks the truth and talks like a brave person. This is the reason why they will listen," Sayantan Basu said. Ghosh on Thursday said under a leader like Dilip Da who is famous for his no-nonsense words. He always speaks the truth and talks like a brave person. This is the reason why they will listen," Sayantan Basu said.

# FRESH OFFENSIVE AGAINST CAA-FISCAL CRISIS

## Prakash Ambedkar Aghadi calls 'Maha bandh' on Jan 24

PTI ■ RAJGHATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) on Thursday stepped up its offensive against the Narendra Modi Government over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register for Citizens (NRC) and current economic crisis, by calling a 'Maharashtra bandh' on Thursday.

A month it organised a massive rally of dalits in Mumbai, the VBA prepared itself for one more show down with the BJP-led NDA government to raise adequate revenues because of a faulty GST, demonetisation and an atmosphere of mistrust. The country is heading towards bankrupt-

Aghadi announced that Prakash Ambedkar said: "As many 35 organisations are supporting our Maharashtra bandh on January 24. We have called the bandh among other things to condemn CAA, NRC and the oppressive ways of the Modi government."

"There is a lot of anger against CAA and NRC among the people in the country. The Government is trying to implement the CAA and other laws through intimidation. On the other hand, the Government has lost control over economy. The Government is not able to raise adequate revenues because of a faulty GST, demonetisation and an atmosphere of mistrust. The country is heading towards bankrupt-

"We are holding the Modi government totally responsible for the situation in the country. We have called this bandh to condemn the Modi Government for its mis-governance. We request all political parties and organisations to join the bandh on January 24," the VBA chief said.

It may be recalled that VBA had on December 26 organised a massive rally of his Dalits and Adivasis at Dadar in north-central Mumbai to oppose CAA and NRC. At that rally, Ambedkar had charged that the RSS and BJP-led government had hatched a "conspiracy" to create unrest in the country through CAA and NRC.

Chola... Public Notice... It is hereby informed in public that we have taken physical possession of our secured asset address-Property at measuring 189 sq yds, bearing Property No-C/11, 20/18, 20/19, 20/20 situated at village Ghosha Jyana, Chola in the state of C. Block, Gd No.17, Bhagan Para, Shaligram, Chennai-600 019. Borrower name-Bharati Shiban XHEHEDH0001322529 through the order of the court in the said case. The belongings of the borrower is lying the persons concerned is hereby informed to remove it with in seven days from publication of this notice failing which we shall dispose of the belongings as unidentifiable and unclaimed property without any further notice.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SUB TRANSMISSION DIVISION DODA... NOTICE INVITING e TENDER... e-NIT No. ENIT/ST/DODA/02 of 2020 dated: 11-01-2020... For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Superintending Engineer O & M Circle Kishtwar invites e-Tenders. (Two Cover System) from reputed A-class electrical contractors / registered firms entitiled with CPWD/MSB/Department of Civil Engineering, Jammu and Kashmir. Manufacturing, Supply, installation, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of two Nos 33 kv bus bar arrangement at 3311 kv R S Mandali and Dadeth in Kishtwar and Replacement of old 33 kv C and R Panel and 33 kv VCB at 2x10 MW R S Mandali Kishtwar in Jammu and Kashmir under Jansanghar scheme 2019. S.No. 1, Description of Work :- Design, Engineering, Manufacturing, Supply, Transportation, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 1, 33 kv Bus bar arrangement at 3311 kv R S Mandali and Dadeth, Kishtwar and 2, Replacement of old 33 kv C and R Panel and 33 kv VCB 2x10 MVA at R S Mandali Kishtwar. Name of the Office :- Superintending Engineer, O & M, Circle Kishtwar Estimated cost (In Rs.) :- 46,50,000.00 Earnest Money (In Rs.) :- 93,000.00 Cost of document (In Rs.) :- 4000.00 Last date of submission of e-bid :- 24.01.2020 upto 4:00 PM. 1. Bidders are advised to study the Standard Bidding Document and Scope of the work carefully. Submission of e-bid against this SBD shall be deemed to have been done after careful study and examination of the procedure, terms and conditions of the Standard Bidding Document with full understanding of its implications by the bidder. 2. The tender document is available on website http://tenders.gov.in. interested bidders may view or download the B document, seek clarification and submit their e-bid on line to date as per the details mentioned in the table below. A. Date & Time of downloading of Standard Bidding Document :- The standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over http://tenders.gov.in from 13.01.2020 from 10:00 AM to 15.01.2020 upto 04:00 PM. C. Sale of Bid Document (Ends) :- 23.01.2020 upto 10:00 PM. No. D/14-1323/19 Dated :- 15-01-2020 Sd/- (Er. Jarnail Singh) Executive Engineer, Sub Transmission Division, Doda



Sl. No.	Executive No.	Tender Notice No. & Date	Work & Location	Approx. Cost of work	EMD
1	DEEN	BC/7/19/202346 (East) BCT dated: 15.01.2020	Mumbai Division : Need based clerical/technical/ Miscellaneous assistance on day to day basis by outsourcing for 06 months in AEM-Offices of Engineering department.	₹40,54,348/-	₹1,100/-
2	DEEN	BC/7/19/202347 (Central) BCT dated: 15.01.2020	Mumbai Division : Interlocking of 2 LC gates LC No. 14 & 23 in Udhna Jalgason-section)	₹72,75,249.13	₹1,45,500/-
3	DEEN	BC/7/19/202348 (East) BCT dated: 15.01.2020	Udhna-Jalgason section : Supply of 50 mm size Manufactured stone ballast as per specification and loading into hopperwagons at Bandana depot. (Qty: 122552Cu.m)	₹5,94,46,727.50	₹6,47,200/-

WESTERN RAILWAY VARIOUS WORKS... Date & Time of submission: on 12.02.2020 till 15.00 hrs. Date & Time of opening: on 12.02.2020 at 15.30 hrs. Regarding detailed nature of contents of tender document (Non-Refundable), EMD, Eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender condition please visit www.treps.gov.in Manual offer will not be considered. Like us on Facebook.com/WesternRly - Follow us on Twitter.com/WesternRly

# No SC relief for telcos on ₹1.47L cr dues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

The telecom companies had sought an open court hearing on their review petition but the Supreme Court decided to stick to its convention of doing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He had directed the superintendent of Arthur Road jail to shift both the accused to their residence under the supervision of the police to ensure their cooperation to the committee.

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

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

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

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

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

"I would believe that going forward both countries will like to further expand that package," he added.

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

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

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

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

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

China on Thursday said the US-1 "considerably addressed" mutual concerns and is "good" for both the countries, as the world's two largest economies move forward to end their bitter two-year tariff war that has ruptured supply chains, rattled markets and contributed to a global slowdown.

On Wednesday, President Donald Trump and Chinese Vice Premier and top trade negotiator Liu He signed the phase-1 of the trade deal at a special ceremony at the White House, raising hopes of a truce between the world's two largest economies.

Trump, however, refused to roll back the massive tariff imposed on import of Chinese goods, saying the deal would lower the tariffs only if the second

## BUSINESS CORNER

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

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



**CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF VISITS NCC R DAY CAMP**

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



**DRIVE SMART DRIVE SAFE ORGANISES CAMPAIGN**

New Delhi: To Arrest Alarming Road Deaths on Indian Roads, during The Road Safety Week 2020, as announced by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, a Nationwide Citizen's Campaign being organised by NGO Drive Smart Drive Safe had its campaign proceeding with mass pledge of Code of Conduct at Delhi Aerocity at GMR Square on 14th January, where more than 2000 people joined and observed a minute silence in the memory of Road Victims, participated in short walkathon and made Safety Human Chain. NGO, Drive Smart Drive Safe alongwith SIAM & many other like minded organisations has launched the campaign titled #IndiaAgainstRoadCrash #ARC2020 during the 31st National Road safety week. The campaign started on 11th January, 2020, as part of the Road Safety Week announced by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways from AttarWapah Border where around fifty thousand people took the safety pledge in one go which itself is a record. Never ever has such large number of people have taken a safety pledge collectively. Lacs of people are expected to join the campaign from all over the country in more than 70 Locations.



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

New Delhi: Forum, sharing of trade data, regional connectivity initiatives, harmonization of standards, upgrading of border trading infrastructure and facilitation of business visas," the commerce minister said in a statement.

The CEPA is a free trade agreement under which two trading partners significantly reduce or eliminate imports duties on maximum number of goods traded between them. They also liberalise norms to promote trade in services sector and boost investments.

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

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

of both countries met in New Delhi to discuss the joint study for the proposed free trade pact. The meeting was held on Thursday.

Samanta has been trying his best for last 6 months to bring more companies to the mega job mela to ensure maximum placement. Steps were taken to aware more and more youth of Kandhamal parliamentary constituency to participate in the mega job mela and proper training was given for placement before the job mela. District administration and staff of the MP tried their very best for this.

On 10th January 2020, the

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra, SA Nazeer and MR Shah said that the company will shut its business in India if it does not get any

## PMC BANK SCAM — SC stays HC order allowing shifting of HDIL promoters from jail to their residence

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde took note of the submissions of solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate, that he was assailing the high court order to the extent of allowing the release of two promoters from the prison and the order dated January 15, 2020," said the Bench, which also comprised Justices BR Gavi and Surya Kant.

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

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

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

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

"unusual order" while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL). Mehta told the bench that the father-son are presently lodged in Arthur Road jail in judicial custody and if they are shifted to their residence as per the high court order, it would be like bail to them.

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

He had directed the superintendent of Arthur Road jail to shift both the accused to their residence under the supervision of the police to ensure their cooperation to the committee.

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

## ED summons Air Asia CEO Fernandes, other executives in PMLA case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned senior executives of Air Asia, including its CEO Tony Fernandes, next week for questioning in a money laundering case, officials said on Thursday.

The agency had registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against the airline and its officials in 2018.

The officials said while Fernandes has been summoned here on January 20, a few others from the airline's current and past management have also been asked to depose before it for questioning in the following days.

The executives have also been asked to bring along with them certain case-related documents when they appear before the ED so that the probe into the case can be taken forward, they said.

**The Executive Engineer, Capital Complex Division, PWD(R&B), Agartala, West Tripura invites e-tender against press Nit. No. 21/EE/CDD/PWD/2019-20 Dated: 14-01-2020.**

For Proposed Construction of MLA Hostel at Capital Complex, Agartala, West Tripura/SH: Construction of internal road, retaining wall, boundary wall, entrance gate, frisking unit, Security box alongwith allied works at MLA hostel premises under Capital Complex Division during the year 2019-20.

With Estimated cost: ₹4,05,45,869.00, Earnest Money: ₹4,05,459.00 Time of Completion - 6 (six) months. Last Date of bidding for bids : 14-02-2020 upto 15.00Hrs.

For more details kindly visit: <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>

**NOTE: \*NO NEGOTIATION WILL BE CONDUCTED WITH THE LOWEST BIDDER\***

Sd/-  
(Er.P.S.Datta Mukherji)  
Executive Engineer  
Capital Complex Division, PWD(R&B)  
Agartala, West Tripura

**SUNIL HEALTHCARE LIMITED**  
Regd. Office: 38E/25-A, Vijay Tower, Shahpuraj, New Delhi-110049  
CIN:L24302DL1973PLC189662  
Email: info@sunilhealthcare.com / Website: www.sunilhealthcare.com  
Tel:-+91-11-49435555/00, Fax: +91-11-43850087

**NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given in pursuance to the Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 and other applicable regulation of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Monday, January 27, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. at New Delhi, inter alia, to consider, approve and take on record the Un-Audited Financial Results for the 03rd quarter/nine months ended on December 31, 2019 of the financial year 2019-20

Further, the Trading Window, under the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015 as already intimated to stock exchange via our letter dated 01.01.2020, shall remain close from January 01, 2020 till January 29, 2019 (both days inclusive).  
The information contained in this notice is also available on the Company's website [www.sunilhealthcare.com](http://www.sunilhealthcare.com) and also available on the website of BSE Ltd. [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com)  
For Sunil Healthcare Limited  
Santosh Kumar Sharma  
Place: New Delhi Company Secretary & Compliance Officer  
Date: January 16, 2020 F-6817

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the world's richest person Jeff Bezos announced fresh \$1 billion investment in India, Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said his firm Amazon was not doing a favour to the country by the investments and questioned how the online retailing major could incur such "big" losses but for its predatory pricing.

Goyal, who has not yet given Bezos an audience, said e-commerce companies have to follow Indian rules in letter and spirit and not find loopholes to make a back-door entry into multi-brand retail segment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BEIJING/WASHINGTON

China on Thursday said the US-1 trade deal with the US "considerably addressed" mutual concerns and is "good" for both the countries, as the world's two largest economies move forward to end their bitter two-year tariff war that has ruptured supply chains, rattled markets and contributed to a global slowdown.

On Wednesday, President Donald Trump and Chinese Vice Premier and top trade negotiator Liu He signed the phase-1 of the trade deal at a special ceremony at the White House, raising hopes of a truce between the world's two largest economies.

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Banks credit grew by 7.57 per cent to ₹100.44 lakh crore while deposits rose by 9.77 per cent to ₹132.10 lakh crore in the fortnight to January 2, according to the Reserve Bank data. In the year-ago period, banks loans stood at ₹93.37 lakh crore while deposits at ₹120.33 lakh crore.

In the previous fortnight ended December 20, credit had grown by 7.10 per cent to ₹99.47 lakh crore and deposits had increased by 10.09 per cent to ₹130.08 lakh crore.

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

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

from 4 per cent in the corresponding month of 2018. During the month, credit to agriculture and allied activities slowed to 6.5 per cent from 7.7 per cent last year.

Advances to the services sector decelerated sharply to 4.8 per cent from 28.1 per cent last year. Personal loans grew at a marginally lower rate of 16.4 per cent in November 2019 as compared with 17.2 per cent, according to the RBI data.

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

## Mega job mela in Kandhamal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 7,000 rural youth were placed in 71 companies at the two-day Mega Job Mela in Kandhamal Parliamentary Constituency organised at the initiative of Achyuta Samanta, Kandhamal Lok Sabha MP in cooperation with the district administration.

The Mega Job Mela was a resounding success with rural youth, mostly having under matric qualifications, getting jobs with salary ranging from ₹10,000 to ₹20,000 in well established companies. The companies will provide other facilities, in addition to salary.

Over 14,000 youths from Kandhamal parliamentary constituency participated in the job mela, while 12,000 youths registered their name for placement.

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

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

On 10th January 2020, the

mega job mela was organized at Boudh where 2,000 youth from Kantaman and Boudh Block registered their name for placement. Total 21 companies participated, selecting 700 youth.

Samanta has been trying his best for last 6 months to bring more companies to the mega job mela to ensure maximum placement. Steps were taken to aware more and more youth of Kandhamal parliamentary constituency to participate in the mega job mela and proper training was given for placement before the job mela. District administration and staff of the MP tried their very best for this.



On 10th January 2020, the

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

# DEVILS CATCH PACK OF WOLVES

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

ly to inflict more pain on the Red Devils in the first half. Pedro Neto's strike was ruled out after a VAR review for handball against Raul Jimenez before Matt Doherty hit the post for the visitors.

"It's a frustration knowing we performed well, but we did not go to the next round," said Nuno.

At the other end, Ruddy made a fine save to deny Daniel James before the Welsh international then fired just wide of the far post early in the second half.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# HD QUALITY

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



Gonzalo Higuain celebrates after scoring during the Italian Cup soccer match

AFP ■ MILAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and Dybala converted the penalty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Kylian Mbappe, center, celebrates with teammates after scoring goal

# Mbappe returns to haunt Monaco

AFP ■ PARIS

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

The victory kept PSG eight points clear at the top.

They also registered their 50th goal of the league campaign from 20 matches. Monaco came away from PSG with a point in a thrilling 3-3 draw in the capital last weekend but they posed no similar threat just three days later. Mbappe was on target in the 24th and 90th minutes with Neymar tucking away a penalty in first-half stoppage time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Neymar made it 2-0 from the penalty spot in injury-time after Kamil Glik had fouled Layvin Kurzawa.

Sarabia's goal was set-up by fellow substitute Marco Verratti

before Mbappe completed the rout of the club he had joined in 2015.

"With our four attackers, we can carry out our plan," added Tuchel.

"For Icardi, it wasn't a negative game. It's a good mix."

Kylian and Neymar carry the ball a lot, Mauro is used to working with us, for the team, to open spaces.

"He hasn't scored in two matches, but he works. There are no doubts over him. He added: "The objective was to win the game, take the three points to improve our position."

"We have the best players but I also want to have the best team in each match." For Monaco coach Robert Moreno, the defeat was a sobering experience coming after Sunday's encouraging draw in the French capital.

"I am very happy and proud of my team," said Moreno after his first home game in charge saw Monaco's six-match win streak at Stade Louis II end.

"It's a different result to Sunday but tonight we conceded three goals on the counter-attack and a penalty. "At 3-1, we took risks but had we scored a second then the mental situation would have changed and the last few minutes would have been interesting."

Rennes are third in the table, five points behind Marseille and 13 off PSG after a 1-0 win over Nimes.

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

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

# Sania in Hobart semis

PTI ■ HOBART

Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza's comeback from maternity leave continued to be a success as she entered the women's doubles semifinals of the Hobart International with Ukrainian partner Nadia Kichenok here on Thursday.

Sania and Kichenok defeated the American duo of Vania King and Christina McHale 6-2, 4-6, 10-4 in a contest that lasted one hour and 24 minutes.

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

Zidanzek and Bouzkova got the better of Canada's Sharon Fichman and Ukraine's Kateryna Bondarenko 6-3, 3-6, 10-4 in their last-eight stage clash.

Sania and Kichenok made a strong start and broke their opponents twice to take the lead. They also did well to save four break points in the opening set.

The second set went on serve till the eighth game

**Sania and Kichenok defeated the American duo of Vania King and Christina McHale 6-2, 4-6, 10-4 in a contest that lasted one hour and 24 minutes. The fifth-seeded Indo-Ukrainian combination will now lock horns with the Slovenian-Czech pair of Tamara Zidanzek and Marie Bouzkova**

before King and McHale broke Sania and Kichenok to draw level in the contest. However, the third set



Sania Mirza in a file picture

Sania Mirza/Twitter

was a stroll in the park for Sania and her partner as they dominated their opponents with superior serves.

The 33-year-old Sania is returning to WTA circuit after two years. During her two-year break, she battled injury breakdowns before taking a formal break in April 2018 to give birth to her son Ishaan.

She is married to Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik. Before the ongoing event,

Sania last played in China Open in October 2017.

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

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

# Shapovalov falls to French qualifier Humbert in Auckland



Denis Shapovalov plays a return shot

AIP/Twitter

AFP ■ AUCKLAND

World number 13 Denis Shapovalov crashed out of the ATP Auckland

Classic Thursday, beaten in straight sets by French qualifier Ugo Humbert. There was only one break in each set of the ven-

# One step away

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

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nagal, seeded 21st in the qualifiers, was shown the door by Mohamed Safwat of Egypt 7-6 (2) 6-2 after one hour and 28 minute contest. Rankumar Ramanathan on Tuesday made an early exit along with lone Indian contender in women's singles qualifier, Aniketa Raina.

# Sindhu out of Indonesia Masters

PTI ■ JAKARTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

Indians thus continued their poor form after making



P.V. Sindhu in action

PTI/File Picture

early exits in the Malaysia Masters last week. Sindhu and Saina had reached the quarter-finals in Kuala Lumpur but none of the men's singles players could cross the second round.

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

# De Minaur out of Australian Open with abdominal tear



Alex de Minaur in action

Alex de Minaur/Twitter

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Devastated Alex de Minaur withdrew from the Australian Open Thursday with an abdominal tear, describing it as "really serious".

The world number 21 and Australia's top player pulled out of the Adelaide International with the same problem and has not been able to recover for his home Grand Slam.

"It's not great. Not

going to lie. Obviously it's a week of the calendar that I really look forward to and put in all the hard work for, so it's pretty devastating to miss out on my home Slam," he said.

"I wanted to go out there and play, even though I've got a four-centimetre grade two tear. So it's not a joke -- it's something really serious. "Getting out of bed hurts, everyday activity it hurts," he added.

De Minaur helped Australia to the semi-finals at the ATP Cup earlier this month, winning two of his four singles matches and pushing world number one Rafael Nadal hard in an engrossing three-setter.

Nicknamed 'Demon', the 20-year-old had a breakout year in 2019, winning titles at Zhuhai, Atlanta and Sydney, and move ahead of Nick Kyrgios as Australia's top player.

# KOHLI TO BE BACK AT NO 3

## In current situation, you should be ready to bat anywhere: Iyer

PTI ■ RAJKOT

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

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

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

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

Kohli batting at three also provides stability to the middle-order. With a concussed Rishabh Pant out of the second game, Rahul is a certainty as he will keep wickets.

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

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

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



India's captain Virat Kohli bats during a practice session

Jadhav and rookie Shivam Dube makes the squad.

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

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

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

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

Bumrah, since his comeback,

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, it will be quite a test of their mettle in the Saurashtra Cricket Association stadium. Australian bowlers also showed at the Wankhede, why they are considered among the best.

Led by pace spearhead Mitchell Starc, they bundled out India for a sub-par 255 and Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins would be raring to go once again.

Spinners Adam Zampa and Ashton Agar, not only contained the bats, but provided crucial breakthroughs and are expected to play a similar role again in the middle overs.

The track here is expected to be

## Bhuvneshwar undergoes sports hernia surgery in London, rehab in NCA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**I**njury-plagued Indian pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar has undergone a sports hernia surgery in London and will begin his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) after returning to the country, the BCCI said on Thursday.

The Board did not specify any timeline for his recovery but it is learnt that he will return to action during the Indian Premier League (IPL), which is scheduled to start on January 29. Bhuvneshwar plays for Sunrisers Hyderabad in the T20 event.

"Fast bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar travelled to London on 9th January and underwent a successful sports hernia surgery on 11th January. He was assisted by Team India physiotherapist Yogesh Parmar," read a statement from Board Secretary Jay Shah.

"Bhuvneshwar will now return to India and commence his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru," it added. He was not named in the T20 squad for the upcoming tour of New Zealand due to the injury.

A belter and India can draw confidence from the home series against New Zealand in 2017, when they won 2-1 after losing the opener, co-incidentally in Mumbai.



Shreyas Iyer celebrates with Virat Kohli

PTI ■ RAJKOT

**S**hreyas Iyer on Thursday said the current competition in the Indian team demands one to bat at any number after he did not get to play at his usual number four spot in the first ODI against Australia.

Iyer returned to India's limited overs set-up following the 2019 World Cup and has done well at number four.

"In this situation, you should be ready to bat at any number because it is really important to play in the team,

(considering) the competition which we have now," 25-year-old Iyer told reporters ahead of the second ODI here.

The stylish batsman also said that the team is looking forward to more experimentation.

"We can't give any reasons of batting at any particular number. Yes it is really important for us to be focused and not to cry about why we haven't been batting at a similar position. Experimentation is something we are looking forward to. Hopefully, we will get a good number for each batsman."

"This is the time we should try and experiment things, hopefully, we will work-out in the future," said the Mumbaier.

A middle-order collapse in Mumbai exposed India's weakest link but Iyer said that was part and parcel of the game.

"Well it happens sometimes and you are not prepared. The country was not prepared to see us collapsing in such situations but it is a part and parcel of the game," said Iyer on the collapse.

"You have to take it in your stride and move forward. As a team we have been doing really well throughout the season and it was just one of the matches where you completely collapsed... There is learning from there," said Iyer.

# Need to have a strong character to get better of Kohli: Zampa

PTI ■ RAJKOT

**A**ustralian leg-spinner Adam Zampa on Thursday said one needs to have a "strong character" to get the better of a class act like India captain Virat Kohli, who he has dismissed six times in limited overs cricket so far.

Zampa said despite enjoying an upturn over the Indian captain in limited-overs, Kohli is a hard nut to crack.

"It's going to be an attacking approach. I think if you're on the back-foot and have a defensive mindset then that's when he (Kohli) can get on top of you. The most important

thing playing in places like India against these guys is to have a little bit of character," said Zampa ahead of Friday's second ODI here.

Zampa has dismissed Kohli four times in ODIs and twice in T20s.

"You probably know you're going to get hit for boundaries but it can really get worse if you make that affect you. I have got him a few times now but I don't think there is anything in it. He still scores at over 100 (strike rate) against me," the 27-year-old spinner said.

"He is a very hard guy to bowl to. He's one of the toughest guys I've ever had to bowl

to. After game one (first ODI), he will be even more switched on. It will be a big challenge," said Zampa, who has 66 ODIs wickets from 49 games.

Steve Waugh had said in the past that Kohli was not shown enough respect to Zampa, but the leggie disagreed with the former Australia skipper.

"I don't think he (Kohli) doesn't respect me. I don't think that's correct (referring to Waugh's statement)."

Zampa said Australia has managed to find out Kohli's weak point.

"We basically just found that Virat finds leg-spinners

hard to line up early in his innings. He's such a great starter, even the other day he was 16 off 14. How much energy he brought to the crease, his running between the wickets, some of the cover drives he played off the quicks," he said.

"I think it's important to try and have a game plan against him. So we figured out before the last game that it would be good to start with leg-spin to him."

"I've got him out four times in the last year or so it's nice to have that confidence to bowl to him at the start of his innings," said Zampa, who is on his third tour to India.

# 'India to fight back hard in second game'

PTI ■ RAJKOT

**A**ustralia captain Aaron Finch has no doubts that India will "fight back" in the second ODI here Friday after being battered in the series-opener in Mumbai.

Australia gave the hosts a reality check with a crushing 10-wicket win in the lung-opener on Tuesday, riding on David Warner and Finch's unbeaten hundreds.

But Finch said it would be silly to take India lightly as they are host of world-class players.

"That was a pretty good performance. I think our fielding was a little bit sloppy but all in all we are really happy with



Aaron Finch bats during a practice session

how the boys went," he was quoted as saying by Cricket.Com.Au.

"They (India) will fight back no doubt. They are a great side, got some world-class players," Finch said talking about what to expect from Friday's match.

Asked about his opening partner's batting display, the Australia skipper said, "He (Warner) is playing unbelievably well I think. It's so hard to bowl to him once he gets in. On Tuesday, riding on his ball all around the ground, so stopping him from scoring is so hard."

"He is so clear with how he is going to bat, his footwork is pretty good. His mental state is unbelievable when he is out in the middle. He is so clear with his thoughts and his game. He is in top shape."



# Runaway favourites Ind ready for High Five

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

**A** few precocious talents, hardworking teenagers and a chunky lot which might fall by the wayside in times to come will form an eclectic 16-team mix in the melting pot called ICC Under-19 World Cup starting on Friday.

Defending champions India will be overwhelming favourites to win the junior global meet for the fifth time with at least six players, including skipper Priyam Garg having played senior cricket (first-class, List A or T20).

Not to forget four players — Yashraj Jaiswal, Garg, Ravi Bishnoi, Kartik Tyagi — who have already landed fat contracts in the IPL.

India have been the team to beat on the junior cricket circuit since Virat Kohli's team dominated the proceedings in the 2008 edition.

While there will be future stars in Pakistan, Australia, England and New Zealand teams, the presence of Japan and Nigeria will certainly have its own curiosity value.

In fact Japan are clubbed with India, New Zealand and Sri Lanka in group D.

has South Asian expats with names like Tushar Chaturvedi, Yugandhar Retharekar, Ishan Fartayal, Debashish Sahoo helping out the likes of Kazumasa Iwakashi, Masato Morita and Shu Noguchi.

The Nigerian team, which is clubbed in a difficult group comprising Australia, West Indies and England, has more local flavour in the presence of Sylvester Okepe, Oke Boniface, Ifeanyichukwu Uboh and Olayinka Olaleye.

The tournament starts with hosts South Africa taking on Afghanistan in the "Diamond City" of Kimberley on Friday, followed by Australia's big-ticket game against West Indies on the very next day.

Australia like India have a number of players, who have already played senior level cricket with one prominent name being former death over specialist OJ Harvey's nephew McKenzie Harvey, who has played 2 List A and 13 T20 games.

Similarly England have Ben Charlesworth with an experience of 11 first-class games to his credit while a few of his teammates have also played for their respective countries.

# Ireland stun WI by four runs

AFP ■ ST. GEORGE'S

**I**reland rode a career-best 95 from opener Paul Stirling before keeping their nerve in a nail-biting final over to pull off a four-run win over world champions West Indies in the first of a three-match Twenty20 series on Wednesday.

The burly Stirling steered Ireland to 208-7 in their 20 overs.

However, the home side appeared comfortably on course for victory — bringing up their hundred inside 10 overs with just two wickets down — until the game was decided in the last over.

Needing 15 to win, all-rounder Josh Little (3-29) got rid of the dangerous Dwayne Bravo, one of two wickets to fall in the last over.

With five needed off the last ball and seven wickets down, Hayden Walsh could only wave his bat into thin air in a desperate attempt to win the game.

It was only Ireland's second victory in T20 cricket over the West Indies who went into the game having swept the ODI series 3-0.

"Everyone is ecstatic, we came so close in that second ODI (fifth by one wicket) and it maybe affected us in that third ODI, so to show the bottle and come out against one of the top teams in T20 cricket and get a win was great for the vibe of the team," said Ireland skipper Andrew Balbirnie.



# Dhoni dropped from BCCI's central contracts list

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**M**ahendra Singh Dhoni was on Thursday dropped from the BCCI's list of centrally contracted players, raising fresh doubts on the future of the former India captain who has not played since the World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand last year.

The BCCI announced the central contracts for the period of October 2019 to September 2020. The 38-year-old Dhoni was in the A category, which fetches a player Rs 5 crore as annual retainer, until last year.

Skipper Virat Kohli, his white-ball deputy Rohit Sharma and top pacer Jasprit Bumrah were retained in the highest A+ bracket of Rs 7 crore.

Dhoni's contract not being renewed is not exactly a surprise as he has not played a competitive game since the World Cup semifinal on July 9. He has been on an sabbatical and has refused to divulge his future plans.

Head coach Ravi Shastri had recently said that Dhoni may soon end his ODI career but could be in contention for a spot in the T20 World Cup squad provided he does well in the IPL.

Among others, batsman K L Rahul has been promoted from B grade to A. Having lost his place in the Test side



MS Dhoni in a file photo

following a dismal tour of Australia last year, Rahul has made a strong comeback and been a consistent performer in the shorter formats.

Test opener Mayank Agarwal, who has done well since making his debut during the tour of Australia in 2018-

# Mahi starts training with Jharkhand Ranji squad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**T**he 38-year-old showed up at his home team's net practice in Ranchi, indicating that he is gearing himself for the upcoming Indian Premier League. This was on a day when BCCI axed him from the list of centrally contracted players.

In fact, Dhoni has bought a brand new bowling machine for his training. While the

19, has been included in the Grade B category, which also features Hardik Pandya and Yuzvendra Chahal along with two others.

Pacer Navdeep Saini and T20 specialist Washington Sundar are new entrants in Grade C alongside Shreyas Iyer, Deepak Chahar and Shardul Thakur. Though he has not played Tests, Saini has emerged as an option in all three formats.

Iyer, who made a limited-overs comeback following India's World

cup campaign, has cemented his place in the middle order and seems to be a stable number four that the team has been looking for.

Pacer Thakur too has made an impact in the limited opportunities he has got while the injured Chahal has become a strong contender for a spot in the T20 World Cup with a string of impressive performances, including a six-wicket haul against Bangladesh in November. It is the best ever in the shortest format till date.

Joe Denly was leg before to Maharaj when South Africa successfully sought a review which showed a ball headed for the stumps had hit pad before

but, while Root was beaten and bowled by a fast delivery from Rabada which hit the top of his off stump.

With the four-match series tied at 1-1, batting first appeared to be a considerable advantage on a pitch which had a fair covering of grass but which offered no help to the bowlers.

It was the sixth successive Test loss by Du Plessis. South Africa picked new cap Dane Paterson as a specialist fast bowler in place of all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius. Paterson surprisingly shared the new ball with Philander, with the quicker Rabada and Anrich Nortje expected to wait for their turn.

AFP ■ PORT ELIZABETH

**W**orld cricketer of the year Ben Stokes survived three reviews by South Africa as he and Ollie Pope regained the initiative for England on the first day of the third Test at St George's Park on Thursday.

England were 224 for four at the end of an attritional day during which South Africa had briefly claimed the advantage.

England were 148 for four when Stokes and Pope came together in danger of failing to capitalise on batting first on a placid pitch on a hot, sunny day. But the pair added 76 without being parted and were able to lift a slow scoring rate after England were able to score only 117 for two in 58 overs before tea. Stokes was unbeaten on 38 at the close while Pope made 39 not out.

Stokes came into the match

# Pope, Stokes revive England

a day after being named player of the year by the International Cricket Council and on the back of a man-of-the-match performance when England levelled the four-match series by winning the second Test in Cape Town by 189 runs.

Stokes made a shaky start, surviving a leg before wicket review on umpire's call against left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj and an appeal for a catch at slip off which South Africa thought was an inside edge off the pad.

South Africa wasted their last review when Stokes played no shot against Vernon Philander with the second new ball but the ball was well outside the off stump.



Ben Stokes in action

Kagiso Rabada took two wickets for South Africa but the home team's most impressive bowler was Maharaj who took one for 55 in 32 overs. He bowled an unbroken spell of 30 overs which enabled captain Faf du Plessis to rotate his fast bowlers as England struggled to assert themselves.

**OPENS FALL INTO TRAP**  
Zak Crawley and Dom Sibley gave England a solid start, putting on 70 for the first wicket but both fell to catches at backward square leg.

Joe Denly was leg before to Maharaj when South Africa successfully sought a review which showed a ball headed for the stumps had hit pad before

but, while Root was beaten and bowled by a fast delivery from Rabada which hit the top of his off stump.