

OPINION 8
THE CAR AS
COMPUTER

WORLD 12
FRENCH PM SEEKS 'UNITY' AS
'YELLOW VEST' ARRESTS CROSS 1,700

SPORT 15
CHELSEA BEAT MAN CITY
2-0 IN PREMIER LEAGUE

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JANHVI TO GET
NORWEGIAN
HONOUR
13 VIVACITY

Redeem Mandir pledge: RSS to Govt

At VHP rally, Bhaiyyaji Joshi demands law for Ayodhya temple, says we are not begging

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) functionary Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi on Sunday reminded the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government to fulfil its promise of constructing a grand Ram Temple at Ayodhya and demanded the Union Government to enact a legislation, if need be, to facilitate the construction.

Thousands of people gathered at Ramlila Maidan in Central Delhi on Sunday for the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) rally to press for the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, days before Parliament's Winter Session commences.

Addressing the VHP rally, Joshi launched a veiled attack on the Union Government saying, "Those in power today had promised to construct Ram Temple. They should listen to people and fulfil the demand of temple in Ayodhya. They are aware of the sentiments." Without naming the BJP, Joshi added, "We are not begging for it."

Joshi reminded the BJP of its Palampur resolution on Ram Temple and said there is no other option and the Government needs to come forward showing courage for this holy work.

"They had passed a resolution that 'Ram Mandir Wahin Banayenge'. Now the time has come to respect that resolution. Without any hesitation, they should move ahead towards



RSS leader Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi addresses during VHP's Dharma Sabha in New Delhi on Sunday



An aerial view of Ramlila Maidan during Vishwa Hindu Parishad's (VHP) event 'Dharma Sabha', in which thousands of people gathered to press for the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, days before Parliament's Winter Session commences in New Delhi on Sunday

fulfilling their commitment," Joshi said in presence of thousands of Lord Ram devotees, saints and religious gurus.

Joshi said the judiciary has its own way, but in a democracy, Parliament has its own rights and the present Government should take initiatives in the direction of formulating a law.

"There is no other option. For this holy work, they need to come forward showing courage. This is the request of all Ram bhakts. We are not begging. We are expressing our

views. The power has a big role in respecting these sentiments. I believe that those in power will understand these sentiments and will take positive steps," he said.

Joshi said the construction of Ram temple would bring "Ram Rajya" in the country and till the time it gets constructed, the movement will go on. "How long we will see lord Ram living in a temporary arrangement? This should end. There is a need for one last push. We all want to see lord Ram in the grand temple. The

construction of temple will lay foundation of Ram Rajya in the country. It will decide, on which way the country will move ahead. Till the construction of temple, the movement will continue," he said amid chants of "Jai Sree Ram" and "Ram Lala Hum Aayenge, Mandir Wahin Banayenge". "The power is not supreme but it plays an important role. Those sitting in the corridors of power need to understand the public sentiment. I believe that they are not only aware of it but are also in agreement on

the issue of temple," Joshi said.

Addressing the gathering, Sadhvi Ritambhara said the Government should listen to its "own" people and pave the way for the construction of a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya. "Apno ki awaz apno ko sunana chahiye aur Ram mandir ka marg prashast hona chahiye," she said. She also took a dig at the BJP for ignoring the sentiments of Hindus.

"Those who were talking about Lord Ram are enjoying power but Lord Ram is still in tent. It's very painful to see Lord

Ram in tents. There's no meaning of constructing big statues of Lord Ram unless a grand Ram temple is constructed in Ayodhya. The use of power exists in putting India's pride in its place," Sadhvi said. Lokesh Muni, a dharma guru of Jain community, asked the Government to bring a legislation in the Winter Session of Parliament for the construction of the temple. It may be noted that the "Title Suit of the Ayodhya Land Dispute case" is pending before the Supreme Court.

Continued on Page 4

Plantation area drop on poll eve anguishes Govt

Cultivation down by 27 lakh ha, 36% drop in paddy due to erratic monsoon

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A massive drop in agricultural cultivation has led to serious concern among the stakeholders, including the Centre, against the backdrop of a recent hike in the minimum support prices (MSP). The Agriculture Ministry data shows that plantation area saw a decline of 27 lakh hectare during the current rabi season this year.

In addition, rice cultivation area also declined by 36 per cent, mainly due to dismal performance reported from southern peninsula including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The lower sowing is attributed to erratic rainfall during monsoon season, deficiency of north east monsoon, low moisture in soil and five cyclonic disturbances/storms which include cyclone Daye (September 17-24); Luban (October 6-15); Titli (October 8-15); Gaja (November 10-19) and Ockhi (November 18-24).

As per latest Agriculture Ministry data, as many as 414.29 lakh hectare was sown as com-



pared to 441.59 lakh hectare last year, a decline of 7 per cent this year despite hike in the rabi and kharif crops of MSP.

"The lowering in plantation area is a major concern for the Agriculture Ministry ahead of the next year Lok Sabha polls and this has happened despite hike in the MSP. The Narendra Modi Government has also expected a bumper crops in 2018-19," said a source in the Agriculture Ministry.

"Farm sector still employs 60 per cent of India's population even though contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product (GDP) has fallen from 18 per cent in 2013-14 to less than 14 per cent in 2016-17. "The bumper crops will make the Government to formulate pro-farmers policy," a source said.

Continued on Page 4

Opp parties' meet today to mull grand alliance viability

Mayawati keeps all guessing, Chandrababu is coordinator

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties are meeting on Monday in Delhi as part of their exploratory exercise to form a grand alliance to take on the BJP in the next year's Lok Sabha polls. The meeting comes day before the start of the Winter Session of Parliament and counting of the five State Assembly polls. Except BSP chief Mayawati, who has kept everyone guessing, leaders of all other major Opposition parties are expected to attend the meet.

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is coordinating the meeting and has personally met several Opposition leaders to bring them on one table.

Naidu has set an example in trying to unite the Opposition by mending fences with arch-enemy Congress and forging an alliance with the grand old party in the Telangana elections.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief



Sharad Pawar, Trinamool Congress (TMC) supreme Mamata Banerjee, National Conference (NC) chief Farooq Abdullah, Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Sitaram Yechury and Communist Party of India (CPI) general secretary S Sudhakar Reddy are expected to attend the meeting.

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav, Mualyam Singh Yadav, are likely to attend the meet, but Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati is unlikely to take part. However sources said senior BSP leader Satish Chandra Mishra might attend it. Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Odisha Chief

Minister Naveen Patnaik was also unlikely to be part of the meeting.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) president M K Stalin, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav and Loktantrik Janata Dal (LJD) leader Sharad Yadav are also among those likely to attend the meeting.

During the meeting at the Parliament House Annexe, the Opposition parties are expected to discuss their responses to Government bills and issues related to the Rafale deal and farmers.

Continued on Page 4

London court to give verdict on Mallya's extradition today

A joint team of CBI and ED has left for the UK to attend the court proceedings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A joint team of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) led by CBI Joint Director A Sai Manohar has left for the United Kingdom on Sunday to attend the court proceedings on India's request seeking extradition of embattled business tycoon and former Kingfisher Airlines boss Vijay Mallya.

The Westminster Magistrates' Court in London on Monday will deliver its verdict on whether Mallya who holds UK citizenship can be extradited to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering amounting to ₹9,000 crore. He is in self-imposed exile in London.

Manohar will take the



place of Special Director Rakesh Asthana, who had been attending the trial till now. The Government had sent Asthana on forced leave, divesting him of all powers after he and CBI Director Alok Verma entered in a bitter feud.

Manohar is part of the SIT earlier headed by Asthana.

Mallya, 62, wanted in India on alleged fraud and money laundering charges, has been on bail since his arrest on an extradition warrant in April last year.

Continued on Page 4

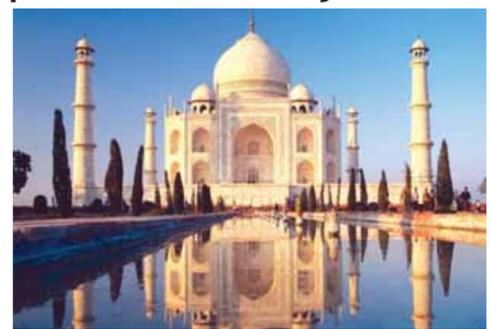
Main mausoleum visit fee hiked to preserve Taj

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From Monday, Indian tourists will have to shell out ₹200 extra to enter the main mausoleum at the Taj Mahal in Agra. The foreign tourists will have to pay ₹1,300. A notification in this regard has been issued on December 5 by the Archeological Survey of India under the Union Ministry of Culture. This comes after the Government had hiked the entry fee to the Unesco heritage site to ₹50 from ₹40 for the domestic visitor.

The decision to charge ₹200 and ₹1,300 from domestic and foreign tourists respectively for visiting the main mausoleum has come as per the recommendation of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI). It had conducted a study on Taj's load-bearing capacity and suggested immediate steps to reduce the number of footfalls into the mausoleum to protect its integrity.

As per the new order, the tourists paying ₹50 will be able to visit just near the stairs of the platform and areas around the Yamuna river but



The Supreme Court had recently directed the Uttar Pradesh Government to submit a vision document on preservation of the monument within 4 weeks

will not be allowed to enter the main mausoleum. Extra ticket will be checked at the entry of the gate of the mausoleum.

Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma had a few months ago had indicated imposing such tariff saying the move aims to "preserve the Taj Mahal" and

for a better crowd management.

"We need to preserve the Taj Mahal for the generations to come," Sharma had said about the increase in tariff from ₹40 to ₹50.

The Supreme Court had recently directed the Uttar Pradesh Government to submit a vision document on the preservation of the monument within four weeks.

One of the seven wonders of the world, the Taj Mahal, was commissioned in 1632 by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan, to house the tomb of his wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

CAPSULE

LT GEN: WON'T HESITATE FOR SURGICAL OP AGAIN

Dehradun: Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Devraj Anbu has said the security forces would not hesitate to launch another surgical strike against terrorists if the need to do so arises. P7

TIGER ELECTROCUTED NEAR WILDLIFE RESERVE

Nagpur/Chandrapur: A sub-adult tiger was found dead after getting electrocuted in a farm near the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Chandrapur district. P7

3 TERRORISTS KILLED IN ENCOUNTER, JAWAN HURT

Srinagar: Three Lashkar-e-Tayyiba terrorists, including one of the youngest ultras in Kashmir, were killed in a gunfight with security forces on the outskirts of Srinagar on Sunday. A soldier and three civilians were also injured during encounter. P7

Syndicate which hoodwinked 350 Govt officials busted, 2 held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has busted a syndicate which was allegedly involved in cheating around 350 Government officials on the pretext of organising Leave Travel Concession (LTC) tours in 2013. The two accused persons, who are now in police net, had offered tour packages to their victims; however after paying for the packages, the complainants found that they were cheated, police said.

The probe has revealed that about 60 complaints from officials of different Government organisations, like the Ministry of Health, Delhi Health Department, Postal Department, AIIMS, court employees and the Delhi Police, had registered complaints at the Connaught Place

Police Station against the alleged company INI Tour & Travel Private Limited for duping them. "Investigation was taken up but the accused persons were nowhere to be found," said a police officer.

"Two persons, identified as Ashwani Singh (32) and Harpat Singh, the directors of the alleged company, have been arrested in the case.

"According to police, the accused were on the run since 2013 and their whereabouts could not be traced. A police team led by the Station House Officer (SHO) of Connaught Place Inspector Vinod Narang traced the accused persons.

"On Wednesday last, Ashwani Singh was arrested from Mohan Garden in Uttam Nagar and during his police remand another accused Harpat Singh was traced from



Accused Ashwin and Harpat Singh in custody of the staff of Connaught Place police station

Pioneer photo

Gurugram," police said.

"According to one of the complainants, Surender Kumar, in 2013, a woman who identified herself as Monika Tyagi contacted him from her mobile regarding a tour programme for Jammu & Kashmir for Government servants.

"She introduced herself as the marketing executive in INI Tour & Travel Private Limited," Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Madhur Verma said.

"On her assurance the complainant Surender paid ₹91,000 in cash to Monika. On June 15, 2013, when the complainant visited the office of INI Tour and Travel in Connaught Place neither the company nor the woman was there," said the DCP.

"Police revealed that a team from Connaught Place Police

Station was constituted and during the course of investigation, police found that the alleged company had cheated several Government employees and absconded.

"Around 60 victims were contacted to know about the culprits. The team got in touch with executive staff working in the company, including Monika, and they were interrogated. During questioning, it was revealed that four people identified as Ashwini Singh and Harpat Singh had hired employees, including two identified as Bhavesh, Mahendra Paleja, and assigned them to sell LTC tour packages to Government employees for a tour to Srinagar," the DCP said. "Two batches of tour packages were organised by the company.

Continued on Page 4

Nehru Place, Bhikaji revamp on cards

Authority to start re-designing in 2019 to make it safer for women

GAYATHRI MANI ■ NEW DELHI
The National Capital's biggest computer market — Nehru Place and the office complex — Bhikaji Cama Place both situated in the South Delhi will be soon revamped to make it more safer for the women as the Delhi Development Authority is soon going to start the re-designing work by the beginning of 2019. The project once completed would also help in decongesting busy Nehru Place in South east Delhi.

As per the project plan, direct connectivity and clear way for the movement of pedestrians, proper space for parking illumination of dark spots and women safety will be the major tasks in both the complexes.

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the owner of the two complexes is ready with the detailed project plan and has also done with all the

modalities of the project to invite tenders. The tender is expected to be floated by end of this week.

These complexes are the one among the three complexes including the revamping of Vasant Lok complex whose redevelopment was ordered by the Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA) in the year 2017. The construction work of Vasant Lok complex has already started and the remaining project of Nehru Place and Bhikaji Cama Place is in its last stage.

As per the official, both the complexes will have proper and direct connectivity of footpaths, corridors, buildings, shops to the bus stop and metro stations. The official said parking space will also be created in these complexes to de-congest the paths for the pedestrians. The already existing parking lot on the Outer Ring Road will be converted into multi-level parking to de-congest the area.



“Women safety and decongestion is the main part of this project as during the survey, numbers of dark spots have been found in both the complexes. Thus, illumination of dark spots locations with high vigilance, increase of street lights will be installed. Nehru Place has footfall but there are dark spots at many places such as Paras cinema hall, Dhaba area, police station and the back side of the market,” said a senior official from DDA.

After the re-designing,

as to get a good footfall, the entire complex including the outside of Hyatt residency, lights will be installed with green space (plantations) and restaurants will be set up where people can enjoy with their friends and family till 11 pm. An open air theatre is also on the plan where people can organise various activities such as launching programmes, awareness programmes and others,” said official.

Further, escalators, lifts and the entire pedestrian's path or footpath will be constructed in the manner with shelters with plants which will protect the people from both sun and rain. Arts and Sculpture will also be installed to beautify the complex.

The budget of redevelopment of Bhikaji Cama place is ₹80 crore and Nehru Place will be ₹180 crore. As per the officials, the completion of the redevelopment of Nehru Place is expected by mid of 2020 and Bhikaji Cama Place will be completed little earlier by end of 2019 as Nehru Place complex is bigger than Bhikaji Cama Place.

Underpass at Mahavir Chowk soon to ease old G'gram traffic

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM



To ease traffic mess in the old Gurugram city, Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) has come out with a plan to construct an underpass along with Foot over Bridge at Mahavir Chowk and a flyover at Gurudwara Road.

The GMDA is now preparing a Detail Project Report (DPR) of the proposed project. The estimated cost of the project would be around ₹118 crore. In which ₹56 crore will be spent for Underpass along with FOB at Mahavir Chowk and ₹62 Crore for a flyover at Gurudwara Road.

“The flyover, underpass and FOB would bring relief to tens of lakhs of commuters who struggle currently through unending traffic jams on these stretches which traffic cops find difficult to manage,” said a GMDA official. At present Mahavir Chowk and Gurudwara Road are often beset with perennial traffic problems, with autos and other vehicles parked on the

stretch grabbing a lot of road space, the official added.

The area near the civil hospital, bus terminal and Sadar Bazaar sees long traffic snarls every day. Despite actions like creating a dedicated lane for autos and closing existing gaps in the median, the traffic police have not been able to prevent the traffic woes. “The entire stretch was surveyed to see how recurring traffic snarls could be addressed. It was decided to construct an underpass as that would address the issue,” the official added.

Similarly, thousands of patients, who visit the district's biggest government hospital, Vegetable Market and Bus Stand find it difficult to cross the busy Mahavir Chowk and Gurudwara Road, said another official. It may be noted that the GMDA has long been planning to decongest Old Gurugram's traffic which includes underpasses, foot over bridges and flyovers at several stretches on busy roads.

Apart from this, the authorities are also planning to construct a flyover or underpass near Atul Kataria Chowk to tackle traffic load on Old Delhi Road. The road will have six lanes from Mahavir Chowk to Palam Vihar curve, after which it will be widened as per available space.

Water supply to be hit in parts of Capital today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Water supply would be affected in parts of the national Capital on Monday and Tuesday due to the annual programme for flushing of underground reservoir and booster pumping station.

The areas where supply would not be available or available at low pressure are A-1 Sector-5 Rohini, Rohini Sector-24 JJC, BI Block Shalimar Bagh, B-4 Lawrence Road, Mayur Vihar I, II & III, Pocket-H Dilshad Garden, 288 MIG Pocket-6 Sector-23 Rohini, A-1 Sector-17 Rohini, BW Block Shalimar Bagh, Shakti Apartment Ashok Vihar, Transit Camp, Anand Vihar, AGCR Enclave, Pocket-F Dilshad Garden, Shastri Park, Usmanpur, Kaithwara, Bhagat Singh Colony, Brahmपुरi, Gautampuri, Welcome, Zafrabad, Chouhan



Banger, Seelampur and adjoining areas.

Delhi Jal Board has advised residents to store sufficient quantity of water in advance as per their requirement. Water tankers will be available at telephone numbers 1916, 1800-117118, 23527679, 23634469, (Central Control Room), 27308015 (Ashok Vihar), 9650291444, 27700231 (Holambi), 27915965 (Mangolpur), 22727812 (Mandawali), 22812683, 22812050, 22817228 (Yamuna Vihar), 22816023, 22814651, 22814518 (Loni Road).

NDMC addresses grievances in Suvidha camp

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The successful implementation of New Delhi Municipal Council's (NDMC) initiative to resolve grievances related to citizen-centric services on the spot in a special 'Suvidha camp', has left an imprint for other civic body in the national Capital to follow the model to avoid unnecessary delay due to involvements of many departments to do the same work.

The initiative has yielded a positive result as more than 157 such complaints were addressed in its first camp organised at Palika Kendra in New Delhi on Saturday, a senior NDMC official said.

In order to ensure timely disposal of the grievances without any lapses and negligence, it was felt to call all the concerned officers of the 'Civic Services Departments' (CSD) at one place. It helped in better coordination among various departments in addressing grievances,” he said. He further said that over a hundred officers of 20 departments of NDMC were present in the camp to resolve the grievances.

The official said that as many as 157 public grievances had been received in person in the camp by the officers concerned of NDMC and out of it, 150 had been resolved on the spot. The most of the grievances of the residents were pertaining to the civil engineering department like roads- by lanes, water, sewer, maintenance of parks, and footpaths. The other grievances were of the Tax and Estate Departments, he said.

The seven unresolved grievances were of such a nature, which takes a little more time due to the official process. However, the complainants were



NDMC Chairman Naresh Kumar listens to the grievance of a woman at Suvidha Camp

informed about the timeline to sort out such cases, the official said.

The Chairman of NDMC, Naresh Kumar and NDMC Secretary Rashmi Singh interacted with the complainants in the camp and said that the Council has provided a platform to the citizens of New Delhi area for resolving their grievances on the spot without any delay or any hurdle of official channel.

They also appealed the citizens that they should come forward and take the benefit of the opportunity being extended to them on every second and fourth Saturday of every month, he said.

Woman held for stealing ₹1 lakh from purse of another woman

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old woman was arrested on Sunday, for allegedly stealing ₹1 lakh from the purse of a woman shopping in Select Citywalk mall in Saket. Police also recovered 16 ladies purses from her possession, police said.

“The accused was identified as Nazish Jahan (25), a resident of Jamia Nagar. On Saturday, we received a complaint from one Devi Cheran regarding a theft of ₹1 lakh from her purse while she was shopping at Select Citywalk Mall,” Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Vijay Kumar stated.

“A First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Saket police station and investigation was being taken up. During investigation, all the CCTV footages of the places she visited were checked.

It was noticed that a woman was constantly following the complainant and took out an envelope from her purse while she was distracted,” said the DCP.

According to police, the woman was identified as Nazish Jahan (25) and she was arrested from her residence in Jamia Nagar on Sunday morning. The entire stolen amount of ₹1 lakh was recovered from her possession. Police also recovered 16 stolen wallets from the accused woman.

“During questioning, she revealed that she used to visit malls and markets to steal ladies purses after following them for a while.

She was previously also found involved in a case of theft at Tughlak road Police Station,” DCP said.

PUBLIC NOTICE
General Public is hereby informed that Mr Ajay Kumar Bhal and Vijay Kumar Bhal have executed GPA and SPA in favour of Mr. K.K. Kapoor and subsequently K.K Kapoor has executed Power of Attorney and other Document in favour of Mr. Sanjay Nangia about the property Flat No. 84, First Floor, DDA SFS Cat-III, HIG Nilgiri Apartments, Alaknanda, New Delhi 110019. Through those Power of Attorney has been cancelled by Mr. Ajay Kumar Bhal and Vijay Kumar Bhal, who was the real owner of the Flat and they have executed Power of Attorney and other documents in favour of Mrs Ruby Bhasin and Mr. Ajay Bhasin.

Now these documents stand valid and applicable regarding the above mentioned property. If anybody use or misuse earlier chain of titles would be illegal and they would be at his own risk. If any person is having objection right of claim against the said property, contact to undersigned along with supporting documents within 5 days from the date of publication of this notice and of the same to the undersigned if found by any one.

DEPAK SINGH - Advocate
Chamber No.52, Civil Wing, Tis Hazari Court, New Delhi -110054 (Ph: 08586856331)

INVITING E-TENDER
The Executive Engineer, East Bldg Maint. Civil Divn. (M-221), Public Works Department, Level-2, Delhi Sachivaiaya, New Delhi-2 invites on behalf of the President of India, Online Percentage Rate tender through e-Procurement from approved and eligible registered contractors of CPWD for the following:-

1. **Name of Work:** A/R & M/O to Police station & Staff Qtrs. Geeta Colony Delhi dg 2018-19 (SH: White Washing & Finishing work), NIT No. 97/EE/EBMD-M 221/PWD/2018-19 (Recall)
Tender ID: 2018_PWD_163150_1
Estimated Cost: Rs. 12,26,660/-
Earnest Money: Rs. 24,533/-
Period of Completion: 90 Days Last date and time of Online Submission of Tender: upto 3:00 PM on 18.12.2018, Further details can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
DIP/Shabdarth/2418/1819

Gang of auto-lifter, snatchers busted, four arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the arrest of four persons including their kingpins Pramod (27) and Mukesh Verma (24), the Delhi Police has busted a gang of auto-lifters and snatchers involved in a dozen cases of auto-theft and snatching.

The duo allegedly enticed two others identified as 20-

year-olds Kamal and Rahul into the gang promising them easy money and a lavish lifestyle, police said.

Police allegedly caught them red handed on Friday at around 9.15 pm, when they assembled at Chhath Puja park at Uttam Nagar to steal a vehicle. Four stolen motor cycles were recovered from their possession, police said.

“The four persons were arrested by Anti-Auto Theft

Squad of Dwarka district. The kingpin of the gang Pramod and his associate Mukesh Verma were both released from jail only last month, and soon after they again started indulging in motor cycle theft.

They had roped-in then teenagers Rahul and Kamal into the gang enticing them with good money and lifestyle,” Deputy Commissioner of

Police (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse stated. The accused Rahul and Kamal would allegedly carry out snatching on stolen motorcycles and thus remained elusive for a while, said the DCP, adding that, “the proceeds earned through snatchings were distributed among the four. The Quartet was fond of stylish clothes and liquor parties.”

Police revealed that fre-

quent cases of auto lifting were taking place in Dwarka district and AATS staffs were assigned to collect criminal intelligence and arrest the concerned persons.

“On Friday, information was received that a gang of auto lifters-cum-snatchers led by Pramod would assemble at Chhath Puja Park, Uttam Nagar in Delhi to commit another theft.

The information was developed and after verification a trap was laid. Around 9.15 pm, the quartet assembled in two motorcycles and were caught red handed by the police force,” said the DCP.

“The accused persons have confessed to their involvement in around one dozen cases of auto lifting and snatchings,” DCP said, adding that, they are further investigating the matter.

Children park opens in Greater Kailash

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) National Vice President Shyam Jaju inaugurated a children park-“Nandan Van” in a function organised at Greater Kailash-1, B-Block.

The park is designed and developed by South Delhi Municipal Corporation with an amount of ₹1 crore approximately. It is equipped with swings, rope bridges, different playing equipment and board games area. Besides, the artistic gates with sculptures would also attract the children.

SDMC Commissioner Dr Puneet Kumar Goel said the children parks will be replicated in all four zones.

Jaju said that the children are fortunate to have such a wonderful park which was never developed in the last few

decades. He added that the children park will go a long way in the overall development of the children.

“The park will provide an excellent opportunity to play in the park instead of concentrating on computers and different games on mobile phones,” he said. Chairperson of Standing Committee in SDMC Sikha Rai said that there are a series of net installed for climbing and sliding which strengthen their body and mind. The outdoor musical instruments encourage children and adults to hear and make music, she said.

Rai further said that a sensory wall has also been built for visually impaired children and wall holla is another attraction. “We will connect with both private and public schools to convince them to organise their picnics in the park,” she added.



70th Indian Pharmaceutical Congress to begin on Dec 21

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The 70th Indian Pharmaceutical Congress (IPC) is all set to be inaugurated by Vice President of India, Venkaiah Naidu on December 21. Around 8,000 delegates from the pharmaceutical industry are expected to be participating.

For the three day annual event which will be held at Amity University, Noida, the theme has been decided as ‘Pharma Vision 2030: Indian Pharma Industry - A Global Leader’.

Dilip Shinghvi MD of Sun Pharma and President of 70th IPC, in a statement, said, “There is an urgent need to reinforce and rebuild standards with

statutory bodies and to restore the confidence of pharmacy graduates. The quality of education has to be improved by industrial participation so that the stakeholders are accepted in the global pharma industry.”

He further said, the regulatory policies of India are to be harmonized so that India becomes global leader in pharma, including generics, active pharmaceutical ingredients, medical devices and diagnostics.

IPC is held every year in the country under the aegis of Indian Pharmaceutical Congress Association (IPCA) which is a federation of five professional pharmaceutical bodies, namely, Indian Pharmacy Graduates' Association (IPGA) and Association of Pharmaceutical Teachers of India (APTI), Indian Hospital Pharmacists' Association (IHPA) and All India Drugs Control Officers' Confederation (AIDCOC).

The annual conference facilitates exchange of new ideas among the members of the pharmacy profession. Apart from that, the conference will also focus on increasing leadership of the women working within the pharmacy profession.

Based on discussions held during the congress and the problems faced by the pharmacy profession, resolutions are passed by the organizing Association and forwarded to the concerned authorities, said an official.

Pollution level likely to go up in next 2 days

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) recording a significant fall in the overall temperature on Sunday, the woes of Delhiites increased as the low temperature slowed dispersion of dangerous pollutants in the air, as authorities warned pollution level might further increase in the next two days.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) of 377, the highest pollution level in nearly 20 days. The neighbouring cities of Ghaziabad, Noida and



Faridabad recorded 'severe' air quality, CPCB data showed. An AQI between 201 and 300 is considered 'poor', 301, 400 'very poor' and 401, 500 is 'severe'.

The air quality in seven areas — Anand Vihar, Mundka, RK Puram, Rohini, Vivek Vihar, Jahangirpuri and Nehru Nagar recorded 'severe' air quality while 20 areas recorded 'very poor' air quality, according to the CPCB.

The overall PM2.5 -- fine particulate matter in the air with a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometre -- level was recorded at 221 and the PM10 level at 389, it said. The Centre-run System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting (SAFAR) said the overall air quality of Delhi will further deteriorate over the next two days.

"Winds are calm and dispersion is low. Western disturbances influence may impact Delhi's air quality by introducing the moisture and making air heavy. The expected fall in temperature and moderate fog is likely to increase pollution over coming two days is expected to

the upper level of very poor," the SAFAR said. The SAFAR said that the air quality might improve on Wednesday if sufficient amount of rainfall occur, which is expected. "However, marginal shower often deteriorates air quality because high moisture content over shadows the wash out effect. In all probability, the AQI will remain within the limit of very poor and will not touch severe," it said.

"Levels of gaseous pollutants, NOx and CO are forecast to be enhanced -- up to moderate range -- after a long time due to a fall in boundary layer height and reduced vertical mixing," the SAFAR said.

Season's lowest temp at 8.2 degrees on Sun

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

It was a cold day in the National Capital on Sunday with the minimum temperature settling at 8.2 degrees Celsius, one notch below the normal for this time of the year.

According to the IMD, the maximum temperature was recorded at 24.8 degrees Celsius, a notch above the normal. The humidity oscillated between 97

and 41 per cent. The Met office has forecast clear sky in the morning on Monday with the possibility of partially cloudy skies in the evening and at night. "The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to hover around 24 and 8 degrees Celsius respectively," the weatherman said. On Saturday, Delhi recorded the season's lowest temperature at 7.6 degrees Celsius.

First tennis academy opens in Punjabi Bagh Govt school

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In order to encourage the students to join sports activity, the Delhi Government on Sunday has inaugurated the first tennis academy for the students studying in the Delhi Government school.

A total of five Tennis Courts in Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Punjabi Bagh by the Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia who is also Minister of Education.

"Inaugurated the first Tennis academy and five tennis Courts in Delhi Government Schools. Former international tennis player Puneet Rawat and his team of coaches will coach players from government and Private schools from nearby areas.

The initiative's success can be gauged from the fact that within one week of its beginning, 170 students have enrolled from Delhi Government schools from surrounding areas, 120 being from the same school," said Manish Sisodia in a tweet.

The initiative is a part of the Delhi government's innovative policy which allows and invites the private academies to use the premises of government schools for free.

Under this policy, these academies will also provide training and facilities for the students of government schools for free.

"The policy saw a very enthusiastic response from many organizations which claim expertise in sports training as well as teaching art and cultural activities to kids. The Education Minister insisted that there should be no difference in quality of training, and instructed the academy to ensure that there is no segregation, no partiality between the students from surrounding areas who are paying and the students of Delhi government schools. The deputy chief minister He also asked the MLA and the school Principals to explore the possibilities of organising inter-school tournaments, once the students are comfortable with the game," said an official.

The sports policy further provides chances for both the budding aspirants as well as the players who played at national and international level.

The first policy - 'Play & Progress Scheme', benefits the talent in sports at school level. Under 14 years students can get Rs 2 lakh per annum directly from the Delhi Govt & students in 14-17 yrs bracket can get Rs. 3 lakhs per annum, quantum of assistance may be enhanced by 20% subject to approval from Committee of Experts.

The games includes Athletics, Badminton, Swimming, Hockey, Wrestling, Cricket, Football, Boxing, Gymnastics, Kabaddi, Basketball, Judo/Karate, Table Tennis & Baseball. Further, training are provided at 18 centers such as Chhatrasal Stadium, Thyagraj Stadium, East Vinod Nagar Sports Complex, Najafgarh stadium and others.

DU postpones academic council meeting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After thousands of teachers protested for not including the draft of Ordinances arising out of the University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations 2018, the University of Delhi has postponed the Academic Council (AC) meeting for a week which was scheduled to be held on 12th December. As per the regulations, the Ordinances were meant for the recruitment and promotion of teachers.

Hundreds of Delhi University (DU) teachers on Friday had staged a protest at the Arts Faculty as well as the members of Academic Council has also submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor as the draft of ordinances arising out of the UGC regulations 2018 meant for the recruitment and promotion of teachers has been expelled from the agenda items.

The agitating teachers now are a little relaxed and are expecting that the regulations will be added in the agenda items of the upcoming AC meeting. Though there are some teachers who are angry with the DU's 'carelessness'.

"The fight of hundreds of teachers has borne fruits as thousands of teachers are suffering for the past ten years due to their pending promotions. Moreover even after the apex Authorities order, the varsity has not included the ordinance.

Though the meeting has been again delayed but now everyone is expecting that the agendas will be added to the items for the decision. If the DU will not implement the regulations as said by the UGC, the careers of thousands of teachers will be ruined," said Pankaj Garg, an AC member.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) in July had asked the universities across the country to implement the ordinances within six months. The UGC Regulations 2018 have 20 regulations including the eligibility criteria and promotion of teachers. Following the regulations, the University of Delhi has constituted a committee consisting 20 members under the chairmanship of Professor DK Singh on 28th to study and formulate the amendments.

As per the members of AC, presently there are 4000 teachers



ers working in various colleges of Delhi University (DU). In September 2018, UGC wrote to all the varsities situated across the country to make provisions of maternity leave for contractual employees. A teacher on ad-hoc basis is appointed for four months against a vacant post. As per recommendations an ad hoc teacher may go on maternity leave for rest of the period of four months from the date she is availing her maternity leave. During this period the College can appoint guest lecturers only so that the female ad hoc teacher who has gone leave can join college after the completion of her maternity leave.

"There is no provision of maternity leave for ad hoc teachers at present and most of the time they are forced to join college after delivery within 2 days due to non availability of maternity leave for ad hoc teacher under the fear of losing her job.

This provision after approval from AC and EC would lessen the hardships of female ad hoc teachers who would be in family way," Pankaj Garg, Member committee and Member, Academic Council.

2% of Yamuna stretch accounts for 76% of pollution

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A small stretch of less than two per cent of the Yamuna accounts for 76 per cent of the river's pollution, according to a monitoring committee overseeing its cleaning.

The committee has further said that the river is "fighting to stay alive" and it would not be possible to rejuvenate the Yamuna unless minimum environmental flow is provided as it is "virtually reduced to a trickle and remains dry in some stretches for almost nine months of the year."

National Green Tribunal Chairperson Justice AK Goel had in July formed the monitoring committee comprising retired expert member BS Sajwan and former Delhi chief secretary Shailaja Chandra and directed them to submit an action plan and detailed report on cleaning of the river by December 31. The committee has submitted the details to the Delhi government.

In the action plan, a copy of which has been accessed by PTI, it is mentioned that "Although the Yamuna river

flows only for 54 kilometres from Palla to Badarpur through Delhi, the 22 kilometre stretch from Wazirabad to Okhla, which is less than 2 per cent of the river length of 1370 kilometres from Yamunotri to Allahabad, accounts for about 76 per cent of the pollution level in the river."

This 2 per cent stretch from Wazirabad to Okhla sees maximum discharge of untreated industrial and domestic wastes.

The committee has suggested that a team of scientists be formed from CPCB, DPCC and other institutions like IIT Delhi or NERII to carry out inspections and submit reports to it for remedial action.

The team can look into the risks and benefits of an alternative way of routing the same quantity of water which can help in reducing the pollution level, it said.

The committee has also recommended a mechanism to be worked out jointly with DPCC and CPCB to install an online system for quality testing of water in Yamuna at Palla

and Wazirabad. "Not only standard parameters would be included but also ammonia because this is brought up as a recurrent problem which impacts drinking water supply to Delhi," it said.

The monitoring committee also raised objection to the capacity utilisation of common effluent treatment plant (CETP) which is as low as 25 per cent.

There are 28 industrial clusters in Delhi and 17 of these are connected to 13 CETPs. The remaining 11 clusters are not connected to any CETP.

Another area of concern is the direct discharge of completely unregulated waste from industries and residences into

the river. "The industrial pollutants when mixed with domestic sewage are not amenable to treatment even by the STPs due to limitation of treatment technology," the committee rued.

Environmental experts have raised concern over the report of the committee, calling it a matter of great shame and regret for Delhiites.

"This reflects very poorly on Delhi. It is a matter of great shame and regret for Delhiites. The condition of Yamuna could be bettered by improvement in the flow which is the only way through which it can be rejuvenated," said environmentalist Manoj Misra.

Another environmentalist

Fayaz Khudsar suggested that building of constructive wetlands is a must for saving the Yamuna. "The only way to save Yamuna is through building of constructive wetlands to mitigate pollution and using sewage treatment without energy consumption," said Khudsar, scientist in-charge of the Yamuna biodiversity park.

"All sewage going directly to river causes massive pollution but if the sewage passes through aquatic plants and then to the river then pollution can be reduced.

It needs to be understood that a city of this size cannot be devoid of pollution and sewage needs to be treated at source," he added.

Woman survives murderous attack, points fingers at in-laws, husband

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman who was found with her throat slit with her minor children a three-year-old girl and an 18-month-old boy, last month, has accused her husband and her in-laws for the murderous attack on her.

"The woman was discharged on Saturday from the hospital and in her statement before the Investigating Officer (IO) she pointed fingers on her husband and in-laws," said a police officer.

On November 17, last, they were found in a critical condition, wherein the three-year-old girl succumbed to her injuries, police said.

"The woman Mohsina (25) was discharged from the hospital on Saturday.

Due to her injuries she is unable to speak, however as she has studied till 8th standard, she can write.

Therefore, we took her statement in a questionnaire format," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Vijay Kumar.

"As per her statements, we are interrogating her in-laws and will decide the course of events as per the evidences," he said.

Earlier on November 17 last, a police control room was received by Malviya Nagar police station regarding a woman who had allegedly slit her children's throat and her own to commit suicide.

The injured were taken to the hospital by their neighbours and family members, but the three-year-old girl succumbed to her injuries during treatment, while the woman and her son were battling for her lives, police said. "A case under section 302 and 307 has been registered on the woman's statement. Further investigation in the case is underway," said the DCP.

Man, woman found dead at 2 different localities of city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In two separate incidents, two unidentified bodies of a woman and a man were found on Sunday in different locations of Delhi, in east district's New Ashok Nagar and in Dwarka's Najafgarh area.

An unidentified body of a woman in her mid 30s was found at around 3 pm in New Ashok Vihar area on Sunday. She was found with her throat slit along Hindon Canal, police said.

"The incident came to light when a man, found the body around Hindon canal, found a woman murdered there. He made a Police Control Room call after that a police team reached at the spot and sent the body for autopsy," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Pankaj Singh.

Police are investigating the matter and scanning complaints of women registered at nearby police stations to identify her.

"We suspect that the woman was murdered on Saturday night and then dumped the body at Hindon canal. A case of murder has been lodge in PS New Ashok Nagar and the investigation has been taken up," said Singh.

The other incident was reported from Najafgarh in Dwarka where the body of an unidentified man in his late 20s was found having knife wounds on his body was found along a drain in Dwarka's Najafgarh area on Sunday morning.

The police said that there were no injuries found on the body of the victim, however, there was blood perforating from the deceased's nose.

AAP directs its in-charges on three LS seats to re-work strategy for votes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In its renewed bid to win all the seven Lok Sabha seats of the national Capital, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has instructed its in-charges on three Lok Sabha seats to re-work their strategy for stronger voter connect.

AAP has recently named its in-charges on all the seven Lok Sabha constituencies in Delhi. However, the incharge of West Delhi seat Rajpal Solanki stepped down.

As per the party members, the incharges will be ultimately declared as official candidates of the party after a final review of their standing in respective constituencies.

"So far, the performance of incharges with respect to organisational work and voter outreach reflects that

improvements are needed in North West Delhi, Chandni Chowk and New Delhi seats," said a senior AAP leader.

He further added that the incharges on these seats have been suggested to change their strategies for better organisational strength and voter connect that will be crucial in the election.

Apart from this section, the remaining South, East and North East Delhi seats, the ongoing work by respective incharges have been found to be "quite satisfactory."

This time, AAP is focussing on Delhi, Haryana and Punjab and will declare its candidates on all seats in these states by mid January. "The final review of incharges on Delhi's Lok Sabha seats will be done later this month or in early January," added the member.

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AFTER 1 YEAR GAP

India, China to resume military drills

Beijing: India and China will resume their joint military drills after a one-year gap on Tuesday in the southwest Chinese city of Chengdu to improve capabilities in fighting terrorism and promote mutual understanding, officials said on Sunday.

The opening ceremony of the drills will be held on December 11, they said.

Each side will send 100 troops to take part in the 7th India and China joint military exercises — 'Hand in Hand' — which will focus on counter-terrorism operations, Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman Col Ren Guoqiang said last month.

The exercises will be held after a gap of one year as both the sides were locked in a 73-day standoff in Doklam in the Sikkim sector of the border in 2017.

The strained relations between the two sides later improved resulting in an informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in the Chinese city of Wuhan in April this year.

"The drill will promote understanding between the two militaries and improving

their capabilities in fighting terrorism," Col Ren said.

The exercises, which will conclude on December 23, will include live shooting and adoptive and basic training, he said, adding that true to its name 'Hand in Hand', China and Indian militaries should also work hand in hand for the benefit of people in both the nation.

Top leaders from both the countries met on November 24 at the 21st India-China border talks held at Duijiangyan near Chengdu in southwestern Sichuan province. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who are the designated Special Representatives, took part in the talks.

They called for intensifying efforts to find a solution to the vexed border dispute.

Earlier at the 9th Defence dialogue held here on November 13 between Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra and Lt Gen Shao Yuanming, Deputy Chief of Joint Staff Department of Central Military Commission, the two sides discussed bilateral relations, military ties, border control as well as regional and international issues. **PTI**

Russia ships arrive for Navy exercise off Visakhapatnam

New Delhi: Three Russian naval ships have arrived in Visakhapatnam to participate in the bilateral maritime exercise with their Indian counterparts aimed at increasing inter-operability amongst the two navies.

The 10th edition of exercise INDRA NAVY will be conducted off Visakhapatnam from December 9-16, an official statement said.

Initiated in 2003, INDRA NAVY exercise has matured over the years with increase in scope, complexity and level of participation, the statement said.

Russian Federation Navy ships Varyag, Admiral Panteleyev and Boris Butoma have arrived in Visakhapatnam.

This edition of the exercise would be held in two phases. The first would be the Harbour Phase, held at Visakhapatnam from December 9-12, that would encompass planning conferences, professional interactions, cultural visits, sports fixtures and formal calls between flag officers and senior officers of participating navies.

The sea phase will be held from December 13-16 and would be conducted in the Bay

of Bengal. The thrust of exercises at sea would be on anti-submarine warfare (ASW), air defence drills, surface firings, visit board search and seizure (VBSS) operations and tactical procedures.

During exercise, the Indian Navy would be represented by INS Ranvir, a guided missile destroyer, INS Satpura, an indigenous frigate, INS Kadmat, an indigenous anti-submarine warfare (ASW) corvette, IN Ships Kuthar and Khanjar both indigenous missile corvettes and INS Jyoti, a fleet tanker. **PTI**



Odissi dancer Arpita Venkatesh with her troupe performs during 'Udayshankar Nityasav' in Kolkata on Sunday **PTI**

Chouhan confident of BJP win in MP; targets Congress

Bhopal: Two days ahead of counting, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday said his party BJP will retain power in the state and accused the Congress of creating doubts in minds of people about the reliability of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

Chouhan, seeking a fourth straight term in office, said the Congress will try to create hindrances on the counting day.

Votes polled in the November 28 elections for the 230-member assembly in Madhya Pradesh will be counted on December 11.

Talking to reporters at state BJP headquarters here, Chouhan said, "BJP is going to form government again in Madhya Pradesh. Friends in Congress are talking baseless things out of desperation."

"We think as doubts were created about EVMs and even the Election Commission was not spared, they (Congress) will try to create hindrances on every step during the counting."

Earlier in the day, Chouhan held an audio conference with all the 230 party candidates and discussed the preparations for the counting. State BJP president Rakesh Singh also took part in the conference. **PTI**

Will play vital role in formation of next Telangana Govt: BJP

Hyderabad: Predicting a fractured poll mandate in Telangana, the BJP on Sunday claimed that it would play a "vital role" in the formation of the next Government in the southern State, where the TRS is eyeing to retain power.

Telangana went to polls on December 7 and the results for the State's 119 Assembly seats will be announced on December 11.

"We have contested the election on our own for the first time after a decade. We have contested the polls to win. The BJP will be part of the Government. Without the BJP, there cannot be any Government. What happens

after the results are declared, we will think of it," State Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president K Laxman told PTI.

He asserted that the saffron party had become a formidable force in Telangana and that it would increase its vote share substantially and the number of seats considerably.

"We have surely become a formidable force in Telangana. We will increase our vote share and even the number of seats. The BJP is definitely going to play a very vital role in the formation of Government," Laxman said. Asked about the reports that quoted him as saying that the BJP would support

the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in the event of a hung verdict, he said his comments were being taken "in a different manner".

He said Modi had accepted a request by the State Government to be the chief guest at the function which will be held in Dharamsala, he said. The State Government is committed to expediting the pace of development so that benefits of development reach the person living at the lowest ebb, Thakur said. **PTI**

Modi to attend BJP Govt's first anniversary function in HP

Shimla: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend a function to celebrate the BJP Government's completion of one year in power in Himachal Pradesh on December 27, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said.

He said Modi had accepted a request by the State Government to be the chief guest at the function which will be held in Dharamsala, he said. The State Government is committed to expediting the pace of development so that benefits of development reach the person living at the lowest ebb, Thakur said. **PTI**

EC orders repolling at booth in Raj's Karanpur constituency

Jaipur: The Election Commission has ordered repolling at a booth in Karanpur Assembly constituency of Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar district on Monday.

The decision was taken after it came to notice that electronic voting machines (EVMs) were not cleared of mock poll when the actual polling began, election department sources said.

Chief Electoral Officer Anand Kumar said repolling would take place at polling centre number 163 from 8am-5pm.

Kumar said there was a decline in the cases of repolling in the State this time. In 2013, repolling was conducted at eight polling centres spread across six constituencies. **PTI**

Shi Yomi becomes 23rd district of Arunachal Pradesh

PTI ■ ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh got its 23rd district on Sunday with the formal inauguration of Shi Yomi, carved out of the West Siang district, officials said.

Two more districts would be created, which would increase the total number of districts to 25, they said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Mechuka read out the notification for creation of Shi Yomi district in presence of Chief Minister Pema Khandu and Union Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijji, an official release said.

"The district, consisting of four circles — Mechuka, Pidi, Tato and Monigong — was

carved out of West Siang district," Khandu said.

Owing to its large geographical area, inaccessible terrains and the district headquarters Aalo being far from these four circles, the State Assembly gave its nod to the creation of the new district, he said.

The Arunachal Pradesh Assembly had on August 29 passed a bill for the creation of three new districts — Pakke-Kesang, Lepa Rada and Shi Yomi.

The Pakke-Kesang district has been carved out of East Kameng district, with five administrative units, and Lepa Rada by bifurcating the Lower Siang district, with four administrative units. **PTI**

2 onion-growers kill self in Nashik

Mumbai: Two onion farmers from Maharashtra's Nashik district have allegedly committed suicide in the last two days, apparently due to indebtedness and low rates commanded by the bulb in markets, police said on Sunday.

The deceased are identified as Tatyabhau Khairnar (44) and Manoj Dhondage (33) who hailed from Baglan taluka in the north Maharashtra district.

Farmers in Nashik district, which accounts for 50 per cent of onion production in India, have claimed that they are unable to fetch good returns for their produce due to glut in production.

A Baglan taluka police official Sunday said Khairnar allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself in his onion shed in Bhadane village Friday.

"No suicide note was found on his body," he said. **PTI**

India much cleaner after Swachh Bharat Mission: Ruskin Bond

Ranchi: Renowned author Ruskin Bond has said that India has become much cleaner following Swachh Bharat Mission but old habits die hard and the challenge lies in addressing the issue appropriately.

Bond, known for his literary collections like the Room on the Roof and Mr Olivers diary, was addressing an audience at the inauguration of the second edition of the Tata Steel Jharkhand Literary Meet (JLM) here on Saturday, along with another noted author Uday Prakash.

"Due to the Modi governments Swachhta Abhiyan different cities have become cleaner than earlier, Bond said.

However, the problem is

that the people return to their old habits and it would take time to change that, Bond added.

Bond said that when he visited Jamshedpur last Friday, he was amazed to see how clean and beautiful the steel city was. He felt the same when he visited Ranchi on Saturday.

On Sunday, Bond will discuss his experience of writing for children at the literary meet.

Hindi poet and author Uday Prakash emphasised the importance of literary meets such as JLM as important conduits to support and recognise literary talent from smaller towns and cities in India. **PTI**

Man's body found at same spot where his wife was killed in Oct

Mumbai: The body of a 22-year-old man was found on a village in Maharashtra's Solapur district where his wife was killed by her parents two months ago in a suspected "honour killing" case, police said.

The incident came to light this morning at Salagar Budruk village near Mangalvedha town, when a passer-by found the body of a man in a farm, which was later identified as that of Shrishail Chanappa Birajdar, an official said.

This was the same place in the farm, where Shrishail Birajdar's 22-year-old wife Anuradha Birajdar was killed allegedly by her parents and last rites were performed hurriedly to destroy evidence, he said.

It is not yet clear whether he committed suicide or was killed, the official said, adding the exact reason of Shrishail Birajdar's death will be known only after a post-mortem is conducted.

The police have called Shrishail Birajdar's family members from their native place in Karnataka, he said.

They have requested the police not to remove the body from the spot till they arrive there, the official said.

As of now the police have registered an accidental death case at the Mangalvedha Police Station and a probe is underway, he said.

Shrishail Birajdar's father was a farm labourer who worked at a farm owned by Anuradha Birajdar's father Vitthal Birajdar (55), the official said.



Shrishail Birajdar used to often visit the farm and over a period of time, he fell in love with Anuradha Birajdar, who was a medical student, he said.

Shrishail Birajdar and Anuradha Birajdar left their homes and got married at Sindagi in Karnataka on October 1, the official said, adding the woman's parents were angry over the alliance and did not approve it.

On October 2, Anuradha Birajdar came to her uncle's residence in Borale village, he said.

Her father took her from Borale to their residence in Salgar Budruk on October 4, saying she has to appear for her oral exams, he said.

The same day she was allegedly killed by her parents, who cremated her body hurriedly, he said, adding it appeared to be a case of "honour killing".

During the investigation, it was found that Anuradha Birajdar had written some notes in which she had expressed threat to her and Shrishail Birajdar's life, he said.

On the complaint of her uncle, the police had arrested Anuradha Birajdar's father and her step-mother on murder charges, the official said. **PTI**

Syndicate which hoodwinked...

From Page 1
"On June 12, 2013, 180 passengers departed from New Delhi to Sri Nagar through GO Airline, but on June 16, 2013, when the passengers reached Sri Nagar Airport for their return journey their flight had reportedly been cancelled due to non-payment to the airline company. In the same way 180 more passengers reached New Delhi Airport on June 16, 2013 to start their LTC Tour from Delhi to Sri Nagar, their flight

was also cancelled by the airline company due to non-payment," he added.

"During investigation, it was found that Ashwani was currently working with a renowned online tour company and has five cases of similar modus operandi registered against him. Meanwhile, Harpat does not have a criminal background. We are further investigating the matter to arrest all the accused persons involved in the syndicate," said the DCP.

Opp parties'...

From Page 1
Not only the heads of non-BJP parties, but also the Chief Ministers of Opposition parties from Kerala, Punjab and Puducherry have been invited.

"The main agenda of the meeting is to chart the future course of action for forming a non-BJP front," said a party leader of an Opposition group.

"Price rise, the ill-effects of demonetisation and the GST, unemployment and threats to the Constitution will also be on the agenda of the meeting," NCP leader D P Tripathi said. Earlier, the meeting was planned for November 22, but had to be deferred because of the Assembly polls in five States.



Tai community members participate in Poi Pee Mau, the new year festival of Tai community in Namsai on Saturday **PTI**

Plantation area drop on...

From Page 1
As per data, despite the Met Department claims of normal monsoon, 250 out of 681 districts remained deficient to large deficient of rainfall this year. "Besides, the Met department has recorded 22 per cent deficiency in north east monsoon till date in southern parts of the country where rice and wheat crops are depended on this monsoon. Frequent cyclonic disturbances also impacted the rabi and kharif sowing this year," said a source.

Officials feel that the production of wheat could fall in 2019 from record output this year as lower moisture levels and higher temperatures in key growing regions especially in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The data shows nearly 194 lakh hectare are

under wheat cultivation is reported till December 8 as compared to 190.90 lakh hectare, a 1.88 per cent more than last year.

Barring wheat, all other crop categories have reported lower acreage as compared to the same period last year. Oilseeds, which reported better acreage till last week, have for the first time slipped to below that in the previous rabi season. As against 67.34 lakh hectare covered in the corresponding period in 2017-18, the area under oilseeds till this week was 65.45 lakh hectare.

The shrinkage in pulses area continued to be more than 10 per cent so far this year. The area under pulses till this week was 113.69 lakh hectare as compared to 126.78 lakh hectare same period in 2017-18. Gram, the main rabi

Redeem Mandir pledge: RSS...

From Page 1
A bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi is expected to announce a date on January 19, 2019 for the beginning of the hearing. The land dispute has remained unresolved for more than 25 years. Pressing for their demand for the construction of Ram Temple, right-wing groups are demanding that the Union Government sidestep the courts and go ahead with the temple building.

"It is a massive gathering which will change the hearts of all those who are not in favour of bringing the Bill for construction of a grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya," VHP's spokesperson Vinod Bansal said.

The right-wing group had approached President Ram Nath Kovind and State Governors during previous phases of its

London court to give verdict on Mallya's extradition today

From Page 1
The amount outstanding against Mallya has been mentioned as over ₹9,000 crore, but the case documents mention the alleged dishonest obtaining of loans "in the amounts of ₹1,500 million, ₹2,000 million and ₹7,500 million during October and November 2009". Officials said Monday's judgement may or may not be on the lines expected in New Delhi, but even if judge Emma Arbuthnot rules that there are no legal bars to his extradition and recommends it to the home secretary, Mallya (and India) will have opportunities to appeal in higher courts.

Besides, since India and the United Kingdom signed an extradition treaty in 1993, sev-

eral key individuals have been sought by India, such as Nadeem Saifi (Gulshan Kumar murder case), Ravi Sankaran (navy war room leak), Tiger Hanif (1993 Gujarat blasts), but none were followed so closely as the flamboyant Mallya's case. He has contested his extradition on the grounds that the case against him is "politically motivated" and the loans he has been accused of defrauding on were sought to keep his now-defunct airline afloat.

WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL RaGa urges Cong CMs to pass resolution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi has written to Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, urging his Government in the State to pass a resolution calling on the Centre to pass the Women's Reservation Bill. Rahul has written the letter, seeking passage of a resolution urging the Central Government to pass the Bill, to the Chief Ministers of those States where the Congress is in power. His letter comes just days before the start of the Winter Session of Parliament.

Rahul Gandhi noted that the Rajya Sabha passed the 108th constitutional Amendment Bill in 2010, but it lapsed after the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha in 2014.

"The Congress and several parties have called on the Prime Minister to ensure the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill and pledged their support. While the opponents of the Bill have cast doubts on the ability of women to affect change, the leadership role taken by women after the 73rd and 73th constitutional amendments have proved the detractors wrong," he said in his letter.

The Bill seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

"In order to affirm our support to the passage of the Bill, it would be expedient for the State Assembly to pass a resolution calling for the reservation of one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and legislative

Rahul Gandhi noted that the Rajya Sabha passed the 108th constitutional Amendment Bill in 2010, but it lapsed after the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha in 2014

He said Mahila Congress chief Sushmita Dev had also written to all party-led State Governments in this regard on November 23

The Bill seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies

Party also demanded passing of Bill protecting the rights of domestic workers in upcoming Parliament Session, asserting that Central law aimed at securing descent working conditions for them and regulating placement agencies was the need of the hour

Assembly for women, in the next Session," Rahul said.

He said Mahila Congress chief Sushmita Dev had also written to all party-led State Governments in this regard on November 23.

The legislative Assemblies of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have already taken a lead and passed a resolution calling on the Central Government to enact the Women's Reservation Bill, he noted.

Ahead of Parliament's Monsoon Session, Rahul Gandhi had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking him to "demonstrate his commitment to the cause of women", and ensure the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill during that Session.

The party also demanded passing of a Bill protecting the rights of domestic workers in upcoming Parliament Session, asserting that Central law aimed at securing descent working conditions for them and regu-

lating of placement agencies was the need of the hour.

Arbind Singh, Chairman of the All India Unorganised Workers Congress (AIUWC), alleged that the policy on domestic workers envisioned by the Government was not all encompassing and lacks in addressing core issues and rights of domestic workers.

Singh said a law aimed at securing descent-working conditions and regulating placement agencies was the need of the hour.

The comprehensive draft law for domestic workers looking at various aspects such as regulation of working condition, fixation of wages, holidays, regulation of placement agencies, and social security, has been submitted by AIUWC to the Government.

A delegation will also submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) demanding law for domestic workers.

Pak issues visas to 139 Indian pilgrims to visit Katas Raj Dham

New Delhi: The Pakistan High Commission on Sunday said it has issued visas to 139 Indian pilgrims to visit Katas Raj Dham, the famous Shiva temple, in the country's Punjab province.

Under the framework of a bilateral protocol on visits to religious shrines, Sikh and Hindu pilgrims from India visit Pakistan every year. Pakistani pilgrims also visit India every year under the protocol.

"Another group of Indian pilgrims, comprising 139 people, have been issued visas by the Pakistan High Commission to visit Shree Katas Raj Dham in Chakwal district from December 9-15," the Pakistan High Commission said.

Last month, Pakistan had granted visas to more than 3,800 Sikh pilgrims to visit the country. Some of the pilgrims had attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the Kartarpur corridor on November 28 in Narowal.

The corridor will link the Darbar Sahib shrine in Kartarpur in Pakistan's Punjab province to Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district in India.

Earlier this month, over 220 Indian pilgrims were granted visas to visit the famous Hindu temple, Shadani Darbar, in Sukkur.



Katas Raj is one of the holiest places for the Hindu community in Pakistan. The temple forms a complex surrounding a pond named Katas — which is regarded as sacred by the devotees.

Pakistan's High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood stated that the issuance of visas for yet another group of pilgrims from India was consistent with Government's policy of promoting visits to religious shrines and was a reflection of its commitment to faithfully implement the 1974 Protocol, the High Commission said in a release.

He said that Pakistan remained committed to providing all possible facilitation for the visiting pilgrims and strengthening people-to-people exchanges between the two countries. PTI

CPM: Cong can't defeat BJP with 'soft Hindutva'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI (M) has cautioned its strategic ally Congress that it will fail to defeat the BJP in the upcoming general elections if it continues to peddle "soft Hindutva". In an editorial in the latest edition of its mouthpiece, People's Democracy, the CPI (M) has referred to Congress president Rahul Gandhi's "flurry" of temple visits in the poll-bound States of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and said that it was a "pale echo of the Hindutva platforms."

"The attempt to prove that the Congress was genuinely more Hindu than the BJP witnessed a flurry of temple visits by Rahul Gandhi in the three States... If the Congress thinks it can defeat the BJP by such soft Hindutva tactics, it is mistaken," the editorial said. Highlighting what the CPI (M) considered as Congress' "soft Hindutva", the editorial picked on the party's manifestos in the three States.

It said while in Madhya Pradesh, the Congress talked of 'gaushalas' (cow shelters) in every panchayat, commercial sale of 'gaumutra' (cow urine) and building a Ram Van Gaman Path Yatra, in Rajasthan, they promised the setting up of an education board to propagate vedic values.



"In the campaign, there was a palpable reluctance to speak out against the lynchings of Muslims like the killing of Pehlu Khan," it alleged. However, the editorial pointed out that the BJP will face electoral reverses in these three States "because the people have voted on issues such as jobs, farmers' distress, lack of basic amenities and corruption".

It said various mass struggles offering a secular and democratic alternative "alone can counter the BJP-RSS game plan and effectively foil it". "The mobilisation of the working people... And the numerous struggles and movements taking place around the country stand in stark contrast to the communal mobilisation being undertaken on the Ram temple issue at Ayodhya," it said.

The editorial also stated that people's protests have forced the BJP to fall back on its communal rhetoric and efforts to smear the Opposition as anti-national. "The anti-Muslim rhetoric and the Ram temple chorus is not going to help the BJP to stave off the people's anger against their misrule in the three States, nor will it help gain any new voters in Telangana," it said.

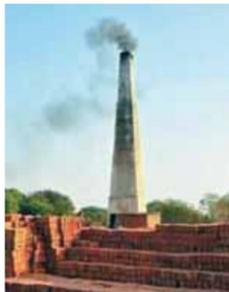
The editorial pointed out that the peasant mobilisation is going to be followed by the two-day general strike of the working class of the country called by the Central Trade Unions on January 8 and 9, 2019. "All these streams of struggle are demanding a secular and democratic alternative, which alone can counter the BJP-RSS game plan and effectively foil it," it said.

Centre mulls banning of burnt-clay bricks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA) is examining if it can ban use of burnt-clay bricks in its construction projects, a move aimed at giving a boost to environment-friendly products. If the Government bans making burnt clay bricks, it would be a big blow to brick-kiln industry. Earlier, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had ordered banning digging of earth for making bricks and roads without prior environment clearance (EC).

According to an official, the HUA Ministry has directed the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) to examine whether burnt clay bricks can be banned for use in its construction projects.



Following the ministry's directions, the CPWD has sought a feedback from its officials concerned and asked them to submit the same by December 11. "Numerous directives, guidelines and rules have been issued by various Government bodies regarding clay bricks, but the situation on

the ground is not changing," officials said. The CPWD is the largest construction agency of the Centre. It mostly constructs office buildings of Central Government, autonomous bodies among others across the country.

Officials say red clay bricks get their colour from the iron-oxide in the valuable fertile topsoil which is used to make them. A huge amount of agricultural soil gets wasted and locked into structures as a result of red clay bricks. "Illegal mining of soil is a huge problem. The unorganised sector doesn't want to take the hassles of organising and managing the supply of better materials and prefers to 'just take the soil from somewhere' and make bricks with it. While the organised sector of AAC and CLC

blocks works professionally by managing the raw-materials for production more efficiently," said officials.

"There are technologies available to produce environment-friendly bricks by utilisation of waste material to give a boost to environment-friendly products and waste material, the Ministry has directed CPWD to examine whether burnt clay bricks can be banned for use in its works," a senior official said.

Traditional brick-kilns cause air pollution as they use coal in brick-making process. In October this year, the Supreme Court-appointed EPCA pushed NCR States to ensure that all brick-kilns implement the "zig-zag" technology, as specified by the Ministry of Environment and

Forests, which can reduce emissions by 80 per cent.

Burnt clay bricks are the classic form of brick, created by pressing wet clay into molds, then drying and firing them in kilns. This is a very old building material—the type of brick found in many of the ancient structures of the world. In appearance, these bricks are solid blocks of hardened clay, usually reddish in color.

"Burnt clay bricks are typically sold in four classes, with first-class offering the best quality and most strength. These high-grade burnt clay bricks have no noticeable flaws, but they're also going to cost more. When these bricks are used in walls, they require plastering or rendering with mortar. Uses for burnt clay bricks include," officials said.



DMK president MK Stalin, along with other party leaders, meets Congress president Rahul Gandhi at residence of former Congress president Sonia Gandhi to wish her on her birthday, in New Delhi, on Sunday

Indian, Russian Air forces to kick-start war game in Jodhpur

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian and Russian air forces will begin a 12-day war game in Jodhpur on Monday with an aim to enhance their operational coordination.

The exercise — Aviaindra — will be unique as the Russian Air Force will not bring its assets and will take part in the drill using Indian platforms, said an official of the Indian Air Force said.

The first edition of the exercise was held in 2014.

Most of the fighter jets being used by the Indian Air Force is of Russian origin, and already both the air forces have achieved significant levels of inter-operability, said the official.

"In India, the pilots from the Russian Federation Aerospace Force will fly alongside their Indian counterparts in the IAF aircraft, which are common to both air forces," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Russia has been a major partner of India in the defence sector and the cooperation has been steadily growing further.

In October last year, India and Russia held a 10-day mega war game involving their armies, navies and air forces for the first time to further ramp up military ties.

The exercise Indra, which took place in Russia, primarily focused on achieving coordination between forces of the two countries in a tri-services integrated theatre command scenario.

It was for the first time, India participate in a tri-services exercise with a foreign country with a large scale participation by the Navy, the Army and the Air Force.

Niti Aayog member: Farm loan waivers benefit only section of farmers

New Delhi: Niti Aayog Member and agriculture policy expert Ramesh Chand said that he is not in favour of debt waivers as this help only a small fraction of farmers. "The biggest problem with loan waiver is that it will benefit only a small fraction of farmers...I am not at all in favour of loan waiver," Chand said.

The country recently witnessed agitations by farmers in key farm States in support of their demands ranging from farm loan waiver to clearing of dues by sugar mills and higher prices for crops.

He also observed that in poorer States only 10-15 per cent of farmers are benefited from loan waiver as few number of farmers get institutional loans in such States. When asked about implementation of the Swaminathan Commission report, he said Narendra Modi-



led NDA Government has implemented most of the recommendations of the Commission.

Chand added the minimum support price (MSP) on various farm produce cannot be raised beyond a point it is not supported by the demand side factors as it would become too distorted and unaffordable for a large section of

the society.

While the Swaminathan committee has suggested the MSP should be fixed on C2 (production cost definition) plus 50 per cent, the Government has adopted A2+FL (actual cost plus the value of family labour) and a 50 per cent increase over A2+FL to provide a reasonable margin to producers. PTI

HUGE GAPS IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME Centre comes up with uniform audit guidelines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Facing flak from the Supreme Court which recently pointed out gaps in the implementation of National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), dealing with pensions for elderly and other issues, the Centre has come up with a draft social audit guidelines and standard operating procedure to strengthen and ensure its uniformity across the States.

In a letter written recently to all the States, the Union Rural Development Ministry has asked them to provide feedback on the guidelines so as to initiate social audit of the scheme in a pilot mode in 22 States.

The SC while hearing a case last month had remarked that "prima facie" the NSAP was a good scheme but there were "huge gaps" in its imple-

mentation which needed to be filled, an observation which the Ministry too, during internal evaluation of the programme primarily found to be true.

The official in the letter admitted that "while NSAP guidelines provides for conducting social audit on six-monthly basis and provisions have been made for financing the social audit through administrative expenses allocated to each State by the Centre, however, it was observed that this part of the Guidelines was not being implemented in letter and spirit."

A bench of justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Gupta had said that the Centre must have a machinery to implement the scheme so that it could be known as to which authorities were doing their job properly.

The NSAP comprises of Indira Gandhi National Old

Age Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme and Annapurna scheme.

The NSAP has a budget of around ₹9,975 crore in 2018-19 and the government has allotted funds for pension covering around three crore elderly persons under the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme. However, the Court observed that "All this is fine on paper. It case of widows in Vrindavan, I do not think anyone of them has been given any money. You have no idea how many widows are there in Vrindavan and in Jagannath Puri. You read our judgements (in widows matter) and you will get to know," Justice Lokur said. Former Union Minister and senior advocate

Ashwini Kumar, who has filed a public interest litigation (PIL) concerning old age persons, told the bench that number of senior citizens have increased from 10.38 crore as per 2011 census.

Only seven states and Union Territories were giving about Rs. 2,000 monthly pension to senior citizens, whose population would increase by over 300 per cent by 2050.

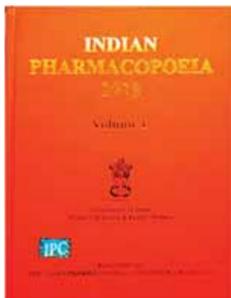
To bring about uniformity in approach, the Social Audit Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) have been prepared to launch the pilot in 22 states, said the letter. The PIL had said there were a large number of aged people, most of whom were living in poverty, without any roof over their heads or proper clothes, food and budgetary allocation for their welfare was also paltry.

Pharmacopoeia to be online soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soon, pharmacopoeia standards for drugs/formulations used under Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani (ASU) and Homeopathic systems of medicine will be available at a click of mouse. The move, a first-of-its kind is in keeping with the Government's vision 'Digital India' as well as to reach out to local manufacturers to help them produce quality and safe alternate drugs whose demand is on increase in domestic and global market.

To begin with, the website of Ayurveda Pharmacopoeia giving scientific details of over 700 ayurveda drugs will be launched by Union Ayush Minister Shripad Naik on December 13 at a symposium



to be organised by the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homeopathy (PCIM&H). It is an autonomous body under the Ministry with a primary mandate to develop pharmacopoeial standards for

drugs/formulations used under ASU and Homeopathic systems of medicine.

"The Pharmacopoeias are official documents and are widely used all over the India. These are the compendia of quality standards to ensure the identity, purity and strength of the drug imported, manufactured for sale, stocked or exhibited for sale or distributed in the country.

"With the launch of the website, these documents will be accessible online as well," said Dr KRC Reddy, Director of the PCIM&H.

He further explained that while demand for the herbal drug is on rise, many manufacturers are still unaware that they have to adhere the standards and quality control para-

eters as given in the authoritative books, pharmacopoeias and formularies of these medical system, which are different from that prescribed for allopathic medicines.

The symposium aims to disseminate awareness among them about these standards they have to mandatorily follow, Dr Reddy said adding that researchers, academicians, regulators and industry related to ayurveda are expected to participate in the event.

So far pharmacopoeia of 400 single molecule drugs under Ayurveda category and 300 drugs of double molecules has been prepared. We are working to add on more drugs in the repository, he added.

Sanct Sharma from AIMIL Pharma, manufacturer

of anti-diabetes herbal drug BGR-34 and Leukoskin to treat white patches (Luckemia) said that these are just some of the measures being taken recently to ensure quality and safety. "These are officially accepted legal documents providing quality parameters for ayurveda drugs. World is looking at ayurveda with great hopes and it becomes important for us to cash in on this demand by maintaining quality."

The Government has already made it mandatory for the industry to comply with the Pharmacopoeias and Formularies prescribed in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules 1945 in the manufacturing of ASU and homeopathic drugs, he maintained.

Rahul attacks PM over his gramophone remark

New Delhi: Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Sunday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for comparing him to a stuck gramophone, posting a video of the Prime Minister in which he is seen and heard making repeated references to members of the Gandhi family in a medley of his speeches.

In a video interaction with BJP leaders in October, Modi had mocked Rahul Gandhi, saying he keeps repeating things like a stuck gramophone but people will not accept his "childish" claims and "lies" against the Government as they make "fun" of such remarks.

Posting the video of a medley of Modi's speeches with repeated references to the

Gandhis, the Congress president tweeted, "This entertaining video has been presented by Mr. 36! I hope you enjoy seeing it! Please share it with your family and friends so that they can enjoy it too."

The video starts with Modi's interaction with BJP workers; he said, "There used to be gramophone records earlier. At times, it would get stuck and play same words again and again. There are some people like it. One thing occupies their mind and they keep repeating it."

After that, in the video Rahul posted, a medley of Modi's addresses follow with only repeated references to members of Gandhi family.

PNS

FORMER BJP STALWART AT TMC'S IDEA OF BENGAL MEET

Didi will be better PM than Modi: Yashwant



Former Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha and TMC MP Derek O'Brien during an interactive session 'Idea of Bengal' on the theme 'Black Money & Broken Promises' in Kolkata on Sunday

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Former Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha once again attacked Narendra Modi Government comparing it to Tughlaq regime — which had also slapped a ruinous demonetisation crippling the Indian economy — and said Mamata Banerjee would make for a better Prime Minister than the present

incumbent. Sinha who quit the BJP early this year was in Kolkata to attend a programme on Sunday said "Bengal is one of the largest States" and the electoral results here would be consequential in how things would shape up in Delhi post 2019 general elections. Asked to comment on the Trinamool Congress chief's chances of getting elevated to

the Prime Ministerial post Sinha said insofar as the Bengal Chief Minister was concerned, she had all the qualities of being a Prime Minister. "She will make for a better Prime Minister," Sinha said adding Modi was for all practical purposes running a Government identical to the regime run by Muhammad bin Tughlaq of the late medieval era adding the pre-

sent government needed to be changed. "This Government needs to be changed," he said. Commenting on demonetization he said "it was extremely draconian and foolish action like the one taken by Muhammad bin Tughlaq." Extremely "thoughtless action" as it was, "demonetization gave enormous pain to the people of this country," the former Union Minister said.

Sinha's statement came on a day when the Chief Minister flew off to Delhi to take part in a meeting of all the anti-BJP opposition parties. "As our Chief Minister had been telling from the beginning that the BJP like the Left Front was not invincible the Assembly election results will prove," a senior Bengal Minister said adding the Chief Minister would hold "discussions with all the anti-BJP parties" to find out ways of an alternative government in the Centre. Banerjee before leaving for Delhi greeted former Congress president Sonia Gandhi on her 72nd birthday. "I pray for your long life and happiness in all you do," Banerjee tweeted before leaving for the national Capital.

Police complaint against BJP's Vijayvargiya, three others

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The West Bengal Police has filed a suo motu complaint against state BJP president Dilip Ghosh and three other party leaders for conducting a public meeting in Coochbehar district on Friday without requisite permission, police said.

Besides Ghosh, BJP state-in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya, national secretary Rahul Sinha and general secretary Raju Banerjee have been named in the complaint registered on Saturday, a senior officer of the district police said on Sunday. "We have registered a suo motu case against four BJP leaders for holding the rally without proper permission from the administration. We have started taking necessary action against them," he said. The BJP leaders have been booked under different sections of the IPC and the Police Act, he said.

Ghosh, along with other party leaders, addressed the

rally on a private land in Jhinaidanga in Coochbehar district after BJP's rath yatra was put on hold, the officer said, quoting the complaint. When contacted, the state BJP chief said he went to the stage to thank the people, who had gathered at the venue in large numbers. "Since a big crowd had already arrived at the venue, I had gone to the dais to thank them for coming. In fact, I had told them that we will not be addressing the rally."

"This shows their (police) intention. If they continue to act like this, it will be clear how police works here in the state," Ghosh said, adding other party leaders named in the complaint were not present on the dais. BJP President Amit Shah was to kickstart the campaign titled 'Save Democracy Rally' from Cooch Behar district on Friday, from Kakdwip in South 24 Parganas district on December 9, and from Tarapith temple in Birbhum district on December 14.



A motorcycle team 'Tornadoes' of Army Service Corps displays skills during the celebration of 258th anniversary of Army Service Corps (ASC) in Bengaluru on Sunday



Members and supporters of LGBT groups during 'Namma Pride Bengaluru Karnataka Queer Pride march' in Bengaluru on Sunday

No response from WB Govt to request for 'rath yatra' meeting: BJP

PTI ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh on Sunday claimed the TMC-led State Government has not responded to requests for a meeting over the saffron party's proposed 'rath yatra'. "We had sent the letters on Saturday and had requested for a meeting. We are yet to receive any response from the state government," Ghosh said at a press conference.

A division bench of the Calcutta High Court had on Friday directed the state's chief secretary, the home secretary and the director general of police (DGP) to hold a meeting with three representatives of the BJP by December 12, and take a decision on the matter by December 14.

Ghosh claimed that a senior police officer called up party officials on Sunday and said the DGP was "very busy". "He declined to give us any specific time frame within which we can sit for a discussion with him (DGP) regarding the 'rath yatra' programme,"

he said. The state BJP chief said the party had also sent letters to the home secretary, but in vain. "This is really unfortunate that despite the court order, the officials of the state government are not ready for discussions," Ghosh said.

BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, who was also present at the press conference, also shared similar sentiments. He said he had specially come from Delhi to talk to the DGP, but the West Bengal government officials were behaving like 'Trinamool Congress' (TMC) cadres.

"Even if the DGP is busy on Sunday and cannot meet BJP leaders to discuss the matter, he should at least give us a specific time, be it Monday or Tuesday, when he would be able to meet. Unfortunately, most of the police and government officials behave as cadres of the TMC," he said. Vijayvargiya dismissed allegations that the BJP's 'rath yatra' was aimed at creating communal tension in the state.

Ending terrorism pre-condition for dialogue with Pak: Rajnath

PTI ■ MATHURA

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said ending terrorist activities was a pre-condition for any dialogue with Pakistan as its 'dual' role is unacceptable to India. "Promoting terrorist activities and entering into a dialogue for peace cannot run together," he said, when asked by reporters to explain why India is avoiding any dialogue with Pakistan.

He said either Islamabad should stop aiding terrorist activities or express its commitment against terrorism with assurance that it would not allow it to grow in Pakistan. "If it finds difficult to control terrorist activities, why it is not seeking help from its neighbour India?" he asked.

"If a crusade against Taliban can start in Afghanistan with the help of the US, why not commence a similar action in Pakistan? the home minister asked. On the outcome of election results in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana, he said, "Prayas to Bhartiya Janta

Party ka yahi raha hai ki hame kamyabi mile, milni bhi chahiye yeh vishwas hai, parinam ki pratiksha kijiye (Efforts of BJP has been to win, we are confident of that, wait for the results)."

He disapproved that the election in the five states was a semi-final for the 2019 Lok Sabha election, adding that "final is final".

He refused to comment on involvement of an army personnel in Bulandshahar incident on the plea that it was a state subject and the Yogi Adityanath government is looking after that.

On the Ram temple issue, he said, "everybody wants majestic temple of Ram in Ayodhya".

Termining the culture of India as the best one, Singh said people feel the strength of "spiritual power" during their visit to India.

The Minister said, since Lord Ram adopted values, he is worshipped, while Ravan failed to reach even an inch of that level, as he neglected values, even though he was more knowledgeable, wealthy and powerful.

Be ready to meet new forms of terrorism, insurgency, CISF told

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Hansraj Ahir Sunday called upon the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel to gear up to effectively meet the emerging challenges posed by new forms of terrorism and insurgency.

He also stressed upon the CISF's growing role in the changing security scenario of the country, particularly in key areas like VIP security, disaster management, protection of government buildings and aviation facilities.

"Keeping in mind the current security scenario in the country, wherein some anti-national elements are trying to create an atmosphere of insecurity and instability, I would like to say the CISF's role gains more importance," Ahir said at the passing-out ceremony of the 32nd batch of Assistant Commandants and the 44th batch of Sub-Inspectors at the National Industrial Security Academy (NISA) in Hakimpet here.

CISF personnel should prepare themselves to successfully meet the emerging challenges posed by new forms of terrorism and insurgency, he said. Praising the varied roles being played by the CISF, the Union minister said whenever the government has assigned any responsibility on the force, be it industrial security, UN peace-keeping mission, VIP security or election duty, it has excelled.

Twenty-four Assistant Commandants and 733 Sub-Inspectors passed out of the NISA, after completion of their basic training

The force, through its dedicated services, has gained reputation as the most professional force at national and international levels. This has been reflected in the rising demand for the force's services from various industrial and private organisations, Ahir said.

He said 30 officials of the Sri Lanka police underwent training at NISA recently, and expressed confidence that the academy would offer training to police and security agencies of more neighbouring countries and also to other nations across the globe.

Twenty-four Assistant Commandants and 733 Sub-Inspectors passed out of the NISA, after completion of their basic training.

Ahir awarded trophies to the trainees who stood first in indoor, outdoor, firing activities and also to the all-round best trainees. CISF Director General Rajesh Ranjan and NISA Director Anjana Sinha were also present on the occasion.

Shivpal sings anti-BJP tune | Demands imposition of President's rule in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Seeking to strike a chord with the minority community, Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Lohia (PSPL) leader Shivpal Yadav said the Ram temple should not be constructed at the disputed site at Ayodhya and the temple could be constructed across the Saryu river as the Uttar Pradesh government had no dearth of land.

Adopting a strident anti-BJP stance, Shivpal Yadav demanded imposition of the President's rule in the State as prohibitory orders were defied in Ayodhya with impunity by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on November 25 where a Dharm Sabha was organised to

demand the construction of temple.

"The Ayodhya case is pending in the Supreme Court. We should either wait for orders or find consensus. The UP Government has a lot of lands and the Ram temple could be constructed across the Saryu river. There should be no talks of the temple on a disputed land," Shivpal Yadav said.

"The political parties these days are wary of talking about the Muslims and their issues and the Muslims are living in constant fear and tension over the safety and security of their lives and property," said Shivpal Yadav while addressing a hugely-attended 'Jan Akrosh Maharally' on Sunday.



Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party-Lohia (PSP-L) chief Shivpal Singh Yadav attend 'Janakrosh Maharally' in Lucknow on Sunday

His brother Mulayam Singh Yadav, against all expectations, also attended the rally.

Shivpal had a bad break-up

Modi to visit Kumbh Mela on Dec 16

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to visit the Kumbh Mela area and inaugurate the newly-constructed projects in the Sangam city and the temporary structures in the Mela area on December 16.

The Prime Minister will also address a public meeting in the Mela area on the day, confirmed a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party here on Sunday.

Modi is also slated to review the Kumbh preparations personally during his visit. However, a meeting of senior leaders chaired by Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya will be held

here on December 11 to finalise the preparations and other arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit.

"The Prime Minister's rally will be attended by over two lakh people from nearby districts," the BJP leaders claimed. Modi will inaugurate projects worth over ₹3,500 crores during his visit. They mostly relate to beautification of the city and projects in the Mela area.

Modi will visit the Sangam city a day after External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is slated to lead a foreign delegation of 172 countries to the Kumbh Mela area to make them aware of the facilities being provided there and give other details of the mela.



Thai officials pose for photos after getting ordained as Buddhist monks at Watpa Thailand Temple in Bodhi Gaya on Sunday

BULANDSHAHR VIOLENCE

UP Govt transfers ASP; Army jawan sent to jail

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The Army jawan arrested for his alleged involvement in the killing of a police inspector during mob violence in Bulandshahr was on Sunday produced before the Judicial Magistrate, who sent him to jail for 14 days, officials said.

The Army handed over Jitendra Malik to Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force team in Meerut late Saturday night.

Malik was interrogated by the crime branch during the day and also questioned by the Special Investigation Team constituted by the Uttar Pradesh Government to probe the incident, the city Superintendent of Police (Crime) said.

He was taken to the district hospital for a medical examination and later produced before the magistrate, who sent him to prison for two weeks, the SP said.

On December 3, a mob of some 400 people rampaged through a village in Bulandshahr apparently after cow carcasses were found in a jungle nearby. During the violence, Inspector Subodh Kumar Singh and a 20-year-old man died of gunshot wounds. Singh and his team had

gone to the area to tackle the violence when they came under attack by the mob.

Earlier in the day, the UP government transferred Raees Akhtar, who was posted as additional superintendent of police (rural) in Bulandshahr, six days after two people died in mob violence in the district following an alleged cow slaughter incident.

In a statement issued here, Principal Secretary (Home) Arvind Kumar said Akhtar has been transferred to PAC Headquarters in Lucknow.

Manish Mishra, posted as additional superintendent of police at modern control room, Ghaziabad, has been made the new ASP (rural) of Bulandshahr.

On Saturday, the UP government transferred Bulandshahr SSP Krishna Bahadur Singh to the DGP office in Lucknow. Kumar had said the senior superintendent of police will be replaced by Sitapur SP Prabhakar Chaudhary.

The government has transferred two other policemen of Bulandshahr district — Circle Officer of Syana area Satya Prakash Sharma and Chingravati police chowki in-charge Suresh Kumar.

Additional Director General, Intelligence, SB Shiradkar submitted a report on the violence Friday. The transfers are understood to be in line with the findings of the report on police handling of the situation.

Inspector Singh, who died in the mob violence, was the investigating officer of the Dadri lynching case from September 28, 2015 to November 9, 2015. However, the chargesheet was filed by a different IO in March, 2016.

Police have arrested nine accused in the Bulandshahr case but the main conspirator, Yogesh Raj, the district convener of Bajrang Dal, is on the run. In a video that surfaced online on Wednesday, Raj had claimed innocence.

Another inquiry by a government-constituted SIT is underway, and the team is going into the details and video footage of the incident, an official said.

Also, a magisterial probe has been ordered by the government.

The Uttar Pradesh government has been severely criticised by opposition leaders over law and order and for its handling of the situation after the violence.

3 terrorists killed outside Srinagar

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Security forces killed three militants Sunday on the outskirts of Srinagar — the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir — during an encounter, the Army said.

“Three terrorists have been killed in the Mujgund operation,” an Army official said.

He said weapons have been recovered from the site of encounter.

Security forces had launched a cordon and search operation near Srinagar-Bandipora road in Mujgund area on the outskirts of the city here Saturday evening.

The search operation turned into an encounter after the militants fired on the search party.

While the encounter had stopped during night, the security forces continued to maintain a tight cordon in the area to stop militants from escaping. The encounter resumed Sunday morning and in the gunfight, three militants were killed, the official said.

Their identity and group affiliation is yet to be ascertained. Authorities have suspended mobile internet services in the city.



A worker cleans a miniature model of Taj Mahal at Wonders Park in Nerul area of Navi Mumbai on Sunday

PTI

Factionalism in MP thing of past: Scindia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that factionalism in the Madhya Pradesh unit of the Congress party is a “thing of the past”, senior leader Jyotiraditya Scindia said Sunday the entire State leadership worked as a “united front” during the Assembly polls in a bid to dislodge the BJP Government.

Scindia, who spearheaded an energetic and spirited campaign for the Congress in Madhya Pradesh, said there is an “uprising for change” in the state.

“During my campaign, I covered over 115 constituencies in Madhya Pradesh. There is an omnipotent energy — it is an uprising for change,” he told in an interview.

Some exit polls have given an edge to the Congress to form a Government in the state after remaining in opposition for 15 years, while others have predicted a close finish for the grand old party and the ruling BJP. Counting of votes for the November 28 elections to 230 assembly seats in the state will take place on December 11.

“We will get a clear majority from the people of Madhya Pradesh,” Scindia said while responding to a question on the exit polls.

Asked if he considers himself as a front-runner for the chief minister’s post in case the Congress wins the elections, Scindia said he does not want

to answer hypothetical questions. The Guna MP said he has consistently maintained that the goal of the entire Congress party has been to unseat the BJP Government in Madhya Pradesh.

“Once that is achieved, the next step is for the party leadership to decide (on the chief ministerial face),” said Scindia, one of the top Congress leaders in the state who had won the Lok Sabha elections in 2014 despite a huge wave in favour of the BJP.

Scindia and the state Congress chief Kamal Nath are being seen as main contenders for the chief minister’s post if Congress emerges victorious in the state.

On whether the selection of the chief minister by the Congress in case of a win could leave some senior leaders “hard done”, Scindia said: “Not at all. One must understand, that we have to learn from our past. We have previously struggled with factionalism within the party. However, that time has passed.”

He asserted that throughout this election in MP, the entire party machinery including senior leaders and every single party worker, worked as a “united front”.

“Our strength, this time, has been in the unity of our campaign. And this will and must continue,” the 47-year-old leader said.

Asked if the Congress was able to counter the narrative of

High command to decide fate of Cong TN chief’s fate

KUMAR CHELAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Count down has begun for the removal of S Thirunavakarassar from the post of the president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee following his Saturday spat with former union minister EVKS Elangovan. Speaking to reporters at New Delhi, Thirunavakarassar had said that he does not mind if the Congress High Command removes him from the post of TNCC chief. “But I’ll never allow Elangovan to be appointed as the new chief,” he said.

Thirunavakarassar’s reaction came immediately after his meeting with former Congress president Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi where he had gone to greet her on her birthday. Elangovan, who too was in New Delhi, told *The Pioneer* that he does not give any importance to what Thirunavakarassar said because all decisions in the Congress party are taken by the party president.

“Whether Thirunavakarassar has to be removed from the post or a new person has to be appointed in his place are matters to be decided by the all India president of the party. So I do not want to comment on his outburst,” said Elangovan.

Elangovan, a former union minister, also said that the party cadre in the State were upset over the style of functioning of Thirunavakarassar. “Sathyamurthy Bhavan in Chennai (head quarters of the TNCC) should not have been

used by him to organise meetings in memory of MG Ramachandran, Jayalalitha and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. If he wanted to pay respects to them, he should have done it outside the TNCC office. He knows well that the Congress has excellent rapport with the DMK and hence should not have done so. I questioned this and he got angry,” said Elangovan.

MK Stalin, president, DMK called on Congress leader Sonia Gandhi at her New Delhi office on Sunday to greet her on her birthday. He formally invited Sonia Gandhi for the December 16 function to be held at Chennai to unveil the statue of former party chief Karunanidhi. The DMK president was accompanied by his step sister Kanimozhi and her friend A Raja besides TR Balu.

There are reports that Thirunavakarassar would soon be removed from the post of TNCC chief in the backdrop of Stalin’s meeting with Sonia Gandhi. It is an open secret that Stalin does not get along with Thirunavakarassar. “The Congress High Command may prefer someone who has good relations with the DMK president to head the State unit at this time because of the upcoming Lok Sabha election,” said KA Johny, writer and commentator. He also pointed out that the DMK seems to be in a commanding position because of the strong anti-incumbency factor against the ruling AIADMK and the internal strife in that party.

Won’t hesitate from another surgical strike if need arises: Lt Gen Anbu

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Devraj Anbu has said the security forces would not hesitate to launch another surgical strike against terrorists if the need to do so arises.

“The surgical strike on militant launchpads across the border was a show of strength by our armed forces and we won’t hesitate to do it again if the enemy challenges us,” Lt Gen Anbu said in reply to a question by reporters on the sidelines of the Indian Military Academy’s Passing Out Parade (POP) in Dehradun on Saturday.

India conducted the surgical strike on September 29, 2016 across the Line of Control as a response to a terrorist attack on an Indian Army base in Uri sector of Jammu and Kashmir earlier that month. Nineteen Indian soldiers died in the attack by Pakistan-backed terrorists.

On Friday, Lt Gen (retd) D S Hooda, who was the Northern Army commander when the surgical strikes were carried out, said the constant hype around the precision

operation was unwarranted. He, however, said it was natural to have initial euphoria over the success of the military action.

Responding to a question from the audience during a panel discussion in Chandigarh, Lt Gen Hooda said in hindsight, it would have been better had “we done it (surgical strikes) secretly”.

On the plans to give women combat roles in the armed forces, Lt Gen Anbu said different aspects of the proposition are being examined as conditions along the borders with Pakistan and China are different from the rest of the country.

In July this year, Army chief Gen Bipin Rawat said the process to allow women in combat role, currently an exclusive domain of men, is moving fast and initially women will be recruited for positions in military police.

In November, he said the Indian Army is not yet ready to have women in combat roles. He said there are several other fields where the Army was thinking of inducting women and there were plans to have women as interpreters.

No lasting peace without respect for human rights: Farooq

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Sunday said that there can be no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect for human rights and the rule of law.

In his message on the world human rights day, Abdullah, the MP from Srinagar, said basic human rights of a man include right to education, right to assembly, right to profess any religion and above all right to live a dignified life.

“We in the NC took it upon ourselves to ensure the people of our state all these basic rights. The ‘naya Kashmir’ (new Kashmir) progressive ideology abounds in all the rights and our leadership has been striving hard to ensure people all the rights,” he said.

The NC president said that “our hopes for a more just, safe and peaceful world can only be achieved when there is universal respect for the inherent dignity and equal rights of all members of the human beings”.

“It was the NC that made

a common peasant master of his land. The revolutionary steps like single line administration, upgradation of medical facilities and granting gender neutral voting rights to all have gone a long way in elevating the living standards of the people of our state,” he said.

He said there were human rights issues during BJP-PDP led regime in Jammu and Kashmir.

“We in the NC will ensure that all those who stand maimed and bruised are looked after. We owe a sense of commitment to people. We will work tirelessly for all the regions of state.

The need of the hour is granting regional and zonal autonomous councils for elevating the living standards of people in the remote and hilly areas of our state like Chenab region and Pir Panchal region,” he said.

Abdullah said development is a right and that need of the hour is to bring about development that is sustainable and inclusive.

He said the state’s four years were “lost to political instability and conflict”.



SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal cleans shoes at Jora Ghar of Golden Temple in Amritsar on Sunday

PTI

After INLD split, Ajay Chautala group launches Jannayak Janata Party

Jind: Former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala’s elder son Ajay Chautala led group on Sunday launched a new outfit Jannayak Janata Party following a split in main opposition INLD last month.

Announcement of the new party was made at a rally at Jind, considered as the political heartland of the state. The flag of the new political outfit was unveiled at a well-attended rally here by Ajay Chautala’s wife and MLA Naina Chautala along with senior leader KC Bangar, former chairman of the Haryana Public Service Commission. His two sons - Hesar MP Dushyant Chautala and Digvijay Chautala - were among those present.

The name of the new party begins with ‘Jannayak’, a reference to former deputy prime minister Devi Lal, with various speakers at the rally vowing to follow his ideals. The Indian National Lok Dal had split last month following a power struggle between Ajay Chautala and his younger brother Abhay Chautala. Ajay Chautala is undergoing a 10-year jail term with father Om Prakash Chautala since 2013 in a teachers’ recruitment scam. **PTI**

TIGER ELECTROCUTED IN FARM NEAR TADOBA-ANDHARI RESERVE

PTI ■ NAGPUR/CHANDRAPUR

A sub-adult tiger was found dead after getting electrocuted in a farm near the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Chandrapur district, a Forest department official said Sunday.

Deputy Conservator of Forests (TATR) Gajendra Narwane said the body of the tiger was found at around 10pm Saturday in a farm in Bhamdeli village in the Moharli buffer zone of the reserve.

“It was a sub-adult collared tiger. A post mortem was conducted Sunday morning. It was electrocuted some time in the morning on Saturday,” Narwane told PTI.

A statement from TATR authorities said the deceased tiger was the offspring of the reserve’s T-7 tigress.

Officials said two persons, identified as Rishi Nannawar and Vishal Dhoke, who reportedly own the farm, have been detained by the forest department and are being questioned over the prohibited electric fencing installed at the site.

The statement said TATR director N R Praveen and other officials, along with National Tiger Conservation Authority representative Bandu Dhotre and veterinary doctor Ravinkant Khobragade reached the spot Sunday morning.

Kausalya gets new lease of life

KUMAR CHELAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Life turned a full circle for Kausalya on Sunday as she got married with 27-year-old Sakthi at the Coimbatore office of the Thanthai Periyar Dravida Kazhagam (TPDK), an outfit of Tamil chauvinists working for self-respect marriages and caste-less society.

Kausalya hogged the national limelight in March 2016 when Shankar, a Dalit youth, whom she had married against the wishes of her parents was murdered in broad day light at Udumalpet. The killers were allegedly hired by her parents who belonged to the powerful Thevar community. A sessions court in Tirupur had sentenced her father Chinnaasamy and five others to death for the “honour killing” on December 12, 2017.

Kausalya, had been seriously injured when she tried to save Shankar from the murderers. Since her discharge from the hospital, Kausalya had joined the social movement to spread message against honour killings and caste based violence.

During her social work, she met Sakthi, who was a drum artist working with TPDK for the same causes and the duo decided to tie the nuptial knots. Sakthi is a visual communication science graduate. Kausalya has launched a movement in mem-

ory of Shankar, her slain husband and is actively helping children belonging to the depressed classes to get educated. She herself was an engineering college student when she fell in love with Shankar. The murder of Shankar spoiled her engineering dreams as she had to look after her on-laws who were poor.

The marriage was solemnised by Dravida Kazhagam leaders and the couple read out a vow in typical self respect style. “We, Kowsalya and Sakthi, agree in front of you all, that we are life partners.” The newly wedded couple also performed a drum recital for their near and dear ones who were present at the wedding. The DK leaders who were present during the ceremony said that it was a self-respect marriage. A self-respect marriage is one which is not performed under the patronage of Brahmin priests.

In a rare gesture, while vowing to stand together to annihilate caste and liberate women, Kowsalya and Sakthi promised to keep their house open for lovers, who face opposition from anybody. “We will fight together for the creation of a special act against caste killing. All lovers are welcome to our house and we will help them in whatever way we can. We also promise that the doors of our house will always be open for lovers,” read their vow.

Man detained for trying to slap Union Min Athawale

PTI ■ THANE/MUMBAI

A 30-year-old man was detained for allegedly attempting to slap Union Minister Ramdas Athawale at a public event in Maharashtra’s Thane district on Saturday night, police said.

The Republican Party of India (Athawale) chief was in Ambernath town to address a rally. Athawale had just got off the dais after delivering a speech on the Constitution when the incident happened at around 10.15 pm, a police officer said Sunday.

Pravin Gosavi, on the pretext of garlanding Athawale, allegedly tried to slap him, following which people overpowered him, beat him up and handed him over to the police. The minister of state for social justice and empowerment was not harmed as the bystanders and police managed to foil Gosavi’s attempt to assault him, the officer said.

Gosavi, who was first admitted to a hospital in Ulhasnagar town following the public beating, has been shifted to a state-run hospital in Mumbai, police said. “We have registered a case under Sections 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 322 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty) of the Indian Penal Code. Gosavi has been detained and not arrested as yet,” said Ambernath police station inspector KG Chavan.

PAPER WITH PASSION

A gaping hole

Till we charge road officials and agencies with culpable homicide for deaths caused by potholes, the SC can do little



Road safety, unfortunately in this country, continues to be a subject of bland seminars and extra-curricular school campaigns but is never a matter of policy. Immune as we are to lives lost cheap, it takes certain cold facts to shake us out of our stupor. And as the only arbiter of the nation's consciousness these days, the Supreme Court has said that potholes have killed more Indians in the past five years than terrorist attacks. According to the latest data, 14,926 people were killed in road accidents caused by potholes between 2013 and 2017. In comparison, 803 died in terrorist attacks, including those by Naxalites and Maoist rebels in eastern India. So alarmed was the apex court that it even raised the ethical cost of poor roads, saying unlike victims of other tragedies or disasters, no compensation was paid to relatives of the dead due to lack of concern shown by the authorities, be it municipal corporations, state governments, the National Highways Authority of India or private contractors. Potholes have become such a norm on Indian roads that photos of them go viral only as a matter of joke, not for the grave civic crisis they pose. Unfortunately, most of the accident victims happen to be two-wheeler owners, who skid and lose control unwittingly. Some drivers swerve violently to avoid them but end up causing other accidents. When they can't see them at night, they simply turtle over the trough, causing a chain of mangled vehicles. During monsoon, the potholes become little water bodies, and on flooded roads, pose a severe threat to passers-by. The most haunting story of a pothole death was reported from Hyderabad last year. A 12-year-old boy, Ravi Teja, saw a couple and their child die after they were thrown off their scooter the moment it plunged into a crater. So shaken was he by that horrendous incident that he immediately began a drive of collecting bricks and stones to fill all potholes near his home and prevent similar deaths. His story became viral alright but there was no proactive step taken.

This is not the first time that the Supreme Court has made a scathing attack on the lack of political will, the corruption and inefficiency of the bureaucracy and the short-changing tactics of project contractors in building safe roads. Time and again, it has voiced its concern but the Government has not risen to the occasion. On July 20, the court had even set up a committee on road safety while also suggesting that the victims be paid a compensation of ₹5 lakh. Had the Government respected the views of the court, it would have in the very least imposed a strict penalty on errant contractors whose roads have a built-in obsolescence and crumble like a cookie once the period of inspection is over. There must be a mandatory audit of roads on safety parameters. The textbooks say the lifespan of a properly laid road should be 15 years. But in India that figure can come down to months due to inferior work quality, poor construction material and lack of turfing and maintenance. Without clearing a strict audit norm, the errant contractor should be disqualified from infrastructure projects. Some experts have also suggested the extreme step of charging road officials and agencies with culpable homicide for deaths caused by potholes. Indeed, it is a gross travesty that even after 70 years of independence and being a key emerging economy, we are still struggling to resolve basic issues like water, electricity, clean fuel, toilets and better roads, all of which guarantee the dignity of human life. Till we value this vital asset, we will continue to rank low globally.

More than a trade war

The US is using the arrest of the Huawei heiress to challenge China's tech superiority



Just when the US and China had agreed to meet each other halfway in their trade war, one that had pulled the world market down by a few notches, the arrest of the Huawei heiress over violating US sanctions on Iran has brought two of the world's biggest economies at flashpoint yet again. Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer and also the daughter of Huawei's founder, one who is being groomed to take over, was picked up in Canada and is being extradited to the US in perhaps a token show of US arm-twisting. Meng will probably even be let off on Monday but not after a weekend of diplomatic to and fro. Huawei is being targeted for riling the US more than once. First, it had been desperately trying to enter the US market as a competitor to AT&T, then there was the issue of filching patented technology of Cisco and finally there was the matter of insulting the efficacy of US pride, Apple's iPhone. Somewhere along the way there were reports that the Russians and Chinese were snooping on US President Donald Trump's cellphone conversations. And though Trump dismissed these as fake news, saying he never spoke on his iPhone or any cellphone for that matter, Huawei provocatively baited him publicly by saying the US President should then be using the hack-proof Huawei phone instead. As one of the largest telecommunications equipment and services providers in the world, recently surpassing Apple to become the second-biggest smartphone maker after Samsung, this bit was certainly about muscle-flexing. It was this arrogance that ultimately cost the company, which has now been charged with using a subsidiary called Skycom to evade sanctions on Iran between 2009 and 2014. Ms Meng, who has reportedly risen from the ranks and is expected to become one of the world's top businesswomen, faces up to 30 years in prison, at least notionally. But the Chinese do not take kindly to mistreatment of their hierarchical icons — Huawei being a matter of national pride — and so is expected to hit back by taking high-value US tech executives working on its soil as hostage. US companies are already preparing travel advisories and gearing up for hitbacks.

The ego-driven arrest is now certain to snap the 90-day truce agreed by both parties, which is an economic imperative. But with US becoming the largest producer of crude this year and tommorrowing it as an example of 'Americia First,' it is using the Huawei case as a bargaining tool to get its way in trade negotiations. However, there are larger implications for the tech economy as a whole. Most Western governments fear that China will score in fifth-generation (5G) mobile and other communications networks through Huawei. Nobody seems to have bought the company's disclaimer that there is no government control over it. Everybody sees it as a conduit for the backdoor takeover of the digital realm. Japan is contemplating a ban on government use of products made by Huawei and ZTE over cyber security concerns and New Zealand and Australia have already blocked Huawei. China is already the world's biggest spender on scientific research after the US and is expected to overtake it in AI deployment. Chinese scientists produce more research papers than those in the US. It is China's tech muscle that is really scaring the world.

The car as computer

With increasing levels of digitisation, the average automobile is more of a robot than a car. Does India risk losing out on this fundamental change?



KUSHAN MITRA

Recently, this columnist found himself in the sunny southern Portugal, driving the latest iteration of German car-maker BMW's 3-series sedan. The car-maker has always prided itself on installing some of the latest technologies in its car. One of the most advanced features on this new car was something called 'Reverse Assist'. Now cars have had reversing cameras and sensors for a while, something that has clearly removed the need for us to look over our shoulder while driving backwards. But this was another level of automation. After driving into a dead-end road or a situation that involves a difficult reverse in the car, which incidentally is not cheap, you do not have to overthink or manoeuvre. That is, you just keep your foot on the brake pedal and your hands off the steering wheel. The car remembers the last fifty metres it travelled and safely reverses you back to more or less where you started.

As the steering wheel turns by itself, you find yourself staring at awe at the car doing this. This is despite the increasing levels of computerisation on cars. This is not just the computers changing gears for you in an automatic by calculating engine speed but monitoring driving conditions, the levels of friction on the tires and fuel economy. The fact is that no modern car, other than the most basic ones that you buy nowadays, has much of a physical link between the pedals and the engines and some have done away with a physical steering connection as well. Much like all modern commercial aircraft, 'Fly By Wire' cars are rapidly becoming 'Drive By Wire'.

So why the need for a driver at all? In fact, your columnist has been in a fully autonomous car developed by Ford. The car drove itself around Ford's Research and Development campus in Dearborn, Michigan. This was on public roads and it took a turn on the road where it had to calculate oncoming traffic. This was two years ago, and that time many cars that are currently available even in India, had added a degree of automation to themselves. Today, there are some automated cars and more will be sold on the Indian market with close to Level 2 automation. That is not just cruise control but things like adaptive cruise control and automatic lane changing as well as automatic braking in emergency situations and lane assist. All of these means on a highway you can drive with your hands off the steering wheel while travelling at speeds in excess of 100 km per hour. Yet your car will maintain a safe distance from the car ahead of it, change lanes when you turn the indicator and even observe and calculate for vehicles in the other lane, holding itself perfectly in the centre of the lane and brake automatically in case there is a sudden impediment.

It can do all this even if your hands are not strongly on the steering wheel. However,



for legal liability reasons, it does not allow you to keep both your hands off the wheel. In case you do that for over a few seconds, the pressure sensors, having known you have lifted your hands off the wheel, will set off visual and aural alarms. Legal liability is an important issue after all; if the car is automated who is liable for an accident? The driver or the car manufacturer? The argument that the car manufacturer is responsible could easily be made because the car does do almost everything itself. Therefore, fully autonomous cars have been only slowly introduced on to public streets and recent incidents such as a crash by an autonomous car that killed a pedestrian in Arizona in the United States have only intensified scrutiny.

While the Arizona crash might have happened to a human driver as well, whenever a new technology is introduced, it is under higher scrutiny, even if it turns out to be safer. Let's look back at another technology mentioned earlier in this article, the 'Fly By Wire' technology on commercial aircraft. When European manufacturer Airbus introduced the technology with the Airbus A320 in the mid-1980s, there was actually a rash of accidents of the plane in its first few years of service, including an Indian Airlines plane in Bengaluru. But today

TRAFFIC IN INDIA IS CHAOTIC AND IT MIGHT BE DECADES BEFORE COMPUTERS BECOME SMART ENOUGH TO SCAN THROUGH THE IMMENSE NUMBER OF VARIABLES THAT TRAFFIC HERE ENTAILS. BUT EVEN BASIC LEVELS OF AUTOMATION THAT ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE WILL LIKELY NOT WORK HERE

the A320 is the best-selling commercial plane in the world with several thousands in service, including hundreds in India. So autonomous technology will become par for the course in some countries where traffic is more orderly.

However, what is almost certain is that despite manufacturers like Mercedes-Benz and Volvo introducing some of these automation technologies on the vehicles they sell in India, this country stands to lose out. Nobody in their right minds can argue that other than a few stretches of expressways and may be in a couple of cities like Chandigarh, traffic in India is orderly. And drivers, no matter what vehicle they are operating, are in deep, passionate love with their mobile phones. There have been cases of drivers video-calling while at the steering.

Traffic enforcement is woefully poor across the country, the sheer volume of vehicles overwhelming traffic police. And even if the police want to enforce traffic rules, the citizenry of this country might rise up. This is notably happening in Pune right now where political parties, civil society and intellectuals are up in arms because the new traffic commissioner wants to enforce helmet usage for two-wheeler riders. If this was not tragic it might have been funny.

The fact is that traffic in India is chaotic and it might be decades before computers become smart enough to scan through the immense number of variables that traffic here entails. But even basic levels of automation that are currently available will likely not work in India. Using Volvo's 'City Safety' technology in India is irritating simply because it activates whenever you get cut off badly by a motorcycle driver or a cow crosses the road blissfully unaware. Of course, a senior politician feared automation because it would take away jobs, but that may be years away even in the West. Not having automation at all will affect job growth in India. Because this technology will in a few years permeate its way down to small cars. If India wishes to become a world leader in cars, technology and manufacturing, it has to work towards enabling automation.

And that involves cleaning up traffic and the political and social will to do that. But we can only hope for the impossible, because India's traffic is emblematic of this country, chaotic and lawless with a lack of enforcement and bad politics. So ten years from now, when India loses out in automobile manufacturing, you will know why that happened.

(The writer is Managing Director, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

They (the BJP) are afraid of the Congress so they are using high-handed tactics to threaten relatives of our leaders.

Congress spokesperson —Abhishek M Singhvi



Mike Pompeo is doing a great job. His predecessor, Rex Tillerson, didn't have the mental capacity needed.

US President —Donald Trump



I am not professionally an actor but there are people who now do think of me and there are roles offered to me.

Filmmaker —Prakash Jha



Youth must be part of the country's growth story and become ambassadors to spread the message of development.

Union Minister —Kiren Rijju



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unpardonable voices

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Careful with words" (December 8). The editorial has rightly condemned former Janata Dal (United) leader Sharad Yadav's utterly senseless and uncivilised remarks against Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje. While one cannot question Yadav's antipathy against the Modi Government or his right to free speech and expression, he has no right to ridicule one's physical build. His remarks are unpardonable and unworthy of a leader.

M Ratan
Via email

No backing out

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Careful with words" (December 8). All right-thinking persons will countenance the fact that our political leaders must be wary of their parlance, words, tone and tenor when speaking at public event. In case of a slip of the tongue, not only does their public image take a beating but their words leave a bad taste in the mouth. Of course,

Poll battles must not be fought with a bad mouth

This refers to the editorial, "Careful with words" (December 8). In recent times, abusive and indecent language has become the norm for our political leaders, particularly when they address an election rally. The latest example is that of former Janata Dal (United) leader Sharad Yadav, who sparked controversy by advising Rajasthan Chief Minister to "rest" as she had grown "fat". Yadav has now expressed regret for body-shaming Raje, and even opted to write to her. In doing so, he may escape action, but his abusive words have brought to fore our leaders' tendency to crack jokes and even indulge in buffoonery with the sole intention of votebank politics.

But they must not be mistaken as this anti-theis may not deliver the desired results. Voters are sensitive. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that such indecent language holds the potential to boomerang. This filth in political discourse certain-



ly does not portend well for the country and must be condemned roundly. This barbaric fight of words must end. The idea of profane language can deliver better results.

Rajendra Prasad
Delhi

a select few seek some sort of an amusement.

As regards the senior leadership, which includes a seasoned politician like Sharad Yadav, who used derogatory remarks against Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, it is beneath their dignity to use out-of-the-pale remarks for their political adversaries. Moreover, with state-of-the-art technology being available in

every sphere of life today, leaders cannot blame the media with platitudes like "I was misquoted" and "I never meant it" in lieu of saying a single word "sorry".

Azhar A Khan
Rampur

Appointment mess

Sir — The Maharashtra Director

General of Police (DGP), DD Padsalgikar, who was scheduled to retire on November 30, has now been asked by the Devendra Fadnis-led Government to continue with his post. On August 31, he had been granted a three-month extension by the Union Government. As a matter of fact, the State Government cannot extend the tenure of an All-India Service officer. Even if it is a case

of re-employment, as claimed by the State Government, one wonders if this is permissible at the level of the DGP. A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court is at present hearing the matter relating to police reforms in States. Maharashtra ought to have approached the apex court if it had any issue against the July 3 order of the top court which had mandated the involvement of the Union Public Service Commission in the selection/extension of DGPs by State Governments.

Hemant Kumar
Ambala Cantt

Corruption rules

Sir — Debate on corruption has been an ongoing process. But have we ever thought, who are the middlemen? Are they the brokers? Yes. They have made their presence felt in almost all sectors now. But what about corporates? They have cheated the banks right under the nose of the law. They are worse than brokers.

Karthik
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

When priorities went askew

The nation, resilient and rooted as it is, would have borne all the problems but for the fact that there seems to be an increasing crisis of faith



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The feedback from the market has been mixed and businesses may not be in very good shape. The public discourse is filled with high-pitch voices of protagonists from one religion or another. Utterings and public postures are full of child-like bravado. Vacant positions in public systems are demanding attention or are waiting to be set right. Of course, pensioners have been hit the hardest. They are not a lobby, they can't take to the street and, numerically, they don't count. Those in power ensure that they are the first recipients of a public system's pay fixation. Top bureaucrats from the elite cadres are the first beneficiaries. English newspapers — barring exceptions — continue to ape leading newspapers in the UK or US. Everything is up for change, including the selection processes of top corporate entities in the public system. Careers at the top level still continue to go to those with a proven Western pedigree. Yet India hasn't changed for the better.

There was a stage when the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) refused to recognise Indian School of Business (ISB) in the sense that management institutions needed statutory recognition. Immediately after this announcement on the AICTE's website, reportedly, a VIP in the then Union Cabinet connected with education visited ISB. After this, the Government changed. While promising change, the present dispensation preserved some of the key biases of the preceding governance. The recent appointment of the Chief Economic Advisor from the pedigree of ISB is a tell-tale example. Key media personnel, while heaping attention on minority-majority, bovine matters, temple, mosque and sundry issues, have little space left to focus on key issues of water purity, passages for human vehicle being projected as roads and more.

There was a small news item a few days ago on the pay fixation of some of the armed personnel. The case of the banking employees continues to be seen by default, barring some spot attention in channels which have a vested interest in taking an anti-Government posture. Little of problem solving is visible. However, the decibels of political noise are sharper than ever before and in some States like West Bengal, physical action speaks louder than words. There is no dearth of first rate minds in the tribe of journalists. They write on everything from Rafale to how Hindu identity has been ignored for years by the political elite of a certain variety. Nevertheless, features and interviews on quality irrigation facilities are few. Statues will be built; cause for celebrating political dates for convenience will be ferreted out while the financial elite continues to make a beeline for sending their wards to foreign educational institutions.

The kind of genetic manipulation of fruits and vegetables that is reported from certain parts of the country would have unleashed uproar in many other nations even if it did not have the back-up of ten thousand years of civilisation. In India, we are still trying to grapple with the 'roots of genetic manipulation'. Even mangoes are being artificially ripened to resemble the naturally ripe ones. The spicy items of the media continue to be peppered with descriptions of grandiose marriages of the socially significant. Just as one was a political nobody, once upon a time, if one did not figure in the Radia tapes, one is a social nobody if one does not have an invite to the destination marriages of the high and mighty.

Arguably, elitism is a universal phenomenon and the crass display of conspicuous expenditure has never been so applauded in any part of the world. The enumeration can go on because everyone is targeting sales. Magazines and newspapers sell with the search for '#Me too' stories. Crass descriptions of the social elite largely make it to the politically prime space. What does not get attention is how the old and the infirm are unable to even access the so-called public systems. The almost regular diet of rape stories has gradually yielded way to the goings-on of shelter homes. Nevertheless, political jingoism continues to be a fine art. The nation, resilient and rooted as it is, would have borne all this stoically but for the fact that there seems to be an increasing crisis of faith.

While all this is going on, fashion and appearance consciousness is at an all-time high. Related products are the best-selling ones in the market. Nothing wrong with that. However, reportedly, the book publishing industry is in a crisis. Library budgets are being cut. Notwithstanding the noise one way or another, even Indian employers are not searching for Indian degree holders.

Recognition in educational institutions and careers is a reflected glory of laurels earned abroad. This has to change. The last four years were expected to set us on this route firmly and squarely. Who knows, the corners will be turned in the coming few months? Has not the poet said, "For hope springs eternal in human breast."

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

WE ALSO WANT SOMETHING TO BE DONE ABOUT THE 26/11 MUMBAI ATTACKS. RESOLVING THIS CASE IS IN OUR INTEREST. IT WAS AN ACT OF TERRORISM.

—PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER
IMRAN KHAN



WE KNOW WHO DID IT (MUMBAI ATTACKS). I DON'T THINK WE NEED A STATEMENT FROM ANYBODY. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY KNOWS WHO DID IT.

—INDIAN ARMY CHIEF
BIPIN RAWAT

Collective will of women

The police *mitra* initiative in Uttar Pradesh has been a resounding success in narrowing down crimes against women. The scheme must be replicated across other districts



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

Over the past few years, there has been a sharp rise in violence against women. Recent National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data indicates that incidents of rape went up by 12-15 per cent. Further, according to the National Family Health Survey 2015-16 (NFHS-4), one in three married women, aged between 15 and 49 years, experienced spousal violence (physical/emotional or sexual) and 3.9 per cent faced violence during pregnancy.

Violence against Scheduled Caste girls, in particular, begins at a younger age. It happens at a higher rate than women of other castes. Data analysis by the All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch from NFHS-4 revealed that 33.2 per cent of women from the Scheduled Caste experience physical violence since the age of 15, compared to 19.7 per cent in the 'Other' category. The highest number of crimes against Scheduled Castes was assault on women with the intent to outrage modesty. While there was a 66 per cent growth in crimes against Dalits during the period 2007-17 (National Crime Records Bureau), crimes faced by Dalit women were the highest. Of the 3,172 crimes recorded, 2,541 were cases of rape against Dalits. But of all women in India, who have ever experienced any type of physical or sexual violence, only 14 per cent sought help to stop violence. Approximately 77 per cent neither sought help nor told anyone about the violence they experienced (NFHS-4).

So when Sumitra Devi received a frantic call from a neighbour seeking her help in a sexual assault case, she didn't waste any time. She knew that the time was of the essence and would need more than just police investigations. The sexual assault of a 13-year old girl by an upper caste boy from her village in Kushinagar district, Uttar Pradesh, had to be handled with sensitivity. The mother of the survivor told Sumitra that she wanted to make a police complaint because she was afraid that unless she spoke out, it would increase her daughter's vulnerability to sexual assaults by other high-caste boys in the village. She was convinced that Sumitra could help not just because she was part of a large women's collective in the block where her village was located, but also because she was a police *mitra* (friend of the police). The advantage of being a police *mitra* meant that even though Sumitra belonged to a Scheduled Caste, she had access to the police and the confidence to file a complaint.

Few women want to visit a police station alone because of existing gender bias and patriarchal attitudes among the law enforcement agencies. And if the complainant happens to be from the Scheduled Caste, her chances of being heard become even bleaker. This is where women's collectives have played an important role in breaking the culture of silence around violence against women.

A recent study by the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) on the role of women collectives in India in addressing violence against women-founded Self-help groups (SHGs) revealed these were considered a safe space for women to discuss their concerns. It found that with feminist training and hand-holding from women's rights organisations, women's collectives had become an important platform to articulate and address violence, and emerged as a bridge between law enforcement agencies and survivors.

In Nebu Naurangia block in Kushinagar district,

“THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVES IN STANDING UP TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN HAS BECOME CRITICAL WITH CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN UTTAR PRADESH ON THE RISE. STATE DATA REVEALED THAT IN 107 DAYS BETWEEN MARCH 16 AND JUNE 30 THIS YEAR, 76,416 CASES AGAINST WOMEN WERE REPORTED. IN 2016, THE NUMBER OF SIMILAR CASES REPORTED FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR WAS 49,262.”



Sumitra and her fellow women police *mitras* are primarily members of women collectives formed by the Uttar Pradesh-based Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana (RGMVP), a not-for-profit organisation working to empower rural marginalised women. These groups have gone beyond saving and credit transactions associated with SHGs. The Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana, which facilitated the formation of about 100 SHGs in Nebu Naurangia, has been able to train the groups to leverage their collective strength to address various types of violence against women in Uttar Pradesh. Thus, in Sumitra's case, being a police *mitra* and having a good rapport with the local police, led to a prompt response from the law enforcement agency. Quick registration of the complaint was followed by action against the culprits accused of sexual assault under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Uttar Pradesh registered 7,018 POCSO cases in just three months of 2018, compared to a total of 4,816 cases reported in the entire year in 2016.

In Nebu Naurangia block in Uttar Pradesh, reporting of sexual assault and other cases of violence against women increased because of the presence of women collectives, and in particular, police *mitras*. The special connect with the local police has come about because there is a sizeable number of women who double up as police *mitras* even while being members of SHGs. In fact, the 15-member Laxmi SHG has the distinction of being the only all-police *mitra* group. The advantage here is that since SHG members are a closely-knit group, shar-

ing personal problems becomes easier. This is why when 30-year-old Anjanee Devi, who had faced violence at the hands of her alcoholic husband for years, finally spoke out. When she shared her experiences with her group, the SHG block president Phoolmati and police *mitras* helped her file a complaint. Her husband is behind the bars at present.

It is the desire to ensure justice that drives these women. They get no financial remuneration for their work as police *mitras*. Most of the times, these police *mitras* spend their own money to accompany complainants to the local Naurangia police station, about 10 km away from their gram panchayat. They also use their own resources to attend the monthly meeting held every first Wednesday of the month at the *mahila thana* (women's police station) located 15 km away in the district headquarters in Pedrona. The identity card given to each police *mitra* has been signed by the Kushinagar SP. This gives these women greater confidence to do their work.

Trust, respect and recognition for these police *mitras* have come not just from the community. That this band of 70 women, aged between 25 and 60 years, is taken seriously is underlined by the fact that a list of all police *mitras* with their photographs and phone numbers has been put up at the Nebu Naurangia block police station as a part of their awareness programme of resource persons available to tackle crimes against women. Three months ago, a meeting between the police *mitras* and the block police officials was held to discuss problems and how to make access to justice smoother.

Additionally, as a collective, SHGs

have managed to get the pradhan, head of the local Government, on board. This has not only fostered access to Government schemes but also facilitated the police *mitra's* work in making their villages safer for women and girls.

The role of collectives in standing up to violence against women has become critical with crimes against women in Uttar Pradesh on the rise. State data revealed that in 107 days between March 16 and June 30 this year, 76,416 cases of crime against women were reported. In 2016, the number of similar cases reported for the entire year was 49,262. Further, 17,249 cases of outraging of modesty were reported in these three months, while 11,335 such cases had been reported in 2016. Similarly, 21,077 abductions were reported between March and June this year, while there were 12,070 cases of abduction in 2016. Over 5,600 rapes were reported in these three months in 2018, while 4,816 cases were reported in 2016.

The success of this novel police *mitra* initiative shows how proper training, some initial hand-holding and support can give courage and justice to survivors. Why then can it not be scaled up to other blocks and districts in India? Women's collectives have the power to rally around survivors of violence, especially in rural areas. With SHGs being the platform to empower 100 million rural poor, especially women, across 600,000 villages under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission, these collectives can not only transform lives at the community level, socially and financially, but also emerge as empowered supporters of survivors of violence.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

The Elephant must compete with the Dragon

As India does well in its Ease of Doing Business rankings, a comparison with the evolving business environment in Asia, China in particular, must propel it to promote reforms across the country rather than confine it to commercial hubs, writes B SHRUTI RAO



PUSHING TRADE BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

As both Pakistan and India continue to trade barbs, a powerful reality in their equation sits like a silent spectator. The leaderships of both countries need to pull back from the strident rhetoric that they have been employing against each other. Perhaps the trade potential that sits silently between them can be some inducement towards this end.

(The Dawn)

The news of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) to brainstorm on breaking into the top 50 rankings of World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) report comes at an interesting time. Within months of assuming power in 2014, the Prime Minister had announced his Government's resolve to improve India's EODB ranking. Over the years, both the Finance and Commerce Ministers have reiterated the Government's commitment towards the same, and not without results.

As India vies for the top spot in the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) confidence index in light of the US-China trade war, a comparison between the evolving business environment of Asia's largest economies becomes inevitable. The sharp rise in the Ease of Doing Business rankings of these two Asian behemoths comes after a long period of stagnation and can be credited to the persistent focus on improving the regulatory environ-

ment of the economies under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Consequently, in the 2018 Ease of Doing Business World Bank report, India jumped 23 notches to rank 77 from its earlier 100th position. China jumped a staggering 32 notches to rank 46 from its earlier 78th position. The hike became even more striking as both countries had stagnated in the rankings for much of the last decade before new leaders took over the helm. India rose by 65 counts under Prime Minister Modi and China by 53 under President Xi.

In this year's assessment, China is the second top improver (after Djibouti) while India is the only economy (along with Djibouti) to make it to the list of top 10 improvers for a second consecutive year. One might critique the Prime Minister for showing excessive interest in this rather straightforward metric, but addressing administrative hurdles and red-tapism affecting businesses lead to corresponding benefits to

other aspects of the economy as well. Nobel economics laureate Robert Lucas had once quoted: "Once one starts thinking about actions to accelerate economic growth, it is hard to think about anything else." This powerful observation aptly explains the Prime Minister's focus on improving the EODB ranking. The improvement is not only a harbinger of increasing FDI, but there also exists a strong correlation between the rankings and the GDP per capita income of nations.

To highlight this link, consider a research published in *The Wall Street Journal* by John Cochrane. It was seen the higher a country's Distance to Frontier Ease of Doing Business score, the higher was its per capita income. The Central African Republic scored a dismal 33 and had an annual per capita income of just \$328. Other scores were: India (50.3, \$1,455), China (61, \$7,000) and the US (82, \$53,000).

A comparison on Doing Business parameters: India leads China only under two heads: Getting

credit and protecting minority investors. On the other hand, China leads in the rest eight. Thanks to SEBI's initiatives and the Companies Act clauses on disclosure of dividend distribution policy, mandatory audit committee approval before related party transactions and increased redressal avenues, India has a near perfect score in protecting minority investors and is ranked seventh. The establishment of debt recovery tribunals reduced non-performing loans by 28 per cent and lowered rates on larger loans. Faster processing of debt recovery cases has cut the cost of credit.

This year in starting a business, China improved its ranking by almost 100 spots and is now ranked 28 while India, with its cumbersome incorporation norms, holds the 137th position. It has much to learn from China's 'One Window, One Form' and five-in-one business license reforms that have reduced the duration for registering a business from 22.9 to nine days. In enforcing contracts, while China is ranked

sixth, India at 163, occupies a spot in the bottom 15 per cent of the countries. Only an overhaul of India's complex judiciary processes and contract laws can elevate it from the bottom of the pile.

In getting electricity, China has jumped from rank 98 to 14 in a year by introducing a mobile application for customers to obtain connections and resolve connectivity issues. India can incorporate similar reforms under the umbrella of its digitalisation drive. India's worst performance is in the metric of registering property, wherein China is ranked 27th and India 166th. Focussed reforms to improve transparency of information and reliability of infrastructure are a must.

India's most significant jump was in dealing with construction permits (from rank 181 to 52). For obtaining building permit, India implemented the Single Window Clearance System in Delhi and the Online Building Permit Approval System in Mumbai.

Ease of Doing Business ranking

New industrial policy for Cabinet approval: Prabhu

We have sent the final Cabinet note. We have also prepared an action plan for implementation of the policy, says Minister

PTI ■ PANAJI

The commerce and industry ministry has sent the final proposal of new industrial policy to the Cabinet for approval, Union minister Suresh Prabhu said.

"We have sent the final Cabinet note. We have also prepared an action plan for the implementation of the policy," Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu told said.

The new industrial policy aims at boosting manufacturing sector growth, promote foreign technology transfer and attract overseas investments.

The policy would have some financial implications as the government may provide incentives for use of frontier technologies like artificial intelligence, Internet of things, and robotics.

It aims at promoting emerging sectors and mod-



ernising existing industries. It will also look to reduce regulatory hurdles, cut paper work and support emerging and new sectors. The ministry would be setting up an elaborate machinery including a steering committee for effective implementation of the policy.

As part of the policy, industrial health clinics could be set up to deal with sickness in the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which are the backbone of the country's industrial architecture.

The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) in August last year floated a draft industrial policy with an aim to create jobs for the next two decades, promote foreign tech-

nology transfer and attract \$100 billion FDI annually.

This will be the third industrial policy after the ones released in 1956 and 1991. It will replace the industrial policy of 1991 which was prepared in the backdrop of balance of payment crisis.

It would be outcome oriented actionable policy that provides direction and charts a course of action for a globally competitive Indian industry that leverages skill, scale and technology.

The development assumes significance as India is aiming at increasing the contribution of manufacturing sector in the GDP to 25 per cent by 2020, from the current level of about 16-17 per cent.

After two years, Uday Kotak now says DeMo was poorly executed

Modi surprised all by announcing withdrawal of ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes, claiming to curb black money, fake notes

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The outcome of the controversial demonetisation drive would have been "significantly better" if "simple things" like introducing ₹2,000 currency notes were avoided, banker Uday Kotak has said.

The executive vice chairman and managing director of the fourth largest private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank has also said small businesses are in a difficult situation at present and has welcomed the Government focus to revive the sector.

On demonetisation, he said the outcomes would have been different if it was planned well.

"I think we would have had significantly better outcomes, if we had just thought about simple things. If you are taking out ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes, why would you introduce ₹2,000 notes?" Kotak asked while speaking at former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian's book launch here over the weekend.

Kotak said as part of the

"execution" strategy, it was essential to ensure larger quantum of notes of the right denomination were made available.

If such things were undertaken, "we would have been talking very differently today than now," he said.

But Kotak claimed that for the financial sector, demonetisation has been a "huge boon".

He said the growth in financial savings have been "unbelievable", which has also led to a challenge of risk management.

On November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi surprised all by announcing a withdrawal of the ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes, claiming to curb black money and fake notes. But the final numbers have disproved all the calculations wrong as 99.3 percent of the cancelled notes worth close to ₹15.8 trillion has come back to the system.

This was immediately followed with the introduction of ₹2,000 note by RBI the same evening. Later, the Central bank has also introduced a ₹200 denomination notes.

On the small businesses sector, he pitched for more focus saying the sector is impacted.

"I believe that the SME sector has taken a significant amount of pain. Getting credit for them is tough even now," he said.

He also welcomed latest Government moves for the sector.

Govt mandates preference to 'Make in India' vehicles in procurement



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has mandated preference to be given to domestically-manufactured vehicles with minimum 65 per cent local content in public procurement of automobiles, according to an official notification.

As per the new norms notified by the Heavy Industries Ministry with an aim to "encourage Make in India" and to promote manufacturing and production of goods and services locally, "preference shall be provided by all Government procuring entities to domestically manufactured automobile and automotive components".

The notification applies to

automobiles based on internal combustion (IC) engines including two and three wheelers, passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles and components or spares required for their manufacture and maintenance. The percentage of local content required to qualify as domestically manufactured automobile has been set at 65 per cent, it said.

On the other hand, for auto components the percentage of local content required to qualify as domestically manufactured has been set at 60 per cent, the notification added.

The new norms have already come into effect and would be reviewed after March 31, 2019. They shall remain valid till a revised notification

is issued.

"The local supplier at the time of tender, bidding or solicitation shall provide self-certification that the item offered meets the minimum local content and shall give details of the location(s) at which the local value addition is made," said the notification.

In cases where the procurement is for a value over ₹10 crore, the local supplier shall provide a certificate from the statutory auditor or cost auditor of the company (in the case of companies) or from a practising cost accountant or practising chartered accountant (in respect of suppliers other than companies) giving the percentage of local content, it added.

AAI plans remote mirror image control of busy ATCs

Idea of remote ATC is technically doable and is happening

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) plans to have remote as well as mirror image air traffic control systems as it looks to save costs and put in place reliable back up options in case of any system failures, a senior official said.

The national airports operator is now in the process of preparing a common tender platform to seek entities that can provide remote Air Traffic Control (ATC) systems.

According to the official, the AAI is also looking to have "mirror image" control of a busy ATC tower in another ATC tower. For example, if there is any failure of a system at a busy airport then operations there can be controlled from another place till things are restored, he added.

The AAI official said the

idea of remote ATC is technically doable and is happening in a few smaller airports in northern Europe.

Since there are different aspects in the systems being offered by different players, the official said it is now working on having a common tender platform.

"We are trying to understand little more about technology and trying to see how it can be made into a biddable pattern. It is being done internally It is an experimental area and will significantly cut down costs," he said.

With mirror image control along with remote ATCs, it would be cost saving as well as having a back up in case of any failures.

Remote towers concentrate ATC at one central location instead of having resources at each single airport, which would help in having synergies and savings.

Currently, airports have manned towers to provide ATC services. With remote towers, there would be a video-based surveillance for such services.

Niti, Heavy Industries Min differ over levy on 2-wheelers to subsidise EVs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Differences have cropped up between the Heavy Industry Ministry and the NITI Aayog over a proposal by the think tank to levy a Feebate on two-wheelers to subsidise electric vehicles for promoting green mobility.

According to sources, the ministry has flagged concerns to the Aayog over the introduction of a Feebate especially on a mass mode of transport like two-wheelers as it could not only lead to a hike in prices but also practical challenges associated with the collection of the tax once introduced.

"Feebate has been proposed by the NITI Aayog, they say they will collect funds through Feebate and use that as a subsidy for electric vehicles. We have explained to them that there is already a 16 per cent Feebate in place as EVs attract 12 per cent GST whereas the IC-engine vehicles attract 28 per cent," said a senior Heavy Industry Ministry official.

The Heavy Industry Ministry implements schemes and policies for the development of Indian automobile sector.

"About 2 crore two-wheelers are sold in India every year. The NITI Aayog's calculation is that even if you charge a Feebate



of ₹500 per two-wheeler, you raise about ₹10,000 crore. However, there is an issue of who will collect it as now all cesses have been subsumed under the GST," said the official.

An e-mail seeking comments from the Government remained unanswered.

The idea of Feebate, a system of charges and rebates in which energy-efficient or environment-friendly practices are rewarded whereas failure to adhere to such practices is penalised, was mooted in two reports supported by the Niti Aayog in the run-up to India's first Global Mobility Summit

held in September this year. The report titled Transforming Indian Mobility had suggested using the feebate mechanism to incentivise the use of green mobility technologies and identifying potential mechanisms and develop a regulation for incentivising green mobility technologies with a feebate mechanism.

It had cited the example of London, a city that imposes congestion charges during weekday working hours to vehicles entering the city centre.

Another report titled Goods On The Move had observed that applying a fee-

bate concept to urban access would charge trucks to enter the city during congested periods while incentivising them enter during nighttime hours, with both costs and savings likely being passed through to the receivers of those goods.

"Such an approach would not only reduce the cost of goods delivery made off hours, crucial for small shops with thin margins serving customers with limited budgets but would also reduce overall congestion within the city both by reducing traffic during peak times as well as by reducing illegal parking," said the report supported by Niti Aayog.

PNB invites bids for two dozen NPA accounts to recover ₹1,179 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Public sector lender Punjab National Bank (PNB) has put up for sale two dozen non-performing assets to recover dues of over ₹1,179 crore.

These 24 dud loan accounts are majorly concentrated in Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata zones of the bank.

Two accounts belong to Chandigarh and Bhopal zones while one is of Patna zone, as per the sale notice on its website.

"We intend to place these accounts for sale to ARCs/NBFCs/other banks/Fls etc on the terms and conditions stipulated in the banks policy, in line with the regulatory guidelines," PNB said.

The bank has to make recovery of ₹1,779.18 crore from these 24 non-performing assets (NPAs).

Among the major borrowers are Vandana Vidyut with an outstanding amount of ₹454.02 crore, Moser Baer Solar (₹233.06 crore), Divine Vidyut (₹132.66 crore), Visa Resources India Ltd (₹115.20 crore), Allied Strips (₹118.81 crore), Arshiya Northern FTWZ Ltd (₹96.70 crore), Birla Surya

(₹73.58 crore) and Trident Tools (₹68.81 crore).

The sale process is to be handled by the Stressed Assets Targeted Resolution Action (SASTRA) Division of the bank.

The submission of financial bids will be only through e-auction method, which will take place on the portal of the bank, it said.

The last date for evincing interest in these accounts is December 10, PNB said. The e-bidding process will take place on December 21.

PNB, hit by a massive ₹14,000-crore scam allegedly perpetrated by jeweller duo Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi, has enhanced its recovery mechanism by forming the Stressed Asset Management Vertical (SAMV) and SASTRA.

The bank posted a staggering loss of ₹4,532.35 crore for the second quarter of the current fiscal on rising bad loans.

Its gross non-performing assets (NPAs) as a proportion of gross advances rose sharply to 17.16 per cent (₹81,250.83 crore) at the end of September 2018, from 13.31 per cent (₹57,630.11 crore) a year ago.

Noteban effect on real estate no more

The instability in the market that occurred due to demonetisation is not affecting homebuyers anymore, now real estate sector is on the upswing, says Prasoon Chauhan, CEO, HomeKraft in his interaction with The Pioneer. Here are excerpts of his conversation with Vikas Kumar.

Tell us about the HomeKraft and its functions?

HomeKraft is promoted by ATS Group and Geetambar Anand. This company has two shareholders, one is ATS, which holds 80 % shares, and another is HDFC Capital, which holds 20 % shares. This is the joint venture of these two companies and now we are coming up with five more projects in the next one-year. Our focus is on mid-income group, which starts from ₹40-70 Lakh and all our projects are qualified for PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna). So customers are taking all benefits under PMAY, which includes GST, PMPAY Area and others.

What steps you are taking to avoid pollution at your sites?

We are following all guidelines under NGT in terms of dust, pollution and all. We are



complying fully with them for our projects.

So who are your biggest customers?

Our biggest customers are middle class and lower middle class people whose income starts from ₹50K to ₹1 lakh.

Effects of demonetisation in real estate sector?

I think its been two years so there is no effect as such

this technology. There are two-three benefits of this technology. One is cost efficiency because initially infrastructure takes huge cost, but, later-on with repetition, costs are drastically minimised. Secondly, it saves a lot of time. In addition, you don't need to do plaster the walls from outside.

Whats the Market scenario?

Market scenario is good; we are getting good response from the customers. Our Monthly sales are at 70-75 flats.

Your ongoing projects?

We only have one ongoing project — Happy Trails — located near to Sector-10, Greater Noida West. And we are about to launch another projects next year.

How Metro extension will help you? What are your projections in terms of Marketing?

Recently, Greater Noida Authority passed this proposal. Since our project is located near the Metro Station, it is pretty easy to commute. Yes, it will help us a lot in terms of our selling and connectivity.

now. And customers who are buying flats, which starts from ₹40 Lakh, I don't think so they are affected by demonetisation.

What are the new technologies your company is taking during construction to meet the good quality?

We are doing our construction from Mivan Technology from shuttering and other construction related activities, we are importing

KoPT gets first 1.6 lakh tonne full cape vessel cargo

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Kolkata Port Trust on Sunday received second cape size dry bulk cargo vessel at Sandheads, a senior KoPT official said.

"This is the first time that the entire 1.65 lakh tonne cargo in this voyage is meant for Haldia. This vessel will offload its entire cargo here and not move to other east coast port," Kolkata Port Trust chairman Vinit Kumar added.

The MV Cape Mary, is carrying coal and will offload 1,00,000 tonne at sand heads and another 65,000 tonne at a new lighterage point opened by KoPT near Sagar island with help of floating cranes, he said.

The first cape size vessel, MV Samjohn Solidarity, last year with similar cargo on account of Adani Enterprises Ltd, called upon KoPT but had discharged 1 lakh tonne of coal before making onward journey to other East coast port.

TCS developed PAN system for I-T in 1977, Charan Singh was not impressed: Book

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India missed a golden opportunity to implement a fully computerised tax administration system way back in the late 70s as a proposal by TCS was rejected by the then finance minister Charan Singh, claims a new book.

Management strategist-researcher Shashank Shah has come out with the book titled "The Tata Group: From Torchbearers to Trailblazers", coinciding with the completion of 150 years of The Tata Group and the death anniversary of JRD Tata on November 29.

According to the author, after nationalisation of banks by the Indira Gandhi government in 1969, there was declining business with banks as the Centre did not want computerisation in India.

"It believed that computerisation would lead to mass unemployment. It is contextual to mention a fact that few know," he claims.

Shah says that it was TCS (Tata Consultancy Services) that had developed the now ubiquitous permanent account number (PAN) system for the

income tax department in 1977.

"Impressed by the output, the company was given an assignment to computerise the total processing of income tax. However, Charan Singh, then Finance Minister, decreed that there would be no computerisation in the finance ministry as it could create unemployment!" he writes in the book, published by Penguin Random House India.

"If implemented then, India would have been far ahead of several countries through a fully computerised tax administration system," Shah claims.

It is mandatory to quote PAN on return of income, all correspondence with any income tax authority.

From January 1, 2005, it has become mandatory to quote PAN on challans for any payments due to the I-T Department.

The book is replete with other little-known facts about The Tata Group.

Among these is about Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi helping in maintaining industrial harmony at Tata Steel plants in the 1920s.

Between 1920 and 1924, Tata Steel, which then had the largest industrial force any single Indian company had in those years, witnessed three strikes, the book says.

"At such a tumultuous time, Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Jamshedpur to mediate. Along with eminent freedom fighter Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and CF Andrews, he tried to rekindle the relationship between the management and the workers," it says.

Bose sided with the workers and battled for their rights by negotiating a historic settlement. He became the Jamshedpur Labour Associations leader and would regularly visit Jamshedpur to engage with the workers, Shah writes.

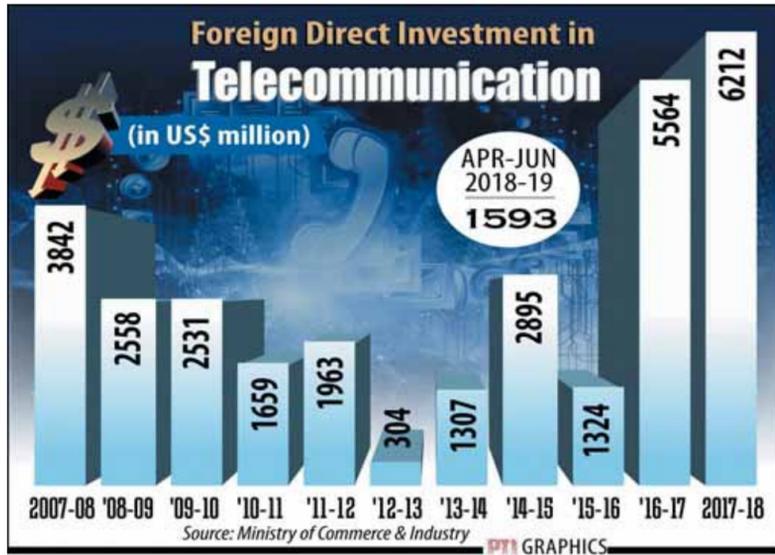
"However, Boses involvement had reduced by 1932. He was also imprisoned by the British government as part of the freedom movement."

The Tatas invited Rajendra Prasad and Jawaharlal Nehru to arbitrate between the workers and the management.

"Their prompt arrival indicated the importance of Tata Steel in the larger priorities of national leadership."

TOPPERS

Scheme	NAV	1Yr %											
Tata Digital India Fund-Reg(G)	14.12	32.65	Tata Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	16.69	0.44	Fund-Reg(G)	Principal Multi Cap Growth Fund(G)	134.75	-8.08	Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-III-Reg(G)	12.93	-12.42	
ICICI Pru Technology Fund(G)	56.37	25.07	ICICI Pru India Recovery Fund-4(G)	16.67	0.42	Mirae Asset Emerging Bluechip-Reg(G)	Principal Personal Tax saver Fund	184.92	-8.1	Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	378.27	-12.72	
SBI Technology Opp Fund-Reg(G)	60.65	24.93	ICICI Pru LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)(G)	346.06	0.07	ICICI Pru Focused Equity Fund(G)	SBI Tax Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	22.09	-8.14	Motilal Oswal Midcap 30 Fund-Reg(G)	23.19	-12.9	
Aditya Birla SL Digital India Fund(G)	49.89	20.65	L&T India Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	25.18	-0.04	Sundaram Fin Serv Opp Fund(G)	Franklin India Prima Fund(G)	893.21	-8.14	IDBI Midcap Fund(G)	10.3	-13.08	
Franklin India Technology Fund(G)	150.65	17.5	DSP World Agriculture Fund-Reg(G)	15.74	-0.09	Aditya Birla SL Focused Equity Fund(G)	BNP Paribas Long Term Equity Fund(G)	35.32	-8.15	UTI LT Adv Fund-III(G)	12.84	-13.16	
ICICI Pru US Bluechip Equity Fund(G)	26.18	16.67	Invesco India Growth Opp Fund(G)	31.66	-0.16	HDFC Capital Builder Value Fund(G)	Edelweiss Eur Dynamic Equity Off-shr Fund-Reg(G)	9.98	-8.19	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series IV-Reg(G)	28.49	-13.22	
Reliance US Equity Opp Fund(G)	14.23	16.4	Mirae Asset Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	16.27	-0.18	HDFC Equity Fund(G)	SBI LT Advantage Fund-IV-Reg(G)	12.04	-8.29	Baroda ELSS 96(G)	41.17	-13.38	
Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-A(G)	20.3	13.21	Baroda Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	20.54	-0.19	IDFC Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	SBI Magnum Global Fund-Reg(G)	162.8	-8.44	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series III-Reg(G)	29.95	-13.46	
Franklin India Feeder - Franklin U.S. Opportunities Fund(G)	27.3	12.21	HDFC Top 100 Fund(G)	449.63	-0.48	ICICI Pru R.I.G.H.T Fund(G)	Principal Tax Savings Fund	196.89	-8.72	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series I-Reg(G)	30.64	-13.52	
DHFL Pramerica Global Equity Opp Fund(G)	16.91	11.18	Reliance Large Cap Fund(G)	32.06	-0.48	UTI Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	Sundaram Diversified Equity(G)	93.66	-9.08	DSP Natural Res & New Energy Fund-Reg(G)	30.12	-13.67	
Kotak US Equity Fund(G)	15.9	9.23	DSP World Mining Fund-Reg(G)	7.45	-0.52	DHFL Pramerica Euro Equity Fund(G)	Consumption Fund(G)	98.78	-9.09	IDBI Small Cap Fund(G)	9.17	-13.73	
Aditya Birla SL Global Real Estate Fund(G)	19.03	9.14	Kotak Standard Multicap Fund(G)	32.44	-0.54	Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)	UTI Banking and Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	88.49	-8.54	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series II-Reg(G)	30.41	-13.76	
Tata Index Fund-Sensex Plan(G)	87.6	9.11	DSP World Energy Fund-Reg(G)	12.5	-0.59	DHFL Pramerica Tax Plan(G)	Franklin India Opportunities Fund(G)	67.92	-8.59	UTI Focussed Equity Fund-I(G)	12.44	-13.88	
HDFC Index Fund-Sensex(G)	315.32	9.09	Edelweiss Emerging Markets Opp Eq. Offshore Fund-Reg(G)	11.66	-0.72	SBI Magnum Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	DSP Equity Opportunities Fund-Reg(G)	203.21	-8.6	Edelweiss Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	24.72	-13.96	
Axis Bluechip Fund(G)	26.69	8.94	DSP Top 100 Equity Fund-Reg(G)	193.17	-0.73	Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	Principal Emerging Bluechip Fund(G)	98.78	-9.09	UTI LT Adv Fund-V(G)	9.22	-14.07	
Reliance Index Fund - Sensex Plan(G)	17.56	8.56	ICICI Pru Bluechip Fund(G)	39.29	-0.73	Aditya Birla SL Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	ICICI Pru Nifty Next 50 Index Fund(G)	23.85	-9.13	Reliance Small Cap Fund(G)	38.59	-14.08	
DSP US Flexible Equity Fund-Reg(G)	23.68	8.31	Invesco India Financial Services Fund(G)	51.16	-0.99	IDBI India Top 100 Equity Fund(G)	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-3(DP)	9.65	-9.17	DHFL Pramerica Midcap Opp Fund-Reg(G)	17.1	-14.29	
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	13.84	7.7	Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)	77.51	-1.02	ICICI Pru Value Fund-15(G)	ICICI Pru Value Fund-4(G)	20.45	-9.19	Invesco India Infrastructure Fund(G)	15.8	-14.41	
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	14	7.65	Reliance Capital Builder Fund-II-B(G)	12.16	-1.22	SBI Equity Opp Fund-Sr	ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	10.93	-9.22	Baroda Mid-cap Fund(G)	8.45	-14.56	
Reliance Pharma Fund(G)	148.07	7.55	Invesco India Contra Fund(G)	44.9	-1.3		L&T India Value Fund-Reg(G)	33.7	-9.27	SBI Contra Fund-Reg(G)	100.32	-14.62	
SBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	16	7.35	Kotak Bluechip Fund(G)	215.23	-1.31					HDFC Focused 30 Fund(G)	71.33	-14.71	
Axis Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	10.73	7.3	Aditya Birla SL Global Commodities Fund(G)	11.94	-1.45					UTI Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	95.6	-14.77	
ICICI Pru FMCG Fund(G)	228.41	7.04	Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	12	-1.46					Tata Infrastructure Tax Saving Fund(G)	22.61	-14.9	
IDFC Nifty Fund-Reg(G)	22.01	6.45	UTI Value Opp Fund-Reg(G)	56.55	-1.54					Tata Resources & Energy Fund-Reg(G)	13.19	-14.95	
HDFC Index Fund-NIFTY 50 Plan(G)	96.83	6.31	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-1(DP)	10.32	-1.55					Aditya Birla SL Midcap Fund(G)	274.36	-15.02	
UTI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	69.42	6.26	Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)	20.52	-1.65					Tata Infrastructure Fund(G)	50.85	-15.29	
Tata Index Fund-Nifty Plan(G)	64.38	6.13	Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity Fund(G)	210.66	-1.66					ICICI Pru Infrastructure Fund(G)	46.42	-15.35	
SBI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	91.57	5.82	Aditya Birla SL MNC Fund(G)	727.7	-1.67					Sundaram Mid Cap Fund(G)	438.78	-15.43	
ICICI Pru Global Stable Equity Fund(G)	14.72	5.75	Edelweiss Large & Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	29.13	-1.71					Kotak Small Cap Fund(G)	66.96	-15.86	
UTI Equity Fund-Reg(G)	132.29	5.55	IDBI Diversified Equity Fund(G)	20.39	-1.78					SBI LT Advantage L&T Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	12.05	-15.89	
Reliance Index Fund - Nifty Plan(G)	17.87	5.48	DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund(G)	154.31	-1.81					L&T Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	15.39	-15.95	
ICICI Pru Nifty Index Fund(G)	102.94	5.35	IDBI Equity Advantage Fund-Reg(G)	25.72	-1.83					L&T Business Cycle Fund-Reg(G)	14.28	-16.04	
Franklin India Index Fund-NSE Nifty(G)	84.6	5.14	Principal Dividend Yield Fund(G)	51	-1.89					UTI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	47.91	-16.23	
Aditya Birla SL Index Fund(G)	104.77	5.09	Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(G)	30.18	-2.01					SBI Magnum Comma Fund-Reg(G)	33.27	-16.29	
ICICI Pru Growth Fund-2(DP)	11.2	4.97	ICICI Pru Value Fund-5(G)	14.55	-2.02					Franklin India Smaller Cos Fund(G)	50.6	-16.74	
IDBI Nifty Index Fund(G)	19.69	4.75	Sundaram Global Advt(G)	16.01	-2.03					SBI LT Advantage Fund-II-Reg(G)	12.5	-16.78	
Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)	41.87	4.7	UTI India LifeStyle Fund-Reg(G)	24.77	-2.04					UTI Transportation & Logistics Fund-Reg(G)	99.04	-16.98	
Canara Rob Bluechip Equity Fund-Reg(G)	22.99	4.69	Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	12.84	-2.09					DSP India T.I.G.E.R Fund-Reg(G)	83.04	-16.98	
Canara Rob Equity Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	60.27	4.53	Reliance Quant Fund(G)	23.96	-2.15					UTI LT Adv Fund-IV(G)	9.91	-17.08	
SBI Magnum Equity ESG Fund-Reg(G)	97.04	3.93	Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	13.38	-2.26					SBI Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	48.74	-17.1	
DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund-2-Reg(G)	11.85	3.9	L&T Equity Fund-Reg(G)	78.19	-2.28					SBI Magnum MidCap Fund-Reg(G)	68.49	-17.32	
Kotak India EQ Contra Fund(G)	49.05	3.84	SBI Consumption Opp Fund-Reg(G)	112.15	-2.32					SBI LT Advantage Fund-I-Reg(G)	12.17	-17.59	
DSP Global Allocation Fund-Reg(G)	11.86	3.58	Tata Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	189.3	-2.34					Reliance Vision Fund(G)	493.08	-17.62	
Edelweiss Large Cap Fund(G)	33.09	3.47	Tata Large Cap Fund(G)	202.53	-2.34					BNP Paribas Mid Cap Fund(G)	29.98	-17.75	
Canara Rob Consumer Trends Fund-Reg(G)	36.69	3.09	Kotak Tax Saver Scheme(G)	40.76	-2.36					SBI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	13.43	-18.39	
Reliance Japan Equity Fund(G)	12.31	2.93	Franklin India Taxshield(G)	530.71	-2.49					Canara Rob Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	41.97	-19.77	
JM Large Cap Fund(G)	64.51	2.86	Reliance Multi Cap Fund(G)	91.45	-2.51					Reliance Power & Infra Fund(G)	92.61	-20.13	
Axis Focused 25 Fund(G)	26.1	2.84	IDFC Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	30.33	-2.51					Kotak Infra & Eco Reform Fund(G)	18.23	-20.24	
Canara Rob Equity Diver Fund-Reg(G)	123.73	2.77	Reliance Banking Fund(G)	252.21	-2.53					Reliance Tax Saver (ELSS) Fund(G)	52.45	-20.32	
Sundaram Select Focus(G)	165.15	2.62	Aditya Birla SL Equity Fund(G)	684.7	-2.57					Invesco India PSU Equity Fund(G)	15.75	-20.53	
Axis Midcap Fund(G)	33.91	2.17	BNP Paribas Large Cap Fund(G)	81.46	-2.59					Sundaram Infra Advantage Fund(G)	29.39	-21.17	
ICICI Pru Business Cycle Fund-2(G)	13.96	2.05	Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-B(G)	17.63	-2.82					Aditya Birla SL Infrastructure Fund(G)	29.49	-21.9	
UTI Mastershare-Reg(G)	114.1	1.86	Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	13.83	-3					DSP Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	51.74	-22.21	
Invesco India Largecap Fund(G)	26.76	1.63	SBI Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)	127.65	-3.08					Aditya Birla SL Pure Value Fund(G)	49.65	-22.27	
Mirae Asset Great Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	32.79	1.59	ICICI Pru Value Discovery Fund(G)	136.27	-3.1					ICICI Pru Smallcap Fund(G)	22.5	-22.28	
Parag Parikh Long Term Equity Fund-Reg(G)	23.28	1.59	JM Multicap Fund(G)	29.35	-3.31					Aditya Birla SL Small Cap Fund(G)	32.91	-22.5	
UTI MNC Fund-Reg(G)	194.46	1.54	Franklin India Bluechip Fund(G)	433.68	-3.31					Sundaram LT Micro Cap Tax Adv Fund-Sr V-Reg(G)	8.35	-23.39	
Tata India Pharma & Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	8.62	1.52	JM Tax Gain Fund(G)	15.66	-3.34					Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series X-Reg(G)	12.68	-23.5	
Tata India Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	17.26	1.42	Edelweiss Multi-Cap Fund-Reg(G)	13.57	-3.35					Aditya Birla SL Emerging Leaders Fund-3-Reg(G)	13.53	-23.99	
Aditya Birla SL CEF-Global Agri-Reg(G)	23.27	1.4	ICICI Pru Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	57.79	-3.39					Aditya Birla SL Emerging Leaders Fund-7-Reg(G)	12.18	-24.77	
Mirae Asset India Equity Fund-Reg(G)	47.11	1.23	SBI BlueChip Fund-Reg(G)	36.19	-3.41					Aditya Birla SL Emerging Leaders Fund-4-Reg(G)	14.02	-24.91	
UTI Dividend Yield Fund-Reg(G)	61.63	0.75	Sundaram Value Fund-II-Reg(G)	15.08	-3.5					IDFC Infrastructure-Reg(G)	14.04	-25.68	
Invesco India Tax Plan(G)	48.19	0.69	DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)	21.41	-3.56					SBI PSU Fund-Reg(G)	9.26	-27.02	
ICICI Pru Multicap Fund(G)	272.15	0.66	Franklin India Equity Fund(G)	553.98	-3.67					Sundaram LT Micro Cap Tax Adv Fund-Sr IV-Reg(G)	8.52	-27.15	
Principal Focused Multicap Fund(G)	60.88	0.63	SBI Large & Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	207.63	-3.68					Sundaram LT Micro Cap Tax Adv Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	10.02	-27.48	
Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	32.1	0.63	Principal Nifty 100 Equal Weight Fund(G)	67.78	-3.74					Sundaram Small Cap Fund(G)	76.31	-28.21	
			DHFL Pramerica LT Equity	13.34	-3.82					HDFC Infrastructure Fund(G)	15.04	-30.24	



London: Robotics are expected to become so sophisticated, hospitals may not need surgeons. Controlled by healthcare assistants, the machines will soon be delivering babies by carrying out C-sections as well as other surgeries, say experts.

San Francisco: Twitter's chief executive Jack Dorsey, who faces a lawsuit for hurting Hindu sentiments during his visit to India in November, now faces criticism for promoting Myanmar as a tourist destination despite widespread allegations of human rights abuses in the country.

Islamabad: Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi will visit Afghanistan on December 15 to hold talks with top Afghan leadership on "political reconciliation and durable peace" in the war-torn country.

Tehran: Iran's navy has planned to stage large-scale military drills in the Indian Ocean in the coming months, the media reported.

Tehran: Four persons suspected of being involved in Thursday's deadly attack in Iran have been arrested on Saturday, an official said. At least three persons, including the attacker, were killed and 48 others injured in the attack at the Chabahar's police hq in Sistan.

PTI

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Thousands turn out for pro and anti Brexit marches in UK

London: Thousands of protesters marched through London in support of Brexit on Sunday amid tight security measures in place by Scotland Yard.

The pro-Brexit march through London, dubbed the "Brexit Betrayal" march, was met by a counter-protest at the same time but taking different routes.

The Metropolitan Police had earlier urged protesters to keep their demonstrations peaceful but indicated it is taking no chances against the backdrop of some violent clashes during the "Yellow Vests" street protests in the neighbouring French city of Paris over the weekend.

"The right to protest is a fundamental right in our democratic society, but this right must be balanced against the right of people to go about their day without fear of vio-



People take part in an anti-fascist counter-demonstration against the "Brexit Betrayal Rally" led by English far-right activist Tommy Robinson who serves as a political adviser to the Leader of the UK Independence Party in central London on Sunday

lence, disorder or disruption," said Met Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor.

"Experience has shown us that when groups with conflicting views come together it can create tension and disorder, not just on the day itself but in the longer term," he said, adding that the force would "adopt a robust arrest policy on anyone who attends and is intent on violence and disorder".

The Met Police has said it would keep the two rival sides apart by issuing two separate routes for them to follow through the West End.

The conditions have been imposed under Section 12 and 14 of the UK's Public Order Act, 1986.

Far-right group English Defence League (EDL) founder Tommy Robinson has joined

the pro-Brexit march called by the anti-Europe UK Independence Party (UKIP), with the counter-protesters including groups like Unite Against Fascism and grassroots group Momentum rallying together against the "far-right extremists".

UKIP said its march against the "Brexit Betrayal" would be "the largest pro-Brexit event of the year".

Some of their banners refer to politicians committing "treason", also referring to the British prime minister, Theresa May, "Traitor May".

"Be there to show you want to Dump the Deal and that Brexit means Exit," said UKIP leader Gerard Batten, who has angered members of his own party by appointing Robinson as an adviser.

UKIP's prominent former leader, Nigel Farage, had

stepped down from the party recently expressing his anger at the party's swing towards extreme right-wing politics.

"This march isn't about Brexit, it's about far-right extremists dressing up in suits and pretending to be respectable," said Opposition Labour Party's shadow chancellor John McDonnell, as he called on people to take to the streets against the "poison" of the far-right.

Meanwhile, a rally is also taking place in London organised by pro-EU group Best for Britain and the People's Vote campaign for another referendum to revisit the June 2016 vote in favour of Brexit ahead of a crucial House of Commons vote on Prime Minister May's controversial Withdrawal Agreement struck with the European Union.

French PM seeks 'unity' as 'yellow vest' arrests cross 1,700

Paris: French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe on Sunday vowed to "restore national unity" after violence during the weekend forced police to use tear gas and rubber bullets against the "yellow vest" demonstrators, who protested against fuel tax rises and high living costs, leading to over 1,700 arrests.

However, the violence on Saturday that was the fourth one was not on the same level as the week earlier, the BBC reported.

Discussions with peaceful protesters "must continue", Philippe said, adding "No tax should jeopardise our national unity. We must now rebuild that national unity through dialogue, through work, and by coming together."

He said President Emmanuel Macron, who many protesters felt should stand down, would soon "put forward measures to foster dialogue".

French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner praised police, who had been deployed in force, for containing much of the unrest.

Castaner, who warned that

the number of arrests increased due to the violence in Paris and some other cities added that 118 demonstrators were known to have been injured along with 17 police officials.

During protests on December 1, 201 civilians and 284 police personnel were injured amid scenes of urban guerrilla tactics.

French authorities deployed a huge police force and used water cannons, tear gas and, for the first time in 40 years, a dozen armoured cars.

The first clashes between police and protesters occurred last Saturday morning in the Champs Elysees, the Yellow Vests' main meeting point.

With a view to prevention, and following the December 1 vandalism, most businesses in the threatened areas remained closed, starting with the big department stores.

Also shut were the monuments and museums of Paris like the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre.

In addition, from the early hours, 36 subway stations remained closed.

Other disturbances took place around the country,

including Bordeaux, Toulouse, Marseilles, Lyon and Nantes.

Demonstrations by the Yellow Vests movement began as a protest against increased taxes on fuel planned for 2019, a ruling that was annulled this week by the government.

Many still demand the resignation of Macron as they continue to demand an increase in social spending on pensions and education, slashing taxes, improving infrastructure, curtailing immigration and ending the privatisation of public services, among many other issues.

In a tweet late on Saturday, Macron thanked the security forces for their "courage and exceptional professionalism" against the "gilets jaunes" protesters.

The yellow vests are so-called because they have taken to the streets wearing the high-visibility yellow clothing that is required to be carried in every vehicle by French law.

Over the past few weeks, the social media movement has morphed from a protest over fuel prices to a leaderless spectrum of interest groups and differing demands, the BBC said. IANS

Women accuse famous spiritual 'healer' of sex abuse

Rio De Janeiro: Several women have come forward in Brazil to accuse an internationally known self-proclaimed spiritual healer of sexually abusing them under pretext of trying to "cure" them of depression or other problems.

The allegations against Joao Teixeira de Faria, 76, better known as "Joao de Deus" ("Joao of God") were made late Friday on a program on the widely viewed Globo Television network.

A Dutch choreographer

identified as Zahira Leeneke Maus and nine Brazilian women who remained anonymous accused Faria of making them masturbate him or perform fellatio, which he insisted was the only way to transfer his "cleansing" energy to them.

Maus also told the program that Faria had raped her. The associated O Globo newspaper later reported that it had spoken to two other women who gave similar accounts of sexual abuse by Faria, bringing the total to a dozen.

All the women said they were aged in their 30s when the alleged acts took place between 2010 and early this year in Faria's "spiritual hospital" in the town of Abadiania, close to the capital Brasilia.

Globo's G1 news website cited a statement from Faria's press service saying he had used his powers to treat thousands of people over the past 44 years and "he vehemently rejects (allegations of) any improper practice during his treatments."

Faria's reputation reaches far beyond Brazil, with followers in the United States, Europe and Australia.

Oprah Winfrey, the US television celebrity and producer, visited Faria in 2013 to look into his "miracles." Several media outlets have done critical investigations into Faria's claims of healing, and some uncovered previous allegations of sexual abuse and other improprieties for which Faria has never been prosecuted.

John Kelly to leave his job at year end: Trump

Washington: US President Donald Trump has said the White House Chief of Staff John Kelly will leave his job at the end of the year.

"Trump called Kelly "a great guy," while speaking to reporters at White House on Saturday, Xinhua reported.

"He's been with me almost two years now, between two positions," he said. "I appreciate his service very much."

The US President said he would announce Kelly's successor "over the next day or two".

Kelly, Trump's second Chief of Staff, took over the position from Reince Priebus in July 2017.

Before that, he was the Trump administration's first Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

FB must end far right's fundraising: British leader

London: Facebook CEO must put an end to far-right activists' fundraising on the social networking platform, said British Labour leader Tom Watson, while criticising Mark Zuckerberg for having a "contempt for social responsibility", the media reported.

According to a Guardian report, Tommy Robinson, a British far-right activist with more than 1 million followers on Facebook, has been receiving financial, political and moral support from a hidden global network of US think-tanks, right-wing Australians and Russian trolls.

Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds through online donations, some via the social network.

Although Facebook has disabled Robinson's access to the donate tool, meant to be

reserved for charities alone, but supporters visiting Robinson's Facebook profile continued to be directed towards his website where they could make donations through a form, the British daily reported on Saturday.

A Facebook spokesperson confirmed the action.

"We have removed the "Donate Now" button from this page. This function is only available for pages that list themselves as a "charitable organisation" and allows them to link to an external webpage of their choice. As this page is for a person we have now removed this," the spokesperson was quoted as saying.

Facebook is Robinson's main social network after Twitter suspended him for claiming "Islam promotes killing people" in March, the report claimed.

Israel says located second 'Hezbollah' tunnel from Lebanon

Jerusalem: Israel's Army said on Saturday it had located another tunnel crossing into its territory from Lebanon, the second such find since launching an operation to expose and destroy alleged Hezbollah "attack tunnels".

"The IDF has located an additional Hezbollah cross-border attack tunnel," spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Conrucus said, refusing to give details on its precise location or dimensions.

"The tunnel crosses into Israel, like the first tunnel it is not yet operational and does not pose an imminent threat to Israeli communities," he said in a briefing with journalists.

EU urged to commit increase in climate commitments by '20

Katowice (Poland): As the first week of the crucial UN climate summit ended this weekend, businesses, investors, local authorities, trade unions and NGOs on Sunday called upon the European Union to commit to significantly increase the current climate commitments by 2020, in order to secure a successful outcome of the summit.

Stakeholders standing together as the Coalition for Higher Ambition urged the EU governments attending the 24th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, known as COP24, to respond to the landmark 1.5 degrees Celsius Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report

with urgency and also scaled up ambition.

The first week of the talks delivered limited progress on technical issues, but most decisions that are expected from this COP, including a commitment to strengthen all countries' climate pledges by 2020, are left to the ministers, who will be attending the summit this coming week.

To stimulate progress of the talks, the EU needs to do its best to convince all countries to support such a commitment.

The EU brought new ambition to the negotiating table, but it is the increase of the short-term emission cuts by 2030 that will make or break our response to the climate crisis.

Taliban key commander among 10 killed in Afghan

Kabul: A total of 10 militants, including a Taliban key commander Mawlawi Nasrullah, were killed in Afghanistan's Faryab province on Sunday, an Army spokesperson said.

The security forces, acting upon an intelligence report, attacked a Taliban gathering in Dawlat Abad district in the wee hours of Sunday, killing 10 rebels on the spot, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to the official, 15 more insurgents have been arrested in the ongoing operations. Nasrullah was an important Taliban commander in Faryab province and his elimination could prove to be a major setback to the insurgents in the area, the official said. Militants have not commented yet. IANS

Armenia votes in snap polls to cement reform drive

Yerevan: Armenians on Sunday were voting in parliamentary elections triggered years ahead of schedule by reformist leader Nikol Pashinyan, who is aiming to cement his political authority in the post-Soviet country.

The 43-year-old former journalist became prime minister in May after spearheading weeks of peaceful anti-government rallies that ousted veteran leader Serzh Sarkisian.

He has pledged to root out endemic corruption and address widespread poverty, earning him supporters in the impoverished landlocked nation of about three million people.

However Pashinyan's reform drive was stalled for months by opposition from Sarkisian's ruling party which dominated the National Assembly until his calculated resignation triggered parliament's dissolution last month.

"After the elections, we will be developing Armenian democracy and make an economic revolution happen," Pashinyan told journalists after casting his ballot, pledging to "hold free, fair, and transparent elections."

At a polling station in central Yerevan voters expressed optimism about the political change promised by Pashinyan and venting their anger at former corrupt officials.

"Thanks to the revolution, we will finally have fair elections," 72-year-old pensioner Parzik Avetisyan told AFP.

"I voted for the positive change promised by Nikol (Pashinyan)," he added.

Astronomers find treasure trove of planets hiding in dust

Beijing: "Super-Earths" and Neptune-sized planets could be forming around young stars in much greater numbers than scientists thought, a new research by an international team of astronomers suggests.

The findings, based on a survey of young stars in a star-forming region in the constellation Taurus, showed many of them to be surrounded by structures that can best be explained as traces created by invisible, young planets in the making.

"This is fascinating because it is the first time that exoplanet statistics, which suggest that super-Earths and Neptunes are the most common type of planets, coincide with observations of protoplanetary disks," said lead author Feng

Long, a doctoral student at Peking University in Beijing, China.

The research, published in the Astrophysical Journal, helps scientists better understand how our own solar system came to be.

Using the Atacama Large Millimeter Array, or ALMA, comprising 45 radio antennas in Chile's Atacama Desert, the team performed a survey of young stars in the Taurus star-forming region, a vast cloud of gas and dust located a modest 450 light-years from Earth.

When the researchers imaged 32 stars surrounded by protoplanetary disks, they found that 12 of them -- 40 per cent -- have rings and gaps, structures that according to the team's measurements and cal-

culations can be best explained by the presence of nascent planets.

The Neptune-sized gas planets or so-called super-Earths -- terrestrial planets of up to 20 Earth masses -- were found to be the most common. Only two of the observed disks could potentially harbour behemoths rivaling Jupiter, the largest planet in the solar system.

"Since most of the current exoplanet surveys can't penetrate the thick dust of protoplanetary disks, all exoplanets, with one exception, have been detected in more evolved systems where a disk is no longer present," explained Paola Pinilla, from the University of Arizona in the US. IANS

Kushner continued talks with Saudi Crown Prince after Khashoggi's death: NYT

New York: Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior advisor, continued talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman even after the October 2 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi who was ambushed and dismembered by Saudi agents in Istanbul, The New York Times said in a report.

As the killing set off a firestorm around the world and American intelligence agencies concluded that it was ordered by Prince Mohammed, Kushner became the Prince's most important defender inside the White House, The Times quoted informed sources as saying in the report issued on Saturday.

Since the early months of the Trump administration, Kushner had been having private, informal conversations with the Prince.

Given Kushner's political inexperience, the private exchanges could make him susceptible to Saudi manipulation, said three former White House officials.

In an effort to tighten practices at the White House, a new Chief of Staff tried to reimpose longstanding procedures stipulating that National Security Council staff members should participate in all calls with foreign leaders.

Arctic sea ice decline slows down temporarily: NASA

Washington: The decline of the Arctic sea ice cover may have temporarily slowed down, despite climate change and global warming, a NASA study has found.

As temperatures in the Arctic have warmed at double the pace of the rest of the planet, the expanse of frozen seawater that blankets the Arctic Ocean and neighbouring seas has shrunk and thinned over the past three decades.

The end-of-summer Arctic sea ice extent has almost halved since the early 1980s.

A recent NASA study found that since 1958, the Arctic sea ice cover has lost on average around two-thirds of

its thickness and now 70 per cent of the sea ice cap is made of seasonal ice, or ice that forms and melts within a single year.

However, at the same time that sea ice is vanishing quicker than it has ever been observed in the satellite record, it is also thickening at a faster rate during winter.

This increase in growth rate might last for decades, a new study accepted for publication in Geophysical Research Letters found.

This does not mean that the ice cover is recovering, though. It is just delaying its demise, researchers said.

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Trend Slazer

Janhvi to get Norwegian honour

Actress **JANHVI KAPOOR** will be awarded 'Arets Stjerneskudd' rising talent of the year by the Norwegian Consulate General here. She said, "I made my debut with *Dhadak* this year. Our film has been seen by audience worldwide and many of them including people staying in Norway have seen the film and sent their good wishes via social media. This recognition is a pleasant surprise. I am happy to receive this honour and humbled that they chose me for this honour." The felicitation evening on Tuesday will also see the screening of two acclaimed Norwegian films including *What Will People Say*, and *The King's Choice*. Among others, Boney Kapoor will also be present at the event.



JATIN VARMA, founder of Comic Con India, tells **ASMITA SARKAR** how trends define the fiesta every year

Delhi's largest pop culture meet

From *Sacred Games* to *Game of Thrones*, the boundaries that define popular culture keep expanding and have become elastic. This has given space to events like Comic Con to become a celebrational and promotional platform for brands. For Amazon Prime Video, Marvel Studios, Paytm, TVS, Doritos, AXN and Sony Pix, the platform is a great way to make inroads with the millions of youth hooked to multiple OTTs, social and mainstream media. For instance, most of the merchandise available at the three-day fiesta and cosplayers had taken inspiration from the movies and TV shows that are currently trending. With Marvel Studios having dropped its Brie Larson starring *Captain Marvel* and *Avengers: Endgame* trailers recently and a Marvel space at the NSIC Okhla, where Comic Con was held this year, merchandise like Thor's



'Cosplay remains one of the biggest draws and this year we're pushing for professional so that we create amazing costumes'

hammer had received more attention, according to ComicCon India Founder, Jatin Varma. Amazon Prime Video had brought *Mirzapur* and Julia Roberts starring *Homecoming* to its experience zone. When asked how *Mirzapur* fits into the narrative, Varma said, "Everything in pop culture fits into Comic Con. Any

content you see on OTT players is part of pop culture and fits in perfectly. When building a zone, these partners bring in anything from Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) to photo booths to gauge the audience's attention," he said.

Also, since *Game of Thrones*' last season will be released in April 2019 merchandise from the George RR Martin series has been a hit. While DC Comics had an Aquaman zone this time, since the movie is going to be released this month and Mattel, famed for their patents Hot wheels and Barbie, had a zone too.

"Cosplay remains one of the biggest draws and this year we're pushing for professional cosplayers so that we create amazing costumes. The fun element comes from regular people trying to cosplay and having fun with it. The theme for this year is that everyone can cosplay. Everyone who's attending the event can dress up as someone as simple as Clart Kent. There are easily two to three thousand cosplayers across the cities where we conduct the event," said he.

Varma has also brought Image Comics, the third-largest comic book publisher after Marvel and DC to India for the first time.

"Everyone coming to Comic Con will get their own volume 1 of *Chew*, which is about a US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) agent who solves crimes by receiving psychic impressions from food, including people. They are bringing their own talent," he said.

Weeks before the event began their stalls had been sold, which speaks volumes about its popularity. Big toy brands and indie artists, equally vied for space here.

The main highlight this time was The Night King, Vladimir Furdik, and only a few had gotten to meet him. A contest and lottery was conducted during the three days to meet him while the mainstage was open to everyone.

'Fukrey is a very special film. I am personally a huge fan of Bholi. She is brave and extremely intelligent and it has been amazing to play her twice. The success of the film has had been surprising and rewarding. I think we definitely deserve part three of the film. I do hope to work for it again.'

—**Richa Chadha**



On veteran actor **DHARMENDRA**'s 83rd birthday, his wife and actress **Hema Malini** wished him saying he is her "everlasting love." She wrote on Twitter, "Happy Birthday to my everlasting love, the dearest father to my darling girls and proud grandfather to Darien and Radhya. I thank all the numerous fans who are sending their greetings to me on Dharamji's birthday. I will definitely convey their wishes to him."

Joe won't talk about Swift

Actor **JOE ALWYN**, who is dating singer **Taylor Swift**, likes to keep his relationship as private as possible. Alwyn says there is "a very clear line" for him of how much he should share about his relationship with Swift. "I know what I feel about it. I think there's a very clear line as to what somebody should share, or feel like they have to share, and what they don't want to and shouldn't have to," he said. The *I knew you were trouble* hitmaker and the *Mary, Queen Of Scots* star have been dating for over a year and a half.



What is pride? How does it distinguish one's choices, styles and legacy? Designer **Tarun Tahiliani** believes that pride is the hallmark of today's generation as a meaningful expression of their success. While their distinct choices define their individuality, the taste of pride comes from their self-earned achievements and accomplishments.

As the designer launches his ready-to-wear collection *Pride* at the Blenders' Pride Fashion Tour 2018, his new concept urges people to love the world and their identity and the blend which they represent. He says, "It signifies the emotions of contemporary India."

He draws inspiration from the pride that each Indian, irrespective of his religious and regional identity and profession, takes when it comes to elements that define the country. He explains what are the new techniques and styles that he has incorporated in this new collection. "We have tried a lot of new patterns and styles this time. We have done more tailoring to take our structure of draping to a whole new level. It is because the aim is to



show an interesting blend of the past and the present and a telescope into the future."

Through a showcase of 40 unique looks blending historical opulence with modern interpretation, he aims to explore and interpret the concept of 'India Modern' through fashion by mixing East with the West.

"I have mixed the two styles and designed it differently taking the styling to a more extreme vibe. I have done new things which are devoid of embroidery as the concept focusses at the present moment even though it is steeped in Indian traditions of draped form and techniques that Indian craftsmen have developed over the years with love."

He uses VS Naipaul's *A Multiple Mutinies Now* metaphorically to talk about a million ideas about India's old culture that has "existed for a thousand years, has had many influences due to numerous foreign invasions." He says that the biggest global influence that we have today is through social media and technology.

So how have contemporary designs found inspiration in the Indian history?

"Unfortunately, there wasn't a lot to find in history because it wasn't documented well in India. There are only the miniatures, which all look similar. There was a bit of documentation once the Britishers came in,

TECH TALK



The bird code

A researcher built a tool to collect data to identify individual birds by setting up a motion-activated camera and using facial detection

peckers, we achieved 97 per cent accuracy. However, it needs further verification.

How can this help birds?

Since many species are very specific in their habitat needs when it comes to breeding, wintering and migration, fine-grained data could be useful for thinking about the effects of a changing landscape. Data on downy woodpeckers could then be matched with information, like land-use maps, weather patterns, population growth, to better understand the abundance of a local species.

Recent studies suggest that it should be possible to train a classifier using a much broader group of images, fine-tune it quickly and with computational demands to recognise birds.

Projects like Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's eBird are working to monitor population dynamics, but the bulk of those data tends to be from locations where people are numerous, rather than from locations of specific interest to scientists. An automated monitoring station approach could provide a force multiplier for wildlife biologists concerned with specific species or locations. This would broaden their ability to gather data with minimal human intervention.

—AP/Written by Lewis Barnett, University of Richmond and published by The Conversation

toward the use of artificial neural networks, which identify their own features proving most useful for classification. Convolutional neural networks, the type that we are now using in our work with birds, are modified in ways that were modelled on the visual cortex.

Progress on bird ID

All the images were taken from the same perspective, and fell into limited categories. Only 15 species ever visited the feeder. Of those, only 10 visited often enough to provide a useful basis for classification. The limited number of images was a definite handicap, but lesser categories

worked in our favour. It could recognise whether the bird in an image was a chickadee, a Carolina wren, a cardinal or other. The project achieved about 85 per cent accuracy. Identifying birds in images is an example of a "fine-grained classification" task, that is, the algorithm tries to discriminate between objects that are only slightly different. Many birds at feeders are roughly the same shape so telling the difference between two species can be quite challenging.

The challenge ups when you try to identify individuals. For most species, it isn't possible. The woodpeckers have

which had more to do with Maharajas and the poverty which was in the draping style. However, I find a lot of inspiration in those drapes. This is the reason I also go to the Kumbh Mela where people still dress the way it was years ago. And I take my inspiration from that," he says.

The collection employs new tailoring and draping in a way that is contemporary to India and combines western notions of cut, silhouettes, construct and finishing.



"The lehengas have become lighter and easier to be carried. They are voluminous and fluffy, feminine and have Indian beading. It carries the sensuality of the Indian draping."

He says that a blend of the Western silhouettes and Indian aesthetics is in the fact that Indian fashion sense has provided a platform to push boundaries, "especially for people like me. I feel excited about the whole idea of blend because I always look at the modern India which in itself is a huge blend." However, the designer says that he "doesn't care" about whether we have managed to change the way the West looks at our fashion and craft. He says, "I changed the way I looked at craft and fashion. And now other people too. And to me that is the most important thing."

He believes that Indians are increasingly becoming conscious consumers of everyday art. Designs today flow into the minutest aspects of daily life like dressing, household utility and casual meetings. He says, "Design changes the quality of life. However, this doesn't mean that we forget the other simpler things."

For him, the "rich Indian heritage" of textiles has been inspiring. "I have worked a lot with *Chikankari* and *Maheshwaris* too. I have taken inspiration from the cutworks from Varanasi. My current love affair is with the *Kanjevaram* fabrics."

Actress **Disha Patani** was the showstopper of the fashion tour in Gurugram.

WEBBED

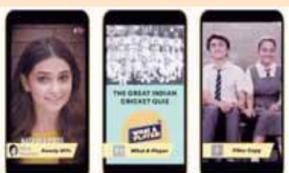


SEX EDUCATION
The web series is a distinctively honest and witty look at the universally awkward coming-of-age experience. The dramedy delivers a healthy dose of nostalgia, taking the audience back to their high school days, with a fresh postmodern take on young adult life, friendships, and attitudes towards sex, identity, love and everything in between. It is a contemporary British love-letter to the classic American high-school story starring *Asa Butterfield* as Otis Milburn, the only child of two sex therapists, and actress *Gillian Anderson* as Jean Milburn, his mother, a larger-than-life sex therapist with no filter. The show releases on January 11, 2019 on Netflix.

BIRD BOX
When a mysterious force decimates the population, only one thing is certain — if you see it, you die. The survivors must now avoid coming face to face with an entity that takes the form of their worst fears. Searching for hope and a new beginning, a woman and her children embark on a dangerous journey through the woods and down a river to find the one place that may



offer sanctuary. To make it, they'll have to cover their eyes from the evil that chases them — and complete the trip blindfolded. Directed by *Susanne Bier*, the thriller stars *Sandra Bullock*, *Trevante Rhodes*, *John Malkovich*. It releases on December 21 on Netflix.



TVF'S THE VIRAL FEVER AND GIRLYAPA GOSSIP GIRLS: *Shreya Mehta*, *Vrushika Mehta*, *Meghna Kaur*, *Apoorva Arora*, *Niharika Singh* and *Radhika Bangia* aka *The Gossip Girls* bring the latest from the entertainment world, all under five minutes. Right from 'Who's Dating Who?' To 'What Makes Actors Tick?'

WHAT A PLAYER: Looking for more from the world of sports? Look no further, as dancer and actress *Samantha Fernandes* presents 'What A Player' full of news and unheard trivia. Find why *Sachin Tendulkar* was superstitious about his pads, and who *Saina Nehwal* is set to marry and much more.

STYLE WAGON: Rule the runway as actress *Barkha Singh* and *Ayesha Adakha* spell out what's in fashion and a lot more. Stay updated with the fashion trends with this show.

The real he for she movement

Filmmaker VIBHA BAKSHI tells TEAM VIVA how ordinary men are taking on the extraordinary fight to change the narrative on masculinity in Haryana

A 96-year-old khap panchayat leader admits that it's time for the winds of change to blow in and that girls need to be nurtured rather than destroyed though he knows he cannot overturn a system that had taken hold for centuries with just one diktat. "Let's do small things to push the big change," he says. Meanwhile, a village bard sings against female foeticide at a busy square, encouraged by menfolk out to do their chores. And then there's a simple father, who wasn't allowed to celebrate the birth of his daughter, and has now turned gender campaigner. From the darkest corners of Haryana, filmmaker Vibha Bakshi found ordinary men taking on the extraordinary fight to change the narrative on masculinity. She found her heroes after ridding herself of stigma, her urban myths and by living in that community and building trust. And once she discovered the hidden truth, she partnered with the United Nations to distribute the film to priority countries as part of encouraging the "He for She" movement.

"Unless men are part of the struggle, we will not win our fight for equality. It's not about him vs her or us vs them. We're in this together. This isn't a woman's issue, it's humanity's issue, so we've got to be in this together. When we bring up exclusionist words like feminists, suddenly we find the men are going even further and that's so not the point," the Boston-based researcher and filmmaker told us. It was another reason why she did not want a celebrity attached to the project because the moment you add one, the film stops being the star. "The issue is the star here," she said.

The making of the film is a story in itself as Bakshi, while scouting for locales, found an ad that read, "Go for foeticide and save millions later." Essentially that meant, kill the girl before she ends up splitting the property that only boys can lay claim to. "The boy-girl ratio in Haryana is the worst or lowest in the country today. So much so that they are getting girls from tribal villages, from remote pockets like Bihar and Assam, to bear children. These hired brides have no legal rights because they are technically not married, there's no paperwork. Can you believe it? She goes from the devil to the deep blue sea. Such brides are even exchanged with other men once their reproductive role has been fulfilled. Besides, the skewed sex ratio has forced a sense of denial and frustration among men. That is why Haryana also has one of the highest rates of gangrapes in the country. It is a cycle. They started the killing and now they themselves are in trouble. They have no option but to heal themselves and society. I have attempted to catch this surging story."

Bakshi has consistently made films on stopping violence against women and has been lauded for both her features, *Daughters of Mother India* and now *Son Rise*. Dealing with the sensitive issue of the Nirbhaya rape in her first, she realised that it would be impossible to make that film if she was not sensitive with the Delhi Police. "It would have been easy for me to sensationalise and play the blame game. I had the issue of rape, I had cops



India's biggest and most influential Khap Chief with under 1,140 villages under his leadership

and that was a deadly mix. But I made a responsible film and rather than stereotyping the cops as apathetic, I tried to see the case from their point of view and how they, too, were hedged in while handling the case. It was the same with Haryana. With all the notorious statistics and skewed birth ratios, I could have again taken the sensational route but we decided we would leave people with hope when we made *Son Rise*."

She hopes that every man who watches this film comes out clapping his hands. "I really hope he claps and says, you know what? If they can do it, I can do it. I'm going to stand up and change the narrative. It's in the form of documentary. No retakes, everything was found on the ground. I opened the film with honouring the people of Haryana, who were brave enough to break the conspiracy of silence. Everyone in Haryana helped me tell the story. UN is a tough jury to clear. So the fact that they have cleared it gives us more strength and they see a possibility of this film setting off a movement," she said. Interestingly, the men, who are part of the film come from different occupations and castes. "We went into remote villages out of the Google map footprint. Yet what was admirable

was that men, who had grown up in the underbelly of patriarchy only seeing biases, were able to rise above themselves," she said.

She chanced upon her subjects at the most unexpected of places. Once while crossing a *gaushala*, she could hear singing and clapping. "We followed the music and found this bard atop a bullock cart articulating the thoughts of the now dead female foetus. Full throated, he sang, 'Oh the killers of daughters, I'm going to come one day and tell the truth.' So he's the voice from the womb which will assume physical birth one day. You would not believe it but there was a crowd of a 1,000 people around him, 80 per cent of whom were men. The bard told me that he was quite popular and, therefore, had decided to use his skill to spread social messages because he could entertain and educate. I'm just giving you a single example. This man has been going from village to village with his campaign. Initially, he was doing it himself, today he's got crowd-funding going on," she said.

Another person she met was a women's wrestling coach. He began with an academy for boys but slowly had the girls coming in. "He is not like Mahaveer Phogat who trained girls from his family. He took aspirants from the neighbourhood. He told us, 'I have allowed girls because

truth be told, they've done better than the boys at competitions and so we've got to change.' Still he was criticised by villagers, who said he had defiled a man's sport. The man runs a full-fledged community *akhara*, where you see fathers dropping their daughters, waiting patiently while they practise, feeding them almonds and doing whatever it takes for the girls to succeed. Then we came upon a village chief who on the birth of his daughter gave money to the nurses. But the nurses said they could not accept it since it was not the custom to celebrate a girl's birth. If it was a boy, they would have asked for double. He told us how on a joyous occasion, society reminded him of his place as the father of a daughter. He vowed to change the mindset and is now one of the biggest crusaders to stop gender-based killings," she said.

These men risked social ostracisation and even banishment to take up this tough fight. "It's time now for the men to step up. Otherwise it's never going to happen. But for that we have to try and understand their contexts too. When we went to shoot we didn't start filming immediately. Once the relationship was established, they completely understood the intent and emotion. And felt they had the authorship of their story," added the filmmaker.

For Bakshi, this was her toughest story to tell since she was the only woman in the group. "We were advised to travel in one big van, just from a security point of view. But every time we stopped at a motel, my character assassination was done on the spot. Like if something happens to her, it's worth it. She deserves it because she is travelling with eight men," she said. She took long to break the ice, at first not making direct eye contact with the men sarpanches. Three months later, the actual conversation started. "Then they were leading and taking me everywhere," she said.

Bakshi is still in touch with these maverick men and hopes that with the UN partnership, their voices will get amplified. "*Bas ab bohot hogaya!* We have seen change in Haryana of all places. That has made me hopeful. I have kept the producing rights, so that the film can be screened for the social good and not be hijacked by somebody else's agenda. It must reach as many people. We are very confident that one million pledges will be collected next year to change the way for the girl child. These men have pledged to change the narrative in whatever way they can. For their mothers, wives, daughters or sisters or friends," she said.

Asked if she saw a mindset change happening, Bakshi said, "I had access to the biggest and the most influential khap leader. He told me how the oldest member among them, a 96-year-old patriarch, had said that change must happen to stop foeticide and shaming offenders was the only way things could work. I realised that if you want to do the right thing, it doesn't matter what generation you belong to. That leader could barely stand. But he said 'the time is now'. What is most significant is that this change is organic and has happened without any exposure to the outside world. The men have changed because of their latent humanity."

Bakshi found that the khaps also had to take care of their own dynamics. "There are khaps which are regressive but this leader wanted a change. What happens is that these insular outfits also have to work with society and if they radically change overnight, they will be rejected completely. So they need to plot their moves carefully. The change has to be gradual. I had confessed to them how alien I thought them to be. When we both gave an inch, we got close and by the end there was laughter," said the filmmaker, who has used Bollywood technicians to tell her unconventional story.

Spirituality for peace and stability

A civilised community does not guarantee progress and prosperity for a healthy living, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

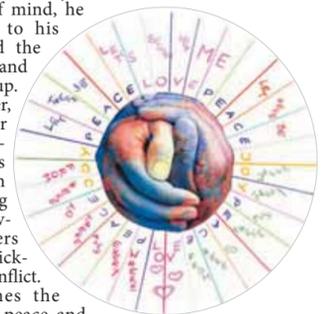


The event of physical birth brings an individual into contact with a particular culture, community, race, religion and nation from the very beginning of his life. As he grows in that environment, his personality is moulded by various groups, influences and, in turn, he also influences these groups. Everyone indeed, has to participate in the life of these various groups because no one can live unto himself alone, cut off from all others. And, it is no doubt true that by relating oneself meaningfully with others one is able to enrich their life at least upto a stage. But one thing that results from participation in group life is that, gradually, man develops cultural, intellectual and emotional ties with, and loyalties towards, these groups, as a result of which one difficulty that crops up from these ties is that man begins to conceive humanity in this limited sense and considers those who are in his group as his own and others, who are not of this group, as aliens. He shares the sense of oneness with only a small section of people belonging to a community and does not have the feeling of belonging to the world community.

In such a state of mind, he does not admit to his obligations beyond the frontiers of rights and duties to the group. This, sooner or later, poses a problem, for man's narrow loyalties create prejudices which take the form of misunderstanding or ego-centric behaviour towards others initially and then bickerings and finally conflict. This then becomes the greatest danger to peace and stability. The fact that a person or a community is civilised is no guarantee for stability and progress if the people are not prepared to make even a little sacrifice for the common good of all, in which their own well-being is also ensured. So, the mantra for peace, progress and prosperity of all is to tune our mind to the wisdom, summed up in the famous Sanskrit saying: *Sarvay bhavantu sukhina, sarvay santu niramaya...* which means 'Let all be happy and prosperous, and let all be healthy'.

Unless and until this forms the basis of our politics, economics and business or industrial management, conflict, confrontation, tension and turmoil will always remain. But the question is how can we cultivate this attitude? For this, the second mantra is *Vasudhaiv kutumbakam...* which means that the whole world is our family. Without this ancient spiritual wisdom, neither can we have peace nor can we make constant progress.

Now this happy condition, in which man has a feeling of belonging to the world-family rather than a small group can be brought about if people are soul-conscious rather than body-conscious. As a soul, one is a member of the great human family and one feels concerned for others who are not even physically related to him in any way. It is through spirituality that one can continue to belong to a particular ethnic or racial group and yet, at the same time, go beyond all this because one will have global, rather than provincial or narrow perspective. It is spiritualism alone that reduces ethnocentrism and increases knowledge and appreciation of others and mutual respect between all human beings. It is this which can create stability and peace. The most urgent need at present, therefore, is for such spiritual education that creates in man the awareness of belonging to world-family under the Fatherhood of God.



Ever wondered what those differently shaded small plants that wash up on the beach, while you're strolling around and enjoying the sea breeze, are?

Technically speaking, seaweeds are marine microalgae. They are autotrophs (making their own food, just like plants), so all they need is sunlight and salty/brackish water in order to thrive. In oceans, microscopic seaweed live suspended by becoming base of the marine food chains. The giant ones grow in abundant forests and look like red-woods, while their roots touch the bottom of the sea. The medium sized seaweeds bloom on the beaches and shorelines.

Seaweeds have been known since ages for various uses. Owing to the high quality and quantity of commercially important metabolites produced by them they have been widely used for various food and industrial purposes. With further

Wonders of seaweed on skin

These marine plants are great for enhancing elasticity, anti-ageing and protection against UV rays, says skincare expert TRISHITA MISHRA ADLAKHA

exploration in the field of science, the use of seaweeds have been expanded in various sectors, growing profusely in the field of skincare.

Seaweeds tend to thrive very well in very salty to very cold waters. They easily cope up with harsh UV rays and other climatic stress factors. It is because of the very efficacious metabolites secreted by them, which protect them from the high-



ly damaging stress factors. The same metabolites have proven to show phenomenal results on skin. A few of the most efficacious and significant ones are golden, brown and sugar seaweed.

Sugar Seaweed is used to enhance products' ability to be a protective layer against UV rays while the golden one enhances the skin barrier functioning, making skin more tough and resilient against external stress factors, which can trigger skin ageing. Sugar seaweed actively increases Keratinocyte differentiation (which is the outer protein found in the epidermis of skin, which forms a strong protective barrier for skin). It intensively increases skin hydration and skin elasticity, thereby reducing wrinkle

depth. To some extent it can also help in reactivation of old cells.

The actives of golden seaweed extracts are often used as global anti-ageing and skin defence ingredients. They are procured from shallow depths of the ocean, wherein there is magnified UV exposure and high levels of salt; and it thrives there, staying perfect and resilient. For the same reason, it has been harvested to extract the potent active and use in luxurious skin care products. This active protects the skin's DNA after exposure to harsh UV rays and reduces skin inflammation mediators. These properties are pivotal for formulating a crême that is quintessential for a global anti-ageing/skin regenerating products.

(The author works for a personal care brand.)

“ It's only after you've stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow, and transform. ”
— Roy T. Bennett

NEW LPG SCHEME REDUCED AIR POLLUTION

The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), a pet project of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that aims to provide every household Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) replacing wood or coal fuel, has been found useful in tackling household air pollution, a new report said.

The study released by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and The Lancet, stated that in 2017 in India 12.4 lakh deaths were caused due to air pollution, of which 4.8 lakh were due to household air pollution.

"There is increasing political momentum in India to address air pollution. Household air pollution is reducing in India. The findings systematically document the variations among states, which would serve as a useful guide for making further progress in reducing the adverse impact of air pollution in the country," said Professor Balram Bhargava, secretary, health research, Ministry of Health.

WASP VENOM OFFERS HOPE FOR LUNG AILMENTS

MIT engineers have developed new antimicrobial peptides, which can combat bacteria causing respiratory and other infections, based on a naturally occurring peptide produced by a South American wasp.

The venom of insects such as wasps and bees is full of compounds that can kill bacteria. Unfortunately, many of these compounds are also toxic for humans, making it impossible to use them as antibiotic drugs.

However, in a study over mice, the team repurposed a toxin normally found in *Polybia paulista* — a South American wasp — to create variants of the peptide that are potent against bacteria but non-toxic to human cells. They found that their strongest peptide could completely eliminate *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* — a strain of bacteria that causes respiratory and urinary tract infections and is resistant to most antibiotics.



SLEEP IN CHILDHOOD RELATED TO BETTER BMI

Is your child facing trouble in sleeping, parents take note. Regular and sufficient sleep from early childhood may be important for gaining healthy body weight in adolescence, suggests a new study.

The study revealed that those who had no bedtime routine at age nine had shorter self-reported sleep duration and higher body mass index (BMI) at age 15, when compared to those children with age-appropriate bedtimes.

"We think sleep affects physical and mental health, and the ability to learn," said Orfeu Buxton, professor from the University of Pennsylvania in the US. "Parenting practices in childhood affect physical health and BMI in the teenage years. Developing a proper routine in childhood is crucial for the future health of the child," Buxton added. Previous studies have shown that poor sleep can affect academic performance, as well as contribute to death and cases of heart disease and stroke.



FIRST ARTIFICIAL HEART VALVE TECHNOLOGY

In line with the Make in India initiative, global medical device maker Meril Life Sciences launched its first indigenously designed and manufactured artificial aortic valve for patients who are at a high risk or unwilling to undergo open heart valve replacement surgery.

The Transcatheter Aortic Heart Valve Replacement (TAVR), which will be sold under the brand name Myval, is a minimally invasive procedure in which the doctor places a artificial valve into the patient's diseased valve via a catheter inserted through the femoral artery (large artery in groin).

"Meril is the first Indian company to commercially make this therapy available in the country. They will soon bring the next generation treatment modality to thousands of patients across the country and globally," said Sanjeev Bhatt, VP corporate strategy, Meril Life Sciences.



BEING SHY CAN PUT YOU AT 'HANGXIETY' RISK

If you are a very shy kind of person, you are more likely to suffer from "hangxiety" — anxiety during a hangover — as compared to your extrovert friends, a new study suggests. The study showed that, among the participants, drinking about six units of alcohol slightly decreased anxiety in highly shy people. But the next day, this slight relaxation was replaced by a significant increase in anxiety — a state of "hangxiety" among the shy drinkers. The research team also found a strong link between this "hangxiety" and higher scores on the AUDIT test which is used to identify alcohol use disorder (AUD) in highly shy people.

"We know that many people drink to ease anxiety felt in social situations, but this research suggests that this might have rebound consequences the next day," said co-author Celia Morgan, professor at the University of Exeter.



STICKATHON



GERMANY MAINTAIN PERFECT RECORD

Two-time champion beat Malaysia 5-3 to top pool D & advance directly into World Cup quarters; The Netherlands maul Pak 5-1

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Germany beat Malaysia 5-3 to maintain their all-win record and seal a direct quarterfinal spot, while Pakistan suffered a 1-5 defeat against the Netherlands but still sneaked into the knock-out stages at the men's hockey World Cup here on Sunday.

Germany finished on top of Pool D with nine points from three games, ahead of second placed the Netherlands (6 points) and third-placed Pakistan (1 point).

While the Germans were through to the quarterfinals, the Netherlands and Pakistan managed to qualify for the cross-overs round.

As per the format of the tournament, the top team from each of the four pools will directly qualify for the quarterfinals while the second and third placed sides will play cross-over matches against teams of other pools for the remaining four last eight berths.

Even though Malaysia (1 point) finished on same points as Pakistan, the Asian Games Silver medalist crashed out of the tournament because of their inferior goal difference.

The Germans joined two-time champions Australia, Olympic champions Argentina and hosts India in the quarterfinals. The other four places of the last eight round will be decided from the cross-over matches.

England play New Zealand while France will be up against China in the cross-over matches on Monday, while Belgium face Pakistan and the Netherlands will take on Canada in the other cross-over games on Tuesday.

In the match between the Netherlands and Pakistan, the Dutch were by far the better side as they made repeated forays into their rival citadel.

The Netherlands scored through



Germany players attempt to save goal via penalty corner against Malaysia; Netherlands players celebrates after scoring goal against Pakistan during pool D match



Hockey India/PTI

Thierry Brinkman (7th minute), Valentin Verga (27th), Bob de Voogd (37th), Jorrit Croon (47th) and Mink van der Weerden (59th) en route to their comfortable win.

Pakistan's lone goal came from the stick of Umar Bhutta in the ninth minute.

Pakistan played catch-up hockey and looked a disjointed unit, having no idea what to do with the ball when it's in their possession. They mostly relied on counter-attacks to surprise their higher ranked opponents but the vast gap of quality between the two sides was quiet evident on the turf.

World number 4 Netherlands started on a bright note and secured their first penalty corner in the fourth minute but it

was wasted.

Three minutes later, Brinkman gave the Netherlands the lead with a field strike.

But Pakistan bounced back strongly and earned three back-to-back penalty corners, from the last of which Bhutta scored off a rebound after Ali Mubashar's flick was saved by Dutch goalie Pirmin Blaak.

In the second quarter, both the Netherlands and Pakistan traded a penalty corner each but failed to extract anything from the opportunities.

Three minutes from half-time, the Dutch restored their lead through Verga who scored a fine field goal after a brilliant one-two touch play with Seve van Ass.

The Netherlands started from where

they left after the change of ends and extended their lead in the 37th minute with a diving effort at the far post from de Voogd, who tapped in a pass from Jeroen Hertzberger.

The Dutch continued their onslaught and secured a couple of penalty corners in quick time and from one such chance Jorrit Croon scored to make the scoreline 4-1 in the European side's favour.

Van der Weerden then converted a penalty corner a minute from the final hooter to round off the scoreline and end Pakistan's agony.

Earlier in the day, Tim Herzbruch (2nd, 59th minute) and Christopher Ruhr (14th, 18th minutes) scored two goals each

while Marco Miltkau (39th) scored the other one for the world number 6 Germans.

Malaysia's all three goals came from penalty corner conversions by Razie Rahim (26th, 42nd) and Nabil Noor (28th).

Both Germany and Malaysia had their chances but it was the Germans who were more precise with their finishing skills.

The Germans started brightly and raced to a 3-0 lead inside 18 minutes through goals from Herzbruch and Ruhr.

The Malaysians tried to make a valiant fightback and managed to reduce the margin to 2-3 in the 28th minute through goals

from Rahim and Noor.

But, the clinical Germans capitalised on Malaysia's defensive errors when Miltkau deflected in a Niklas Wellen's perfect lay-off in the 39th minute.

The Malaysians did not give up and narrowed down the scoreline to 3-4 when Rahim converted another penalty corner.

The Germans had the last laugh when Miltkau scored from a counter-attack just a minute from the final hooter to dash any hopes of a Malaysian comeback.

Both the teams had numerous scoring opportunities in the form of penalty corners. While Malaysia earned as many as eight penalty corners, the Germans secured seven in the match.



David Luiz celebrates after scoring goal via header against Manchester City during PL clash

Kante, Luiz hand City first defeat

AFP ■ LONDON

Chelsea inflicted champions Manchester City's first Premier League defeat of the season as goals from N'Golo Kante and David Luiz handed the hosts a 2-0 win at Stamford Bridge and sent Liverpool top of the table.

Kante's goal just before half-time came against the run of play as the visitors dominated the first 45 minutes, but without the injured Sergio Aguero, City lacked a cutting edge up front and Luiz's header 12 minutes from time sealed a huge win for Chelsea.

Liverpool are now a point clear of City after Mohamed Salah scored a hat-trick in a 4-0 victory at Bournemouth earlier on Saturday.

Chelsea boss Maurizio Sarri had lost all of his previous three meetings against City boss Pep Guardiola and was growingly increasingly frustrated at his side's inability to hold possession as the visitors dominated the first half.

Raheem Sterling should have scored when his weak left-footed finish was placed too close to Kepa Arrizabalaga before the world's most expensive goalkeeper also denied Leroy Sane from a narrow angle.

Yet, for all City's possession, the visitors were stung by a sucker punch just before half-time as Sarri's decision to field Eden Hazard as the focal point of the Chelsea attack and maintain Kante in an advanced midfield role paid off.

Sarri has resisted calls to return Kante to the deep-lying midfield role where he shone in winning the World Cup with France and Premier League titles for Leicester and Chelsea at the expense of Jorginho.

Hazard was finally fed the ball to feet inside the City box and his pass picked out Kante, who side-footed the ball high past Ederson.



his net, but was called into action again to keep his side in the game just after the break when he palmed away Willian's free-kick.

Willian wasted another good chance on the counter-attack as having been behind only once before in the Premier League this season, City were rattled and rarely threatened to get back in the game in the second period.

Guardiola's men may also have to cope without David Silva for some of the festive season after the Spaniard hobbled off holding his hamstring.

Defending set-pieces has often been a rare Achilles heel for City and it was exposed when Luiz made the game safe by rising highest to Hazard's corner and looping a header in off the underside of the bar.

SPURS REACH THIRD

Mauricio Pochettino Tottenham thrust themselves back into the Premier League title race with a 2-0 victory at Leicester City ahead of a Champions League trip to Barcelona in midweek.

The Tottenham manager saw his side brush the Foxes aside despite Harry Kane and Christian Eriksen, two of his most potent players, playing only cameo roles off the bench.

Victory in the East Midlands moved Tottenham back into third, just six points off the top of the Premier League.

In the absence of Kane and Eriksen, Son Heung-min came to the fore to opening the scoring with a left-footed rocket from the edge of the penalty area before crossing for Dele Alli to head home Spurs' second.

Magical Messi dazzles in derby demolition

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Lionel Messi stole the show with two free-kick goals in a blistering display as Barcelona maintained their lead at the top of La Liga with a thumping 4-0 derby win over Catalan rivals Espanyol.

The Argentine superstar curled home two sensational set-pieces and set up another goal as he and his teammates romped to victory at the RCDE Stadium and made sure Barca kept chasing Atletico Madrid and Sevilla at bay.

Atleti and Sevilla had moved level on 28 points with Barca on Saturday after Diego Simeone's side defeated Alaves 3-0 and the Andalusians drew 1-1 at Valencia.

However Messi made sure that Ernesto Valverde's team kept their place at the top of the pile with a mesmerising display alongside front-three partners Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele that left Espanyol dead and buried by half-time.

"He is extraordinary," said Valverde. "The free-kicks, the chances on goal that he creates, what he brings us and what he take from the opponent..."

"It is still very early, La Liga is very tight, but the idea is to be solid away from



Lionel Messi scores his second goal via free kick against Espanyol during Catalan derby

home, knowing that winning is very difficult against every team."

MAGICAL MESSI

Messi began the rout in the 17th minute with a perfectly placed free-kick that arched past a desperate Diego Lopez, and followed that up



by keeping possession under intense pressure before providing the pass for Dembele from which the French attacker curled in a fine second.

It was then Dembele's turn to become provider a minute before the break, slipping in a super through ball that Suarez somehow took on and squeezed



home from near the byline.

Messi capped a dominant team and individual display with his second free-kick of the night, which this time whipped past Lopez which such venom the Spanish goalkeeper could barely move towards it.

Mouctar Diakhaby's header in second half stoppage time for Valencia meant Sevilla missed the opportunity to stay just a point behind Barca.

Pablo Sarabia had put the visitors into the lead nine minutes into the second half and Sevilla had chances to seal the points at the Metalla with Ever Banega and Andre Silva hitting the post.

Khelo India Youth Games to start from Jan 9

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore on Sunday launched the jersey for the second edition of Khelo India, rechristened as Khelo India Youth Games, which will kick start from January 9-20 in Pune.

Building on the success of the inaugural edition, the Minister alongside Khelo India stars Manu Bhaker, Jeremy Lalrinnunga, Saurabh Chaudhary, Lakshya Sen, Esha Singh, Tababi Devi, and Srihari Natraj started the countdown to Khelo India Youth Games with an evocative "#5MinuteAur" campaign.

Scheduled to take place at Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Pune, the Games will see over 10,000 participants from 29 states and seven Union Territories taking part in the two age categories -- under 17 and under 21.

In its inaugural edition, Khelo India had a strong message "Kheloge Kudoge Banoge lajawaab" encouraging more kids to play every day, it was an effort towards changing an age-old belief.

Building on the core of this message through the #5MinuteAur campaign, the Ministry wants India to encourage kids to play for those extra five minutes. "The success of Khelo India School



Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore along with other dignitaries poses during the jersey launch

Games is a testimony to the hunger and multitude of sporting talent in India. Buoyed by the terrific response for Khelo India School Games and with an aim to increase participation in sports across all age groups, we have not just added two sports this year but the games will also be played under two age categories U-17 and U-21 to allow even more enthusiasts to participate and flourish," Rathore said.

"The '5 minute aur' campaign for the Khelo India Youth Games is a reflection of the immense strides we've made and the journey that lies in front of us to make India a truly sporting nation. We hope it will inspire India to work towards incorporating sports as a way of life," Rathore added.

Star India has expanded the broadcast coverage for the second edition. The coverage of the upcoming season will include live telecast in five languages (Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and English) and telecast of all 18 disciplines of both age groups.

Pink Panthers beat Thalaivas



Jaipur Pink Panthers Deepak Hooda attempts to reach half line after successfully scoring touch point against Tamil Thalaivas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jaipur Pink Panthers came up with an accomplished performance to beat Tamil Thalaivas 37-24 in the Inter Zone Challenge Week of Vivo Pro Kabaddi Season 6 in Vizag.

Deepak Hooda (9 points) was the architect of their victory and was ably supported by Anand Patil (5 points) and Ajinkya Pawar (4 points). Sunil Siddhgavali got a high five in defence for Jaipur Pink Panthers.

Tamil Thalaivas started off brightly but faded away as their two key men Ajay Thakur and Manjeet Chhillar had a disappointing game. The victory gives Jaipur Pink Panthers in the hunt for a place in the playoffs.

A couple of successful raids by both teams in the first two

minutes made the score 2-2. It was an evenly contested affair for the first 11 minutes of the match as the defence of Jaipur stood strong against the raiders of Thalaivas with the score level at 7-7.

Jaipur Pink Panthers turned on the pressure with Anand Patil making a two-point raid in the 14th minute. Deepak Hooda's successful raid in the 16th minute led to Thalaivas suffering an all out as they trailed 9-16. Sukesh Hegde scored a raid point in the 20th minute as Tamil Thalaivas went into the break trailing 10-17.

Tamil Thalaivas were struggling to keep up with Pink Panthers as their two key players — Ajay Thakur and Manjeet Chhillar — couldn't get going. Chhillar couldn't

score a single tackle point in almost 30 minutes whereas Thakur had just two points against his name. For the Jaipur Pink Panthers, it was Deepak Hooda who continued his rich vein of form. He came into the match as Jaipur's leading raider and was once again a force to reckon with. Jaipur Pink Panthers held a seven-point advantage as they led 23-16 after 30 minutes of play. Things took a turn for the worse for Thalaivas as they suffered an all out in the 34th minute to trail 18-30. In the last five minutes of the match Jaipur Pink Panthers continued to assert their supremacy over Tamil Thalaivas and ran out comfortable winners in the end.

INDIA 6 WICKET AWAY FROM WIN

Ashwin, Shami strike twice to put India in command as Aus still need 219 on final day to avoid defeat

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Indian bowlers once again exposed the chinks in jittery Australian batting line-up leaving the hosts tottering at 104 for 4 in pursuit of a tough target of 323 on the fourth day of the first Test on Sunday.

With 219 runs required on a fifth day track, it will be an onerous job for the Australian batsmen, who have been struggling against a consistent Indian attack with their ultra defensive approach.

Ravichandran Ashwin (2/44 in 19 overs) and Mohammed Shami (2/15 in 9 overs) were impressive during the final session as Australia lost three wickets in Marcus Harris (26), Usman Khawaja (8) and Peter Handscomb (14).

At end of play, Shaun Marsh was unbeaten on 31 runs (92 balls) while Travis Head was batting on 11 not out (37 balls).

After tea, Australia had an early reprieve in the 13th over when Cheteshwar Pujara failed to latch onto a tough chance at first slip from opener Marcus Harris (26), then on 14 not out, off Mohammed Shami (2/15).

The pacer put up an improved performance as he managed to etch out Harris' wicket in the 17th over, caught behind.

The big blow to Australia's dim hopes of winning this Test came when the dogged Usman Khawaja (8) was caught in the deep off Ashwin as he tried to clear mid-off.

The mistimed skier was caught by Rohit Sharma, who judged well and dived in-front to take the catch.

Peter Handscomb (14) and Marsh then added 24 runs for fourth wicket in 13.2 overs. The former had a 'life' when KL Rahul didn't latch onto a tough chance at short leg off Ashwin in the 34th over.

Three overs later the breakthrough did come when Handscomb hit Shami straight to midwicket and Pujara completed an easy catch.

This was after India lost five wickets for 25 runs in the post lunch session to set a 323-run target. The visitors were bowled out for 307 (106.5 overs) in their second innings thanks largely to some atrocious shot selection from the lower-middle order.

At tea, Australia reached 28-1 (12 overs). Aaron Finch (11), survived a loud lbw appeal on zero off Ishant Sharma (0-14) on only the second ball of this innings. He went for DRS review and the decision was turned because it was a no ball.

Ashwin though nabbed him before tea, as the ball seemed to have brushed his gloves before looping up for keeper Rishabh Pant to claim an easy catch. Replays showed that Finch had made a mistake not going for the DRS review as there was nothing on snickometer or hotspot.

Earlier, India only added 47 runs for their last five wickets after resumption of play post



Virat Kohli celebrates with teammates after Shami dismissed Peter Handscomb, right, during the first Test between Australia and India in Adelaide

AP

lunch.

Rishabh Pant (28) continued attacking Nathan Lyon (6-122) but didn't last long as a wild swing found the fielder at deep cover.

It started the Indian slide. Ashwin (5) and Ajinkya Rahane (70) played uncharacteristic strokes, indicating that a declaration was forthcoming. But India never got to that point.

Ashwin was caught pulling in the deep off Mitchell Starc (3-40) while Rahane was out caught reverse sweeping. Mohammed Shami (0) was out caught first ball, wildly swinging at Lyon.

Ishant Sharma (0) was last out as India were bowled out in just 11.5 overs after lunch. Their last seven wickets cost only 73 runs.

Starting from overnight 151 for 3, India made good progress through the first session as Pujara and Rahane ground down the Australian attack with an 87-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

Pujara started on a positive note with successive fours early in the day's play. India's main threat came from Nathan Lyon, who was using the rough on the pitch to trouble the



batsmen.

Rahane survived an appeal for a catch in the 74th over via DRS when replays showed that the bat was nowhere near the ball.

India's 200 had come up in the 77th over while their 50-partnership came off 103 balls. Pujara reached his 20th Test half-century off 140 balls.

Australia got a breakthrough with Pujara out caught at short leg, off Lyon in the 88th over as the ball looped up.

He walked off to a standing ovation from the Sunday crowd, having faced 450 balls in this match, the second-most for an Indian batsman in a Test on Australian soil after Sachin Tendulkar (525 at Sydney, 2004).

Rohit Sharma (1) came to the crease thereafter, but left quickly, caught at silly point smartly by Peter Handscomb as Lyon picked up his third wicket.

Young Pant though decided to attack and took India past 250 before lunch. At the other end, Rahane had opened up to play pull strokes off the pacers against the new ball and reached his 16th Test half-century off 111 balls.

We expect more from the tail: Bangar

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Indian assistant coach Sanjay Bangar on Sunday highlighted the lower order collapse as one of the areas the team can improve going ahead in the Test series against Australia and said it is now about "crossing the line".

The visitors lost their last seven wickets for 73 runs, and the last five for 25 runs, as they were bowled out for 307 runs in the second innings of the opening Test at the Adelaide Oval.

Bangar said the expectation was of another 25 runs from the lower order, which collapsed as soon as Rishabh Pant holed out after an attacking innings.

"We were expecting at least 25 runs. That's an area where we are continuously looking to improve. And we hope the lower order, especially 9, 10 and 11 show more application than they did today," he said.

"When Rishabh Pant walked in we were 260-odd. Immediately he released the pressure and gave us those quick 30-35 runs. Once he had



put us in that position, we expected that with time, with a better approach and calculation, tactically he could have done better.

"But you don't want to take the fearlessness away from him otherwise. Hitting against the turn and getting those boundaries are high percentage shots. Those are the shots that many courageous players have played."

When asked if Pant needs to relocate at certain aspects of his batting, Bangar replied, "He is a pretty mature player. He is capable of playing both games. He has another aspect to his game and for somebody who is just starting his career, it is an exciting prospect to have."

Lyon remains hopeful of Aus win

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Australia have drawn inspiration from a miraculous draw against Pakistan two months ago and will be going for a win on day five of the first Test against India on Monday.

Lyon has said that the day five wicket at the Adelaide Oval will still be good enough to bat on, and that the hosts can press on to chase the 323-run target set by India.

Australia had pulled off a miraculous draw on the final day in Dubai and Lyon was confident that it could be repeated on Monday.

"I think the pitch has quickened up a little bit and is doing a lot less for the seamers. It's definitely spinning and they've got a world-class spinner. So it's going to be a great challenge for our batters out there with two left-handers, with R Ashwin spinning away," Lyon, who took 6-122 in 2nd innings said.

Usman Khawaja had scored a match-saving 141 against Pakistan on day five of the Test played in October. Skipper Tim Paine too made a significant contribution, an unbeaten 61, to save the game for his team.

"We just spoke about Dubai. We still believe we can win this, and that's the best thing. We still believe we're in this game, it's just about coming out tomorrow (on Monday), winning the first ball, first over, first hour, just breaking it down, very simple," he added.



Gambhir dismisses rumours of joining politics, open to coaching

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The just-retired Gautam Gambhir on Sunday categorically rejected rumours around him joining politics but the former India opener indicated he is open to coaching at the big stage.

The 37-year-old World Cup winner walked into the sunset by scoring a memorable hundred in his farewell Ranji Trophy match against Andhra at the Feroz Shah Kotla.

"Not at all," Gambhir said when asked if he was contesting in the next general elections.

"There are rumours which I have heard as well, probably the reason is maybe I take up social issues as well... For me Twitter was always a platform which is very, very important and where I take up social issues.

"I am not that kind of a character where I am going to start joking on a platform like twitter as well. For me being a citizen of this country it is my right to take up social issues and that probably is the reason why people think I am going to join politics but there is nothing of that sort."

He was also asked if he is keen on taking up coaching

assignments in competitive cricket, and he sounded positive.

"One thing which excites me is action and I am sure action is not about sitting in those AC rooms doing commentary and stuff. I don't know if I am going to be as good a coach as I have been a player," Gambhir said.

"I will have to evaluate whether I can be successful as a coach. Let's see, if that comes around and if I feel that I have the energy, passion and if I have the commitment to do it, I will think about it."

Gambhir said he is willing to help young players in Delhi cricket.

"I am still a government nominee, hopefully I can now try and contribute more now (since he is no longer a player). There won't be any conflict of interest involved, which is very important and there won't be any criticism as well because when I took this up there were a lot of criticism."

"The boys need a lot of good things in DDCA and hopefully I am able to put that word across the executive committee and get those things done from cricket point of view. Apart from that, my job is to get the best out of the boys."

Manish Pandey plays a shot

PTI/File Picture

Pandey fires India A to series triumph

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

Captain Manish Pandey led from the front with an unbeaten 111, firing India A to a series-clinching victory over New Zealand A in the second unofficial ODI of the three match series here on Sunday.

For the second game in a row, India won the toss and opted to field. George Worker (99) and Will Young (102) steered New Zealand A to a competitive 299 for eight.

India A, who had comfortably chased down 309 in the series opener, made short work of the 300-run target this time, getting home with five wickets in hand and an over to spare.

Pandey remained unbeaten with five fours and three sixes while the other contributions came from Shreyas Iyer (59) and Vijay Shankar (59), who both scored their second straight half-century.

The final game of the series will be played here on Tuesday.

India A opens Shubman Gill (25) and Mayank Agarwal (25) got starts but failed to convert for the second game in a row.

Iyer and Pandey then shared a 90-run stand for the third wicket to set the tone for the chase. After Iyer's fall, Pandey stitched a 123-run stand with Shankar to ensure another convincing victory.



Mushfiqur Rahim top scored with an unbeaten 55 as Bangladesh defeated West Indies by five wickets in the first one-day international in Dhaka on Sunday.

Set a modest target after three wickets each from Mashrafe Mortaza and Mustafizur Rahman helped Bangladesh restrict West Indies to 195-9, the hosts sailed to 196-5 in 35.1 overs for a comprehensive win to kick off the three-match series.

Mushfiqur shared 57 runs with Shakib Al Hasan for the fourth wicket to steady Bangladesh's innings after West Indies had reduced the home side to 89-3 on a slow pitch at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Earlier, opener Liton Das scored 41 off 57 balls with five fours for the home side, but not before he was reprieved on five off a no-ball by Kemar Roach.

West Indies owed their total to 43 off



59 balls by opener Shai Hope and contributions from lower order batsmen Roston Chase and Keemo Paul, who made 32 and 36 runs respectively.

The visitors, who opted to bat first, had been restricted to 127-6 after 40 overs despite Hope's effort, but Chase

and Paul put on 51 runs for the seventh wicket to give their bowlers something to fight for.

Left-arm pacer Mustafizur finished with 3-35 after fellow fast bowler Mashrafe grabbed 3-30 playing his 200th ODI — the first Bangladeshi to do so.

Shivank shines in Delhi's draw

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Debutant off-spinner Shivank Vashisht picked up a five-wicket haul as Delhi ended with three points after a draw with Andhra on Sunday, a game that marked the end of Gautam Gambhir's illustrious career.

Delhi, resuming the day at 409 for seven, went on to score 433 in response to Andhra's 390 all out for the all-important first innings lead.

Gambhir made a mark in his farewell game with a solid 112. However, he did not come out to bat on the final day after Delhi dismissed Andhra for 130 all out in 59 overs.

Set an 88-run target, Delhi managed 41 for two in five overs with Anuj Rawat dismissed on what turned out to be the final ball of the day.

Vashisht did the maximum damage for Delhi and ended with figures of 5 for 49 in 20 overs. Left-arm spinner Vikash Mishra took three wickets to take his match tally to five.

With a third draw in four matches, Delhi are yet to taste victory this season and face a huge task of making the knock-outs. They are placed second last in Group B, only ahead of Andhra.



MAHARASHTRA TAKE 3 POINTS

PUNE: Hosts Maharashtra took three points on the basis of their first innings lead after their Elite Group A game against Mumbai ended in a draw.

Maharashtra, who had taken a first innings lead of 79, were bundled out for 254 in their second essay with skipper Rahul Tripathi top scoring with 76.

For Mumbai, Shivam Dubey (3-25) and Shivam Malhotra (3-41) took three wickets each.

Mumbai, who are yet to register a single win, were set an improbable 334-run target and ended up at 135 for 5 when the match was declared drawn.

Experienced Aditya Tare remained unbeaten on 52 in company of Shivam Dubey (8 not out).

Meanwhile at Valsad, the Gujarat versus Railways game ended in a tame

draw with the visitors grabbing 3 points on the basis of the first innings lead.

TN REGISTER FIRST WIN
CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu registered their first win of the season, beating Kerala by 151 runs in Elite Group 'B' match at M A Chidambaram stadium.

The victory and six points renewed Tamil Nadu's hopes after the team had logged only five points from four matches prior to the Kerala game.

Needing 369 to win their third match, Kerala were bowled out for 217 despite half-centuries from Sanju Samson (91) and Sijomon Joseph (55). The two added 93 runs for the third wicket to defy the Tamil Nadu bowlers, who were on the lookout for breakthroughs.

The partnership between Samson and Sijomon Joseph, who showed great resolve, raised Kerala's hopes of pulling off a draw.

Left-arm medium-pacer T Natarajan, who was the star for the home side in the second innings picking up five wickets, broke through by getting Joseph leg-before.

None of the other batsmen showed any resistance as Natarajan triggered the collapse and sealed an important and much-needed win for Tamil Nadu.

Harman, Smriti smash fifties in WBBL

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India T20 captain Harmanpreet Kaur and her deputy Smriti Mandhana hit blistering half-centuries, helping their respective sides to emphatic victories in the Women's Big Bash League here on Sunday.

Harmanpreet struck a breezy 26-ball 56 to help Sydney Thunder Women pile on 192 for 4 from 20 overs against Brisbane Heat Women after electing to bat first.

Sydney Thunders then bowled Brisbane Heat out for 164 in 18.5 overs to register a 28-run win at the North Sydney Oval ground.

Harmanpreet, who was recently involved in a controversy surrounding the dropping of veteran India team-mate Mithali Raj in the semi-final of the World T20, hit six fours and three sixes in her hurricane innings. She was the top-scorer of her side.

Batting at number three, Harmanpreet had two crucial partnerships, first of 41 runs for the third wicket with Naomi Stalenberg (10) and the second of 53 runs for the fourth wicket with cap-



tain Alex Blackwell (33 not out).

Madhana also top-scored for her side Hobart Hurricanes Women with a 41-ball 69 to help her side post 196 for 6 after batting first against Melbourne Stars Women at West Park Oval, Burnie.

Her innings was not as quick as that of Harmanpreet but she hit 13 fours and dealt mostly in boundaries.

Hobart Hurricanes later bowled Melbourne Stars for 124 in 16.5 overs to record a 72-run victory.