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VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY JANUARY 27, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



AND NOW,
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GOOGLE'S VIBRANT R-DAY DOODLE SHOWCASES DIVERSITY, HARMONY

Google on Sunday dedicated a special doodle to mark the 71st Republic Day, which captured the country's vibrant diversity, rich sartorial and cultural heritage as well as its beautiful bio-diversity. The multi-hued doodle, with a dominant blue tone, depicts iconic monuments interspersed with images of famous music instruments and dance forms. The Internet behemoth is known to mark landmark occasions and life and times of celebrated personalities with special doodles. The word Google was portrayed colourfully using images of India's national bird and an iconic south Indian dance form.



GURDWARA HOLDS OPEN HOUSE DAYS AFTER RACIST ATTACK IN US

A Gurdwara in the US state of California has organised an open house and welcomed hundreds of people in a bid to spread awareness about the religion, weeks after it was defaced with a swastika graffiti in an apparent hate crime. On January 13, the priest of Guru Maneyo Granth Gurdwara Sahib in Orangevale saw words "White Power" and a swastika graffitied onto the sign out front and informed police. On Saturday, members of the minority community welcomed hundreds of people from different backgrounds, religions and races.



INDIANS ACROSS THE WORLD CELEBRATE 71ST REPUBLIC DAY

MELBOURNE/COLOMBO: Thousands of Indians across the world enthusiastically celebrated the 71st Republic Day on Sunday and participated in various cultural events with unfurling of the tricolour and singing of the national anthem. Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu led the Indian community during the celebrations at the India House on Sunday. Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, along with his wife Shiranthi Rajapaksa, joined the Indian diaspora to celebrate the day organised by the Indian High Commission in Colombo.



CONGRESS SENDS MODI COPY OF CONSTITUTION, TWEETS RECEIPT

On the 71st anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution, the Congress sent a copy of the book to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying, "When you get time off from dividing the country, please do read it". The dig encapsulated the opposition's allegations of the government violating the Constitution through the Citizenship Amendment Act or CAA. Most of the politicians, civil society and artists who are opposing the CAA, read the Constitution on Republic Day.



India-Nepal understanding on key issues benefits both: Oli

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Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan receives the guard of honour during the Republic Day celebrations at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium in Vijayawada on Sunday.

Guv bats for 3 capitals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan unfurled the Tricolour marking the start of the 71st Republic Day celebrations at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada on Sunday.

The Governor took the guard of honour and inspected the parade by various contingents of the State Police department and reviewed the beautifully decorated tableaux of government departments.

Later, in his message to the people of the State, Harichandan said his government was emphasising upon equitable distribution of resources and balanced development of all regions.

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Governor receives progress report

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has fulfilled most of his election promises in the seven months of the YSRCP government, and a report on this achievement has been submitted to the state Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan on the occasion of the 71st Republic Day celebrations in Vijayawada.

YSRCP senior leader Ummareddy Venkateswarlu, told the media here on Sunday that the YSRCP's flagship programme Navaratnalu was being implemented in the state.

"Most of the previous governments failed to fulfill their election promises after coming



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy receives Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan at the Republic Day celebrations in Vijayawada on Sunday.

to power. Unlike any other government, Jagan has fulfilled about 90 per cent of the

promises made in the YSRCP manifesto," Venkateswarlu said.

Continued on Page 3



Centre should mind its job: Ajit on NIA probe in Elgaar case

5



Gadkari: 22 expressways, green corridors to be built at Rs 3 lakh-crore

8

R-Day: Advani hoists flag at his residence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani on Sunday unfurled the tricolour at his Prithviraj Road residence here and extended good wishes to the people on the occasion of Republic Day.

The nation celebrated the 71st Republic Day with a grand military parade and exhibition of its history, cultural diversity and strategic weaponry at the Rajpath.

Earlier, Advani, 92, attended the Republic Day parade.



Botsa: Decision on dissolution of Legislative Council today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Administration Minister Botsa Satyanarayana on Sunday said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy made it clear to his Cabinet colleagues that it was the people who would have to decide whether they require a Legislative Council or not.

Addressing the media here, the minister accused the TDP members of violating the rules of Legislative Council for political reasons and reminded that earlier, NTR had abolished the Council.

"The media had also sup-



Botsa Satyanarayana

ported the move by NTR to abolish the Council but today, the same media is opposing us," Botsa said.

He added: "It's evident that the Council Chairman violat-

ed the rules and sent the Bill (on Decentralisation of Administration) to the Select Committee. A particular set of media channels then reported that we were influencing the MLCs and bringing them to support us.

We are not doing any such thing. We don't have to indulge in such cheap tricks like Naidu, who is well experienced in buying MLCs."

The Minister said that on Monday there will be a clear decision from the government on abolishing the Legislative Council, irrespective of how much time it takes.

Naidu won't be able to stop abolition of Council: Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Advisor to the State government (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy on Sunday created a flutter by revealing that 17 MLCs of the TDP were ready to join the YSRCP, and emphasised that the YSRCP does not feel the need to welcome them into the party fold.

Stating that the YSRCP has some principles and it would stick to them, Sajjala told reporters at the party's central office in Tadepalli that there was no need for politics of 'buying' people's representatives belonging to TDP.

He said that a crucial question has cropped up regarding the future of various Bills that the government may pass from time to time in the Assembly if the Legislative Council were to exist.

"As is customary, crucial Finance Bills would not be sent to the Upper House," Sajjala said, accusing the TDP, which enjoys a majority in the Council, of creating hurdles to delay the passage of Bills.

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- 17 TDP MLCs ready to join, but YSRCP doesn't need them
- TDP chief concerned only with future of his son Nara Lokesh
- Crucial Finance Bills would not be sent to the Council
- TDP, which enjoys a majority in the Council, is creating hurdles to delay the passage of Bills

5 MLCs skip TDP meeting to discuss YSRC's Council plans

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a shocker to TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu, five MLCs of his party failed to attend a key Telugu Desam Legislature Party (TDL) meeting at Mangalagiri on Sunday.

These five MLCs are Gali Saraswati, KE Prabhakar, Tippe Swamy, Satrucharla

Vijaya Rama Raju and Samanthakamani. Of these five, Vijaya Rama Raju and Samanthakamani had skipped voting on Rule No. 71 as well. TDP sources said that while Ramakrishna did not attend the meeting as he is abroad, Vijaya Rama Raju skipped it due to health reasons.

Continued on Page 3

4.6 temblor rocks parts of AP, TS

Second most severe earthquake recorded after 51 yrs in 2 states

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An earthquake, measuring 4.6 on the Richter scale shook parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states in the early hours of Sunday.

NGRI identified the epicentre of the earthquake at Chintalapalem Zone at Vellatur, about 7 km deep into the ground. The resultant tremors were felt in parts of Hyderabad and Amaravati as well for a few seconds.

The earthquake was reported at around 2.37 am on Sunday in Jaggaiahpet and Nandigama areas. This is reported to be second earthquake measuring over 4 on the Richter scale in the two Telugu speaking states, and the second most severe in the last 51 years. The last such earthquake, recorded with a mag-

nitude of 5.3 on the Richter scale, had rocked Bhadrachalam region in 1969. On Sunday, the magnitude of the earthquake Huzurnagar constituency in Suryapet was recorded below 3, and it shook the ground for about 10 seconds.

While no loss of property was reported, residents fear that aftershocks may occur again or in a day or two.

NGRI Chief Scientist Nagesh said, "The waves from Chintalapalem reached Guntur and Krishna in Andhra Pradesh and Nalgonda and Khammam districts in Telangana creating tremors. The earthquake was occurred in a faultline that exists near Velthur of Suryapet. We haven't named the faultline. The epicentre of the quake is in river Krishna."



Abhijit Banerjee

BJP will gain from better opposition: Nobel laureate

PNS ■ JAIPUR

India needs a better opposition which is the heart of any democracy and the ruling party should embrace that to keep it under check, noted economist and Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee said here on Sunday.

Speaking at a session at the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF), the 58-year-old Indian-American economist said there was no co-relation between the authoritarianism and the economic success.

"You can easily argue that Singapore had a successful dictator and can easily come back and talk about Zimbabwe. We can talk about this ad nauseum... At some level authority is an illusion," he said.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Magha & Shukla Paksha
 Panchangam
Tithi: Tritiya, Full Night
Nakshatram: Shatabhisha, Full Night
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 08:16 am - 09:40 am
Yamagandam: 11:04 am - 12:28 pm
Variyam: 02:47 pm - 04:33 pm
Gulika: 01:52 pm - 03:16 pm
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritkalam: 01:27 am - 03:11 am
Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:06 pm - 12:51 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Clear
 Temp: 33/21
 Humidity: 65%
 Sunrise: 06:49
 Sunset: 06:08
 Current Weather Conditions
 Updated January 26, 2020 5:00 PM

Village secretariats now provide 470 services

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Bringing administration closer to the people, the State government on Sunday made 470 services available for citizens at all the 15,002 village secretariats across AP.

The officials prepared charts listing the kind of services available on each working day. An action plan has been evolved to provide any service within a span of 72 hours. In all, the government aims to provide 540 services related to 11 departments to the people in a phased manner.

The officials said it might take five more days for those services that could be availed



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy inaugurates a village secretariat in this file photograph.

by paying fees. Preparations were being made for dishing out such services by linking payment of such fees to the accounts of various departments. They clarified that only

- Any service will be provided within a span of 72 hours
- The government aims to provide 540 services related to 11 departments in a phased manner
- Only 70 services would be offered on payment of fees

70 services would be offered on payment of fees and the remaining 470 could be availed with immediate effect.

All village secretariats are being equipped with computers, Internet connectivity, tables, chairs and mobile phones.

Spandana programme

would be organised every day to receive grievances from the public, officials said.

They said the employees undergoing training at Mandal Parishads and municipalities should report to their designated secretariats and offer services to the people.

Continued on Page 3

300 personalities back anti-CAA protesters

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Over 300 eminent personalities from the creative and scholarly community of India, including actor Naseeruddin Shah, filmmaker Mira Nair, vocalist TM Krishna, author Amitav Ghosh and historian Romila Thapar have expressed solidarity with the students and others protesting against the CAA and NRC.

The amended Citizenship Act and National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a "threat" to the soul of India, the signato-



ries said in a note published on Indian Cultural Forum on January 13.

"We stand in solidarity with the students and others who are protesting and speaking out against the CAA and against the NRC," the eminent personalities said.

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Waltair Division a torchbearer of innovation, praises DRM

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Despite challenges thrown by difficult circumstances, Waltair Railway Division is excelled to surpass the targets from April to December 2019 and achieved 9.5% growth over corresponding time (three quarters) of the last fiscal. Waltair Division stood in front-line in all the fields like safety, security, infrastructure development, amenities improvement, innovative measures and excelled in all fields.

Due to untiring efforts of railwaymen, the Division could able to recover from the cyclones within record time and completed projects with major thrust on passenger amenities like lifts and escalators. Waltair Division of East Coast Railway celebrated the 71st Republic Day celebrations with fervour. Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, Waltair Divisional Railway Manager, unfurled the national flag and received the guard of honour from the contingents of Railway Protection Force, Cadets of Bharat Scouts and Guides and Civil Defence at the Railway Foot Ball Stadium.

Speaking on the occasion, DRM said that they focused on upgradation of infrastructure to enhance the mobility and safety, by eliminating level crossings, enhanced speed in the Division, carrying non-interlocking works in record time and completion of 197 km rail renewal works.

After the passionate Republic



Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, Waltair Divisional Railway Manager, receives the guard of honour at the Railway Foot Ball Stadium in Visakhapatnam on Sunday (right) A dog with a camera during the parade



Children performing in a cultural programme during the Republic Day celebration

Day parade, DRM Chetan Kumar said that Waltair Division has played a vital role in national integration and adopted the path of innovative progression that made it as a torch bearer for many. Railways have great contribution towards socio-economic development of the nation through its work force and service. The Division's progress is on fast phase that we can observe in e-Commerce, technological upgradation, the volume of passengers and goods it carry, the network development and passenger facilities. Waltair

Division bagged National Tourism award for the best tourist friendly railway station and Waltair Division took initiative for innovative measures for the convenience of public, constructed Refreshing Lounge under Corporate Social Responsibility funds from HPCL, which is unique over Indian Railways and several other initiatives like world class AC relaxing lounge, entertainment Fun-zone, Car Display, Human interactive interface, which are first of its kind in Indian Railways, the DRM added.

● Due to untiring efforts of railwaymen, the Division could able to recover from the cyclones within record time and completed projects with major thrust on passenger amenities like lifts and escalators

● Waltair Division bagged National Tourism award for the best tourist friendly railway station and Waltair Division took initiative for innovative measures for the convenience of public

● Constructed Refreshing Lounge, which is unique and several other initiatives like world class AC relaxing lounge, entertainment Fun-zone, human interactive interface, which are first of its kind in Indian Railways

CAPSULE

Durga temple EO recalls freedom fighters sacrifices

VIJAYAWADA: Sri Durga Malleswara Swamivarla Devasthanam celebrated 71st Republic Day here on Sunday. Temple Executive Officer MV Suresh Babu unfurled the national flag. Later, he received the guard of honour from the SPF, home guards and temple security personnel. On the occasion, he paid floral tributes Mahatma Gandhi. The Executive Officer spoke about importance of the Republic Day and recalled the sacrifices of freedom fighters. He appealed to devotees visiting the temple to come in traditional attire. Later, sweets were distributed to children and temple staff. Temple engineer, additional executive officer, police and security staff and others were present. Caption: Durga temple executive officer MV Suresh Babu receiving the guard of honour on the occasion of Republic Day in Vijayawada on Sunday.

3K run organised to create awareness on health

VIJAYAWADA: The Vijayawada Orthopaedic Society (VOS) organised 3K run to create awareness among people on health to mark the 71st Republic Day celebrations. The run commenced from BRTS Road with a slogan 'Exercise for Your Healthy Bones & You'. The run was flagged off by Dr Y Poorna Chandra Rao, orthopaedic surgeon and founder of Vijayawada Orthopaedic Club, here on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Rao said that Vijayawada Orthopaedic Society (VOS) will organise a three-day 49th annual conference of Orthopaedic Surgeons Society of Andhra Pradesh 'OSSAPCON 2020' starting from January 31 to February 2. VOS secretary Dr Vasu Karlapudi said that the conference is aimed at creating awareness on the latest and advanced procedures in orthopaedics. He appealed to members of the orthopaedic family to attend the conference and make it a grand success. Dr K Satya Kumar, Dr M Ravi Kanth, Dr P Rajesh and senior orthopaedic surgeons Dr N Ramesh, Dr MV Subba Rao, Dr Meher Prasanna, Dr N Jagadeesh, Dr M Srinivas, Dr S Vijay Srinivas, Dr K Srinivas were among those who took part in the run.

Patriotic wave witnessed at TTD's Parade Grounds

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The 71st Republic Day has witnessed grand gala of celebrations at the TTD Parade Grounds on Sunday. The National Day commenced with Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal hoisting the tricolour flag on the occasion.

An attractive parade by the TTD vigilance staff led by AVSO Nandeeswar Rao stole the show. It was followed by EO's address to the TTD employees and presentation of one Srivari silver dollar and an appreciation letter to 24 officials and 205 other employees of all departments by him for their meritorious contributions.

On the occasion, the 20-member private security team led by Srinivas highlighted the arrangements made by the TTD to avert accidents on ghat roads.

A display of dogs of bomb squad in detecting drugs and explosives and a human pyramid display by TTD security staff enthralled held the gathering. The attractive dance and patriotic songs presented by students of various TTD educational institutions, including Annamacharya sankeertans won the applause.



TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal giving a certificate to a priest during the Republic Day celebrations in Tirupati on Sunday

TTD committed to propagation of sanatana dharma, says EO

TIRUPATI: Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams is committed towards the propagation, promotion and preservation of sanatana dharma linked to socio-economic development of society, said TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal. In his Republic Day address to TTD employees at Parade Grounds of the administrative building on Sunday, the Executive Officer highlighted the activities of TTD and also its innovative strategies for religious promotion, devotees' welfare and TTD employees welfare. He thanked the generosity of 36,000 donors, who contributed nearly Rs 386 crore to the TTD for promotion of all its activities. The TTD has successfully conducted prestigious and challenging events like the annual Brahmotsavams, Vaikuntha Ekadasi at Tirumala. All preparations are underway for the successful conduction of Ratha Saphthami at Tirumala on February 1, he added. The Executive Officer said from January 20, the TTD had launched another unique devotees' welfare programme of free distribution of one laddu to each devotee after Srivari darshan and facility to buy additional laddus without any recommendations.

HC UPADHYAY ■ HYDERABAD

The ongoing tirade over implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Population Register (NPR) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) by fringe pseudo-secular elements has ultimately culminated into proxy war by Pakistan against India. There is no surprise element in it; rather it is on expected lines.

The all-out war on all fronts, viz. legislature, judiciary and streets by the Congress-Left-Communal-Extremists combine has fiercely erupted in the last-ditch battle to disintegrate, divide and douse India into the fire of communal frenzy which, if successful, would be nothing but a repeat of the 1947 Partition scenario.

The rogue state, called Pakistan, with its like-minded henchmen in India, has now come out in the open to support such anti-national elements in all possible ways, including the much-needed finance and breast-beating globally.

Although the conspirators have ganged up against nationalist forces, happily the nation stands united like a rock. The

FINALLY, IT'S INDIA VERSUS PAKISTAN!

CAA-NRC cries have created more hatred against these gangs than sympathy. The authorities, both in public administration and judiciary, are rightly acting in sync to set right these anti-national, terrorist and communal forces.

Indeed, the present volatile situation in the country is nothing, but the rehearsal of the gory days ahead when the imminent war against Pakistan becomes a reality. As Prof. Balraj Madhok, the co-founder of Bharatiya Jan Sangh had predicted, "the country will face war from within the country as well as from Pakistan." Therefore, he had favoured one last decisive war with Pakistan.

Unfortunately, the stage has been set now. The war is certainly not a good word, but like a bitter pill, it has to be accepted to cure the country from the cancer of anti-national elements and the external enemy. And, India is capable to teach a fitting lesson to both these enemies. The need of the

The rogue state, called Pakistan, with its like-minded henchmen in India, has now come out in the open to support such anti-national elements in all possible ways, including the much-needed finance and breast-beating globally.



LEGAL ROUNDUP

hour is to expedite this cleansing process. The Constitution of India, too, clearly mandates that we shall strive to protect sovereignty, integrity and unity of our democratic nation at any cost. On our part, the nationalist and patriotic forces should be vigilant and spare no efforts to inform and awaken the people in their circles to identify such divisive forces wearing the mask of 'patriotism' and further that they should not be carried away by the sham

VMC strives to improve Swachh Survekshan ranking

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner V Prasanna Venkatesh said the architect of Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar enabled us to lead a happy democratic life. On the 71st Republic Day celebrations, the Commissioner unfurled the national flag and received the guard of honour. He paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and greeted officials and staff on the occasion.

He said that every year "we celebrate Independence Day and Republic Day on a grand note". However, it is the responsibility of every individual to know the importance of the Republic Day. He said on the 150th birth anniversary of



Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh receives the guard of honour in Vijayawada on Sunday

Mahatma Gandhi and as part of Swachh Bharat Mission, we are striving to improve the Swachh Survekshan ranking this year. He said cleanliness drive is not just the duty of the Corporation, denizens should feel the responsibility to keep

the surroundings clean. Additional commissioner A Mohan Rao, chief medical officer Dr R Venkata Ramana, city planner Lakshman Rao, deputy commissioner Venkata Lakshmi and others were present.

CORONAVIRUS IMPACTS YELLOW METAL

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The outbreak of Coronavirus in China which is the second largest buyer of gold has adversely impacted price of the yellow metal in global markets during the week. Consequently, New York gold and silver closed at US \$1570.30 and 18.20 (per oz) respectively. Platinum and Palladium were quoted at \$1,009.75 and \$2,479.23 (per oz).

During the year, palladium price saw an increase of 31 per cent. In foreign exchange market, Indian Rupee further weakened.

On the closing day, US Dollar and British Pound commanded the exchange values of Rs 71.33 and Rs 93.25 respectively.

Similarly, Euro and Canadian dollar closed at Rs 78.64 and Rs 54.25 while Kuwaiti Dinar stood at Rs 234.73.

Saudi Riyal and Omani Riyal were quoted at Rs 19.01 and Rs 185.27 whereas Singapore dollar and Australian dollar were exchanged for Rs 52.78 and Rs 48.70.

Buoyancy continued to grip the stock markets.

Sensex and the 50-share Nifty closed at 41,613.19 and 12,248.30 points respectively. MCX gold and silver closed at

With the Union Budget proposed to be presented in Parliament on February 1, markets are agog with expectations. It is likely that the FM would try to please all sectors of the economy by performing a fine balancing act.

Rs 40,352 (per 10 gm) and Rs 46,935 (per kg). MCX copper declined considerably and closed at Rs 438.65 (per kg). Similarly, Brent crude oil closed at the lower level of \$60.56 while crude oil was quoted at 3,873 (per barrel).

WEEKLY MARKET REVIEW

In local markets, the precious metals were quite optimistic. With the weakening of rupee vis-a-vis American dollar, the import of gold and silver became costlier. As such, standard gold (24 carats) further appreciated by Rs 80 and closed at Rs 40,110 (per 10 gm) while silver (0.999) too, recorded an increase of Rs 300 at Rs 46,700 (per kg) at close.

With the Union Budget proposed to be presented in Parliament on February 1, markets are agog with expectations. It is likely that the Finance Minister would try to please all sectors of the economy by performing a fine balancing act.

COMMODITIES

The sentiment in local principal wholesale commodity markets continued to be firm.

The markets at Begum Bazaar, Osmangunj, Mir Alam Mandi, General Bazaar, Bowenpally, Kukatpally, Dilshuknagar, Risala Abdullah, Maharajgunj, Kishangunj and Monda Market witnessed brisk business activity.

The sentiment in tamarind, ginger, garlic, pulses and sugar remained strong while in coriander, common edible oils and chillis, it was moderate.

A notable development in the trade between India and Malaysia is that India has agreed to continue to buy palmolein oil from Malaysia while the latter country would import sugar from India.

Common vegetables and NECC eggs recorded a further decline due to comfortable supply position. In Hyderabad, the NECC wholesale egg price further crashed by Rs 48 at the closing price of Rs 360 (per 100).

Ranchi recorded the highest price of Rs 452 while Hospet closed with the lowest of Rs 370.

Tableau on Disha Act bags second prize

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Women and Child Welfare Department's tableau on Disha Act has become the cynosure of all eyes at the Republic Day parade at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here on Sunday. The tableau was awarded the second prize at the Republic Day celebrations. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy brought the Disha Act to render quick justice to women. To take the Act closer to people, Valayam Creations Private Limited designed the Disha Act tableau highlighting how the Act functions and what would be the response of the government in case of atrocities perpetrated on women.

MD of the Valayam Creations Ramamohan Reddy Bairapuram expressed happiness over the tableau bagging the second prize. He further stated that the Act will render justice to women. Boldness of the Chief Minister and his quick reaction inspired his organisation to bring out the tableau. He thanked those who supported his efforts on behalf of his organisation.



CP unfurls national flag

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Commissioner of Police Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao unfurled tricolour flag on the 71st Republic Day celebrations on his office premises on Sunday. He received the guard of honour, while officials and staff greeted him on the occasion. Vijayawada joint police commissioner D Nagendra Kumar, DCP (Admin) Harikrishna, Special branch ADCP Nawab Jaan, ACP Chenchu Reddy, AO T Ganga Rao, Inspectors, RIs, SIs, and other staff were present on the occasion.

SCR DRM receives guard of honour

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

P Srinivas, DRM, South Central Railway, unfurled the national flag here on Sunday. The DRM inspected the parade of Railway Protection Force (RPF), Scouts & Guides and received the guard of honour.

Students from Asha Kiran, Jack & Jill School and SKPV Children Trust (Children Helpline) staged cultural pro-

grammes. Pleased by the performance of schoolchildren, P Srinivas announced cash awards and he also appreciated the RPF battalions and Scouts & Guides.

Later, the DRM distributed prizes to winners of various competitions and congratulated all the participants.

MVS Ramaraju, ADRM, G Sumana, ADRM, Dr V Satyanarayana, CMS, P



P Srinivas, DRM, South Central Railway, poses with children at the R-Day function

"The right to swing my fist ends where the other man's nose begins," observed American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes. In recent times, one can rarely find a better example of the truth of this statement than in the row over certain comments made by BJP leader Dharamapuri Arvind. The Telangana Rashtra Samiti party is taking the new entrant and firebrand BJP leader Arvind seriously, thanks to his series of wins. Much of it, however, has to do with the tone and language of his criticism. Not only party leaders, even the TRS supremo has reacted to the Nizamabad MP's comment. Arvind's boasts that he would

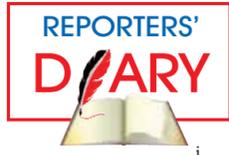
Arvind becoming a thorn in TRS plans

"shave off" Asaduddin Owaisi's beard and cut the nose of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao have not gone down well with TRS. Quite expectedly, the entire leadership, including K T Rama Rao, condemned the latter comments in particular. KCR countered: "Is this how an honorable Member of Parliament speaks? The Chief Minister also said that if TRS started resorting to such behavior, BJP would be nowhere in the picture. He remarked: "Our cadre itself is 60 lakhs" and asked, "If we start cut-

ting noses, will you be there?" The man responsible for the defeat of KCR's daughter in Nizamabad, and now the only saving face of BJP, Arvind is certainly going to be pain for TRS leaders.

The ex-officio tangle

The ex-officio tangle in the municipalities has stunned the rebel camp of Jupalli Krishna Rao in the all-important Kollapur. Although rebels emerged victorious and captured a majority of the seats



scrape through the all-important goal post of the chairman election. This same issue is helping TRS in many other places and the new Municipal Act-like elections is of course helping TRS emerge easy winner in many places

A leader's class on '(heart) breaking news'

Pressers of ruling and opposition parties' leaders on January 25th turned out to be out and out ones against media. The Congress MP

from Malkajgiri A Revanth Reddy at Gandhi Bhavan expressed his ire at the media, particularly electronic arm. Objecting the content telecast on the municipal elections results day in Telugu news channels, Revanth Reddy gave a call to the Congress cadre to attack the media houses if they fail to telecast news properly. Revanth Reddy then lectured on 'What is breaking news?' finding fault with the electronic media for telecasting everything as 'breaking news'. He said that there should be a limit on what electron-

ic media telecasts as 'breaking news'. Likewise, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, at Telangana Bhavan, too found fault with the print media after terming the social media as 'anti-social media'. KCR advocated media personnel not to write as they wished. There should be a proper way to write the news, he suggested. A scribe who had covered pressers of both KCR and Revanth sarcastically said that Revanth Reddy criticized the media since he was unhappy, while KCR criticized the media in a happy mood. In either case, the victims are only scribers.

(Contributed by Naveena Ghanate, Avinash Deepak Puli, Kolishetty Venkateswarlu)

SAVE NATION'S INTEGRITY: PAWAN

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan called upon people to draw influence from the supreme sacrifices made by people to make the country a secular, socialist and democratic republic.

Addressing a gathering after unfurling the national flag at the party's central office in Mangalagiri on the occasion of the Republic Day on Sunday, Pawan Kalyan said the 71st Republic Day was not a festival celebrated on a particular day but it should instil a constant sense of responsibility to save the integrity of the country.

"Exactly on this day in 1950, all British laws had ceased to exist and we have started making our own laws in consonance within the framework of our Constitution," Pawan Kalyan said and opined that Hinduism is not a religion but 'Bharateeyam' (Indianness).

People should question wherever they see injustice, he said and asked them to serve society. He called upon people to act responsibly in maintaining the integrity of the country.



Children giving flower vase to Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan during the Republic Day celebrations in Vijayawada on Sunday

● "Exactly on this day in 1950, all British laws had ceased to exist and we have started making our own laws in consonance within the framework of our Constitution," Pawan Kalyan said and opined that Hinduism is not a religion but 'Bharateeyam' (Indianness)

'Ensuring hassle-free darshan is TTD priority'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The priority of TTD is to ensure hassle-free darshan and providing amenities to pilgrims by weeding out corruption, black marketeers and middle men, said TTD additional executive officer AV Dharma Reddy.

During the Republic Day address at Gokulam Rest House Ground on Sunday, the additional executive officer called upon the work force of TTD working in Tirumala to dedicate themselves in the pilgrim service. "Pilgrims come for darshan of Sri Venkateswara Swamy and for all of us pilgrims are almighty."

"During the last Independence Day, we took a pledge to weed out middlemen and we succeeded doing so in darshan and laddu prasadam by bringing out reforms with the introduction of SRIVANI Trust linking with darshan and making sale of laddus in open.

Malladi Vishnu sworn in as Brahmin Corpn chairman

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The aim of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is to see that fruits of welfare schemes reach the door step of the poor and needy, said Speaker Tammineni Sitaram.

He participated in the swearing in ceremony of AP Brahmin Corporation Chairman Malladi Vishnu at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram here on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, the new Chairman of the Corporation Malladi Vishnu said that the Chief Minister allocated the chairman post for uplift of the poor Brahmins across the State. He alleged that

the TDP government had diverted funds allocated to the Brahmin Corporation. He pointed out that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy allocated Rs 234 crore for the development of temples and Rs 100 crore for Brahmin Corporation.

He said that they are planning welfare hostels for the poor Brahmin children in Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada and Tirupati to support those who perform Upanayanams. He assured that the Videsi Vidya Deevana scheme money will deposit for the Brahmin beneficiaries by March-end and eligible beneficiaries would get house sites.



Speaker Tammineni Sitaram addresses a gathering in Vijayawada on Sunday during the swearing in ceremony of Malladi Vishnu as Brahmin Corporation chairman

Governor hosts customary 'At Home'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan hosted 'At Home' at Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada to mark the 71st Republic Day celebrations on Sunday.

The Governor was accompanied by First Lady Suprava Harichandan greeted guests and dignitaries, who attended the function.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, Speaker Tammineni Seetharam, Legislative Council Chairman MA Sharif, Chief Justice JK Maheswari, Lokayukta Justice P Lakshmana Reddy, Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, DGP Gautam Sawang, Judges of High Court, Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy, Minister for Municipal



Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, Speaker Tammineni Sitaram and others having dinner at 'At Home' hosted at the Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada on Sunday

Administration Botsa Ramachandra Reddy, Minister for Endowments Vellampalli Srinivasa Rao, Chairmen of Panchayat Raj Peddireddy

The Governor was accompanied by First Lady Suprava Harichandan greeted guests and dignitaries, who attended the function

corporations, MLAs, MLCs, Chairman of Official Language Commission, Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad, Advisers to government, senior officers, public representatives, freedom fighters, national awardees and prominent citizens attended the function.

CRPF's role vital in fight against Maoists

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

CRPF Personnel (234 Battalion) in Visakhapatnam celebrated the Republic Day with fervour. RS Balapurkar, Commandant at 234 Battalion, hoisted the national flag, which was followed by rendition of the national anthem by officers and jawans.

Addressing a gathering, RS Balapurkar read out the names of the recipient, who have been awarded with various medals-Saurya Chakra/Kirti Chakra/ Police medal for Gallantry/President Police medal for Gallantry at Force level- at the 234 Battalion headquarters location, the Commandant appreciated the valuable contribution of the CRPF personnel to the country and the role of them in fighting terrorism/Left Wing extremists.

Naidu won't be able to stop...

Continued from Page 1

Obstructing the Bills from being passed in the Council demonstrates the childishness of the TDP, he said, charging the TDP leaders of biding time by exercising their influence over the Council Chairman.

Stating that a discussion was held in the Assembly on the abolition of the Legislative Council, he said the government would take the views of all stakeholders over the issue into consideration.

"Naidu influenced the Chairman's decision by sitting in the visitors' gallery in the Council," he alleged.

"There was no possibility of the Centre opposing the abolition of the Council as the government had public support," Sajjala said.

"Naidu is trying to stop it only to save Lokesh," he said.

Stating that Naidu was telling his MLCs that he has spoken to Amit Shah and that he had promised him to see to it that the Council was not abolished, Sajjala said the TDP chief was misleading them.

5 MLCs skip TDP meeting to discuss YSRC's Council plans

Continued from Page 1

Tippe Swamy is busy with arrangements for a wedding in the family while Saraswati and Prabhakar have cited personal reasons for staying away from the meeting, the sources said. However, it is learnt that the truant MLCs did not assign any reason for their missing the key meeting that was convened to devise strategies to counter the YSRC's plans to abolish the Council. The TDP decided to stay away from the Assembly session to be held on Monday to discuss the issue of doing away with the Legislative Council. The TDP members felt that it was unconstitutional for the Assembly to deliberate on the discussions held in the Council. The TDP felt that it should not give a chance to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy to discuss the issue of abolishing the Council at a time when it was gearing up to constitute a

SHARIFF ISSUES WHIP TO PARTIES

Council Chairman MA Shariff on Sunday issued a Whip to all political parties asking them to suggest names of the members to be appointed to the Select Committees. He said the Select Committee would consist of nine members. While TDP would have a share of five members, the Progress Democratic Front (PDF), YSRC, BJP would be represented by one member each. Minister of the department concerned would chair the committee. Two separate committees would be constituted for Decentralisation and CRDA bills.

Select Committee for the purpose of referring the two key Bills pertaining to the Capital - the Decentralisation Bill and the CRDA Bill.

300 personalities back anti-CAA protesters

Continued from Page 1

Over 300 eminent personalities from the creative and scholarly community of India said: "We salute their collective cry for upholding the principles of the Constitution of India, with its promise of a plural and diverse society."

"We are aware that we have not always lived up to that promise, and many of us have too often remained silent in the face of injustice. The grav-

ity of this moment demands that each of us stand for our principles," the statement read.

Writers Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, actors Ratna Patak Shah, Jaaved Jafferri, Nandita Das, Lillete Dubey, sociologist Ashis Nandy, activists Sohail Hashmi and Shabnam Hashmi were also among the signatories. "The policies and actions of the present government, passed quickly through parliament and without opportunity for public dissent or open

discussion, are antithetical to the principle of a secular, inclusive nation.

"The soul of the nation is threatened. The livelihoods and statehoods of millions of our fellow Indians are at stake. Under the NRC, anyone unable to produce documentation (which, in many cases, does not exist) to prove their ancestry may be rendered stateless. Those deemed 'illegal' through the NRC may be eligible for citizenship under

the CAA, unless they are Muslim," the statement further read.

The personalities said that contrary to the stated objective of the government, the CAA doesn't appear to be a "benign legislation only meant to shelter persecuted minorities".

They questioned why the minorities from neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, China and Myanmar have been excluded from the CAA.

Centre's infra projects will boost steel industry: RINL

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

RINL-Visakhapatnam Steel Plant celebrated the 71st Republic Day with patriotic fervour at Ukkunagaram on Sunday.

PK Rath, chairman and managing director, RINL-VSP, unfurled the national flag, took the salute and received the guard of honour accorded by CISF jawans, home guards, schoolchildren of Ukkunagaram at the sprawling Trishna Grounds in the township.

Addressing a large number of employees and their family members, Rath observed that the per capita consumption of steel would bound to improve with the government's initiatives of huge spending of Rs 100 lakh crore allocation for infrastructure in the next five years and gave thrust to projects such as industrial corridors, dedicated freight corridors, Bharat Mala, Sagar Mala and Smart City Mission. These projects definitely help in bridging the rural-urban divide and improve transport infrastructure and steel consumption, Rath added.

Rath said that RINL on its part, is contributing its mite in nation building. The expansion programme of capacity enhancement to 6.3 mtpa has been completed and production ramped up significantly.

The modernisation plan to 7.3 mtpa has also been completed and facilities are being put in operation, Rath added.

The slowdown in Indian economy in 2019-20 added a few challenges to the steel industry. The long product segment suffered the most as the construction and automobile sector sustained prolonged sluggishness. However, the situation is improving.

The imported coking coal prices are reducing and global steel prices are firming up, Rath stated.

470 services now available through...

Continued from Page 1

Details of the social survey conducted on pension schemes being implemented by the government would be displayed at the secretariats, they said.

Village Secretariats have turned a new leaf in public administration and Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's main objective is to make administration more accessible and take up mass recruitment drive by providing employment to over four lakh people in the form of Village and Ward Secretaries and Volunteers.

Under the new system, the government, one village secretariat was set up for a population of 2,000, with each one comprising about 12 village officials drawn from various departments. The government intends to ensure that its services reach the people's doorsteps, thereby strengthening the Panchayat Raj system.

The cost of hiring about 1.26 lakh new employees is going to be roughly about ₹2,200 crore a year for the government. Besides, the State government will avail the services of two lakh village and ward volunteers who would be paid a monthly salary of Rs 5,000. They would assist the people in availing various government services.

TAKES UP THE GAUNTLET



Nagari MLA RK Roja plants a sapling as part of the 'Green Challenge' initiated by MP Santosh Kumar, at PCN High School, Nagari in Chittoor on Sunday

Government working towards justice ...

Continued from Page 1

The Governor said that to realize this objective, his government had taken a historic decision recently in the Assembly to decentralise governance by setting up Legislative capital in Amaravati, Executive capital in Visakhapatnam and the Judicial capital in Kurnool.

He said that decentralisation of administration would bring people closer to government and arrests fissiparous and divisive tendencies which arise out of frustration caused due to unequal opportunities and concentration of wealth. Harichandan highlighted the welfare schemes being executed in the State like the village and ward secretariats along with the village and ward volunteers which provided employment to over four lakh people, including 1.3

Governor receives progress report in implementation of schemes

Continued from Page 1

He said that only a person with dedication and integrity towards the public can implement such programmes. Venkateswarlu reeled off the programmes that were being implemented by the YSRC government and hailed the village secretariat and volunteer system that ensures the door delivery of every service from the government. "Jaganmohan Reddy is the only Chief Minister in the country who has fulfilled Gandhi's ideal of 'Grama Swaraj', the veteran leader said, adding that about 2.90 lakh youths have found employment after the YSRC came to power. The important factor to be noticed here is that about 50 per cent of the employed are from SC, ST, BC, and Minority communities, he pointed out. Venkateswarlu said the services provided by the government to farmers from the supply of seeds to purchase of the crop are beneficial to farmers and are also ensuring quality of the crop. He said that the previous government had diluted the Arogya Sri services and after the YSRC came to power, the scheme was reformed in a way that patients are provided with financial assistance even after surgeries. He hailed the steps taken by the government in the education sector where Nadu-Nedu and Amma Vodi to ensure education to every child in the state were successfully launched.

lakh regular and permanent employees in village secretariats and 2.7 lakh village/ward volunteers.

YSR Rythu Bharosa has benefited about 46 lakh farmers across the state to provide input assistance of Rs 13,500 per annum. Rythu Barosa centres are set up adjacent to village secretariats to supply

unadulterated, quality tested and certified seeds to farmers, the Governor said.

He said that Jaganna Amma Vodi was aimed to ensure 100 per cent literacy in the state. The programme will provide financial assistance of Rs 15,000 per annum to all economically backward mothers to enable them to educate

their children. Medium of instruction in English was decided by the government in all schools and Telugu will be a compulsory subject from Class I to Class VI for the academic year 2020-21 in all schools.

Under Manabadi Nadu-Nedu revamp of infrastructure in 45,000 schools, 471 junior

colleges, 151 degree colleges and 3,287 hostels will taken up in three phases.

Taking a step forward for welfare of employees, the state government merged all the APSRTC employees in newly formed Public Transport Department from January 1, 2020, the Governor pointed out.

CAPSULE



Tiger mauls to death man, cow in MP

UMARIA (MP): A tiger mauled to death a man and his cow in Umaria district in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday, a forest department official said. The incident happened in Akamaniha village, some 40 kilometres from the district headquarters, close to the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, he added. "Narbad Singh (35) was grazing his cow near the forest when a tiger attacked them. Before villagers could come to their rescue, the tiger had killed them both. It fled into the forest after a crowd descended on the spot," said Nourajabad police station inspector Rakesh Uike.

TN CM greets Padma awardees from state

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami on Sunday greeted the Padma awardees from Tamil Nadu and wished they bring more laurels to the state. Industrialist and TVS Motors Chairman Venu Srinivasan and social worker Krishnammal Jagannathan from Tamil Nadu are among those named for the Padma Bhushan award by the Centre. The Lalitha-Saroja Chidambaram duo, Manohar Devadoss, S Ramakrishnan, KS Mahabooob and SM Subani duo and Prof Pradeep Thalappil from Tamil Nadu are the Padma Shri awardees. In a statement, Palaniswami said these persons had brought pride to the state by winning the prestigious awards. "I greet and laud them on behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu as well as myself and wish they bring more laurels to the state by winning more awards," he said. The Chief Minister expressed joy that the personalities have been chosen for the awards in recognition of their contributions in their respective fields.



This cannot stop our work: Brinda Karat

NEW DELHI: CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat, who has been named in an unsigned letter sent to noted actor Prakash Raj and 13 others threatening to "eliminate" them, called the group which had sent it "cowards" and said this will not stop their work. Raj, who shared the letter on Twitter, said it was from a group of "cowards" and quoted Faiz's iconic poem "Hum Dekhenge". The letter is addressed to Nijagunanda Swami, a prominent critic of the Sangh Parivar, and mentions 14 others, including Karat, Raj and former Karnataka chief minister H D Kumaraswamy. "These cowardly threats will never stop our work. Police should take note and take required action," Karat said. The threat letter was reportedly posted to the Saeer's ashram in Belagavi. The letter, which is in Kannada, reads, "Muhurtham for the 'samhara' (elimination) of you and the 'dharmaadrohies' & 'deshadrohies' with you, has been fixed from 2020, January 29."

India-Nepal understanding on key issues benefits both: Oli

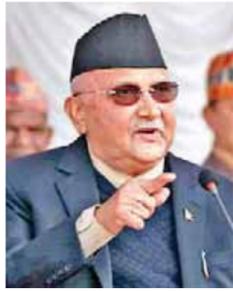
PNS ■ KATHMANDU

India is not only a key development partner of Nepal, it is also the largest friend in multiple fields such as trade, transit and technology, and the understanding on a range of sectors will lead both the countries to a "win-win situation", Prime Minister K P Oli said on Sunday.

In his message on the occasion of India's 71st Republic Day, Oli congratulated and extended best wishes to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, the Indian government and the people of India across the globe for their good health, happiness and continued prosperity.

"India is not only a key development partner of Nepal; she is also the largest friend in terms of trade, transit, investment, infrastructure, technology, energy, education, health-care and so on," he said in his message published in major Nepalese newspapers on Sunday.

"We believe that the high-level visits from both sides in



Oli congratulated and extended best wishes to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, the Indian government and the people of India across the globe for their good health, happiness and continued prosperity

recent few years have further reinforced the age-old cordial relations between the two countries with the pursuit of bilateral cooperation even in the fields of agriculture, railway and waterway connectivity, infrastructure, energy, and others.

"We believe that the understanding on these sectors will lead both the countries to win-win situation and also support us in translating the vision of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' into reality for the prosperity and wellbeing of our people," Oli said.

Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry is celebrating the 71st Republic Day of India in the country.

The multifaceted relationship between the two countries at government to government, business to business and people to people level bonded by glorious common religion, culture and tradition has remained exemplary since time immemorial, the Nepalese Prime Minister said.

On the occasion, India's charge'd affairs in Nepal Ajay Kumar expressed his deep gratitude to the people of Nepal "who cherish and support the strong bond of friendship between India and Nepal". "Economic partnership between our two countries is

an important part of our multidimensional relationship. The past two years witnessed significant steps to enhance connectivity between our two countries to further boost and upgrade economic linkages," he said.

In Nepal, the 71st Republic Day was celebrated by hoisting the flag at the embassy premises.

In New Delhi, celebrations began with Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro in attendance as the chief guest. Prime Minister Modi paid his tributes to martyrs by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the three service chiefs and Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat.

SC seeks J'khand govt view on Pathalgarhi case accused

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has asked the newly elected Jharkhand government to clarify whether it wants to withdraw cases against four tribal activists booked under sedition charges for allegedly writing Facebook posts supporting the Pathalgarhi movement in the state. The top court was informed by the accused that the Hemant Soren government in the state had, in one of the first decisions of the Cabinet, announced that it would take back all criminal cases related to the movement. Pathalgarhi is a name given to a tribal protest which seeks autonomy for village sabhas (gram sabhas). Those demanding Pathalgarhi want no laws of the land be applicable on the tribal people in the area. The Pathalgarhis reject government rights over their forests and rivers.

As part of the movement, Pathalgarhis erect a stone plaque or signboard outside the village/area, declaring the village a sovereign territory and prohibiting the entry of outsiders.

A bench of Justices L



Pathalgarhis erect a stone plaque or signboard outside the village/area, declaring the village a sovereign territory and prohibiting the entry of outsiders

Nageswara Rao and Hemant Gupta asked standing counsel for Jharkhand, Tapesh Kumar Singh, to take instruction and inform it in two weeks about any decision of withdrawal of cases. "List after two weeks. In the meanwhile, learned counsel for the state of Jharkhand

is directed to get instructions as to whether the state intends to proceed with the criminal cases registered against the petitioners," the bench said in its order uploaded recently.

At the outset, advocate Joel, appearing for four petitioners led by one J Vikash Kora informed the court that new government was sworn in the state and it announced in its first cabinet meeting that criminal cases arising out of Pathalgarhi movement will be taken back. Advocate Tapesh Kumar Singh representing the state said that if that is the case then the petitioners should withdraw their appeal against the Jharkhand High Court order of last year refusing to quash the cases against them.

Learning Assamese till Class 10 now must for jobs

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Education Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that Assamese will be made a compulsory subject in all schools of the state and only those who have studied the language till Class 10 will be eligible for its government jobs.

Sarma, however, clarified that the rule will be applicable to all areas in the state, barring the three Barak Valley districts and the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD), where similar clauses will be introduced for Bengali and Bodo languages respectively.

The state cabinet has taken a decision to make Assamese a mandatory subject in all mediums of schools and a bill will be tabled in the Assembly in this regard during the Budget session, the minister told reporters on Saturday.

He also said that his two children, who study outside the state, will not be eligible for any Assam government job as they have not studied the language in school.

New industries in MP have to employ 70% local youth: Guv

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon on Sunday said the state government was accelerating job creation by setting up new industries, which have to compulsorily employ 70 per cent local youths. Giving a speech at the Republic Day function here, he also said that the state government was focusing on food processing, new renewable energy, logistics, mining, cloth and garment industries to enhance investment.

"The state government is working to provide employment to youths. Along with setting up of new industries, it is being ensured that 70 per cent youth of the state get jobs in these establishments com-



The state government has brought the number of permissions required in the realty sector from 27 to five. This sector generates immense employment opportunities

LALJI TANDON
Governor of Madhya Pradesh

pusorily," Tandon said. Stating that improvements have been brought about in the industrial policy for smooth operation of the sector, Tandon said a law will be introduced to give all requisite permissions within a week for setting up new industries. "The state government has brought the number of permissions required in the

realty sector from 27 to five. This sector generates immense employment opportunities," the governor said.

The state government is building 1,000 cow sheds with each of them having a pasture area of five acres, Tandon said.

The daily fodder allowance per cow has been hiked from Rs 3 to Rs 20, he added.

Maoist killed by villagers in Odisha

PNS ■ MALKANGIRI

One Maoist was killed by villagers in Odisha's Malkangiri district, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

Two Maoists had come to Janturai village on Saturday night and told the residents to observe the Republic Day as 'black day', the officer said.

However, the residents opposed the Maoist diktat and instead chased the duo out of the village. As the Maoists opened blank fire to terrorise the people, the villagers retaliated with their traditional weapons like bows and arrows besides resorting to stone pelting in which one Maoist was killed and another was injured, he said. The villagers were of the opinion that they were deprived of development programmes because of the Maoist presence in the area.

Recently, the Maoists had opposed the construction of a road to Janturai village located in the cut-off area of the district. The village is cut off from rest of the state as on three sides of it is encircled by water of Balimela reservoir while there is a forest on one side adjoining to Andhra Pradesh.

One Maoist was killed and another seriously injured in the incident, the first such incident of villagers attacking Maoists in the state, police



said.

The villagers later handed over the body of the deceased Maoist to the BSF jawans at their camp located at nearby Hantalguda village.

Malkangiri Superintendent of Police, R D Khilari said: "We have been told that the villagers retaliated when Maoists opened fire. It is said that one Maoist was killed."

Security personnel including BSF jawans have been rushed to the village as the residents fear revenge-attack by Maoists, police said.

The police have rushed the injured Maoist to the district headquarter hospital in Malkangiri for treatment.

Meanwhile, a report from Kalahandi district said an exchange of fire took place between security personnel and Maoists near Niyamgiri hills.

On January 22, Maoists had stopped a road construction work in Niyamgiri locality.



Nigerian held, cocaine worth over Rs 3 lakh recovered

PNS ■ THANE

Police have arrested a 22-year-old Nigerian man from Koparkhairane in Navi Mumbai and seized cocaine worth over Rs three lakh from him, an official said on Sunday. The arrest was made on Friday evening, he said.

"Based on a tip-off, Navi Mumbai Police kept a vigil in Koparkhairane and nabbed the accused, identified as Ikkechukku Precious Onedikachi. Cocaine weighing 26 gms and valued at Rs 3.13 lakh was recovered from him," DCP Pankaj Dahane (Zone I) of Navi Mumbai said in a statement.

"The accused was going towards a food joint to sell the cocaine, when he was caught," the official said.

An offence was registered against him at Koparkhairane police station under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Researchers in Bihar mistaken for NRC surveyors, handed over to police

PNS ■ DARBHANGA (BIHAR)

A team of researchers from Lucknow mistaken as surveyors for NRC was caught by residents of a village here and handed over to the police, a senior official said on Sunday.

Superintendent of Police, Darbhanga, Babu Ram said the incident took place on Friday when the team, comprising 12 people, including four women, visited a village under Jamalpur police station area. The team was from a Lucknow-based research organization, which was engaged by a US-based PhD scholar.

However, as they began visiting households and collecting information, the word spread that "NRC surveyors" had arrived following which villagers grew furious and held them hostage for some



time before dragging them to the police station.

The situation was defused at the police station where officials verified the identities of the researchers and explained the fact to the villagers, who then went back satisfied, the SP said.

He, however, added that similar incidents have taken place in the district in recent past and an awareness campaign has been launched as part of which residents are being told to "inform the police or local administrative officials" if any surveyors in

their area aroused suspicion "instead of illegally detaining them".

With the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR) spreading in different parts of Bihar, people engaged in conducting surveys for private research and marketing companies are being mistakenly targeted.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, whose JD(U) is an ally of the BJP, have been at pains to explain that the CAA would expedite grant of citizenship to refugees from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, having fled religious persecution in their countries, without affecting Indians and that there was no move so far to bring in the nationwide NRC.

Pilot: People who worked for poll win must be made to feel important

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hailing the setting up of a coordination panel by the Congress in Rajasthan as a "good move", Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot on Sunday said people who struggled for ensuring victory in polls must be made to feel a valuable part of the ruling dispensation as sometimes one tends to take the party organisation for granted after governments are formed.

Pilot also asserted that the seven crore people of Rajasthan had reposed their faith in and voted for the Congress party, and it was only after that the party decided who will be chief



minister, deputy CM and ministers.

His remarks come following criticism of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's handling of the Kota infant deaths issue and Congress chief Sonia Gandhi

forming coordination and manifesto implementation committees in Rajasthan and other Congress-ruled states to ensure smooth working of the party and government in tandem.

Pilot, who last week completed six years as president of the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee and is the longest serving chief of the state unit, said as part of the government and the RPCC head, it is his responsibility to ensure that the hard labour of party workers is recognised and they are rewarded for their efforts in bringing the party back to power.

Stunts by police personnel highlight of Guj R-Day

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Daredevil stunts performed by police personnel on motorcycles and horses, tableaux showing achievements of Gujarat and cultural events marked the states 71st Republic Day event held at Rajkot in Saurashtra on Sunday.

State Governor Acharya Devvrat, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, state ministers and senior government were present at the function held at the Racecourse Ground.

A large number of people were present to witness the event held in the morning. After unfurling the tricolour, the governor inspected the guard of honour in an open jeep, with Rupani accompany-



ing him. The governor received salute from 28 platoons.

As many as 922 policemen

took part in the event along with the platoons of Indian Army, Indian Coast Guard,

Teams of policemen and policewomen performed daredevil stunts on motorcycles and horses. School students presented various cultural programmes

police commandos, and state reserve police jawans, among others. Teams of policemen and policewomen performed daredevil stunts on motorcycles and horses. School students presented various cultural programmes. Tableaux showcasing the achievements of the state were also part of the parade. Talking to reporters later, Rupani said, "Parade, cultural events and stunts by

police were part of the Republic Day function in Rajkot. It was celebrated in a very enthusiastic way." The Republic Day was also celebrated with fervour in other parts of the state.

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

SHORT READS



'Honouring unsung heroes with Padma awards is discovery'

NEW DELHI: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said honouring unsung heroes with the Padma awards is in a way discovery of India. Congratulating all the Padma awardees, Naidu, in a series of tweets, said this year's Padma awards are also an "ode to the unsung heroes" who have quietly contributed to the cause of our society in different ways. "I appreciate the Government for recognizing the unrecognized irrespective of their visibility. One way, this is a discovery of India," he said. Complimenting all the Padma awardees, the vice president appreciated their spirit of selfless service to the cause of the nation.

Ahead of flag hoisting by MP CM, 2 Cong leaders hit each other

INDORE: Two Congress leaders in Indore on Sunday hit each other after an altercation minutes before Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath was to arrive at the party office to hoist the tricolour on Republic Day. A video, which went viral on social media, showed state general secretary Chandrakant Kunjeer and senior party colleague Devendra Singh Yadav arguing and hitting each other, before being separated by onlookers and police. The fight started after Kunjeer reached close to the stage and Yadav raised an objection, eye witnesses said. Minutes after the fight, Nath arrived and hoisted the national flag.

Mamata urges people to uphold principles of Constitution

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday urged people to take a pledge to protect the Constitution of the country and uphold its principles. Taking to Twitter, she said, "On #RepublicDay, let us pledge to protect our #Constitution and uphold the principles of sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, as enshrined in the Preamble." India is celebrating its 71st Republic Day on Sunday. On this day in 1950, the Constitution of India came into effect.

Man held with US dollars worth Rs 12 lakh at Delhi airport

NEW DELHI: A Bangkok-bound passenger was apprehended by CISF personnel on Sunday at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying US dollars worth Rs 12 lakh concealed inside a pair of sandals kept in his bag, officials said. Mohammed Waseem was apprehended at the Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport at 5 am when his bag was being scanned, they said. The CISF personnel seized 17,000 USD worth about Rs 12 lakh from the pair of sandals kept in Waseem's bag, the officials said. He was handed over to Customs authorities for further probe, they added.

Republic Day: 51 BSF officials get police medals

NEW DELHI: As many as 51 Border Security Force (BSF) personnel were honoured with the distinguished and meritorious service police medals on the occasion of the Republic Day, a force spokesperson said on Sunday. The awardees for the distinguished service medal include Inspector General (IG) Sonali Mishra and Deputy IGs M S Sharma, R S Rathore, Pradeep Katyal and V S Yadav. Mishra, a 1993-batch Indian Police Service officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, is at present serving as the chief of the intelligence or the 'G' branch of the force here. She has also headed the BSF formation in the Kashmir valley as its IG. Those decorated with the president's police medal for meritorious service include Commandants Rajan Sud, Nilotpal Kumar Pandey, Harendra Singh Rautela and Constable (cook) Shankar Kumar Ghosh among others.

POMP AND SHOW MARKS R-DAY IN EAST

Bomb blasts in Assam, CAA protests in Bengal

PNS ■ GUWAHATI/ KOLKATA/ PATNA

The 71st Republic Day was celebrated with pomp and pageantry across the eastern region on Sunday, even as four serial explosions rocked Assam early in the day, and sparse protests over the new citizenship law were reported from parts of the state and neighbouring West Bengal.

Barring Meghalaya, where Tathagata Roy is on leave since December, governors in their respective states, unfurled the Tricolour and presided over the ceremonial parade, amid heightened security.

In Assam, four power explosions - three in Dibrugarh and one in Charaideo districts - shook Upper Assam, with police sources suspecting it to be a handiwork of ULFA (Independent) militants, who had called for a boycott of Republic Day celebrations.

All four blasts occurred in a span of 10 minutes - between



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who attended the programme along with cabinet colleagues, greeted the governor at the conclusion of the programme.

8.15 and 8.25 am, a police officer said, adding no casualty had been reported, as Republic Day being a holiday, people were mostly indoors.

Later in the day, Governor Jagdish Mukhi said the Assam government was committed to protect the political, cultural and linguistic rights of

indigenous people and a committee, headed by retired Gauhati High Court judge Biplab Sharma, would soon submit a report in this regard.

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

In West Bengal, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar led the celebrations, as he hoisted the national flag and inspected the parade by armed forces and police personnel.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who attended the programme along with cabinet colleagues, greeted the governor at the conclusion of the programme.

Members of an interfaith group came out on the streets in state capital Kolkata and formed human chains in various parts of the city, as a mark of protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

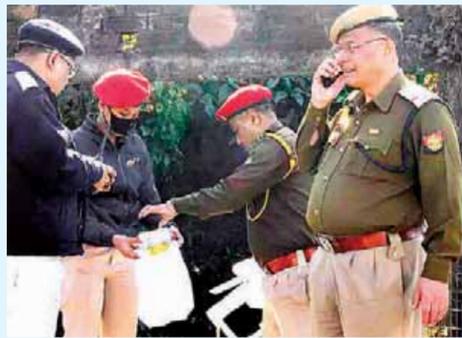
ULFA(I) claims responsibility for R-Day Assam blasts

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

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

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

Three blasts had taken place in Dibrugarh and one in Charaideo districts of Upper Assam in a span of 10 minutes -- between 8.15 and 8.25 am on Sunday, a police officer said. There has been no report



of any casualty, as Republic Day being a holiday, people were mostly indoors, he said. The first blast was reported outside a shop at Teokghat in Sonari police station area of Charaideo district.

Three explosions followed soon after in Dibrugarh dis-

trict -- two at Graham Bazar and AT Road, beside a gurudwara, and another at the oil town of Duliajan Tinali, just 100 metres from the local police station, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Padmanabh Barua told PTI.

Centre should mind its job: Ajit on NIA probe in Elgaar case

PNS ■ PUNE

The Maharashtra government was trying to go to the root of the 2017 Elgaar Parishad case when it was suddenly handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) by the Centre, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said here on Sunday.

He also sought to remind the Centre about the federal structure of governance when asked about the development.

"I feel that the Centre and state governments should do their respective works. The Centre can intervene when an issue of the national level crops up," Pawar told reporters on the sidelines of the launch of Rs 10 'Shiv Bhojan Thali'--a flagship scheme of the Shiv



Ajit Pawar

Sena-NCP-Congress government.

Pune Police are probing whether 'provocative' speeches made at the Elgaar Parishad conclave in Pune on December 31, 2017, led to the caste violence around Koregaon Bhima in the district the next day. Police had first used the term 'urban naxals' during the

investigation after arresting nine activists and lawyers, including Telugu poet Varavara Rao and Sudha Bharadwaj.

"I recently met state home minister Anil Deshmukh and his deputy Satej Patil. We were briefed about the case by investigating officials. I felt they were trying hard to probe the case," Pawar said while responding to a query on the NIA taking over the probe.

"In the event of any untoward incident, the basic objective is to investigate that incident, go to its root, check facts and avoid any communal rift. The state government was in tending to investigate the case on that line, but suddenly the Central government decided to take over the case," he said.

Let us raise level of protests: PC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid pan-India agitations against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday called for raising the "level of protests", saying "as long as freedoms are denied to any number of people, the whole population is denied freedom".

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

These freedoms were given by the people unto themselves and no government can take them away, the former home minister said in a series of tweets.



PM Modi continues 'safa' tradition, sports saffron 'bandhej'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing his tradition of donning colourful turbans on Republic Day and Independence Day celebrations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sported a saffron 'bandhej' headgear with a tail for the 71st Republic Day on Sunday.

Wearing his traditional kurta pajama and jacket, Modi paid homage to the fallen soldiers at the newly-built National War Memorial here on the Republic Day for the first time instead of the Amar Jawan Jyoti beneath the India Gate arch.

Bandhej is a print developed using tie and dye method practiced mainly in states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Turbans have been a high-

light of the prime minister's sartorial choices at Independence Day and Republic Day events.

Modi had sported a multi-coloured turban when he gave his sixth Independence Day speech from the rampants of the Red Fort last year after securing a second term. For his maiden Independence Day address as the prime minister in 2014, Modi had opted for a Jodhpuri bandhej turban in bright red colour with green at the tail.

A yellow turban covered with criss-crossed lines in different shades of the same colour, along with a few in red and deep green, marked his 2015 look, and he chose a tie and dye turban in hues of pink and yellow for his appearance at the Red Fort in 2016.

Modi pays homage to fallen soldiers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Amar Jawan Jyoti is symbolised by an inverted bayonet and soldier's helmet over it with an eternal flame burning beside it. It was built in 1972 underneath the India Gate arch to commemorate soldiers martyred in the Indo-Pak War of 1971. Spread over an area of approximately 40 acres, National War Memorial comprises four concentric circles, namely -- the 'Amar Chakra', 'Veerta Chakra', 'Tyag Chakra' and the 'Rakshak Chakra' with names of 25,942 soldiers inscribed in golden letters on granite tablets.

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

EDUCATION IN CHHATTISGARH

'Local dialects to be medium of instruction'

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Local Chhattisgarhi language and different dialects will be made the medium of instruction in primary schools across Chhattisgarh from the next academic session, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said on Sunday.

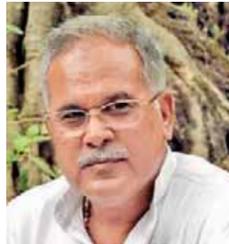
Speaking at the state-level Republic Day function held in Jagdalpur, around 290 kms from here, he also cautioned political parties by quoting Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's statement that if parties place their creed above the country, then people's freedom will once

Appealing to the people to work towards protecting the Constitution, he said its different aspects will be taught in schools

again be in danger and might end forever.

Appealing to the people to work towards protecting the Constitution, he said its different aspects will be taught in schools.

The state government had



Bhupesh Baghel

on Friday issued a circular to schools, asking them to hold discussion on the Constitution after prayers every Monday.

He said the previous UPA government at the Centre had made a provision in the Right to Education Act 2009 to ensure children are taught in their mother tongue as much as possible.

"But ironically, the state has not yet taken any concrete step in this direction," he said. "From the forthcoming academic session, arrangements will be made to use local Chhattisgarhi language and dialects like Gondi, Halbi, Bhatri, Sargujia, Korwa, Pando, Kudukh, Kamari and others as medium of instruction in primary schools," Baghel said.

Postal Dept to provide civic services

PNS ■ Allahabad

Several civic services including birth and death certificates, Aadhaar enrolment and updation, and bus and flight ticketing would be provided by the Postal Department in Uttar Pradesh from April 1, with a special portal being set up for the purpose, an official said on Sunday. Superintendent of post offices, Allahabad division, Sanjay D Akhade told PTI that initially these services will be available in the head post offices of the state and later they will be expanded.

He said the government has planned to provide citizen-centric services through a CSC portal across the country.

Akhade said for this purpose a Common Service Center-Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC-SPV) has been set up which will work closely with the Department of Posts. The head post office at Parliament Street in New Delhi has been made the nodal office. Under the new services, people will be able to apply for PAN card, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Soil Health Card, Pradhan Mantri Crop Insurance Scheme and PDS, he said.

'Misinformation being spread on CAA, atmosphere vitiated'

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Stating that Muslims were never subjected to discrimination in India, RSS general secretary Bhaiyyaji Joshi on Sunday alleged that misinformation was being spread in the country over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

He was talking to reporters after hoisting the national flag at the Sangh headquarters here

on the occasion of the 71st Republic Day.

"Till date, the followers of Islam have never been subjected to any kind of discrimination in this country. If any citizen from there, be it a Muslim, come to India, then they can also get citizenship as per the law which is already in place. What is the problem in that?" Joshi said in response to a question on the CAA.



Bhaiyyaji Joshi

Planned Central Vista makeover makes R-Day special

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For 85-year-old Keval Krishna, this year's Republic Day parade on the Rajpath had a special significance as it was one of the last such processions on the historic stretch before being redeveloped under the government's ambitious Central Vista renovation plan.

"I have been here more times than I can count. I am aware that the government plans to redevelop the Central Vista. The Rajpath may not look the same... The old Rajpath will be remembered and the new one welcomed," Krishna, who hails



from Punjab, said.

The redevelopment project of Central Vista envisages a triangular Parliament building next to the existing one, common Central Secretariat and the revamping of the 3-km-

long Rajpath -- from Rashtrapati Bhavan till India Gate.

According to sources, the historic Rajpath will go for redevelopment works soon after hosting the Republic Day

According to sources, the historic Rajpath will go for redevelopment works soon after hosting the Republic Day parade in 2021

parade in 2021.

Many others voiced concerns about the project affecting the heritage character of Lutyens' Delhi.

Samsun Mumei, from Manipur's Tamalong district, believes heritage should be given priority over development.

"The redevelopment project has alarmed heritage lovers.

This is the finest place in the entire city. When (Edwin) Lutyens designed it, he had an idea in mind. The government is welcome to redevelop the landscape, spruce it up without fiddling with its heritage character," he said.

Digambou Newmai, 27, who was viewed the Republic Day parade on the Rajpath for the first time, suggested that the

government should invest in planting trees and reducing pollution.

"The buildings are in a fine shape. The India Gate lawns and the Rajpath are a go-to place for a picnic or a drive. I am not sure if the public will be allowed move freely here after two years," he said.

Aniket Ghosh (31) from Kolkata, witnessing his fourth R-Day parade, said development is good, but it should not come at the cost of heritage.

Derrier, a French tourist, said he prefers heritage over development.



Thali

PAPER WITH PASSION

Toxic war of words

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



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

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

Roger that

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



Roger Federer is not just a sporting legend. He is a human story and an inspiration for everybody because he has demonstrated true grit that survival requires in our times, surprising us every time when we feel he has just gone over the hill. And at a time when individual power sports is all about burnouts, Federer has crafted lastability as a credo despite the competition and overcome challenge from millennials. He has produced several great performances over the years. One of those performances came in the match against Australia's John Millman during the third at the Australian Open 2020 on Friday where the former world number one was looking down and out in the fifth-set super tie-breaker after falling behind with the score of 8-4. However, he showed why he has won 20 Grand Slams in his career by picking up six consecutive points and cementing his spot in the fourth-round at the first Grand Slam of the year. And he did it in a thrilling match that began Friday night in Melbourne and ended after midnight Saturday. Who cares if he is 38 years old when he keeps finding new ways to redefine his greatness? Unlike other tournaments — such as Wimbledon and the US Open, which play first-to-seven in a tiebreaker — the Australian Open has a first-to-10 format, and Federer fell behind 8-4 early on. So imagine the kind of rallying he had to do with six straight points to win the tiebreaker and the third-round match, 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (10-8). With this, he has also become the first singles player to win 100 matches in two different Grand Slams; his Wimbledon 100 happened last year. In his post-match interview, Federer joked that when Millman had that huge lead in the tiebreaker and was two points away from taking the match, he was already preparing himself to offer excuses during his press conference for why he lost. Now we know how he didn't let his doubts get the better of him. So tennis can still be an old man's game. Just like life itself.

You're what you say you're

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



AJOY KUMAR

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOUNDBITE

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



Author —Amitav Ghosh

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



Supermodel-actor —Lisa Ray

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



US official —Alice Wells

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



President —Ram Nath Kovind

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Widening gap

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

Shivanshu K Srivastava
Lucknow

Be alert and prepared

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

Address key issues to remain relevant

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

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



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

Pachu Menon
Margao

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

TK Nandadan
Chennai

Reduce food wastage

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

Madhu Agrawal
Delhi

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Endless protests and their fallout

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



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



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

Listen to the teenage zealot

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



PHILIP JOHNSTON

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

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

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

All the great eastern and central European cities — Berlin, Warsaw, Vienna and St Petersburg — are exceptionally mild, though winter could yet have a sting in the tail. The so-called Beast from the East that arrived late in the season a few years ago temporarily shocked us out of our complacency but it was relatively short-lived and not that exceptional in any case.

Mild Januaries are now the norm. We have a lovely old wooden toboggan that has hardly been put to use since the 1980s, which is the last time I can remember a succession of cold winters. Growing up in Kent in the 1960s and 1970s, heavy frosts and blizzards were an annual occurrence. Not now.

I am reluctant to attribute what might prove to be temporary weather glitches to long-term climate change but there is clearly something going on that cannot be ignored. We don't have to buy into the apocalyptic angst of Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg, on show again in Davos last week, to recognise that something has to be done.

Whether or not you are a sceptic about the impact of carbon dioxide on the climate or question man's involvement in producing the greenhouse gas, our energy future is a non-carbon one, like it or not. Virtually every Government across the world has committed to this as an overt aspect of public policy and those that haven't, like China or the US, have a rapidly growing green energy sector poised to exploit the move to a carbon-free future.

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



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

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

At a conference in Venice at the weekend, he said we should commit to the one clean energy source that is plentiful, easy to transport and getting cheaper to produce. It is all around us, does not have to be drilled out of the ground in parts of the world favoured with the right geology and does not pollute the atmosphere. It is hydrogen, the most widespread element in the universe. Like many businesses reliant upon carbon-based energy, Alvera's Italian energy infrastructure company, Snam, has no long-term future unless it adapts because its pipelines, compressors and storage tanks will be useless as oil and gas come under pressure from state actors around the world. They can be used for hydrogen instead. However, this is more than just a commercial calculation. Alvera has published a book compellingly setting out the case for Governments, manufacturers and investors to get behind hydrogen now before they head off down other less-promising blind alleys.

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



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

product is water.

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

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

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

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

(Courtesy: The Telegraph)

Students of a feather

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



NADEEM PARACHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAPSULE



Republic Day: Air India distributes 30K national flags among its passengers

NEW DELHI: The national carrier Air India celebrated the 71st Republic Day by distributing 30,000 Indian flags made of eco-friendly seed paper among its passengers at airports in metro cities and Srinagar on Sunday. The airlines also put up a big hoarding at the historic Lal Chowk in the heart of Srinagar to congratulate the people on Republic Day. It was the first Republic Day celebration in Srinagar after the abrogation of Article 370 provisions that gave special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. The handmade flags prepared by Sahariya tribals of Madhya Pradesh were distributed at the airports in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Srinagar, said Air India spokesperson Dhananjay Kumar.



Six of top-10 cos lose Rs 81,148 cr in m-cap; RIL hit hard

NEW DELHI: Six of the 10 most valued Indian companies suffered a combined erosion of Rs 81,148 crore from their market capitalisation last week, with Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) taking the biggest knock. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra Bank and ITC were the other bluechips which witnessed a drop in their market capitalisation (m-cap) for the week ended Friday, while HUL, ICICI Bank, Infosys and SBI finished on the gainers' side. The market valuation of RIL, the country's most valued firm, plunged Rs 37,369.7 crore to Rs 9,64,639.40 crore.



Sarovar Hotels to add 15 properties across India

NEW DELHI: Hospitality firm Sarovar Hotels and Resorts is looking to open 15 more properties across India by the end of this year, adding around 900 rooms to its portfolio as part of its expansion plans in the country, a top company official said. The company currently manages 85 hotels with 6,500 rooms in India and three locations overseas. "We are optimistic that we should cross the hundred mark this year. We plan to open 15 hotels across India by end of 2020," Sarovar Hotels and Resorts Managing Director Ajay K Bakaya told PTI.

GOYAL-AMAZON ROW

India should welcome investments, says UKIBC

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Indian government is responsive to concerns expressed by businesses but needs to do more to attract investments into sectors such as e-commerce, the UK India Business Council (UKIBC) has said.

The comments from the lobby grouping come after there was a sharp criticism of Goyal for saying Amazon was not doing India a favour by the investment announcement. India's GDP growth is set to slow to a decadal low of 5 per cent for 2019-20 and all eyes are set on the strategy deployed by the government in the upcoming Budget.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has said the e-commerce major will invest USD 1 billion (over Rs 7,000 crore) in digitising small and medium businesses in India.

Declining to comment specifically on the impact on investors because of Goyal's comments, UKIBC Chief Executive Officer Richard Heald told PTI here that the e-commerce sector has a tremendous potential, especially for the smaller businesses, who get



I am a great fan of e-commerce and I think that e-commerce is misunderstood to a certain extent and it benefits the general public and those people who operate within the supply chain in ways that are not popularly understood

—RICHARD HEALD
UKIBC Chief Executive Officer

a platform to sell their wares. "I am a great fan of e-commerce and I think that e-commerce is misunderstood to a certain extent and it benefits the general public and those people who operate within the supply chain in ways that are not popularly understood," he said.

Heald said Mukesh Ambani-promoted RIL also has plans to enter the e-commerce segment through a different business model and one can have her own preferences on business models. "Encouraging investments into India is important, encouraging the e-commerce

sector is important because it benefits small businesses disproportionately to large businesses," he said adding that British businesses may not be "startled" at the posturing.

India represents a large opportunity for the British businesses and even a slower 4.8 per cent GDP growth is much faster than what the UK or Europe is witnessing, he said.

When asked if the government is responsive in India, he answered in the affirmative and said, "What I found striking (in conversations with government officials) was that increasingly, it is a two-way dialogue. The Indian government wants to understand and engage, it wants to understand what the operating issues are and get those addressed, positives as well as negatives."

Welcoming the cut in corporate taxes, Heald advocated a relaxation in fiscal deficit targets in the upcoming Budget and added that the UKIBC will keenly watch the narrative on growth being set by the Indian government and look for specific measures on rural poverty alleviation and infrastructure spends.

Industry tells FM: Address policy issues stalling growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

LPG used as fuel in automobiles or Auto LPG, which is among the cleanest alternative fuels with a Global Warming Potential of 'zero' is currently taxed at 18 per cent GST. Also, the GST rates on Auto LPG/CNG conversion kits stand at a prohibitive 2 per cent, IAC said.

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

"We seek the attention of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman towards the imminent need for devising friendly policies to allow rapid growth of environment-friendly transport fuels such as Auto LPG. Auto LPG which is being promoted actively by governments across the world is facing discriminatory policies in India. It is taxed at a high GST slab of 18 per cent. Similarly, conversion kits for auto LPG and CNG are placed at the highest slab of 28 per cent which is meant for either luxury goods or demerit items like tobacco products,"



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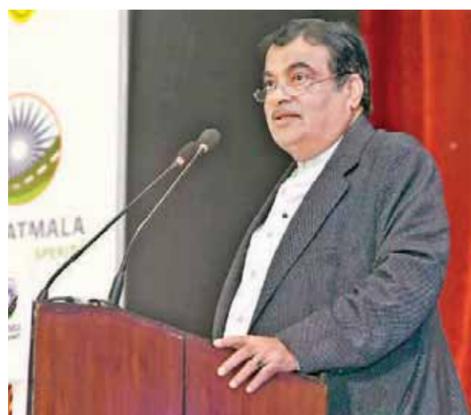
said Suyash Gupta, Director General, Indian Auto LPG Coalition (IAC).

IAC said LPG is the most widely used alternative fuel in the world, with a proven track record of improvement in air quality.

The global consumption of Auto LPG has risen by over 40 per cent over the past 10 years, fuelled by environmental concerns. Among the key nations that have successfully adopted this green fuel for their transportation requirements are South Korea, Turkey, Poland,

Japan, Australia, Italy, Mexico and Russia.

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



Gadkari: 22 expressways, green corridors to be built at Rs 3 lakh-crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

US-China deal effect: FPIs pour in Rs 1,624 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



Morningstar Investment Adviser India.

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

On the domestic front, "there are some signs of India shaking away the slowdown with business activity picking

up and this is reflecting in the investments coming into equities. Besides, after the limit to which FPIs can invest in debt instruments has been increased, more inflows into the debt category can be expected," said Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww.

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

According to the current norms, short-term investments by an FPI should not exceed 20 per cent of the total investment of that FPI in either central government securities (including treasury bills) or state

development loans. The same norms are applicable on investments in corporate bonds. The short-term investment limit has now been increased from 20 per cent to 30 per cent in both the cases, the RBI said in a circular.

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

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

MG Motor eyes increasing production of SUV Hector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

MG Motor India plans to increase production of its SUV Hector by around 30 per cent after BS-VI emission norms come into effect from April 1, according to a senior company official.

The company, which last week launched the ZS EV, is also set to review plans for a sub-Rs 10 lakh electric vehicle (EV) considering the robust response to its pure electric SUV.

"In case of Hector we are planning for another ramp up and hopefully that should happen in two-three months' time," MG Motor India President and MD Rajeev Chaba told PTI.

NCLAT sets asides insolvency proceedings against Raheja Developers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Providing a major relief to Raheja Developers, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has set aside the insolvency proceedings against the NCR-based real estate firm and handed over the management of the company back to its board of directors.

Earlier, on August 20 last year, the Delhi-based principal bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had directed to initiate insolvency proceedings against the company over the plea filed by one of its flat buyers citing delay in the project and appointed an interim resolution professional.

Setting aside it, a three-member NCLAT bench head-



ing the possession," said the NCLAT. The NCLAT also questioned the role of its flat buyers and observed that they moved the NCLT to initiate insolvency proceedings against the company "fraudulently with malicious intents".

The NCLAT said that Raheja Developers had offered possession of flats to the buyers but they wanted refund of the amount with more interest and refused to take the actual amount in terms of flat buyer's agreement.

"We have no other option but to set aside the impugned order dated August 20, 2019. The application preferred by 1st and 2nd respondents under Section 7 of the 'I&B Code' is dismissed," said the NCLAT.



Gold imports dip 6.77 pc during April-Dec 2019

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Imports of the yellow metal stood at USD 24.73 billion in the corresponding period of 2018-19.

The decline in gold imports has helped in narrowing the country's trade deficit to USD 118 billion during the period, against USD 148.23 billion a year ago.

Reliance's partnership with S Aramco not retreat from energy biz

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries' partnership with Saudi Aramco for its USD 75 billion oil-to-chemicals business signals expansion rather than retreat as growth opportunities are expected to boost the petrochemical and refining vertical, market analyst firm Bernstein said.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani had in August last year announced initial agreements to sell a 20 per cent stake in the oil-to-chemical business to the Saudi national oil company. Also, a 49 per cent interest in fuel retailing business was sold to UK's BP plc for Rs 7,000 crore.

"Reliance has pivoted away from energy to the new economy. But energy still accounts for 64 per cent of EBITDA. While RIL has divested stakes to BP and Aramco, we expect RIL to grow their petrochemical and refining business given



the secular growth opportunities," it said in a report.

Stating that India has significant secular expansion (that is, unaffected by short-term trends) ahead in refined prod-

ucts and petrochemicals, it said with the lowest demand per capita of 1.3 barrels per person, demand for refined products will grow by 5 million barrels per day over the next two

decades, more than any other major market.

Ethylene demand could grow ten-fold from 5kg per person per annum to 50-60kg pp/ps as consumer demand rises.

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"Reliance partnership with Aramco and BP signals expansion ahead rather than retreat," Bernstein said. "Aramco's investment is to secure market access and growth. While refining is a cash cow for the business, we believe that there are significant opportunities for petrochemical expansion ahead given demand growth and synergies with refining."

Fuels marketing will be significantly expanded given the partnership with BP and plans for 5,500 stations, it said.

China) and will also one of the fastest growing markets for petrochemicals given the per capita demand which will grow with the GDP," it said.

As part of the August deal, Saudi Aramco will supply 500,000 barrels per day of crude on a long-term basis to RIL's Jamnagar refinery complex (40 per cent of the refining capacity).

"While bears will argue that Reliance is stepping away from energy to digital, we see this deal as an opportunity to expand the downstream business in India with a solid partnership. For Aramco, the deal provides direct access to what is widely expected to be the fastest growing refined oil product market over the next 20 years," it said. "For Reliance, it provides cash to fund expansion of their digital business and further expansion of downstream capacity with an experienced partner."

Ambani had in August last year announced that the deal with Aramco will close by March 2020 but it is now expected to close within the current calendar year.

Refining and petrochemicals are a cash cow for Reliance. "But to think of this as an ex-growth part of the business would be a mistake. In India, there is strong secular demand growth ahead. India is estimated to be the fastest growing refined fuels market over the next 20 years (faster than

Govt likely to soon allow Indian cos to list overseas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The official said many companies are interested in listing their equity shares in foreign countries. Currently, quite a few Indian companies have American Depository Receipts (ADRs) that are traded in the US.

UNDERSTANDING AN AUTEUR'S JOURNEY

ANUSHKA PRADEEP speaks to Adoor Gopalakrishnan, one of the pioneers of the new-wave in Malayalam cinema, about the training required to be a filmmaker, his journey into movies and more

Adoor Gopalakrishnan — one of the most recognised Indian film directors across the world, ranking alongside stalwarts of Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen — on the recent drift in Indian cinema towards innovative concepts, away from what is consumed through mainstream commercial movies, said, “I usually prefer to not watch mainstream cinema as the process of sitting through these movies is something which I honestly find to be a gruesome process. However, it is good to see that there are young people nowadays who are trying to make movies which stand out and that is most welcome. They are different

from what commercial cinema has been churning out so far. This shows promise in the next generation.”

“I don't make standard films. I make films the way I like it. The technique, story and the narrative I use are different each time,” Adoor spoke about his method and process of making a movie. Adoor Gopalakrishnan has directed 12 films in his career spanning more than 50 years. Each of which has received several accolades on various national and international platforms. He is the recipient of the Padma Shri Award in 1984 and Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2004.

While there are so many upcoming directors working on films without having to go to a film school, Adoor Gopalakrishnan was of the opinion that a formal education in filmmaking is important.

In an exclusive with *The Pioneer*, Adoor Gopalakrishnan said, “One should know their medium. Formal education in the subject is important for a filmmaker is what I believe. Even if a director has a basic understanding about the movie he wishes to make, there will still be people under him

who know the subject and it is they, who would end up creating the movie for him. Hence if the director doesn't know his subject the director receives credit for something that cannot be called his original work.”

But Adoor Gopalakrishnan also focussed on the kind of learning that comes from studying cinema by just watching them. He gives the example of Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray as someone who made it without any formal training.

It is a known fact that filmmaking and other such career prospects in arts were mostly frowned upon during his younger days but Adoor had the support he needed. “Fortunately I was born into a family of artists. They were particularly patrons of Kathakali for generations and sponsored Kathakali troops known as the Kathakali Yogam. Hence when I showed interest in filmmaking, my family members were equally enthusiastic. While one of my uncles on my father's side of the family was an artist another was a painter and a sculptor, who had both been tutored under the guidance of Rama Varma, the son of the celebrated



A still from Adoor Gopalakrishnan's movie, Pinneyum (Once Again)

artist Ravi Varma. Rama Varma had an art school in Mavelikkera. My mother's eldest brother was a connoisseur of art. I joined the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in 1962. By the time I joined I had dabbled in writing, directing and acting in theatre,” Adoor said and added that his role model is G. Shankara Pillai who he met during his time in theatre.

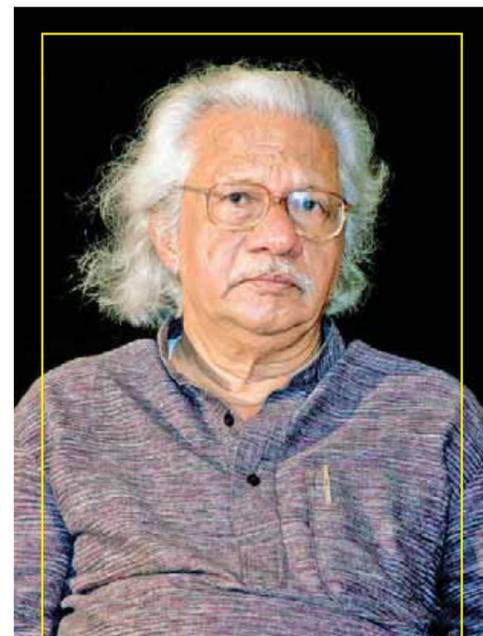
So what does it take to be cast in a movie directed by Adoor Gopalakrishnan? “I

don't even do screen tests. I look at a person and decide whether I find them fit for a particular role or not. I've worked with both well known and experienced actors just as much as I have worked with new actors who may not even have an idea about acting and the film-making process,” Adoor Gopalakrishnan said.

“Several actors I picked to star in my movies eventually made it big in the industry. Abhirami, who was later nicknamed 'Adipoli

Abhirami' in Tamil industry, first starred in my film *Kathapurushan* and went to act alongside Kamal Hassan. Similar is the case with Narain who debuted in *Nizhalkuthu*, Sudheer who used to be a set boy earlier, Bharath Gopi who starred in *Kodiyettam*, or Karamana Janardanan Nair among others.”

When asked about which movie of his he holds dear, he says, “All my movies hold the same amount of importance to me. They are all alike. I'm happy about each one of



“I was born into a family of artists. They were patrons particularly of Kathakali for generations and sponsored Kathakali troops known as the Kathakali Yogam. Hence when I showed interest in filmmaking, my family members were equally enthusiastic

ADOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN
 FILMMAKER

them. I don't make many films but the ones I do work on, I make sure I spend enough time on it and I don't regret anything about any of the films I made as I never compromised on the quality

of the content.” “What I believe are my future prospects is something I can't really tell you as even I am clueless about my future, just as much as you are,” he concluded with a laugh.

Hyderabad-based Akhil Reddy created various platforms and initiatives to help bring out the hidden artist inside each individual through right training, finds V SATEESH REDDY



Akhil Reddy Kommidi, founder of Dabaki platform, is inspired by various cultures and art forms from around the world. A photographer and documentary filmmaker by profession, he also has the experience of working on projects to boost local tourism funded by the state and the central governments. He founded Dabaki as a common platform for artists from all disciplines to come together and collaborate. “Dabaki is a multi-disciplinary artist engagement platform dedicated to content creation and art produc-

tion. Dabaki is the existential journey through which we constantly discover answers to three questions — where are you from, what feeds your soul and where are we going. We are helping artists from various states and background to work with other artists, which now is at 75, and perform their best,” Akhil said.

He curates a programme called 'Heart Talks' through which artists narrate their journey through their work. In the recently concluded Hyderabad Literary Festival, Akhil held talks with various artists for literature lovers. “In Heart Talks, we take artists to a farmhouse and

they would stay there for three days. During this time, the artists work with senior artists to improve their art through panel discussions, workshops and more, and finally learn how to build their ideas into formative and substantial performances,” said Akhil who added that the next edition of Heart Talks would be held from February 21 to 23.

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Akhil says, “I learned photography at Rajan's School of Photography, Hyderabad. While working as a photographer and a documentary filmmaker, I realised that if you don't do mainstream work like covering weddings,

PROVIDING A CANVAS FOR ARTISTS



“We take artists to a farmhouse and they would stay for three days. During this time, the artists work with senior artists to improve their art through discussions and workshops, and finally learn how to build their ideas into something substantial

AKHIL REDDY KOMMIDI
 PHOTOGRAPHER, FILMMAKER

then we could not keep our passion alive. Hence, I had an event management firm called The Show which I managed for four years. I also worked for educational companies and curated programmes for high school students. As a photographer and a filmmaker who has

gone through all these experiences, I can understand the plight of an artist.” Akhil also guides artists to come out of their comfort zone and work while travelling. As part of one of his assignments, he had travelled to Cambodia to document the lives of farmers. Akhil

said, “Travel takes artists out of their comfort zone and helps them try something innovative. I went to Cambodia alone to document the lives of farmers there and to find out how they manage their agriculture even with sudden climate changes. I was impressed with their techniques and later followed it with another trip to Cambodia where I took many artists along with me. That trip was a success.”

Recently, Akhil and team travelled to the Nilgiris. “Our aim behind the Nilgiris trip was to make the artists interact with nature and the people there and share their stories through art. We had documented our work there. We will be releasing it soon as a web series titled *Art In Motion*,” said Akhil and added that he has plans to go to the Northeast next because he feels that many are not aware of the culture and traditions of that region.

A journey of THOUSAND STEPS

The 11th edition of the Republic Ride of LifeCykul in association with Synchrony was a great success. The event was fully digitalised with the introduction of the LifeCykul app. The app can connect interested participants across the globe to take part in the ride irrespective of their location and time zone. People can simply download the LifeCykul app, enroll and start the Republic journey from anywhere in the world. The Republic Ride is a yearly fixture in Hyderabad's cycling calendar and has seen around 50,000 cyclists participate during the past 11 years.

The event was held at Pala Pitta Cycling Park Gachibowli, Hyderabad and was attended by Andy Ponneri, Senior Vice-President and Business Leader-India, Synchrony,

and Kameswari Gangadharabhatla, Vice-President, Human Resources, Deenanath Harapanahalli, CEO LifeCykul along with other senior leaders from various corporations who flagged off the ride which saw the participation of more than 2,000 amateur and pro cyclists.

Speaking on the occasion Andy Ponneri said, “The annual Republic Ride has helped encourage cycling in Hyderabad. We are happy to participate and were amazed to see such an overwhelming response. It's a wonderful and healthy way of celebrating our Republic Day together. I thank all the participants and enthusiastic citizens who came to cheer on the riders. To help drive a culture of wellness, we are pleased to support fitness programs like these that promote a healthy lifestyle.”





Kangana, Ekta, Karan Johar, among BTown Padma Shri recipients

Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut, filmmaker Karan Johar and producer Ekta Kapoor have been honoured with the Padma Shri for their contribution in the field of performing arts. The Padma awards were announced by Government of India on the eve of Republic Day on Saturday.

Popular singers Adnan Sami and Suresh Wadkar were also honoured with Padma Shri. "I'm humbled and I'm honoured. I thank my country for this recognition and I dedicate this to every woman who dares to dream. To every daughter... to every mother... and to the dreams of women who will shape the future of our country," Kangana said.

Her film *Panga* has released on Friday and director of the film, Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, felt proud of the actress and mentioned: "There are very few humans who have the ability to be visionaries not for just themselves but also for others. Kangana has risen on her own through her dedication and hard work despite many challenges and limited support."

"This recognition empowers many more women of our beloved country to walk their own chosen path fearlessly," added Ashwiny.

Ekta Kapoor is known for her constant contribution not only on television and cinema, but also on the digital entertainment platforms. As a producer and content creator, Kapoor, too, is happy with the award.

Karan Johar, on the other hand, is overwhelmed to be honoured with the award. "It's not very often that I'm at a loss for words, but this is one such occasion. The Padma Shri... such an honour to receive one of the highest civilian awards in the country. (I am) overwhelmed by so many emotions right now," he said.

"(I am) humbled, elated and also thankful for the opportunity to live my dream every day, to create and to entertain. I know my father would be proud and I wish he was here to share this moment with me," said Johar.



Brad-Aniston 'BACK IN LOVE'

Hollywoods former couple Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston have reportedly "reignited their romance".

According to their close friends, the exes dated at least five times prior to their screen reunion last weekend, reports mirror.co.uk.

A confidante of the actress said: "I don't think she's ever really stopped loving him, even though he broke her heart when he left her for Angelina Jolie."

"It has taken a long time but she has forgiven him for everything — forgiveness has been a big part of them moving on."

A long-time associate of Pitt's movie production company Plan B confirmed: "All he can talk about is Jen. They have reignited their romance and I haven't seen either of them this happy in years."

TV cameras had recently caught Pitt beaming and mouthing the words "Oh, wow!" during Aniston's acceptance speech at

the Screen Actors Guild ceremony.

Later the pair were spotted backstage smiling warmly at one another and clasping hands.

Asked about their first public reunion, the actress said: "It just feels like a really fun night to cheer each other on. We've all grown up together, we really have."

Pitt said: "I don't know. I'm blissfully naive and I'm gonna stay that way."

Kabir Khan's *The Forgotten Army* makes Guinness World Record

Filmmaker Kabir Khan's debut web series *The Forgotten Army* has created Guinness World Record for being the biggest team of musicians to perform live ever.

The team of Amazon Prime Video's *The Forgotten Army* paid tribute to the unsung heroes of the Azad Hind Fauj at a musical event on Friday night at a suburban hotel here. The live operatic musical event saw 1000 singers

and instrumentalist coming together to perform three songs from the show's album, which has been composed by Pritam.

Guinness World Record adjudicator Swapnil Dangarikar announced that *The Forgotten Army* now holds the record for the largest Indian cinematic music band.

"It was a spectacular performance with the highest level of proficiency. It's my great pleasure to be present here to be able to see and listen to the largest Indian

cinematic music band," he added.

Present at the event were musician Pritam, Kabir and the cast including Sunny Kaushal, Sharvari Wagh, Rohit Bharadwaj, and TJ Bhanu.

Kabir hailed the performance and said it was able to "capture the very spirit of the Azad Hind Fauj". Pritam said he was excited to have witnessed a "unique live performance".

The Forgotten Army started streaming on Amazon Prime Video from Friday.



FUN

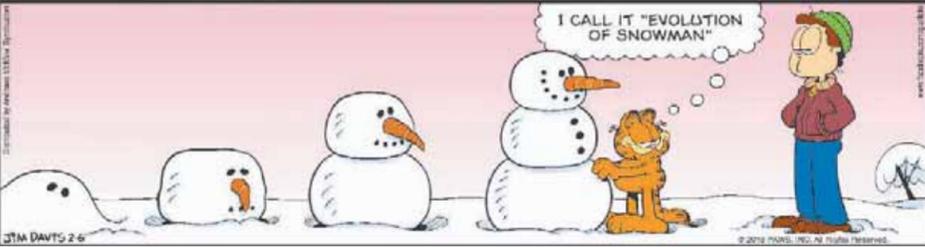
ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



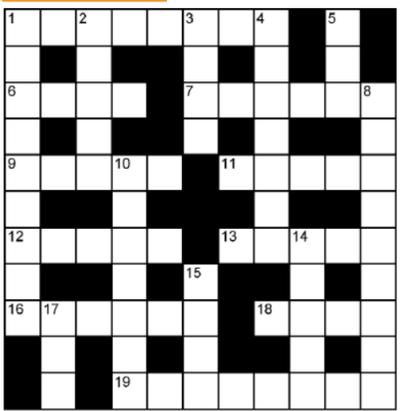
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Hot coals left after a fire
- A list of restaurant meals
- People who work in classrooms
- A feeling that makes you want to scratch
- Check the length of
- A female sheep
- Large extinct animals
- Very old
- A crown-wearing woman
- A person from Sweden
- The largest continent
- Adult males

DOWN

- An emergency vehicle
- Normal



SUDOKU

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1				2	7			
	8	6			3			
					3	7	5	
	7	1		8		2		
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						6	9	3

Yesterday's solution

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3	7	1	8	2	5	9	4	6
8	5	6	4	9	1	7	2	3
9	6	3	2	8	4	5	7	1
5	1	8	7	6	3	4	9	2
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1	9	4	3	5	8	2	6	7
7	3	2	1	4	6	8	5	9
6	8	5	9	7	2	3	1	4

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

Film with RAVI TEJA an action-thriller: RAMESH VARMA



Ramesh Varma wants to make it big on the screen with Ravi Teja. NAGARAJ GOUD finds out what the director has in store for his next film with *Mass Maharaja*

After bouncing back with *Rakshasudu* last year, filmmaker Ramesh Varma has now landed a Ravi Teja film. Although buzz about the same has been doing rounds for past two weeks, the project was officially announced on Ravi Teja's birthday on Sunday. Speaking exclusively to *The Pioneer*, Ramesh scoffed reports that the film is another remake for him after *Rakshasudu*. "It's an original screenplay falling under the action-thriller

genre. I've shared the plot line with Ravi Teja garu last October and he was impressed with it. He gave us the go-ahead to fully develop it. Fifteen days ago, me and my team, gave him a detailed narration for three-and-half hours and he was sold. We wanted to announce the project next month but since Sunday is his birthday, we've decided to advance our plans and greet him this way," the director said. The director is planning to take the film to floors in February-end or

in early March, while the official muhurat will be held early next month. "Around 50 per cent of it will be shot in Hyderabad, while the other half will be filmed across Azerbaijan. It will feature will two heroines. While one actor will have a prominent role, the other will last around for 20 minutes on screen. The casting process is on," he added.

Ramesh had earlier teamed up with Ravi Teja for *Veera* (2011), which was an above average grosser. On small screen though it continues to rake in good TRPs whenever it is telecast. "Veera was an okay film overall but I didn't get a good name out of it. The protagonist of the film was not my kind of hero. I had to do the film because of certain situations. I've just delivered a hit in the form of *Raid* and felt doing a film with Ravi Teja will keep me moving forward. The stability that I have today, I didn't possess it back then. Veera could've been done by any other hero than Ravi Teja but this new film of mine needs only him," he stated.

The director is collaborating with educationalist Koneru Satyanarayana again after *Rakshasudu* for the untitled film. On his choice of producer, Ramesh said, "I did get many offers last year but I had a great time working with Satyanarayana garu on *Rakshasudu* and felt the need to continue my association with him again. He is a good producer. There is Havish as well in the back-end," he concluded.



Trivikram's punch to *O Pitta Katha*

Filmmaker Trivikram Srinivas, who is basking in the afterglow of *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo*, has unveiled the title of production house Bhavya Creations' next venture in Hyderabad on Sunday. Featuring Viswant, Sanjay Rao, Nithya Shetty and Brahmaji in lead roles, the film, titled *O Pitta*

Katha, has been directed by debutant M. Chandu. The film is a comedy thriller and its shooting has been wrapped up. Trivikram said, "I found the story interesting. When the director told me about the title options, I evinced my interest on *O Pitta Katha*. I suggested running it with a caption 'it's a long story'. My contribution ended there itself. The title

is good and I hope people will connect to it." Terming the film as a screenplay-driven film, director Chandu added, "The story unfolds in a village in a realistic ways. On one hand it will have the audience in the theatres rolling with laughter, on the other it will keep them glued to their seats with suspense. The twists will add to the thrills."

PRABHAS' next to release this year itself



When veteran actor-producer Krishnam Raju recently announced that his next production with nephew Prabhas will mostly likely release during this year-end or in the summer of 2021, the young rebel star fans were dejected. Sensing the dejection among fans, it seems that the actor has decided to release his film, directed by Jil fame Radha Krishna, a little before the year-end. With the third schedule, which started on January 17 completed on Saturday, the makers want to amp up the proceedings now. "The next schedule will start in Hyderabad from February 7, post which the unit will embark on lengthy schedules to finish the film at the earliest. Beginning April, the Austria schedule of 60 to 75 days will wrap up the

THE LOVE STORY WILL BE SIMULTANEOUSLY MADE IN TELUGU, TAMIL AND HINDI

principle shoot, leaving the unit to film some songs. The release date will be decided once *RRR* makers officially confirm their date first. Right now, they are eyeing a date in October. Also, the makers have made up their mind to regularly update about the film's development in view of mounting pressure from Prabhas fans," said a source.

We also hear that to avoid leaks about the actor's look and production design; the makers have heightened security measures. "More than 20 sets replicating Europe have been erected in prominent studios of Hyderabad and in Tellapur and the makers are in no mood to have any leaks," added the source. Being made simultaneously in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi, the film, a love story, is a joint production venture between Gopi Krishna Movies and UV Creations.

Mahasamudram to be a bilingual



The *Pioneer* was the first (on December 28) to inform you that director Ajay Bhupathi has got the nod from Sharwanand and Samantha to front his second film *Mahasamudram*. To this end, the latest we hear is that there is a high probability for the film to be shot in Tamil as well. "It was Sharwa who first put forward the proposal of shooting in it Tamil besides Telugu as he felt that the film's content and backdrop can resonate with Tamil audience as well. He has a sizeable following there and the fact that his next with Tamil production house Dream Warrior Pictures is a Telugu-Tamil bilingual meant that he wants to consolidate his Tamil market. Plus, there is Samantha who is as popular in Tamil as she is in Telugu. Bhupathi couldn't agree more. However, a lot depends on who will play the second hero — a cop — besides Sharwanand. Names like Vijay Sethupathi, Atharva Murali and Bobby Simha are attached to it," informed a highly-placed source close to the unit. Major portions of *Mahasamudram*, a love story set in the backdrop of smuggling, will be shot in Visakhapatnam. Sithara Entertainments is tipped to produce the project, while Chaitan Bharadwaj is already on board to render music. It will move to floors mostly in May. — NG



AND NOW, SHRIYA JOINS *RRR*

The cast of S.S. Rajamouli's ambitious *RRR* has grown bigger. *The Pioneer* has exclusively learnt that Shriya Saran is on board to play a key supporting role in the film. What's more is that the Delhi beauty has already joined the sets in Vikarabad. "Shriya is cast opposite Ajay Devgn in the film. Soon after the *Singham* star landed in Hyderabad last week, the actress followed suit. They will be seen as husband-wife in the film and portions involving them as a young pair are being shot at in Vikarabad forests by Rajamouli as we speak. Besides her acting chops, the fact that Shriya is a notable figure in Hindi belt has sealed the deal for her," said a well-placed source who further added that shoot will go on in Vikarabad for another five to six days, post which the setting will shift to other sets in Hyderabad. *RRR*, which is riding high on expectations, already sees an impressive roster of prominent supporting actors such as Samuthirakani, Satyadev and Rahul Ramakrishna. The source further added that Makrand Deshpande is also playing a small role. Set in early 1920s, the film, a production venture of DVV Danayya, is a fictional story based on two real-life heroes and freedom fighters — Alluri Seetharama Raju and Komaram Bheem. Tarak is playing the younger Bheem, with English actress Olivia Morris paired alongside him, while Charan will be seen as younger Ramaraju, with Alia Bhatt as his love interest. — NG



Walk in Eden Park

Indian bowlers trap Kiwis in slow track and win 2nd T20 by 7 wickets to go 2-0 up in five-match series

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

India tightened their grip on the T20I series with a seven-wicket drubbing of New Zealand in the second match after their bowlers stifled the hosts on a pocket-sized Eden Park on Sunday.

Boasting a formidable batting line-up, chasing 133 proved to be a cakewalk for the visitors on a pitch that was slightly on the slower side.

The very short boundary ensured the match ended with as many as 15 balls to spare.

The trio of Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami allowed no respite to Kane Williamson's team after New Zealand surprisingly chose to bat, restricting them to 132 for five.

K L Rahul then scored 57 not out off 50 balls while Shreyas Iyer scored 44 off 33 balls, the duo adding 86 runs for the third wicket and after Rohit Sharma's twin failure.

Tim Southee took 2-20 as India had to do without major contributions from both Sharma and skipper Virat Kohli.

Sharma (8) was out caught at slip in the first over off Southee. New Zealand's new ball bowlers were compact and didn't let the Indian top order get away unlike the first T20I on Friday.

Even so, Rahul and Kohli added 31 runs for the second wicket. The latter then was caught behind off Southee in the sixth over with Tim Seifert taking a brilliant diving catch.

Kohli scored 11 off 12 balls and the wicket's slow nature was starting to impact proceedings. New Zealand held back their spinners too, but Rahul-Iyer settled down in this passage of play.

They rotated strike well and added 50 in 55 balls by minimising risks. Rahul brought up his 11th T20I half-century off 43 balls.

Couldn't play like first game as pitch was different: Rahul

AUCKLAND: Indian batsman K L Rahul on Sunday said he had to change his approach in the second T20I due to the slightly slow nature of the pitch at Eden Park.

Rahul, who had smashed 56 off 27 balls to set up India's six wicket win in the first T20I, produced an unbeaten 50-ball 57 to anchor the visitors' seven-wicket victory in the second game.

The 27-year-old said he had to make some changes to his game as the pitch was different than the one India played during the opening match.

"Obviously different circumstances, the target was different, the pitch was a little different from what we played on a couple of days ago. So I knew I couldn't play the same way I played a couple days ago," said Rahul, who was adjudged the *Man of the Match*.

"I had a different responsibility today. We lost our senior players Rohit and Virat early so I had to stay in there and make sure I finish the game."

Rahul, who has been in sizzling form in white ball format, said he has improved in his shot selection and reading of the game.

"I think the understanding of my game and how I'm reading the situation and reading the game has gotten better for me. That's helped me be more consistent and I've always put the team ahead and thought about what the team requires at that moment," he said.

"More often than not I've come up with the right shots and right answers so that's been the mantra for my success in the last several T20s."

Overall, Rahul hit three fours and two sixes, while Iyer hit one four and three sixes.

India crossed 100 in the 15th over after which Iyer cut loose to approach the finish line. He fell just prior, holing out off Ish Sodhi (1-33).

But Rahul stuck around while Shivam Dube finished the job with a six over midwicket.

This was after Indian bowlers made good use of a slower pitch.

Opting to bat, the Black Caps couldn't generate enough momentum in the middle overs and finished with a sub-par total.

Martin Guptill top-scored with 33 off 20 balls, while Tim Seifert was unbeaten on 33 not out off 26 balls.

Guptill and Colin Munro (26) provided a measured start to New Zealand putting on 48

runs for the first wicket. Surprisingly, India held back Jasprit Bumrah (1-21) as Shardul Thakur (1-21) and Mohammed Shami (0-22) bowled four overs in the power play. The tactic worked as Thakur got rid of Guptill at end of six overs.

India then used the slow nature of the used-wicket to put brakes on the New Zealand middle order. Wickets came at a regular interval as the Black Caps struggled to get the big shots out.

Yuzvendra Chahal (0-33) and Shivam Dube (1-16) combined well after the powerplay, while Ravindra Jadeja was the stand out bowler with figures of 2-18 from four overs.

Overall, India also raised their fielding effort barring a bizarre drop from Virat Kohli late in the innings.



KL Rahul raises his bat after completing his second consecutive half-century against New Zealand KL/Instagram

Bowlers stood up & took control: Kohli



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson on his way back to pavilion after being caught out by Yuzvendra Chahal off Ravindra Jadeja's bowling AP

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

India captain Virat Kohli lauded his bowling unit for taking control of the proceedings from the onset after an emphatic seven-wicket victory against New Zealand in the second T20.

"I think we had another good performance today, especially with the ball. The bowlers stood up and took control of what we wanted to do out there. Sticking to one side of the wicket was a very good feature for us as a team to restrict a good New Zealand team to 132 which I think was below par," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

The low target led to India chasing down the total with 15 balls to spare.

"The low total led us to bat in that manner but we thought the pitch was good for 160 in the first half. We understood the angles of the field better, how the pitch was playing and I had to think on my feet as a captain," he added.

Kohli's opposite number Kane Williamson reckoned that the pitch was tough for batting compared to the first match and that they were 20 runs short.

"It was a tough day. The wicket was quite different from the first game. I think as a batting unit we needed another 15 or 20 to make it a little bit more competitive. But credit to the way India bowled," Williamson said.

He termed India as a "class side" which put them under constant pressure.

"They're a class side in all departments and they put us under pressure in that middle period. Even though we only had 130 on the board on a small ground, we still knew if we were able to take early wickets and build pressure like they did, then you never really know."

"But they showed their experience and took the game much deeper than we were able to in the first innings and they were very clinical."

Iyer learnt art of chasing watching Kohli bat

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

There is no one better than Virat Kohli when it comes to chasing down totals in white-ball cricket, something that India's newest No 4 Shreyas Iyer wants to emulate on a consistent basis in coming days.

With a half-century and 44 off 33 balls in the successful chases in the first two T20 games, Iyer is fast becoming another viable option for the Indian team apart from its talismanic skipper when it comes to tricky run-chases.

"I personally feel that you have a fair idea how many runs you are going to chase and at what run-rate you have to chase them. Virat Kohli is the perfect example when he goes out to bat and the way he plans his innings. I learn a lot from him personally, the way he grinds out and he tries to finish the game. That's the best part about him," Iyer told mediapersons.

He also learns a lot from his senior Mumbai teammate Rohit Sharma, who can demolish any attack on his day.

"(I) Also (learn from) Rohit Sharma, whenever he's given an opportunity, he makes the best use of it. All these amazing characters in the team set a really good example for us youngsters."

"There's a lot to learn from them and that's what I try to apply whenever I go out there. I think that I have to stay not out and it really helps me grind throughout that middle period and when the time comes, I take on the bowlers. That's how you plan your innings when you are chasing," Iyer said.

The 25-year-old is known for his penchant for hitting big sixes but he also understands the value of rotating the strike as a middle-order batsman.



Shreyas Iyer plays a shot over wicketkeeper Tom Seifert's head during 2nd T20 AP

Pitch became hard for batting as game progressed: Guptill

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Senior New Zealand opener Martin Guptill blamed the sluggish Eden Park track for their flop show with the bat in an absolute surrender to the Indian side.

Guptill scored a quickfire 33 off 20 balls but Indian bowlers kept a tight leash on the Black Cap restricting them for 132 and then reaching the target in only 17.3 overs.

"We certainly felt that the pitch was getting slower and slower when we were batting. It got harder and harder to bat as the game progressed. We need-

ed one of the top three-four to bat majority of the innings. We weren't able to get partnerships to add up the total," Guptill told reporters after his team lost second successive game.

The surface was slower compared to the first game where New Zealand scored 203.

"It was a slightly different wicket. Earlier on, it was coming nicely. Colin (Munro) and I were off to a reasonable start. We lost momentum thereafter the sixth over, and we had to sort of rebuild from there," he said.

The target was not a tough one to chase down admitted Guptill.

"We probably knew we were light on runs. But we had to try and defend that, and get early wickets upfront. Thought the bowlers did well in the front six overs, we needed more wickets after Virat got out. Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul batted very well and we were not able to break that partnership," he added.

Guptill and Colin Munro put up 48 for the opening stand after 80 in the first game.

"Our role in the team is to be aggressive and we go out there to do that. One of us would have been good to bat 15 overs to set the innings up and

have guys bat around us. It was not supposed to be today and we have time to try to do that in the next game and do a better performance," he added.

The opener felt that India once again out-batted them on a difficult track.

"They played very well, as hard as they did the other night. They built partnerships to put pressure on us. We were not able to do that and got out-batted tonight. India have got some great players and match winners. It is hard for the boys to go out there and try their best. Sometimes you come up short," Guptill further added.

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Martin Guptill hits a six off Shardul Thakur's bowling during second T20 AP

India A suffer five-run defeat

CHRISTCHURCH: Ishan Kishan was left stranded on an unbeaten 71 as India A lost four wickets in nine balls to suffer a narrow five-run defeat in the deciding third ODI against New Zealand A on Sunday.

Chasing 271 for a series-win, India A needed seven runs from the final over with two wickets in hand but wicket-keeper batsman Kishan took a single off the second ball after playing a dot to

expose the tail. It proved quite costly as pacer Kyle Jamieson (4/49) knocked off Sandeep Warrier and Ishan Porel off consecutive balls to end the match with two balls to spare.

In the 49th over, India A lost well-set Axar Patel (32) and Rahul Chahal (0) to left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel, as New Zealand snatched the momentum when it mattered the most.

India had got off to a good

start with young opener Prithvi Shaw (55) and Rituraj Gaikwad (44) putting on a confident 79-run stand for the opening wicket. Skipper Mayank Agarwal (22) got a start but could not convert it into a big knock.

After the top three, only Kishan and Axar offered resistance as Suryakumar Yadav (5) and Vijay Shankar (19) could not last long.

New Zealand A's left-arm spin duo of Ajaz Patel (3/44)

and Rachit Ravindra (2/43) did considerable damage to India's middle and lower order.

It was Mark Chapman, who got New Zealand back into the match with an unbeaten 110-run knock.

India had reduced the host to 68 for four and then 105 for six at one stage with dismissals at regular intervals but Chapman and Todd Astle (56) raised a 136-run partnership for the seven wicket to put up a fighting total.



Mark Chapman in a file picture NZ/Twitter

England close to series win

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Joe Root made a patient half-century as England set South Africa a world record target of 466 to win the fourth and final Test at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

The England captain scored 58 and played an anchor role before he was last man out as England were bowled out shortly before the close for 248.

Root decided not to enforce the follow despite England leading by 217 runs on the first innings.

Past bowler Mark Wood took five for 46 as South Africa were bowled out for 183 in their first innings.

Quinton de Kock (76) and Dwaine Pretorius (37) kept England in the field for most of the morning and probably made sure England would decide to bat again.

De Kock and Pretorius put on 79 for the eighth wicket and prevented England

only five other 50-plus scores between them.

Vernon Philander was out to the sixth ball of the day, reducing South Africa to 93 for seven, at which stage a follow-on seemed a strong possibility.

It was an unhappy day for Philander, who will be retiring from international cricket at the end of the match as he pulled up with a hamstring injury after bowling just nine balls in the second innings.

He left the field immediately and was sent for a scan.

Despite the loss of their leading bowler, South Africa bowled and fielded better than in the first innings when England scored 400.

Left-arm seam bowler Beuran Hendricks claimed a five-wicket haul on debut, finishing with five for 64 when Root was last man out to a sensational diving catch by South African captain Faf du Plessis at a wide slip.



from wrapping up the innings early. De Kock scored his fourth half-century of what has been a poor series for the South African batsmen. His team-mates have contributed

Philander fined for Buttler send-off

JOHANNESBURG: South African opening bowler Vernon Philander, who is playing in his final Test, has been fined 15 percent of his match fee after a send-off of England batsman Jos Buttler during the second day of the fourth Test at the Wanderers Stadium.

The International Cricket Council announced on Sunday that Philander had been found guilty of a level one offence for "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal in an international match."

Buttler was fined 15 percent of his match fee after the second Test in Cape Town where he was caught on camera swearing at Philander.

SINGLES

B'DESH TO HOST ZIM IN FEB-MARCH
DHAKA: Bangladesh will host Zimbabwe in an int'l series in Feb-March, B'desh Cricket Board said on Sunday. The series will kick off with a one-off Test in Dhaka on Feb 22, and will also include three ODIs and two T20Is. The three ODIs will be held in the port city of Chittagong on March 1, 3 & 6. The tour will wrap up with two T20Is in Dhaka on March 9 & 11.

YUVRAJ, AKRAM TO PLAY IN RELIEF MATCH
SYDNEY: Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh and Pakistan fast bowling great Wasim Akram on Sunday became the first players outside Australia to confirm their availability for the charity cricket match organised to raise funds for the bushfire victims. Australia's prolific Test opening duo of Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden are also set to reunite after the latter's name was added to the squad list. They'll be joined by Australian men's team greats Andrew Symonds, Brad Haddin, Mike Hussey, Ponting, Warne, Adam Gilchrist, Brett Lee, Langer, Michael Clarke, Shane Watson and Alex Blackwell.

FED CUP MATCHES MOVED OUT OF CHINA
NEW DELHI: The Indian Fed Cup team on Sunday heaved a sigh of relief after the ITF shifted the Fed Cup matches from the Coronavirus-hit China to Kazakhstan but the side is likely to compete without Sania Mirza, who has aggravated a calf-injury. Concerned for its players' health due to a medical emergency in China, AITA had written to the ITF, requesting the world governing body to consider either shifting the venue or postponing the tournament, originally scheduled in Dongguan from February 4. After rejecting their request twice, the ITF finally shifted out of China.

INDIAN MEAN'S TT TEAM'S OLYMPIC BID ENDS
GONDOMAR: The Indian men's table tennis team's quest for an Olympic berth ended in disappointment after it suffered a 1-3 defeat to Czech Republic in a play-off match of the qualifying event. The loss significantly reduced India's chances of qualifying for the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo. The Indian team will now hope to make the cut during the Asian Olympic qualification tournament to be held in Bangkok, Thailand from April 6 to 12.

AGENCIES