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CAPSULE

MINOR FIRE AT PM'S RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX
New Delhi: A minor fire broke at 9 Lok Kalyan Marg inside the residential complex of the Prime Minister but his residence and office were not affected by it, the PMO said. The fire has been brought under control, the PMO added.

J&K HC JOBS OPEN FOR NON-RESIDENTS ALSO
Jammu: Opening the State employment in the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh for candidates from across the country after nullification of Article 370, the Jammu & Kashmir High Court has invited applications from eligible candidates from all over India to fill 33 vacancies with it.

5 KASHMIRI POLITICAL LEADERS RELEASED
Srinagar: Five political leaders, who had been under preventive detention for the past 148 days, were released from the MLA hostel on Monday by the Union Territory administration of Jammu & Kashmir, officials said.

KERALA TOPS NITI'S SDG INDEX, BIHAR WORST
New Delhi: Kerala retained the top rank while Bihar was adjudged as the worst performer in Niti Aayog's SDG India Index 2019, which evaluates progress of States and Union Territories on social, economic and environmental parameters, as per a report released on Monday.

2 DOCTORS MISSING IN DELHI SINCE X'MAS DAY
New Delhi: A man and a woman, both doctors, have been missing from the national Capital since Christmas evening, police said on Monday.

THE COLDEST DAY

119-year record broken, Delhi's max temp dips to 9.4° C

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi is experiencing the coldest winter in over a century. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) declared Monday as a coldest day in the national Capital in 119 years with maximum temperature dipping to 9.4 degrees Celsius at Safdarjung (official) observatory. The Regional Weather Forecast Centre (RWFC) has predicted no relief from cold wave on Tuesday.

Sixteen flights were diverted and four cancelled at the Delhi airport on Monday due to heavy fog, an official said. Many trains were running late. Citing 24 hours temperature trend, the IMD said the Aya Nagar observatory recorded day temperature at 7.8 degrees Celsius, followed by Ridge 8.4 degrees Celsius, Palam 9 and Lodi Road 9.2 degrees Celsius.

Forecasting weekly weather for the national Capital, the RWFC has predicted rain on January 1, 2 and 3 while December 31 is still tagged as "cold wave" day. There will be no respite before January 3 as minimum temperature will fluctuate around 3-4 degrees Celsius, while maximum temperature will be around 16



People walk on a road amid early morning dense fog in New Delhi on Monday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

degrees Celsius January 1 onwards.

Low visibility in Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) delayed thirty trains. Kuldeep Srivastava, head RWFC, said the day temperature was almost half of what is considered nor-

mal for this day of the year. "Today was the coldest day recorded for the December," Kuldeep said.

Around 3.30 pm, the IMD announced that Delhi is likely to break previous records of cold as maximum temperature

was recorded 9.4 degrees Celsius. "Delhi is likely to record the coldest day today in last 119 years for December month as day temperature till 14.30 IST of today has been unusually following a coldest trend with Safdarjung record-

ing 9.4 degrees Celsius and Palam 9.0 degrees Celsius," IMD tweeted.

On Monday, a thick blanket of fog engulfed Delhi and the minimum temperature settled at 2.6 degrees Celsius.



Car plunges into G Noida canal as fog blocks visibility, 6 killed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the fog engulfed Delhi-ANCR on Sunday night dropping the visibility to zero, six people, including two minors, were killed when their Maruti Etriga car skidded off the road and fell into a canal in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida. Five other occupants of the car suffered injuries in the accident that took place

around 11.30 pm on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Mahesh (35), Kishan Lal (50), Neeresh (17), Ram Khiladi (75), Mallu (12) and Netrapal (40), all residents of Sambhal district in Uttar Pradesh. Police said there was one more car accompanying them and they all were going to Delhi when the unfortunate incident occurred.

Tug of war starts for 2 Rajya Sabha berths

GIRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

A tug of war has commenced for two Rajya Sabha berths in Madhya Pradesh. Out of the three seats getting vacated in March 2020, one is certain to go with the BJP.

A common perception is that former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh would get re-nominated due to his proximity with high command and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Kamal Nath.

However, former Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who had been strong contender for the post of Chief Minister, who has been away from the party mainstream affairs for almost a year now, is willing to get Rajya Sabha nomination.

Congress insiders feel Scindia could be rewarded for his efforts in December 2018 state assembly polls by providing a Rajya Sabha berth.

After 15 years back in power, the Congress party is facing a lot of lobbying and pressure towards obliging regional, religious and gender lines. They are groups demand-



ing a woman, a minority or from other smaller groups to get Rajya Sabha berth.

It is, however, the call of Central leadership to take a call on the selection.

Three Madhya Pradesh quota seats, held by Digvijay Singh, Prabhakar Jha and Satyanarayan Jatiya, are going vacant in April 2020.

However, with Digvijay Singh, who also lost lok sabha polls in 2019, the road to Rajya Sabha does not seem a smooth ride for the Scindia royal scion.

Scindia had primarily been in sulking mode for the past one year after the party snatched chief ministership from him and instead handed it over to Kamal Nath after the Assembly polls. The former

Union Minister Scindia had then shifted his focus to leading the party in the state as the PCC chief but the plan too was shelved by the party high command and Chief Minister Kamal Nath still continues to be the PCC president.

With the three Rajya Sabha seats going vacant, Scindia is said to be eyeing one of them to keep himself in thick of things in the politics.

Scindia who had been critical of Kamal Nath Government on several occasions has of late toned down significantly. In the last one month, the two senior leaders have been seen together twice, a marked improvement in their relations for many.

Navy bans smartphones, FB on job Decision comes after 7 personnel held for espionage

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Close on the heels of an espionage racket busted within its ranks and the arrest of seven sailors, the Indian Navy has banned the use of smartphones and Facebook by its personnel within naval establishments and on warships. The arrested sailors were honey-trapped and allegedly blackmailed through social media to pass on sensitive information.

"Directive on use of smartphones and social media for naval personnel were always there. The new instructions on smartphones are that these cannot be used within naval establishments and naval platforms. Social media, use of Facebook, is banned for all naval personnel," Navy sources said here on Monday. For messaging apps, instructions are expected to be issued shortly, they added.

The latest orders are in line with ensuring the security of information, officials said stating the recent incident involving the seven sailors in Visakhapatnam has also been taken into consideration while arriving at this decision. "We do understand that this may come at the cost of some dis-



comfort, however, the decision is in the larger national interest, they added.

The latest order comes days after the Andhra Pradesh Police along with the Navy intelligence unit and Central intelligence agencies arrested seven sailors, besides a hawala operator. The sailors were arrested from Visakhapatnam, Mumbai and Karwar naval establishments. They reportedly passed on unauthorised information about movement of warships and other operational details through social media to a Pakistan handler.

While Visakhapatnam has the Eastern Naval command headquarters besides the sensitive submarine building centre where the nuclear submarines Arihant are under construction, the Western Naval command is based in Mumbai. The lone aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya's base is in Karwar, Karnataka.

The spy racket was busted on December 19 by the Andhra Pradesh Intelligence Department in a joint operation with the Navy code named "Dolphin's Nose." The police claimed the sailors, recruited in 2017, passed information like locations of naval ships and

submarines after they fell into a honey-trap through social media in 2018.

Incidentally, a similar case involving at least two soldiers leaking information through social media came to light two months back in Rajasthan despite the armed forces regularly cautioning its personnel to be careful on social media.

The Army recently warned its personnel against 150 fake social media profiles, including of phoney spiritual gurus and babas, being used by Pakistan's Intelligence officers to honey-trap officials for extracting sensitive military information.

General Bipin Rawat named first Chief of Defence Staff

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As expected Army Chief General Bipin Rawat was on Monday night appointed the first ever Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). He will assume charge on December 31 when he retires as the Army Chief. Vice Chief of Army Manoj Mukund Naravane will take over as the next Army Chief.

The CDS will have a tenure of three years or will serve till the age of 65. Rawat will complete 62 years when he retires as the Army Chief.

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday last week had approved the creation of the CDS. He will function as the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister and head the new department of military affairs in the Defence Ministry.

Since Rawat is the senior most Service Chief, as the CDS he will first among equals among service chiefs.

The CDS, who will draw salary equivalent to the Services Chiefs, will be responsible for rationalising weapons procurement procedures, besides integrating the operation of the armed forces.

Idyllic Kolams speak their minds on CAA

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Agitations by political parties usually bring anxious moments in the minds of ordinary people for fear of violence. The opposition against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 drawing thousands of people to rallies across Tamil Nadu is no exception as there is apprehension that the law and order may go haywire.

But the last two days saw the anti-CAA demonstrations in Tamil Nadu taking a new turn. There are no rallies holding up traffic or throwing normal life out of gear. The agitation has women as protagonists and they are using an age-old Tamil custom to give vent to their resentment against the new legislation. Kolams or Rangolis are the new tools employed

the anti-CAA demonstrators. A day in the life of an ordinary Hindu family begins in Tamil Nadu with the lady of the house cleaning the courtyard or the entrance and decorating the area with Kolams made of white rice powder.

They draw Kolams in different sizes, shapes and models. "It is a way to welcome gods, prosperity and happiness. The expertise with which the Kolams are drawn is a measure of the devotion and dedication the lady has for gods as well as her house," said Vijayashree Ramesh, advocate and social activist.

However, many houses in Mylapore, Adyar and even in Boat Club Roads spotted pro-CAA Kolams making it a Kolam war in Tamil Nadu. The season being Margazhi



Kolams drawn in front of the bungalows of Stalin and Kanimozhi in Chennai on Monday morning

(the period from December 15 to January 15), extra care is taken to make big and beautiful Kolams. There is no need to mention that this is a practice

ingenious style of protest to express their resentment.

Women activists belonging to the DMK and the CPI(M) assembled at Besant Nagar, a high-end residential area and started drawing Kolams with anti-CAA messages and slogans inscribed in them. Taken back by the intruders who drew a kind of "surrealistic" Kolams in front of their houses, the residents opposed the art work because the contents were not in tune with tradition.

Following objections raised by the residents, the activists moved over to the public road where they started drawing Kolams with anti-CAA messages.

But the police detained them under the charges of disturbing public order and they withdrew for the day.

Country's forest-tree cover rises by 5K sqkm, Karnataka tops list

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The forest-and-tree cover in the country has increased by 5,188 square kilometres in the last two years, but in the North-East it is on the decline. India is also on track to achieve its goal of creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes under the Paris Agreement, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said while releasing the biennial India State Forest Report 2019.

According to the report, the forest cover increased by 3,976 sqkm (0.56 per cent), while tree cover by 1,212 sqkm (1.29 per cent).



Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar speaks at the release of the India State of Forest Report 2019 in New Delhi on Monday

7,12,249 sqkm which is 21.67 per cent of the geographic area of the country. Delhi's total forest and tree cover has increased from 305.41 sqkm in 2017 to 324.44 sqkm. Delhi's total forest and green cover is now 21.86 per

cent of the total geographical area (1,483 sq km), the report said.

The tree cover, which refers to small patches of less than 1 hectare outside forests, is estimated at 95,027 sqkm, which is 2.89 per cent of the geographical area.

The top five States in terms of increase in forest cover are Karnataka (1,025 sqkm), Andhra Pradesh (990 sqkm), Kerala (823 sqkm), Jammu & Kashmir (371 sqkm) and Himachal Pradesh (334 sqkm).

However, the North-East did not show positive results as the current assessment showed a decrease of forest cover to the extent of 765 sqkm (0.45 per cent) in the region.

At Gauhar Mahal Christmas Mela evokes warm response

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The rustic backdrop of Gauhar Mahal is embedded with colourful lights and fizzy shades of Christmas. The Christmas Mela is evoking a great response by the shopaholics of the city.

The Christmas Mela is put up at Gauhar Mahal where the shopaholics have an opportunity to shop for Christmas. Here on Monday, a huge crowd was noticed at the venue marking the second last day of exhibition-cum-sale. A variety of lights and decorative items are at display at the exhibition-cum-sale.

The shopaholics of the city were seen captivated towards the colourful and fizzy shades of the State, as the mela also showcased the most renowned dress materials of the State i.e. Chanderi and Maheshwari, the huge collection of handloom materials made up of jute, paper-mache and much more.

The exhibition is all about handicraft and handloom material in which self help groups (SHGs) participated from across the State. The capturing items at the fair are the tribal art, from Warli paintings to Gond all are capturing the eyes of the buyers.

The fair is much exotic for the female buyers as a lot of stuff of home decoration was also available at the fair. Not only this, but, an amazing collection of imitation jewellery and colourful foot wears also attracted the female buyers.

Few separate stalls of home decoration pieces made out of red clay remained the major attraction of the fair. The stalls displayed wind shrines, and other pieces that much wooed the people there. The exhibition cum sale will be on view till Tuesday.

SS Eye Hosp gets upgraded Diabetic Retinopathy Instruments

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Siddh Bhauji, Chairman of the Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital, here on Monday, handed over the upgraded Diabetic Retinopathy Instruments to Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital. These instruments include one Fundus Angiography camera, Hand held Fundus camera and a set of 6 fundus cameras for one each to Sehore, Kalapipal, Shujalpur, Harda, Mandideep and Berasia vision centres. Cost of this project is 45.11 lakh.

This project has been aided by Lions Club International Foundation, Lions Club Bairagarh greater and Lions Club Bhopal Couple. With the setting of these instruments, Diabetic Retinopathy patients would now be able to get the advanced DR treatment facilities in the hospital.

On this occasion, Sant Siddh Bhauji said that Paramhans sant Hirdaram Sahib ji in his life time always preached us that the services to ailing eye patients for saving their vision will bestow joy

This project has been aided by Lions Club International Foundation, Lions Club Bairagarh greater and Lions Club Bhopal Couple

and pleasure in the lives of the volunteers. Sadhu TL Vaswani also shown us the path of service. Sadhu Vaswani ji had once told that the meaning of service is more service in the life of volunteers and serving organizations. He said that if anybody wants to be happy in his or her life, they should always help and serve the poor and the needy.

Siddh Bhauji assured the office bearers of Lions Club that a regular performance report will be sent to the club so as they can know about the fruitfulness of the instruments. State Programme officer Blindness eradication Dr Hemant Sinha said that only at Bhopal over 15,000 patients of Diabetic Retinopathy are available, but due to the lack

of sufficient instruments, organisation and expert services, Quality treatment of all patients could not become possible till now.

He hoped that by the installation of these instruments in Sewa Sadan now more patients would be benefited to get quality treatment. Dr Sinha assured that like Govt grant for the cataract surgeries to private Hospitals he will try to get grants for the DR surgeries also. Medical Director Dr Prerna Upadhyaya stressed the need for timely diagnosis of Retina ailment.

Managing Trustee LC Janiyani shared the progress report of SSEH Lion Bhagwan Tejwani, Lion Anil Jha, Lion Kamal Bhandari, Lion RG Pathak, Lion RK Chourasia and Lion Dilip Dhariwal have also expressed their views, Dr Ridhima Deshpande conducted the programme.

Dr Mansi Kishnani shared about the DR treatment facility available in the hospital. Siddh Bhauji presented mementos to office bearers of Lions Club.

Cyber crook nabbed for duping one of ₹15Lakh

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Cyber Crime Branch, Bhopal, has nabbed Indore-based fraudster who duped the victim of ₹15 lakh in the name of returning ₹4 lakh per month by using company's application.

The accused, posing as Indore-based MMTCS Company's director Mukesh Kumar Sardar, was nabbed by cyber crime after he duped Ratnesha Kumar.

Police said that the victim was lured by the accused of return of ₹4 lakh per month in return of his investment of ₹15 lakh. After the investment, the victim asked for ₹4 lakh which the accused initially evaded with excuses and later stopped all communication after which the victim lodged complaint with the police.

In the complaint, the victim stated that accused posed as director of MMTCS company and lured him of return of ₹4 lakh per month on downloading LookChup application and to like and share the downloaded link. The accused provided a fake agreement to the victim.

Then, the police started searching and tracking the mobile number used by the accused and nabbed him from Indore.

The accused used to take the victims to Indore and would organise meeting with people who have earned big through the application.

Police have recovered mobile phone, SIM card from the accused. The police registered a case under sections 420, 467, 468, 471, 294 and 506 of the IPC.

The victim works with a smart value company which deals in multi-level marketing in Bhopal.

IN BRIEF

SEMINAR ON 'CYBER CRIME AND SECURITY' HELD
Bhopal: Maharani Laxmi Bai Government Post Graduate Autonomous College organised a seminar on "Cyber crime and Security" on Monday at Institute Premises. Cyber Security Expert from AMTAC Global, Akshay Bajpai who is also a Cyber Security Consultant for District Legal Services Authority, Bhopal, leads the session by informing students about cyber security practices which should be followed by every individual in current scenario. Akshay told students about cybercrime, laws, financial frauds, ATM security and other security measures followed on social networking platforms. On this occasion, career counselling head Anima Khare and Sangeeta Saxena were present along with 90 students to show their participation in the session.

NEW WATER POLICY WILL BENEFIT SMALL VILLAGES
Bhopal: Public Health Engineering Minister Sukhdev Panse has said that the new drinking water policy will benefit small villages along with big villages in the summer season through Mal Jal Yojana. He said that in the new policy, the implementation process of Mal Jal schemes in small and far-flung villages has been simplified. Panse said that new hand pumps will be installed in the settlements where 55 litres per person per day drinking water is not available during the summer season. Minister Panse informed that necessary changes have been made in the interest of the settlements under the new drinking water policy. According to this, at least one Government drinking water source will be made available in minimum 300 metre radius. Earlier there was arrangement of one drinking water source in 500 metre radius of the settlement.

5,316 BENEFICIARIES GET TRAINING UNDER SULM
Bhopal: Training was imparted to 5,316 beneficiaries in the year 2019 under State Urban Livelihood Mission. Of these, employment/self-employment was made available to 2298 beneficiaries. The scheme is being implemented in 110 cities. Under this scheme contracts have been made with CEPAT, Indo-German tool and private industrial institutions for training. Under self-employment programme, this year 517 beneficiaries have been given loan of ₹6.28 crore. Under Urban Street Vendors Membership Scheme identity cards were distributed to one lakh 24 thousand 799 street vendors after survey this year. Hawkers-corner was constructed at a cost of ₹1 crore 33 lakh to facilitate street vendors. As many as 133 shelters (ashrams), in 55 urban bodies with a population of over one lakh and at district headquarters are being run under this scheme. In these, people without shelter are provided free housing and medical facilities.

74-yr-old injured in road accident dies

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 74-year-old man who was injured after his bike slipped near 74 Bungalow area on December 26, died on Sunday. TT Nagar police have started investigation.

According to the police, the deceased, identified as Zahid Ansari, was rushed to Narmada hospital after he was

injured. After four days of treatment, he died on Sunday while undergoing treatment at People hospital at Malviya Nagar.

The body was sent for post-mortem after the preliminary investigation.

The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and have started further investigation.

The deceased had gone to 74 Bungalow area and while he was on his way back home he met accident.

He was taken to Narmada hospital where he was referred to People hospital in Malviya Nagar and later he died on Sunday.

Meanwhile, a 24-year-old girl died on Sunday who consumed poisonous substance to

commit suicide by hanging from the ceiling at her house in Prem Nagar under Chola Mandir police station area.

The deceased identified as Archana Baresia died while undergoing treatment at hospital who consumed poisonous substance on December 27.

Police have not found any suicide note which could help

in the revealing the reason behind the suicide but it was found that the deceased used to have fights in the family.

After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem and a case under section 174 of the CrPC. The statements of the family are yet to be recorded which could help in the investigation.

25-metre Standard Air Pistol Junior and Senior games played

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The 25-metre Standard Air Pistol Junior and Senior and 50-metre Pre Pistol Junior and Senior men's games were played under the 63rd National Shooting Championship Competition.

The championship is being played at Madhya Pradesh State Shooting Academy. The winners were awarded medals by Special DG Sanjay Rana. Joint Director Sports Vinod Pradhan presented the sapling as a memento to the Chief Guest Sanjay Rana.

Joint Director BS Yadav, NRAI Secretary Shri Nimit Chhapra, Assistant Director OP Harod, Shipra Srivastava were present on the occasion.

Gaurav Rana of Air Force won the gold medal by scoring 555 points in the 50m Free Pistol Junior Boys Individual event. Punjab's Arjun Singh was second with 548-11 points

and Nikhil Chandila of Haryana was third with 548-9 points.

In the team competition, Punjab finished first with 1630 points, Haryana with 1599 points and Uttar Pradesh with 1595 points stood third.

In the competition, BSF's Sib Kumar Ghosh finished first in the 50m pistol men's individual event with 556 points, Gaurav Rana of Air Force with 555 points and Jitu Rai of Army with 554 points. In the team event, Army Marksmanship Unit finished first with 1648 points, Rajasthan with 1638 points and SSB with 1636 points.

Similarly, in the 25m standard pistol men's event, Vijay Veer Sidhu of Chandigarh was first with 580 points, Gurpreet Singh of Army with 578 points and Udayveer Sidhu of Chandigarh was second with 574 points and Haryana was third with 1689 points



Children artists of Kalapadya Bharatnatyam dance academy perform Bharatnatyam at a cultural event at Ravindra Bhawan in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

House burgled, valuables worth lacs taken away

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Miscreants decamped with valuables worth ₹2.5 lakh including ₹50,000 cash from Deepak Society under Chunabhatti police station area late in the evening on Sunday.

According to the police, the victim Anand Nema had gone to Salkanpur for visiting temple in the morning on Sunday and when they returned in the evening, they found broken locks and open doors and on entering valuables were found missing.

In the complaint, the victim has claimed that gold jewelry worth ₹2 lakh and ₹50,000 cash were found burgled.

Based on the complaint and after the preliminary investigation, the police registered a case under sections 457 and 380 of the IPC. Victim works as a

contractor. The victim is a resident of Deepak Society.

Police suspects that the burglars were aware regarding the whereabouts of the family and committed the burglary when the family was away. The domestic help and security guard of the locality would be questioned.

In the complaint, the victim has claimed that jewelry and cash were missing. The total loss in the burglary was around ₹3.5 lakh. Police have detained few suspects in the investigation who would be quizzed.

During the investigation, police found that security guard are deployed in the society and maintain vigil round the clock.

Interestingly neighbours have expressed ignorance regarding burglary which was committed in broad day light. The FSL team visited the house and started investigation.

Terracotta Glaze Pottery workshop held

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under the series of Skill Development programme a Terracotta Glaze Pottery workshop was organised by Indra Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) Bhopal from November 01 to December 31, 2019 concluded on Monday.

Rashmi Shukla, coordinator of this pottery workshop told that 19 registered participants had participated in this training workshop and created around 365 objects efficiently by using about 165 glaze and 200 terracotta materials. During the workshop, in the primary stage, participants were imparted training to develop pottery by Slab, Koyling and Pinch technique. In secondary stage, they were imparted training of Biscuit firing & glaze technique in 800 degree Celsius temperature followed by Glaze firing in 1050 degree Celsius temperature.

On this occasion, Prof Sarit K Chaudhuri, Director, IGRMS Bhopal congratulated all the participants and said that IGRMS is one of the best Institutions of learning and empowerment. Further he appreciated the work of the participants and said that the terracotta objects created by the participants are very impressive and seems like that these objects were made by veteran people regularly engaged in such work. IGRMS will organize such workshop on regular basis which will be beneficial for the people who wants to participate in such workshop. He requested the participants to share their experiences in social medial platform so that maximum people will be enlightened.

Thereafter, certificates were distributed to all the participants by Prof Sarit K Chaudhuri, Director and DS Rao, Head of Office, IGRMS Bhopal. Programme coordination and vote of thanks was given by Rashmi Shukla, Assistant Keeper.



Chancellor of Rabindranath Tagore academy and writer Santosh Choubey being felicitated at a programme titled 'Pranaam-2019' during foundation day of Dushyant Kumar Memorial Manuscript Museum in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

विशेष संक्षिप्त पुनरीक्षण-2020

क्या आपका वोटर आईडी कुछ इस तरह है?....

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1950

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Visitors enjoy cool weather at the banks of Upper Lake in Bhopal on Monday

Pioneer photo

Panna dist, famous for diamond, makes global identity in tiger conservation

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Panna district, famous for diamond, has made a global identity in tiger conservation by completing 10 years of successful tiger reintroduction. Panna Tiger Reserve, had lost tigers few years ago, is today home for some 55 tigers, small and big. Due to the tendency of tigers to stay solitary, this area is also becoming smaller for tigers.

Impressed by success story of reintroduction, many countries are now making efforts for tiger restoration in their countries by studying Panna model.

Panna jungle was once home for tigers due to which it was granted the status of Tiger Reserve in the year 1994. Then came a time when in the year 2009, there was not a single tiger left in this tiger reserve. Wildlife experts and Panna citizens were surprised to see the situation. Two tigers were brought to Panna from Bandhavgarh and Kanha Tiger Reserve in March-2009. They were named T-1 and T-2. After this, a tiger was brought from Pench Tiger Reserve on December 6, which was named T-3.

Tiger T-3 left Panna Tiger Reserve and went back towards the south direction. The vigilant park management chased

it continuously for 19 days with great difficulty and finally managed to bring it back on December 25 after rendering it unconscious.

Constant brainstorming and research to bring the tiger back to the tiger reserve continued. For this, the Forest Department contacted the Lost Wilderness Foundation. The Foundation first encouraged the depressed park management and then prepared them through training for the difficult and long journey ahead.

One of the main reasons why tigers vanished from the Panna Tiger Reserve was the local Pardi community who considered hunting as their traditional occupation. The Pardihs considered hunting as the yardstick of their valour. To convince them to leave their ancestral business was a big challenge. These people were poor as well as illiterate. Therefore, along with changing the mentality of the Pardi community, ways were explored to provide them with new employment opportunities.

After taking them into confidence, they were trained to support forest guides and tourists on natural excursions, so that they could earn sufficient income. Their tour "Walk with the Pardihs" became quite

popular with the tourists. The park management also utilised the in-depth knowledge of the Pardihs about forest to increase tourism.

They charm the tourists with various sounds of birds and the seed carvings. To connect this community with the mainstream of development, their children were admitted to boarding schools.

Lost Wilderness Foundation is currently working in 15 tribal habitats in Panna Tiger Reserve. The Foundation teaches the tribals how to avoid encounters with tigers and stop the wildlife-human conflict.

Park management has increased vigilance against hunting. Earlier, the tribals hunted animals and sold their organs illegally. Many times when tigers entered the village in search of food and killed the cattle, the villagers also killed the tiger with trap or poisoned them.

Also, the biggest reason for the extinction of tigers was the illegal hunting of tigers by outsiders. The hunters would kill tigers by dodging the forest guards in the dark of night.

Return of Tiger T-3 to the tiger reserve changed history. In 2010, tigress T-1 gave birth to cubs in April and T-2 gave birth to cubs in October.

Sex racket busted, 15 nabbed

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Crime Branch police busted sex rackets at MP Nagar and Baghsewania and nabbed 15 persons including 10 women on Monday.

At Baghsewania, the raid was conducted after neighbours reported suspicious activities at the Shine Spa & Beauty Salon in Hoshangabad Road in Baghsewania area.

Acting on a tip-off, regarding visiting of different people including women who would stay at the spa for long crime branch police raided the place and found that flesh trade was operated at the spa.

Police found that the main accused women used to operate the racket by bringing women from different parts of the state and other states.

The nabbed accused revealed that the visiting women involved in flesh trade posed as employees at spa while men would visit as customers.

After receiving information police started to investigate and found that sex racket was operated and during the investigation information was received that women in big number are gathered at the place after which police conducted raid and nabbed



Persons in compromising position.

After the preliminary investigation, the police have registered a case under

Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act (PITA).

The nabbed men were identified as Rohit Chourasia(30) of Anand

Nagar, Rehan Khan (20) of Chola Mandir, Shivam Soni(25) of Piplani, Dev Rathore(25) and Lakhan Verma alias Bhura (32) of Sehore.

In another case of flesh trade, sex racket operated from MP Nagar two women were nabbed from a flat who were involved in flesh trade.

At the flat small rooms were carved for operating flesh trade.

Police personnel unveiled the sex racket by visiting the flat posing as customer and later team raided the place where two women were nabbed.

2019 boon for MP's farmers and unemployed youth

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The past year has brought a new dawn for the farmers and unemployed youth in Madhya Pradesh. The State Government has also opened up avenues for financial assistance giving priority to the farmers and youth in the field of agriculture and horticulture and food processing. Both these areas have become a strong medium of additional income for the farmers and youth.

Now the farmers of the state have started to adopt the business of horticulture and food processing along with farming. Unemployed youth are also becoming self-sufficient by adopting this sector with modern technology.

After the formation of the new government in the state, the biggest challenge was to make the farmer prosperous and provide employment to the youth. The government has increased the subsidy of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe farmers from 50 to 70 percent in the vegetable and spice area expansion scheme in horticulture.

Due to this, farmers are getting grants up to ₹ 70 thousand per hectare. The grant is also being provided on the material used for making pavilions of plastic crate and vine vegetable crops along with seeds. This has resulted in a reduction of 20 to 25 percent in loss of crops incurred in transporting horticulture products from the farm

to the market.

Good quality of crop products has started fetching more value in the market. The government has now decided to give a grant for cultivating up to two hectares at the rate of Rs 7 to 12 thousand per hectare on pavilion building material of vine crops on the demand of the farmers. By this, the time of production of the crop will be increased from 6 to 7 months by planting vine vegetables on the pavilion.

Also, due to very good quality of production, the market rate will also increase by 20 to 25 percent. This way, farmers will be able to get an income of ₹ 2 to 3 lakhs per hectare from crops like bitter melon (karela), bottle gourd (lauki) and sponge gourd (gilki).

Considering the possibilities of food processing from this year in the State, 1,000 acres of saplings of Totapari mango variety is being planted in Hoshangabad, Harda and Betul districts. In this, a special plan for planting saplings has been implemented by providing a grant-in-aid of ₹ 56 thousand per acre to the farmers.

The scheme will also be extended to other districts next year. This variety of mangoes can generate income from ₹ one to one and a half lakh per acre for the farmers.

Along with this, employment will also be generated by the establishment of mango processing industrial units in the State.

HEMA Hr Sec School students bring laurels

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Adding another feather to the cap of achievements of HEMA Hr Sec School managed by Heavy Electricals Malayalee Association Education Society, students brought laurels to the school by winning various competitions. Students bagged various prizes in the competitions organised by Herbal Mela. Ahan Biswas of class III won first prize in Fancy Dress while third prize was bagged by Ankit Rai of class II. Avani Patel of class 4th took away 1st prize in Mono acting through her exemplary performance.

Byju's conducted a competition to bring out the hidden knowledge and know how of various subjects where in 2 students of the school reached the 2nd level. Drawing Competition was held in the school to showcase the talent and creativity of Kindergarten students. The participants actively participated and wondrously showcased their penchant for drawing.

The enthusiasm among the participants was worth working and amazing.

Philip Panicker, President, HEMA Education society said "From the humble beginning we

made in 1973, having crossed many memorable milestones, today our school is a dream destination for students, teachers and parents alike. I wish to begin celebrating our success with an expression of gratitude to our team, past and present, whose vision, wisdom and missionary zeal inspired all stakeholders to work with passion and commitment. The school is performing very well which is evident from the fact that the school strength has increased manifolds over the years and every year there is an increase in the strength.

To cater for this rising demand many more additions have been done to the infrastructure. The school offer education from class KG I to class XII based on CBSE curriculum. School is synonymous with excellence. It envisages imparting the best of education along with molding a child's personality and equipping him with all the necessary skills to lead a happy, disciplined and successful life. School believes inspiring and motivating the child to discover their talents.

At school, multifaceted platforms are provided to the students to unveil and ventilate their

The school is performing very well which is evident from the fact that the school strength has increased manifolds over the years and every year there is an increase in the strength

hidden potential and excel in their respective fields be it academics, sports or an extra-curricular pursuit".

A Shashi Kumar, Secretary, Ajit Kumar, Treasurer and other Governing Members of HEMA Education Society congratulated the winners for their unmatched achievement.

HEMA Education Society formed in 1973, as an offshoot of HEMA, (Heavy Electrical Malayalee Association) the socio-cultural organization in the BHEL township, which is affiliated to the Bharat Heavy Electricals Cultural and National Integration Samithi (BHECNIS). The Society started HEMA Hr. Sec. School in 1973 under M.P. Board and is now affiliated to CBSE Delhi.



Governor Lalji Tandon felicitates youth volunteers for their excellent work in cleanliness campaign at a programme organised by Nehru Yuva Kendra Sanghathan at Raj Bhawan in Bhopal on Monday

Pioneer photo

Four-day annual sports meet 2019 held at Scope Campus

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A four-day annual sports meet 2019 was organised at Scope Campus on Monday. The participants in this annual event played cricket, volleyball, chess, badminton, table tennis, 100 m race.

Organised by AISECT headquarters, all the AISECT affiliated institutions participated with full enthusiasm and enthusiasm. In the final of the cricket event, the team of Rabindranath Tagore University won by defeating the Super Kings, the team of ICT headquarters. In this, the goal of 50 runs was given by the Super Kings team, which was easily achieved by Rabindranath Tagore's team. Man of the match was awarded to Rahul. The title of Best Bowler was also given to Rahul for taking 12 wickets in the tournament.

Best Batsman Title Shami got it. Man of the series was given to Parvez. In the women's team, Sect-Scope's team became Vijay. In the volleyball final match, the technology team led by Venkat Raman defeated the UID team.

In badminton, Sanju and Rakesh came first in the mail category, while Umesh Kumar and Nitin Dhemole came in second

place. Pinky Raghuvanshi and Roshni Gaur stood first in the female doubles category. Meenakshi Dayal and Sonam Dhakad came in second place.

Participants in the male and female categories also participated in carrom.

In this, Javed Pathan and Anil Rawat were the winners in the mail. In second place were Venkat Raman and Ramdeen Vishwakarma. Sonam Dhakad and Pinky Raghuvanshi stood first in the female category.

Hina Srivastava and Malini stood second in the second place. In chess, Mahendra Dhun was first in the mail category and Venkat Raman Iyer second. Pinky Raghuvanshi was first and Riddhima Chaturvedi second in the female category.

100 m In the race, Rahul stood first and Narendra Awasthi was second. Sonali Raghuvanshi stood first in the female category and Poonam Nagar on the second.

Rajat Chaturvedi was the winner in the Table Singles category of Table Tennis. Nalini Khare became the winner in the female category.

The winners of all the events were awarded by Director of AISECT, Siddharth Chaturvedi and Chief Public Relations Officer Mahavir Upadhyay.

Delightful Bharatnatyam performance held at Ravindra Bhavan

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A delightful Bharatnatyam performance was held at Ravindra Bhavan Auditorium here on Monday.

The classical event was organised by Kalapadm Bharatnatyam Dance Academy, Bhopal. The Bharatnatyam performance was choreographed by Bharti Hombal.

The evening began with the alluring Bharatnatyam performance by little artists. It is to be noted that dancers from 3 years to 60 years performed in the event. Their speedy footwork and wondrous expressions marked their beautiful performance.

They undoubtedly maintained the purity of Bharatnatyam performance in their presentation.

An excellent blend of sensuous movements and graceful footwork with absolute control on rhythm was the perfor-

The evening began with the alluring Bharatnatyam performance by little artists. It is to be noted that dancers from 3 years to 60 years performed in the event. Their speedy footwork and wondrous expressions marked their beautiful performance

musicians. This was followed by Alarippu, which is the first dance piece that the Bharatnatyam dancers learn, the children left the audience spell bound.

The students also performed Hanuman Stuti. The students then presented dance pieces like Shambho Mahadev, Jai Janardan and more. The performance was very rhythmic and filled with lot of enthralling footworks that was also enjoyed by the audience. It was a feast for the classical dance lovers.

While giving the delightful performance the dancers refined the dramatic and rhythmic aspects, delighting audiences with the performance over rhythm and the stylized presentation.

It is to be noted that the event was organised to mark the annual function of the dance academy.

The audience enjoyed every bit of the show.



National Cadet Corps contingents take out a swachhata awareness rally in Bhopal on Monday

Pioneer photo

CORPORATION BANK (A premier public sector bank) Dewas Branch: 123-A, Kalani Bagh, Agra- Mumbai Road, Dewas Ph: 0772-253206, 2532071 E-mail: cb1209@corpbank.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties)

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Corporation Bank under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice date mentioned below to the following borrowers/guarantors, calling upon them to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notices within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notices.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/guarantor and the public in general that undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Act rule 2002, on date mentioned below.

The borrowers/Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Corporation Bank, Dewas Branch for an amount herein below mentioned & interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower Property Owner	Description of Mortgage Property	Demand Notice Dt. Possession Date Total Outstanding Amt.
Borrower : Mr. Mahendra Morya S/o Omprakash Morya, Jamana Nagar, Maxi Road Dewas (M.P)	EMG of Registered Mortgage of House/shed on Land Survey No 194/4 Old/194/2 Piki New & Municipal No 27/1 at Village Bilawali Near, jamna Nagar A.B. Road Teh and Dist Dewas Boundaries: East- Back Lane Than House Ramnarayan Dhakad West- A.B. Road, North-house of Madhav Singh Dhakad, South-road	01/10/2019 24/12/2019 PMEGP- ₹ 4, 19, 615/- PMECC- ₹ 10, 53, 980/- +interest & other charges thereon

Date: 30-12-2019, Place: Dewas Authorised Officer, Corporation Bank

AXIS BANK LTD. Registered Office: "Trishul", Opp. Samartheswar Temple, Law Garden Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad - 380006, (Gujarat) Branch Office- Axis Bank Collection Department : Z-13, 2nd Floor, Near ICICI Bank, Zone 1, MP Nagar, Bhopal-462011, (M.P.)

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISION TO RULE 8 (6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s)concerned that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession (as Detailed below) of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Axis Bank Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on (shown below in respective column) for recovery of the amount (shown below in respective column) due to the Axis Bank Secured Creditor from respective borrower(s) and guarantor(s)shown below. The reserve price and the earnest money deposit of respective properties as shown below in respective column.

Sr. No.	Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor/Mortgagor Name	Date of Demand Notice U/Sec. 13(2) of SARFAESI Act	Date of Possession	Description of Property/House having Total area about	Reserve Price (in Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.)	Outstanding dues (in Rs.)	Last date and time for submission of bids	Date and Time of opening of bids.
1.	Mr. Nikhil Sharma, Mr. Ram Sharma	22/05/2017	18/05/2018	All such pieces or parcels of a diverted land/ property in the name of Shri Nikhil Sharma S/o Prakash Sharma House No. 155 'Amaltas' Comprising of Plot area 104.12 sq.mtr. which is a part of land revenue Survey No. 168/1 & 168/2, situated at faith Kala empire, Village shahupur, P.H. No.28, Tehsil Huzur, Dist Bhopal. Bounded By : On or Towards East. 7.50 mtr. wide road, On or Towards West. Plot No. 130, On or Towards North. Plot No. 154, On or Towards South. Plot No. 156	₹ 29,76,000/-	₹ 2,97,600/-	₹ 33,80,400/- (Rs. Thirty Three Lakh Eighty Thousand Four Hundred Only) As on 22.05.2017	04/02/2020 (Till 4.00 PM)	05/02/2020 (11.30 AM)

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in the secured creditor's website i.e. <https://www.axisbank.com/auction-retail>

Date: 31/12/2019, Place: Bhopal Authorised Officer-Axis Bank Ltd.

Cong Ministers, MLAs hold protest march, dharna against CAA

PNS ■ LUDHIANA

Punjab Congress on Monday organized a protest march and dharna at Ludhiana to protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Led by Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh and the state Congress president Sunil Jakhar, the state Congress leaders including Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, came out on streets to raise voice against Narendra Modi Government and the "draconian" Act.

Lashing out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for trying to "change the Constitution's preamble", the Chief Minister called upon all Indians to unite against their divisive and dangerous attempts to destroy the nation's secular fabric with the CAA.

At the same time, Capt Amarinder declared that Punjab Government will not allow implementation of CAA in Punjab and the Congress would continue to fight it tooth and nail.

The protest march started from Daresi Ground and culminated at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Matarani Chowk.

Capt Amarinder, addressing Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) leaders and workers at a protest march and dharna, also joined by All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary in-charge of Punjab affairs Asha Kumari, warned that the BJP could not get away with its nefarious designs. He pointed that protests against the draconian Act were going on currently in 16 states, including Punjab.

Reading out the preamble, he said that it was the very basis of India's foundation, which nobody could disturb. "While Articles of the Constitution are amended from time to time, not just in India but across the world, no one can tolerate tinkering with its basic structure," he said, pointing out that even the United Nations had termed the CAA discriminatory.

Capt Amarinder, referring to the manhandling of AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi in Uttar Pradesh, said that the police could not have indulged in such behaviour without Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's knowledge. "Aren't you ashamed of such actions," he asked Yogi Adityanath, warning that the Congress would not forget this incident and tables would turn one day.

Pointing out that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) students had also passed a resolution against CAA, the Chief Minister observed that while the entire world was expressing concern over the ramifications of the legislation, "those sitting in Delhi continue to be adamant, refusing to pay heed to the voice of the nation".

Capt Amarinder pointed out that Sri Guru Nanak Dev had also taught secularism, as manifest in his words "na koi hindu, na koi musalman, sab rab de bande" (nobody is a Muslim or a Hindu, all are

God's people). He added that the protest march, held in Punjab's economic heartland, would help send the anti-CAA message across India.

Later, in an informal chat with mediapersons, Capt Amarinder reiterated that his government would continue to oppose the Centre's attempt to destroy India's secular character and change the Preamble of the Constitution.

On the manhandling of Priyanka by UP police, he termed the incident shameful. "It is shameful that Guru Nanak Dev ji's secular ideology was being attacked while his 550th birth anniversary was being celebrated across the world," he added.

Earlier, senior party leader and Finance Minister Manpreet Badal recalled Mahatma Gandhi's removal from a train in South Africa, prompting him to warn the white officials that he will throw them out of his country.

Likening the current situ-

ation with that incident, Manpreet said that if Modi tried to send Indians out of the country, the Congress will turn him (Modi) out of India.

Noting that the BJP had secured a mere 39 percent votes in the last Lok Sabha elections, he asserted that with the remaining 61 percent supporting the opposition parties, the Modi Government could not get away with the enactment of such black laws.

PPCC president Sunil Jakhar lambasted the 'kale angrez sitting in Delhi' (BJP-led central government) for trying to implement the agenda which the pre-Independence 'goras' (whites) had failed to execute.

The people accepted the demonetization and GST assaults patiently but had now lost all their patience, he said, pointing to the country-wide anti-CAA protests, led by students.

Pointing to Modi's shocking claims of identifying people by their clothes, Jakhar flayed the tyranny of the NDA

Government, warning that no citizen would escape the ill-effects of the Centre's actions.

He took a dig at the BJP leadership's 'tukde tukde gang' remarks, saying that the NDA itself was a 'tukde tukde' government, which was out to divide the country.



Preparations underway for 'Jashn-e-Bhopal' a cultural mega event with sound and light show at floating stage in the Upper Lake for new year celebrations, in Bhopal on Monday
Pioneer photo

PMO takes cognisance of Rishikesh schoolgirl's complaint

Niharika had complained about poor sanitation, bad condition of roads

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

Though the authorities in Uttarakhand ignored the complaint made by a school girl in Rishikesh, the office of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi took cognisance of the girl's complaint regarding the poor condition of sanitation and roads in this town.

Niharika Makhija, a 13-year-old student who studies in Class VIII in Rishikesh said that she had sent a letter to the Dehradun district magistrate and the Chief Minister on the pathetic condition of roads and poor sanitation in Rishikesh. However, since no action was taken, she sent her complaint to the Prime



Minister's office earlier this month. The PMO forwarded the

complaint to the municipal corporation of Rishikesh, directing it to take necessary action. Niharika said that she came to know about the cognisance taken by the PMO when the corporation officials including the municipal commissioner Narendra Quiriyal visited her home on Monday. He said that he had come to her home after receiving her complaint from the PMO along with instructions to do the needful. The municipal commissioner said that he had received a letter from the PMO in this regard, after which he had met the girl. He further said that he had inspected various sites and directed municipal staff to resolve problems stated by her without delay.

Opp ups the ante against Randhawa

Seeks his arrest, Dismissal from cabinet

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A day after Punjab Cabinet Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa filed a police complaint alleging a "doctored" video was being circulated on social media showing him making derogatory remarks about a Sikh guru which he never made, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) on Monday opened front against the senior Congress leader.

Upping the ante against the Congress Minister, SAD has demanded an immediate action against Randhawa "for committing a sacrilege against the founder of the Sikh religion". AT the same time, the saffron party has urged the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder

Singh to dismiss Randhawa, besides arresting him in view of his controversial video. That is not all! The Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), known as the Sikhs' mini parliament, has also sought action against the Punjab Minister.

Saddened by the video which has gone viral depicting Randhawa ridiculing and laughing at Guru Nanak Dev, the former SAD minister and party's senior vice president Mahesh Inder Singh Grewal said that a case, under 295 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), should be registered against Randhawa.

"The State Government should immediately dismiss him from his Cabinet rank as a minister and apologize to the Sikh sangat for its senior party functionary to have committed a sacrilege of this huge magnitude," he said adding that the

Minister-level people are ridiculing Guru Nanak Dev when we are celebrating his 550th parkash purab. Lashing out at the "false sanctimonious pretence" of the State Government, Grewal said that a case was registered within no time when the Christian community complained of sacrilege in Ajanala and here a senior Minister in the Congress party is being protected even though there is enough evidence to register a case.

Randhawa's statement that it is a "doctored video" to falsely implicate him can be and should be checked as the laboratory at Hyderabad is equipped to discern if it's his voice or someone else's.

"The Chief Minister should immediately ask the police to register a case and a prompt, fair investigation should be done to assuage the anger at the blasphemy committed by a senior Minister serving in the

State Government," he added. Demanding Randhawa's dismissal at the earliest possible by the Chief Minister, the SAD also demanded a fair and thorough investigation by the police. "Randhawa can use his status and office to circumvent the inquiry and his statement that it is a doctored video is nothing but prevarication tactics to delay and sabotage the blasphemous statement made by him," said Grewal.

Meanwhile, BJP's national secretary Tarun Chugh said that Randhawa not only deserves to be dismissed from the Cabinet but should also be booked and arrested for his comparison of Guru Nanak Dev to the Chief Minister.

Terming it as "gross sacrilege", Chugh said that Randhawa has committed an unpardonable sin. "The video which has gone viral and is being condemned by one and all belongs to a painting exhi-

bition at Delhi," he said. "While the whole world is celebrating the 550th parkash purab of Guru Nanak Dev with utmost devotion and humility, Randhawa has chosen to compare the great Guru with the Chief Minister, which is highly unfortunate. It is sad that a Minister of the government which claimed to be the champion in celebrating the 550th parkash purab was indulging in such a blasphemy," he said.

Saying that the Minister's utterance has hurt the sentiments of Sikhs, Chugh demanded that Randhawa needs to be dropped with immediate effect, booked and arrested for what he has spoken.

Notably, Chugh has also shot off a letter to Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore asking him to dismiss the Minister if the Chief Minister fails to do so.

NEW YEAR EVE Chandigarh Police to get strict on hooliganism

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Union Territory Police on Monday said those drinking liquor at public places, creating noise pollution through exhaust of vehicles and indulging in hooliganism on New Year eve will be dealt with strictly.

In a statement on Monday, the Chandigarh Police said it will conduct a special drive against drunken driving and speeding in the city on the eve of New Year-2020.

"Strict legal action shall be taken against those driving under the influence of alcohol," the statement said, adding vehicles of drunk drivers will be impounded, penalty of Rs. 10,000 may be imposed and their driving licenses may be suspended.

The Police also made several stretches Vehicle Free Zone

from 10 pm on December 31 to 2 am on January 1 in the interest of safety and security of the general public as well as peaceful celebration of New Year-2020.

These roads are Inner Market roads of Sector 7, Sector 8, Sector 9, Sector 10, Sector 11, Sector 17, Inner Mkt road of Sector 22, Road in front of Leisure Valley, Sector 10, from Aroma Light Point to Small Chowk near Dispensary and around Elante Mall, Industrial Area Phase 1.

The Police requested general public is requested to make own parking arrangements for their vehicles in the vicinity of these road stretches. Residents whose houses are accessed using the above said road stretches, have been asked to carry a valid identity card and residence proof in order for their facilitation.

Intelligence dept will be modernised, says Anil Vij

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij on Monday expressed disappointment over functioning of intelligence department of the Police saying it will be modernised soon with equipment, appointments, training of staff among others. A three member committee headed by Additional Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan and two senior police officers-DGP Prabhat Ranjan Deo and DGP KP Singh has been formed and they have been asked to give suggestion about the measures to be taken to improve the efficiency intelligence department.

It may be mentioned here that in 2015, when Vij was the state Health Minister, he had alleged that the CID was 'spying' on him as he had caught an officer of the department.

The Home Minister said Haryana has its own Police Act but it has not been implemented strictly so far. Police rules will be implemented strictly in the State, he said.

High Power Tariff: AAP to submit memorandums today

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Slamming Punjab Government over the proposed hike in the electricity tariff which was already on the higher side, Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Punjab unit on Monday said that it would reach out to the Government demanding roll back on the "anti-people" decision besides changing the power purchase agreements with the private companies.

Seeking a rollback on the proposed exorbitant hike, and pressing upon tweaking the

"one-sided" power agreements entered into by the erstwhile Badal government, AAP leaders would submit memorandums in every district of the State through respective Deputy Commissioners (DCs) on Tuesday.

AAP MLAs Aman Arora and Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer, in a joint statement, described the sharp hike the electricity tariff as an "anti-people" decision of the government, which would hit all sections of the society and thus, the government should null an immediate roll back.

"Government's decision to

raise the electricity tariff further by 36 paise per unit in the State from January 1, 2020, is a lopsided, which would leave every consumer in a fresh financial quandary," they said.

Citing an example of the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi Government providing cheaper electricity to the people there, they said that the Punjab Government should replicate the Delhi model in the State.

"If the government in Delhi could afford cheaper electricity to consumers in Delhi, why couldn't Punjab government do in the state?" they asked.

Differences crop up between Home Minister and CMO in Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Differences have cropped up between Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij and Chief Minister's Office (CMO) over raids conducted in Regional Transport offices by the CM's flying squad on Monday with the assistance of police without informing the Home Department and Police chief.

Home Minister Anil Vij also expressed his displeasure over transfer of nine senior IPS officers as he was not consulted in their transfer.

While talking to reporters, Vij said, "I was not informed in the transfer of nine IPS officers."

On Monday, Haryana government took major action against alleged irregularities in Regional Transport offices. Raids were conducted in the RTO offices of all the districts in the state since Monday morning. Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has asked the officers for the report to be submitted by Monday evening.



Home Minister Anil Vij also expressed his displeasure over transfer of nine senior IPS officers as he was not consulted in their transfer

The CM Flying Squad carried out the raids, headed by CID Chief Anil Kumar Rao. Raids were conducted at RTO of Bahadurgarh, where officials were absent. Empty bottles of liquor were recovered from the RTO office in Rewari, sources said. Officers and personnel were apparently found missing during the raid in Sonapat. Raids were also conducted in Narnaul and officers and personnel were not found on duty.

Sources said that Home Minister was not informed though CM Flying Squad took assistance of police while conducting raids at RTOs. Vij is

reported to have expressed disappointment as he was not informed about the same.

Sources said that regarding transfer of nine IPS officers, controversy surfaced after Vij did not agree on the list of the transfers. Shortly after his disagreement, transfer orders were issued.

On December 28, a copy of the proposed transfer list was sent to Home Minister Vij. When the list reached him, he immediately sent an answer to deputy secretary. He returned the list with suggestions. Even after this, transfer orders were issued, which Vij has apparently objected to.

Self styled godman Baba Piara Singh Bhaniara dies at 61

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The controversial self-styled godman Baba Piara Singh Bhaniara, spiritual leader of a breakaway Sikh sect based in Dhamiaana village in Ropar, passed away on Monday morning.

Aged 61, he was taken to Mohali's Max Hospital after complaining of a chest pain and suffocation, in the early morning. Doctors declared him brought dead.

His 'dera' is situated at Bhaniara village near Nurpur Bedi in Ropar district. He had thousands of followers, mainly among the dalit community.

Bhaniara, survived by his wife and three sons, was an employee of Horticulture Department at a sericulture farm in Asmanpur village.

He was one of the seven children of Tuls Ram, who was the care taker of two 'mazars'. After his death, Bhaniara left

his job at the Horticulture Department, where he worked as a peon and took over his father's work.

Subsequently, he proclaimed himself as 'Baba'. He encroached upon a piece of land of the Forest Department and established a dera there.

His fame as a healer spread wide after political leaders, government and judicial officers started visiting his dera. Recognized for his social work, and was even rumoured to feed the wild animals and birds in forests, he soon built a number of deras across the State.

The most famous among his followers were former Union Minister Buta Singh.

Soon, he proclaimed himself to be the incarnate of the Sikhs' tenth master, Guru Gobind Singh — an action that evoked the then Akal Takht jathedar (head priest) Bhai Ranjit Singh to ex-communicate him from the Sikh panth (community) in 1998.

Childcare leave online in Haryana Education Deptt



PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A pilot project on applying for childcare leave online will be started soon by the Haryana Education Department.

"The project will be started keeping in mind the convenience of the woman employees in the schools.

In the first phase of the pilot project the PGT teachers can apply for child care leave online," a spokesman of

the department said on Monday.

He said that it was decided to take the application for 'Child Care Leave' and further process the leaves on the HRMS portal to develop online modules in the School Education Department of Haryana.

The facility has been provided so that the woman employees do not have to run from pillar to post to enquire about the status of their leave.

He said that in the first phase, the online process of 'Child Care Leave' for two weeks has been started for PGT teachers, after which this facility will be started for other women employees as well.

In this, the official concerned who approves the 'Child Care Leave' will handle their HRMS accounts themselves. He informed that officers will also be imparted training to explain the process of application.

#INDIASUPPORTSCAA

Modi tweets Sadhguru video, launches 10-day outreach drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday led the BJP's outreach campaign with the hashtag #IndiaSupportsCAA to gather support for the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which has sparked violent protests across India in recent weeks. Modi's official website tweeted that the CAA "is about giving citizenship to persecuted refugees and not about taking anyone's citizenship away".

Seeking to mobilise support for the amended citizenship law, other BJP leaders too launched the campaign on

social media to highlight its features with Modi posting a video of spiritual guru Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev backing the legislation.

Amid protests, including from Muslims in several parts of the country, the Prime Minister has asserted that the law is about giving citizenship to refugees from three countries and not about taking away anyone's citizenship. BJP has announced a 10-day campaign across the country to spread awareness about the CAA and taken on the Opposition for pushing "rumours and fears" around it.

"Do hear this lucid explanation of aspects relating to



CAA and more by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev. He provides historical context, brilliantly highlights our culture of brotherhood. He also calls out the misinformation by vested

interest groups. #IndiaSupportsCAA," Modi tweeted.

The Twitter handle of Modi's personal website also had a message saying that the CAA is about giving citizenship to persecuted refugees and not about taking anyone's citizenship away. The message was posted with the hashtag #IndiaSupportsCAA.

It also asked people to share content, graphics and videos from the Prime Minister's NaMo app to show their support for the law, which has triggered protests in different parts of the country.

BJP president and Home Minister Amit Shah also posed

Sadhguru's video and said "stop believing lies and half truths on CAA". He urged everyone, especially the youth, to watch the video and get a "historical perspective on why we need CAA".

Joining the campaign, party's working president JP Nadda quoted from the spiritual leader's remarks to say that "in a very calibrated way somebody sent the message to the minorities that your citizenship is under threat which is an absolute lie".

Opposition and other critics slammed the CAA, saying it is against India's secular Constitution as it makes religion as a ground for citizenship.

The BJP has asserted that it is meant for minorities persecuted in three neighbouring countries due to their faith.

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar took on the critics, who have dubbed the law as discriminatory, and tweeted, "Spread Facts Not Myth: In the last 6 years, 2830 Pakistani, 912 Afghani & 172 Bangladeshi citizens have been given Indian citizenship. Many of them are from majority community of these countries."

He also posted several tweets, highlighting key aspects of the amended law and quoted Modi's comments that it will not adversely affect any Indian citizen.

INSHORT

TEAM FORMED TO PROBE NEWBORNS DEATH IN KOTA

New Delhi: BJP working president JP Nadda on Monday appointed a four-member delegation to investigate death of newborns at a hospital in Kota, Rajasthan. Delegation will visit Kota on Tuesday and review the situation. It has to submit report within three days of the visit.

CBI TAKES OVER IIT STUDENT'S DEATH CASE

New Delhi: The CBI has taken over the investigation in the case involving the death of Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) student Fathima Latheef. The Special Crime Branch of the agency's Chennai unit re-registered the FIR of the local police on December 27 and took over the investigation in the matter.

OVER 20 PARTIES DIDN'T FILE FISCAL REPORT: EC

New Delhi: In a reply to the Right to Information (RTI), the Election Commission (EC) said that more than 20 registered parties have not filed their annual reports to their receipts of financial donations. The national parties include National Conference (NC), People Democratic Party (PDP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The RTI was filed by a retired Navy Officer. The last date for filing annual reports was October 31, 2019.

RETIRED IAS OFFICER RE-EMPLOYED AS DY EC

New Delhi: Senior IAS officer Umesh Sinha has been reemployed in the Election Commission (EC) as the deputy election commissioner after his retirement on Tuesday. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the re-employment Sinha on a contract basis for one year with effect from January 1, 2020, and up to December 31, 2020, the DoPT order said. Sinha, a 1986 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, was working as the secretary general in the EC. New Delhi: The CBI has carried out searches at eight locations, including the premises of two Income Tax officers based in Bengaluru, in connection with I-Monetary Advisory (IMA) ponzi scam, officials said Monday. The officers are then Deputy Commissioner, Income Tax (Investigation), Saurabh Nayak, and ACIT (Assessment) D Kumar, they said.

FAKE GUN-LICENSING RACKET

CBI raids 2 babus' premises, 17 locations in J&K

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday conducted searches at 17 locations in Jammu & Kashmir at the premises of senior IAS officers Yasha Mudgal and Kumar Rajeev Ranjan besides the then District Collectors/District Magistrates of Kupwara, Baramulla, Udhampur, Kishtwar, Shopian, Rajouri, Doda and Pulwama in an alleged gun licensing racket busted by the Rajasthan police in 2017.

The move comes two years after the agency registered two cases on allegations issuance of around two lakh arms licences to non residents of the erstwhile State.

The CBI said incriminating documents recovered during searches are being scrutinised.

The agency had registered two cases in August last year on the consent of Jammu and Kashmir Government and further notification from the



Centre. After taking over the case in 2018, searches were also earlier conducted at 11 places including Srinagar, Udhampur and Jammu at the locations of private gun houses which led to recovery of incriminating documents including issue, renewal of arms licences, blank application forms submitted by various licencees, money transactions of gun dealers with licencees, blank NOC purportedly issued by District Magistrates and other documents, the agency said in a statement.

"It was also alleged that the then public servants in this conspiracy of issuance of licences to non-residents of J&K in violation of rules, allegedly received gratification," the agency said in a statement.

Several documents related to the cases, including bank statements, were recovered during the searches that were carried out at three places in Kashmir, 11 places in Jammu and one each in Gurugram (Haryana), Mohali (Punjab) and Noida (Uttar Pradesh), officials said.

Besides searching the premises of Mudgal, a 2007-batch IAS officer, and Ranjan, a 2010-batch IAS officer, houses of I Hussain, Mohammed Saleem, Mohammed Junaid Khan, F C Bhagat, Farooq Ahmed Khan and Jenhagir Ahmed Mir were searched, officials said.

Mudgal is at present CEO and Managing Director of Power Corporation Jammu and Ranjan is CEO of Jammu Srinagar Metro Rail Corporation.

The case was handed over to the CBI on the basis of a recommendation from Rajasthan Director General of Police O P Galhotra after the anti-terror squad had busted a racket related to the matter. Following this, the two FIRs were lodged by the agency.

The CBI's Chandigarh unit had registered the FIRs for alleged criminal misconduct and criminal conspiracy under the Ranbir Penal Code and in violation of Section 3/25 of the Arms Act, besides provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

According to Rajasthan Police officials, the Jammu and Kashmir government was informed about the racket in 2017 and several letters addressed to then Chief Secretary B B Vyas remained unanswered.

Registry of illegal colonies' houses in Delhi to begin in 10 days: Puri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the AAP of spreading "lies" and misleading people on the issue regularisation of unauthorised colonies, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday said registry for ownership rights in unauthorised colonies will start in the next 8-10 days.

Puri said that the Central Government will soon hand over registry to the residents. It is estimated that 40-50 lakh people living in 1731 unauthorised colonies play a vital role in deciding the fate of any political party in every election in the national capital. In 2015, people of unauthorised colonies voted to Arvind Kejriwal to bring changes in the national capital. In 2020, both BJP and AAP is eyeing on unauthorised colonies vote bank.

"They (AAP) are weaving nets of words while registry will

start in next 8-10 days to give ownership rights to people. You keep telling lies, and we (Centre) will soon hand over documents of houses to the residents of these colonies. You cannot be an obstacle in the happiness of Delhiites," Puri tweeted in Hindi.

"The Aam Aadmi Party is misleading people but the BJP-led Centre has brought laws, he said in reference to the Parliament passing a bill to give ownership rights to the residents of unauthorised colonies. "...Tell, has the law been enacted or not? has the process of giving ownership rights to people begun or not? Their (AAP's) strategy is not to benefit people, and mislead them instead," Puri said.

The minister said that the

Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has completed the work on preparing maps of unauthorised colonies in just two months while 35,000 people have registered themselves on its website and submitted documents.

In another tweet, the Union housing and urban affairs minister accused the Kejriwal government of failing to prepare maps of 1,731 colonies in the past five years and they moved a court seeking two-year-time for the same.

Earlier on Sunday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said at a press conference that political parties indulge in politics, but if government starts furnishing wrong information, it is saddening. Citing (FAQ) frequently asked questions from DDA website on unauthorised colonies, Kejriwal claimed that neither central government is giving ownership rights nor regularising them.

Flipkart to sell items made by women self-help groups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Monday signed an MoU with Flipkart in which products made by women self-help groups formed under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), will now be available on e-commerce platforms.

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said the government would also rope in Amazon to provide a platform for the online sale of SHGs' products.

Under the DAY -NULM, self-help groups consisting 44 lakh women have been working across the country, a move aimed at making women finan-



cially independent. According to the secretary, 12 lakh people have so far been trained in different skills in the last five years under the mission while around 5.06 lakh people were given funds by the government and they are currently self-employed.

"Today, we have signed an MoU with Flipkart. It aims to directly sell products made by self-help groups through e-commerce portals. We are also likely to ink an MoU with Amazon on January 7 for the same purpose," Mishra told reporters on the sidelines of an

event. According to the secretary, 12 lakh people have so far been trained in different skills in the last five years under the mission while around 5.06 lakh people were given funds by the government and they are currently self-employed.

Govt to create 1 lakh tonnes of onion buffer stock in 2020

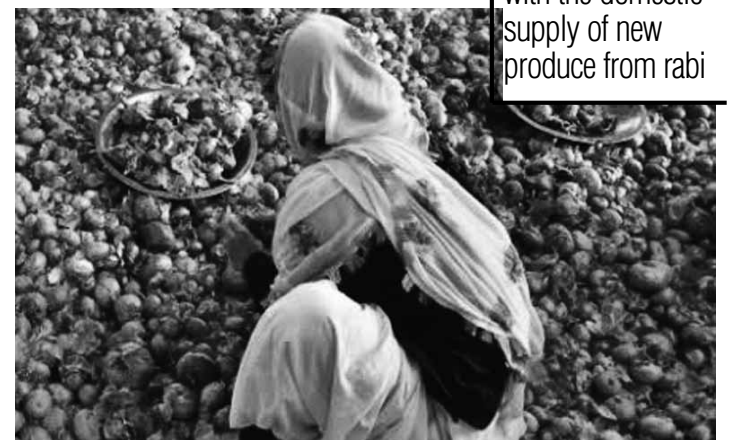
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To prevent the repeat of this year's onion crisis, the Centre has decided to create a buffer stock of 1 lakh tonnes of the key kitchen staple between March and July in 2020.

Top sources said that Cooperative Nafed, which had maintained the buffer stock of onion on behalf of the government, will continue to do so next year. It will source the rabi (winter) onion crop — which has higher shelf life— between March and July directly from farmers.

The Government had created a buffer stock of 56,000 tonnes for the current year but it was not sufficient to contain the prices which are still ruling above Rs 100 per kg in most cities across the country.

The prices are expected to cool down by end of January next year with the domestic supply of new produce from the rabi (winter) and late kharif (summer) seasons — thereby also giving rise to the possibility of a glut. Sources said the arrival of imported onions will coincide with the supply of late kharif onions from Maharashtra and Gujarat in the last week of December, as well as the early rabi produce from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and



Karnataka by late January.

"The issue was discussed in detail in the recent meeting of the group of ministers (GoM), headed by Home Minister Amit Shah. It was decided that higher buffer stock of about 1 lakh tonne will be created for next year," sources said.

This year, onion prices fell sharply due to 26 per cent fall in kharif and late kharif (summer) production due to late monsoon and later untimely rains in key growing states especially Maharashtra and Karnataka.

To check rising prices, the

government took several measures to boost the domestic availability including ban on exports, stock limits on traders besides sale of onion at subsidised rates from its buffer stock and imports.

Already, the government has exhausted its buffer stock of onion which was disposed at a subsidised rate in the local market. Now, it is selling imported ones.

MMTC, which is importing on behalf of the government, has contracted about 45,000 tonnes of onion from Turkey, Afghanistan and Egypt.

The shipments are underway. The first batch of 790 metric tonnes of onion arrived from Turkey and Egypt and distributed to Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka and Telangana.

According to agriculture ministry's data, 0.98 lakh hectare area is covered under late kharif as against 1.22 lakh hectare in the corresponding period last year. The area under rabi onion crop, meanwhile, is 2.76 lakh hectare as against 2.31 lakh hectare in the corresponding period last year (until the first week of December this year).

NITI AAYOG'S SDG INDEX

Kerala on top, Bihar, JK'hand, AP worst performers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Kerala and Chandigarh retained the top ranks among States and Union Territories even as Bihar turned out to be the worst performer in Niti Aayog's SDG India Index 2019 that evaluates progress on social, economic and environmental parameters.

According to 'SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) India Index 2019', released on Monday, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim have shown maximum improvement, but States like Gujarat have not shown any progress vis-a-vis the 2018 rankings.

"Kerala retained its rank as the top State with a score of 70. Chandigarh too maintained its top spot among the UTs with a score of 70. Himachal Pradesh took the second spot while Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana shared the third spot," the report said.



The Niti Aayog vice chairman also said Modi government will not leave any stone unturned to make sure India achieves SDG Agenda 2030. According to the report, India's composite score improved from 57 in 2018 to 60 in 2019 with major success in water and sanitation, industry and innovation.

However, nutrition and gender continue to be problem areas for India, requiring more focussed approach from the government. The report said while three out of five states in the top spots perform equal to or better than the country average on 12 goals, the other two states do the same on 11 goals. "Only three states were placed in the category of Front Runners (with a score in the range 65-99, including both) in 2018 - Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. In 2019, five more states joined this league - Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Sikkim and Goa, taking the total tally to eight," it noted.

With regard to poverty reduction, states which have done well include Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Sikkim. On 'zero hunger' parameters, Goa, Mizoram, Kerala, Nagaland and Manipur were the front runners, according to the report.

The SDG India Index, launched last year by Niti Aayog with the help of United Nations, took into account 16 out of 17 goals specified by the United Nations as SDGs. The Index this year ranked states based on 54 targets spread over 100 indicators out of 306 outlined by the UN.

The first report, which was launched in 2018 had 13 goals and 39 indicators. The year 2020 will be the fifth anniversary of the adoption of SDGs by 193 countries at the UN General Assembly.

The SDGs, constituted through an unprecedented consultative process, have 17 goals and 169 related targets to be achieved by 2030.

Sporting success

As the 2010s come to a close, we should celebrate a great decade for Indian sport and look forward to the 2020s

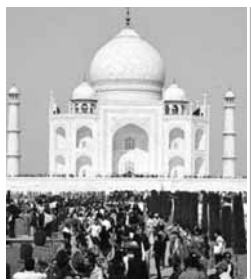


The 2010s began with a bang for Indian sport with its success at the 2011 Cricket World Cup, whose finals were held at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. The 2012 Summer Olympics held in London also saw India's best-ever haul with six medals, albeit we finished without a Gold. Things have been a bit disappointing since then. While the Indian men's cricket team tops the world rankings in Test series, it has faltered at the semi-final stages of the subsequent One-Day International World Cups and has also failed to win a second T20 World Cup to follow up from the 2007 win. However, the seismic impact of the 2007 win was felt in the creation of the Indian Premier League (IPL), which in the past decade has cemented its position as the leading franchise-based T20 tournament in the world. The Indian women's team has also enjoyed great success over the past decade with their appearance in the finals of the International Cricket Council's women's World Cup. But while this decade has cemented the adage that "India is cricket and cricket is India", it has also seen the emergence of new professional leagues that have enjoyed success as well as the rise of new champions in other sports. The premier Kabaddi League is a genuine success story, particularly in a traditionally Indian sport. On the flip side though, India's failure to win both kabaddi Gold medals, particularly in the men's competition at the 2018 Asian Games, can be attributed in part to the arrogance of newly-rich professional players. On the other hand, the emergence of champions like PV Sindhu has been a singularly impressive achievement. Her standing as World Champion must go down as India's greatest sporting success in the past decade. Alongside Sindhu stands boxer Mary Kom, who despite age and motherhood, is still a champion though she ended the decade on a sour note. Dipa Karmakar's heroic feat at the Rio Olympics, too, is noteworthy as was Sushil Kumar's World Championship in 2010, which gave a fillip to wrestling that has been taken forward by the Phogat sisters.

However, not everything was a success. The response to the Indian Super League in football and the Hockey India League was tepid at the very least and miserable at worst. India's reputation in certain sports, particularly weightlifting, has been tarnished, thanks to constant reports of serious doping. That said, drugs are an active problem throughout the world of sports. There have been serious issues with the Government's ambition to clean up Indian sports federations from its political patronage. Much still needs to be done on this front if India is to achieve its potential in the world of sports — football being a particular case in point. India enjoyed some success in the previous decade. After climbing inside the top 100 rankings in the sport, it has seemingly frittered away some of those gains in the last 24 months. Can India finally make a mark in football? The 2020s will show the way. It is likely that an Indian-born player may make it big for a major team in Europe, which could finally crack the market. At the same time, special mention should be given to the "Khelo India" programme and the games that have been ushered under the Narendra Modi administration. A focus on sports under capable Ministers has meant that India is looking forward to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics with a glimmer of hope previously unheard of. So much so that a double-digit haul is on the cards with Indian shooters, pugilists, wrestlers, badminton players and possible track and field athletes such as javelin ace Neeraj Chopra, all being in the race for medals. Expectations are that others will join Abhinav Bindra in the list of individual Indian Gold medalists. As for cricket, India has a packed year coming up. Will India finish the year as reigning ICC Test match champions? Can it make it count in the T20 World Cup to be held in Australia early next year? And where will the IPL and franchise cricket go in the coming months? Can other sports replicate the success of kabaddi? There are many questions that will be asked of Indian sports in the coming decade but we hope that whatever happens, it will only climb to heights never previously achieved.

No more welcome

Following internet shutdowns, the tourism sector is the latest victim of the Government's high-handedness



The Government may be consistently playing down the countrywide protests over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) as a conspiracy of intellectuals to jeopardise its legitimate existence. But with the protests showing no signs of abating — they have now turned into a people's movement over exclusionary and discriminatory policies that breed hatred and disunity — the clampdown on freedom of expression has been severe. So harsh that internet and mobile network shutdowns

have indefinitely become the order of the day. This has elicited strong admonitions and travel advisories against India, impacting our tourism business severely. For example, tour operators in Agra, the home of Taj Mahal, have unofficially reported a loss of about 50 per cent revenue during the holiday season. Nowhere has the clampdown been as draconian as it has been in Uttar Pradesh with over 19 people killed and more than 1,100 arrests. The visitors' count for December has been the most dismal. A paltry 4.5 lakh tourists arrived at Agra's Taj Mahal over the new year weekend, which is down from seven lakh the same month, last year. Tourists from the US, the UK, China, France and Japan are understandably cautious after reports emerged of foreign students being deported for extending moral support to protesters. Internet cafes, a favourite among young travellers to keep folks connected to them back home, are running dry.

As the tourists have been dissuaded from travelling to India — in part because the message from New Delhi has been that it will not buckle down and, instead, has sharpened its attack on anti-CAA protesters and tightened the noose of police action — their numbers fell well before November, when the crucial Ayodhya verdict was to be announced by the Supreme Court. The month, which saw a foothold of 6.7 lakh tourists last year, saw only 5.4 lakh tourists this year. Agra alone attracts over 6.5 million tourists every year, generating nearly \$14 million annually from entrance fees. Similar is the story elsewhere. Overall, the hospitality sector has been hit. Assam has already faced a loss of ₹400 crore. Mysuru saw a 20 per cent dip in tourism. Revenues for many hotels, tour operators and guides have plunged with many tourists, both domestic and foreign, either cancelling their trips or cutting them short. This is understandable. Protests are now dragging on into the second month and have shown little signs of abating even as the Government has issued "clarifications." There are plenty of signs of matters turning more violent as both police and marchers up the ante. The larger question, however, is whether the tourism sector will be able to absorb the damage once normalcy returns. For an industry, which the Government pegged as a growth driver even in a slowing economy, this is a bad sign. In this business, perception matters and the *atithi* is certainly not feeling welcome anymore.

Why we need data

Preparation of a NPR and decennial census is a legitimate activity of the Union Government and the data thrown up by these exercises form the basis for policy-making



A SURYA PRAKASH

The false propaganda unleashed by some political parties against the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, has now got extended to the mandated programme to prepare the National Population Register (NPR) and the conduct of the decennial census, which are scheduled for 2020 and 2021. Several opponents of the current establishment in New Delhi have been spreading disinformation about the NPR and the decennial census, both of which are tools essential for governance.

The purpose of the CAA is to provide citizenship to persecuted religious minorities in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who crossed the borders and came into India before December 31, 2014. This has nothing to do with any Indian citizen, whatever be his or her religion. Nor does it open the floodgates for migrants because of the deadline fixed in the Act. The NPR and the decennial census are meant to get demographic information and also inputs on the social and economic status of the population in different regions of the country. Neither of these exercises is aimed at disenfranchising anybody.

The NPR exercise was formulated and introduced by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in 2010, to collect demographic and biometric information about individuals. Here, enumerators go door-to-door and gather particulars about "usual residents" — individuals residing at a given place for the preceding six months. It is, therefore, strange to find that the Congress, the very initiator of this idea, is now opposing it and is doing so with such vehemence that it all looks like a theatrical act.

The census in India is primarily a head count and has been rightly described as the largest administrative and statistical exercise in the world. Three million individuals will be deployed to collect the data and for the first time, the enumerators will be using a mobile app and other modern applications to collect and collate data from the field.

The decennial census is being conducted in India since 1892 without a break and this is an important exercise from a national point of view because it tells us about the demographic changes that have taken place at the national and local level in the preceding 10 years. Both these surveys provide policy-makers critical data that enables them to formulate national programmes, especially with regard to basic amenities to the less-advantaged sections of society.

As stated by the Government, the census is the biggest source of primary data at the village, town and ward level, providing micro-level data on various parameters, which includes housing, education, economic activity, literacy, migration, fertility, language, religion, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Preparation of a NPR and decennial census is a legitimate activity of the Union Government and the data thrown up by these exercises form the basis for policy-making not just at the federal level but at the State, dis-



trict and *taluk* levels as well. It was, therefore, shocking to see someone like Arundhati Roy exhort citizens to provide fake names and addresses to the enumerators so as to render the entire exercise infructuous. Media reports indicate that she even suggested that the people provide "7, Race Course Road" — the address of the Prime Minister at one time — as their residential address.

Even more preposterous was her suggestion that the Narendra Modi Government, which got a massive mandate from the people in May 2019 to govern till 2024, not be allowed to continue in office.

Her attempt to paralyse the working of the Union Government in regard to collection of population data and to curtail the tenure of a duly-elected Government constitutes subversion of the Constitution. Tolerance of such subversive activities is inimical to national unity and integrity and we should not allow a small minority of dissenters to disrupt governance and democratic traditions in this manner.

Further, the propaganda that the enumeration undertaken for the NPR must be resisted because it is against the Muslim minority in India, is totally baseless. It appears as if some people are afraid of the truth.

Data is critical for a number of reasons. For example, the

“
AS STATED BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE CENSUS IS THE BIGGEST SOURCE OF PRIMARY DATA AT THE VILLAGE, TOWN AND WARD LEVEL, PROVIDING MICRO-LEVEL DATA ON VARIOUS PARAMETERS, INCLUDING HOUSING, EDUCATION, ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, LITERACY, MIGRATION, FERTILITY, LANGUAGE, RELIGION, SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES
 ”

Union Government and many State Governments have formulated policies and welfare schemes especially to ameliorate the conditions of the religious and linguistic minorities. These schemes relate to education, employment, skilling and financial assistance for self employment. The scope and range of these schemes depend on demographics and a decadal head count is an absolute must. The census data is used not just by the Union Government but by Governments and institutions down below at the State, district and *taluk* levels.

Pseudo-secularists seem to believe that the Muslims are the only minority in India. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The Hindus in India constitute just around 80 per cent of the population, which means in actual numbers, they would be about one billion of the 1.33 billion population. But the Hindus constitute a minority in six of the 28 States in the country and in a few Union Territories, as do the Christians (except in some States in the North-east), the Sikhs (except in Punjab), the Buddhists, the Jains and the Parsis. The Muslim population in India has risen from 35 million at the time of Independence to around 175 million at this point in time.

Further, we have the linguistic minorities, who are at par with religious minorities as per our Constitution. A reading of

Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution will make it clear that the intention of the founding fathers was to accord the same kind of protection to both religious and linguistic minorities and the State would be the unit to determine who is a minority. A Kannadiga in Hindu-majority Haryana (as this writer is) gets as much protection as say, Mohammed Iqbal, in Hindu-majority Haryana as per these Constitutional provisions.

Therefore, if pseudo-secularists oppose population data collection and census, which is a legitimate Government activity in all nations across the world, the presumption will be that they are afraid of the numbers that will crop up. The steep rise in the Muslim population in India over the decades and the huge difference between the decadal growth rates of Muslims *vis-a-vis* the Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis, will nail the lie that Muslims are persecuted in India.

Indian citizens, who are adherents of Islam, must, therefore, guard against the false narrative of this minuscule minority of pseudo-secularists and should not allow themselves to be persuaded to oppose the NPR or the census. India will become ungovernable if such tendencies emerge.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

In my opinion, Citizenship Amendment Act is too little compassion, coming too late. This Bill is only focussed on religious persecution.

Spiritual leader
 —Sadhauru Jaagi Vasudev



I am thrilled with the kind of work that's coming my way. But I feel envious of the young girls, who are getting a chance to play varied parts so early on in their careers.

Actor
 —Neena Gupta



The US has shown its support for terrorism by carrying out air strikes on forces in Iraq that have dealt blows against the Islamic State group.

Iranian official
 —Abbas Mousavi



In 2015, people believed him (Kejriwal) to be a great revolutionary, as Fidel Castro or Che Guevara. But now they are fed up with (his) lies.

Union Minister
 —Prakash Javadekar



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Environment's cause

Sir — Air passengers have their ticket details verified by security personnel at the departure gates of the airport. Upon producing valid identification proof and an e-ticket, passengers can proceed to the check-in counters. Being allowed to produce e-tickets on electronic devices such as smartphones and tablets has helped save paper. Otherwise, tonnes of paper get wasted when people take printouts of tickets. However, owing to a lack of awareness, many passengers still rely on printouts instead of just producing soft copies.

To prevent unnecessary paper usage, airline carriers should provide incentives to passengers who use soft copies of tickets instead of paper-based ones. Organisations such as the Center for Asia Pacific Aviation, the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the Airports Council International and the International Air Transport Association should extensively promote the use of paperless tickets for domestic travel. This will go a long way in protecting the environment.

Varun Dambal
 Bengaluru

Government must shun authoritarian ways

The Modi Government has shown itself to be arrogant, arbitrary and adamant with its decision to update the National Population Register (NPR) in the teeth of sustained protests against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The tearing hurry with which the Government is pushing ahead with its agenda concerning citizenship casts suspicion on its motives. Nobody is so naive to believe that NPR is not a precursor to NRC. The fact that NPR will serve as the database for NRC is plain to see. The reason for gathering data on date and place of birth of parents and last place of residence from respondents in the proposed house-to-house enumeration is not far to seek or beyond comprehension. The UPA-era NPR, with its emphasis on "residency" and the present modified version of NPR with its emphasis on "citizenship", cannot be bracketed together. Needless to say "additions of three or four columns" can make all the difference.

Fears over the enumeration exercises are not unfounded. NRC or NPR, in conjunction with CAA, will lead to a humanitarian catastrophe of enormous proportions. If the Government is to convince people of its bona fide intentions and bridge the trust deficit, it has to amend

Identity at stake

Sir — Army chief Bipin Rawat's recent comments on anti-CAA protesters have rightly been seen by many military veterans and

security experts as "overtly political." Though such kind of remarks are common in Pakistan, it is almost unheard of in our country.

The political nature of the armed forces is indeed a neces-



CAA to treat Muslim refugees at par with refugees of other religious persuasions. Sad to say, the Government remains unmoved by the distress of a 14-month-old breastfed child separated from his parents jailed for taking part in the anti-CAA protests. The parents of the child exemplify true patriotism. "Civil disobedience with a smile" on Gandhian lines appears to be the only option now left for the people to bring the Government to its senses and persuade it to abandon its policy of divide and rule and pull the country back from the brink.

G David Milton
 Maruthancode

Press any matter in relation to a political question or on a service subject or containing any service information." The Army must preserve its identity.

Sujit De
 Kolkata

Cheap tactics

Sir — It is unfortunate that the Uttar Pradesh police allegedly manhandled Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who was on her way to pay a visit to retired IPS officer SR Darapuri at his residence. As the police tried to stop her vehicle from moving further, Priyanka hoodwinked the police by riding pillion on a two-wheeler and reached her destination. While the police's act is condemnable, the traffic police issued the owner of the two-wheeler a challan of ₹6,000 because the two were riding without a helmet. This appears to be a revenge action by the police and is definitely in cheap taste.

Tharcus S Fernando
 Chennai

Send your feedback to:
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Handle sensitive issues carefully

The judiciary and the executive cannot be at loggerheads in a welfare State as it would make citizens jittery and lose faith in the system



ABHAY RAJ MISHRA

The kind of storm which the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 has kicked up is, perhaps, unprecedented as it deals with the subject of future citizenship and not the current. The matter is now resting the opinion of the Supreme Court (SC) for its constitutional validity, which will hear 59 petitions filed in opposition of the law on January 22, 2020. It would be interesting to note whether the views of the judiciary and the executive would converge on an issue as sensitive as this one. In the case of Ayodhya, the apex court's verdict has established well that law cannot be detached from the interests of the people it serves. There was a raging debate whether the Ayodhya verdict was based on credible and admissible evidence or was it influenced by the faith and belief of the majority? Irrespective, the verdict was peacefully accepted by all the factions, not necessarily for its veracity but for bringing to end a painful impasse. What is clearly visible and undebatable is that it brought peace finally.

There would be peace if two conditions are fulfilled. One, the interests of the larger sections of the people must be put above all else. To punish a few guilty, we cannot make the masses suffer along with them. Second, there cannot be a chasm between the views of the executive and the judiciary, which would otherwise make citizens jittery and lose faith in the system altogether. Imagine being brought up by two warring parents.

This ethos of acting in public interest and going along with the views of the executive must now be extended to end pain in other areas as well. Take livelihoods as an example, where the case of Goans has been hanging for far too long. Goa was the only State where mining rights were granted to its citizens by the Portuguese Government in perpetuity, but were eventually revoked by the Indian Government. Ever since the apex court abruptly cancelled 88 mining leases in the State on February 7, 2018, life has come to a grinding, tragic halt for mining dependents in the State. This is now no longer just an economic crisis — which is severely debilitating in its own right — but a grave human crisis as well. Such is the situation that the Goa Government has requested a review of the ban by the SC, which is also pending. Jobs and livelihoods disappearing overnight as a result of judicial intervention is painful, particularly at a time when India is going through the worst employment crisis in the last 40 years. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the country's employment reached the lowest rate in 2017-2018.

Earlier, in 2012, the SC cancelled 122 spectrum licences in response to a PIL filed by a host of activists and to answer the question whether the Government had a right to distribute natural resources in a manner that was not "fair and transparent." This affected 5.3 crore telephone connections. It was alleged that the exchequer lost ₹1.76 lakh crore in revenue and a few private telecom players were the beneficiaries. This case was highlighted as among the top 10 abuses of power by Time magazine. The verdict shook the country, changed the contours of a developing telecom industry, made new telecom operators wrap up their business and gave the reins of the sector into the hands of a few business groups.

In a reversal in 2017, a special court in New Delhi acquitted all the accused in the 2G spectrum case citing that the CBI could not find any evidence against the accused in seven years. As per the judgment, "Some people created a scam by artfully arranging a few selected facts and exaggerating things beyond recognition to astronomical levels." The matter now rests with the Delhi High Court on basis of appeals filed by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate. The key question is as to why the case could not have been tried without cancelling the licences? The court should have allowed business to continue, while the case would have carried on. By invoking closure of business, the court caused collateral damage to the industry, the economy and most importantly to the livelihoods of people employed by the companies that had to close shop.

Studies have established that India's Maoist movement is deeply rooted in socio-economic conditions prevalent in parts of India with large tribal populations. It has mostly affected areas where there is a conflict between the State and the populace on the economic derivation of forest produce and mining such as in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand and agriculture in parts of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Such aggressive posturing by citizens has huge direct and indirect costs. The purpose of the law is to create a conducive environment for the citizens of the State. However, sometimes, like in the Goa mining ban and the spectrum case, the law and its interpretation has spelled doom for citizens and businesses. This cannot become a precedent and must be addressed immediately. Situations like these need more complex solutions, just like the CAA. It is simplistic to penalise lakhs of people for the actions of the few with the stroke of a pen, and it is certainly not done.

(The writer is president, not-for-profit organisation PRAHAR)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THOSE DAMAGING PROPERTY HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN VIDEO AND CCTV FOOTAGE. WE WILL TAKE REVENGE FROM THEM BY SEIZING THEIR PROPERTY.
—UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH



THIS IS PERHAPS THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THAT A CHIEF MINISTER HAS STATED THIS. FOLLOW THE DHARMA SYMBOLISED BY YOUR SAFFRON ROBES.
—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY, EASTERN UP PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA

A defining year

In 2019, a reformist Government was brought back to power and that, too, with a huge majority. This shows how electoral preferences are guided by economic expectations



KARAN BHASIN

Since the early 1990s, there has been a sense of optimism with regards to India's economic progress. The process of liberalisation during 1991 brought with it a sense of hope regarding a dramatic turnaround in the country's economic fortunes. While the nation's growth did accelerate from the 1980s onwards, however, it wasn't comparable to other emerging economies, including China.

The first decade of the 21st century was believed to be India's time as it had a Government that was looking at the next generation of economic reforms. These transformations happened and the country witnessed the first serious privatisation of several public sector enterprises (PSEs) along with a drastic reduction in small savings rates. India's macroeconomic situation was stable and gradually growth started to increase along with its investment rates. This growth continued till 2007, after which it started to lose steam due to lack of economic reforms and then the 2008 crisis hit the country along with the rest of the world.

While many thought the impact of the 2008 crisis wasn't as much on India as elsewhere, the reasons behind this were the policy instruments which were deployed to address the risks that emerged. These instruments, combined with a lack of reforms and an entitlement-based regime brought a fresh macroeconomic challenge in the second decade of the 21st century.

Two decades have elapsed and India is yet to justify the sense of optimism that prevailed at the start of the century. But to be fair, the second decade wasn't that bad considering that India's growth in 2014, 2015 and 2016 was fairly decent even when one ignores the fact that it witnessed two successive droughts in 2014 and 2015. The country's macroeconomic situation has improved significantly since 2014 and the Government has undertaken several reforms that will have long-term growth implications such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA).

Despite these reforms, growth slowed towards the end of 2018 and throughout the first half of 2019. This has led people to question whether the third decade will be any different from the previous two decades. However, there are compelling reasons that point at how this time, it will be different. For starters, the current slowdown is not because of any inherent structural factors but is a direct outcome of the financial sector stress which spread over from banks to Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The reasons behind the build-up of this stress are more to do with reckless lending during the first decade of the century as the attempt to fix it started only post the introduction of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Act.

As the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest Financial Stability Report suggests, the Public Sector Banks' (PSBs) Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) may increase by September 2020 and this poses fresh concerns regarding the ability of the PSBs to take prudent lending decisions. The recent spike in NPAs could also be because of the high cost of capital compared to the moderation in inflation, which has artificially kept the real

“ A LOT OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS WAS MADE IN 2019 AND SOME OF IT COULD BE BECAUSE OF THE SLOWDOWN. HOWEVER, 2019 WILL MARK A STRUCTURAL BREAK FOR INDIA AS WE ENTER INTO A DECADE WHICH WILL CERTAINLY BELONG TO THE COUNTRY'S ENTREPRENEURS AND ITS ECONOMIC AMBITIONS ”



rates at one of the highest levels in the world.

Clearly, India's got a problem on the monetary side, which needs to be rectified if it is aiming to grow at seven per cent or more. Some progress has been made on this by the RBI, however, it continues to be conservative and the longer it takes for it to recognise the extent of the problem, the more prolonged the bottom of the U.

Irrespective of these short-term challenges, the outlook for economic growth for the country in the medium-term is completely positive as some of the current supply-side issues will get resolved and India will witness a growth of 5.0-5.4 per cent in the third quarter (Q3) of the current Financial Year (FY) followed by a 6.2-6.6 per cent growth in the fourth quarter (Q4) of the current FY. India will end the decade with a modest growth rate; however, the country will begin it with a seven per cent or higher growth rate in the FY 2020-21.

The question is whether this rate will be sustained throughout the decade or not. There is a reasonable belief that India will sustain a seven per cent growth this decade and it may even attain an eight per cent or high growth rate towards the end of the decade as it witnesses a steady revival of investments as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This improvement will be a direct product of some of the painful reforms that were undertaken in the past, which will unleash the nation's productive potential. The recent corporate tax cut would result in steady improvements in corporate sector balance sheets, which will result in fresh investments from 2022 onwards. At the same time, implementation of the Direct Tax Code (DTC) will simplify taxation procedures, which

will further augment productivity.

There's also talk of a GST overhaul which may happen during the next couple of years. This, when combined with land, labour and agricultural reforms, will be critical to unlocking India's productive potential. Demographics, too, favour India as it has the world's largest workforce which will act as a check in wage costs, thereby giving it a competitive edge over other emerging market economies for the next two decades. All of this is essential to experience the kind of transformation that several of the country's peers experienced during the 1980s and 1990s.

Of course, fresh reforms will be required — but they are already on the agenda of the Government as the labour codes are coming into effect. Many of these reforms will be aided by the fact that there's a mandate of 303, which enables the Government to take decisions that would be extremely difficult to push for in a divided Parliament.

Global conditions, too, seem to be conducive for India as Boris Johnson's election in the United Kingdom (UK) will end uncertainty regarding Brexit. He has expressed his willingness to enter into a trade agreement with India and the nation should be closing trade deals with the UK, Europe and the US to further integrate itself into global trade.

Global economic growth is also likely to recover in 2020, which means that external factors will be conducive for India's growth, provided it can address some of its domestic constraints. The year 2019 goes down in Indian economic history for many reasons. For starters, it marks the first time in the history of India where a reformist Government was brought back into power and that, too, with a

huge majority. This shows how electoral preferences are maturing in India.

The outcome of the election made it possible to take three significant economic decisions. First was the merger of 10 PSBs into four. This is likely to consolidate the sector and improve its efficiency over a period. It also opens up interesting possibilities for future privatisation of some of these big four banks as there's no need for having four big PSBs, especially at a time when the nation has already pumped in ₹3 trillion into them without any positive outcome so far.

The second was to do with the corporate tax cut, which was promised in the previous tenure. Indeed, many consider it just a tax cut, however, it is a deep structural reform that will have long-term positive implications for financial stability and financing of investments. More importantly, it illustrates a shift in thinking of taxmen, who now recognise that tax revenues can increase at lower rates due to improvements in tax compliance.

The third decision was of privatisation of several firms, including BPCL. This is a bold move as it signals a staunch commitment to the phrase that "the Government has no business to be in business."

This move has signalled to the world that India is finally opening greater space for private players in its economy, which has hit all the right notes. Indeed, a lot of economic progress was made in 2019 and some of it could be because of the slowdown. However, 2019 will mark a structural break for India as we enter into a decade which will certainly belong to the country's entrepreneurs and its economic ambitions.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy researcher)

2020 must be about implementation

There should be a 20 per cent increase in funding for health by States, the Centre and Urban Local Bodies. Inter-departmental coordination is also needed for stronger implementation linkage between health, water and sanitation and nutrition-related initiatives



CHANDRAKANT LAHARIYA

Legislations or related deliberations were arguably the highlight for India's health sector in 2019. The Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019; the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act and the Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act were passed by the Parliament. The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill is being considered by the select committee of the Rajya Sabha and a draft Bill to protect doctors and health care providers from assault is also under consideration. The health sub-committee of the Fifteenth Finance Commission made recommendations to enact the right to health in India by 2022 and

to shift "health" into the concurrent list.

A few States, namely Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, deliberated about enacting the right to health legislation. During the year, public health experts argued that the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, announced in 2018, had put health higher on the political agenda and nearly six States started a variant of Mohalla Clinics (neighbourhood clinics) to increase the provision of free primary health care services.

There were a few negative developments as well. Violent attacks on doctors, health care providers and facilities were reported from different parts of the country, followed by protests and strikes by the medical fraternity.

In the summer of 2019, encephalitis deaths were reported from Muzaffarpur in Bihar. The experts were once again divided on the cause of this and consequently, the children of the nation are still waiting for scientific and long-term solutions to prevent such tragedies from recurring.

In the last quarter, poor air quality returned to affect the health of the people in many districts of north India and all policymakers did was to question the proven evidence on the impact of air pollution on people. Hence, it is clear that there are many issues that need to be addressed in this crucial sector.

Legislative approach in health works: The Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, which has hiked the penalties for traffic violations, has the potential to improve health, as nearly one in every 10 preventable deaths occurred due to road accidents. After the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017, mental health services in India received a boost at the implementation level as the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority directed companies to include mental health care services in their insurance package as one in every seven people have one or other mental health care needs.

Though the Bill to protect doctors and health care workers could not develop a consensus, it is also

true that preventing such attacks requires more than just a legislative approach. Improving the quality of health services, preventing commercialisation of health services and changing health-seeking behaviour to get early care is the need of the hour. A realistic expectation from health services needs to be developed and the "market-based belief" that every health condition is treatable, needs to be addressed. In health services, the outcomes are completely unpredictable and even the best of the treatment and advanced care may not save a person, while another person with a similar health condition may quickly recover with basic health interventions.

Kerala averted Nipah virus outbreaks: Learning from the experience of 2018, the Kerala Government acted swiftly when a new case of Nipah was reported in 2019. With effective surveillance, early identification, effective containment/isolation and case management, an epidemic was averted. This highlights the need for a

stronger and effective surveillance system across all Indian States to tackle emerging disease threats.

What to expect in 2020: In the last two years, India has seen a lot of focus on policy formulation, legislation and other broader health issues. However, in 2020, policymakers would do well to rapidly scale-up and allocate more resources for the health and wellness centres, a vital component of the Ayushman Bharat programme.

States must also give additional priority to adopting community clinics for urban settings. The country also needs to follow a focused approach to integrate preventive and promotive health interventions with overall wellness initiatives and linkage with AYUSH.

The Government must shift focus from making isolated health facilities functional to a group of amenities in entire planning units, i.e. blocks in rural areas and entire corporation planning units, functional.

There should be at least a 20 per cent annual increase in Government

funding for health by States, the Centre as well as by Urban Local Bodies. Inter-departmental coordination is also needed for stronger implementation linkage between health, water and sanitation and nutrition-related initiatives.

Taxation on "demerit goods" such as tobacco products should be further increased to global recommendation of tax being 70 per cent of the product price.

Beverages sweetened with sugar, including fruit juices, must be taxed as demerit goods at higher rates. And last but not the least, healthy behaviour should be encouraged at all levels, especially in schools and colleges, with ban on sale of "junk food" near schools and colleges.

In short, for the health sector, 2020 should be a year of implementing policies, improving provision of a broad range of health services as per the needs of the people, State Governments taking the lead in health provision to make a healthy India.

(The writer is a Delhi-based senior public health specialist.)



FOREIGN EYE



TOO MUCH PATRONAGE

If Boris Johnson wants to break up the elites, he should reform the honours system. The 2004 select committee report contains a blueprint on honours which should be revived. Its ideas include simplification, clearer criteria, scrapping knighthoods and damehoods, no automatic awards and an end to the word "empire" in honours. Such a system would not preclude a knighthood for Iain Duncan Smith. But he would have to take his chances with the rest.

(The Guardian editorial)

Priyanka communalising CAA protests: UP Dy CM

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma countered Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on her remarks against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday and accused her of denigrating Hinduism.

Addressing a Press conference barely two hours after the Congress general secretary made certain remarks against Adityanath, before returning to New Delhi after winding up a four-day visit to the State capital, Sharma said, "Priyanka Gandhi stands with those who indulged in (anti-CAA) violence." Priyanka hit out at Chief Minister on Monday, saying there was no place for violence or "revenge" in the country.

In a jibe at Adityanath days after he said those who damaged public property during protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the ensuing violence would be made to pay, the Congress general secretary said saffron denotes Hinduism, a religion that does not advocate violence or "revenge".

Hitting back at Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, Sharma said the clash of religions should not be started for the sake of politics.

"The Congress general secretary has accused the saffron



along with the Chief Minister," Sharma alleged. "Yogi ji ne dharam ko dhaaran kiya hai (Yogji has imbibed a religion). The Hindu religion never teaches to do any harm to anyone. Hindu religion does not speak about insulting any other religion. Hindu religion is very huge

and you are saying that a person (imbibing Hindu religion) is doing such a thing," he said.

"You have started a clash of religions for your politics. Please do not do this. This is not the question of Hindu and Muslims. It is the question of India's future and national unity," he added.

Sharma said no one would leave saffron for the fear of expletives. "The more you hurl abuses, the more our self-confidence will increase," he added. To a question, Sharma clarified that Adityanath had used the word 'badla' (revenge) to convey that vandals will have to pay for the damage caused to public property during protests against the amended citizenship law.

No place for violence, revenge in country: Priyanka

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Monday hit out at Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, saying there is no place for violence or "revenge" in the country. Addressing a Press conference, the Congress general secretary took a dig at Adityanath's earlier warning that rioters damaging public property will have to pay and said the saffron denotes Hinduism, a religion that does not advocate violence or "revenge".

Concluding her four-day visit to Lucknow days after statewide violent clashes over the Citizenship Amendment Act, she told mediapersons that her own security was not a big issue. "The question of my security is not a big one. It is a small question on which there is no need to hold any discussion. I will not raise the issue of security because it is a trivial matter. It has nothing to do with the public," she said, in an apparent reference to her alleged manhandling by the State police.

"The issue is the safety of common man in UP," she asserted. "This is the country of Lord Krishna — who was the



symbol of compassion. Lord Ram was symbol of compassion. Everybody dances in the marriage procession (baraat) of Lord Shiva. There is no place for 'hinsa' (violence), 'badla' (revenge) and 'ranj' (anger) in the country's soul.

"When Shrikrishna gave sermon to Arjun during the Mahabharat war, he did not talk about revenge or anger to

the great warrior on the battlefield. He only brought out the feelings of compassion and truth," she said. Sharpening her attack on the Chief Minister, she said, "He is wearing the dress (vastra) of an Yogi. He is wearing saffron clothes. This bhagwa (saffron) is not yours, it belongs to 'dhaarmik' (religious), 'aadhyatmik' (spiritual) tradition of the Hindustan. It is a symbol of the Hindu religion. *Us dharna ko dhaaran kariye* (imbibe that religion). In that religion, there is no place for anger, violence and revenge. This is all I have to say."

Releasing copies of a 14-page memorandum submitted to Governor Anandiben Patel, she said there are ample proof in the document on how the police and the administration indulged in wrong doing and vandalism.

The memorandum claimed a total of 23 death occurred in the state in the alleged police excesses during the anti-CAA protests by people, while the UP Government claims 19 deaths in clashes.

There is also a video of police vandalism, police beating up a minor in Kanpur, she said, referring to the contents of memorandum.

"There were numerous examples through which it could be seen that the police and administration acted on the Chief Minister's statement that he will take revenge.

"I think it has happened for the first time in the history that a CM has given such a statement that revenge will be taken from the public," she said. The properties which have been confiscated and notices served, also include that of ex-IPS officer SR Darapuri. He probably had used the earnings of his lifetime for his house, and he has got a notice, because he had uploaded a Facebook post.

Quoting from the memorandum, the Congress leader said the conduct of the UP police has been "patently unlawful, destructive of the rule of law and repressive of honest citizens." "This is unfitting of a force that is duty-bound to safeguard and protect the citizens' rights," the memorandum said.

After the Chief Minister's statement, police and administration appear to have acted in "a manner that is biased, unlawful, and violative of the fundamental rights of citizens," the memorandum said.

Congress to give legal help to those held in anti-CAA protests

Lucknow: The Congress party will provide legal help to people facing prosecution for participating in the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests, party sources said on Monday.

According to the sources, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi has held a meeting on the matter with lawyers associated with the party. At the meeting, Priyanka Gandhi told the lawyers that the party will provide legal help to those who have been arrested in the peaceful protests and the party stands with the victims.

The Congress General Secretary has been active here in the Uttar Pradesh capital in support of the opposition to the CAA, meeting with the families of those arrested in the protests. In one instance here, Priyanka Gandhi even drove a scooter and then walked to reach the home of the family of a victim.

The Congress leader has also alleged that the local police misbehaved with her to curb her movement. The police, however, have denied the allegation. The politics is at boiling point in the state where the Congress party has taken centre-stage in the opposition to the CAA. IANS

NORTH INDIA SHIVERS

Jammu records season's coldest night in over decade

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

The cold wave further tightened its grip across Jammu & Kashmir on Monday with the winter capital, Jammu, recording the season's coldest night in over a decade, while Srinagar shivering at minus 6.5 degrees Celsius.

There was no relief from the bone-chilling cold for the residents of the Union Territory. Jammu recorded the season's coldest night in over a decade as the mercury plummeted to 2.4 degrees Celsius, the meteorological department said.

It said the city had recorded the coldest night on December 28, 1998, when the mercury had went down to 0.9 degree Celsius followed by 2.3 degrees Celsius on December 31, 2007. Jammu had also recorded a low of 2.4 degrees Celsius on December 27 in 2014.

In Srinagar, the mercury continued its record-breaking spree as the city experienced the coldest night of the season so far at minus 6.5 degrees Celsius on Monday. Dense fog forced cancellation of all morning flights from the Jammu Airport. An official of the Airport Authority of India said all the four morning flights scheduled to operate from the Jammu airport were cancelled due to poor visibility as dense fog engulfed the city.

"So far four flights to and fro the Jammu airport were cancelled, while the afternoon flights are likely to get delayed," he said. The minimum temperature in Jammu marked a dip of 3.3 degrees compared to the previous night to settle at 2.4 degrees Celsius — five notches below normal during this part of the season, a MeT

SRINAGAR FREEZES AT -6.5°C

Monkeys huddle to keep themselves warm on a cold winter day in Jammu on Monday PTI



office official said. This lead to the freezing of the fringes of the Dal Lake and other water bodies as well as water supply lines at several places. The night temperature in Srinagar, which has been witnessing clear skies and some sunshine during the day, is over four degrees below the normal for this part of the season, the official said.

The ski-resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir recorded the low of minus 7.8 degrees Celsius last night — down from the previous night's minus 6.6 degrees Celsius, he said. The night temperature at Pahalgam resort, which also serves as one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath yatra in south Kashmir, settled at a low of minus 10.2 degrees Celsius as against minus 10.4 degrees Celsius on Sunday, the official said.

Pahalgam, in south Kashmir's Anantnag district,

was the coldest recorded place in the valley, he added. The official said Qazigund — the gateway town to the Valley — in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 9.3 degrees Celsius — slightly up from minus 9.5 degrees Celsius on Sunday.

Kokernag town, also in south, recorded a low of minus 7.3 degrees Celsius, while Kupwara, in north, registered the minimum of minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, the official said. He said Leh town, in the Ladakh Union territory, recorded a low of minus 20.1 degrees Celsius — down from the previous night's minus 19.0 degrees Celsius.

The nearby Drass town froze at a low of minus 28.8 degrees Celsius. Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai-Kalid' — the 40-day harshest period of winter when there are most chances of frequent and maximum snowfall and the temperature drops considerably. IANS

Jaipur shudders at 2nd lowest temp in 55 yrs

Jaipur: Jaipur recorded second lowest-ever temperature in 55 years at 1.4 degrees Celsius as a cold wave continued to sweep Rajasthan, according to weather officials. The State capital had registered its lowest ever temperature at 0 degree Celsius on December 13, 1964.

For the last four days, the temperature has been dipping in state. On Sunday, Mount Abu was the coldest at -3 degrees followed by Jobner at -1.6 degrees.

Sikar and Fatehpur registered 0 degree, while Kota shivered at 2.8 degrees, Churu at 1.2 degrees, Vanasthali 1.8 degrees, Jaisalmer 3 degrees and Bundi 2 degrees. IANS



A Kashmiri boatman row his boat as he breaks the frozen surface of water to make way through the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Monday AP



The roof of a car is seen covered in frost on a cold and foggy day in Ajmer on Monday PTI



A zoo-keeper installs a heater near a cage of a white tigress on a cold winter day in Guwahati on Monday PTI

Maha: Rise in betel leaf prices makes 'Calcutta paan' costlier

PTI ■ AURANGABAD

Betel leaf used to make the popular 'Calcutta paan' has got costlier in Aurangabad in Maharashtra, leaving a bitter taste in the mouth of patrons.

These leaves come from Medinipur in West Bengal and rates have now touched ₹1,200 for a bundle of 100 against ₹500 till some days ago, paan merchant Mohammed Sharfuddin told PTI.

A tour of shops here showed prices of 'Calcutta paan' had gone up from ₹8 to anything between ₹12-20 depending on other ingredients.

"Paan prices had to be increased here because of the betel

These leaves come from Medinipur in West Bengal and rates have now touched ₹1,200 for a bundle of 100 against ₹500 till some days ago, paan merchant Mohammed Sharfuddin said

leaves getting costlier. We have been told cultivation of these leaves has decreased," Sharfuddin, who has been in the business for 54 years, added.

He said shops in Aurangabad sell some 20,000 paan a day and the rise in prices was making people move towards leaves coming in from Chennai.



A person warms himself near a fire sitting next to cows in Prayagraj on Monday AP

Intense cold wave in UP, Churk witnesses bone-chilling 0.8°C

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Churk in Uttar Pradesh recorded 0.8 degree Celsius as the state continued to reel under cold wave conditions on Monday, according to the Meteorological Department.

Muzaffarnagar recorded a low of 1 degree Celsius, followed by Kanpur (1.6 degree Celsius), Agra (1.9 degrees Celsius), Jhansi (2.2 degrees Celsius), Varanasi (2.3 degrees Celsius) and Meerut (2.5 degrees Celsius).

According to the MeT department, Churk town in Sonbhadra district was the coldest place in the state recording 0.8 degree Celsius, eight notches below normal.

State capital Lucknow recorded a minimum temperature of 6.7 degrees Celsius, one notch below normal, while the maximum temperature recorded was 12.3 degrees Celsius, 10 degrees below normal. The sunshine came as a respite to the city residents.

The weather is most likely to remain dry, and shallow to moderate fog is very likely to occur at few places in the State.

Cold day to severe cold day condition is very likely at a few places in the State, the weatherman said. Dense to very dense fog is very likely at isolated places over the State, according to the MeT department.

POST-ART 370 NULLIFICATION

HC opens jobs for candidates from all over India

PTI ■ JAMMU

In a first step of its kind, opening the State employment in the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh for candidates from across the country after nullification of Article 370, the Jammu & Kashmir High Court has invited applications from eligible candidates from all over India to fill 33 vacancies with it.

The 33 vacant posts of non-gazetted officials include those of senior scale stenographer, junior scale stenographer, steno typist, compositor, electrician and driver.

The advertisement to fill the vacancies was issued by the

J&K High Court's Registrar General Sanjay Dhar on December 26 with the last date for submission of applications being January 31, 2020.

Following nullification of the Article 370 on August 5, there had been demands from various quarters, especially in the Jammu region and Union Territory of Ladakh, carved out of the erstwhile state of J&K after its bifurcation into two UTs, for a domicile certificate or some legal restrictions on the purchase of land by outsiders as well as their appointments in Government jobs.

"The application forms shall be received by the con-



cerned principal district judges of the UTs of J&K and Ladakh

within whose jurisdiction the applicant resides against the

proper receipts duly stamped.

"The applicants who do not belong to the UTs of J&K and Ladakh shall submit their application to the Registrar General, J&K High Court, Jammu," the advertisement read.

It said the principal district judges of Kashmir province, Baderwah, Kishtwar and Ladakh would make necessary arrangements for the receipt of application forms even during the ensuing winter vacation.

"All principal district judges of J&K and Ladakh shall submit the application forms along with the list of candidates to the office of the

Registrar General, J&K High Court, Jammu by or before February 7, 2020," the advertisement said.

It said the selection would be made as per J&K Reservation Rules 2005. "The candidates who are having age as on January 1, 2019 not below 18 years and not above 40 years in case of open merit, 43 years in case of SC/ST/RBA/ALC/OSCs, 42 years in case of physically challenged, 48 years in case of ex-servicemen and 40 years in case of candidates in Government service or contractual employees are eligible for participation in the selection process," the notice read.

Five Kashmiri political leaders released after 4 months of detention

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Five political leaders, who had been under preventive detention for the past 148 days, were released from the MLA hostel on Monday by the Union Territory administration of Jammu & Kashmir, officials said. The leaders belonging to the National Conference and the PDP were released after the authorities were satisfied that they would not be indulging in any agitation or call for any strike after their release, they said.

Those released include Ishaq Jabbar and Ghulam Nabi Bhat (National Conference) and Bashir Mir, Zahoore Mir and Yasir Reshi (PDP), the officials said.

Reshi is considered as a rebel PDP leader who had openly revolted against then chief minister and PDP patron Mehbooba Mufti. He was subsequently removed as the district party chief.

On November 25, two political leaders — Dilawar Mir of the PDP and Ghulam Hassan Mir of the Democratic Party Nationalist — were released by the new Union Territory administration.

The National Conference welcomed the decision of the administration and said such moves will help in bridging the gap between the government and the people.

In a statement, party's provincial president Davinder Singh Rana expressed hope that other political detainees will also be released soon.

He said such moves will facilitate a conducive atmosphere for a genuine democra-

tic political exercise.

"It will help in reaching out to the people at large and bridge the gap between the Government and people besides creating conditions for winning hearts and minds," he said. Many political leaders were picked up from their residences on August 5, the day when the Centre announced abrogation of provisions of Article 370 and bifurcation of the state into two union territories — Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir.

The two Union Territories came into existence on October 31 this year. The political detainees had been kept at Centaur hotel and shifted to the MLA hostel in third week of November.

As many as 34 political detainees were shifted to the hostel from the Dal Lake, as Srinagar reeled under harsh winter conditions and the hotel lacked proper heating arrangement, the officials said.

The chill had taken a toll on the health of the detainees, which included leaders from the National Conference, the PDP and the People's Conference and prominent social activists — and the security personnel guarding them.

Three former Chief Ministers — Feroze Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti — are also under detention. While senior Abdullah was slapped with the stringent Public Safety Act on September 17 and remains confined in his residence, Omar Abdullah and Mufti are under detention at different locations in the city.

With ministerial berth, Aditya is a man to watch

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray never fails to spring surprises. After permitting his son Aditya to contest and win the State Assembly polls from Worli in south-Central Mumbai, Uddhav hit the bullet and became the Chief Minister of the State. Now, he has chosen to induct his son Aditya into his Cabinet — unmindful of a possible criticism about the presence of father-son duo in the State Cabinet.

If anything, 29-year-old Aditya Thackeray has arrived on the State's political scene. Though there was speculation initially that the Shiv Sena might pitch him for the posts of either the Chief Minister or Deputy Chief Minister's post, Uddhav scotched the speculation a couple of months ago, by saying that he should learn the ropes before becoming either the Chief Minister or a Deputy Chief Minister.

Coming from the family of Thackerays — four generations of whom have been in public life but had never contested an election till Aditya did so in the 2019 State Assembly polls, Uddhav — who will be contesting a State Assembly bypoll in the next couple of months — and junior Thackeray will soon be well-trenched in electoral politics.

Uddhav's great grandfather Keshav Sitaram Thackeray — better known as Prabodhankar Thackeray — was one of the key figures in the Samyukta Maharashtra movement who played a key role in the campaign for a linguistic State of Maharashtra, while most popular grandfather Bal Thackeray — a cartoonist-turned politician — founded Shiv Sena in 1966. He carved a place for himself in Maharashtra politics, but chose to remain a king-maker than a king.

A wildlife photographer-turned-politician — Uddhav himself was a reluctant beginner in public life. Uddhav was anointed by his

late father as the Shiv Sena's national executive president way back in January 2002. He has never contested an election, even though he has established his firm hold over the party set-up during the past 17 years. Nor has his uncle and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray contested any election.

As much as his chief minister-father Uddhav, the man to be watched in the State politics in the coming days — in his new mantle as a Cabinet Minister — either holding the Education or Environment portfolio.

Aditya's rise in the Shiv Sena began nine years ago, when late Thackeray launched the Shiv Sena's youth wing "Yuva Sena" and anointed his grandson Aditya Thackeray as its head in October 2010, two years before he passed away on November 12, 2012.

A Bachelor of Arts in History from Mumbai's elite St. Xavier's College, Aditya has come a long way since his college days. As a third-year Arts student, Aditya had hit headlines ahead of his appointment as the Yuv Sena chief in 2010, when he forced the Bombay University withdraw Rohinton Mistry's novel *Such a Long Journey*, prescribed for the second year Bachelor of Arts (English) as an optional text book, from the syllabus. Aditya had opposed Mistry's book on

the ground that it contained foul language and derogatory references to the Shiv Sena.

The year 2010 proved to be eventful for Aditya. It was in that year the Yuv Sena for the first time swept the Mumbai University (MU) Senate polls from the Graduates' constituency. Eight years later — in March 2018, the Yuv Sena once again swept the MU senate by decimating the BJP's student outfit Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and Congress-backed NSUI and winning all the 10 seats.

Interestingly, acting on Aditya's proposal, the Mumbai police have for the first time in recent years relaxed bar closing hours on the eve of January 1, 2020. It remains to be seen as to what kind of response the new year bar closing hours relaxation will elicit from Mumbaiers.



Infants' death: Toll climbs to 91 at Kota hospital as 14 more children die, BJP to send Central panel

Kota: Fourteen more infants have died at the JK Lon hospital here in the last five days, taking the number of deaths to 91 this month at the facility, officials said on Monday.

"The 14 infants, including six newborns, died in the period between December 25 and December 29 in NICU and PICU units of the hospital," the newly appointed superintendent of the hospital, Suresh Dulara, said. Earlier, 77 infants had died till December 24, including 10 within 48 hours on December 23-24, he said.

On the cause of deaths, Amrit Lal Bairwa, Head of Department of Pediatrics, said that they are analysing the reasons behind the 77 deaths till December 25.

Out of the 14 infants who died later, four succumbed to severe pneumonia, one to Meningoencephalitis, four to Congenital pneumonia, three to pneumococcal septicemia, and one to respiratory disorder, he said.

Rajasthan Medical Education Secretary Vaibhav Galariya said a three-member team comprising Dr Amarjeet Mehta, Dr Rambabu Sharma and Dr Sunil Bhatnagar was probing the infant deaths will submit its report in two days following which action will be taken.

The BJP, which has targeted the Congress Government in Rajasthan over the child deaths, said it has formed a committee comprising four MPs to look into the matter. **PTI**

Yogi: Disability not a hindrance to a person's progress

Lucknow: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that disability never hindered a person's progress and his/her talent only needed an opportunity and an able teacher to conquer the world.

"Every such person has some special skills. But one must find a qualified teacher who can recognise the skill and then the individual is sure to succeed. There are many such examples. Eminent scientist Stephen Hawking, who uncovered the mystery of universe, is a great example of this," Yogi said.

The chief minister said that the state government would extend all possible support to Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Divyang University to establish it as an example in the country. **PNS**

Isolate BJP on CAA-NRC, says Mamata; BJP hits back

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ PURULIA

Mamata Banerjee on Monday called upon all the parties and the non-BJP Chief Ministers to isolate the BJP and unite against the "mischievous" Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register for Citizens (NRC) which have allegedly been designed to throw the non-BJP people out of India.

Leading a colourful protest rally at Purulia — backed by tribal and drum-beats — which has in the recent past emerged as stronghold of the saffron outfit Banerjee said, "I call upon every one... let us unite and discard CAA and NRC and isolate the BJP."

Alleging that the BJP leaders were making confusing statements on the CAA and the NRC she said that the party had a hidden agenda behind the enactment of the "mis-



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee meets local people during a protest rally in Purulia on Monday. **PTI**

chievous citizenship law which is a prelude to invoking NRC in the country."

She said India had a population of 130 crore out of which the BJP Government wanted to throw out 30 crore by marking them as foreigners.

"They will give citizenship to only those people who follow

"They think that after passing the law they will be able to pursue their hidden agenda. They think that India is their zamindari (fief) which in fact is not. I must remind them that the laws are made by the Centre but implemented by the States. As of now most State Governments are led not by the BJP but the other parties who are opposing the CAA and NRC."

"Most State Governments have rejected this law and so from the beginning this law is a failure," Banerjee said, adding she would "not allow the mischievous law to be implemented in Bengal. In fact we have also stopped the work of NPR (National Population Register) which is as discriminatory as the CAA and NRC."

She added "this is a protest to protect a person's democracy (democratic rights)," reminding how she had descended on the streets from the very begin-

ning. Banerjee had earlier questioned the alleged faulty implementation of NRC in Assam where she alleged about 14 lakh Bengalis had been robbed of their citizenship.

Meanwhile, even as the Chief Minister staged her sixth protest rally in the State the BJP too embarked on staging counter-rallies backing the CAA. The party staged rallies at Coochbehar in North Bengal where the large procession was led by senior leader Mukul Roy and Baruipur in South 24 Parganas where State BJP president Dilip Ghosh addressed a massive rally but not before being black-flagged by a local TMC crowd.

Ghosh questioning Banerjee's repeated calls to reject the CAA iterated a Chief Minister being an elected person had no right to defy and reject central law the way she had been doing.

There are pockets in nation where social evils persist: Naidu

VIJAYAN ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Monday pointed out that though India has made significant strides on the economic and technological fronts, there are pockets in the nation where social evils persist.

"We live in times of turbulence. Increasing cases of discrimination based on caste, community and gender are a cause for great concern."

"We must not doubt in our mind that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. The caste system in our country is a vicious cycle," said Naidu while inaugurating the 87th Sivagiri Pilgrimage Meet at the Sivagiri Mutt in Varkala near here.

Sivagiri Mutt is the abode of Sree Narayana Guru and

today it has become the supreme centre of worship for the followers of the Guru.

"It is time for us to retrospect and take pragmatic steps. We must end all discrimination, we should abolish the caste system. India of the future must be caste-less and classless. It cannot be made by mere Bills. We need political will and administrative skill for making that possible."

"The nation we aim to build must have a place for everyone to reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives by providing equal opportunities to one and all," added Naidu.

"The movement to dispel the caste system must come within the heart and mind of society. It must be an intellectual revolution, a compassionate revolution, a humanitarian revolution," the Vice President said.

EXTENSION OF TRIPS OF SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of Passengers, Railways have decided to extend the run/trips of the following Special Trains as under:-

Train No.	Station From	Dep. Time	Station to	Arr. Time	Frequency/ Days of run	At present running upto	Period of Further Extension
01701	Jabalpur	15:15	Haridwar	12:55	Weekly (Wed)	25.12.2019	up to 29.01.2020
01702	Haridwar	14:45	Jabalpur	12:25	Weekly (Thurs)	26.12.2019	up to 30.01.2020
09809	Kota	20:20	H.Nizamuddin	03:15	Daily	31.12.2019	up to 31.01.2020
09810	H.Nizamuddin	05:15	Kota	13:15	Daily	01.01.2020	up to 01.02.2020
01707	Jabalpur	08:00	Attari	11:45	Weekly (Tue)	31.12.2019	up to 28.01.2020
01708	Attari	14:45	Jabalpur	17:20	Weekly (Wed)	01.01.2020	up to 29.01.2020
01709	Jabalpur	06:00	Attari	11:45	Weekly (Sat)	28.12.2019	up to 25.01.2020
01710	Attari	14:45	Jabalpur	19:50	Weekly (Sun)	29.12.2019	up to 26.01.2020
04781	Bathinda	06:40	Anupgarh	11:55	Daily	31.12.2019	up to 30.06.2020
04782	Anupgarh	12:30	Bathinda	17:30	Daily	31.12.2019	up to 30.06.2020
04783	Bathinda	19:00	Suratgarh	22:00	Daily	31.12.2019	up to 30.06.2020
04784	Suratgarh	06:20	Bathinda	09:30	Daily	31.12.2019	up to 30.06.2020
09731	Jaipur	07:35	Delhi Cantt.	13:20	Tri-Weekly (Tue, Thu & Fri)	31.12.2019	up to 31.03.2020
09732	Delhi Cantt.	15:00	Jaipur	20:40	Tri-Weekly (Tue, Thu & Fri)	31.12.2019	up to 31.03.2020

Beware of Touts Always buy your tickets from Railway Counter or authorised rail travel agents only.

Note:- For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

Please join us on

NORTHERN RAILWAY
visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

Integated Helpline No. 139 and Security Helpline No. 182

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of work and its location: 30-ELECT-57-T-19-20-E3 "Hiring of truck capacity 9.0 MT or equivalent for loading/unloading of Railway material of SSE/OE&P/SSB depot over Delhi division for three years."

Approx. Cost of the works in ₹: 73 lakh

Address of the office: St. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

Earnest Money: ₹55,500.00

Date & Time of submission of tender: 29.01.2020, 15:00 hrs.

Opening of tender: 29.01.2020, 15:00 hrs.

Website & Notice board: www.irps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 4165/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person Name: Harendra S.Y. S/o Unknown R/o Unknown Age : about 35 years, Height : 5'5" Approx., Complexion : Wheatish, Face: Oval Wearing : Green and Khaki Jacket, Red and Grey T-Shirt & Black Jeans Pant has been found dead at near Washing Line, Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi on 27.12.2019. In this regard a case vide DD No. 12A dated 27.12.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Patparganj Ind. Area, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this found dead person may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO :
P.S. Patparganj Ind. Area, Delhi
East Distt., Delhi
Tel. No. 011-22146491, 22146492

DP/7228/ED/19

'AI might be forced to shut down in 6 months'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Struggling Air India might be forced to shut down by June next year unless it finds a buyer as "piecemeal" arrangements cannot be sustained for long, according to a senior airline official.

Amid continuing uncertainty over the fate of the national carrier, the official said there is also need for funds to restart operations of 12 grounded narrow-body planes.

The airline has a debt burden of around ₹60,000 crore and the Government is still working on the modalities for the disinvestment.

Sounding alarm bells, the official said Air India might well go Jet Airways way if a prospective buyer does not come on board by June next year.

With government leaving the debt-ridden airline to fend for itself by refusing to inject funds any more amid its privatisation plans, the airline is "some how" keeping it afloat with peace meal arrangements, which are unlikely to sustain for long, the official said.

As per the government, it has infused funds to the tune of ₹30,520.21 crore in the flag carrier from financial year 2011-12 till December this year. Under the turnaround plan approved by the UPA regime in 2012, the airline was to get financial assistance of ₹30,000 crore over a 10-year period.

"We had sought ₹2,400 crore sovereign guarantee to mop up funds for meeting operational requirement. But the government has provided guarantee only for ₹500 crore. "We are some how manag-



ing the operations at present and at best we can sustain this situation till June. If a buyer does not come by that time, we will have to shut shop," said the official on condition of anonymity. After more than 25 years of flying, full service carrier Jet Airways shuttered operations in April due to cash crunch.

In 2018-19, Air India's net loss is provisionally estimated to be ₹8,556.35 crore.

Besides, it has a total debt of ₹60,000 crore, half of which has already taken out of the

fourth quarter of the fiscal. According to the official, it would take "at least" six months to complete the transaction in the eventuality of an investor coming on board, provided the sale process kick starts early next month.

At the same time, the official did not sound very hopeful of the government getting an investor in such an "economic situation," which has also affected the domestic aviation industry. Domestic air traffic, which is one of the parameters for gauging the health of the industry, grew only 3.86 per cent in the January-November period of the year as against an impressive 18.60 per cent growth in 2018. Response to the recent road shows in Singapore and London for Air India disinvestment was reportedly

"tepid". The official said that currently 12 narrow-body Airbus A320 planes are on the ground for want of engine replacement and are unlikely to be back in operations in the immediate future.

"We need at least \$150 million (about ₹1,100 crore) to get new engines for these 12 planes. With adequate funds not available even for normal operations, it looks difficult we will get funds for engine replacement and make these planes operational any soon," the official said.

However, the official said that seven of the eight wide-body planes, which were grounded for engine and other engineering related issues, are back in operations. The eighth one is expected to start flying soon.

Market ends steady in a see-saw trade; investors long for fresh cues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices closed on a flat note after a topsy-turvy session on Monday, with participants fence-sitting in absence of further cues ahead of year-end holidays.

At the closing bell, the BSE benchmark Sensex was 17.14 points, or 0.04 per cent, lower at 41,558. The 30-share gauge swung between a high of 41,714.73 and low of 41,453.38 in a highly volatile session.

The broader NSE Nifty, however, closed 10.05 points, or 0.08 per cent, higher at 12,255.85. The 50-share index too faced bouts of volatility during the day. ICICI Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 0.99 per cent, followed by SBI, TCS, HUL, Asian Paints and Axis Bank.

On the other hand, Nestle India, Hero MotoCorp, Mahindra and Mahindra, Bharti Airtel and Tata Steel were among the gainers. Sectorally, BSE IT, bankex, finance, teck and oil and gas indices closed in the red.

While, BSE auto, metal, telecom, industrial and basic materials were among the prominent gainers.

In the broader market, BSE midcap and smallcap indices outperformed benchmarks, rallying up to 0.75 per cent.

"Market was range-bound, premium valuation and lack of fresh triggers influenced investors to take cautious approach on heavyweights. But reasonable valuation of mid and small caps attracted inflows leading to outperformance in the broad market. We expect

this polarised valuation not to sustain, there could be shift of money from the overvalued large caps to midcaps in 2020," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Globally, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong ended higher, while those in Tokyo and Seoul settled in the red.

Stock exchanges in Europe started on a negative note.

There was hardly any significant news flow on the domestic front, however, in the coming days the focus will remain on monthly numbers from auto companies and on the GDP numbers, analysts commented.

On the currency front, the rupee was 4 paise higher at 71.34 against the US dollar.

Govt might breach fiscal deficit target in FY20; need for fiscal stimulus rises: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government might breach the fiscal deficit target this financial year amid drop in the revenue mobilisation and expected additional expenditure by the Government, says a report.

According to Dun & Bradstreet's Economy Forecast, the need for fiscal stimulus has increased even as the government finances remain "strained".

"We expect that the drop in the revenue mobilisation of the government and likelihood of additional expenditure by the government might breach the fiscal deficit target in FY20," Dun & Bradstreet India Chief Economist Arun Singh said.

No MDR on RuPay, UPI payments will kill industry, warns industry

PTI ■ MUMBAI

No MDR charges on transactions through RuPay cards and UPI payments will kill the digital payments industry, the Payments Council of India stated on Monday while criticising the government's move.

After a meeting with bankers last Saturday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had asked them not to charge MDR on payments via RuPay, UPI from January 1

with a view to driving digital payments. The move will apply to all companies with a turnover of ₹50 crore or more. Merchant Discount Rate is the fee paid by a merchant to a bank for accepting digital payments. The move is part of the Budget announcement in July.

Govt will give 5G spectrum for trials to all operators: Prasad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will not bar any equipment suppliers, such as China's Huawei, in the upcoming trials for 5G, with Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Monday saying the government will allocate airwaves to all telecom service providers for conducting trials of super-fast speed 5G networks.

Huawei rivals western equipment makers, such as Ericsson, and is banned in the US. Many countries, however, have allowed telecom service providers to use Chinese gear. And now, India has also indi-

cated its unwillingness to keep any company out of 5G trials. The government has decided to give 5G spectrum for trials to all operators in the country, Prasad said on Monday on the sidelines of a telecom event.

This implies that all operators, backed by equipment vendors they have decided to partner with, will be able to participate in the upcoming 5G trials in the country, and the stance is expected to spell a relief for Chinese gear maker Huawei.

"The age of 5G is coming... We have taken a decision to give 5G spectrum for trials to all the players," Prasad said.

With four labour codes, 2020 to be a 'year of reforms', says Gangwar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 44 central labour laws are most likely to be subsumed under four labour codes in 2020, making it a year of reforms as the Government works to bolster investments and tackle slowdown blues.

Besides, the Union Labour Ministry is mulling launching a "Santusht" portal next month for effective implementation of labour laws at the grass-root level.

Entering 2020, the government hopes that India would be able to implement all four codes on wages, industrial relations, social security and occupational safety, health and

working conditions. These are expected to improve ease of doing business and safeguard interest of workers.

"We hope that 2020 would be an year of labour reforms. The four codes would be a reality in 2020. The codes would safeguard the interest of workers and employers. We have tried to strike a balance between workers' as well employees' rights," Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar told PTI.

The labour reforms assume significance in view of an over six-year-low gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 4.5 per cent in the second quarter of this fiscal.

BSNL clears ₹1,700 crore in dues to vendors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has cleared ₹1,700 crore of vendors dues, its CMD P K Purwar said on Monday.

The corporation has also made salary payment to its employees for November, Purwar added.

"Payments worth ₹1,700 crore have been released to our vendors and contractors of BSNL," he said. Overall, the outstanding to creditors is ₹10,000 crore, he added.

"Employee salaries for November too have been released," he said adding that monthly wage cost stood at about ₹800 crore.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Sita @ Ishani D/o Sh. Lal Babu R/o H No. T-160, Indra Colony, Phatak No.07, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 14.12.2019. In this regard a **DD No. 30A dated 15.12.2019** has been lodged at PS, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. The description of missing/kidnapped girl is as under:

Name: Sita @ Ishani, **Father's Name:** Sh. Lal Babu, **Age:** 21 year, **Height:** 4'11", **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing:** Black Pant and Carate Colour Jacket and Black Shoes in feet.

If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641
Extn.-210
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/9614/NW/19

SHO
P.S., Shalimar Bagh, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27495198

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one unknown dead body of male, Age 55 years, Height 5'6", Complexion Shallow, Round Face, Thin Built, Wearing Green checkdar colour shirt and grey colour pant was found dead at TTE Rest House Gate, Near Sainik Aram Greh, Nabi Karim, Paharganj, Delhi on 21.11.19. In this regard a DD No. 91-A dated 21.11.19 U/S 174 Cr.PC has been lodged at PS Nabi Karim, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved in Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital Mortuary for 72 hours for identification.

Any person having any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned.

SHO
PS: Nabi Karim, Delhi
Ph.: 23521081, 23531734
DP/6856/CD/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one female namely **Nawal Devi W/o Sh. Mukesh R/o H. No. 124, Birshan Pana Village-Salahapur, Majra, Delhi**, has been missing since 20.11.2019 from the area of P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi. In this regard, a case **DD No. 10A dated 21.12.2019** has been registered at P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi. The description of the missing female is as under.



Age: 38 Years, **Complexion:** Fair, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Green Suit-Salwar & fancy chappi in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing female then please inform P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi at following Tel No. / e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- S.H.O.
P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi
Ph: 011-25952485
DP/3557/RD/19

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

(See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person accused **Manoj Kumar S/o Ct. Lal Bhadur R/o Vill. Tulsipur, Mora, PS: Nawab Ganj, Gonda, U.P. Also At: Ashok Kumar, Bank Street, Village: Prahlad Pur, Bangar, Delhi** has committed the offence in a **FIR No. 472/2000 u/s 279/304 IPC PS Shalimar Bagh Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrants of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Manoj Kumar** could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Manoj Kumar** has absconded (or are concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrants). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person **Manoj Kumar** of **FIR No. 472/2000 u/s 279/304 IPC PS Shalimar Bagh Delhi** is required to appear in the court to answer the said complaint on or before **22.02.2020**.

By order
Ms. Pooja Aggarwal
Metropolitan Magistrate
Room No.112,
Rohini Courts, Delhi
DP/9630/NW/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Ayush, S/o Vijay Sharma, R/o: Ashiyana Children Home, Delhi, Age: 12 years, Height: 4',6" Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Wearing: Brown colour Check Shirt & Brown Dark colour Pant and Black colour Shoes in feet**, has been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS Alipur, since 05.12.2019. In this regard a case vides **FIR No. 462/19 u/s 363 IPC, dated 05.12.2019** has been registered at P.S. Alipur, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-23011334
Ph. No.: 011-2301046, 23105229
P.S. Alipur, Delhi
DP/880/ON/19
Ph.: 011-27202290, 27202265

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Prem Chand, S/o Chote Lal, R/o Kh. No. 616, Sultanpur, Mehrauli, Delhi also at: Village Jeda, Post Eka, Distt. Firozabad (UP)** has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 804/15 u/s 279 IPC, PS Paschim Vihar East, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Prem Chand** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Prem Chand** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Prem Chand** of **FIR No. 804/15 u/s 279 IPC, PS Paschim Vihar East, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **05.02.2020**.

By Order
Sh. Puneet Nagpal,
Metropolitan Magistrate,
Room No. 268, 2nd Floor,
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi
DP/3008/OD/19(Court Matter)

BUSINESS CORNER

LIC PAYS ₹2,610.74 CRORE DIVIDEND TO GOVT



New Delhi: MR Kumar, Chairman, LIC of India, on Monday presented the dividend cheque of ₹2,610.74 crore to Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, as the Government of India's share of the surplus arising out of LIC's actuarial valuation as at 31.3.2019. During the fiscal 2018-19, LIC generated a total valuation surplus of ₹5,214.41 Crore, registering a growth of around 9.9 per cent over the previous year. This is for the first time in LIC's history that valuation surplus has crossed ₹50,000 Crore. Rajiv Kumar, Secretary (Finance), Debashish Panda, Special Secretary (Insurance & FI) were present along with officials from Life Insurance Corporation of India, TC Suseel Kumar, MD, Vipin Anand, MD, Mukesh Kumar Gupta, MD and Raj Kumar, MD. LIC has completed 63 years since its incorporation and now manages Assets worth more than ₹31.11 lakh Crore. It had annual income of ₹5.61 lakh Crore and achieved the highest ever first year premium Income of ₹1, 42,191.69 crore in the year 2018-19. During the year 2018-19, it has paid 2 crore 59 lakh claims for an amount of ₹1.63 lakh crore. LIC's market share is 76.28 per cent in number of policies and 71 per cent in first year premium as on 30th November 2019.

CLW ORGANISES EVENT ON 70 GLORIOUS YEARS



Chittaranjan: A two-day inter unit competition was organised by Chittaranjan Locomotive Works Bharat Scout and Guide District Unit from 29 December to 30 December 2019 by members of Scouts and Guides, Rovers and Rangers to commemorate the completion of "70 glorious years" of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW). The program concluded on Monday. Ram Prakash, PCEE, CLW visited various camps set up by the teams as a chief guest on this occasion. More than one hundred and fifty comprising both senior and junior members took part in the program organised at Scout Den of Rail City. On this occasion, camp construction, their skills and structural development and capacity were demonstrated by the members.

PAN-Aadhaar linking deadline extended till March, 2020: CBDT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The last date for the mandatory linking of the Permanent Account Number (PAN) with Aadhaar has been extended till March next year, the CBDT said on Monday.

The earlier deadline was

Tuesday, December 31.

"The due date for linking of PAN with Aadhaar as specified under sub-section 2 of section 139AA of the Income-tax Act, 1961 has been extended from December 31, 2019 to March 31, 2020," the department said on its official Twitter handle.

China's top negotiator to visit US to sign phase one deal to ease trade war, says report

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's Vice-Premier Liu He, who is also the chief negotiator for trade talks with the US, will lead a delegation to Washington this weekend, during which he is expected to sign a phase one deal to significantly de-escalate the trade war between the two biggest global economies, a media report said on Monday.

Washington has sent an invitation and Beijing has accepted it," Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted a Chinese official as saying. The Chinese delegation, headed by Liu, which would leave on Saturday is expected to stay "a few days" in the US, the report said.

However, neither side has officially confirmed the trip. China's Ministry of Commerce was not immedi-

ately available for comment. The signing of a phase one deal during Liu's trip would mark a point of truce in the ongoing bitter trade war between the world's two biggest economies. On December 13, China and the US have agreed on the text of a phase one economic and trade agreement to end the 18-month-long bruising trade war.

According to an official statement, both the sides have agreed to complete their necessary procedures, including legal review, translation and proofreading, as soon as possible and discuss the detailed arrangements for officially signing the agreement.

Chinese Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen had announced that a breakthrough in the trade negotiations has been reached for a phase-one deal.

HK Police: Protesters inciting youth crime

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong police on Monday accused activists in the long-running pro-democracy movement of inciting minors to commit crimes.

The claim Monday comes two days before a planned New Year's Day march that is expected to attract tens of thousands of participants.

Chief police spokesman Kwok Ka-chuen told reporters that the force was in close contact with the organizers of the Jan. 1 event, but would not tolerate threats to public safety.

Kwok also said young people had been motivated to commit criminal acts during the protests, including dropping objects from the upper stories of apartment buildings.

It wasn't clear whether those actions were directly tied to any specific demonstration. "Over the weekend, during our arrest operation, we arrested a large number of youngsters and are very alarmed that some



File Photo

criminals incite youngsters to commit crimes," Kwok said, adding that some of the violence had been inspired by the children's teachers.

Children as young as 12 have been among the nearly 7,000 people arrested during the protests, which have drawn broad support and were originally sparked by now-discarded legislation that would have allowed citizens of the semi-autonomous Chinese city to be

sent to China for trial.

The movement started in opposition to a now-shelved proposed law that would have allowed suspects in Hong Kong to be sent to mainland China to stand trial. Protesters' demands have since expanded to include universal suffrage and an investigation into alleged police abuses, and have frequently broken out into pitched battles between the two sides.

US strikes on Iran-backed militia in Iraq, Syria killed 25

AP ■ BAGHDAD

An Iranian-backed militia said on Monday that the death toll from US military strikes in Iraq and Syria against its fighters has risen to 25, vowing to exact revenge for the "aggression of evil American ravens."

The announcement in Baghdad came a day after US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Washington had carried out military strikes targeting the Iranian-backed Iraqi militia blamed for a rocket attack that killed an American contractor in Iraq last week.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the strikes send the message that the US will not tolerate actions by Iran that jeopardize American lives.

The US military said "precision defensive strikes" were conducted against five sites of Kataeb Hezbollah, or Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq and Syria.

"Our battle with America and its mercenaries is now open to all possibilities," Kataeb Hezbollah said in a statement after midnight Sunday. "We have no alternative today other than confrontation and there is nothing that will prevent us from responding to this crime."

The US blames the militia for a rocket barrage on Friday that killed a US defense contractor at a military compound near Kirkuk, in northern Iraq. Officials said as many as 30 rockets were fired in that attack.

Iraq's Hezbollah Brigades, a separate force from the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, operates under the umbrella of the state-sanctioned militias known collectively as the Popular Mobilization Forces. Many of them are supported by Iran.

The Popular Mobilization Forces said Sunday that the US strikes killed at least 19 of Kataeb Hezbollah's members. But Kataeb Hezbollah spokesman Mohammed Mohieh told The Associated Press on Monday that the death toll rose to 25.

At least 51 militiamen were wounded and some of them were serious condition, he said, adding that the militia group's commanders would decide on the retaliation.

In Tehran, foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi condemned the US strikes against Kataeb Hezbollah as an "obvious case of terrorism" and accused Washington of ignoring Iraq's sovereignty. Lebanon's Iran-backed

Hezbollah also blasted the "brutal American aggression," saying those who took the decision to carry out the attack "will soon discover how stupid this criminal decision was."

Kataeb Hezbollah is led by Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, one of Iraq's most powerful men. He once battled US troops and is now the deputy head of the Popular Mobilization Forces.

Iran says US strikes on Iraq show its 'support for terrorism'

AFP ■ TEHRAN

Iran said Monday that the United States has shown its "support for terrorism" by carrying out air strikes on forces in Iraq that have dealt blows against the Islamic State group.

The Pentagon said on Sunday that it targeted an Iran-linked militant group in western Iraq and eastern Syria in response to a barrage of rockets that killed a US civilian contractor two days earlier.

"These attacks have once again proved America's false claims in fighting Daesh... As the United States has targeted the positions of forces that over the years have inflicted heavy blows to Daesh terrorists," Iran's government

spokesman Abbas Mousavi said, referring to IS.

"With these attacks, America has shown its firm support for terrorism and its neglect for the independence and sovereignty of countries and it must accept consequences for its illegal act," he said in a statement.

The spokesman said the presence of foreign forces in the region was the cause of insecurity and tensions. "America must put an end to its occupying presence," said Mousavi.

US-Iran tensions have soared since Washington pulled out of a landmark nuclear agreement with Tehran last year and began reimposing crippling sanctions.

Two dead in Texas church shooting; shooter killed

PTI ■ HOUSTON

A gunman pulled out a shotgun and opened fire on worshippers at a church during Sunday service in Texas, killing two persons before being shot by an armed member of the congregation, the authorities said.

The shooting took place at about 11:50 am (local time), during the morning service on Sunday. The service was being live-streamed on social media.

According to the authorities, the gunman pulled out a shotgun at the West Freeway Church of Christ in White Settlement, a suburb of Fort Worth, and began firing.

The two churchgoers who were shot, died later in a hospital, police said.

Video footage showed the gunman stand up and speak to a man nearby, who gestured at another parishioner. The gunman then fired at the man he gestured toward.

Taliban say have 'no ceasefire plans' in Afghanistan

AFP ■ KABUL

The Taliban on Monday denied agreeing to any ceasefire in Afghanistan after rumours swirled of a potential deal that would see a reduction in fighting after more than 18 years of war.

The statement from the insurgents comes as local and international forces brace for another bloody winter amid renewed US-Taliban talks, after President Donald Trump called off the negotiations earlier this year over insurgent attacks.

"In the past few days, some

media have been releasing untrue reports about a ceasefire... The fact is that, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has no ceasefire plans," the Taliban said, after multiple media reports, including a story in the Wall Street Journal, suggested the group was on the verge of announcing some type of temporary truce.

The US and the Afghan government in Kabul have long called for a ceasefire with the Taliban, including during the year of negotiations between Washington and the militants that were abruptly called off by

Trump in September.

However, the insurgents have repeatedly stated that any potential truce will only be ironed out after American troops withdraw from the country.

The US-Taliban talks, held mainly in Doha, were aimed at allowing Washington to begin withdrawing troops in return for various security guarantees.

They were on the brink of a deal when Trump abandoned the effort in September, citing Taliban violence. Negotiations have since restarted in Doha, but were earlier this month put on a "pause".

Trump is looking to slash the troop presence in

Afghanistan, potentially even before a deal between Washington and the Taliban is cemented.

Deadly bouts of fighting continue however, with tens of thousands of Afghan security forces killed since they inherited combat operations from NATO at the end of 2014.

Earlier Monday, in northern Afghanistan's Jowzjan province, the Taliban killed at least 13 Afghan security forces during a raid on a pro-government militia position, according to a provincial spokesman.

Every day Afghan civilians also continue to bear the brunt of the bloody conflict.

Putin thanks Trump for helping foil terrorist acts in Russia

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke with President Donald Trump on Sunday to thank him for information that Putin said helped Russia foil terrorist attacks over the New Year's holiday, the Kremlin said.

Putin thanked Trump "for information transmitted through the special services that helped prevent the completion of terrorist acts in Russia," the Kremlin said in a brief statement posted on its website.

Russia warns Iran nuclear deal in danger of 'falling apart'

AP ■ MOSCOW

Iran's nuclear deal with world powers is in danger of "falling apart" without the compliance of the United States and the European Union, Russia's foreign minister warned Monday after meeting with his Iranian counterpart in Moscow.

The 2015 deal between Iran and Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for limits on its nuclear program. The U.S. withdrew from the accord last year and imposed crippling economic sanctions that block Iran from

selling crude oil abroad.

"Because of the destructive line that Washington keeps towing, this important achievement of international diplomacy... is in danger of falling apart," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said, adding that "colleagues from the European Union" were not fully complying with the agreement either. In response to the US sanctions, Iran has pressured the European signatories to find a way to limit the impact on the Iranian economy.

Tehran has slowly inched toward ceasing its own compliance with the terms of the deal. Last week, for example, the

country began new operations at a heavy water nuclear reactor.

Iran's moves have been condemned by Western governments and escalating tensions in the region, while Russia and China have repeatedly blamed the US.

After meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif on Monday, Lavrov said Russia would demand full compliance from both the U.S. and the EU, in which case Iran would be able to return to fulfilling its obligations in accordance with the deal. Otherwise the agreement should be considered "no longer existing," he said.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER JAMMU AND KASHMIR POWER CORPORATION LIMITED GLADNI COMPLEX NARWAL JAMMU - 180006
 Email id: mdjkttradeco@gmail.com Phone: 01998-2474233
 NIT No. CEJKPCLT-MTL-03 Date: 21.12.2019

TENDER

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of Jammu & Kashmir, Chief Engineer, JKPCL invites e-bids for upgradation of existing two Nos Meter testing labs at Jammu and Srinagar, CT-PT Testing Laboratories including construction of dedicated sub-station and Control Room/Lab building under PMDP Scheme. The details are given here under :-

Tender No. :- CE/JKPCLT-MTL-03 Dated :- 21.12.2019

Name of Work :- Upgradation of existing two Nos Meter testing labs at Jammu and Srinagar, including establishment of additional CT/PT testing equipments, Construction of dedicated sub-station and Control Room/Lab building

Amount of Earnest Money Deposit :- 10.00 Lacs

Cost of e-Bid document :- Rs. 5000/-

Last date for submission of e-Bid :- 31.01.2020 (16:00 hrs)

1. The tender document will be available on the official website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view/download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below:

Date & Time of downloading of Standard Bidding Document :- The Standard Bidding Document can be downloaded from <http://jktenders.gov.in> W.E.F 26.12.2019

A. Sale of e-Bid Document (Start) :- 26.12.2019 (16:00 Hrs onwards)

B. Sale of e-Bid Document (End) :- 10.01.2020 (upto 16:00 Hrs)

C. Pre Bid Conference Date :- 13.01.2020 (11:00 Hrs) at Jammu Office

D. Clarification End Date :- 20.01.2020 (up to 16:00 Hrs)

Sd/-
 Chief Engineer, JKPCL

No. DIP/J-11514/19
 Dated: 28-12-2019

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED
 (See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Sandeep Kumar S/o Suraj Kumar R/o X-480, Camp No.1, Nangloi, Delhi** have committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in a FIR No. 76/13, u/s 377/509/34 IPC & 4 PCOSCO Act PS Nangloi, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrants of arrest there upon issued that the said accused Sandeep Kumar could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Sandeep Kumar have absconded (or are concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant), Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused persons **Sandeep Kumar of FIR No. 76/13, u/s 377/509/34 IPC & 4 PCOSCO Act PS Nangloi, Delhi is required to appear in the court to answer the said complaint on or before 30.01.2020.**

By order
Dr. Archana Sinha
 ASJ-06 (West), Special Court
 Under PCOSCO Act, Room No. 209,
 2nd floor, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/3013/OD/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one female namely **Gulabo Devi W/o Lt.Sh. Rama Nand R/o H. No. C-43/9, Jhuggi Ambedkar Basti, Faiz Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi**, has been missing from her residence. In this regard, a case **DD No. 13A dated 31.07.2019** has been registered at **P.S. DBG Road, Delhi**. The description of the missing female is as under.

Age: 60 Years, Complexion: Shallow, Height: 5'3", Face: Oval, Build: Normal, Wearing: Red colour Saaari & Blouse and chocolate colour hawal chappal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing female then please inform P.S. DBG Road, Delhi at following Tel No. / e-mail: c/c@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- **S.H.O.**
P.S. DBG Road, Delhi
Ph: 011- 23537374, 23613252

DP/6839/CD/19

All eyes on 'new way' in Kim's New Year speech

AFP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called for "offensive measures" to strengthen security ahead of a New Year speech that could flesh out the nuclear-armed nation's threat to seek a "new way" forward after the expiration of its year-end deadline for US sanctions relief.

Kim's latest comments, made during a meeting of top ruling party officials in Pyongyang, came amid concerns that the North could formally close down dialogue with Washington and resume nuclear and long-range missile tests.

Addressing the officials,



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un speaks during a Workers' Party meeting in Pyongyang, North Korea

Kim stressed the need "to take positive and offensive measures for fully ensuring the sovereignty and security of the country," the state news agency KCNA reported Monday.

Nuclear talks between the North and the US have been largely stalled since the collapse of a February summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump in Hanoi.

Pyongyang has been demanding the easing of international sanctions imposed over its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, while Washington is insisting it takes more tangible steps towards giving them up.

The North has not so far specified the "new way" it would adopt if the US does not offer fresh concessions by the end of the year, and Kim is expected to make it clearer on Wednesday.

This month China and Russia — the North's biggest economic partners — proposed loosening UN sanctions against Pyongyang, and analysts say Kim is likely to seek to exploit rivalries between Washington, Beijing and Moscow.

Turkey detains 124 suspected of links to ISIS

AP ■ ANKARA

Police in Turkey detained at least 124 people suspected of links to the Islamic State group, the state-run news agency reported Monday, in an apparent sweep against the militant group ahead of New Year celebrations.

At least 33 foreign nationals were detained in the capital Ankara in a joint operation by anti-terrorism police and the national intelligence agency, according to the Anadolu Agency. In Istanbul, police raid-

ed 31 houses, detaining 24 suspects, including four foreign nationals.

Police conducted simultaneous, pre-dawn raids in the city of Batman, in south-east Turkey, where 22 suspects were detained, it said in a separate report.

Raids were also conducted in the cities of Adana, Kayseri, Samsun and Bursa where 45 people, including six foreign nationals were detained.

Anadolu said the IS suspects apprehended in Ankara

were from Iraq, Syria and Morocco. Police were searching for some 17 other suspects, the report said. The country was hit by a wave of attacks in 2015 and 2016 blamed on IS and Kurdish militants that killed over 300 people.

The IS group also claimed responsibility for an attack at an Istanbul nightclub during New Year celebrations in the early hours of 2017.

The attack killed 39 people, most of them foreigners. Meanwhile, Turkey deported a total of 778 IS or

other jihadists back to their home countries in 2019, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said Sunday.

Turkey has stepped up its efforts to expel foreign fighters back to their countries of origin in recent months, accusing many European countries of not taking responsibility for their nationals and saying Turkey was "not a hotel" for foreign fighters.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:

S.N.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty	Closing Date
01	16194215	180 DAYS LIFE, LUBE OIL AND FUEL OIL FILTER	505 NOS	23.01.20
02	16191594	KIT GASKET (CYLINDER HEAD) TO D&W	552 NOS	27.01.20
03	02192508A	LOW MAINTENANCE LEAD ACID BATTERY 525AH	485 NOS	28.01.20
04	09192270A	KIT OF AUTOMATIC TWIST LOCK 24087 SET	24087 SET	31.01.20

Note:- 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained. Tender Notice No. 26/2019-2020
 Dated: 27.12.2019. 4152/19

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

The Sr. DME/Diesel, Northern Railway, Diesel Loco Shed, Tughlakabad for and on behalf of President of India invites e-tenders for the following work. The tender will be accepted online only in the prescribed tender document.

Name of Work	Place of work	Completion period	Approximate cost of work	Tender Document Cost	Earnest Money	Eligibility Criteria (Special)	Website to download and upload e-tender document	Due date & time of uploading of tender by tenderer	Place of opening of tender	Date & Time of Tender opening	Validity of offer
"PU Painting of 37 (Thirty Seven) Nos. (WDP4D & WDP4B) HHP Diesel Locomotives at Diesel Shed, Tughlakabad"	Diesel Shed, Tughlakabad, New Delhi-110044	36 Months	Rs. 48,98,996/- (Rs. Forty Eight Lakhs Ninety Eight Thousand cost of work) Nine Hundred And Ninety Six Only) including GST @18%	Rs. 3,540/- (Rs. Three Thousand Five Hundred Forty Only)	Rs. 99,000/- (Rs. Ninety Eight Thousand only)	As per approval of competent authority, tenderer must have eligibility of successfully "PU Painting carried out in transport sector i.e. Rail Transport (EMU/ MEMU/ DMU/ Locomotive/ Wagons, ICF/ RCF, built coaches), Road Transport (Public carrier buses) and Civil aviation (Aeroplanes/Choppers)".	ireps.gov.in	22.01.2020 upto 12:00 Hrs.	Divisional Railway Manager office, State Entry Road, New Delhi.	22.01.2020 after 12:00 Hrs.	45 days from opening of tender

Tender Document can be downloaded from Indian Railway website www.ireps.gov.in For details of work experience, scope of work and terms & conditions please see tender document. TENDER NOTICE NO.: DSL-TKD-PU PAINT-HHP-RT-19 Dated: 30.12.2019. 4151/19

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE MECHANICAL DIVISION UDHAMPUR

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

E-NIT PHEM/UDHR/ 76 OF 2019-20 DATED 23-12-2019

Executive Engineer PHE Mechanical Division, Udhampur, on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir UT, invites tenders by e-tending mode from registered firms who have sufficient experience in the relevant field of electromechanical/electrical works.

S. No. 1, Name of Work :- Design, fabrication, installation, testing and commissioning of 265 ampere auto starter cum fault analyzer cum protection & control panel at pumping station Thill Roun

Qty :- 01 job, Name of Division :- PHE Mech. Division Udhampur, Cost of Tender Document / Tender Fee (in Rs) :- Rs. 200/- Earnest money (in Rs) :- Rs. 7000/- (Rs.3500/- for DIC / SSI Registered Firms) of J&K in the shape of CDR/ FDR Addressed to the Executive Engineer PHE Mechanical Division Udhampur, Validity of Rates :- 90 days, Bid validity :- 90 days

Position of funds : Demanded

1. Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 24-12-2019 (10:30 AM) to 29.12.2019 (10:30 AM)

2. The Bids shall be deposited on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 26-12-2019 (01:00 PM) to 16-01-2020 (3:00 PM)

No. DIP/J-11482/19
 Dated: 28.12.2019

Sd/- Executive Engineer
 PHE Mech. Division Udhampur

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS

The Executive Engineer, Civil Division No. VIII, Irrigation & Flood Control Deptt., Govt. of NCT of Delhi Sector-15, Rohini, Delhi invites online item Rate E-tenders on behalf of the President of India from approved and eligible contractors of I&FC Deptt. The contractors who are registered with other Departments but granted provisional permission by the Chief Engineer (I&FC) are also eligible for participation of e-tendering for the following works:-

Sl. No.	IT/NO.	Name of Work	Head of Account	Estimate Cost (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time Allowed	Tender ID No.	Last date & time for submission on price Bid
1	EE/CDD-VIII/2019-20/76	Construction of road bearing Kh. No. 142/85, 99 and 142/40, 41 at village Kanjhavalla in Distt. NW.	4515 Plan	1,70,65,282	3,41,305	180 Days	2019_IFC_186365_1	03.01.2020 upto 15.00 Hrs.
2	EE/CDD-VIII/2019-20/77	Renovation work of existing Dada Bhaiya chopal and construction of a new hall Dada Bhaiya chopal at village Bavvana in Distt North.	4515 Plan	1,09,02,627	2,18,053	180 Days	2019_IFC_186369_1	03.01.2020 upto 15.00 Hrs.
3	EE/CDD-VIII/2019-20/78	Construction of phini road (near temple) from Bavvana, Auchiandi road to Sh. Sukhbir House at village Auchiandi in Distt. North	4515 Plan	77,16,787	1,54,336	180 Days	2019_IFC_186371_1	03.01.2020 upto 15.00 Hrs.

1. The enlistment of the contractors should be valid on the last date of opening of tenders. In case, the last date of opening of tender is extended, the enlistment of contractor should be valid on the original date of opening of tenders.

2. Earnest money in physical form and self attested copy of Registration of enlistment & other documents (eg. ESI & EPF registration, copy of PAN card, Copy of VAT documents) should be submitted in the Office of Executive Engineer, Civil Division-VIII, I&FC Deptt., Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Sector-15, Rohini, Delhi-110085 before the last date and time of submission of technical bids.

3. The details of above mentioned works can be seen and downloaded from the website <http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

4. The agencies who do not fulfill eligibility criteria do not submit required documents upto the stipulated time, their tenders shall be rejected summarily at technical bid stage.

5. Tenders submitted through e-procurement portal shall only be considered and no manual tender shall be accepted.

6. Intending tenders participating in tendering process in EE/CDD-VIII, I&FC shall furnish ESI & EPF registration along with other required documents and the same shall be submitted while bidding. Moreover the ESI & EPF registration documents of all contractors shall be kept on records and ESI & EPF registration documents of lowest tenderer to whom the work awarded shall form the part of the agreement (I&FC department office order No.1417-48 dated 29.01.2016).

Sd/-
 (J. NARENDER SAGAR)
 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER-CD-VIII
 Civil Divn-VIII, (I&FC Deptt.)
 Govt. of NCT of Delhi
 Sector-15, Rohini, Delhi-85

DIP/Shabdarth/1206/19-20

Metro Railway, Kolkata
 Kolkata's Pride
CORRIGENDUM

In our published advertisement having Abridged e-Tender Notice No. Civil-2308-2019 (Open) in this newspaper on 21.12.2019, readers are requested to read "Chief Engineer (Con.), Metro Railway, instead of Chief Engineer, Metro Railway". All other terms and conditions will remain the same. Chief Engineer (Con.)

POLICE HEADQUARTERS J&K
 Phone/Fax No. 0194-2434301/2434302 B/S. (0194-2434302/2434303) JMU
 Website - www.jkpolice.gov.in, Email - jkpolice@jkpolice.gov.in

Tender Extension Notice

Due to administrative and technical reasons, last date and online opening date of NIT No. 84 of 2019 dated 13.12.2019 floated to procure Anti Riot Gas Mask with canister is extended as follows :-

i) **Last Date for online tender submission :- 09.01.2020**

ii) **Online opening of technical bids :- 11.01.2020**

Detailed tender documents with terms and conditions are available on J&K State e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in.

No. DIP/J-11511/19
 Dated: 26.12.2019

Red's 'brilliant' 2019 just a building block for Klopp

AFP ■ LONDON

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp insists the European champions must build on a "brilliant" 2019 to turn a 13-point lead at the top of the table into a first Premier League title in 30 years.

Klopp's men were not at their flowing best and needed the help of two VAR reviews to continue their relentless march towards the title with a 1-0 win over Wolves on Sunday.

Liverpool have now won 18 of their first 19 league games of the season and lost just once in the calendar year in the league, on top of winning the Champions League, Club World Cup and UEFA Super Cup.

"2019 was brilliant but it's not important because we count seasons, not years, so the 2019/20 season is not over," said Klopp.

"We are halfway there, we still have 19 games to play and probably 18 or 19 of them will be like this tonight, for different reasons."

"Who cares about points in December? We just created a basis which we will work with from now on, that's all."

FUMING AT VAR

Wolves were angry even before the VAR controversies as the Premier League Christmas scheduling meant they travelled to Anfield just 45 hours after a thrilling 3-2 win over Manchester City.

In the match they were left fuming at the two calls that went against them in quick succession towards the end of the first half.

Mane swept home his 14th goal of the season from Lallana's knockdown with his shoulder and referee Anthony Taylor's initial decision was overturned.

However, Wolves were unhappy that another claim for handball against Virgil van Dijk earlier in the move was not checked.



Liverpool's Sadio Mane, 2nd right, celebrates after scoring the opening goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Wolverhampton Wanderers at Anfield Stadium

Liverpool/Twitter

Wolves' frustration was compounded in first-half stoppage time when Pedro Neto's equaliser was ruled out.

Jonny was adjudged to be offside by the tiniest of margins in the build-up to add to a number of Premier League goals over the past two days ruled out for the most marginal of offside calls.

"Anfield is amazing but they were celebrating a non-goal. It doesn't make sense. The referee should sustain his decision," said Wolves boss Nuno Espirito Santo.

"The VAR referee is miles away taking decisions on a lot of things happening here. Who is inside the game? Who feels the intensity and the flow? The referee here."

Nuno was booked among the Wolves protestations, but the Portuguese coach's decision to start with top scorer Raul Jimenez and Adama Traore on the bench meant he had weapons up his sleeve come the second half.

Traore's pace was unleashed on the hour mark and Jimenez followed shortly after, but only after Diogo Jota's fierce strike forced Alisson Becker into a smart save.

The visitors had lost just once in their previous 14 league games to move into contention for a top-four finish and they did not go down without a fight in the final stages.

"If it would be easy to win that number of games a lot more teams would have done it," added Klopp.

"It is not easy and you have to fight with all you have. Sometimes we have more and sometimes less and the boys do that all the time, so I couldn't be more proud of what they did again. To get that result over the line is just impressive."

Jimenez had the best chance to claim an equaliser, but was denied by a block from Joe Gomez before Joao Moutinho, Romain Saiss, Ruben Vinagre and Traore all fired off target.

West Ham turn to Moyes for second time

AFP ■ LONDON

Struggling West Ham said they had appointed David Moyes as manager for the second time in a bid to safeguard their place in the Premier League.

Moyes, whose career has never recovered from a deeply unsuccessful spell as Manchester United boss in 2013-14, succeeds Manuel Pellegrini, who was sacked after a 2-1 defeat to Leicester on Saturday that left the Hammers just one point above the relegation zone.



West Ham's manager David Moyes shouts from the sideline

AP

The 56-year-old has been without a club since leaving West Ham after a six-month spell in the 2017-18 season.

Moyes guided West Ham to safety that season after Slaven Bilic was dismissed in early November and will be tasked with doing the same for a second time.

"It's fabulous to be back," said Moyes in a club statement on Sunday.

"I'm feeling very proud that I'm back here at West Ham. But I think more importantly I'll be looking to see what I can do and what I can make improvements to."

"I do believe that the squad of players I've got here is a better squad of players than when I took over before, so I am looking forward to working with them."

The West Ham hierarchy were keen to make a swift appointment following Pellegrini's sacking ahead of Wednesday's crucial clash with fellow strugglers Bournemouth at the London Stadium.

"David proved in his short time with the club that he was capable of getting results and we believe that he will start moving the club in the right direction once again," said West Ham's co-chairman David Sullivan.

"We are delighted to welcome David back - he knows the club well and he built strong relationships during that time which will be crucial for the work that needs to be done going forward."

Moyes won nine and drew 10 of his 31 previous games in charge of the club. He made his name in 11 successful years at Everton, but was sacked after less than a year as Alex Ferguson's successor at Manchester United.

Moyes also struggled in short spells at Real Sociedad and Sunderland before taking the West Ham job first time round on a short-term contract.

However, West Ham's ambitious appointment of former Real Madrid and Manchester City boss Pellegrini did not pay off as the Chilean was let go on Saturday after a run of seven defeats in nine Premier League matches.

Vikas makes Indian squad for Olympic Qualifiers

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Accomplished comeback-man Vikas Krishan (69kg) claimed a slot in the Indian men's boxing squad for next year's Olympic qualifiers after winning his final trial bout along with two others here on Monday.

The former world championships and Asian Games medal-winner, who competed in the middleweight 75kg category for a long time, is back to the 69kg division after recovering from a short injury sustained during his brief undefeated stint in the professional circuit.

The 26-year-old, already a two-time Olympian, out-punched national medalist Duryodhan Singh Negi in a unanimous decision in the trial finals.

Also making the squad for the Asia/Oceania zone qualifiers, scheduled from February 3 to 14 in China, were Commonwealth Games medal-winning duo of



Match referee raises Vikas's hand after he qualifies for Indian squad for Olympic Qualifiers

Twitter

Gaurav Solanki (57kg) and Naman Tanwar (91kg).

While Solanki defeated Mohammed Hussamuddin, Tanwar edged past Naveen Kumar. Both the bouts were split verdicts.

On Sunday, Asian silver-medalist Ashish Kumar (75kg), veteran Satish Kumar (+91kg) and Sachin Kumar (81kg) booked their places in the squad.

Ashish defeated reigning

national champion and South Asian Games Gold-medallist Ankit Khatana in a unanimous verdict.

Satish, a Commonwealth and Asian Games medallist, booked his berth with a split verdict triumph over Narendar. Sachin claimed the 81kg spot with a victory over Brijesh Yadav.

Amit Panghal (52kg) and Manish Kaushik (63kg) have already claimed their place in the team after winning medals at the world championships in September.

While Panghal claimed a path-breaking silver, Kaushik brought home a Bronze, fulfilling the criteria for selection set by the Boxing Federation of India.

Indian squad for Asia-Oceania Olympic Qualifiers: Amit Panghal (52kg), Gaurav Solanki (57kg), Manish Kaushik (63 kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), Ashish Kumar (75kg), Sachin Kumar (81kg), Naman Tanwar (91kg), Satish Kumar (+91kg).

Country proud of both Mary and Nikhat : Rijiju

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said not much should be made of the "ugly spat" that marred the trial bout between M C Mary Kom and Nikhat Zareen and the country is proud of both the six-time world champion and her promising challenger.

Mary Kom defeated Zareen 9-1 in the trials held on Saturday to make the squad for Olympic Qualifiers in China in February. The bout was marred by acrimony as the two boxers didn't shake hands after the contest and Mary Kom ignored an attempted hug by Zareen.

"Mary Kom is a legend who has achieved what no other boxer has ever achieved in the World Amateur Boxing. Nikhat Zareen is an amazing boxer who has the potential to follow the footsteps of Mary Kom. India is proud of both of them.



Period," Rijiju tweeted. "...Passions & emotions are the souls of Sports! The only point to

bear in mind is, in professional sports, the players & money matter more whereas in amateur sports

it's the nation. The ugly spat (sic) shouldn't have adverse effects on players while representing India,"

he added.

Zareen had approached Rijiju with an open letter when the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) flip-flopped on a stated policy and announced direct selection of Mary Kom for the Olympic qualifiers.

Rijiju had steered clear of the matter at that time citing the Olympic charter.

On Saturday, Mary Kom said she was upset about being dragged into the selection controversy as the call on selection was not hers to take.

The Manipuri icon defended her refusal to exchange post-bout pleasantries with Zareen, saying that the former junior world champion will get her respect only if she "herself shows respect to others".

The 23-year-old Zareen said she expected better from the senior boxer and felt hurt when her attempt at sharing a hug was rebuffed.

CITY EASE PAST BLADES TEST

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Manchester City shrugged off a tight turnaround from defeat at Wolves to beat Sheffield United 2-0 on Sunday thanks to second-half strikes from Sergio Aguero and Kevin de Bruyne.

City boss Pep Guardiola had lambasted the scheduling that saw the English champions kick off less than 48 hours after playing the majority of Friday's 3-2 defeat at Molineux with 10 men.

Fatigue seemed to get the better of City in the first half as the Blades enjoyed the better of the chances and had a Lys Mousset goal ruled out after a VAR review for offside.

However, the greater individual quality at Guardiola's disposal decided the game as De Bruyne teed up Aguero to smash into the roof of the net seven minutes after the break.

De Bruyne then rounded off another excellent display by scoring the second himself with a fine finish eight minutes from time to inflict United's first defeat away from home for nearly a year and bring City back to within 14 points of runaway Premier League leaders Liverpool.

"Today I understood why Sheffield United are in the place they're in the table," said Guardiola.

"In the first half we had problems, we changed some things and the second half was much, much better."

Despite claiming that the crowded Christmas scheduling showed the Premier League and broadcasters "don't care" about player welfare, Guardiola made just three changes to the side that started against Wolves.

City's sluggish start should have punished by the visitors with Mousset particularly wasteful.

The Frenchman spurned a glorious early chance to put United ahead when he got on the end of a floated Callum Robinson cross but headed wide.

United thought they had claimed the lead on 29 minutes when Mousset raced onto a long ball from John Fleck and



Kevin De Bruyne celebrates after scoring his side's second goal

AP

fired home.

City were furious because they thought Aguero had been fouled in the build-up but, while their complaints were brushed aside by referee Chris Kavanagh, VAR came to their aid by ruling Mousset was marginally offside.

"If the Mousset goal was not offside, it would have been very difficult for us," added Guardiola. "In the second half we put more players closer to Sergio, and we passed the ball with more quality."

It was a let-off for City but they were caught out by a long ball again soon after as Oliver Norwood picked out Mousset, who was outside this time but could only shoot into the side-netting with just Claudio Bravo to beat.

"You always know when you comes to grounds like Manchester City you have to take your opportunities, and unfortunately we didn't," said Blades boss Chris Wilder.

"The first goal is the game-changer. We were in the game and then we had to open up to try to get back into it and a world-class player finishes us off in the last ten minutes."

The lack of a clinical finisher has been the only thing holding back Wilder's men, who sit eighth in the table, on their already impressive return to the Premier League and they got a lesson in taking their chances from City's all-time record scorer soon after the break.

De Bruyne picked out Aguero with a fine through ball and the Argentine blasted him past Henderson on a narrow angle.



Japan's Nishikori plays a return shot

ATP/Twitter

Nishikori pulls out of new ATP Cup

AFP ■ PERTH

Japanese star Kei Nishikori pulled out of the inaugural ATP Cup Monday as he continues to struggle with an elbow injury that has kept him out since the US Open.

The former world number four, who has

slipped to 13, said he was disappointed not to be representing his country in Perth at the team event starting on January 3.

"Today, together with my team, we have made this decision as I am still not 100 percent ready to compete at the highest level," he said in

a statement.

Nishikori's elbow needed surgery in October and it is unclear whether he will be fit for the Australian Open when the first Grand Slam of the year begins at Melbourne Park on January 20.

Yoshihito Nishioka

will replace him as the top-ranked player in Japan's ATP Cup team.

Yasutaka Uchiyama also withdrew from the event earlier this week, with Toshihide Matsui taking his place.

Nishikori's absence is another blow for the event after Britain's Andy

Murray pulled out over the weekend with a pelvic injury and Roger Federer opted not to play.

The innovative team championship, from January 3-12, offers \$15 million in prize money and a maximum of 750 singles and 250 doubles ATP rankings points.

It will see 24 nations split into six groups, with eight teams emerging from the round-robin stage to compete in the knockout phase.

Sydney will host the finals, along with group games which will also be held in Brisbane and Perth.

vivacity

NOT AFRAID
OF FAILURES:
JOHN ABRAHAM
-P 14



ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO THINK BEYOND FOOD, SHELTER, AND CLOTHING

Utilise open and frank dialogue when it comes to discussing needs and wants. A study suggests parents remind their children of the difference between purchasing something that would be nice to have versus purchasing something that is necessary. If your child wishes he had the latest version of a video game console, for instance, remind him his older console works well and plays games, so he doesn't need a new one, writes **TEAM VIVA**

Your kids will probably grow up hearing you say no often, but for some parents, saying no to things that kids want can be difficult, especially if the item or activity is affordable. We all want to please our kids, and many people want to give their kids the things that they didn't have while growing up. However, it's really important to be able to say no to your kids when it comes to financial matters. Teaching your kids that they can't have everything they want will help them prioritise their needs later in life, and hopefully, will help them to value their things and be responsible with money.

Children compare wants and needs and create a collage of wants and needs. Students clarify their understanding and interpretation of wants and needs as they compare their wants and needs with others in the room and in the world. Children start to reflect on ways they can empathise with and help people who have different needs than their own.

Encourage children to think beyond food, shelter, and clothing to some of the other things that might be needed or wanted. This will help them think about needs of a homeless person in the next lesson. For example, a homeless person may appreciate socks, a toothbrush, gently used books, stuffed

animals, or a friend to play games with.

Any parent who has been subject to a full-scale tantrum in a grocery store can attest to the idea that, sometimes, kids can't tell the difference between a want and a need. In the heat of the moment, it can seem as if your child definitely needs a treat. But differentiating between wants and needs is a financial lesson that can stick with kids into adolescence and eventually adulthood. By having frank financial conversations with your child, you can help her understand more about wants and needs.

Talk to your child about the difference between needs—things that are necessary to survive — and wants —things that are fun or make life easier. After your discussion, label a piece of construction paper with "Needs," written on one side and "Wants" on the other. Grab a couple of old magazines and look through them with your child. When you find an item, cut it out and ask your child to glue it on the correct side of the construction paper. For instance, food items would go under "Needs," while toys should be pasted under "Wants."

Ask your child a series of questions when she whines about a product she wants. This helps her understand the criteria that make an item a need, rather than a want. If she

TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEEDS—THINGS THAT ARE NECESSARY TO SURVIVE — AND WANTS — THINGS THAT ARE FUN OR MAKE LIFE EASIER



wants a piece of candy, ask "Does this make your life easier? Do you need this to survive?" to help her think objectively about the differences.

Allow your child to make spending choices. Whether she receives an allowance or she has some spending money from a relative, remind her that in order to purchase her "wants," she sometimes has to give up a "need." If you're shopping for school clothes, for instance -- she might really want

a flashy new dress, but she really needs new socks and jeans. Give her the choice between the two, asking her to weigh the pros and cons of each.

Utilise open and frank dialogue when it comes to discussing needs and wants. A study suggests parents remind their children of the difference between purchasing something that would be nice to have versus purchasing something that is necessary. If your child wishes he had the latest version of a video

game console, for instance, remind him his older console works well and plays games, so he doesn't need a new one.

In addition to being comfortable with telling your kids no, you also need to teach them the difference between wants and needs. From a young age, most children will understand that they need water and food. You can also explain the way that a job works. Explain why you need these things; this might be especially necessary when a child is younger, and often demands things because they want them. When a child is very young, you can keep your explanations short. For example: "The teddy bear costs money, but we also have to pay for the pasta dinner we are having tonight." As a child gets older, you can explain more about how you prioritize your budget to make sure you can afford the things that your family needs.

You talk about it as soon as they can start understanding those concepts. When children are in elementary school, you can introduce the concepts of planning and saving, long-term gratification and short-term gratification, and "giving back." You gear the conversation to where a child is developmentally and what he or she can cognitively understand at that point.

Teaching wants versus needs

can become more difficult in certain situations. Clothing is one of those situations, because many kids want to have name brand clothing to compete with their friends or feel that they fit in. While we all need clothing, we don't need specific brands. As your kids get older, if you can't afford to buy all really nice clothing, you can encourage them to use their allowance, ask for a particularly nice item for a birthday or holiday gift, or get a part-time job.

Another difficult lesson for kids can be related to school activities. It is important to encourage kids to participate in activities they enjoy, but if you want to save money, you need to be selective. Most kids participate in sports and other school activities, so your child might have a hard time seeing these extras as wants instead of needs. This is a great time to explain the idea of choosing what is really important so that your kids understand that they can't always pay for everything. You can also teach them to cut costs in order to make things work. This is another important lesson for them to learn.

One of the best ways to teach them about money is to just talk to them about these issues as they come up. Don't shy away from money issues especially when they are foundational issues like needs and wants.

LOOK AHEAD 2020

Trend Slazer

Huma teaches Dave dance moves

Actor HUMA QURESHI has promised her *Army Of The Dead* co-star Dave Bautista to get him to India to do a film and taught him some Bollywood moves on superstar Shah Rukh Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan's song *Chammak Challo*.

"My brother used to try these deadly wrestling moves called chokeslams and Batista bombs on me. My co-star is a gentleman called Dave Bautista," Huma said.

She added, "When Saqib (Saleem) got to know, he wanted me to ask Bautista about his finishing move — the Batista Bomb and I did. Dave also mentioned that he loves Indian films and he wants to do a Hindi film. I promised him we will get him to India to do a film. I have even showed him some dancing videos and made him practice some Bollywood moves."



Fashion is not defined just by a one-off choice or what one wears to an event. It's more about the everyday sartorial choices that we make. This year, besides the sea of animal prints on everything from jackets to pants, tops, handbags and footwear, athleisure scored big. From Bolly and Hollywood stars sporting leggings and yoga pants to men giving a thumbs up to their Lululemon ABC pants, comfort ruled 2019. I have always been a believer in easy-wear clothes that are fuss-free and this trend signalled a relaxing in the otherwise almost-draconian dress codes dictated by top-drawer design houses.

For 2020, I'd personally root for fashion that is more environmentally conscious. Slow fashion, which is focussed on revisiting design, production, and consumption patterns, including recycling of clothes through the simple expedient of reusing and refashioning one's wardrobe, should become the norm, rather than the exception. Another reason that slow fashion gets my thumbs-up is that it follows the principles of fair treatment of producers, in this case, the weavers, as well as in causing the least damage to our planet.

With the advent of factory-based production post the industrial revolution, the concept of fast fashion was born. Production processes were speeded up, to churn out yardage after yardage of man-made, synthetic fabrics. Prices dropped, and consumption zoomed. Thus was born the "use-and-throw" concept. However, now that more and more people in the fashion world are cognisant of the fact that the garments industry is the second-highest environmental polluter, it is high time

With people becoming more cognisant of the fact that the garments' industry is the second-highest environmental polluter, 2020 will take us back to the pre-Industrial Revolution production and consumption patterns, says craft and textile revivalist MADHU JAIN

that we went back to the pre-industrial Revolution production and consumption patterns. Let us take inspiration from our 2,000 year old textiles tradition and legacy. What we urgently need to do is to go back to how our forefathers operated. At that time, mankind was in sync with nature and clothes were organic and plant-based. Each region had its own distinctive signature textile. Cotton, flax, hemp, jute, sheep wool and so on were the go-to choices. These textiles were derived from one's natural surroundings and suited the region's climate and aesthetics.

I'm happy to note that in recent years, sustainable fashion — where the entire production process, from sourcing natural yarns to manufacturing the end product — is gaining momentum.

My label was launched 33 years ago keeping the same values and principles in mind. Being ahead of the curve in environmental responsibility has been a hallmark of our textiles, notably our 100 per cent biodegradable bamboo clothing and, the first in the world, bamboo silk *ikkat* textile.

Additionally, it is important that companies in the clothing business close the loop between the production and recycling of clothes. In an ideal cir-



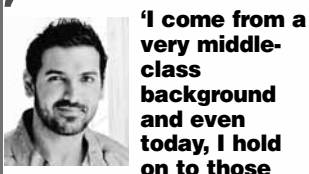
'Let us take inspiration from our 2,000-year-old textiles tradition and legacy. What we urgently need to do is to go back to how our forefathers operated'



cular economy, there is a conscious effort to reduce over production, on the one hand, and reuse materials in production processes, on the other, thus diverting tons of textile waste from landfills.

As for fashion choices of 2020, remember that Indian colours work well on our skin tones. So there will be more of burnt orange, fuchsia, indigo, ivory, vermilion red, *kesari* yellow, *rani* pink, and the eternal favourite, white. With winters having well and truly set in, layering will be back and will keep the people toasty. Classic Indian jackets have a tremendous potential as they can be worn short, mid-thigh or long to suit one's body type. *Chogas*, the long, loose garment of Turkish origin, if cut expertly, can be extremely slimming and can add height. In terms of motifs, if you like them bold, don't shy away from vibrant weaves that offer a high contrast. But if you prefer something more subdued, a white-on-white on weave can be equally eye catching. And finally, keep the stoles handy. It is one of the most versatile fashion accessories which will continue to flatter any outfit. Team it up with a small clutch or an Indian *potpie* or *batua*, jewelled sandals or embroidered *jutis*, and you will be good to go.

Happy 2020!



'I come from a very middle-class background and even today, I hold on to those values very strongly. My biggest advantage is that I'm not afraid of failure. And when you're not afraid of it, you can do whatever you want because you've seen failure and success in the same measure. So, failure really doesn't affect me.'

—John Abraham



VIRAT KOHLI and **ANUSHKA SHARMA** are in Switzerland these days to usher New Year and they spot **Varun Dhawan** and girlfriend **Natasha Dalal**.

A selfie of the two couples has been taking rounds on social media. Sharing the photo, Varun captioned, "Mountain *ke dost*."

Not just Virat and Anushka, Varun also bumped into Karisma and Kareena Kapoor in Switzerland recently.

Super in love: Meghan

Singer **MEGHAN TRAINOR** says she feels "super in love" with her husband **Darryl Sabara**.

She got married to Sabara on December 22 last year. "It's so good. It's very romantic right now, we're super in love," said Meghan about her married life.

She recently spent a lot of time in the UK, where she joined the judging panel of *The Voice*.

She also revealed that her mother and brother had accompanied Darryl to the UK. Meghan said, "My mother is here. My dad didn't make this short trip because it's too hard on his body but he's waiting for us back at home. They're my everything. My older brother is my videographer. They all take care of me and it's great."

Entertainment of the year

Here's a look at the trends of how Indians had out-of-the-home experiences in 2019

As we bid adieu to 2019, we look at the trends in entertainment choices of Indians with BookMyShow introducing millions of its users to newer out-of-home experiences.

The online booking app hosted over 1,880 films across languages on its platform in 2019. The Marvel craze took over India as *Avengers: Endgame* broke all records to sell over 8.6 million tickets to become the highest-selling Hollywood film on our platform. This was followed by *Uri - The Surgical Strike*, with over 5.7 million tickets sold for the film.

FILM TRENDS

While the demand for Hindi films grew by 12 per cent from the last year, movie buffs booked an average of 2.6 tickets per transaction. The top-rated regional language films were in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Marathi, whereas the demand for English and Hindi films rose at 45 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. Hindi versions of regional films like *Saaho*, *Sye Raa Naranjima Reddy* and *KGF* have matched up to the primary language's success at the box office. The uptake for English language films increased significantly by 56 per cent vis-à-vis last year. The *Avengers* series retained the top spot among English language films, wherein *Avengers: Infinity War* led the race in 2018, *Avengers: Endgame* shattered all ceilings in 2019.

Looking at the genres, about 30 per cent of the top 10 films (as per number of tickets sold on the app) were based on real-life stories and incidents. The trends also pointed towards an interest in Assamese films, which grew five times to match the increase in the number of users who chose the app to watch these films and rated them on the platform.

Action films witnessed a growth of 45 per cent, becoming the most preferred genre followed by drama and comedy.

While actors Hrithik Roshan and Ranveer Singh ruled the top 10 Hindi film bucket with two films each to their credit, Akshay Kumar with 9.2 million tickets and Ayushmann Khurrana with 6.3 million tickets overall had a great year with three films each.



SALE OF TICKETS

The year also saw an 89 per cent rise in the number of screens occupied by the widest circulated films as compared to the previous year. The advance ticket sales grew by 11 per cent on the app in 2019, which is just shy of 20 million tickets with 11 per cent of the tickets being booked before the release. Following this, over 45 films crossed the one million ticket sales mark on BookMyShow. Just three per cent of the total tickets were booked in the last 30 minutes before a film's show time.

TRENDS AS PER TIME AND LOCATION

While Sunday evening was the most preferred show time for movie-goers, Hyderabad was home to the maximum

number of film lovers, which was followed by Mumbai and Bengaluru. Hyderabad moved from fourth position in 2018 to outnumber its peers and lead the charts in 2019. Kochi also witnessed a 56 per cent increase in the number of people using the app to watch films as compared to 2018.

TOP 10 SOLD FILMS

- ★ *Avengers: Endgame*
- ★ *URI - The Surgical Strike*
- ★ *Kabir Singh*
- ★ *Saaho*
- ★ *War*
- ★ *The Lion King*
- ★ *Mission Mangal*
- ★ *Simmba*
- ★ *Gully Boy*
- ★ *Chhichhore*



Lauv is warm and humble: Akasa

Singer **Akasa Singh** says American singer-songwriter Lauv is warm and humble beyond being talented.

Akasa, popular for singing foot-tapping numbers like *Kheech Meri Photo* and *Thug Ranjha*, got a chance to work with Lauv on song *Dil Na Jaaney* from film *Good Newwz*. Composed by Rochak Kohli and Lauv, the song is sung by Rochak, Lauv and Akasa. The lyrics are by Gurpreet Saini, Ari Leff and Michael Pollack and music is produced by Lauv, Johnny Simpson and Rochak.

"Rochak Kohli has always been one of the dream producers that I have wanted to work with because all his melodies are magical. Gurpreet called me to dub a song for Rochak, they played me the song and the first thing that came into my head was finally I get to sing a slow, romantic song," Akasa said.

"They hinted of the possibility of Lauv being a part of the song but nothing was confirmed. Coincidentally, I had met and interviewed Lauv early this year when he

had come to play in Mumbai for Fly Music Festival. I even went to the concert because I have always been a huge fan of his work and his talent. This collaboration with Rochak and Lauv was like a far-fetched dream for me but is one of the things ticked off my bucket list," she said.

Looking back at her experience of working on the song, Akasa said, "My aim was to just dub and do my best. After the dub there was no conversation about it and one day I just woke up to a post by Lauv and the rest is history! It's been a fantastic feeling. People have been texting me non-stop, appreciating this side of my voice in *Dil Na Jaaney* which is so different to *Naagin* or *Aithya Aa*."

On working with Lauv, she said, "I think Lauv brings so much energy and passion to the song and he is in fact, one of the nicest people I have met from the global music industry till date. He is warm and humble beyond being very talented. I feel blessed to be ending 2019 on such a positive note."

—IANS

ECHOES OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

Artist SEEMA KOHLI brings *yoginis* alive amid the greens of Sunder Nursery, says UMA NAIR



The Sunder Nursery has brought alive the 64 sandstone *yoginis* and larger-than-life sculptures by artist and performer Seema Kohli.

LOTUS POND AS SITE

Chief architect and CEO of the Agha Khan Trust for Culture, Ratish Nanda, picked out the lotus pond as the right site for the *yoginis* to rest at. With one stroke, he became the confluence of cultures and thereby spoke to us about the essence of a pure spirit.

The Trust has been rehabilitating existing parks and creating new spaces for over 20 years with the objective of demonstrating that these green spaces can be catalysts for positive economic, social and cultural change. The Agha Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) focusses on the physical, social, cultural and economic revitalisation of communities in the developing world.

64 SANDSTONE YOGINIS

The landscape design of the Sunder Nursery has become a lush stage for Kohli's sculptures. When you look at them under the tree and then see the *yoginis*, you know that the amalgamation of art and landscape aims to enhance the historic character. It provides a connection with a truly urban scale as it derives inspiration from the traditional Indian concept of congruency between nature, garden and utility, coupled with environmental conservation.

Kohli has been working with antiquity for the past 15 years. She began creating the *yoginis* first as zinc plates and then translated them into sandstone sculptures with the help of artisans. The temples of the *chausath* (64) *yoginis*, are strewn across the heart of India, in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. In more ways than one, it is the enigmatic aura that keeps us glued to the imagery as we think of the feminine power in a world that has turned a blind eye to the protection of women and abused the feminine body for its own lust.

FROM THE EARTH
The *Tree of Life* sculpture and other ones in bronze and wood are a heady mix of haute history and the power of yogic stances. The placement of the sculptures under the salient tree speaks of the age of regalia. Perhaps in terms of language and grammar, the idea of creating a sculptural park of a precious architectural heritage becomes important in the unveiling of a new trend.

The bronze and the large wooden sculptures echo the pulse of the past and the present. We think of the eternal power of the human mind and hands, the skills of building with the elements of the earth and re-energising the traditions of passing on the knowledge of restoration methods with appropriate technologies and materials. Conservation of ideas spring forth when you see the balance and harmony of the feminine yogic sculptures sitting in peace and utter calm. You also think of the zenith in the dictionary of building traditions, techniques and human heritage.



AN ARTFUL OASIS

Over the years, Kohli has worked on the philosophy and the wisdom of the *Hiranyagarbha*, *The Golden Womb*, *Tree of Life* and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. This show is an extension of research in the art of illustrative patterns. The sculptures blend well into the expanse of greenery where earlier there was dust and rubble. Offering a contemporary stage to a design inspired by historic Indian myth and sacred literature becomes an important statement in the signal for art events in modern moorings of Delhi. The Sunder Nursery gardens enhance the arrival point on the edge of the lotus pond. The glimpse of the sculptures becomes a testimony to the power and poetry that can be brought alive in a garden as a sculpture court.

FEMINE FIGURES

"The translation of an ancient form, specially feminine, in terms of the goddesses and figures of the past makes art more universal and accessible," states Kohli.

As an artist, Kohli is both engrossed and deeply driven by an instinct. Her sculptures embody the compassion of many avatars of existence. This exhibition also tells Delhi that we have one more space to exhibit and sculptures will get a new lease of life at the Sunder Nursery.



Amalgamation of creativity

In the sixth edition of *Vision'20*, a few artists bring out the visual aspects of life on their canvas

An amalgamation of nature, movement, human activity, a manifestation of the artists, their experience and observation of their surroundings are intertwined for the sixth edition of the group exhibition *Vision'20*.

The contributing artists Ajay Ghose, Biswapati Maity, Gautam Pramanik, Jyoti Prasad Mallick, Karna Puri, Manoj Sarkar, Rabindranath Choudhury, Saroj Basu, Subrata Biswas, Tapas Basu, Tirthankar Biswas and Tilok Mandal have interwoven these ideas and developed them further.

Rabindranath Choudhury one of the senior contributing artists whose work has been collected by various institutions across the globe says, "In my current series, I am experimenting with colours, forms, textures, and perspectives to uncover the deepest crevices of the human psyche. Nature always haunts me and unleashes my mind a profound thrill with all her beautiful things."

In the exhibition, one can find unity in Ajoy Ghosh's excellent intertwining of nature with mythology or, in the meditative vibes of Karna Puri. While the paintings of Tilak Mondal teach the world tenacity through womanhood, Tapas Basu's works are an amazing example of finding peace in the beauty of nature and contemporary society. As Manoj Sarkar takes you through an adventure of many aspects of human life, Tirthankar Biswas' will make you live through the moment of the topic in his canvas.

Tapas Basu's work reflect an expression of the inner world with eclectic colours. The award-winning artist says, "My work is inspired by the beauty of nature and contemporary society, where life is captured in a symbolic, yet surrealistic approach through colours and forms."

Along with them are displayed Biswapati Maity and his feminism, Gautam Pramanik and his colours, Jyoti Prasad Mallick painting humble lives, Rabindranath Choudhury, Saroj Basu and Subrata Biswas who create a different world with their works. All of these critically acclaimed artists bring out the visual aspects of life on their canvas, overwhelming us into an epitome of non-visual feelings.

Most of the artists contributing to this exhibition have been inspired by Nature, and everything that surrounds us. Biswapati Maity says, "Although Nature is the main inspiration of my paintings, I am heavily influenced by human figures and its behavior. In my paintings, human figures come out in a very natural way. Sometimes it can be a full figure and sometimes it may be only the face."

Nature is a dominant theme for most artists, it's beauty and the magical colours can draw anyone to itself, however, as Tirthankar Biswas explains, sometimes inspirations are realistic and sometimes semi-realistic. "The common denominator in my paintings is movement and force. It can be a sixer from an energetic cricketer, it can be an escaping deer from an approaching tiger, it can be an out-posted hut from a flash flood or it can be a swinging head of palm tree with monsoon wind. The variation of the medium is also just like my subject. I use from diluted ink to pencil, pastel, charcoal, acrylic and oil colour depend upon the demand of the subject. The recent works belong to the semi-realistic category with the medium of oil on canvas."

(The exhibition will be held from January 3 to 9.)

Scarlet shackles sit peacefully on display in front of a sad, gray backdrop. The now rusted leg irons once locked human ankles during 18th century voyages from Africa to some European port, then to the Americas.

Who the shackles held remain a mystery. But as a citizen of the United States, I've likely broken bread with a descendant of the woman forced to wear this instrument. Maybe my uncle fought alongside her kin in a war. Or it's possible one of her distant relatives is now be my relative.

These are the thoughts I entertain recently while walking through the reflective International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, England. Founded in 2007 on the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade, the museum sits just a short walk from the dry docks where slave trading ships were repaired and fitted out in the 1700s. (And it's close by the The Beatles Story, the world's largest permanent exhibition purely devoted to the hometown band.) Once a major slaving port, Liverpool grew thanks to merchants' financial ties to the enslavement of people to the Americas.

Today, the building tells the story of the enslavement of people from Africa and how this British city benefited from human bondage. The Liverpool location reclaims a space once connected to worldwide human suffering and is similar to O Mercado de Escravos — the slavery

Chains of bondage

A museum in Liverpool aims to confront the painful legacy of slavery



museum in Lagos, Portugal, where the European slave trade began. But Liverpool's museum is much larger, more interactive, and more ambitious without being exploitative.

Inside, visitors immediately are taken on a meditative experience focusing on Africa before European contact. You are greeted by quotes of American abolitionists and civil rights leaders etched into stone walls before you see traditional masks from present-day Sierra Leone and Mali. There are vibrant textiles from Ghana, intricate head-dresses from Cameroon and samples of Igbo wall painting from Nigeria. You can listen to samples of drum signals from the Republic of Congo or a Mbuti hunting song. The messages are clear: before enslavement, Africa was a diverse and complex continent with long artistic and religious traditions.

Next, visitors are whisked toward a room tackling enslavement and the brutal Middle Passage. Racial ideologies and Europe's unfamiliarity with the cultures of Africa sparked the slave trade which grew once European powers expanded to the Americas, the museum tells us. In this room, details of the voyage of the ship *Essex* are reconstructed. That's a slave ship that left Liverpool on June 13, 1783, just nine years after the American Declaration of Independence.

During the Middle Passage

portion, visitors encounter shackles and chains used in forts and castles along the African coast to hold humans before their horrific journey. A small replica of a slave boat illustrates how captives were tossed into small compartments. Next to the ship are 18th-century whips and branding irons. Yes, these were used.

Then, there was resistance, liberation, and the long fight for civil rights. Surprising, I walked into an area dedicated to the African American heroes from Harriet Tubman to the Rev Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X. US news footage from the 1950s and 1960s illustrates how the descendants of those who crossed the Middle Passage had to fight for human rights and against violence amid white supremacy — the ideology that launched racialised slavery in the first place. There are also photos of the Civil Rights struggles in the United Kingdom from London's "Keep Britain White Rally" in 1960 to the Toxteth Riot of 1981 in Liverpool over allegations of police harassment.

The museum ends with a space for changing exhibits related to the themes around modern-day slavery. During my visit in November, I encountered an exhibition called "Am I not a woman and a sister?" — a moving image installation by England-based artist Elizabeth Kwant. She co-created the project with female survivors of modern-

day slavery in partnership with Liverpool charity City Hearts. The project links current human trafficking to the story out of the Middle Passage.

In the US, journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones has sparked conversations about the legacy of slavery in that nation's history with her interactive 1619 Project in The New York Times. It examines the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved people from West Africa on the present-day America's eastern shore. The project challenges readers to consider how their own lives have been shaped by the legacy of slavery and it is helping inspire activists in places like Albuquerque, New Mexico, to push for their own museum of black history.

Walking by an installation of former slave and abolitionist Olaudah Equiano, I heard two young black women discussing the 1619 Project and how they didn't understand the criticism it faced for trying to reshape a narrative in the U.S. As we left the Equiano sculpture, we stopped at a display of a 1920-era Ku Klux Klan robe and hood from Port Jervis, New York. The outfit that was once used to terrorise blacks and Catholics stared back down at us. We were silent. But I could feel we were relieved the glass case surrounding it protected us. We were safe for now.

But were we?

—AP

On the 157th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand, LeRythme Music Academy organises 14th Annual Cultural Conclave — *The Youth Festival - Colours of India*. It will showcase performances by Padma Bhushan vocal maestro Begum Parween Sultana, tabla maestro Ustad Akram Khan, Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee Rajendra Prasanna, Bharatnatyam by Padmabhushan Saroja Vaidya Nathan and contemporary dance Legend Santosh Nair.

WHEN: January 4 TIME: 5:30 pm onwards WHERE: Kamani Auditorium, Copernicus Marg, Mandi House.

Artist Anindita Kishore presents her solo exhibition *My world of art*. As a contemporary enamelist, she has been practicing enameling since the last 20 years. And now she has developed her individual style with a preference for employing thick and thin metal foils, wires and crystals as a technique to express herself.

WHEN: January 8 to 14 TIME: 11 am to 7 pm WHERE: Vivanta by Taj, Dwarka, Sector 21.



Curated by artist Akshita Wason, Gallery Sree Arts, presents her solo exhibition *Under a White Cloud*. Her work are an attempt to highlight the current environmental realities and incite human emotions. WHEN: January 4 TIME: 5 pm WHERE: Galerie Romain Rolland, Alliance Française De Delhi, 72 Lodhi Estate.



WATCH OUT



Gallery Latitude 28 presents an exhibition of new works by Baroda-based artist Sudipta Das. Through collections and assemblages of her new iconic doll-like paper sculptures, Das dives into personal history and family narratives to explore themes of exile, refuge and temporariness of life. WHEN: Till January 17 WHERE: Gallery Latitude 28.

Alekhya, an exhibition of painting and sculpture showcases a magnificent union of different genres of fine arts ranging from artist Nidhi's vibrantly coloured canvases brought to life through the delicate water colour wash technique, artist Ganesh Prasad Sahu's fine oil painting with etching on paper and the exquisite mirror work and paintings of the Buddha articulated by artist Mohit Bharadwaj.



WHEN: Till January 2 TIME: 11 am to 7 pm WHERE: AIFACS Gallery, Rafi Marg, Sansad Marg.



Indian captain Virat Kohli raises his bat after scoring hundred

BCCI/Twitter

Kohli maintains top spot in ICC Test ranking

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian captain Virat Kohli will end the year at the top of the ICC Test ranking chart for batsmen but five-day specialist Cheteshwar Pujara slipped a place to fifth.

With 928 points, Kohli is way ahead of second-placed Australian maestro Steve Smith (911) and New Zealand's inspirational skipper Kane Williamson (822), while Australia's Marnus Labuschagne, who has amassed 1,085 runs in 11 Tests this year, improved a place to grab the fourth spot.

Pujara was placed fifth with 791 points, while Ajinkya Rahane was joint seventh with 759 points.

With his enterprising 95 against England in the first Test, Quinton de Kock not only set up his team's win, but also shot into the top of the latest rankings release on Monday.

In bowling, India's lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah, returning from an injury layoff, remained static at sixth position with 794 points, while spinner Ravichandran Ashwin

Ponting picks Kohli as captain of his Test team

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australian captain Ricky Ponting on Monday picked India skipper Virat Kohli to lead his all-star Test team of the decade, which featured four English players.

Ponting's Test team of the 2010s doesn't feature any other Indian apart from Kohli, who is currently ranked No.1 in both ICC Test and ODI rankings for batsmen.

The Englishmen in his team include all-rounder Ben Stokes, batsman Alastair Cook, and the pace duo of Stuart Broad and James Anderson. Among the

Australians he has opted for Steve Smith and David Warner along with spinner Nathan Lyon.

"Everyone's picking teams of the decade so I thought I'd join in the fun," Ponting wrote on his twitter handle.

"This would be my Test team of the 2010s: David Warner, Alastair Cook, Kane Williamson, Steve Smith, Virat Kohli (c), Kumar Sangakkara (wk), Ben Stokes, Dale Steyn, Nathan Lyon, Stuart Broad, James Anderson."

Kohli was also named captain of the Test XI of the decade by Cricket Australia's official news website.

(772 points) and seamer Mohammed Shami (771) were ninth and tenth respectively in the order.

Australian pace spearhead

Pat Cummins was at the top of the standings with 902 points ahead of Neil Wagner (859) and South African pacer Kagiso Rabada (832).

Rahane, Shaw to play against Karnataka



Prithvi Shaw plays a shot in Vijay Hazare Domestic tournament

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Test specialist Ajinkya Rahane and young prodigy Prithvi Shaw will turn up for Mumbai in their Ranji Trophy game against heavyweights Karnataka.

The two were named in the 15-member squad announced by the association on its website on Monday.

The game will be played at the Bandra Kurla Complex from January 3.

Both Shaw and Rahane played the previous games against Baroda and Railways.

Shaw had hit a blazing double hundred against Baroda in the lung-opener but faltered in both the essays against Railways at Wankhede Stadium.

Rahane also had a horrendous time with the bat against Railways. Mumbai had won the game against Baroda while lost to Railways by 10 wickets.

Rahane, who has played 63 Tests, will be playing consecutive Ranji games after a long time.

Shreyas Iyer and Shivam Dube, who were criticized heavily for not playing the last Ranji games, have been not named in the squad as they are away on India duty.

Pacer Shardul Thakur, who is also away on India duty, has not named in the squad either.

Meanwhile, young batsman Sarfaraz Khan has been included in the squad.

This could possibly be the last game Shaw plays for the time being as he then heads to New Zealand with the India A squad.

Mumbai squad: Suryakumar Yadav (Captain) Aditya Tare (Vice Captain) Ajinkya Rahane, Prithvi Shaw, Sarfaraz Khan, Shubham Ranjane, Akash Parkar, Siddhesh Lad, Shams Mulani, Vinayak Bhoir, Shashank Attarde, Royston Dias, Tushar Deshpande, Deepak Shetty and Eknath Kerkar.

Kohli, Bumrah in Wisden's T20I team of the decade

PTI ■ LONDON

India skipper Virat Kohli and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah were the only two Indians who found a place in Wisden's T20 International team of the decade, which didn't feature Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

Australia's limited overs captain Aaron Finch was named captain of the team, which has two more Australian in Shane Watson and Glenn Maxwell, two England cricketers — Jos Buttler and David Willey, two Afghanistan all-rounders — Mohammad Nabi and Rashid Khan, and New Zealand's Colin Munro and Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga.

On Kohli, Wisden said: "While Kohli's record in domestic T20 cricket is patchy, the same cannot be said of T20Is. Kohli's average of 53 was the best in the decade, and while his consistency compromises his strike-rate slightly, he is still able to score at a good rate, even if not exceptional.

"Strong against pace and spin, and rapid between the wickets, Kohli is an ideal player at No.3, able to fight fires when an early wicket is lost and stabilise the innings, but also



Jasprit Bumrah during practice session

PTI

accelerate when a platform is set. Following a huge first-wicket partnership, Kohli will

slide down the order in this XI," it said on its website.

Kohli, who ranks third in

the list of leading run-scorers of all time with 21,444 runs, was also included in Wisden's Test and ODI teams of the decade, besides being named in Wisden's list of five cricketers of the decade which also features Steve Smith, Dale Steyn, AB de Villiers and Ellyse Perry.

While Kohli was picked in Wisden's T20I team of the decade to strengthen the batting order, Bumrah found a place in the bowling unit due to his superb economy rate and reputation for being a reliable death bowler.

"Bumrah's overall economy rate of 6.71 is the second best in the world among quick bowlers, behind Dale Steyn," Wisden said about Bumrah, who has overall taken 216 wickets, including 51 in T20Is, in his international career so far.

"This statistic is more impressive when you consider he did the majority of his bowling in the death overs, where his economy rate of 7.27 was the seventh best in the world, and comfortably the best by a quick bowler. Bumrah is likely bowl three overs at the death for this side."

Short replaces Abbott for ODIs against India

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia on Monday called up explosive all-rounder D'Arcy Short in place of injured pacer Sean Abbott in their ODI squad for the upcoming tour of India.

The tour begins on January 14 with the first One-day International in Mumbai.

The second and third ODIs will be held in Rajkot and Bengaluru on January 14 and January 19, respectively.

Short has been included in the squad after a side strain during a Big Bash League game ruled out Abbott for four weeks.

With fast bowlers Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc and Kane Richardson already in Australia's ODI squad, selectors have called in Short, a top-order batter who also bowls wrist spin, to replace pacer Abbott. "It is extremely unfortunate for Sean, who is very much a part of our white-ball squad plans leading into the ICC T20 World Cup and the World Cup," selection convener Trevor Hohns was quoted as saying by Cricket Australia.

"D'Arcy offers the squad another spinning all-rounder option along with Ashton Agar, which, along with the four world-class fast bowlers and Adam Zampa, balances the squad out nicely. His proven record and ability to bat anywhere in the order will also be a great asset to the squad."

Short has played four ODIs for Australia, hitting 83 runs at an average of 26.66. Unless there's an injury, he will likely bat in the middle order given Warner and Finch are going to open. David Warner and Steve Smith will also be touring India for the first time with the Australian team since the ball-tampering scandal, both expectedly figuring in the squad.



Australia all-rounder D'Arcy Short in action

cricket.com.au/Twitter

AUSTRALIA SQUAD

Aaron Finch (capt), D'Arcy Short, Ashton Agar, Alex Carey (wk), Pat Cummins, Peter Handscomb, Josh

Hazlewood, Marnus Labuschagne, Kane Richardson, Steven Smith, Mitchell Starc, Ashton Turner, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

Lyon shoots down Warne call to take a rest for Sydney



Mitch Swepson and Marnus Labuschagne in the MCG nets with Shane Warne

Cricket.com.au/Twitter

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's Nathan Lyon on Monday shot down a suggestion from Shane Warne that he take a rest for the Sydney Test against New Zealand this week so leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson can make his debut.

Tim Paine's team have already won the three-match series against the Black Caps after crushing them by 247 runs in Melbourne on Sunday, follow-

ing their comprehensive win in Perth. Cricket great Warne has championed Swepson and over the weekend flagged the idea of axing Lyon if selectors opt for one spinner in Sydney.

"Just giving Mitchell Swepson a taste of it, giving him a chance, I reckon it will pay dividends in the long run," Warne said.

But Lyon, who took four wickets on Sunday to wrap up late New Zealand second innings resistance, said there was no way he would be standing aside.

"Did Warne ever want a rest and give Stuart MacGill a go?" he asked, noting the lack of opportunity given to Warne's leg-spin rival at the height of their careers.

"I won't be resting. I haven't met any Australian cricketers that would like to be rested.

"It's that hard playing Test cricket, but it's that rewarding as well so every opportunity you get to play cricket for Australia it means the world to us.

"So I can't imagine Mitch Starc, Pat (Cummins) or Patto (James Pattinson) putting his hand up to say I need a rest."

Queensland's Swepson has been added to Australia's squad for Sydney, where conditions often assist slow bowlers, and was taking tips from Warne in Melbourne.

There is a chance that Australia will play two specialist spinners in the third Test, with the call to be made after Paine and selectors look at the pitch.

Swepson, who has taken 12 wickets from six Sheffield Shield games at 26.58, was a member of Australia's Test squad for tours of India and Bangladesh in 2017 but has yet to make his debut.

Lyon said if both of them played, he would be more than happy.

"Mitch has been bowling brilliantly for Queensland," he said. "He's a great fella to start off with, but he gives it a rip and that's what I really love to see. "I'm a big fan of Mitch, it's great to see him in and around our squad so he gets his chance and fingers crossed we can have a great combination together."

If Australia go down that road, they would almost certainly retain Cummins, Starc and Pattinson, meaning a batsman would be axed with Matthew Wade the likely candidate after Travis Head scored a century in Melbourne.

Du Plessis criticises 'big three' move

AFP ■ CENTURION

South African cricket captain Faf du Plessis believes cricket needs more, not fewer, elite nations.

Speaking after South Africa's 107-run win in the first Test against England on Sunday, Du Plessis was asked his opinion about plans for an annual 'Super Series' of one-day games, involving the so-called 'Big Three' of India, Australia and England, with one other country to be invited on a revolving basis.

"The last year or so you can see what's going on in terms of the big three countries," he said.

"There's a lot of movement going towards that, a lot more matches being played against the top three, or big three. It's probably better if you include more teams, the better to grow the game as much as you can."

Du Plessis pointed out that there was inequality of fixtures, especially in Test cricket, with new Test nations such as Ireland and Afghanistan struggling to get fixtures.

"There's a lot of smaller nations not playing a lot of Test cricket, they're actually playing less," he said.



Ailing NZ call up Somerville for third Test

AFP ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand have turned to Will Somerville for his experience of playing in Sydney as they look to avoid a whitewash in the third and final Test against Australia.

Off-spinner Somerville, who was raised in Australia and played Sheffield Shield for New South Wales, will replace injured pace bowler Trent Boult for the Test starting in Sydney on Friday.

Coach Gary Stead said the inclusion of the lanky 1.93 metre (6ft 4in) Somerville was a nod to the expected conditions at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

"There's no secret the SCG pitch is one of the more spin-friendly in Australia," Stead said.

"Will offers something different to our two other spinners in the squad with his right arm off-spin and height.

"The fact he's played a lot of cricket in Sydney during his career for New South Wales will also be helpful

as we prepare for this final Test."

Somerville, 35, has played three Tests, taking seven wickets on his debut against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi last year and a total of seven in two Tests away to Sri Lanka four months ago.

Boult is returning to New Zealand after suffering a fracture to his right hand in the second Test which Australia won comfortably by 247 runs on Sunday within four days in Melbourne.

Australia won the first Test by 296 runs, again wrapping up the match inside four days.

New Zealand already have Matt Henry and Kyle Jamieson in the squad to provide fast bowling cover while Somerville's height and local knowledge could see him overtake the incumbent spinners Mitchell Santner and Todd Astle.

Somerville was one of the leading bowlers in Australia's Sheffield Shield in 2016-17 season with 35 wickets at an average of 23.14.