

**WORLD 5**  
HK POLICE: PROTESTERS  
INCITING YOUTH CRIME

**OPINION 6**  
WHY WE  
NEED DATA

**MONEY 10**  
'AI MIGHT BE FORCED TO  
SHUT DOWN IN 6 MONTHS'

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CITY EASE  
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11 SPORT



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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 tem-



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

Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

perature will be around 16 degrees Celsius January 1 onwards.

Low visibility in Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) delayed thirty trains. Kuldeep Srivastava, head RWFC, said the day tempera-

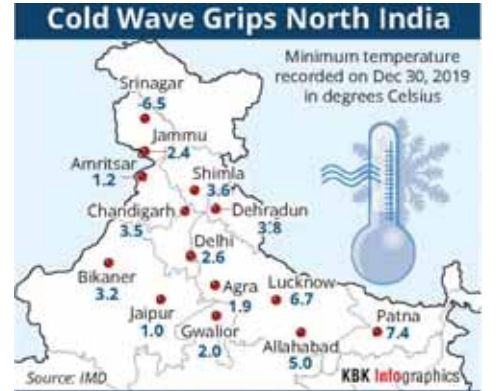
ture was almost half of what is considered normal for this day of the year. "Today was the coldest day recorded for the December," Kuldeep said.

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

coldest 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 recording 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.

## Aditya makes it to dad's Cabinet, Ajit is Dy CM

**Sanjay Raut's brother misses berth as Maha Cabinet size full**

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday sprang a surprise by including his son Aditya Thackeray in his team and carried out his first full-fledged expansion of his Ministry by inducting Ajit Pawar as Deputy Chief Minister and 35 new Ministers in his Cabinet.

With the expansion, the Cabinet size has gone up to 43, the maximum for 288-member Maharashtra Assembly.

Ajit Pawar, who returned as the Deputy Chief Minister of the State for a record fourth time, and 35 other Ministers, including Aditya Thackeray and former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan, were sworn into office by Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari at an oath-taking ceremony held on the Vidhan



Shiv Sena leader Aditya Thackeray greets his father and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray after taking oath as a Minister during the swearing-in ceremony for State Cabinet expansion at Vidhan Bhavan in Mumbai on Monday

Bhavan premises in south Mumbai.

Of the Ministers who were administered oath by the Governor, 25 are of the Cabinet rank, while the remaining 10 are Ministers of State. With the induction of 36 new Ministers, including the

Deputy Chief Minister, the number of Ministers in the Uddhav Thackeray Cabinet has risen to 43, including that of the Chief Minister.

Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut's MLA-brother Sunil Raut couldn't find a place in the Cabinet expansion.

## 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 by

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

being followed only by believers in Sanatana Dharma. Since the law enforcing agencies got tough with the anti-CAA rallies, the latter devised an

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 aback 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). The total forest cover of India is now esti-



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

ated at 7,12,249 sqkm which is 21.67 per cent of the geographical 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.



# #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.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF on Monday said there was no breach in Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's security during her recent trip to Lucknow. The paramilitary blamed Vadra for "violations" by riding pillion on a scooter.

The force, which provides armed commandos under the 'Z+' category of VIP security cover to her, said the Congress leader undertook "unscheduled movement without intimation".

Therefore, an advanced security liaison (ASL) could not be conducted, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) said in a statement issued here by Inspector General (Intelligence and VIP security) P K Singh.

Priyanka's office had written to Singh's office on December 28 with a complaint that a police circle officer (CO) in Lucknow had issued threats to her security personnel and warned of restricting her movements on the same day.

"There was no breach in security by the official" who happens to be the CO of Hazratganj, Abhay Mishra, reads the statement.

It said the "only programme" of Priyanka indicated to the CRPF team for that day was about her visit to the local Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) office for attending a party foundation day event.

The CRPF said it had "conducted" an ASL for this event and had intimated it to state authorities.

It alleged that the Congress leader's "personal staff did not communicate" the detailed programme of the day to the Uttar Pradesh Police CO when he came calling at Priyanka's place of stay in Lucknow at about 8 am.

The force said while there was no breach in Priyanka Gandhi's security, at least three "security violations" took place when she chose to ride a two-wheeler while on her way to visit retired IPS officer S R Darapuri.

"During travelling, the protectee used non-bullet resistant civil vehicle without a personal security officer. The protectee took a lift on Scooty as a pillion rider," it said, adding that as this movement was not planned, the CRPF team could not conduct an ASL which was a breach of security protocol mandated for Priyanka Gandhi.

"Despite the security constraints, appropriate security cover was provided by the CRPF during the visit," it said.

The force added that such security lapses are communicated to the protectee and "advised" for ensuring proper security arrangements.

Priyanka, also the Congress general secretary in-charge of UP (East), was in Lucknow on December 27 and December 28 as part of her first visit to the State capital after violent protests against the amended citizenship law and a proposed countrywide implementation of the National Register of Citizens.

## 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

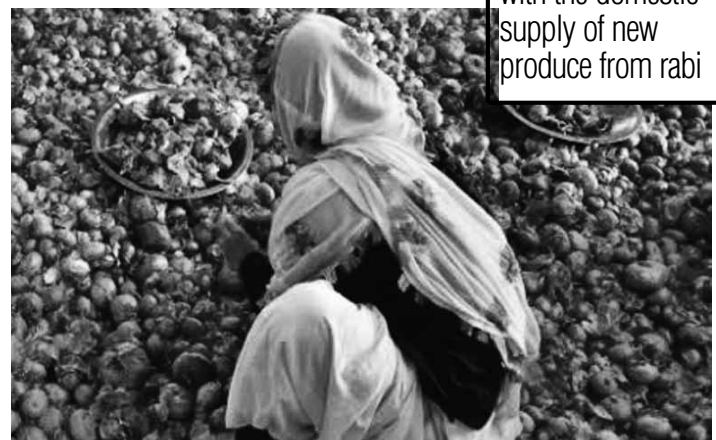
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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.

Prices likely to cool down by Jan end with the domestic supply of new produce from rabi

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.



Bihar, Jharkhand and Arunachal Pradesh are the worst performing States in this year's Index for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "The United Nations' SDG target of 2030 can never be met without India... We are fully committed to achieving UN's SDG target," Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said at the launch of the report.

Speaking at the event, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said southern states have done well in health. "West Bengal (rank 14) has also done well in Niti Aayog's SDG Index 2019, but given the education level (in the state), West Bengal should be in top 3 performing states," Kumar added.

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.



# C'garh seeks Telangana's assistance for tribal survey

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

RP Mandal, chief secretary of Chhattisgarh in a letter to his Telangana counterpart has sought assistance for holding a survey of the tribal who have migrated to the southern state.

The letter is part of a rehabilitation and resettlement of internally displaced people (IDP) of Chhattisgarh in Telangana using section 3(1) (m) of Forest Rights Act, 2006.

The letter cites that National Commission of Scheduled Tribe (NCST) taking cognizance of the

**The letter is part of a rehabilitation and resettlement of internally displaced people (IDP) of Chhattisgarh in Telangana using section 3(1) (m) of Forest Rights Act, 2006**

application filed by one social worker had organised a meeting inviting

representatives of Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha on July 2, 2019. State government of Chhattisgarh was directed to conduct social and economic survey of tribal population migrated to the neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha with the help of local revenue and tribal welfare department of Chhattisgarh.

Letter further states the NCST has directed to make inquiry of the present status

of those people at the migrated place and to know whether they want to return. To receive the forest rights claims of such families and issue titles as per their eligibility.

The commission has also directed district collectors of adjoining districts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Odisha for helping in the survey to be carried out by Government of Chhattisgarh. Keeping this in view, the chief secretary has sought assistance from Telangana government.

# Nomination process begins for three-tier panchayat polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The respective district election officers cum collectors across the state issued the notification for the three tier panchayat polls on Monday as per the scheduled programme issued by State Election Commission, Chhattisgarh.

The notification for the reservation and polling centres list was also published. The reservation will be held for the three-tier, at village Panchayat, Janpad Panchayat and Zila Panchayat.

The security deposit of Panch post is Rs 50, while Sarpanch is Rs 1000 where as for Janpad Panchayat member the amount is Rs 2000. The amount fixed for Zila Panchayat member is Rs 4000. For the Scheduled



Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Other Backward Community and woman candidate, the amount will be just 50 per cent of the fixed security deposit. Except for Panch, in

all other posts the nomination should accompany with affidavit in specified format, which is certified by Notary. A candidate can file nomination paper for Panch,

Sarpanch, Janpad member or zila Panchayat member but cannot file more than one nomination for a single post in more than one place.

The three-phase polling is scheduled on January 28, January 31 and February 3, 2020.

The polling will be held for all the Gram Panchayats, the tenure of which is scheduled to end on February 2020, including all the new village panchayat after delimitation, for members of Janpad Panchayat and Zila Panchayat.

The last date for filing of nomination papers is January 6, 2020 for all the three phases while the nominations will be reviewed next day (January 7). The last date for withdrawal of nomination paper is January 9, 2020 till 3.00 pm.

# Cong to announce Mayoral candidate on January 5

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

A meeting of newly elected Congress Corporators of Raipur Municipal Corporation was held on Monday at party's state headquarters Rajiv Bhawan to discuss about election of Raipur's new Mayor.

It was decided that the announcement of the name for the Mayoral election to be held on January 6 would be made a day earlier i.e. on January 5.

There is a close contest between three party bigwigs for the Mayoral post namely former Mayor Pramod Dubey, Ejaj Dhebar and Gyanesh Sharma.

Congress sources said the name to be finalized would be up to the Corporators and will not be imposed by the party high command.

Notable, though Congress has two Corporators short from majority mark, it is well



assured of getting support from independent Corporators. Out of 70 total wards, Congress won in 34, while the number of independ-

ent candidates who have succeeded in recently concluded civic body elections are seven.

On the other hand the BJP clinched victory in 29 wards and it is also claiming for the Mayoral post asserting that it has support of independent as well as some Congress Corporators.

# Chhattisgarh to constitute Irrigation Devpt Authority

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

In a bid to provide maximum benefit of irrigation facilities to farmers of Chhattisgarh, the State Government will constitute an Irrigation Development Authority.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has given orders for its formation, according to official sources.

Notably, presently, the irrigation capacity in the state is 10.38 lakh hectare, which is 18% of the total fertile land. Chief Minister said that development of irrigation facilities is one of the top priorities of the state government.

For speedy development of irrigation resources, it is necessary to work on mission mode, for which the state government has decided to constitute the development authority.



Chief Minister said that the Chhattisgarh Infrastructure Development Corporation (CSIDC)

constituted earlier is not serving the purpose as per present expectations.

Hence, the CSIDC will be transformed into Irrigation Development Authority.

It is noteworthy that Chhattisgarh has nearly 57 lakh hectares of agricultural land. In year 2004, the developed irrigation capacity in the state was 15 lakh 51 thousand hectares and actual irrigation capacity was 10 lakh 22 thousand hectares, whereas in year 2018, the developed irrigation capacity was 20 lakh 88 thousand and actual irrigation capacity was 10 lakh 38 thousand hectare.

Chhattisgarh Irrigation Development Authority would chalk out action plan for expansion of actual irrigation capacity and development of new irrigation schemes in the state so that farmers of the state may get maximum benefits from the same.



With the cold wave gripping the entire state, the state government has made necessary arrangements for bonfire at various places in urban and Panchayat bodies to combat the chilling weather. Pioneer Photo

# Paddy procurement slowed down: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh BJP Kisan Morcha's former president Sandeep Sharma alleged that farmers are unable to sell their produce due to lack of transportation and on the other hand paddy have been stacked at the procurement centres.

He claimed that the primary societies, citing lack of space, are not procuring paddy.

The BJP's farmer leader blamed the state government for not charting any policy-based arrangement for paddy milling due to which the paddy stocked



in procurement centres are not being lifted for milling. He alleged that the state

government is now trying to fix the responsibility at primary society managers and procurement in-charge, when the state should resolve the issue.

Sharma said it is the responsibility of the state government to make arrangement for milling so that paddy stocks are lifted from procurement centres.

He further said farmers having sold their produce a fortnight ago have not received the payment. The procurement processes have slowed down due to such policy deficiency and as a result farmers are agitating at different places, he claimed.

# Our winning streak will continue in Panchayat polls: Congress

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

State Congress on Monday claimed that it will register one-sided victory in ensuing Panchayat polls going to be held in the state in three phases from January 28.

State general secretary and chairman communication wing of the party Shailesh Nitin Trivedi in a statement said similar to the party's success in assembly by-polls in Bastar and in the recently concluded urban body polls, the Congress will also emerge victorious in Panchayat elections, continuing its winning streak.

"The fulfillment of promises made during assembly elections



to labourers and farmers by implementing farm loan waiver and providing minimum support price of ₹2500 for per quintal of

paddy will certainly help the party in succeeding in the election as by doing so we have won the hearts of the people", he claimed.

Erstwhile BJP government in a well planned conspiracy had tried to restrain illiterates from contesting the Panchayat bodies' polls but the ruling Congress by making necessary amendment has made provisions for illiterates also to participate in the festival of democracy, Trivedi said.

Asserting that it was Congress which had empowered the Panchayat bodies by making amendment in the Constitution, Trivedi claimed that the party very well knows how to make strong the elected representatives of them.

# School timings changed in Raipur, other districts

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Keeping in view of cold wave like condition across the state, the school timing for school going children have been changed across the state by separate orders issued by district collectors.

The timing will be effective from December 31.

According to District Education Officer, Raipur the schools having two shifts, the new school timings for junior school will



be from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm while for senior section it will be from 12.45 pm to 5.00 pm.

For the single shift, there will be no change of timing from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. The order will be effective in all the government, private, government aided school and Madrasa schools. The order will be effective till January 10, 2020.

A similar order has also been issued by District Education Officer, Kabirdham effective for all schools under the district.

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# Punjab Cong Mins, MLAs hold protest march against CAA

PNS ■ LUDHIANA

Punjab Congress on Monday organised 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 situation 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.

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.

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



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 misleading countrymen on CAA: BJP

PNS ■ NUAPADA

An Assembly-level intellectual meet was held by BJP Nuapada at Khariar on Sunday to discuss about Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

BJP State president and Nuapada MP Basant Panda along with district president Subrat Thakur and Prasanna Padhi spoke on the issue which was followed by interactions with the intellectuals present in the meeting.

"The opposition parties including Congress and TMC of Mamta Banerjee, who could not motivate public sentiment against the removal of Articles 370 and 35A or on the issue of Ram Mandir are trying to mislead people on the issue of CAA. They will not succeed in their intentions to sabotage the implementation of the Act," said Panda in his address on the issue. The speakers also



elaborated how Congress party kept itself aloof from such issues for fear of losing its vote bank. "When PM Narendra Modi has dared to bring the change, the Congress is feeling threatened," said Panda. The speakers appealed the participants to come forward to reconstruct India under the leadership of Modi.

"The CAA will provide opportunity to those religious minorities of our neighbouring countries, who are suffering under Muslim rule; but it is not against any Muslim," said the speakers. Lawyers, social activists, lecturers, businessmen and senior citizens of Khariar town attended.

## Sex racket busted, 15 arrested

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 stated 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.

## Intense cold in B'ngir hits normal life

PNS ■ BALANGIR

With the daily temperature dipping to below eight degree Celsius, people of Balangir are experiencing a sudden cold here.

Since last few days there has been a sudden drop in the temperature and without gloves and jacket, it is not possible to come out from house both in morning and evening, said Prithviraj, a local, standing beside a roadside fire at Sonepur Chowk.

"We experienced cold conditions all of sudden and for the old age people, life is very dif-

icult," explained Jaya Krishna Patel, an old man while sitting near the roadside fire.

The sudden drop in the temperature has also affected the number of visitors coming to tea stalls in morning. "After the cold wave situation, there is a drop in the visitors to my tea stall," admitted Nila.

Besides affecting the business it has also affected the farmers too.

Due to the cold wave situation, the farmers are going to their khet (agriculture field) very late. Consequently, less work is done, told a young farmer.

While the cold wave has affected normal life and business, it has brought cheers for woolen cloth sellers.

"After the sudden drop in temperature, more and more people are thronging to our woolen shops over the last three-four days," said Chung, a Tibetan youth, selling woolen clothes. Chung came to Balangir for the first time from Chandragiri of Gajapati district.

This sudden cold wave has enlightened the minds of poets. "Change of temperature and season is a law of nature and it would continue," said Sandeep Kaunar, a poet.

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Sr. No.	NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE BORROWER, CO BORROWER, GUARANTOR AND LOAN AMOUNT	DETAILS OF THE SECURED ASSET	DEMAND NOTICE DATE	AMOUNT DUE IN RS.
1.	<b>ASHOK KUMAR (BORROWER)</b> BADHAI PARA, TATYA PARA, WARD NO. 38, NEAR SANTOSHI MANDIR, RAIPUR-402001, CHATTISGARH. <b>RANI DEVI (CO-BORROWER)</b> BADHAI PARA, TATYA PARA, WARD NO. 38, NEAR SANTOSHI MANDIR, RAIPUR-402001, CHATTISGARH. <b>ALSO AT-</b> NAGAR NIGAM HOUSE NO. 07 (NEW), KH.NO. 435/14, PH.NO. 108/38, VEER SHIVAJI WARD NO. 07, VILLAGE-KHAMTARAI (SHIVANAND NAGAR), TAH. & DISTT. RAIPUR (C.G.)-492001.	<b>PROPERTY NO.1 ALL THE PART AND PARCEL OF THE PROPERTY AT NAGAR NIGAM HOUSE NO. 07 (NEW), KH.NO. 435/14, PH.NO. 108/38, ADMEASURING 2440 SQ. FT., VEER SHIVAJI WARD NO. 07, VILLAGE - KHAMTARAI (SHIVANAND NAGAR), TAH. &amp; DISTT. RAIPUR (C.G.)-492001. NORTH : HOUSE OF NAVI KHAN SOUTH : HOUSE OF PAWAN EAST : ROAD WEST : ROAD</b>	20.12.2019	RS. 49,95,387-131/ (RUPEES FORTY NINE LAKHS NINETY FIVE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY SEVEN AND THIRTEEN PAISA ONLY) WITH FURTHER INTEREST FROM THE DATE OF DEMAND NOTICE 20.12.2019

You the Borrower/S and Co Borrowers/Guarantors are therefore called upon to make payment of the above mentioned demanded amount with further interest as mentioned hereinabove in full Within 60 Days of this Notice failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to take action under the act to enforce the above mentioned securities. Please note that as per Section 13(13) of The Said Act, You are in the meanwhile, restrained from transferring the above-referred securities by way of sale, lease or otherwise without our consent.

**Place: RAIPUR Date: 31.12.2019**

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## 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 Dhiana 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 Nurrpur 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.

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.



File Photo

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

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

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, vowed 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 around 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 US. Withdraw 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 US 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

TENDER Notice 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. Details include bid amount of Rs. 5000/- and submission deadline of 31.01.2020.

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 PCOSO 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 PCOSO 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 PCOSO Act, Room No. 209, 2nd floor, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

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, Built: Normal, Wearing: Red colour Saaari & Blouse and chocolate colour hawal chappal in feet.



GULABO DEVI

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-tendering mode from registered firms who have sufficient experience in the relevant field of electromechanical/electrical works.

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.



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

Addressing the officials,

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.

Table with 5 columns: S.N, Tender No., Brief Description, Qty, Closing Date. Includes items like Fuel Oil Filter, Kit Gasket, Low Maintenance Lead Acid Battery, and Kit of Automatic Twist Lock.

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:

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS The Executive Engineer, Civil Division No. VIII, Irrigation & Flood Control Dept., 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&F Deptt. The contractors who are registered with other Departments but granted provisional permission by the Chief Engineer (I&F) are also eligible for participation of e-tendering for the following works:



## Sporting success

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



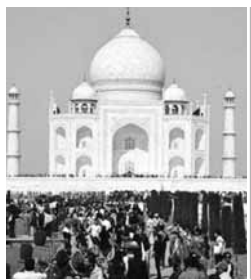
The 2010s began with a bang for Indian sport with its success at the 2011 Cricket World Cup, whose finals were held at the

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 "Khalo 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

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**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 Hindi-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](mailto: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.)



**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-Kalan' — 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.

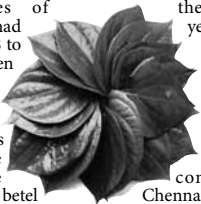
A tour of shops here showed prices of 'Calcutta paan' had gone up from ₹8 to anything between ₹12-20 depending on other ingredients.

"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, Zahoor 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 — Feroz 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.

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



Between 2010 and 2019, Aditya has not only established a following of his own among the youth in various parts of the state, but he has also learned the ropes of party politics by working in tandem with his father and party president Uddhav.

Aditya has lined up several plans for Mumbai. As a Yuv Sena leader, Aditya had during the previous BJP-Shiv Sena alliance Government, Aditya had mooted "Vibrant Nightlife" proposal for Mumbai.

It may be recalled that within months after the Sena-headed Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) adopted a resolution seeking "Vibrant Nightlife" for Mumbai and sent off a proposal to the Maharashtra government suggesting necessary amendments to relevant laws, Aditya had in February 2015 met then chief minister Devendra Fadnis and submitted a formal letter requesting the latter to put in place the laws that make Mumbai a "live 24/7" city.

In a series of tweets that he put out after he met Fadnis to push his "vibrant Nightlife", Aditya had written: "Tweeps the GOOD News is CM has accepted my proposal of nightlife and assured me that necessary amendments to laws by March/August Session". "I truly believe that this is well-deserved for Mumbai will not only boost the core economy but also the ancillary industries like transport...At the same moment, Mumbaiers will have a time zone at night to chill in soon! I will ensure this happens", a confident Aditya had tweeted.

Currently, the restaurants and bars close down at 1.30 am. However, once Aditya's proposal gets implemented, these establishments will remain through the night — provided these establishments are not in designated residential areas. The 1.30 am closure deadline for bars and restaurants has been in force since 1992-93.

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](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in)

Integrated Helpline No. 139 and Security Helpline No. 182

**NORTHERN RAILWAY** visit us at: [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in)

## 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	₹ 27.73 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	<a href="http://www.irps.gov.in">www.irps.gov.in</a> & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 416519

## 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, tech 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 may provide tax incentives for startups in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is expected to provide tax incentives to start-ups in the forthcoming budget to support the growth of budding entrepreneurs, sources said. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has suggested several measures to the finance ministry for start-ups in the budget.

The recommendations include extension of tax incentives to incubators supported under Atal Innovation Mission; reduction in GST (Goods and Services Tax) rates on AIF (alternate investment fund) management fees; and tax benefits on ESOPs, they said.

Start-ups need talented workforce and ESOPs are one of the best options to attract skilled people as giving just high cash payout add to the burden on cash-starved enterprises, industry players said.

Tiger Global-backed tea cafe chain Chaayos founder Nitin Saluja said that there should be less tax on ESOPs. "It should attract as little

## 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 as 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.

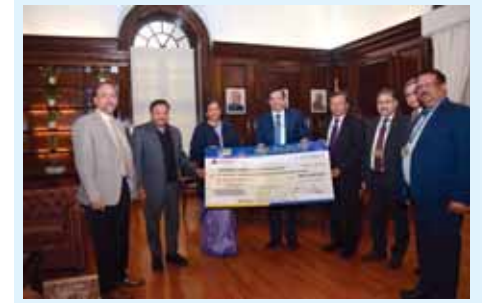
The corporation has also made salary payment to its employees for November, Purwar added.

"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.

## 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 ₹53,214.41 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.

### 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](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641  
Extn.-210  
Fax: 011-24368639  
SHO  
P.S., Shalimar Bagh, Delhi  
Ph.: 011-27495198  
DP/9631/NW/19

### 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](mailto: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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tuesday, December 31.

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

extended till March, 2020. 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

ately available for comment.

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-

### 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/9631/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](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax: 011-23011334  
Ph. No.: 011-2301046, 23105229  
SHO  
P.S. Alipur, Delhi  
Ph.: 011-27202290, 27202265  
DP/880/ON/19

### 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor,  
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi  
DP/3008/OD/19(Court Matter)



# 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 in 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 side line

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.

He was not offered a new deal despite comfortably keeping the club up by finishing 13th.

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 back injury sustained during his short 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 Narender. 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).

## 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 Agüero 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 Agüero 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 Agüero 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 Agüero with a fine through ball and the Argentine blasted him past Henderson from a narrow angle.

## 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.



Kiren Rijiju @KirenRijiju

Too much of issues are created on this! 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...

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.



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.





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 paceman 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 Sweeney 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 Sweeney 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 Sweeney and over the weekend flagged the idea of axing Lyon if selectors opt for one spinner in Sydney.

"Just giving Mitchell Sweeney 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 Sweeney 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.

Sweeney, 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.

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