



India's birds suffering dramatic population declines, warns report

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Government clashes with SC over delay in judicial appointments

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China virus cases pass the 70,000 mark as WHO mission begins

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Sachin Tendulkar bags the Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000-2020)

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Kejriwal not to take charge of any dept.

NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday allocated Ministries to his Cabinet colleagues with no major modifications. He himself won't hold charge of any department but oversee works of his Ministers.

CITY PAGE 4

HC seeks govt. reply on Jamia student's plea

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Monday sought the response of Centre, city government and police on a plea by a Jamia student seeking compensation for injuries suffered allegedly in police action on December 15.

CITY PAGE 2

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Women Army officers eligible for permanent commission: SC

Chandrachud dismisses govt.'s view that women are physiologically weaker

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed the Union government's submissions that women are physiologically weaker than men as a "sex stereotype" and declared that Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers are eligible for permanent commission and command posts in the Army irrespective of their years of service.

"Women officers of the Indian Army have brought laurels to the force... Their track record of service to the nation is beyond reproach. To cast aspersion on their abilities on the ground of gender is an affront not only to their dignity as women but to the dignity of the members of the Indian Army - men and women - who serve as equal citizens in a common mission. The time has come for a realisation that women officers in the Army are not ad-



Moment of triumph: Women Army officers celebrating in New Delhi on Monday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

joined to a male-dominated establishment, whose presence must be "tolerated" within narrow confines," a Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Hemant Gupta observed in a 54-page judgment.

The verdict came on a nearly 10-year-old appeal filed by the government against a March 12, 2010 de-

cision of the Delhi High Court to grant SSC women officers permanent commission. The Supreme Court ordered the government to implement its judgment in three months.

The order castigated the government for submitting a note containing written submissions portraying women as physiologically unfit for

answering the "call beyond duty" of the Army. The note had shown women officers in a poor light, saying isolation and hardships would eat into their resolve and they would have to heed to the call of pregnancy, childbirth and family. The note had mentioned that women ran the risk of capture by enemy and being taken prisoner of war.

Justice Chandrachud, who wrote the judgment, countered that 30% of women officers were deputed in conflict zones. He said the note screamed of the age-old patriarchal notion that domestic obligations rested only with women. The court found the remarks in the note not only constitutionally invalid but also discriminatory, affecting the dignity of women officers.

OPPOSITE POSITIONS PAGE 12
WOMEN-AT-ARMS EDITORIAL

Shaheen Bagh: protest, but don't block roads, court tells protesters

Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde appointed interlocutor

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday conceded that mothers, children and ordinary people of Shaheen Bagh and Delhi had a right to protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, even as it expressed concern over their blocking of public areas.

"Democracy works on different views. We have no quibble on that. You want to protest, no problem. You don't want to wait for our judgment on the validity of the CAA but want to have a social build-up against the legislation, we have no problem... We do not mind if a 1,000 sites are created, but our limited concern is whether you could protest without blocking roads and entering public areas... With every right there comes a responsibility too," Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul observed.

It appointed senior advocate Sanjay Hegde to act as an interlocutor, along with



Protesters at Shaheen Bagh on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

advocate Sadhana Ramachandran, to convey its apprehension to the protesters and suggest to them to move to an area where they could continue the protests but not inconvenience public movement. The court left it to Mr. Hegde to approach former bureaucrat Wajahat Habibullah to join them.

'Right to protest'

"My colleague Sadhana Ramachandran and I accept the responsibility... We will be meeting all parties with a view to assisting them to resolve their issues in a manner that respects both the right

to protest and requirements of orderly civic life," Mr. Hegde said in a statement.

During the hearing, Justice K.M. Joseph, on the Bench, stressed that the "right to protest is recognised all over the world. We have a fundamental right to assemble. The right is only subject to security and public order".

Justice Joseph was responding to submissions made by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Delhi Police, that children and women are used as a "shield" by the protesters.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Fresh death warrants issued for March 3 in Nirbhaya case

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday issued fresh death warrants for March 3 at 6 a.m. against all the four convicts in the December 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case.

All convicts are "to be

hanged by the neck until they are dead on March 3, at 6 a.m.," it said. The order was passed by Additional Sessions Judge Dharmender Rana pursuant to pleas by Tihar Jail and the victim's parents, seeking issuance of a fresh date to hang them.

This is the third time the court is issuing death warrants against Mukesh Kumar Singh, 32, Pawan Gupta, 25, Vinay Kumar Sharma, 26, and Akshay Kumar, 31. The trial court had issued the first death warrants for January 22, which were later post-

poned to February 1.

On Monday, the court discharged advocate Vrinda Grover as counsel for Mukesh after he asked for a change of his advocate. It appointed legal aid counsel advocate Ravi Qazi to represent him.

The court was also in-

formed by counsel for Akshay that in his earlier mercy petition, owing to poverty and ignorance, the complete facts could not be brought before the President, and he had prepared a fresh mercy petition that would soon be moved before the President.

KALLOL BHATTACHARJEE
NEW DELHI

A Labour MP from the United Kingdom was deported to Dubai as she was found not in possession of a valid Indian visa, sources said on Monday.

Debbie Abrahams, leader of the U.K. Parliament's All

Party Parliamentary Group for Kashmir, said she was "treated like a criminal" at the airport here before being placed on a flight out of India. "Along with everyone else, I presented myself at the immigration desk, with my documents, including my

e-visa, had my photograph taken and then the official looked at his screen and started shaking his head. Then he told me my visa was rejected," said Ms. Abrahams.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

FOUR DAYS OF LARGEST CLASSROOM OF DEMOCRACY FOR YOUTH

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Inaugural Ceremony 20th FEB 2020
Shri. Sharad Pawar (President of NCP)
Shri. Devendra Fadnis (BJP)
Shri. Shivraj Patil (INC)
Shri. Kailash Satyarthi (Nobel Laureate)
Shri. Niladri Kumar (Music)
Dr. Vijay P. Bhatkar (Scientist)
Dr. R. A. Mashelkar (Scientist)

Day 1: Thur, 20th FEBRUARY 2020
Session 1: Learn Before You Lean - Following Social Media & Celebrities
Shri. Pocharam S. Reddy (TRS)- Vidhan Sabha Speaker
Shri. Tejmen Imna Along (BJP)- State Edu. Minister
Main Speakers:
Smt. Smriti Irani (BJP)- Union Minister
Shri. Shekhar Gupta (Journalism)
Shri. Pawan Kalyan (Film & Politics-JSP)
Shri. Digvijay Singh Chautala (JJP)
Dr. Pankaj Mittal (Education)
Prof. Dr. Abhishek Mishra (SP)
Mr. Jim Cloos (European Union)
H.H. Morari Babu (Spiritual)
Prof. Dr. G. R. C. Reddy (Education)
Special Session : Leaping to 5 Trillion Economy : Chances, Challenges & Opportunities for Youth
Main Speakers:
Shri. Nitin Gadkari (BJP)- Union Minister
Shri. Vijay Darda (Journalism)

Day 2: Fri, 21st FEBRUARY 2020
Session 2: Caste to Class or Class to Caste: Where are we really moving?
Shri. Rajesh Patnekar (BJP)- Vidhan Sabha Speaker
Shri. Kanwar Pal (BJP)- State Edu. Minister
Main Speakers:
Shri. Prahlad Singh Patel (BJP)- Union Minister
Shri. Arjun Ram Meghwal (BJP)- Union Minister
Shri. Dushyant Singh Chautala (President of JJP)
Shri. Prakash Karat (CPI-M)
Adv. Randeep Singh Surjewala (INC)
Shri. Shiv Khera (Motivational)

Day 3: Sat, 22nd FEBRUARY 2020
Session 3: A Billion & Still Growing : Has Hum 2 - Hamare 2 Worked?
Shri. Tammineni Sitaram (YSRCP)- Vidhan Sabha Speaker
Shri. Thokchom Radheshyam Singh (BJP)- State Edu. Minister
Main Speakers:
H. H. Swami Ramdevji Maharaj (Spiritual)
Shri. Rajesh Tope (NCP)
Shri. Kamlesh D. Patel (Daaji) (Spiritual)
Ms. Argentina Matavel Piccin (International)
Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni (Spiritual)
Dr. Syed Kalbe R. Rizvi (Motivational)
Prof. Dr. N. K. Ahuja (Education)
Session 4: Can Young India Rise to Zero Hunger, Zero Poverty by 2030?
Dr. Fr. Abraham V. Mani (Education)
Special Session : Leadership and Governance Reforms
Shri. Jyotiraditya Scindia (INC)
Session 3: Combating Terrorism, Insurgency & Naxalism: Causes & Challenges
Dr. Surjya Narayana Patro (BJD)- Vidhan Sabha Speaker
Shri. Uday Samant (Shiv Sena)- State Edu. Minister
Main Speakers:
Shri. Rajnath Singh (BJP)- Union Minister
Shri. Arif Mohammad Khan -Hon'ble Governor
Col. (Retd.) Rajyavardhan Rathore (BJP)
Sister BK Shivani (Spiritual)
Shree Hita Ambrish (Spiritual)
Dr. N. T. Rao (Education)
Rajyogini Dr. Binny Sareen (Spiritual)
Session 4: Leaping to 5 Trillion Economy : Chances & Challenges
Shri. Nana Patole (INC)- Vidhan Sabha Speaker
Shri. K. T. Jaleel (CPI-M)- State Edu. Minister
Main Speakers:
Shri. Anurag Singh Thakur (BJP)- Union Minister
Smt. Naina Lal Kidwai (Industry)
Prof. Dr. Nageshwar Rao (Education)

Day 4: Sun, 23rd FEBRUARY 2020
Session 5: India in the Mirror : A Timeline of 7 Decades
Shri. Rabintra Nath Mahata (JMM)- Vidhan Sabha Speaker
Dr. Dinesh Sharma (BJP)- State Edu. Minister
Main Speakers:
Shri. Kapil Sibal (INC)
Smt. Shobhana Bhartia (Media)
Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi (BJP)
Adv. Dr. Lalit Bhasin (Law)
Dr. Ashok P. Hinduja (Industry)
Shri. Prakash P. Hinduja (Industry)
Prof. Dr. Sandeep Sancheti (Education)
Prof. Dr. Aditya Shastri (Education)

Valedictory Ceremony 23rd FEB 2020
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Justice (Retd.) N. Santosh Hegde (Law)
Kunwar Natwar Singh
Shri. Rajdeep Sardesai (Journalism)

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IMPACT : Since 15 years, the alumni of MIT-SOG and BCS are working with various political parties as office bearers and policy makers. Few of them have contested Lok Sabha Elections, State Assembly Elections and Elections of Local Self Government level.

Sharjeel Imam sent to one-day police custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A court here on Monday sent Sharjeel Imam, arrested on sedition charge last month, to one-day police custody in another case related to violent protests against Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) at New Friends Colony on December 15. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Gurmohina Kaur issued the order after the police said that they wanted to quiz Mr. Imam after an accused in the December 15 violence case, Furkan, alleged in his disclosure statement that he was provoked by Mr. Imam's speeches. Mr. Imam has not been booked in this case. The court granted custody to the police after Mr. Imam was interrogated in the court for half-an-hour. It said his custodial interrogation was necessary for a proper investigation into the case.

Another video surfaces of 'police brutality' in Jamia Millia Islamia

Clip shows students with folded hands in front of policemen; force refutes claims

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Though several videos of alleged police brutality inside Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) premises, including its library, have been doing the rounds since December 15 last year, the police have refuted all claims. The latest video related to the incident of "violence" surfaced on Monday in which students can be seen folding hands in front of policemen as they are attacked by men carrying sticks and wearing riot gear. In the latest video, purportedly from the old library, women students can be seen leaving the library with hands folded, followed by male students as policemen charge at them. In the video, Delhi Police officers can be seen attacking the students brutally with sticks inside the library.



A grab of a video showing policemen in riot gear attacking JMI students in the university's library. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The video also shows students trying to flee to save themselves. Former Deputy Commissioner of Police (South East) Chinmoy Biswal had denied that the force had entered the library. While speaking to the media two days after the violence, when 10 people had been arrested on charges of rioting among others, Mr. Biswal had said:

"The police did not enter the library." He had also said that the matter was under investigation. The case was later transferred to the Crime Branch, which has been probing the matter. Forensic examination Special Commissioner of Police (Crime) Praveer Ranjan said all the videos received by Delhi Police, in-

cluding the latest ones, were being examined and would be sent for forensic examination. "The Special Investigation Team probing the violence will analyse the videos and establish the sequence of events," he said. Another claim made by Delhi Police, which raised questions, was denial over opening fire on December 15 when the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests were under way. The police maintained that no gunshots were fired till a video surfaced in January showing policemen opening fire. In the video, two policemen can be seen pulling out their service pistols and firing three shots in the direction of the protesters and then running away. The video was shot on Mathura Road on December 15. The police later called it "an act of self-defence".

Enough evidence to establish excessive force: Jamia student

Recounts night of horror in which he lost vision in one eye

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

"What more does the police need in terms of evidence? Everything is crystal clear," said Mohammed Minhajuddin on Monday who lost vision in one eye during the police crackdown at Jamia Millia Islamia on December 15. Mr. Minhajuddin, an LLM student, was among many other students seen in a CCTV video of the research scholars library where police personnel are seen indiscriminately beating up people. He said, "A few of my friends and I were there since 2 p.m.... We went downstairs in between and returned. We even have the CCTV footage of this which we have submitted to the court." One point of entry Narrating the sequence of events, Mr. Minhajuddin said that by evening, the police had entered and spread across the campus and everyone was in a state of panic. "There were a lot of sounds coming and many students had switched off their laptops and were just worried about finding a way out," he said. With many seeking refuge in the research scholar's section, the door, which is the only point of entry, was latched from inside. "But they [police] banged the door several times, broke the latch and entered," he said, following which allegedly without any warning, the police personnel in the video are seen beating up pe-



Jamia [Millia Islamia] could have released this footage themselves and made everything clear but they were also worried about the law and order situation

MOHAMMED MINHAJUDDIN
LLM student

ople with lathis. He said that the police gave no instruction to leave the place and were simply thrashing everyone present there, allegedly also hurling communal slurs. Speaking to CNN News18, Mohammad Mustafa, an M.A. student at the university who was reportedly at the library as well said that police personnel who entered and carried out the crackdown without warning had asked him, "Do you want Azadi [freedom]?" Mr. Mustafa who is said to have suffered fractures in both hands during the incident, told the TV channel that he felt vindicated. Mr. Minhajuddin said that his fingers were fractured when he was hit by a lathi. When he tried to escape from the room, he was hit in the eye in which he lost his vision. While the police were hitting people with lathis inside the research scholar's section, more personnel were allegedly waiting outside the room. They allegedly hit people as they came out. "I started to feel unconscious and somehow made my way

to the bathroom," he said. Mobile footage from the day, showed Mr. Minhajuddin bleeding from his face, lying unconscious in the bathroom of the university along with another student. "Jamia [Millia Islamia] could have released this footage themselves and made everything clear but they were also worried about the law and order situation," he said, adding that there was enough evidence to establish police brutality and that action must be taken. Mr. Minhajuddin is undergoing regular treatment at AIIMS to make sure his other eye does not get infected, he said. Various foundations had also reached out to him and were helping him raise funds for his treatment. He said that he had been advised to go abroad to seek treatment as well but was yet to take a decision in the matter. He has also approached multiple authorities to have a case registered in the matter and has approached the High Court to seek compensation, he said. A notice was issued to the authorities on February 11 in this regard, he added.

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	239	Gurgaon	227
Ghaziabad	307	Faridabad	258
Noida	279	Greater Noida	296

Legend: Good (0-50), Satisfactory (51-100), Moderate (101-200), Poor (201-300), Very Poor (301-400), Severe (>400)

Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) | Source: CPCB

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Book discussion on "A Chequered Brilliance: The Many Lives of V.K. Krishna Menon" written by Jairam Ramesh. Discussants: T.C.A. Raghavan, former Indian high Commissioner to Pakistan; and Shivshankar Menon, former National Security Adviser and former Foreign Secretary at Conference Room - II, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Talk: A seminar on "Egyptian-Indian cultural communication through the translation of contemporary literature". Renowned Egyptian writer, M. Salmawy will be in discussion with Prof. Aftab Kamal Pasha and Dr. M. Qutbuddin, from JNU at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Inner Mastery", a solo paintings exhibition in mixed media by Ekaterina Abramova at Open Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Aarambh", a group show of sculptures and painting at Alturash Art Gallery, 147, DLF South Court, Saket, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityed@delhi@thehindu.co.in)

HC seeks govt. reply on Jamia student's plea

Mujeeb sought ₹2 crore compensation for injuries suffered in 'police action'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday sought the response of the Centre, the city government and the police on a plea by a Jamia Millia Islamia student seeking compensation for injuries suffered allegedly in police action against anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protesters on December 15.

At the outset, the court was of the view that the student ought to have filed a civil suit if he was seeking compensation as his claims would have to be proved through evidence. "These are matters of evidence. Why are you not filing a suit for damages? On the basis of annexures in a writ claims cannot be proved," said a Bench of

Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar. "It has become a fashion in Delhi to file a writ for everything," the Bench also said. Both legs fractured The plea by Shayaan Mujeeb, a Jamia student, has alleged that his both legs got fractured in the "brutal violence carried out" by secur-

ity personnel. He contended that he was studying in the library on December 15, 2019, when police personnel entered the building and allegedly beat up the students there. Advocate Nabila Hasan, representing the student, contended that CCTV footage showed the police entering the library and beating up the students.

Notice to Centre, CBI, Delhi police in Gargi College case

Petition in HC seeks court-monitored CBI probe into alleged molestation of students during an event

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre, the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Delhi Police on a petition seeking a court-monitored CBI probe into the alleged molestation of students during a cultural festival at DU's Gargi College on February 6. It sought the response

from the authorities and posted the case for further hearing on April 30. 'No action yet' The court was hearing a petition by advocate M.L. Sharma, who claimed that nothing had been done till now. The police had registered an FIR on February 9 and arrested a few persons, he said.

The plea was filed on Thursday after the Supreme Court declined to entertain the petition and asked the petitioner to move the High Court instead. In his petition, Mr. Sharma sought the preservation of all video recordings and CCTV camera footage of the college campus. The plea also sought the arrest of those who are behind the

"planned criminal conspiracy". Ten people, between 18 and 25 years, were arrested on February 12 in connection with the incident. However, they were released on bail on February 13, the next day. Two others were arrested the same day. According to the police, over 11 teams were looking at technical details and also

visited various sites in the NCR in connection with identification of the suspects and investigation into the case. Delhi Police had registered a case on February 10 after it received a complaint from the college authorities. A case was registered at Hauz Khas police station under IPC Sections 452, 354, 509 and 34.

'Hate speech is being celebrated in India'

JNUSU demands repeal of CAA



JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh and others protesting at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Monday. *BIBEK CHETTRI

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The JNU Students' Union on Monday called for a protest demanding the release of university student Sharjeel Imam, arrested on sedition charge last month, and Kafeel Khan, booked under the National Security Act for his speech during an anti-CAA protest at Aligarh Muslim University on December 12. The protest was scheduled to be a march from Mandi House to Jantar Mantar but the students called off their march and headed directly to Jantar Mantar. Speaking at the protest, JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh alleged that the government in power was targeting people for unjustified reasons and that "hate speech" was being celebrat-

ed in the country. "Nowadays, hate speeches are being celebrated in the country. However, if people, specifically people from the Muslim community, raise their voice against the government, they are targeted and a sedition case is slapped against them," Ms. Ghosh said. The protesters drew examples of various speeches delivered by the members of the ruling party in the run-up to the Delhi elections and asked as why no action was taken against them. The students also called for a repeal of the amended Citizenship Act, a stop to the NPR and other draconian laws. They demanded that all dissenters jailed under sedition and other draconian acts be released.

JNU violence case: Central government refuses to reveal investigation details

Minister apprises RS of safety steps taken in its aftermath

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre informed the Rajya Sabha earlier in February that "details of investigation" pertaining to violence on the JNU campus "cannot be divulged at this stage". In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy said as reported by Delhi Police, a case was registered at the Vasant Kunj North police station on January 6 regarding the attack at JNU. "Another case has been registered at PS Vasant Kunj North on January 6, 2020, with regard to the attack against the students and

teachers of JNU on January 5, 2020, by masked people with rods and sticks. 51 persons including students sustained injuries and all were medically examined. No one was killed in this incident. Some private cars and property were also damaged. Some of the rioters involved have been identified," Mr. Reddy said. The Minister said that as reported by Delhi Police, since October 2019, students of JNU have been protesting against hostel fee hike and other administrative issues. "In order to stall the online registration process for the new semester, on January 3 and 4, 2020, students dam-

aged the server system of CIS Centre inside the JNU campus and indulged in physical abuse and violence. Based on complaints received from the Chief Security Officer, JNU, two cases have been registered by Delhi Police PS Vasant Kunj North," he said. He said the safety measures taken by Delhi Police include deployment of police personnel both inside and outside the JNU campus, stationing of PCR van in the vicinity of JNU campus and briefing of the students and administration to report to police immediately if any violent/unwanted activities come to notice on campus premises.

Court issues notice on maternity benefits plea

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday sought response of the Centre and the University Grants Commission (UGC) on a petition seeking to frame guidelines for women who are unable to attend classes due to pregnancy, child birth and post-natal care situations. A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar issued notice to the Ministries of Human Resource Development, Women and Child Development and Social Justice and Empo-

werment and the UGC on the plea. The court posted the case for hearing on May 28. Advocate Kush Kalra, in his petition, has sought setting up of a high-level committee to give recommendations for securing and safeguarding rights of women. The plea has also contended that the benefits provided to working women under the Maternity Benefits Act ought to be provided to those studying in educational institutions.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Protesters at Shaheen Bagh welcomed the Supreme Court's directive to appoint interlocutors to speak with those at the site, volunteers with the movement said on Monday. While volunteers said that they had not received any intimation regarding when the interlocutors would speak with them, they said that they expected them to come to the site to hold discussions with them. Meraj Khan, a volunteer, said that the protesters had

Protesters at Shaheen Bagh welcome SC move to appoint interlocutors

drawn up a memorandum of demands which include either a complete rollback of the CAA or amendments to it in such a way that mention of particular religions are removed, that the NPR in the current form not be carried out, that the NRC not be carried out at all, that persecuted Rohingya refugees also be included in the CAA, that cases against protesters across the country be taken back or they be released if jailed and that any property recovered from protesters be returned. Mohammed Shabaz,

another volunteer, also argued that the focus on traffic issues be caused by the protest was misplaced and that other roads could also be opened up in order to bring relief to the traffic situation. He also reiterated that the protests would go on till the demands were met. Meanwhile, AAP leader Sanjay Singh said that the Centre could end the protest at Shaheen Bagh, but it is keeping the issue alive to avoid discussion on pressing issues like unemployment and economic slowdown.

THE HINDU PRESENTS SCHOOL BUZZ
A Newspaper exclusively curated for School Students

CELEBRATIONS AT NEHRU WORLD SCHOOL
Nehru World School, Ghaziabad organised their 41st Annual Production on 8th February. The programme commenced with an introduction of the play on 'Bizzy Mizz Lizzy' by Ms. Susan Holmes, Head Teacher. This was followed by a welcome song and the annual report presentation. This play depicted the story of the busiest little bee in the hive town. Mr. K P Singh, Director Administration, NWS, motivated and appreciated the participants' confidence and efforts.

ANNUAL SPANISH FIESTA AT RAMJAS SCHOOL
Ramjas School, Pusa Road organised their Annual Spanish Fiesta. The students participated in a wide range of activities highlighting the rich and diverse Spanish Culture. The class nine students made a presentation highlighting some of the key aspects of Spain. The class eight students made Eurocards, postal stamps and interesting travel itineraries. The students also sang a Spanish song. The Principal, Surabhi Dua, appreciated the efforts of the students.

GET READY FOR THE YOUNG WORLD QUIZ
There is good news for children who enjoy putting their knowledge to test! The 20th Edition of The Hindu Young World Quiz is all set to take place at 17 cities PAN India. The quiz is open to students in two categories - Juniors (from classes 4 to 6) and Seniors (from classes 7 to 9). Each team must consist of two members. From a school, any number of teams can take part by registering online and paying a non-refundable registration fee of Rs. 200 per team. The team members must be from the same school/branch and no cross teams are allowed. For Registrations and further details, log on to www.thehindu.com/ywquiz

For Subscription related queries, please contact Kapil Nagar:
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China outbreak taking toll on local economy, warn traders

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Highlighting the effect that the outbreak of COVID-19 in China is having on trade and industry in India, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on Monday wrote to Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal seeking the government's intervention.

"India's trade and industry are highly dependent on China... We import finished goods that are redistributed; raw material that is used for producing goods; and spare parts that are used in assembling goods," read the letter. China has stopped supplying goods, the letter read, adding that importers usually keep two months worth of stock as buffer but if the situation persists then the supply chain will likely be affected.

The CAIT has called upon the government to convene a meeting of trade and industry representatives to come up with remedial measures to ensure uninterrupted supply chain. It also sought a "package" for traders and small industries to help strengthen their capacity. It added that the government should suggest ways to ensure that over-dependence on any country should not take place in the future as it could "cripple our economy".

We were on a mission: rescue team that went to Wuhan

In my mind we were soldiers working for our country, says team leader

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

"This was a mission not a trip," said Pulin Gupta, professor of Internal Medicine at RML Hospital, who headed the first medical team that evacuated 324 Indians from Wuhan, China - epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak that has now spread to over 25 countries.

"It was all worth it when we saw the reaction of the Indians we were rescuing. There was cheer and even applause as the flight took to the air... there were many moist eyes," he added.

The real work of the medical team (three doctors and two nursing staff) started just before the 324 Indians came on-board. "We had stocked up on medicines, personal safety equipment, emergency medicines and had sessions with staff on what the protocol would be. The Air India staff was also informed about the virus and how best to protect themselves. When our citizens boarded the plane, we had to evaluate their medical condition, ensure their safe trip back home and be sure to minimise the spread of any infection. That was a challenge," said Dr. Gupta.

He added that besides logistics, the anxiety of going



From left: Sarath Prem, nursing officer; Sanjeet Panesar, assistant professor; Pulin Gupta, professor; Anand Vishal, associated professor; Ajoy Jose, nursing officer; (below) a batch of people, who had been kept in isolation in Delhi after arriving from China, being released on Monday. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



into an area which was dealing with a relatively little know virus was not easy.

"Though we knew that fatality was relatively low compared to similar strains, we were still anxious. However, when my mother told me that the country needs me now, all last-minute anxieties vanished and I was able to convey that confidence to my team also. In my mind

we were soldiers working for our country. That in a nutshell was our frame of mind," said Dr. Gupta.

After returning to India, the team was kept in isolation for 14-days.

"But this is all part of our duty to help our brothers and sisters in distress. This was no time to think about risks. We were aware that prevention is the best cure.

We also prepared the blueprint for the second Indian team which went into Wuhan for the next batch of Indians," said Dr. Gupta.

On Monday, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan presented the team from RML Hospital and Safdurjung Hospital, an appreciation letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their "grit, determination and compassion", and successfully evacuating a total of 645 India citizens and seven Maldivian citizens from Wuhan.

The appreciation letter from the PM read: "In such a scenario, the evacuation of Indian citizens in distress has not only given relief to those rescued but has also reassured the Indian diaspora settled across the globe that in time of crisis, the entire nation stands firmly united. Your indefatigable effort inspires every citizen to serve the nation with dedication and commitment".

As per the Health Ministry, 3,21,375 passengers from 2,996 flights and 6,387 passengers from 125 ships have been screened till date.

A total of 2,571 samples across 15 laboratories have been tested and only three samples have come back positive for COVID-19.

Over 50% inmates in Tihar jail from backward classes in 2018

Muslims accounted for 84% of minority prisoners: data

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Over 50% inmates in Tihar prison belong to Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe and from Other Backward Classes (OBC), as per Prison Statistics 2018.

The data was recently shared by the Ministry of Home Affairs in response to a question in Rajya Sabha.

The data show that in 2018, there were 3,724 SC, 540 ST, and 4,063 OBC prisoners in Tihar jail out of a total of 15,468 inmates - accounting for 53.65% of the jail population. In 2017, there were 3,725 SC, 215 ST, and 4,156 OBC prisoners - accounting for 53.4% of the jail population. In 2016, the percentage was 51.2; in 2015, it stood at 46.9%.

The data was shared by

Prison data

TOTAL INMATES IN 2018

15,468

INMATES FROM BACKWARD CLASSES

SC 3,724
ST 540
OBC 4,063

53.65% of the total jail population

SOURCE: PRISON STATISTICS 2018

4,275 inmates from the minority community, out of which 84% were Muslims; the rest included 289 Sikhs, 348 Christians and 42 others. In 2017, Muslims accounted for 83.9% of the total inmates from the minority community, and in 2016, it was 84.1%.

There has been marginal change in the percentage of inmates from the minority community since 2014, the data showed.

"Demography and the fact that people from lower strata of society are more prone to committing crime, could be the reasons for the high percentage," a prison official said, adding that the high Muslim population in the jail could be because "after Hindus, Muslims are highest in number in India".

the MHA in response to a question on whether the government maintains data based on the caste and religion of inmates, and what is the percentage change in the figures.

The data also showed that in 2018, there were

Two killed in encounter

Involved in multiple cases of murder

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two persons were killed in an exchange of fire with police officers on Monday in south-east Delhi's Pul Prahaladpur. The police said that the men were involved in multiple cases of murder and robbery.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said that Raja Qureshi and Ramesh Bahadur were shot during an encounter around 5 a.m.; they were rushed to AIIMS Trauma Centre where they were declared brought dead.

The police said that on February 12, Raja and Ramesh fired indiscriminately at a property dealer in Karawal Nagar. They also fired at two police personnel who

were present at the spot and injured them. On the same day, the duo killed a man in Loni, Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Kushwah said that after receiving a tip-off on the whereabouts of the two men, a team was deployed to intercept them near Okhla Mandi.

When asked to surrender, the duo opened fire at the team, he added.

"The police fired back in self-defence. During the exchange of fire, the rounds fired by the accused hit the police gypsy and bullet-proof jackets of four police personnel," he said.

Three pistols along with live cartridges, two helmets and a motorcycle used by the accused were recovered, police said.

IN BRIEF



Commendation awards

NEW DELHI
Delhi Police chief Amulya Patnaik presented 75 officers with Commendation Disc Awards, a first such initiative in the force to boost personnel morale. Mr. Patnaik also released the lyrics of Delhi Police song *Abhiman Mera*.

Three men arrested for robbing, beating up railway constable

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three men were arrested for allegedly robbing a Railway Protection Force Constable last week while inside a shared cab on the way to Meerut from Delhi, the police said on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner of

Police (Crime Branch) Dr. Ram Gopal Naik said Sunil Paswan (27), Amir Paswan (27) and Md Dulare (35) have been nabbed for robbing Constable Ravinder Singh, deployed in Mumbai.

The incident happened on February 10 when Mr. Singh came to Delhi at 5 a.m. fol-

lowing which he went to Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) in Anand Vihar from Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, the police said. He then took a share cab to Meerut with two accused, who posed as passengers, and the driver.

The trio looted him of his belongings and also beat

him, the police said, adding that they made him withdraw money from different ATMs in the city.

Mr. Singh then managed to escape at 9 p.m. near Bawana Industrial Area after which he approached police, the DCP said. A case was then registered at Patparganj

Industrial Area police station.

In the last three months, the accused committed 33 robberies in Gurugram, Panipat, Bawana and Anand Vihar, the police said. The trio has robbed over 100 passengers by offering them lift in share cabs, they added.

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PREPARE to HUDDLE

The Arts & Entertainment Sessions

February 22 & 23, 2020

ITC Gardenia, Bengaluru

Gender Bender: Women in the new age of cinema

Taapsee Pannu, Actor

Movies: Pink (Hindi), Badla (Hindi), Mission Mangal (Hindi), Game Over (Tamil)

Namrata Rao, Editor

Movies: Oye Lucky, Lucky Oye (Hindi), Ishqiya (Hindi), Band Baaja Baaraat (Hindi), Love Sex Aur Dhokha (Hindi)

Atika Chohan, Screenwriter

Movies: Chapaak (Hindi), Margarita with a Straw (Hindi), Waiting (Hindi)

In conversation with **Namrata Joshi**, Cinema Editor, *The Hindu*

Between Jazz & Jaunpuri: Finding music's middle ground

Anil Srinivasan, Pianist & Educator

Sikkil Gurucharan, Musician

The Netflix Session: Creating stars in the digital age

Manisha Koirala, Actor

Movies: Lust Stories (Netflix, Hindi), Bombay, Dil Se, 1942: A Love Story

Mithila Palkar, Actor

Movies/Series: Little Things (Netflix series), Chopsticks (Netflix Movie), Karwaan (Hindi movie), Girl in the City (TV Series)

Priyanshu Painyuli, Actor

Movies: Upstarts (Netflix film), Rock On 2 (Hindi), Love at First Sight (Hindi)

Srishti Arya, Director for International Film, India

In conversation with **Rosella Stephen**, Associate Editor, *The Hindu*

The Naked Comedian: A stand-up act by Papa CJ



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The buck stops here



(From left) Cabinet Ministers Kailash Gahlot, Satyendar Jain, Manish Sisodia, Imran Hussain, Rajendra Pal Gautam and Gopal Rai at Delhi Secretariat on the first day of the new government on Monday. ■ SANDEEP SAKENA, PTI

Kejriwal not to take charge of any dept.

Chief Minister retains old Cabinet with minor modifications; will monitor functioning of all departments

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday allocated portfolios to Ministers with no major modifications compared to the previous Cabinet; there were minor changes made in the departments of water, environment and the women and child development.

Mr. Kejriwal, who headed the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) in the previous government, has given the post to Satyendar Jain, with the objective of monitoring the work of all Ministers alongside ensuring direct connect with the people, a statement by the government read.

"Mr. Kejriwal will not be taking charge of any department, instead he will be overseeing the work of all Ministers. He will monitor all operational processes and functioning of all the departments. He will also ensure interactions with the public to resolve grievances and induce communication between his government and the public," the statement read.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has been allocated the Ministries of Education, Finance, Planning, Land and Building, Vigilance, Services, Tourism, Art, Culture and Lan-



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at Delhi Secretariat on Monday. ■ SANDEEP SAKENA

guage and all other departments not specifically allocated to any Minister.

Gopal Rai has been allocated the departments of Employment, Development, Labour and General Administration Department, Environment, Forest and Wildlife.

The Water Department has been shifted to Mr. Jain, the statement said, in addition to the Departments of

Mr. [Arvind] Kejriwal will not be taking charge of any department, instead he will be directly overseeing the work of all Ministers

STATEMENT BY GOVT.

Health, Industries, Public Works Department, Power, Home, Urban Development

and Irrigation and Flood Control. "Among the changes that have been made in the Cabinet this time, the DJB will be under Mr. Jain, while the Department of Environment will be under Gopal Rai. The Department of Women and Child Development will be headed by Rajendra Pal Gautam," read the statement. Imran Hussain will handle the Food and Sup-

ply and Election Departments of the government while the Departments of Gurdwara Elections, SC & ST, Social Welfare, Cooperative have been allocated to Mr. Gautam.

Law, Justice and Legislative Affairs, Transport, Administrative Reforms, Information and Technology and Revenue, have been allocated to Kailash Gahlot, the statement added.

'Fulfilling poll promises will be top priority of AAP govt.'

Cabinet Ministers talk of working towards Delhi's development

NIKHIL M BABU
JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

The new Cabinet took charge at the Delhi Secretariat on Monday with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's government stating that its biggest priority would be fulfilling the promises made in the Guarantee Card and the Aam Aadmi Party's manifesto.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia presided over back-to-back meetings with officials concerned of both departments soon after resuming office.

Sisodia on Budget

"The Budget, which will be tabled in the Delhi Assembly in March, is among our priorities," he said.

At a meeting with senior officers of the Finance Department, Mr. Sisodia had stressed on the need to eradicate departmental corruption by income tax officers.

"It is important to take steps to wipe out departmental corruption...setting up effective revenue targets should be our next course of action," he said.

He also held a meeting with officials of the Education Department where he gave several instructions, including speeding up work on

two new universities – the Delhi Skills and Entrepreneurship University and the Sports University – and repairing the outer wall of all schools under the government's jurisdiction.

After resuming charge, Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said: "The Guarantee Card will be my priority... the government will work on further strengthening Delhi's transport system."

Clean water 24x7: Jain

Delhi Jal Board (DJB) head Satyendar Jain said: "Fulfilling the targets of AAP's manifesto will be my priority along with the Guarantee Card. I will also work hard to bring Mohalla Clinics within a radius of 1km for every citizen across Delhi. I will also work to provide clean water 24x7."

Development Minister Gopal Rai said: "The new government will reach every level of society and work will be done keeping in mind the needs of the most disadvantaged sections. The people of Delhi have new expectations and are looking forward to delivery of the Delhi's development model today. People are discussing this model across the country and we will ensure its expansion."

Social Welfare Minister Ra-

jendra Pal Gautam said: "We will work for the development of people from every class. The people have supported AAP wholeheartedly and this is our time to return this faith."

Food and Supply Minister Imran Hussain said: "The government wants to make Delhi a world-class city. Keeping this in mind, the manifesto and the Guarantee Card, the emphasis will be on fast implementation."

"We have to continue to work on improving the infrastructure of our schools. We need to speed the installation of CCTV cameras and ensure more new classrooms. Effective utilisation of the School Management Committee funds is also important," Mr. Sisodia added.

An official, close to the government, said there will be fewer big announcements compared to the 2015 government as they will be implementing promises and many of the schemes are already in the pipeline.

"We will work on giving free rides for students in buses. We will look into the feasibility of issuing passes to the students for the same and also work on making cables underground across the city," the official said.

I consider myself lucky to get party ticket: richest AAP MLA

Lakra, a businessman, left Cong. in 2015 and joined AAP in 2017

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Newly elected MLA from Mundka Dharampal Lakra, who is the richest AAP legislator, said he considered himself lucky to be given a ticket by the party. Mr. Lakra, a businessman, left the Congress in 2015 and joined AAP in 2017.

He has movable and immovable assets worth ₹250 crore and his wife has assets of around ₹45 crore, according to his affidavit submitted to the Election Commission.

Mr. Lakra said, "I was with the Congress from 2013 to 2015. Before that I was not with any political party. I joined AAP in 2017 and the party decided to give me a ticket. I consider myself very lucky that the party chose me." He said he switched to AAP because of its ideology,



Dharampal Lakra

image and its work. "I was impressed by their good work and their type of politics," he said.

Work for vikas

The MLA said he would work for the development of rural areas. "I will work for the vikas of the villages and also work on the Sports University, which has already been approved by the government," Mr. Lakra said.

"We will also make schools in the area better and provide better medical facilities. This will be my focus area," he added.

The AAP MLA who lives with his wife, three children and their families, said he used to be involved in social work even before he joined the Congress. When asked about getting a party ticket less than three years of joining AAP, Mr. Lakra said, "I was doing work on the ground and the party was impressed with it."

Mr. Lakra, 61, was born in Mundka. He said his father did farming and was also a businessman. The MLA did a diesel mechanic course from ITI Pusa in 1978-1979. "My three sons are into property dealing," he said, adding that they also have few farm fields in Delhi.

AAP to launch membership drive in Uttar Pradesh from February 23

Party will focus on strengthening its base, says Sanjay Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NOIDA

Sanjay Singh, AAP in-charge of Uttar Pradesh unit, on Monday said the party would start a membership drive in the State from February 23, starting from Lucknow.

The party aims to take the "Arvind Kejriwal model of development" to Uttar Pradesh and strengthen its base across the 403 Assembly Constituencies, he said, adding that the membership drive will end on March 23.

He added it was for the party's high command to decide on whether or not it will contest the State elections in 2022. "During the membership drive, people can become members of the party by physically reaching out to our offices and getting receipts, by giving missed calls or by enrolling through our website," Mr. Singh said.



Sanjay Singh

Around 5,000 posters and banners will be put up in each constituency, totalling over 20 lakh across the State to talk about our model of politics and development, Mr. Singh said, adding that the party has 60 active district-level units in Uttar Pradesh while maintaining presence in all districts.

He said there are around a dozen AAP leaders hailing

from various places in U.P. who have been elected to the Delhi Assembly.

They include Ministers Manish Sisodia, Gopal Rai, Satyendar Jain, Imran Hussain, among others. These leaders will be felicitated in their hometowns and awareness will be raised regarding the "Kejriwal model of development".

Mr. Singh also criticised Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over a host of issues, especially the law and order situation in the State.

Stating that Delhi has sent out a message that "politics of hate" will not work against "politics of work", the AAP MP claimed that only a party which gives good education, healthcare, cheap power and water and helps the cause of the common person would win the elections.

(With PTI inputs)

AAP's PAC to decide where party will fight

Dates not fixed for meeting, says Rai

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party Delhi convener Gopal Rai on Monday said the Political Affairs Committee, the highest decision-making body of the party, will soon decide which upcoming State Assembly polls AAP will contest.

After winning 62 out of the 70 seats in Delhi, Mr. Rai had said that the party will fight local body elections across the country where the party has a unit and also contest Assembly elections in different States.

"The PAC will meet to decide on which upcoming State elections the party will fight," Mr. Rai said.

Though Mr. Rai said they have not fixed dates for the PAC meeting, a party insider said it might be held within a week to 10 days.

Explaining the party's

The PAC will meet to decide which upcoming State elections the party will fight. Our aim is to join 1 crore people through the nation-building campaign

GOPAL RAI
AAP Delhi convener

plan of expanding in other States, he said. "We will run a 'nation-building campaign' to join volunteers from February 23 to March 23. Our aim is to join 1 crore people through the campaign. Will conduct volunteer meetings in all States and press conferences in all major cities," he said.

The party had held a meeting of officer-bearers of different States on Sunday to discuss the campaign.

Farmers storm Noida Authority complex, seek compensation

They demand increased payout in compensation for acquired land and residential plots

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Hundreds of farmers from 81 local villages stormed the Noida Authority complex on Monday demanding 64% increase in compensation for acquired land, residential plots of the size equal to 10% of acquired land, and settlement of issues regarding houses which fall in the *abadi land* (rural land used for resi-

dential purposes).

These have been long-standing demands, but there has been a spurt in the protest since last week when 11 farmers were arrested. Keeping this mind, the district administration has imposed Section 144 in Gautam Buddha Nagar for a month. Farmers of Greater Noida have also joined the protest. On Monday, AAP MP Sanjay Singh

and MLA Raghav Chadha addressed the farmers and supported their demands.

Ravi Kumar, a farmer leader, said they welcomed the support of AAP. "The officials know our demands for a long time but they are not taking any action," he alleged, adding that farmers should not be made to pay the price of development.

Rajendra Yadav, State pre-

sident of Bharatiya Kisan Sangathan, said the Authority was working as a commercial enterprise and was not looking after the interests of farmers. "The problem arose because the officials did not survey the land properly. Every piece of land, including schools and colleges, in these 81 villages is in the name of the Noida Authority now. We gave up farmland for deve-

lopment, not our residences and educational institutions. When we ask for residential plots, which is our right, they say we are squatting on the Authority's land," he said.

Mr. Yadav said the Allahabad HC had directed the State government to hike the compensation by 64% in 2011. "Some farmers were even given the amount. However, the majority of them are still waiting."

U.P. pollution body asked to submit report on approval to industries

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea seeking remedial action against existing mechanism used by the Uttar Pradesh government to issue consent to operate to industries in critical or overexploited areas, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the U.P. State Pollution Control Board to furnish a report on the same.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel observed, "It is well known that in OCS [over-exploited, critical and semi-critical] areas, such consent for commercial purpose cannot be given, in absence of ensuring replenishment of groundwater which is not happening. This situation needs to be remedied."

Directing the UPPCB to fur-

nish a report by March 13, the Bench noted: "The prayer of the applicant is that to prevent damage to the environment, the UPPCB must invoke 'precautionary principle' and not to grant or renew consent to operate to such industries, which may extract groundwater, by a mechanical condition of NOC being later obtained from the CGWA."

Timings DELHI

TUESDAY, FEB. 18
RISE 06:58 SET 18:13
RISE 02:53 SET 13:31

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19
RISE 06:57 SET 18:14
RISE 03:50 SET 14:23

THURSDAY, FEB. 20
RISE 06:56 SET 18:15
RISE 04:43 SET 15:17

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	26	09
Safdarjang	26	09
Palam	26	10

Delhi Palam Today
27°C A misty and cool morning is likely. A warm afternoon with light winds and sunny sky is expected.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
26°C Mist/shallow fog is likely in the morning. A warm day with clear sky is expected. Slight drop in day temperature is likely.

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THE HINDU
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Agra readies to receive Trump

City getting a makeover and intelligence sweep ahead of U.S. President's visit

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

The city of Taj is being spruced up to welcome U.S. President Donald Trump and wife Melania on February 24. Shops have been painted in one colour and hoardings are being cut in one format to avoid any visual discomfort to the VVIP couple. Water is being sprayed so that the dust settles. Even trees are being washed. "Even statues at the roundabouts are being given a bath," said an elated Rajesh Kumar, who runs a grocery store near Fatehabad Road. In the Swachh Survekshan 2019 cleanliness rankings, the Agra Municipal Corporation was placed 85th nationwide.

Old-timers remember that Bill Clinton was the last U.S. President to visit the Taj in 2000. Barack Obama's visit in 2015 was cancelled at the last minute, apparently because of security concerns. This time, apprehensions are being raised about the condition of the railway bridge near the Kheria Airport that



Workers carrying out road repair ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's visit, in Agra on Monday. •PTI

falls on the way to Taj Mahal. "As the airport is not regularly used, and foreign tourists are expected to take the train route, not much attention has been paid on its maintenance," said a tourist guide, requesting anonymity. In fact, the Public Works Department has put up a board saying the bridge is in a weak condition and that heavy vehicles are not allowed. Allaying the fears, Superintendent of Police (City) Botre Rohan Pramod said, "It is not a cause of worry. It was used during the recent visit by the

Brazilian President." Divisional Commissioner Anil Kumar told reporters on Monday that the PWD and the (U.P. State) Bridge Corporation have been told to do a check-up.

Massive police presence
Police sources said besides 4,000 constables, 10 Superintendents of Police, 18 Additional Superintendents of Police, 75 Deputy Superintendents of Police, 200 inspectors, 350 sub-inspectors and 16 companies of Central Armed Police Forces would

be pressed into the security of arguably the most powerful man on earth.

"We are checking every house that falls on the route. The hotels have been asked to submit details of those staying with them to the local intelligence unit. Snipers will be placed on rooftops along the route," said Mr. Pramod. Concerns have also been raised about the hotels which are working without proper permission from the authorities. "We are keeping a check on them as well," assured the official.

The increasing number of monkeys in the monument is also a concern. Interestingly, Mr. Trump is coming at a time when the Taj Mahotsav is on, with hundreds of artisans in the city. Mr. Kumar said the administration has taken note of it. He said "the visit will end by 7.30 p.m.", the time when the stage shows of the Mahotsav begin.

A four-member advance team of the U.S. Embassy visited Agra on Monday.

J&K police FIR against social media users

'Govt. ban order defied, misused'

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir police on Monday lodged a First Information Report against locals for using social media platforms on virtual private networks (VPNs). "Taking a serious note of the misuse of social media, the Cyber Police Station, Kashmir Zone, Srinagar, has registered an FIR against various social media users, who defied the government orders and misused the social media platforms," a Srinagar-based police spokesman said on Monday.

'Unlawful activities'
The police said there were continuous reports of misuse of social media sites by miscreants "to propagate the secessionist ideology and to promote unlawful activities".

The FIR has been registered while taking cognisance of the social media

posts by miscreants by using different VPNs, which are propagating rumours with regard to the current security scenario in the Kashmir valley, secessionist ideology and glorifying terrorists, the police said.

'Incriminating material'
"A lot of incriminating material has also been seized in this regard," the spokesman said.

The case is registered under FIR No. 01 of 2020 U/S 13 U A (P) Act, 188, 505 of IPC and 66-A(b) of the IT Act.

"I appeal to the general public not to use social media via VPNs," Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar said.

The J&K government had on January 14 banned all social media sites. The ban, the government said, was to curb the misuse of sites by miscreants for propagating false information "having the effect of causing social instability".

M.P. road rage: man beaten to death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SEONI

A 24-year-old man in a pick-up truck was beaten to death allegedly by three youths on motorcycles after an altercation on a road in Seoni district of Madhya Pradesh, police said on Monday.

The pick-up truck in which Jamiruddin Khan was travelling overtook the motorcycles of Neetesh Uike (22), Ajay Markam (19) and Anshul Gajbhiye (19) on Sunday night after which an argument ensued, Dundaseoni police station in charge Vilas Dani said.

"When the pick-up truck driver Salman Khan overtook the two-wheelers, one of them fell after being thrown off balance. The youths followed the truck, stopped it near Selua Ghati and beat up Salman and Jamiruddin. Jamiruddin died en route to hospital," Mr. Dani said.

All three men have been arrested," he added.

Fiery end



Firefighters and locals douse flames after three houseboats were gutted on the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Monday. •NISSAR AHMAD

'Punjab govt. will renegotiate power pacts'

SAD-BJP govt. had signed them to defraud the State and people: Amarinder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

With the Opposition's criticism of high power tariffs mounting on the ruling Congress government in Punjab, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday said his government would renegotiate the Power Purchase Agreements, which he alleged the

previous SAD-BJP government had signed to defraud the State and its people.

'Affordable rates'
Given the shortfall in production by the State-owned power plants at Lehra Mohabbat and Ropar, the Chief Minister said his government would work around the existing ar-

rangements with the private players to make power rates more affordable.

Addressing the newly-elected Punjab Youth Congress office-bearers here, the Chief Minister said the State's financial position was on its way to consolidation as a result of his government's efforts of the last three years

and any attempt to scuttle the momentum would not be tolerated.

Capt. Amarinder said he hoped the exuberance shown by the young leaders would further enhance penetration of the State government's various pathbreaking pro-people policies at the grassroots.

Punjab launches drive to check roadworthiness of school buses

Move comes after a van fire killed 4 students in Sangrur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Days after four children were burnt alive in Punjab's Sangrur when a mini-van transporting them caught fire, the State Transport Department on Monday started a drive to inspect roadworthiness of school vans and buses.

Across the State, as many as 4,504 school buses and vans were checked in which 1,649 challans were issued for various violations.

As many as 253 vehicles were impounded for not complying with the requisite parameters of the Motor Vehicles Act during the drive by joint teams of the Punjab police and the civil administration of districts, according to an official spokesperson.

CM's order

The drive was launched following directions by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, who ordered the Transport Department to launch a State-wide checking of all school buses to ensure safety and security of students to avoid recurrence of tragic mishaps like the school van fire in Sangrur last week. Capt. Amarinder had also



Policemen inspecting the charred remains of a school van that caught fire in Sangrur, killing four students. •FILE PHOTO

directed the district child protection officers of the Social Security Department to keep a strict vigil on schools vehicles violating provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and also school managements that are using worn-out vehicles for transportation of students.

AAP flays govt.

Aam Aadmi Party MLA and Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Harpal Singh Cheema meanwhile hit out at the ruling Congress government in the State for being insensitive to the safety and security of

school children travelling in private school buses and vans.

Seeking dismissal of Education Minister Vijay Inder Singla, Mr. Cheema said that it was unfortunate that the government had been insensitive to the cause of safety and security of school children by giving a free hand to the transport mafia in the State.

The AAP leader urged the State government to form a regulatory body to check the maintenance of vehicles, their fitness and road worthiness and ensure safety measures.

Magsaysay awardee held, later released

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Magsaysay awardee Sandeep Pandey along with nine others was on Monday arrested and later released by the Uttar Pradesh police while he was trying to lead a march against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens. Mr. Pandey was also found distributing pamphlets at the protest site. He was released on a personal bond.

"He spent 3-4 hours in custody," said Mr. Pandey's wife Arundhati Dhuru, an activist. Mr. Pandey and others were booked under CrPC Section 151, which deals with arrest to prevent the commission of cognisable offences.

Mr. Pandey, a well-known social activist, along with 30-40 persons were marching from the Hussainabad Clock Tower to Ujariyaon village in Lucknow. Women have been holding sit-ins against the CAA at both sites since last month.

The pamphlets, distributed by Mr. Pandey and signed by a number of activists, asked citizens to unite to turn the Preamble of the Constitution "into a reality".

Seeds to be distributed through cooperatives

Bid to prevent black marketing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

In a major step to prevent black marketing of certified seeds, the Rajasthan government has decided to distribute seeds with subsidy to the farmers only through the village cooperative societies.

The decision is also expected to strengthen cooperative infrastructure in the State.

he cooperative societies will later sign a memorandum of understanding with the Rajasthan State Seeds Corporation for production of seeds.

Registrar of Cooperative Societies Naresh Pal Gangwar said here on Monday that these decisions would facilitate the supply of seeds of good quality to farmers and support the agriculture sector.

'Diversify operations'

Mr. Gangwar, who addressed a meeting of officers of the Cooperative and Agriculture Departments at Nehru Sahakar Bhawan here, said the cooperative societies should diversify

Cooperative societies should also develop their warehouses as mandi sub-yards to make procurement from external sources on a large scale

NARESH PAL GANGWAR
Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Rajasthan

their operations to meet new challenges.

Agro-processing

"The agricultural export promotion policy, announced last year, has encouraged agri-business and agro-processing works," he said. Mr. Gangwar said the cooperative societies should also develop their warehouses as mandi sub-yards to make procurement from external sources on a large scale.

"The farmers may sell their produce directly to the cooperative marketing societies if the warehouse facility was created and the societies' buildings were developed as the custom hiring centres," he said.

Trivendra Singh Rawat
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

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Land revenue receipt, PAN not proof of citizenship: Gauhati HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Land revenue-paying receipt, permanent account number (PAN) card and bank documents do not prove the citizenship of a person, the Gauhati High Court has observed.

A Division Bench of Justices Manojit Bhuyan and Parthivjyoti Saikia made this observation on February 12 while dismissing a writ petition filed by one Javeda Begum against the order passed by a Foreigners' Tribunal at Tamulpur in western Assam's Baksa district.

The FT had declared her a foreigner who had entered Assam after 1971, the cut-off year for detection and deportation of illegal immigrants according to the Assam Accord of August 1985.

Ms. Begum had told the FT that the names of her grand-

parents and parents had appeared in the voters' list of 1966 while that of her father was in the 1970 list. The High Court agreed with the findings of the tribunal that she could not produce any document that could establish her link with her parents.

The court also referred to a 2016 case of one Md. Babul Islam to reject Ms. Begum's reliance on certain papers. "This court... has already held that PAN card and bank documents are not proof of citizenship," the judgment read.

Observing that land revenue-paying receipts and certificates issued by a village headman "can never be proof of citizenship of a person", the court said the FT was correct in its decision on Ms. Begum while dismissing her petition "devoid of merit".

How green is my valley



One-horned rhinoceros grazing inside the Kaziranga National Park in Assam on Monday. •PTI

JU V-C calls for peaceful students' polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOLKATA

Jadavpur University Vice-Chancellor Suranjan Das has appealed to all stakeholders of the institute to "remain calm and maintain peace"

during students' union polls on February 19. Mr. Das expressed hope that the "long-standing tradition of cooperation and harmony on university campus would be upheld" on the day.

Students' union polls would be held at the State university after a gap of three years. The ABVP and the SFI have been accusing each other of trying to thwart their campaign.

Odisha to bring all depts. under 'Mo Sarkar' initiative

From Aug. 15, no need to visit offices for any services: Naveen

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday announced that by August 15 this year, the people of the State will have the freedom not to visit government offices for any services. They will have the option of online services or professionally run common service centre or door delivery, he said.

Making a statement on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address in the Assembly, Mr. Patnaik said all departments of the State government will be brought under the 'Mo Sarkar' initiative by March 5.

Mr. Patnaik announced that April 1 was set as deadline for shifting all wage payments through banks for all line departments. All government transactions



Naveen Patnaik. •FILE PHOTO

tion on a big scale comparable to the best in the world," he said.

Bold industrialisation and world class infrastructure, MSME clusters, start-up hubs and State's presence in the global tourism map with robust socio-economic indicators will lead to a New Odisha, claimed Mr. Patnaik.

"Today, we are known for highest reduction of poverty in the country and setting global benchmarks in disaster management," he said. "We have brought more than 8 million people out of poverty in the last decade."

'ST Mantra' Highlighting various welfare schemes, Mr. Patnaik said his government is determined to work hard for the complete transformation of the State by implementing the "ST Mantra".

across Departments will be done through the Integrated Financial Management System by April 1.

"We have now reached a certain stage in development and governance from where we should take a leap to the next level. People are aspirational and that should motivate us to provide effective governance. In this backdrop the State government is going to focus on employment and value addi-

'Revenue loss due to GST may go on after 5 years'

It is due to structural changes, says latest Odisha Economic Survey

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR

Odisha may continue to sustain loss on account of Goods and Services Tax (GST) even after five years although there was constitutional provision of compensating loss for five years only, says Odisha Economic Survey which was tabled in the State Assembly on Monday.

The introduction of GST in July 2017 had subsumed 17 taxes levied by the Centre and the State under the GST. "With initial troubleshooting issues related with the implementation of the new tax regime, Odisha has been fac-

ing revenue loss," says the latest Survey. "As per the constitutional provisions, the State will get compensation towards loss of revenue for five years. However, the State may continue to sustain loss on account of GST even after five years because of the structural changes like the rate structure, abolition of central sale tax and entry tax," it observes.

As per the Economic Survey, applying 14% growth rate to the base year's collection, revenue for 2018-19 works out at ₹1,63,70.08 crore whereas revenue collection under GST is ₹1,21,40.45 crore. It implies compensation claim of the State stands at ₹4,29,64 crore, out of which received so far is ₹3,785 crore. Balance ₹444.64 crore is yet to be received.

Sand sculpture celebrates gender diversity

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR

Internationally acclaimed sand artist Sudarsan Pattanaik paid tributes to the woman workforce at Puri beach by creating a sand sculpture on Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages, which is celebrating its 23rd anniversary on Tuesday.

The HCCB, one of India's leading FMCG companies, is known for its gender diversity and employment of women at its 15 factories. It employs more than 40% women at its newest factory in Sanand in Gujarat.

Its woman workforce includes the company's first woman forklift operator, first lady electrician and the world's first lady operator of the Plasmax machine.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
Public at large are hereby informed that my client Kulddeep Singh S/o Amarjeet Singh R/o S372, Old Mahavir Nagar, Tikli Nagar, West Delhi-110018, intends to purchase Plot No. WZ-159, Ground Floor, Gali No. 8, Krishna Park, Tikli Nagar, New Delhi-110018 (the Property) from Mr. Harpreet Singh S/o Manmohan Singh-50% Owner, Mr. Rinku Bala S/o Sukhdev Raj-25% Owner and Ms. Anjali D/o Amar Nath-25% Owner (the legal owners), against consideration. Any person, who has got, right, interest, title, claim, encumbrances, charges of any nature whatsoever in respect of the above said property or any part thereof, can send their objections with their documentary evidence at below address within 15 days from the date of this notice, failing which, it shall be presumed that the said property is entirely free from all such claims, interest, charges encumbrance etc...
Praveen Kumar Singh, Advocate
Ch. No.406, Dwarka Court, ND-75

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby inform to the public at large that our clients Sh. Vinod Kumar S/o Sh. Ram Charan and Smt. Suman W/o Sh. Vinod Kumar both R/o F-286, Gali No. 84, Mahavir Endave Part-II Delhi have debarred their son, Akhender Kumar @ Sohail R/o F-286, Gali No. 84, Mahavir Enclave Part-II Delhi and daughter in law Archana D/o Sh. Aashu Ram R/o R.K. Puram, Sector 7 Gate No. 2 Delhi from their all movable and immovable properties and severed their relationship since they are out of control of our clients. Anybody deals with them shall do so at their own risks, costs, and consequences.
Sunil Kumar Advocate
Chamber No. 382, Lawyer's Chamber Block, Saket Court Complex,
New Delhi-110017
Date: 15/02/2020

PERSONAL

LOST & FOUND

It is notified for the information that my original qualifying examination certificate of main secondary examination of year 2019 and roll no 8163305 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate- Utsav Ghosh, 4A Seven Style Mile, Kalka Das Marg, Mehrauli, New Delhi 110030, Aruna park Shakarpur Delhi

LOST & FOUND

It is notified for the information that my original qualifying examination certificate of Main, Senior Secondary Examination of Year 2014 and Roll no. 9121270 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Aditi Bhardwaj 958232760

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Manoj Kumar S/o Late Mangal Prasad R/o WZ-73, Dasghara Village, Central Delhi-110012 has disowned and debarred his daughter Aradhana from my movable & Immovable property (s) & has severed all relations from her. Any person dealing with them will do so at their own risk.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that I Brahmi Prakash Verma S/o Manohar Lal R/o C-203, Gali No.39, Mahavir Enclave Part-3, New Delhi-110059 have severed all my relations with my daughter Durgesh Verma due to her bad habits and recently she changed her religion without our permission. I have also disowned and debarred my said daughter from all my movable and immovable properties. Anybody dealing with Durgesh Verma will do so at his/her/their own risk and responsibilities and I will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Durgesh Verma.

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SITUATION VACANT

GENERAL

Form no INC-26
(Pursuant to rule 30 the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014) Advertisement to be published in the newspaper for change of registered office of the company from onestate to another
Before the Central Government Regional Director, Northern Region, New Delhi
In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013, Section 13(4) of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 30(6) (a) of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014
AND
In the matter of **M & M HOSPITALITIES PRIVATE LIMITED**
CIN: U55101DL2009PTC196842
Having its Registered office at 948, Sector-A, Pocket-B, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi
..... Petitioner
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the special resolution passed at the Extra ordinary General Meeting held on 07.08.2019 to enable the company to change its Registered office from "NCT of Delhi" to "State of Punjab".
Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the Registered office of the company may deliver or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the Regional Director, Northern Region, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, B-2 Wing, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi - 110003, within Fourteen days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy of the applicant company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:
948, Sector-A, Pocket-B, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070
Date:13.02.2020
Place: New Delhi
For and on behalf of the Applicant For M & M Hospitalities Private Limited
s/-
Surinder Mahendru
Director
DIN: 00156095

TENDERS

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A Cooperative Group Housing Society at Dwarka consisting of 60 flats (involving ICR) from repaired and existing condition. Architects/Bulkers to strengthen the existing structure, Repair and Extension of balconies/rooms (PAR) vide MPD 2021 on turnkey basis. Interested Parties - having experience in similar work in CGHS may apply with detailed terms and conditions. In sealed cover to **President/Secretary, The Shoma Friends CGHS Ltd.**, Sector-7, Plot No.21, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075, within fifteen days from the date of this notification and not later than **4th March, 2020**. Tender documents can be collected from Society office in office hours on payment of Rs 500/-
Contact: Ph 9811297514 or Email: dwaikagapartments1983@gmail.com

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Pallavi D/o Sunil Kumar H. No. F-194 Lal Kuan Molar Band South Delhi-110044** have changed my name to **Pallavi Sunil Kam.**

LOST & FOUND

For and on behalf of the Applicant For M & M Hospitalities Private Limited s/-
Surinder Mahendru
Director
DIN: 00156095

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आम-सूचना
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1	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 3	e-1/1 (P)B	0.50	15,76,778	19,70,973	15,76,7780
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5	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	A-4(P)	8.00	2,52,28,448	3,15,35,560	25,22,84,480
6	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	IV/A-9(P)2	1.50	47,30,334	59,12,918	4,73,03,340
7	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	IV/A-9(P)4	1.00	31,53,556	39,41,945	3,15,35,560
8	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	IV/A-9(P)6	2.00	63,07,112	78,83,890	6,30,71,120
9	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	I/4 (P)	0.35	11,03,745	13,79,681	1,10,37,450
10	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	I/5 (P)	0.15	4,73,033	59,12,92	47,30,330
11	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	I/6 (P)	0.35	11,03,745	13,79,681	1,10,37,450
12	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	H-22	0.50	15,76,778	19,70,973	1,57,67,780
13	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	H-27	0.50	15,76,778	19,70,973	1,57,67,780
14	BOKARO INDUSTRIAL AREA , BALIDIH , PHASE - 4	IV D - 6(P)	4.00	1,26,14,224	1,57,67,780	12,61,42,240

इच्छुक आवेदक उपरोक्त वर्णित भूमि का स्थल अवलोकन ऑनलाइन आवेदन करने के पूर्व कर लेंगे। आवेदन के पश्चात भूमि संबंधी किसी भी आपत्ति पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।
P.R.225519 Industries(19-20):D

MODERN COACH FACTORY, RAEBARELI

E-Tender Notice
E-Tender Notice no.-ELECT-PS-20529-RT Date: 15.02.2020
On behalf of the President of India, CPM, Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli is inviting open e-tender, based on single packet system from capable & experienced tenderers through Indian Railways portal www.ireps.gov.in for the under mentioned work.
Details :-

1. Name of work	Outsourcing of electrical maintenance activities at MCF Raebareli for three years.
2. Place of work	Modern Coach Factory Lalganj, Distt. Raebareli.
3. Approx. cost	Rs. 45169751.00 (Four crore fifty one lac sixty nine thousand seven hundred fifty one only).
4. Cost of tender	Rs. 10000.00 (Ten thousand only).
5. Earnest money	Rs. 375900.00 (Three lac seventy five thousand nine hundred only).
6. Date & Time of closing of tender	26.03.2020 at 15.30 hrs.
7. Term & Condition	Other details, terms & condition are available in tender documents on www.ireps.gov.in

By Chief Electrical Engineer/PS
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

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On Konkan tour, CM avoids Nanar issue

Desai says party hasn't changed stance on refinery; Rane accuses Uddhav of double standards

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

While emphasising the strong ties between the Shiv Sena and the Konkan region, Sena president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday cautiously avoided commenting on the contentious Nanar refinery project in Ratnagiri district.

Mr. Thackeray started a two-day visit to Konkan, his first visit to the region since becoming Chief Minister, on Monday. "Together with the Konkan region, we will create a new Maharashtra," he said during a groundbreaking ceremony in Ganapatipule in Ratnagiri.

The Chief Minister avoided making any remarks on the Nanar refinery project and whether his party, which has been vehemently opposed to the project, would stick by its stand.

Saamana advertisement

The Sena had opposed the Ratnagiri Refinery Petrochemical Limited, commonly known as the Nanar refinery project, when it was in power with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the State.

However, an advertisement for the project in the Konkan edition of *Saamana*,



Reviewing roadmap: Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray at the groundbreaking ceremony of the development plan for Ganapatipule on Monday. • TWITTER/@CMMAHARASHTRA

the Sena's mouthpiece, has raised eyebrows and irked the residents of Nanar, who have threatened agitations if the party does a volte face on its promise to scrap the project.

Speaking earlier in Dhule, Industries Minister Subhash Desai said, "Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is not a person to change his stance. We have cancelled the notification for the Nanar refinery

project. No other party has gone to this extent. The Sena has not changed its stance on the project."

Not all was smooth on the first day of the Chief Minister's tour, as he had cope with fractiousness within his own party and criticism from the Opposition in the form of his bete noire, Konkani BJP leader and ex-Shiv Sainik Narayan Rane.

Mr. Rane, a former chief

minister, accused Mr. Thackeray of duplicity over the Nanar project, while alleging that the Maha Vikas Aghadi government and the Chief Minister's Office were a wellspring of corruption. "This government is not pushing any development projects, but halting all previous ones initiated by the erstwhile BJP government. Uddhav Thackeray has shown his double standards

over Nanar by first opposing it and now permitting [its] advertisements in *Saamana*," Mr. Rane said.

He questioned the CM's silence over the matter and asked why Mr. Thackeray had refused to meet anxious Nanar residents despite promising never to permit the refinery to come up.

Unhappy MLA

Meanwhile, Mr. Thackeray's event in Ganapatipule was marred by Sena MLA from Ratnagiri Bhaskar Jadhav refusing to join in the felicitation ceremony for the Chief Minister.

Despite Mr. Thackeray personally requesting him, Mr. Jadhav, a former NCP leader and erstwhile guardian minister of Ratnagiri, refused to participate. He angrily warned off the attempts of Sena MP Vinayak Raut and Mr. Thackeray's political secretary, Milind Narvekar, to include him.

Mr. Jadhav, who has been disgruntled for not getting a Cabinet berth, took umbrage at the fact that he was seated at the far end during the ceremony. In December last year, Mr. Jadhav had openly expressed shock at his exclusion from the Cabinet.

BJP not planning 'Operation Lotus' in Maharashtra: Patil

State party president says MVA govt. will fall on its own

SHARAD VYAS
MUMBAI

The Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) is not working on 'Operation Lotus' to bring down the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra, State party president Chandrakant Patil said on Monday.

While the BJP believes the tripartite government is on a sticky wicket, the party will not work to bring down the government in an unconstitutional manner, he said. Mr. Patil was reacting to reports that the BJP may fashion a Karnataka-style 'Operation Lotus' to poach MLAs during the upcoming budget session of the Assembly and fashion a downfall of the MVA government.

"This government will fall on its own and the BJP will not attempt unconstitutional means to work behind the scenes on this. The people are aware these parties have formed the government despite not having the mandate. The voters will bring them down," Mr. Patil said.

Earlier, the ruling alliance had alleged that the BJP was trying to poach some MLAs



Devendra Fadnis, J.P. Nadda, Chandrakant Patil and Pravin Darekar at the BJP's State meet on Sunday. • FILE PHOTO

from the Congress and the Shiv Sena by using unconstitutional methods.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had threatened his former ally to desist from luring his party's MLAs or pay a heavy price. "I challenge them (the BJP) to bring this government down," he had said.

Meanwhile, the BJP on Monday announced that it will hold protests against the MVA government's failure on February 25. The protests will be held in all districts and regions outside the local

tehsildar's office.

Former chief minister Devendra Fadnis had announced the move at the party's State meet in Navi Mumbai on Sunday. "This MVA government has worked against the interest of not only farmers, but slum dwellers, women and other sections of society. We will not bring down this government. But I challenge this MVA government to fight elections against the BJP. We will defeat them with a big margin," Mr. Fadnis had said.

Woman, kin refuse to claim her husband's body, booked

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AURANGABAD

A disabled woman was booked in Aurangabad along with 10 relatives after she allegedly refused to take possession of the body of her husband, who died in a road accident, said an official on Monday. The family allegedly created a ruckus in the police station.

Arjun Rathod (30) died after his motorcycle was hit by a four-wheeler on Paithan-Aurangabad Road on February 11. His wife, Devaki, refused to take the body for cremation after legal formalities later that day, said the police official. "She said she would claim her husband's body only after the four-wheeler driver was arrested. She also asked us to get the four-wheeler owner to pay her ₹10 lakh as compensation, which we refused as this demand was not possible for us to meet," said MIDC Paithan police station in-charge Archana Patil said.

"Devaki and her relatives created a ruckus in the police station and attacked the staff. We booked 11 of them under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code," Ms. Patil said.

Devaki, however, has accused the police of hitting her and her relatives, and demanded that the cases against them be withdrawn.

Superintendent of Police Mokshada Patil said CCTV footage would be examined, after which further action will be initiated in the case.

People unhappy with my work troubling me, says Nivrutti Maharaj

MANS has sought action against him



Contentious: Nivrutti Maharaj Indurikar during a sermon at Ashti in Beed on Sunday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEED/PUNE

Marathi *kirtankar* (preacher) Nivrutti Maharaj Indurikar has said some people unhappy with his work for society and the Warkari community were trying to trouble him by demanding cases against him.

The Maharashtra Andhashradha Nirmulan Samiti (MANS), which works to eradicate superstitious beliefs, last week sought a police case against Mr. Indurikar for remarks on timing of intercourse and the sex of child, which it said violated the Pre-Conception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act.

During a sermon in a hamlet in Ahmednagar, the preacher reportedly said that a couple having intercourse on an even date would beget a son, and on an odd date a daughter. "If intercourse is done at an inauspicious time, the child that is born would bring a bad name to the family. If

the timing (of intercourse) is missed, the quality of output (child) will be sub-standard," he is heard saying in a video that went viral.

During a sermon on Sunday in Ashti tehsil in Beed, the preacher said, "I have been working for society and among the Warkari community for the past 30-35 years. Some people are unhappy with this and want to put me in trouble."

He received support from BJP MLC Suresh Dhas, who claimed the *kirtankar* had said what was written in the treatise *Guru Charitra*. "We will support Nivrutti Maharaj if any action is taken against him. What is the connection between what he said and the PCPNDT Act?," Mr. Dhas asked.

The preacher received a rousing welcome in Bhosari in Pimpri Chin on Monday, with BJP's Pimpri Chinchwad MLA Mahesh Landge said, "We will hit the roads if anyone tries to malign his image," Mr. Landge said.

Maken hits out at Deora for praising Delhi govt.

Senior Congress leaders in war of words on Twitter over party's Delhi tenure

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
DELHI/MUMBAI

Former Delhi Congress chief Ajay Maken on Monday hit out at senior party leader Milind Deora, who had tweeted saying that the AAP government had doubled its revenues to ₹60,000 crore and maintained a revenue surplus over the last 5 years.

Mr. Maken alleged that Mr. Deora was stating half-baked facts and that he may leave the party if he wishes so.

"Sharing a lesser known

& welcome fact the @ArvindKejriwal-led Delhi Government doubled its revenues to Rs 60,000 crore & maintained a revenue surplus over the last 5 years. Food for thought: Delhi is now one of India's most fiscally prudent governments [sic]." Mr. Deora had tweeted.

'Leave Congress'

Mr. Maken in a blunt reply said: "Brother, you want to leave @INCIndia-Please do. Then propagate half baked

facts! [sic]"

Mr. Maken said: "However, let me share even lesser known facts-1997-98- BE (Revenue) 4,073cr, 2013-14-BE (Revenue) 37,459cr. During Congress Govt Grew at 14.87% CAGR, 2015-16 BE 41,129 and 2019 -20 BE 60,000 AAP Gov 9.90% CAGR [sic]."

To this, Mr. Deora said: "Would never undermine Sheila Dikshit's stellar performance as Delhi CM. That's your specialty. Instead of advocating an al-

liance with AAP, if only you had highlighted Sheila j's achievements, @INCIndia would've been in power today [sic]."

Sheila Dikshit served as Delhi's Chief Minister for 15 years from 1998 to 2013. She died in July last year at the age of 81.

Twitter war

AICC Spokesperson Sharmista Mukherjee had also hit out at former Union Minister P. Chidambaram on twitter after the loss.



Have sought time from Shah to discuss CAA, NPR: Yadav

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE

Swaraj India chief Yogenendra Yadav on Monday said his outfit had demanded time from Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss issues like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Population Register (NPR) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Mr. Shah had told a news channel a few days ago that anyone who wanted to discuss issues related to the CAA with him could seek time from his office and they would be given time "within three days".

Speaking to reporters here, Mr. Yadav also said that the Maharashtra government should stick to its promise of not allowing the NPR exercise in the State.

The leaders of the Shiv Sena, Congress and Nationalist Congress Party have been talking in different voices on the NPR.

Mr. Yadav said a front called 'Hum Bharat Ke Log' established by some social forums will launch protests against the NPR across the country.

Bhuj menstruation check: college principal, rector arrested

Police register FIR against them for forcing 60 girls to remove undergarments

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

Police on Monday arrested four persons, including the principal of a Gujarat college where authorities allegedly forced over 60 girls to remove their undergarments to check if they were menstruating a week ago, an official said.

The arrests were made after the Bhuj police filed an FIR against them for the February 11 incident at Shree Sahajananand Girls Institute (SSGI) which caused public outrage.

Principal Rita Raninga, girls' hostel rector Ramlabhan Hirani, college peon Naina Gorasiya and one Anita Chau-



The NCW has also sought an explanation from the trustee of Sahajananand Girls' Institute College. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

han were arrested. "We on Monday arrested all the four accused named in the FIR," Inspector P.H. Langdhirka

said. They were produced before a local court which remanded them in police custody for two days, police said.

Shree Sahajananand Girls Institute (SSGI) trustee Pravin Pindoria said they had suspended Ms. Raninga, Ms. Hirani, and Ms. Gorasiya after the FIR was registered against them.

The accused have been booked under IPC Sections 384 (extortion), 355 (assault with intent to dishonour a person) and 506 (criminal intimidation).

The hostel is part of the SSGI, run by a trust of the Swaminarayan Temple. It is affiliated to the Krantiguru Shyamji Krishna Verma Kutch University.

A seven-member team of the National Commission for

Women on Sunday met the girl inmates of the hostel. A student earlier said the incident took place in the hostel on the campus of the SSGI, which offers graduate and undergraduate courses.

After a probe, Darshana Dholakia, in-charge Vice-Chancellor of the university to which the college is affiliated, had earlier said the girls were checked because the hostel has a rule that girls having their periods are not supposed to eat meals with other inmates. The hostel authorities decided to check them after they came to know that certain girls had broken the rule.

(With PTI inputs)

Goa tax on feni: GFP demands withdrawal, threatens agitation

'Govt. has not made any effort to popularise heritage drink'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

The Goa Forward Party (GFP) on Monday asked the Pramod Sawant government to withdraw the tax on feni announced in the State budget for 2020-21, and warned of an agitation if the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party did not do so.

First such tax

It is the first time that a tax, announced in the budget tabled in the Assembly on February 6, will be levied on the popular Goan beverage made from fermented and

distilled juice of cashew apples, or from coconuts.

The tax is expected to increase price per bottle by almost 50%, and distillers and bottlers had earlier said the hike would impact sales of the alcoholic drink.

Talking to reporters in Margao, GFP chief Vijai Sardesai said the State government should withdraw the feni tax by the end of the Carnival, scheduled from February 22 to 25, or face an agitation.

"Feni contributes only 1% of excise revenue collected by the State annually. Feni is

made by Goans for Goans. The State government has not made any effort to popularise it after giving it the heritage drink status. This tax will also affect private players who want to make the drink popular," Mr. Sardesai said.

Coconut feni worst hit

He said the coconut feni industry would be the worst hit, as it would amount to double taxation because farmers already pay tax when they bid for cashew plantations for harvesting at auctions.

IN BRIEF



Sabarimala continues to witness heavy rush

PATHANAMTHITTA
With a day left for the culmination of the five-day monthly rituals in the Malayalam month of *Kumbhom*, the Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala saw heavy rush on Monday. The Tantri, Kandararu Maheshwararu Mohanararu, assisted by Melsanthi E.S. Sankaran Nambodiri, performed the *Kalabhajapuja* in the forenoon. The temple will be closed after the *Athazhapuja* on Tuesday and will open again on March 13.

Hearing in A.P. rape and murder case adjourned

CHITTOOR
The district court at Chittoor on Monday adjourned the hearing on the case regarding the rape and murder of a five-year-old girl, which happened near Madanapalle in A.P. on November 7, to Tuesday. According to Deputy SP (Madanapalle) A. Ravi Manohar Achari, the divisional police had successfully completed the investigation and filing of chargesheet in a record 17 days after the crime, leading to quick trial in the case. The accused is Rafi, 25, a lorry cleaner.

Jagan to launch scheme to revamp govt. hospitals

VIJAYAWADA
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will launch the first phase of the 'Nadu-Nedu' (now and then) programme to revamp the health sector by laying the foundation stone for a sub-centre at Kurnool on Tuesday. Under the project, the government plans to take up construction and renovation works at government hospitals at a cost of ₹1,737 crore in three years. Around 530 life-saving drugs are being provided in health care institutions.

Three Kashmiri students remanded in judicial custody

They were accused of raising pro-Pakistan slogans and booked for sedition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HUBBALLI

Three Kashmiri students accused of raising pro-Pakistan slogans and booked for sedition were remanded in judicial custody by a Hubballi court till March 2.

High drama prevailed at the court complex where they were brought amid tight security. While a group of Hindutva activists and advocates raised slogans against them and in praise of "Bharat Mata" as they arrived, a few threw slippers towards the van and sought punishment for the accused terming them "anti-nationalists."

When the accused were escorted out of the courtroom and to the police van, a few VHP and Bajrang Dal activists tried to manhandle them breaking the police cover. They were subsequently taken to the sub-jail.



Under attack: Police trying to shield the Kashmiris from VHP and Bajrang Dal activists in Hubballi on Monday. *KIRAN BAKALE

The accused – Basit Ashiq Sofi, Talib Majeed and Aamir Mohiuddin Wani – studying engineering in Hubballi were arrested on Saturday after a video in which they reportedly raised pro-Pakistan slogans went viral and were booked for sedition. But by

Sunday evening, the Gokul Road police released them under Section 169 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner R. Dileep said they were summoned for questioning on Sunday itself and were arrested after in-

criminating evidence against them was found.

He said the students were produced before the third JMFC (judicial magistrate first class) court, which remanded them in judicial custody till March 2.

Confusion and protests

On Sunday, members of Hindutva organisations staged a protest outside the Gokul Road police station after reports about their release. The Police Commissioner told them that the students had not been released and that they had been detained for further questioning.

Meanwhile, principal of KLE Institute of Technology Basavaraj Anami issued a press release clarifying that neither he nor the college management gave any security bond or undertaking seeking the release of the students.

Court stays proceedings on writer's petition against director

'Randaamoozham' not made into film as agreed in 2014'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed proceedings on a plea filed by noted Malayalam author M.T. Vasudevan Nair against film director Sreekumar Menon in a case relating to the making of his work *Randaamoozham* into a movie.

A Bench of Justices Indu Malhotra and Ajay Rastogi is-



M.T. Vasudevan Nair

Court. The duo had signed an agreement to make the work into a film in 2014. Mr. Nair first approached the Munsiff court complaining that his work had still not made it to the silver screen even after five years. He sought his script back.

Though Mr. Menon sought an amicable settlement through arbitration, his appeals in the Fast Track Court as well as in the High Court failed and the case was sent back to the Munsiff Court. Mr. Menon then moved the Supreme Court.

sued notice to Mr. Nair on an appeal by Mr. Menon. The court listed the case for hearing after four weeks.

The apex court had stayed the proceedings before the Kozhikode Munsiff

Teenager accused of shoplifting dies

He collapsed outside the store in Hyderabad; parents say staff beat him up

STAFF REPORTER HYDERABAD

The police have registered a case after an Intermediate student collapsed and died outside a store here on Sunday. The police said he had walked out of the DMart hypermarket at Vanasthalipuram without paying for the chocolates he allegedly picked up.

The youngster, from Jogi Tanda in Suryapet district, was pursuing second-year Intermediate in Sri Chaitanya Junior College (Residential), Hayathnagar.

On Sunday morning, he

along with three other students went for an outing, the police said.

Around 9 a.m., they went to DMart to buy footwear. "As they didn't like the models on display, they decided to leave the store, before which the youngster allegedly pocketed a few chocolates," Vanasthalipuram inspector A. Venkataiah said.

"A sales executive who noticed this alerted the security, who in turn asked the teenagers to return for checking. While going back to the store, the accused suddenly collapsed and was

rushed to a nearby private hospital where he was declared dead," he said.

However, the victim's parents on Monday alleged that their son was beaten to death by DMart staff, and also accused the college management of letting the youngster go out of the campus without their consent. They staged demonstrations outside the store and the college.

"The video footage of surveillance cameras clearly shows that the youngster collapsed before reaching the security, and so far, we are

not suspecting any foul play," the inspector said.

The youngster's parents told the police that they were not aware of the outing. However, the college authorities maintained that they called the youngster's local guardian and his cousin, who had given permission for the outing.

The police suspect that the teenager had a panic attack and died. "However, the exact cause of death can be known only after the post-mortem," Mr. Venkataiah said. A case was registered and a probe is on.

Mr. Thanchankary said the police had accounted for all of the 660 INSAS rifles, and there was no "shortage" as found by the CAG.

The police had counted 647 rifles in the armoury and verified their serial numbers. An armed battalion deployed in Manipur had the remaining 13 guns in its custody. The officers had photographed the serial number of the guns and text-

ed the images to the CB, he said. Ill-maintained records and clerical error might have prompted the CAG to deem the weapons as lost. Mr. Thanchankary said the CB had expedited its probe into the 12,061 missing cartridges spotted by the CAG.

Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala asked why the police could not convince the CAG about the whereabouts of the arms.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala police on Monday made an overt bid to prove to the public that the 25 assault rifles flagged as missing by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) were in their safe custody.

Seemingly stung by the damning findings of the CAG and cautious about the attempts of the Opposition to politicise the issue, the government had despatched Additional Director General of Police, Crime Branch (CB), Tomin J. Thanchankary to the armed police camp here to enumerate the INSAS 5.56 rifles stockpiled from armed units across the State. In an unusual move, the police allowed newsmen into the bell of arms room to record visuals of Mr. Thanchankary cataloguing the arms.

After a swift inspection,



A thorough check: ADGP Tomin J. Thanchankary and IG S. Sreejith, left, inspecting the weapons. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA Office of the Executive Engineer, Public Works Division No.2, Nagpur

E-mail : div2nagpur.ee@mahapwd.com

Telephone No.07122565048

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 58/ 2019-2020

Online E-tenders in 'B-1' Forms are invited by Executive Engineer, Public Works Division No. 2, "Bandhkam Sankul" Civil Lines, Nagpur for the following works from the registered contractor who satisfy the qualifying criteria. The tender documents should be downloaded from the Government Website <https://mahatenders.gov.in>. The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders. Conditional tenders will not be accepted.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rupees in Lakhs)
1	2	3.
1	Widening of existing Minor Bridge (Arch Bridge) on Parshioni Khaparkheda Patansawangi road SH-346 at Ch. 13/400 (Near tansawangi village) in Taluka Saoner Distt. Nagpur.	Rs.180.00 Lakh
2	Construction of Cement Concrete road on V.R. 64 Ch. 0/00 to 2/00 from Kelwad to Kawatha in Tahasil Saoner Distt. Nagpur	Rs.180.00 Lakh
3	Construction of Compound Wall Rural Health Training Centre Office at Saoner Tahasil Saoner Distt. Nagpur	Rs.73.73 Lakh
4	Construction of Kaushalya Vikas Centre at Mouza Kharoli in Tahasil Narkhed Distt. Nagpur.	Rs.50.00Lakh
5	S.T.B.T. Patansawangi Yerangaon road (V.R.133) Km. 1/00 to 2/200 Tahasil Saoner Distt. Nagpur	Rs.49.80 Lakh
6	Construction of Ambada Sonak to Fetari (V.R.241) in Tahasil Katol Distt. Nagpur	Rs.40.00 Lakh
7	Maintenance of 4160 trees on Railway Govt. Land at Kalambha village in Tah. Katol in Nagpur District	Rs.20.59,824/-
8	Repairs to water supply and sanitary fitting, electrification and misc. repairs to Public Works Department at Narkhed in Tahasil Narkhed Distt. Nagpur	Rs.3.96 Lakh

1	Tender Download	As per e-tender schedule uploaded on e-portal
2	E-Tender Opening	Online Time Table will be applicable and it will be Final

All information of e-tendering is available on the following website / Notice Board.

Terms & Conditions :-

- <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
- <https://mahapwd.com>
- (If there is any changes in the notice, then the information will be communicated on the above website)
- Executive Engineer, Public Works Division No.2, Nagpur Office Notice Board.
- For any correspondence contact. Above mention e-mail & Telephone No.

Notice:-

- All eligible / interested Contractor are downloading and mandated to get enrolled on e-tendering portal <https://mahatenders.gov.in> in and further need to empanelled online on sub portal <https://mahatenders.gov.in> in the appropriate bidder applicable to them.
- Bidders are requested to, contact on following telephone numbers for any doubts / information / difficulty regarding online enrollment or obtaining digital certificate. Help Desk Number- 0120-4200462, 0120-4001002
- Tender Document Fee and EMD, is to be paid via Online E-payment Gateway mode only. EMD, Exemption Certificate shall not be considered. The information of E-payment Gateway is available on Etendering website <https://mahatenders.gov.in>

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Public Division No. 2, Nagpur

PRO/5043/ADV/19-20

**HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-Procurement Notice
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**

1 The Executive Engineer, Nerchowk Division, H.P.PWD., Nerchowk H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the online bids on item rate in electronic tendering system in 2 cover system for the following work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with H.P.PWD., department.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Cost of Tender	Eligible Class of Contractor	Time limit
1.	Special repair on Bhangrotu Nauru Mandal Tikkar road km. 0/0 to 4/400 (SH- Providing and Laying cement concrete interlocking paver in Km. 0/0 to 0/165 and 0/200 to 0/335).	Rs.8,80,252/-	Rs. 17,650/-	Rs.350/-	"A to D"	Two Months
2.	Construction of road from Village Kummli to Harzin Basti Khandia Rajgarh Gadhrou Kummli road Km. 0/0 to 5/0 (SH- C/o 6.00 RCC mtr. RCC slab culvert at Km. 0/250) under SCSF.	Rs. 10,92,557/-	Rs.22,000/-	Rs.500/-	"A to D"	Three Months

2. **Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:** The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website <http://hptenders.gov.in> bidder would be required to register in the website which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <http://hptenders.gov.in> Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. **Key dates:-**

1.	Date of Online Publication	26-2-2020 at 11:30 A.M.
2.	Document Download Start and End Date	26-2-2020 at 11:30 A.M. up to 11-3-2020 at 11: A.M.
3.	Bid Submission Start and End Date	11-3-2020 at 11:00 A.M.
4.	Date of technical bid opening	11-3-2020 at 11:30 A.M.
5.	Physical submission of original documents i/c original EMD & Cost of Tender documents etc.	11-3-2020 at 10:30 A.M.

4. **Tender Details:-**
The tender documents shall be uploaded on line in 2 cover.
i) **Cover 1:** shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents eligibility" information.
ii) **Cover 2:** shall contain "BOQ/Financial bid" where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

5. **Submission of Original Documents:** The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest money Deposit (EMD) and other Technical Documents with this office as specified in key dates at Sr.No.5.failing which the bids will be declared non responsive.

6. **Bid opening Detail:** The bid shall be opened on 11.3.2020 at 11:30 HRs in the office of Executive Engineer, Nerchowk Division H.P.PWD Nerchowk. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bid as specified the bid will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bid for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Nerchowk Division,
HP.PWD Nerchowk.

HP/4826/19-20 HIM SUCHANA AVAM JANSAMPARK.



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India's bird population suffers long-term decline

Joint study by 10 bodies blames growing threat from loss of habitat, widespread presence of toxins, hunting and trapping

G. ANANTHAKRISHNAN
CHENNAI

Over a fifth of India's bird diversity, ranging from the Short-toed Snake Eagle to the Sirkeer Malkoha, has suffered strong long-term declines over a 25-year period, while more recent annual trends point to a drastic 80% loss among several common birds, a new scientific report jointly released by 10 organisations said on Monday.

The State of India's Birds 2020 (SoIB) assessment raises the alarm that several spectacular birds, many of them endemic to the sub-continent, face a growing threat from loss of habitat due to human activity, widespread presence of toxins, including pesticides; hunting and trapping for the pet trade. Diminishing population sizes of many birds because of one factor brings them closer to extinction because of the accelerated ef-

fects of others, the report warned. For every bird species that was found to be increasing in numbers over the long term, 11 have suffered losses, some catastrophically.

Rare urban sparrows

Of 101 species categorised as being of High Conservation Concern - 59 based on range and abundance and the rest included from high-risk birds on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List - endemics such as the Rufous-fronted Prinia, Nilgiri Thrush, Nilgiri Pipit and Indian vulture were confirmed as suffering current decline, and all except 13 had a restricted or highly restricted range, indicating greater vulnerability to man-made threats.

Among widely known species, the common sparrow, long seen as declining in urban spaces, has a stable pop-



Facing threats: Nilgiri Pipit, a species of High Conservation Concern is currently suffering a decline. ■ FILE PHOTO

ulation overall, although the data from major cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai confirm the view that they have become rare in cities and urban areas. Among the possible reasons for this is a decrease in insect populations as well as nest-

ing places, but there is no conclusive evidence in the scientific literature on radiation from mobile phone towers playing a part. The SoIB was produced using a base of 867 species, and analysed with the help of data uploaded by bird-watchers to the online plat-

form, eBird. Adequate data on how birds fared over a period of over 25 years (long-term trend) are available only for 261 species. Current annual trends are calculated over a five-year period.

Looking at the health of avifauna based on scientific groupings such as raptors (birds of prey), habitat, diet, migratory status and endemism (exclusively found in an area), the analysis concludes that raptors overall are in decline, with 'open country' species such as the Pallid and Montagu Harriers, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Red-necked Falcon suffering the most.

The severe long-term decline of vultures, recorded and analysed for years now, is underscored by the report.

Migratory shorebirds, along with gulls and terns, seem to have declined the most among waterbirds, the report states, consistent with

population trends among Arctic-breeding shorebirds based on independent assessments.

Habitats need help

Forward-looking actions suggested by the report include an update to the Red List of endangered species published by IUCN using the SoIB, collaborative research by scientists and citizens and urgent emphasis on habitats of species of high concern, notably grasslands, scrublands, wetlands and the Western Ghats.

Suhel Qader, a member of the SoIB team, noted that the report was a first step and an assessment of trends rather than causes. "Habitat loss and fragmentation are known causes of species declines, but targeted research is needed to pinpoint causes of decline", he said.

BIRD WATCHING ► DATA POINT

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely over isolated parts over Arunachal Pradesh.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...	28.4	16.5	Kozhikode	...	35.4	24.4
Ahmedabad	...	34.0	19.1	Kurnool	...	35.5	19.7
Aizawl	...	20.3	-	Lucknow	...	27.7	12.2
Allahabad	...	28.1	10.2	Madurai	...	35.6	20.6
Bengaluru	...	32.6	17.2	Mangaluru	...	35.7	24.0
Bhopal	...	29.4	10.8	Mumbai	...	38.1	19.8
Bhubaneswar	...	31.8	19.8	Mysuru	...	32.4	18.3
Chandigarh	...	25.5	19.2	New Delhi	...	26.7	12.0
Chennai	...	32.0	20.6	Patna	...	26.6	12.0
Coimbatore	...	34.2	19.9	Port Blair	...	29.4	21.1
Dehradun	...	25.8	10.0	Puducherry	...	32.0	20.6
Gangtok	...	13.7	8.4	Pune	...	34.1	18.3
Goa	...	36.5	22.2	Raipur	...	31.0	15.2
Guwahati	...	28.4	14.4	Ranchi	...	27.6	10.1
Hubballi	...	33.0	19.0	Shillong	...	17.0	7.9
Hyderabad	...	33.6	17.5	Shimla	...	17.2	6.2
Imphal	...	25.3	8.9	Srinagar	...	16.8	-1.2
Jaipur	...	31.0	12.4	Thiruvananthapuram	...	34.9	24.2
Kolkata	...	33.6	25.0	Tiruchi	...	35.0	19.8
Kohima	...	15.6	7.4	Vijayawada	...	33.2	20.6
Kolkata	...	29.8	16.9	Visakhapatnam	...	29.9	22.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	64	69	21	174	104	...	
Bengaluru	10	61	67	143	61	...	In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Guwahati, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 362 indicating a hazardous level of pollution. In contrast, Malhar, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 47
Chennai	52	23	37	72	
Delhi	29	59	53	393	353	...	
Hyderabad	21	46	29	136	
Kolkata	22	128	23	279	298	...	
Lucknow	6	66	28	363	
Mumbai	18	97	38	231	304	...	
Pune	66	94	86	83	79	...	
Visakhapatnam	7	54	41	67	98	...	

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

IN BRIEF



Fire breaks out at GST Bhavan in Mazgaon

MUMBAI
Several important documents were damaged in a massive fire that broke out at GST Bhavan in Mazgaon on Monday morning. No casualty was reported.

Six killed as car falls into gorge in Uttarkashi

DEHRADUN
Six persons were killed and one child is missing when the car they were travelling fell into a gorge in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand on Monday, police said. The car, with seven passengers on board, fell into the gorge in Nalupani area. PTI

Former Chief Secretary held in ₹640 crore scam

AGARTALA
Former Tripura Chief Secretary Y.P. Singh - a key accused in the ₹640 crore PWD scam of 2008 - was on Monday arrested from Ghaziabad in Delhi NCR. He was the Principal Secretary of the PWD when the graft allegedly occurred.

14 officials booked for death of Dalit

STAFF REPORTER
BHOPAL

The Shivpuri police have registered a case against 14 forest officials for allegedly shooting dead a Dalit man, while his family filled water from a hand pump near a forest post, in the district on Sunday.

The Forest Department claims that when a patrolling team reached a forest post at Fatepur village to remove an encroachment by the victim, villagers pelted stones on them, prompting the firing of pellets.

The victim's family alleges the officials fired at them during a scuffle that broke out over drawing water from a hand pump in the village.

"An FIR (First Information Report) has been registered against ten identified persons and others who are unnamed," said R.S. Chandel, Shivpuri Superintendent of Police.

"The victim suffered more than 50 pellet wounds," he said.

Peninsular command by next year end, says General Rawat

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat on Monday spelled out a road map for restructuring the Armed Forces that would holistically counter threats along the borders with China and Pakistan as well as in the Indian Ocean, backed by logistical agreements with other countries.

General Rawat said that an Indian Ocean-centered Peninsular Command, possibly formed by merging the Eastern and Western Naval Commands, should start shaping up by the end of next year.

"Security of peninsular India should be the responsibility of one Commander. Can we integrate the Eastern and Western Naval Commands and call it Peninsular Command? We will be issuing study directives for the Peninsular Command by March 31," Gen. Rawat said in an interaction with media-persons here on Monday.

The study will look at ear-



General Bipin Rawat

marking some assets of the Army and the IAF for deployment under the Peninsular Command.

Gen. Rawat pointed out that the Chief of Naval Staff must look at the "big picture", and stressed that the "Indian Ocean region is one entity".

Military diplomacy

He added that military diplomacy also must be prioritised - an observation that coincided with the departure of the Naval Chief, Admiral Karambir Singh, to Myanmar on Monday.

Gen. Rawat said India has signed several logistics agreements with a number of countries, which should

be leveraged for operational turnaround. "We will work with other Navies to see how we can work with them... for logistical support," he observed.

Elaborating on tri-service theatre commands, General Rawat said that one or two theatre commands will mark the border with China. With Pakistan as the focus on the western front, he said, "Jammu and Kashmir should be a separate theatre, including the IB (International Boundary) part. Balance of Western theatre is another command."

The CDS clarified that the Navy should focus on submarines, and a third aircraft carrier was not an immediate priority. In response to a question on the IAF's tender for I14 fighter jets, Gen. Rawat said, "It has to be staggered."

He added that the government was not inclined to look at single big-ticket purchases. "I feel you should never go in for large numbers in one go," he said.

Google to end 'Station' programme

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Five years after it started the 'Station' programme to bring free public Wi-Fi to 400 busiest railway stations in India, Google has decided to gradually wind down the service globally as it believes that better data plans and improving mobile connectivity have made it "simpler and cheaper" for users to get online.

However, users in India will be able to continue using the existing facilities at the over 400 stations via RailTel, Google's partner in India for the programme. The technology giant said that through the year 2020, it would be working with its partners to transition existing sites so that they could remain useful resources for the community.

The programme was kick-started in India in 2015 as a partnership between Google, Indian Railways and RailTel to bring fast and free public Wi-Fi.

Govt. plans research on 'indigenous' cows



Under study: Scientific research will be carried out milk products derived from Indian indigenous cows. ■ FILE PHOTO

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The government has unveiled a programme to research on 'indigenous' cows. To be funded by multiple scientific ministries, the initiative, SUTRA PIC, is led by the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

It has the Department of Biotechnology, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Ministry for AYUSH (Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Homoeopathy) among others and the Indian Council of Medical Research as partners.

Five themes

SUTRA PIC or Scientific Utilisation Through Research Augmentation-Prime Products from Indigenous Cows, has five themes: Uniqueness of Indigenous Cows, Prime-products from Indigenous Cows for Medicine and Health, Prime-products from Indigenous Cows for Agricultural Applications, Prime-products from Indigenous Cows for Food

and Nutrition, Prime-products from indigenous cows-based utility items, according to a concept note on the DST website.

Researchers from academic organisations as well as "capable voluntary organisations (NGOs) active in India with proven record of accomplishment in executing S&T-based R&D projects," were invited to apply for funding.

Milk derivatives

"The proposals under this theme should aim to perform scientific research on complete characterisation of milk and milk products derived from Indian indigenous cows; scientific research on nutritional and therapeutic properties of curd and ghee prepared from indigenous breeds of cows by traditional methods; development of standards for traditionally processed dairy products of Indian-origin cow," says the 22-page note explaining the objectives of the programme.

Southern Bench of SC not favoured: Prasad

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, in a letter to Rajya Sabha member and Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam chief Vaiko, said that though the matter of setting up a Southern Bench of the Supreme Court of India is pending in the top court, the issue has so far not found favour.

The letter, dated February 12, responded to a query raised by Mr. Vaiko in Parliament, in which he asked if a Bench of the Supreme Court can be set up in south India. "According to Article 130 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court shall sit in Delhi or in any other place or places as the Chief Justice of India may, with the approval of the President of India, from time to time, appoint. Representations have been received at various times from various quarters for the establishment of Benches of the Supreme Court in various parts of the country," Mr. Prasad said in his letter.

"I would like to state that the idea of a separate Bench of the Supreme Court outside Delhi has not found favour with the Supreme Court of India. The Attorney General of India, from time to time, was also consulted and had also posed the idea of Regional Benches of the Supreme Court," Mr. Prasad said in his reply.

UT OF LAKSHADWEEP LAKSHADWEEP DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED (A GOVT. OF INDIA UNDERTAKING)

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Web: www.tdcl.nic.in
E-mail: amindivi@asianetindia.com
Dtd 17.02.2020

TENDER FOR STEAMER/LAUNDRY SERVICES

E-tenders are invited for engagement of Steamer-Laundry agents for 700 MT Product oil tanker Thilaakkam operated by LDCL vide tender no: LDCL/Steamer/Laundry-THLKM/2020. For details and E-tendering please visit website www.tenderwizard.com/UTL. Tender due on 02.03.2020 at 2.00 PM. For any help in e-tendering, please contact M/S KEONICS e-tender help Desk: 080-40482000.

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Director

Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Ltd. Office of the Project Administrator

Unit: Upper Indravati Hydro Electric Project (Civil Wing)
At/PO: Khatiguda - 764085, Dist. Nabarangpur (Odisha)
Email: cceuihep@gmail.com; FAX: 06858-224324, Tel-06858-224211 / 224307
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NOTICE INVITING TENDER No.CCE(C)UIHEP 02 / 2019-20

Sl. No.	Description of Services	Cost of tender paper (Non-refundable) in Rs.	EMD (Refundable) Rs.	Period of availability of tender at OHPCL Website	Date & Time for receipt of Tender	Date & Time of opening of Techno Commercial bid	Place for sale of tender paper	Place for Receipt of tender paper
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1	Deployment of Security personnel, at different vital points, under Stores & Mechanical Division / Padagada Dam Division / Muran Dam Division, of Upper Indravati Hydro Electric Project, Khatiguda	Rs.10000/- + GST@18% Rs.11800/-	2,92,600/-	18.02.2020 11.00 A.M to 03.03.2020 up to 4.00 P.M.	18.02.2020 11.00 A.M to 04.03.2020 up to 1.00 P.M.	06.03.2020 at 11.00 A.M.	O/O of the Executive Engineer Stores & Mechanical Division, UIHEP, Khatiguda & (2) Corporate Office, OHPCL, Vanivihar, Khatiguda, J a n a p a t h u k , B B S R - 22	(1) O/O the Executive Engineer Stores & Mechanical Division, UIHEP, Khatiguda & (2) Corporate Office, OHPCL, Vanivihar, Khatiguda, J a n a p a t h u k , B B S R - 22
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For details of the tender documents, Terms & Conditions, please visit our website www.ohpctl.com w.e.f. 18.02.2020, at 11.00 A.M. to 03.03.2020 up to 4.00 PM
Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer (C), UIHEP, Khatiguda
CAD-978
OIPR-32211/11/0005/1920

NOTICE IN THE HIGH COURT OF ANDHRA PRADESH AT AMARAVATI COMMERCIAL SUIT NO.1 OF 2019.

Piraeus Bank S.A. (also known as Piraeus Bank A.E.) ...Plaintiff Vs.

1. M.V.EVANGELIA M & 27 others ...Defendants

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the order dated 9th September, 2019, 24th October, 2019, 21st December 2019 and 31st January 2020 passed by His Lordship Sri Justice M.Venkata Ramana of the Hon'ble High Court of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati in I.A.No.18 and 19 of 2019 in COMMERCIAL SUIT NO. 1 OF 2019 respectively, the Registrar (Judicial), High Court of Andhra Pradesh has been directed to auction the vessel M.V.EVANGELIA M (IMO No.9506708) described in schedule hereunder, lying at the port of Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, by inviting bids in sealed covers in US Dollars at the office situated on the second floor of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, Nelapadu, Amaravati-522237.

The vessel will be sold on "as is where is, what is there is" basis. The intending bidders may give their offer(s) in sealed envelope along with Earnest Money Deposit of \$41,852 (USD Forty-one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two) by way of wire transfer (foreign inward remittance) to State Bank of India, Guntur Main Branch, Account Number 38969202369, Swift code SBININBB181, routing number SBIN000844 (excluding bank charges) in favour of Registrar (Judicial), High Court of Andhra Pradesh and obtain tender forms indicating the sale conditions, from the office of the Assistant Registrar (Sri R.Karthikeyan), High Court of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati on all working days till 4.15 pm between 20th February, 2020 to 3rd March, 2020 and can also be downloaded from the website of Registrar (Judicial) (www.kakinadaesports.in). The sealed tenders will be submitted to the Registrar (Judicial) in-person or by post till 2.00 pm on 4th March, 2020. The offer in sealed covers will be placed for opening, before the Hon'ble Admiralty Judge (Civil Admissions) of the Hon'ble High Court of Andhra Pradesh on 11.03.2020 at 02.15 pm or on such adjourned date as the Court may fix.

The bidder(s)/offerer(s) shall remain present before the Hon'ble Admiralty Judge (Civil Admissions) of the Hon'ble High Court, Andhra Pradesh on 11.03.2020 at 2.15 pm. The successful bidder shall pay the balance consideration by 30.03.2020.

- The specifications of the vessel are given below:
- Name of the vessel: "EVANGELIA M"
- Call sign "D5GB2/16409"
 - Year of Built/Place: 2010/Yangzhou Guoyu Shipping Co.Ltd, China
 - IMO Number: 9506708
 - LOA: 189.99 metres
 - Breadth: 32.26 metres
 - Depth: 18.00 metres
 - Summer Dead weight: 56723.99 metric tons
 - Main Engine: Wartsila 6RT-Flex 50B Diesel Engine 9480 bhp @ 124 rpm
 - Cargo Capacity: 71634 m³
 - Classification Society - Bureau Veritas-B.V.
 - Type of vessel: Bulk carrier
 - Bunkers on board - Fuel Oil-86 metric ton
Diesel Oil-4 Metric ton
Lube Oil-Nil
Bilges-Contain water and oil mixture.
 - P & I Club - Hydr AS
 - Net Tonnage - 19,231 tonnes
 - Gross Tonnage - 33,005 tonnes
 - Owner of the Ship - SEA MAJESTY INC.
 - Flag - Liberia
 - Port of Registry - NEW YORK, USA.

Intending bidders may inspect the above vessel at Kakinada Harbour between 10.00am and 5.00pm on all working days from 20th February, 2020 onwards to 3rd March, 2020. The inspection expenses shall be borne exclusively by the intending bidders. The intending bidders shall leave a request in writing to the HARBOUR MASTER, KAKINADA PORT, KAKINADA, one day in advance of the choice of the date for carrying out inspection. The inspection expenses incurred by the Port shall be shared by the intending bidders.

The reserve price is fixed at \$ 7,300,000 (USD seven million, three hundred thousand only). The Exchange rate is INR 71.68 per US Dollar as on 20th November, 2019.

Dated this the 13th day of February, 2020. (OSD) I/c Registrar (Judicial)



A royal mess

Only pragmatism and prudence can lift the telecom industry from its current troubles

It cannot possibly get messier than this. The telecom industry is in turmoil unable to pay up its dues as per the Supreme Court verdict on adjusted gross revenues delivered in October last; the Court is aghast that its order is not being complied with; and then there is the government torn between revenue considerations, the need to uphold sanctity of contracts, and ensuring that one of the players does not go under in the process of honouring the verdict. Faced with the wrath of the Court, Bharti Airtel paid ₹10,000 crore on Monday with the promise of paying the rest before mid-March when the court will hear the case next. Vodafone Idea, the one hit the most by the judgment, on Monday sought more time to pay up but the Court was in no mood to humour the company and refused to hear the plea. The company eventually paid ₹2,500 crore by the evening. The two companies, as indeed the others in the industry, have only themselves to blame for the predicament that they find themselves in now. They could have paid up their annual dues over the years — which were not material in relation to their respective turnovers — under protest even as they litigated the case in the top court. That would have obviated the need to pay interest and penalties now which are higher than the actual dues. At the very least, they ought to have provided for the liability in their balance sheets as a contingency, which they failed to do.

While they have to pay the price for this now, what can be done to ensure that the blow is not fatal? If Vodafone shuts shop, not only will the industry be reduced to a duopoly, with all the attendant consequences for customers but it will also lead to loss of about 15,000 direct jobs and several thousand more indirect ones. Worse, the cascading effect will be felt across the economy as lenders face the consequences of the company going bankrupt — non performing assets will rise. Telecom equipment suppliers may also go down as their dues will not be paid. And what happens to the 212 million Vodafone subscribers? It is doubtful whether the other two players can absorb them all. The industry is critical to the government's plans for a digital economy not to mention its revenues, including from the upcoming 5G spectrum auctions. The government has to, therefore, examine what it can do to save the situation without disrespecting the Court's verdict. Legislation to offer a staggered payment schedule that ensures that the net present value of future payments is equal to the dues is one option experts are suggesting. There could be other options that can be considered in conjunction with the industry, including reducing the adjusted gross revenue-based licence fees and spectrum usage charges. Whatever route it chooses to soften the blow, the government will have to get the Court on its side at the next hearing on March 17. The need of the hour is pragmatism laced with prudence on all sides to clean up this royal mess.

Women-at-arms

In allowing women permanent commission, the court has demolished gender stereotypes

The Supreme Court has delivered a sharp rebuke to the government by asking it to adhere to its own stated policy, articulated on February 25, 2019, on granting permanent commission to women in the Short Service Commission (SSC). Though women are absorbed into the SSC, they are now denied permanent commission in most branches of the Indian Army. More importantly, in furthering the principle of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in the Constitution, the Court has at the same time come down heavily on the stereotypes of women and their physiological features that were consistently put across in the government's submissions to deny equal opportunity to women who fulfil the same criteria their male counterparts do. As long as society holds strong beliefs about gender roles there will not be change of mindsets, the top court observed. Indeed, the Court has torn into a number of contradictions inherent in the government's arguments that gravely weaken its case and expose inherent prejudices. For instance, it was submitted that deployment of women officers was not advisable in conflict zones where there was "minimal facility for habitat and hygiene". Yet, the government admitted to the Court that 30% of the total number of women officers are in fact deputed to conflict areas. In directing the government to grant permanent commission to those women who opt for it, in 10 branches of the SSC, and by ordering the government to level the playing field, the Court has forced acknowledgement of the sterling role women have played and continue to play, shoulder to shoulder, with their male counterparts, for the security of the nation. It has also made recommendations to correct the anomalies including in the matter of pensions due to women.

It is a telling state of affairs that though Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on August 15, 2018 that permanent commission would be granted to serving women officers of the armed forces, it needed the Supreme Court to prod the government into doing it. The efforts of the litigants, who have waged an uphill battle since 2003, fighting their way up from the Delhi High Court, which ruled in their favour 10 years ago — and the government wilfully ignoring it — all the way up to the Supreme Court, deserve applause. That this discrimination should happen even while the Indian Army experiences a shortfall of officers by about 10,000 in the ranks is all the more galling. It is not as if there is surfeit of women officers: a mere 1,653 out of 40,825. Given the inherent flaws in the structure, implementation and change are not likely to happen soon, even given the Court's deadline of three months.

India's disturbing trauma narrative

In the silence over violence being perpetrated against children, the country appears to have lost its moral compass



VIKRAM PATEL

If the seizure of a pair of slippers of an 11-year-old as evidence in an investigation in a sedition case in Bidar, Karnataka, was not ludicrous enough, the imprisonment of a mother of a student in the same case for having contributed to the script of an apparently seditious primary school play, the arrest of the principal for allowing it to be performed in her school, and the interrogation of the children by uniformed police officers in the absence of any child welfare workers, would make a perfect script for an Orwellian nightmare.

Violation of rights

For those puzzled readers who may be wondering what the pair of slippers might have to do with this surreal theatre, it was the very object referred to in the play, according to media reports, when a child says "the boy who was selling tea till the other day is asking us for documents. I'll ask him where he was born and where his papers are. If he does not provide them, I will beat him with my slippers". Even if some patriots might argue that a child's slippers could indeed be used to wage war on our great nation and the remand report for the two women "found grounds for suspicion that the two influenced the children", the students themselves insisted, even after repeated interrogation, that they wrote the play themselves.

On the other hand, one child told HuffPost India, "We were scared. The policemen raised their voice every time they questioned

us." Not surprisingly, many students have stopped going to school since then.

I imagine most people would think that this story must be fake news not only because it is so utterly absurd but also because our police who cannot find a moment to stop the lawless mayhem on our roads which have made India one of the world's largest traffic-death countries must surely be doing more important things. But the soul-crushing truth is that these events did happen. Leaving aside the numbing irony that a law designed by the British to suppress the freedom of speech of our avowedly non-violent independence activists should now be used by the police to suppress the freedom of expression of school-children, my anguish is because of the terror that these children must have experienced as a result of this ordeal.

Not only did the arrest of the mother, a single parent, leave the child in the care of a neighbour but the arrest of the principal of their school left all the children without their trusted headmistress. Simultaneously, the police, threatening as they must have seemed to the children in their full regalia and having carted away the mother and principal to jail, were trying to get them to squeal incriminating evidence which could be used against these very trusted adults.

On 'toxic stress'

These traumatic experiences are not only a violation of the fundamental rights of the child but are severely damaging to their mental health. As the media reported, one child said when her mother was finally released, "I felt lonely and sad because all I have is my mother. I have never lived without her for a single day. So I was terrified."



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The most damaging kind of trauma is that which results in "toxic stress", a term used to describe a child's experience of persistent adversity or abuse. Persistence, with no hope of escaping the threatening situation, is the hallmark of toxic stress. Perhaps the most vicious example is unfolding in Kashmir where, after two decades of living in a context suffused with the fear of violence from one side or the other, children have been subjected to six months of a lockdown, losing their fundamental rights of freedom to learn, play and be carefree. Worse, they must witness, silently, the mounting rage and helplessness that dominates the emotional landscape of their parents and their community, compounding their own feelings of insecurity, hopelessness and alienation. There are now many reports of the mental health crisis engulfing young people in the Valley.

The events in Kashmir and Karnataka are not an aberration. Consider the harrowing accounts of the experiences of children in a shelter home in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, where young girls were kept locked up for most of the day and where they were raped, after being sedated, at night. Investigators observed many signs of mental health problems, for example remarking on how "strangely they behaved", laughing and crying in rapid sequence, remaining silent

for long periods, and appearing to be severely depressed. Many girls had self-inflicted injuries, a behaviour associated with trauma in children. Conditions in other shelter homes were not much better, with appalling stories of cruelty and torture, and several instances of suicidal behaviour and mental breakdown.

Yet another example of unspeakable violence has unfolded in the past week with dozens of young women being insulted, paraded and forced to remove their underwear to prove they were not on their period by their principal and school staff after a used personal hygiene product was found in a garden of their school, in Bhuj, Gujarat. "There are no words to describe the humiliation that we faced," said one of the students, as the media reported. No doubt, the overall atmosphere in such a school must have been atrociously oppressive.

Breach of trust

Among the most primal emotions which humans experience in their earliest years of life is fear. Fear is key to survival for, in leading to behaviours such as crying, it prompts a trusted adult to respond with affection, food or, most importantly, safety. But there are times when the fear can have catastrophic consequences and this is when the threat is persistent and unpredictable and, especially when, it is perpetrated by an adult who the child has been taught to trust and rely on for their protection — such as the police or the school principal or the child welfare worker or the army. It is this breach of the bulwark of trust which is the most poisonous toxin for the mind, and it is this feature which binds all these forms of trauma together.

When the Donald Trump administration in the United States im-

plemented its policy to reduce illegal immigration by separating children from their parents at the U.S. border with Mexico, there were harrowing consequences on the mental health of the children. A report, published by the U.S. government's own inspectors, confirmed that separation of children from their parents had caused grievous psychological harm and laid the foundations for lasting and profound mental health problems in later life. Virtually every major American professional society concerned with mental health, public health or children's health condemned the government's actions as an assault on children's rights and well-being. While there has been a deathly silence from most professional groups in India in response to the gratuitous levels of violence being perpetrated against our children by the state, a few courageous institutions stand out for doing their job. In the past week, a panel of the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights concluded that "it is clear that the police violated the rights of the children at the [Bidar] school".

Let me emphasise that my concerns about traumatising children have nothing to do with taking sides with a particular brand of politics or ideology, but simply about upholding the foundations of science, the law, ethics and, ultimately, our humanity. I have little doubt that the children of Shaheen Urdu Medium Primary School, the Muzaffarpur shelter home, the Shri Sahjanand Girls' Institute and all over Kashmir, cry to see their beloved country descend into such madness that it has lost its moral compass. To be sure, I weep with them too.

Vikram Patel is the Pershing Square Professor of Global Health at Harvard Medical School

The long and the short of Trump versus the rest

With the weight of the Republican Party now behind him, the U.S. President is going all out to bag the November poll



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN

The American Congress predictably acquitted U.S. President Donald Trump from charges of obstruction of Congress and abuse of power. This has left the Democrats, their supportive bureaucrats and the media detesting him while the Republicans and their followers embrace him, or back him sufficiently, to want him to continue in office.

The liberal media never accepted Mr. Trump as legitimate, depicting him as racist, chauvinist and a liar; they are unable objectively to assess the President's policies. Democrat-supporting liberals in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and the bureaucracy showed their discontent in a quasi-rebellion against the President, and when the Russia collusion probe led nowhere, they turned to the impeachment route. Citing the sixth U.S. President, John Quincy Adams (1825-1829), "America... goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all," the liberal guardians of the presumed benevolent empire consider Mr. Trump a reckless isolationist — although he injected billions of dollars into the military — for questioning the financial burdens of alliances with the North Atlantic Treaty Organi-

zation, Japan and South Korea.

A shift in Republican stance

Republican establishment figures and ultra-conservatives, originally resentful of Mr. Trump, now coalesce behind him because he favours economic protectionism, chauvinism and foreign policy isolationism, has reduced corporate and wealth taxes, imposed limits on immigration and refugees, appointed conservatives to Supreme and Federal courts, de-regulated the economy and supported evangelical agendas including support for Israel's settlements and recognition of Jerusalem as its capital. If President Barack Obama's tenure saw the elimination of Osama bin Laden and stimulated the economy, Mr. Trump has killed Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and Iran's General Qasem Soleimani, slashed unemployment and grown the economy while opposing government programmes such as Obamacare and the Green New Deal. His approval among Republicans is around 90% despite his hostile takeover of the Party while branding himself as a warrior against elites, fake news and a corrupt establishment.

Driven by the urge for publicity, Mr. Trump uses provocation, confrontation and bombast to dominate the news agenda and exploit the vulnerabilities of his adversaries. His boasts of successes, which bend facts to breaking point, infuriate his opponents and distort their judgement. Populism is disjunctive to the educated, but has certain merits in encouraging neglected constituencies to participate in the democratic process,



though it is illiberal in nature and assaults institutions tasked with oversight over majority rule. Mr. Trump's opponents attack his boorishness but neglect the reasons why many voters supported him, namely because working and middle-class Americans, losing faith in state institutions and political parties, are responsive to right-wing extremists.

A resonating slogan

Approach the Gulf War fiasco and the financial crisis, Mr. Trump understood that the U.S.-led liberal order, free trade and globalisation no longer had popular traction; that is why his slogan "Make America Great Again" resonates. Americans know Mr. Trump held no public office, was a shady real-estate operator, draft dodger, evader of taxes, denigrator of Muslims, Latin Americans and women, but they elected him nevertheless, and he has continued along the same path, focusing on power irrespective of principle. With the weight of the Republican Party now behind him, he has, in effect, been campaigning from the day of his inauguration, while building a sophisticated data-gathering and voter mobilisation operation with an eye to winning the November 2020 election. Basic to this approach is bilateral leverage or *quid*

pro quo. Mr. Trump saw nothing wrong in asking the Ukrainian President to advance his political interests, or in acting against a Congress instruction. He claims the Democrats in Congress are obstructing him, and that only those who elected him could hold him accountable. It will be the American people who will finally express judgement on the Trump presidency, next November.

Then and now

In the previous presidential election of 2016, Republicans and independents who voted for Mr. Trump were driven mainly by dislike of Hillary Clinton and the elites who backed her. This time the Democrats and many independents will be motivated by hatred for Mr. Trump and his record. Independents, who will determine the outcome, will vote with consideration to their conscience and bank balances. Those who benefit from Mr. Trump's economic policies will vote for him, short of an economic recession or financial crisis, which although widely predicted, have yet to materialise. Those worried about democracy, liberal values and civic rights will vote against him for fear of authoritarianism, racism and inequality.

How could one of the most divisive Presidents in American history, impeached for high crimes and misdemeanours, reeling from one self-inflicted crisis to another, win high office again? The election debate will focus largely on Mr. Trump, which is what he wants. Republicans will emphasise his accomplishments and Democrats his transgressions, though the elec-

tion ought to be about the economy, American traditional values and democracy. To win, the Democrats must appeal to the working and middle class, the automaker and steel worker. Mr. Trump will claim that millions of unworthy immigrants entered the U.S. while jobs went to China and Mexico and the establishment stood idly by. His 2016 strategy was to win key States such as Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and that will be his objective again. Mr. Trump could, therefore, suffer a heavy defeat in the popular vote while winning the handful of States that decide the electoral college. Accordingly, while the impeachment process against Mr. Trump failed, its effect on voters in a few crucial States will prove critical.

Much will also depend on the Democrats' choice of nominee. Mr. Joe Biden would be portrayed by Mr. Trump as a corrupt re-run of the Obama regime. Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren will be painted as radical leftists who endanger American prosperity. No sitting President incumbent has lost since George H.W. Bush's defeat to Bill Clinton in 1992 during tax increases and a recession. The 2020 presidential election will represent a decision between liberal and illiberal democracy. Whatever the outcome, the Trump presidency has laid down new yardsticks to preoccupy his successors and political leaders in all other countries for many decades to come.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Right to dissent

Dissent is a vital ingredient of a vibrant democracy, as indicated by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud ("Blanket labelling of dissent as anti-national hurts ethos of democracy: Justice Chandrachud," Feb. 15). Dissent and democracy are often considered synonymous in a liberal-democratic social order. It is through open debate and discussion that the diversity of perceptions in a democracy gets exposed. Only through continuous interactions on critical issues does the real truth emerge. We owe our independence to Mahatma Gandhi, who had the

courage and fortitude to express his dissent in a peaceful manner. In a progressive society, contrary views should be entertained. Further, the legislature should pass laws to protect dissidents, activists and whistleblowers; it takes courage to take a stand and speak up, while the easiest thing is to 'go with the flow'. Dissent must be welcomed not just on the political front but in religious and professional spheres as well.

T.S. PATHAK,
Tumkur

In national interest?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion on Sunday

that his government stands by its decision to dilute Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and to introduce the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) is a product of high-handedness, prompted by the brutal majority enjoyed by his party in Parliament (Front page, "Will stand by decision on Art. 370, CAA: Modi," Feb. 17). His justification, that these decisions were "in national interest and necessary", does not hold water, given that there are umpteen number of matters of national interest to be addressed on priority, like improving the economy; job creation; resurrecting

ailing PSUs, etc. Also, why should a government that can invite Members of European Parliament to visit J&K, in order to get a 'normalcy' certificate, refuse to heed to the resolutions passed in international bodies?

A. JANULABDEEN,
Theni, Tamil Nadu

Vulnerable electorate

The phenomenal outreach of social media networks in our country has raised the susceptibility of the electorate to micro-targeting. Through social media networks — coupled with sophisticated data mining and analytical tools — companies have acquired

enormous capabilities to profile individuals. One can visualise the potential of these tools being used by political parties as a force multiplier to increase vote share, considering the vulnerabilities already existing in India. (Editorial page, "In political micro-targeting, the vulnerable Indian voter," Feb. 17).

A.VENKATASUBRAMANIAN,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

PSA against Dr. Faesal

By slapping the draconian Public Safety Act on bureaucrat-turned-politician Dr. Shah Faesal, the Centre has proved that democracy in Kashmir has a connotation different

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from that in the rest of the country. The UPSC topper had become a poster boy and an icon for youngsters in the Kashmir Valley wishing to join the mainstream. Any criticism of its narrative is now being considered seditious by New Delhi. The need of the hour is to reverse all such tyrannical orders that violate the human rights of people. Also, the conversion of the paradise into a military garrison needs an immediate relook if everything is to be considered normal in J&K.

AHMED YASEEN,
Baramulla, J&K

Protecting children's right to protest

A child has as much right to be present at a protest site as any adult



SEEMA MISRA

There are many legal and social difficulties involved in the Supreme Court's move to take suo motu cognisance of children taking part in demonstrations in Shaheen Bagh in Delhi. This has a direct impact on children's right to protest as well as on their mothers' right to protest, specifically since the enforcement of the National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act could render both mother and child stateless.

Two unrelated issues

It is indeed a tragedy that an infant died in the cold during the protests earlier this month. But criminalising the mother and putting the onus of the child's death on her negligence rather than questioning and examining the economic and political reasons for poverty is a travesty of justice. Why is it that Indian mothers, especially from migrant labouring families, have to carry their children where ever they go? By saying that women should not be allowed to take their children to protests, we are effectively rendering impossible their own mobility and pushing them back into their homes. How can women then voice their dissent against a law which is going to affect them directly? And if they do voice their dissent by going to a protest, where are they supposed to leave their children? What infrastructure does the state provide by way of crèches or day care centres? What kind of housing does the state provide for migrant workers? In Bengaluru, a migrant colony was recently demolished after videos claiming that illegal Bangladeshi immigrants were sheltered in the settlement went viral. A wall is being built in Ahmedabad to apparently hide slums from the U.S. President during his visit this month. In such a context, isn't the idea of a safe home also mediated by class?

There is an erroneous notion that the infant died on account of the protest rather than due to other systemic issues. And the Supreme Court



"Why is it acceptable for children to participate in an anti-pollution protest during peak winter in Delhi, but not in the protests at Shaheen Bagh?" A child protests against the CAA and NRC in Bengaluru in January. •AP

is assuming causality without even examining the matter. In the suo motu action, the Court has conflated two unrelated issues. The first is a child's right to participate in or witness a protest. The second is the death of the infant. There is no obvious relationship between the first and second issue. The death of the child due to natural causes should have no bearing on children's right to be present at a protest or a mother's right to take her children to a protest.

A child's right to protest

Implicit in the freedom of speech and the freedom to assemble peacefully and without arms under Article 19 of the Constitution is the right to protest. This right is guaranteed to all citizens of India regardless of age. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which India has ratified, expressly recognises in Article 13 that freedom of expression of the child includes the "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice."

Both the Indian Constitution and the CRC state that no restriction may be placed on these freedoms except those that are necessary and imposed by statute for the "purposes of safeguarding the sovereignty, integri-

ty and security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence". Even these restrictions must pass the test of reasonableness as understood by the constitutional courts. As such, neither the Constitution nor the CRC contemplate a blanket restriction being imposed on children's right to protest by a court directive.

Even with respect to individual cases, there must first be a serious examination of the specific circumstances of the case since overarching directions regarding a child's participation are also a restriction on the mother's mobility and on parenting rights generally.

Further, the CRC, in Article 5, recognises the "evolving capacities" of children. This means that as children acquire enhanced competencies, there is a diminishing need for them to be protected. They have a greater capacity to take responsibility for decisions affecting their lives. The law recognises that children do not magically acquire agency when they turn 18 years, but are capable of exercising their rights and that the law must facilitate the same.

Article 12 of the CRC provides that member states should assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely. For this purpose,

the child should be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly or through a representative. Therefore, there can be no restriction on a child's right to protest without hearing the child.

A place for learning

While many schools encourage children to read newspapers and watch news channels, attending a protest is also a way for children to receive information and ideas. At a protest they get to witness expressions of discontent against acts or omissions of the government that have prejudicial and even violent impacts on people's lives. A protest is also a space where children get to experience and assert citizenship. It's a space for them to comprehend what 'We The People of India' encompasses; it is where they get to see people from all walks of life. It could also be a space for children to celebrate their unity as Indians.

As far as the CAA-NRC are concerned, women, especially poor women, will find it hardest to prove ancestry due to lack of documentation. Further the CAA and NRC directly affect children as well: if one parent is held to be an illegal migrant, it means the child will also be considered an illegal migrant. A child has as much right to be present as a stakeholder at such a protest as any adult.

While news reports say that the infant who died was exposed to the chilly Delhi air, they don't mention the circumstances of the parents who are daily wage migrant workers living in an adjoining jhuggi in a plastic tent home.

Also, why is it perfectly acceptable for children to participate in an anti-pollution protest in peak winter, but not in the protests at Shaheen Bagh? Why don't those protests constitute parental negligence worthy of court intervention? The petitioner in this case is herself a child. What is the basis on which it is decided that one is a valid exercise of the child's agency and the other is not? When we debate the participation of children in protests, these are questions we must ask ourselves.

Seema Misra is a lawyer practising in the trial courts in Delhi

May the Force be strengthened

The functioning of the CRPF needs to be revisited



K.V. MADHUSUDHANAN

In the wake of Independence, a contentious administrative issue was over the retention of CRP (Crown Representative Police). As the Constitution designated 'law and order' as a State subject, the relevance of having a Central police force was questioned by everyone, except Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who argued vehemently and boldly in favour of it.

From having just two battalions as the CRP, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has now expanded to being a three-and-a-half lakh-strong force consisting of specialist wings like the Rapid Action Force, the COBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action), and the Special Duty Group. It is the largest paramilitary force in the world and no other security force of the country has seen expansion at such a rapid rate.

Providing integrated security to a diverse country of continental size is not an easy task. Resolving certain conflicts requires immediate solutions for which regular armed forces cannot be deployed. Hence, we require paramilitary forces, and the CRPF is the most sought-after one because of its flexibility and versatility. The force has earned its place as the 'peacekeeper of the nation'.

April 9 is observed as 'Valour Day' by the CRPF because it was on this day in 1965 that an ordinary battalion of the CRPF repulsed an attack by a Pakistani brigade. Similarly, October 21 is observed as 'Commemoration Day' by all police forces, as a mark of respect to the CRPF soldiers who, in their fight against the Chinese Army in 1959, at Hot Springs, Leh, made the supreme sacrifice.

However, this glowing track record pales into insignificance when we consider the mass casualties the Force has had to suffer. In April 2010, at least 75 of its soldiers were killed by Maoists, numbering about 300, in Dantewada early morning when they were returning after a night-long patrol. And last year, the Pulwama attack happened.

Pressure on soldiers

What made Pulwama different from the earlier episodes of mass casualties was the unparalleled response from the political leadership, civil society and all other stakeholders to the attack. A year after the attack, it is time for the nation to take a relook at the main agency dealing with conflicts in different ter-

ritorial zones. The frequent movements lock, stock and barrel are taking its toll. There are increasing cases of suicides and fratricides. The anguish caused because of prolonged periods of duty away from one's family members adds to the pressure experienced the soldiers having their fingers constantly on the trigger guard, where a delay in response by even seconds can cost them their lives. Though the Home Minister recently stated that CRPF jawans would get to spend 100 days with their families every year, considering the present levels of commitment, 100 days of leave is an impossible dream for a soldier.

An easier way out here would be to revisit the government's decision on tasking specific Central Paramilitary Forces exclusively with certain operations. It should be compulsory for recruits to all Central Police Forces to be deployed to anti-insurgency roles during their first 15 years of service, when they are newly trained and fighting fit. They can be shifted, in the next 10 years, to border duties. The last phase of their career should be in static duties. That way, the present system of a soldier ending up performing a high-risk job till the last day of his service, just because he happened to be allotted to CRPF after a common selection process, can be avoided and he can look forward to easier duties during the later phase of his career.

Rehabilitation of retired personnel

Also, as the Force is deployed to the last man, the welfare and morale of the soldiers needs to be taken care of. A large number of personnel are taking voluntary retirement, but there is no rehabilitation policy. The creation of a Welfare and Rehabilitation Board has not made any impact. Provision of canteen facilities, without tax exemption, hardly gives the soldiers any relief. Another demand that needs to be considered is that of a One Rank, One Pension scheme.

And finally, it is high time the Force develops home-grown leadership. Elements like a healthy work culture, ethos and regimentation are very crucial for any armed force and they are best guarded by officers born on the cadre. The long overdue Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFU) materialised only after judicial intervention. However, the top leadership – made up of IPS officers on deputation – is reluctant to implement it. The first anniversary of the Pulwama attacks should enable all stakeholders to device ways and means to plug the loopholes and address the system failures in a Force that still remains the most formidable in internal security matters.

K.V. Madhusudhanan retired as IG of training and northeastern sector of the CRPF in 2012

Germany's AfD conundrum

The grand coalition's supposed neutrality may not be a credible strategy in a fragmented polity

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

Cracks are widening in the German establishment's defences against the far-right. The resignation of Chancellor Angela Merkel's heir, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, on February 10 as leader of the ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is the most profound convulsion to rock the party since the 2015 migrant crisis.

Crossing the line

Days earlier, the Christian Democrats' local unit drew wide condemnation for seeking the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)'s votes in electing Thuringia state's premier. The move, intended to block the return of the left-wing Die Linke after the inconclusive October regional election, was unprecedented in post-war German history. Soon after the polls, sections of the CDU pushed for the opposite outcome. The aim this time was to back Die Linke to return to office. That move too was rebuffed by the leadership. Earlier, in December, the governing coalition in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt came under strain when a CDU official's links with neo-Nazis became apparent, forcing him to finally quit.

Allowing the AfD to play kingmaker in Thuringia caused outrage across the political spectrum. The CDU could not countenance an affront to its founding principle of propagating a social market economy to counter nationalism, even though the beneficiary was the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP), its long-time ally. Chancellor Merkel described the election of FDP leader Thomas Kemmerich in Thuringia with AfD votes as "a bad day for democracy". She said the outcome "has to be reversed" and criticised her party's role as "unforgivable". Ms. Kramp-Karrenbauer, whose ratings have plummeted after her narrow victory as party chief in 2018, took the cue and bowed out.

The AfD is no less a taboo for the FDP. Mr. Kemmerich has since called for fresh elections. FDP national leader Christian Lindner, who initially justified the machinations, eventually promised a vote of confidence in his own leadership. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), the junior partner in Ms. Merkel's grand coal-

ition, and the Greens, another potential CDU ally, would view even a slight swerve towards the far-right the ultimate red line.

The episodes in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt have only exposed deepening divisions within the centre-right party. At the heart of the issue is the long-standing stance of maintaining equidistance from the extreme left and hard right. But such supposed neutrality may not commend itself as a credible strategy in Germany's current fragmented polity, especially not after the steady erosion of the CDU and SPD base. Their vote share in the 2017 federal elections plunged to the lowest since 1949. Meanwhile, the stridently anti-Islam and anti-immigrant AfD emerged the largest opposition in the German parliament with 89 seats. The party is well represented in all the regions. The Bundestag's March 2017 move to redefine the honorary title of "father of the house" to mean the longest-serving member rather than its oldest, only to block an AfD member, seems like another era.

A silver lining

One silver lining for the CDU-SPD is the finding that in western Germany, the AfD tends to win half the votes it takes in the eastern states. Eastern Germany still suffers from high unemployment, inequality, and poor public services. Greater investment to boost growth would be the antidote to the AfD's anti-immigrant onslaught, not a rightward slant by centrists. If Germany's ideological firewall needs a recast, the relevant direction seems obvious.

Ms. Kramp-Karrenbauer's resignation has reopened the question of vesting the party leadership and the country's chancellorship in the same person. Should the logic behind this argument be pursued, a snap election and a premature end to Ms. Merkel's unbroken tenure from 2005 cannot be ruled out. The current uncertainty comes at an awkward moment, as Germany assumes in July the six-monthly rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. It is hoped that Germany will tide over this crisis.

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DATA POINT

Bird watching

Over three-fourths of the 146 bird species whose populations were tracked over the last five years declined in numbers, according to The State of India's Birds 2020 report. Interestingly, seven of the top 10 such species were labelled as being of "least concern" (not a focus of species conservation) by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Over half of the 261 bird species whose populations were tracked over the last 25 years declined in numbers. By **The Hindu Data Team**

Long-term decrease | The table lists the top five species whose populations have declined the most in the last 25 years. For instance, for every 100 **White-rumped Vultures** spotted 25 years ago, only three could be spotted in 2020



Common name	Currently spotted
White-rumped Vulture	3 for every 100
Richard's Pipit	7
Indian Vulture	10
Large-billed Leaf Warbler	11
Pacific Golden Plover	12

Long-term increase | The table lists the five species whose populations have increased the most in the last 25 years. For instance, for every 100 **Rosy Starlings** that could be spotted 25 years ago, 271 could be spotted in 2020



Common Name	Currently spotted
Rosy Starling	271 for every 100
Rock Pigeon	244
Glossy Ibis	240
Plain Prinia	221
Ashy Prinia	205

Short-term decrease | The table lists the five species whose populations have declined the most in the last five years. For instance, for every 100 **Singing Bushlarks** that could be spotted five years ago, only 76 could be spotted in 2020



Common Name	Current	IUCN status
Singing Bushlark	76	Least concern
Nilgiri Pipit	77	Vulnerable
White-tailed Robin	80	Least concern
Lesser Cuckoo	82	Least concern
Red-headed Vulture	82	Critically endangered

Short-term increase | The table lists the five species that have seen the maximum increase in their populations in the last five years. For instance, for every 100 **Rain Quails** that could be spotted five years ago, 133 could be spotted in 2020



Common Name	Currently spotted
Rain Quail	133 for every 100
Ferruginous Duck	133
Greater Crested Tern	124
Hume's Leaf Warbler	117
White-spotted Fantail	116

Pictures: Wikimedia commons

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 18, 1970

New citizens cannot vote in polls

It is now almost certain that the new citizens, who were admitted to Ceylon citizenship under the provisions of the Sirimavo-Shastri Agreement, will not be permitted to vote in the forthcoming general elections, since the latest list of voters that could be used for the elections taking place this year is that of 1968. Every year the list is renewed and the 1969 list will not be complete before the later part of this year and therefore could not be used for the mid-year elections. According to an official estimate, teenage voters will be the highest-ever in the next elections numbering about 10 lakhs out of a total of 55 lakhs of eligible voters. Putting down a strong foot on certain mischievous and communal elements who have been agitating for preferential treatment for Ceylonese by descent as against Ceylonese of Indian origin by registration, the Prime Minister, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, today [February 17, Colombo] said there should be absolutely no discrimination between these two categories of citizens in the matter of allocation of import licences for food items.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEB. 18, 1920.

A Mesopotamian Letter.

The Basra-Baghdad Railway. Basra, February 15. - This new line was opened on the 13th instant by Major General McMunn the General Officer Commanding-in-chief. The first train started from Makina (Basra) on the night of 13th January. The line runs across country and passes through the rich grain producing parts of lower Mesopotamia viz., Ur Dlwaniyah, Hillah, etc. As laid and worked from Basra to Nasiriyeh and later from Basra to Amara. The cross-country route having been decided to be the best and the most profitable, the line from Basra to Amara was pulled down and the continuation of the line to Baghdad was undertaken in September last year. With more rolling-stock and new engines it is expected the Basra-Baghdad run will take only 12 hours.

Prospects of cotton cultivation. The British Cotton Growing Association has been interesting itself with the prospects of a successful cotton-growing industry in this country. Previous experiments by the Agricultural Department with the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force are said to have demonstrated the possibility of cotton growing and it is expected that cotton grown here would compare favourably with that of the United States and Egypt.

FROM PAGE ONE

Protest but don't block roads, SC tells protesters

The court made it clear that it was not going to interfere or curtail the right to protest of ordinary people. It said it was only worried whether "tomorrow someone else may try to emulate the Shaheen Bagh protesters and block another portion of an already congested Delhi".

"You [Shaheen Bagh protesters] may have genuine concerns, but if everybody starts blocking roads and entering public areas... where will it end? It may create a chaotic situation," Justice Kaul said.

He also spoke of the possibility of another section of people "who may be not on the same page as you may get an idea to start a protest somewhere else... Then where do we end?"

Alternative sites

The court asked Mr. Mehta to suggest alternative sites for the protesters. But Mr. Mehta objected, saying that it was for the protesters to find an alternative spot.

"But the right to protest in a democracy is a fundamental right..." Justice Joseph reiterated.

Referring to the appointment of an interlocutor and future talks with protesters, Mr. Mehta said these efforts from the court should not be seen by the protesters as "every institution kneeling" to them.

"We have taken it upon ourselves to dissolve this issue now. Why did you not meet them for the past 68 days of their protest then?" Justice Joseph asked Mr. Mehta.

The law officer said efforts were made through local residents, religious leaders, etc, but to no avail.

"I always believe that the inner strength of the people will see help them see reason. For now, we have expressed our opinion. If nothing works out, then we will leave it to the authorities..." Justice Kaul said.

The case was posted for further hearing on February 24.

The hearing is based on a petition filed by advocate Amit Sahni, seeking a direction to forcibly remove the peaceful protesters. Mr. Sahni said the protest hampered the lives of ordinary commuters.

U.K. MP denied entry into India, deported

She sought an explanation from the Indian immigration authorities for revocation of her Indian visa that was issued in October 2019 and was valid for one year. "Why did the Indian government revoke my visa after it was granted?" asked Ms. Abrahams.

Commenting on social media, the British MP wanted to know why Indian officials did not issue a "visa on arrival" if the immigration authorities found the issued visa was invalid. "Is it because I have been critical of the Indian government on Kashmir human rights issues?" she asked.

An official source, however, maintained that Ms. Abrahams was "not in possession of a valid visa to visit India" and therefore was denied entry.

It is understood that the U.K. High Commission here reached out to the MP during her few hours stay at the Indira Gandhi International Airport and has taken up the

matter at the bilateral level.

"We are in contact with the Indian authorities to understand why Deborah Abrahams, MP, was denied entry to India. We provided consular assistance to her while she was in New Delhi airport," said a British High Commission spokesperson. It is still not clear why the Labour MP's visa was revoked.

As the chairperson of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Kashmir, Ms. Abrahams convened meetings on the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir as well as on the India-Pakistan conflict.

She has been consistent in demanding direct access to the ground realities in Jammu and Kashmir and in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. She has been a critic of the Narendra Modi government's decision to end the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

(With inputs from Vijaita Singh)

After SC's rap, telcos pay ₹14,697 crore to DoT

Bharti, Vodafone make part payment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Telecom services providers, including Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Tata Group, on Monday cumulatively deposited ₹14,697 crore in part payment of their adjusted gross revenue dues with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). While Bharti Airtel paid ₹10,000 crore, Vodafone Idea remitted ₹2,500 crore and the Tata Group deposited ₹2,197 crore.

Additionally, Vodafone Idea committed itself to paying another ₹1,000 crore by the end of this week.

This follows last week's Supreme Court order that asked the managing directors and directors of the companies to show cause why contempt proceedings should not be initiated against them for failing to pay even a "single penny" to the government despite an October 2019 judgment.

Bharti Airtel, in a letter to the DoT, said that the ₹10,000 crore had been paid on behalf of Bharti Airtel Limited, Bharti Hexacom Limited and Telenor.

The next hearing is slated for March 17, 2020.

Based on the overall review of the position, the Board has authorised the Company to immediately pay to DoT a portion of the

dues calculated based on AGR, aggregating to a sum of ₹2,500 crore today and a further ₹1,000 crore before the end of the week," the company said.

The Board would take further stock of the situation to see how additional payments could be made, Vodafone Idea said.

"An urgent oral application made this morning before the Hon'ble Supreme Court for directions to be issued to the DoT to not take any coercive steps for recovery of AGR dues was not entertained by the Hon'ble Court," it added.

Tata payment

Meanwhile, in a statement, Tata Teleservices said, "Tata Teleservices Limited and Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Limited have made a payment of ₹2,197 crore... to the DoT towards License Fees and Spectrum Usage Charges." It added that TTSL and TTML had also submitted to DoT the details of calculations in support of the payment.

As per the DoT's assessment, Bharti Airtel's liabilities for licence fee and spectrum usage charge stand at about ₹35,586 crore, while that of Vodafone Idea and Tata Teleservices are about ₹53,000 crore and ₹13,823 crore, respectively.

Govt. presented opposite positions: SC

Policy statement endorsed permanent commission for SSC women officers in two sections

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, which castigated the government for its stand on permanent commission for Short Service Commission women officers, favourably saw a policy statement filed separately by the government as a letter on February 25, 2019. It noted that the government's note and the February 2019 policy statement clashed with each other.

It wondered how the government had managed to present diametrically opposite positions in court.

10 streams

The judgment recorded that the policy statement had endorsed permanent commission for SSC women officers in 10 streams of the 'Combat Support Arms' and 'Services' sections. These are Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Army Air Defence, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME), Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps and Intelligence, in addition to the existing streams of Judge Advocate General (JAG) and Army Education Corps.

"The policy decision of the Union government is a recognition of the right of women officers to equality of

Women in command

It's an order

Here are some of the salient features of the order:

- Accepts government policy to grant PC to short service commission (SSC) women officers in 10 streams of the Combat Support Arms and Services wings

- SSC women officers are eligible for command assignments and not just staff appointments

- SSC women officers granted PC will be entitled to all consequential benefits, including promotion and financial gains

opportunity," the court said. SSC for women is available only in the 'Combat Support Arms' and 'Services' wings of the Army.

The exclusion of women from combat operations was not examined by the court as it was not the contested in the appeal.

The court dismissed the government's stand that only

For the women in uniform, career progression is now becoming a reality with the Supreme Court directing the Centre to grant permanent commission (PC) within three months. Here is a snapshot of the long years of the fight women officers have conducted against discrimination:

1992: Centre notifies women eligible for appointment as officers for five years in the Army Postal Service, Judge Advocate General Department, Army Education Corps, Signal Corps, Intelligence Corps, Corps of Engineers, Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering and Regiment of Artillery, among other Corps

Dec. 1996: Ministry of Defence deletes the five-year clause for enrollment

Nov. 2005: The initial process of induction of women officers under the WSES was replaced by SSCs with an

outer period of 14 years. The first batch of women officers under the new scheme entered the Army in 2008

2003 and 2006: Writ petitions filed in the Delhi High Court by advocate

Babita Punia and several SSC women Army officers for permanent commission and equality of opportunity in the Army

March 2010: Delhi HC holds that women SSC officers of the Air Force and Army who had opted for PC, but not granted that status would be entitled to PC at par with male SSC officers with all consequential benefits. Contempt proceedings were then initiated by the women officers against the Union of India for non-compliance with the HC judgment. Contempt was later stayed

September 2, 2011: The case reaches the Supreme Court in appeal



women officers with less than 14 years of service ought to be considered for permanent commission, and those with over 20 years of service should be pensioned immediately.

Applying the judgment retrospectively, the court declared that all serving women officers would be eligible for permanent com-

mission. The court held that a blanket ban of women SSC officers from command posts cannot be sustained by law.

"An absolute prohibition of women SSC officers to obtain anything but staff appointments does not fulfil the purpose of granting permanent commissions as a means of career advance-

ment in the Army," Justice D.Y. Chandrachud wrote in the judgment. Justice Hemant Gupta was the other judge on the Bench.

The court held that since command appointments were not automatic for men officers, so would it be for women. It was left to the Army to take a call on a case-to-case basis.

A blow to stereotypical mindset, says lawyer

Verdict ensures greater roles commensurate with individual merit and aptitude of officers, she says

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court verdict on Monday granting permanent commission (PC) and command positions for women officers is a watershed moment and success "against stereotypical mindset and attitude," said Aishwarya Bhati, a senior advocate representing the officers.

Defence sources said the PC had already been granted to women officers in many areas and the verdict was for those who joined the service before it was given. "We respect the court ruling," a senior defence source said.

They [Bench] junked the argument of domestic duties, motherhood, biological requirements of women and [the verdict] will ensure greater gender justice and gender dignity in all walks of life

AISHWARYA BHATI, Advocate



"Women have been in the Army since 1992, so to deny PC to existing officers and command positions to all of them betrays the constitutional guarantee and is also contrary to their impeccable service record for the past 27 or 28 years," Ms. Bhati said.

Terming it an important milestone in the evolution of

women in the armed forces, Ms. Bhati said one interesting observation by the top court was "they junked the argument of domestic duties, motherhood, biological requirements of women and [the verdict] will ensure greater gender justice and gender dignity in all walks of life". Women are already

performing combat roles in the IAF, Ms. Bhati said and added this verdict "will ensure greater roles commensurate with their individual merit and aptitude".

'Quick implementation'

One officer, who was part of the case but did not wish to be identified as she was serving, welcomed the judgment but said they were yet to study the details. "We hope it is implemented quickly," she said.

Army officials declined to comment saying they were yet to study it.

A defence source said it was not possible to put all

command positions under one umbrella, as there were criteria and non-criteria appointments in all arms and services. Also some criteria appointments were in the field and some were not.

"It is a non-issue. To get criteria appointments, we first had to get PC. That is now settled," the official said, adding that now women officers would get criteria appointments if they met the requirements. There are four factors considered while choosing officers for criteria appointments - leadership, performance, qualification and medical fitness, the official said.

Why delay appointments, asks SC

Attorney General blames collegium for taking a long time to forward files to govt.

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the government why it was "holding back" recommendations for appointments to various High Courts even after reiteration by the Collegium.

"Once the Supreme Court Collegium reiterates the name of a candidate for appointment, then you [government] cannot hold back... Why are you keeping these recommendations pending? Why don't you accept them? It is the law," Justice K.M. Joseph told Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, for the Centre.

The Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice Joseph was conveying its



alarm at the rising number of vacancies in various High Courts. Some of these courts are functioning only with half their sanctioned judicial strength. On an average, they suffer at least 40% vacancies.

Mr. Venugopal defended saying the collegium delays the appointment process

quite as the government. The government's delay is largely because it thoroughly combs the antecedents of the candidate, leaving no room for error. The process, on an average, takes at least 127 days.

On the other hand, the judiciary takes 119 days on an average merely to forward the file to the government. Mr. Venugopal challenged the Bench to issue formal notice to the various High Courts to explain the delay. He said some courts like Allahabad and Andhra take over 45 and 50 months to even report a vacancy. The appointment of Justice P.V. Kunhrishnan of the Kerala High Court took two years to come through.

Mr. Venugopal referred to how the Collegium system was put to an end through the National Judicial Appointments Commission to make the appointments process transparent and participatory, only to be thrust out by the Supreme Court.

"We had brought a perfectly fine Constitutional Amendment [NJAC]... We can perhaps bring another amendment," Mr. Venugopal told the court.

Justice Joseph replied that "You or I cannot re-open that [NJAC] issue."

Noting that there are 199 vacancies in the High Courts, Justice Kaul said the efforts should be made to kick-start the appointments process to the courts early.

Court begins hearing on religious rights

'Law can regulate offerings at religious places if used for terrorism, casinos'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A nine-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on Monday observed that making offerings at places of worship may be a religious practice, but the law can regulate the money donated at such places if it is used for "terrorism" or "running casinos."

The top court said the old practices of "human sacrifices" and "sati" amounted to murder under law and could not be saved on ground of "essential religious practice." The Constitution Bench, headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde, made these

observations as it commenced hearing to deliberate upon the issues pertaining to the scope of freedom of religion as also of judicial scrutiny into "essential religious practices" of separate "religious denominations."

The Bench is also examining the issue whether a person, who does not belong to a particular faith, can file a PIL petition questioning the religious practice of another religion.

The questions have arisen out of a judgment in the Sabarimala case.

"The IPC can be read as the guard against the prac-



Questions on the scope of freedom of religion rose out of the Sabarimala case.

tice of human sacrifices, because it is murder under the IPC. Likewise "sati" also amounted to murder... Even a religious aspect can be the subject matter of reform," said the Bench, which also included Justices R. Banumathi, Ashok Bhushan, L. Nageswara Rao, M.M. Shan-

tanagoudar, S.A. Nazeer, R. Subhash Reddy, B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant.

Examining the scope of judicial power in religious matters, it gave illustration of practice of giving offerings or money in temples and said they were part of religious practices.

"But if money is being used for terrorism or for running a casino etc. then this is secular part of the religion and can be regulated by the law," it said. It also said financial activities of a religious trust pertaining to "donations, hygiene and health" can be regulated by laws.

Babulal Marandi's party merges with BJP

Two of the three MLAs join Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA/NEW DELHI

The Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajantrik), led by Babulal Marandi, merged with the BJP on Monday in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other party leaders in Ranchi.

However, two MLAs of the party joined the Congress. At a press conference, the Congress's Jharkhand in-charge R.P.N. Singh announced that Bandhu Tirkey and Pradeep Yadav had joined the Congress. Mr. Marandi had expelled both from the JVM(P) for "anti-party activities".

Mr. Singh said a majority

of JVM(P) workers and functionaries had decided to join the Congress.

"Very soon, we will have a big rally in Jharkhand where all the party functionaries of JVM will formally merge with the Congress," he said.

At the merger function, Mr. Shah said, "The Narendra Modi and Raghuraj Das governments had been successful in implementing all programmes and policies for the welfare of the poorest of the poor in Jharkhand through supply of LPG connection, electricity, construction of homes. And now piped water will be provided to them."

'Turkey trying to justify cross-border terror'

New Delhi issues démarche to envoy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Turkey is trying to justify Pakistan's cross-border terrorism in Kashmir, India said on Monday.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Raveesh Kumar issued a scathing comment, saying President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's latest statement on Indian territory during his trip to Pakistan reflected a narrow-minded view that would have "strong implications" for India-Turkey ties.

"This recent episode is but one more example of a pat-

tern of Turkey interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. India finds that completely unacceptable. We particularly reject the repeated attempts by Turkey to justify the cross-border terrorism practised so blatantly by Pakistan," Mr. Kumar said.

He said a "strong démarche" was made to the Ambassador of Turkey earlier in the day by the Secretary in charge of Western affairs Vikas Swarup.

Mr. Erdogan had said the situation in Kashmir is an outcome of "unilateral" actions taken by India.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court order on permanent commission to all women officers on Monday triggered a political war of words between the Congress and the BJP, with former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi accusing the Centre of disrespecting women by arguing against permanent commission for women.

In a tweet, Mr. Gandhi said, "The government disrespected every Indian woman by arguing in the SC that women Army officers didn't deserve command posts or permanent service because they were inferior to men. I congratulate the women for standing up and proving the BJP government wrong."

BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, who was the advocate for the women officers, rebutted Mr. Gandhi's claim and pointed out that it was the Congress-led UPA government in July 2010 that had gone in appeal to the top court against a High Court order that had favoured permanent commission for women.

"In July 2012, they [the Union government] had filed an additional affidavit, citing various reasons and grounds, why the order be declined...I want to tell Mr. Rahul Gandhi that he better be aware what exactly has transpired," she said.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi tweeted, "Women are capable - in the Army, in valour, in water, land and sky. This is a befitting reply to the prejudiced Modi government, which is opposed to women's power," she tweeted.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, in a series of tweets, put out the the Modi government's record in inducting women. "Before 2016, women made up just 2.5% of the armed forces, working in mainly non-combat roles. As of Jan 2019, 3.89% of the army personnel were women, while 6.7% of the Navy and 13.28% of the Air Force personnel were women as of June 2019," he said.

FATF to review Pakistan status today

Officials and diplomats say task force may retain grey list status

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As officials from the International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) of the 39-member Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meet in Paris on Tuesday to discuss the risk rating for Pakistan and Iran, India plans to raise the repeated "politicisation" of the process by Pakistan, which is aiming to avoid being "blacklisted" by the group for its actions on counter-terrorism.

In particular, Indian officials are expected to point to statements by the leaders of Turkey and Malaysia, who have gone public on their plans to back Pakistan, instead of going by the regulations of the FATF that evaluates countries on the basis of technical parameters and maintains confidentiality proceedings. In the past two weeks, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad and Turkish President Recep



Brownie points: Pakistan may highlight the recent conviction of LeT chief Hafiz Saeed for terror financing. ■PTI

Tayyip Erdogan have issued statements promising to support Pakistan at the FATF, as well as on Kashmir.

The External Affairs Ministry issued sharp responses to both statements, in addition to issuing the Turkish Ambassador to India a "strong demarche" on Monday over the references to India's "internal affairs".

Asked about India's plans to raise the issue at the FATF, however, the Ministry declined to comment. "It is for the FATF to decide," said an official, adding that the government "would not like to comment on FATF delibera-

tions". In the past, the FATF had taken strong exception to public statements and "politicisation" of its processes.

Decision on Friday

The decision of the FATF's plenary session (February 16-21) on whether to retain Pakistan on its "greylist" of countries of concern, downgrade it to its 'blacklist' for non-compliance, or let it off for progress shown, will be finalised on Friday at the end of the session.

At the last meeting of the Asia Pacific Group in Beijing last November, Pakistan had

been judged as having cleared 14 of the 27-point action plan checklist it was given by the group on counter-terror financing and black money laundering.

India hopes to highlight the unfinished items on Pakistan's agenda, as well as the government's claimed inability to track UN Security Council-designated terrorists like Jaish e Mohammad chief Masood Azhar and 26/11 LeT operations chief Zaki Ur Rahman Lakhvi as India seeks to push for more stringent action against Pakistan.

However, officials and diplomats aware of the process said it was more likely that Pakistan would be retained on the "greylist" for the moment with a "stern warning" rather than being moved to the blacklist during this round at the FATF, for a number of reasons.

To begin with, there is a general perception that, albeit on paper, Pakistan does appear to have made some positive moves on the FATF's demands, including amending its laws and a crackdown on bank accounts and premises of terror groups such as the LeT/JuD and JeM.

'Many outfits get funds from supporters'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Monday said several terrorist groups continued to benefit from funds raised through illegal activities and from supporters worldwide despite the iteror financing watchdog tightening the standards on flow of money.

Without naming Pakistan, the FATF said that terrorists use various methods to gain financing, including using social media to identify new followers and to solicit financial or other forms of material support.

"The FATF has tightened its standards on terrorist financing which has helped disrupt access to funds for groups such as ISIL and Al-Qaeda. However, various groups still benefit from funds raised through illegal activity," it said.

Centre lets Ladakh appoint non-gazetted personnel

Lack of staff hampers day-to-day work, says an official

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Following a shortage of personnel, the Union government has empowered the Union Territory of Ladakh to formulate its own rules to appoint "non-gazetted" officials.

A senior official said the day-to-day work in Ladakh was getting hampered as the process to reallocate government officials had not been completed, and not many officials were willing to move to the Union Territory.

The erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh by Parliament on August 6, 2019. Thereafter, the Union government appointed a panel to find out officials' preference for posting. The General Administration Department of Jammu and Kashmir issued an order last year seeking options from government officials "for their further allocation" to

An administrative complex is being built in Leh. It will also house the office of Hill Development Council

SENIOR OFFICIAL

The employees had to fill a form, comprising 18 columns, which sought information on their "place of birth, home district, marital status and caste". "All employees have submitted their preference," the official said.

To tide over the crisis, the Centre on January 21 said Ladakh's Lieutenant-Governor "shall exercise the power to make rules in regard to...the method of recruitment to all Group 'B' (non-gazetted) and Group 'C' posts under his administrative control".

'L-G can decide'

The notification further said the Lieutenant-Governor could decide on the "qualifications necessary for appointment to such services

and posts; and the conditions of service of persons appointed to such services and posts for the purposes of probation, confirmation, seniority and promotion".

The official said a new administrative complex was being built in Leh. It would also house the office of the Hill Development Council.

There are about four lakh State government employees and 66 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and 68 Indian Police Service (IPS) officers in the erstwhile State. Under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, the IAS, the IPS and other central service officers will continue to work in the Union Territories, while new recruits will be allocated the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory cadre.

In the Union Budget unveiled on February 1, a total of ₹30,757 crore was allocated to Jammu and Kashmir and ₹5,958 crore for Ladakh for the fiscal 2020-21.

Pawar, NCP firm on SIT probe in Elgar, Bhima Koregaon cases

Uddhav Thackeray's government is divided on the issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar on Monday asked his party's Ministers to ensure that a special investigation team (SIT) was set up in the Elgar Parishad and Bhima Koregaon cases.

After the National Investigation Agency (NIA) took over the case from the Maharashtra police, the NCP Ministers must ensure that a parallel probe was instituted at any cost. Mr. Pawar told his party colleagues while reading out Section 10 of the NIA Act which permitted the State government to set up a parallel probe. Mr. Pawar chaired a meeting of NCP Ministers at the Y.B. Chavan Centre in South Mumbai.

"The moment he read out the Act, we took the cue and



Sharad Pawar

spoke among ourselves on how to set up the SIT. The party believes whatever may be the Shiv Sena's opinion on this, the cases are completely fabricated," said a NCP Minister.

After the meeting, Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said the government would set up an SIT once the legal opinion from the Advocate-

General was received.

"Once we have the A-G's opinion, we will once again speak to the Chief Minister and get approval for this SIT. We are committed to setting up the SIT and most of our leaders agree this should be done," he said. Two other NCP Ministers, including Minority Minister Nawab Malik and Water Resources Minister Jayant Patil, advocated the need for an SIT. "The NIA Section 10 allows the State to institute this SIT, there is no question of withholding such a move from taking place," Mr. Malik said.

While the NCP believes the party's priority is to dig deeper into the issue, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and the Shiv Sena are not keen on perusing the matter further.

'Gandhiji kept protests within limits'

RSS chief's comment is construed as an oblique reference to anti-CAA protests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Monday said that on occasions when Mahatma Gandhi's experiments with protests and agitations went wrong, he used to "take responsibility and make amends", unlike in present times when no one stepped forward to do so.

In what is being seen as an oblique reference to protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the violence, Mr. Bhagwat said, "People are beaten, get bullets and go to court but who comes forward and takes responsibility for such an agitation today?"

He was speaking at the launch of the book *Gandhiji Ko Samajhney Ka Sahi Samay* by former National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)



New perspective: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, centre, releasing a book on Mahatma Gandhi in New Delhi on Monday. ■PTI

chief J.S. Rajput at Gandhi Smriti in New Delhi.

"In Mahatma Gandhi's experiments with agitations, if something went wrong, he made amends for it. Nowadays if such a thing happens, if a law and order situation is created, people face lathi charges or bullets, they suffer but those behind it only

claim victory or defeat," he said.

'Hindu identity'

Mr. Bhagwat said Mahatma Gandhi never shied from claiming his Hindu identity and was a "kattar [committed] Sanatani Hindu" all his life. "Gandhiji at times said that this is a hardcore sanatani

Hindu, and since he was one, he did not distinguish between different ways to worship god. Therefore, he stuck to his faith and advocated respect for other faiths as well".

'Faith in youth'

Mr. Bhagwat stated that 20 years ago, he used to say that the India of Gandhiji's dreams was yet to be formed but expressed "full faith in the youth of today to realise the dream of Gandhiji's India".

Development and its conception should be humanitarian and calculated to benefit the last man in the line, he said.

"Gandhiji always looked at India from an Indian perspective". There was much similarity in the Mahatma's views and that of RSS founder K.B. Hedgewar, he added.

J&K to get delimitation commission

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

About six months after the State of Jammu and Kashmir was split into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh, the government moved on Monday to start the delimitation of Assembly constituencies in J&K.

On a request by the Department of Legislative Affairs of the Ministry of Law and Justice, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora on Monday named Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra as his nominee to the proposed Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir, an EC spokesperson said.

An official of the Commission said the EC was ready to provide secretarial assistance to the Commission once appointed, as it is required to do.

No headway in India-U.S. trade talks

However, officials say differences have narrowed on 25 of the 30 issues

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

With no significant movement on the India-U.S. trade negotiations yet, officials are considering taking even a modest trade deal off the table when U.S. President Donald Trump visits India on February 24-25, sources privy to the talks said.

As *The Hindu* had reported on Friday, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lightizer was due to visit New Delhi last week, but put off the visit when it appeared there was not enough progress in the talks, that appear to have run into trouble over market access for agricultural products including dairy, liberalising e-commerce, and investment norms for retail, as well as India's push for a full

reinstatement of its GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) status that the U.S. revoked last June.

Mr. Lightizer and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal have not spoken since last Thursday, it is learnt, and after another unsuccessful attempt to reschedule Mr. Lightizer's visit over the weekend, officials are beginning to feel that time may be running out to wrap up negotiations in time for the presidential visit.

Met three times

However, officials on both sides have confirmed that there has been a narrowing of differences on as many as 25 of about 30 issues, as USTR officials have met with Commerce Ministry negotia-



Robert Lightizer

tors three times in the past month, and their talks could be picked up after the President's visit. In addition, said the sources, if there is enough political backing for a trade deal of some sort, Mr. Trump, who said last week that he was keen on signing the "right deal" with India,

could include Mr. Lightizer as a part of his delegation to try and make a broad announcement.

Another issue that has eluded resolution despite talks for more than two years concerns the U.S. Embassy's sale of "Lincoln House", its previous Consulate Building in Mumbai, that was sold for a record bid of ₹750 crore to a businessman in 2015. However, the property is on a long-term lease from the Defence Ministry, which has yet to clear the transfer of the property, holding up the payment for the Embassy. Officials had hoped to have this issue, which incurs U.S. Congressional oversight, cleared before Mr. Trump's visit, but have made no headway yet.

Activists held during protest in U.P. get bail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

A group of persons comprising nine students and activists and a woman journalist, who were arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur district while on a 'satyagraha' march to Delhi, were released on bail on Sunday. A sub-divisional magistrate court granted them bail on personal bonds of ₹1 lakh each. Among them was Delhi-based freelance journalist Pradeepika Saraswat.

154 prominent citizens back CAA, NPR, NRC; say protests are motivated

Centre asked to take stern action against those behind stir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

As many as 154 prominent citizens, including former judges, bureaucrats, armed forces officers and academics, on Monday said a "false and motivated" campaign was being launched against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Population Register (NPR) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) with a sinister design to harm the nation.

In a letter to President

Ram Nath Kovind, they urged the Centre to look into the ongoing protests with all seriousness and safeguard the democratic institutions of the country, and to take stern action against those behind them.

The citizens, including 11 former judges of High Courts, 24 retired IAS officers, 11 former Indian Foreign Service officers, 16 retired IPS and 18 former Lieutenant-Generals, said "fear" was being spread across the

length and breadth of India which appeared to be "motivated and with a sinister design" to harm the nation.

They said the campaign was being carried out in a "coordinated manner" leading to violent protests in which public and private property had been destroyed. There had been a "false and nefarious narrative" about the recently enacted legislation such as the CAA, and the idea of the NPR and the NRC.

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd.
(A Government of India Enterprise - Mini Ratna)
CIN: L74899DL1999GOI101707
(a) Notice Inviting E-Tender No. IRCTC/SZ/TSV/2019-20/1, II, VI, VII, IX, XI, XIII, XVII, XVIII, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI & XXVII/04
GGM/SZ invites E-Tender (through two bids system) for provision of Train Side Vending Services in non Pantry Car Superfast and Mail/Express trains over Southern & South Western Railways.
S. No. Sale of Tender Last Date & Time for submission of E-Tender
1 17.02.2020 04.03.2020 at 12:00 hrs
Tender document downloading & participation can be done on Website - www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC
In case of any corrigendum/addendum issued on the above advertisement, it will be published only on IRCTC's website www.irctc.com

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management
Anna University Campus, Chennai-600025
Ph.: +91 44 22200600, Fax: 91 44 22200700
Website: www.ncscm.res.in, e-mail: procurement@ncscm.org
INVITATION FOR BIDS NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
Date: 17.02.2020 PR03/2020 Bid No.: NPMU/G-76
The Director, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, Chennai now invites bids for the Supply of IT Equipments and Related Services-Unified Storage System (1 no.).
Important details are:
1. Period of Sale of bid document : 17.02.2020 to 19.03.2020
2. Date & Time of Pre-Bid Meeting : 02.03.2020 at 11.30 A.M.
3. Last Date & Time of receipt of bids : 20.03.2020 11.00 A.M.
4. Date & Time of opening of bids : 20.03.2020 11.30 A.M.
5. Cost of Bid Document : Rs.2,240/-
6. Bid Security : Rs.2,00,000/-
The detailed notice & the bid document can be seen and downloaded from the NCSCM Website: www.ncscm.res.in Director, NCSCM

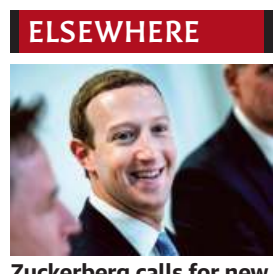
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management
Anna University Campus, Chennai-600025
Ph.: +91 44 22200600, Fax: 91 44 22200700
Website: www.ncscm.res.in, e-mail: procurement@ncscm.org
INVITATION FOR BIDS
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
Date: 17.02.2020 PR04/2020 Bid No.: NPMU/G-97&108
The Director, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, Chennai now invites bids for the Supply of Scientific & Technical Equipments and Related Services-Sub Bottom Profiler (NPMU/G-97) & MIDAS DWR (NPMU/G-108).
Important details are:
1. Period of Sale of bid document : 17.02.2020 to 02.04.2020
2. Date & Time of Pre-Bid Meeting : 04.03.2020 at 11.30 A.M.
3. Last Date & Time of receipt of bids : 03.04.2020 at 11.00 A.M.
4. Date & Time of opening of bids : 03.04.2020 at 11.30 A.M.
5. Cost of Bid Document (for each bid no.) : Rs.2,240/-
6. Bid Security : NPMU/G-97Rs.1,40,000/- NPMU/G-108 Rs.90,000/-
The detailed notice & the bid document can be seen and downloaded from the NCSCM Website: www.ncscm.res.in and www.sicm.nic.in. Director, NCSCM

NLC India Limited
'Navratna' - Government of India Enterprise
Regd. Office : First Floor, No.8, Mayor Sathyamurthy Road, FSD, Egmore Complex of Food Corporation of India, Chelpei, Chennai - 600 031.
Corp. Office : Block-1, Neyveli-807 801, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu.
CIN No.: L93090TN1956COI003507, Website: www.nlcindia.com
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR SUPPLIES (e-Tender Notices Sl.No.2 & 3)
Sl.No. Tender Ref. / Scope of Supplies & Qty. Reqd.
1. NTPL/TUTICORIN: CEO/NTPL/COAL/PTE/2508/2019-20: Logistic contract for movement of raw coal from Talabira Mines NLCIL, Odisha to VOC Port, Tuticorin via Paradip Port. EMD: ₹ 14,60,00,000/-
2. UNIT: M.M.COMPLEX: PTE No.ENQ/H19-20/003334/MM01(01), dt. 13-02-2020: Design, Engineering and Supply of VVVF Drive. Due date of opening: 18-03-2020
3. PTE-ENQ/19-20/003331/MM02(01) dt. 13-02-2020: Labyrinth rings both inner and outer for the troubleshooting and return idlers of 2400 mm, conveyors as per Drg.No.CE/CON/MII/30/91-A Sheet 7 of 14. Qty.: 2,496 Sets. Due date of opening: 11-03-2020
Period of Work: Sl.No.1: Two Years from the date of LOA. Pre-Bid Meeting: Sl.No.1: On 28-02-2020 at 11.00 Hrs. at the O/o, CEO/NTPL, Harbour Estate, Tuticorin - 628 004.
Sl.No. Tender Document Cost Last Date for Receipt Date & Time of Opening
1 ₹ 30,000/- 10-03-2020 Upto 14.30 Hrs. 10-03-2020 At 15.00 Hrs.
FOR e-TENDER DOCUMENTS/DETAILS/CORRIGENDUM, VISIT: www.nlcindia.com
PUBLIC SECTOR IS YOURS: HELP IT TO HELP YOU

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
SAMAGRA SHIKSHA
STATE PROJECT OFFICE, KBC BOYS HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS, OPP.RAITHU BAZAR, PATAMATA, VIJAYAWADA, ANDHRA PRADESH
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
e-procurement notice No. SSA-16021/4/2019-MIS SEC-SSA, dt. 17-02-2020
Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh is inviting Expression of Interest for procurement and supply of (1) three (3) pairs of Uniforms cloth, (2) a set of Note Books, (3) one pair of Shoe and two pairs of Socks, (4) a Belt and (5) a School Bag under the scheme of "Jagananna Vidya Kanuka" to all the students (approximately 40 lakhs in number) studying classes I to X in Government/MPP/ZPP/Municipal/KGBVs/Model Schools/Residential /Aided Schools in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the year 2020-21. For details please visit <https://tender.aperecurement.gov.in> from 22-02-2020. EOI form can be downloaded from website. Eligible firms shall upload the prescribed format as per the schedules given in the above said sheet. Contact No. 0866-2428599. Sd/- V.Chinaveerabhadru, I.A.S., State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh.
DIPR 396PPCL, Dt: 17/02/2020

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
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THE HINDU
LET US KNOW YOU BETTER
Your feedback is valuable to us. Please scan the QR code or visit www.thehindu.com/feedback
You may call us at toll free 1800 102 1878 or write to us at customerservice@thehindu.co.in
A ND-ND



ELSEWHERE
Zuckerberg calls for new big-tech regulator for EU
Facebook head Mark Zuckerberg called for a new type of big tech regulator as he lobbied the EU officials who have become the world's top enforcers on Silicon Valley.

Woman drops charge against Nepal ex-Speaker
Nepal's former Parliament Speaker, who quit his job over attempted rape allegations, was on Monday found not guilty after the victim retracted her testimony.

14 children among 22 killed in Cameroon: UN
Armed men massacred 22 villagers, including 14 children, in an anglophone region of Cameroon, according to the United Nations.

China virus cases cross 70,000

Hundreds of Americans flown home from cruise ship in Japan, 14 with COVID-19

More than 300 American cruise liner passengers, including 14 who were diagnosed with COVID-19, were flown home to military bases in the U.S., after two weeks under quarantine off Japan.



Taking a breather: Medical personnel chatting with a patient diagnosed with COVID-19 at the Wuhan Red Cross Hospital in China.

The cruise ship Diamond Princess, with more than 400 cases, has become the biggest test so far of other countries' ability to contain an outbreak that has killed 1,770 people in China and five elsewhere.

Although U.S. officials said passengers with virus symptoms would not be taken, 14 passengers found at the last minute to have tested positive were permitted to board the planes.

Chinese authorities say the stabilisation in the number of new cases is a sign that measures taken to halt the spread of the disease are having an effect.

Chinese doctors using 'plasma therapy'

Chinese health officials on Monday urged patients who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate blood so that plasma can be extracted to treat others who are critically ill.

Eleven patients at a hospital in Wuhan received plasma infusions last week, said Sun Yanrong, of the Biological Center at the Ministry of Science and Technology.

been discharged, one is able to get off the bed and walk and the others are all recovering," she said.

plans to follow the U.S. in bringing passengers home. Authorities around the world were also trying to track down passengers from another cruise liner, the Westerdam, which was turned away from ports across Southeast Asia for two weeks before docking in Cambodia on Thursday.

Carnival Corp., which operates both cruise liners, said it was cooperating with authorities in trying to trace other passengers.

'No blanket measures' The World Health Organization (WHO) warned against "blanket measures" over the outbreak, pointing out that the epidemic outside of China was only affecting a "tiny" proportion of the population.

WHO also said that - with a mortality rate of around 2% - COVID-19 was "less deadly" than other coronaviruses such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) or the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

suggestion that all cruises should be halted to avoid risking a new nest of infection like the one on the Diamond Princess.

A WHO team earlier held discussions with Beijing health authorities on the outbreak. The team visited the main infectious disease facility, Ditan Hospital, and the Anzhen community centre and health clinic, and held talks with the China Centre for Disease Control.

No let-up in Taliban attacks as fresh orders awaited over deal

'Leadership hasn't conveyed any message about a ceasefire'

Taliban fighters attacked Afghan government forces overnight, and militant commanders said on Monday insurgency operations would go ahead until they receive fresh instructions based on a deal with the U.S. to reduce violence in the country.



U.S. soldiers keeping watch in Nerkh district of Wardak province, in this file photo.

Last week, a senior U.S. administration official said negotiations with Taliban representatives in Qatar had resulted in an agreement in principle for a week-long reduction of violence, but the seven-day period had not commenced.

Our leadership hasn't conveyed any message about a ceasefire to us, said a Taliban commander in Helmand, a southern province that has seen some of the fiercest fighting.

On Sunday night, Taliban fighters attacked Afghan government forces manning a checkpoint in the northern province of Kunduz. According to a statement by Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid, they killed 19 security personnel.

The Afghan Defence Ministry confirmed the attack in a statement but put the death toll at five. It also said retaliatory air strikes were conducted against the militants.

down in Nimroz province, but an official there said the helicopter made an emergency landing and had not been attacked.

Peace accord Despite the violence on the ground, a senior Taliban leader in Doha confirmed a deal with the U.S. is set to be signed by the end of February in a "signing ceremony" in Doha.

Leaders of the United Nations, European Union and Islamic nations would be invited to the attend, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, deputy chief of the Taliban's Doha office, was quoted as saying by Nunn Asia - a pro-Taliban website with strong links to the group's leadership.

Gunmen kill 24 in Burkina Faso

Gunmen killed twenty-four people, including a pastor, in an attack on a church during Sunday mass in north-western Burkina Faso, security sources said on Monday.

religious conflict. The timing of the shooting, during a church service in the village of Pansi in the Yagha region, mirrors that of other attacks on Christians in the past year, including church attacks and assassinations of pastors and priests.

The violence threatens to upend traditionally peaceful relations between the majority Muslim community and Christians, who represent up to a quarter of the population.

Armed assailants "attacked the peaceful residents of this area after identifying them and separating them from non-residents", the government said. It said 18 people were also injured in the attack and an unknown number were kidnapped.

Many Muslims have also been killed by armed groups over the past year. Last October, gunmen stormed a mosque during Friday prayers and killed 15 people.

Trump calls for Russia to stop backing Syrian 'atrocities'

U.S. President expresses concern over violence in Idlib

President Donald Trump has called for Russia to end its support for the Syrian regime's "atrocities" as he expressed U.S. concern over violence in the Idlib region, the White House said on Sunday.



Donald Trump

see an end to Russia's support for the Assad regime's atrocities".

Turkey has 12 observation posts in Idlib as part of a 2018 deal reached between Ankara and Moscow to prevent a regime offensive, but Syrian regime forces have pressed ahead regardless.

"I stressed that the attacks in Idlib must stop and it was necessary to establish a lasting ceasefire that would not be violated," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told journalists at the Munich Security Conference, after he met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

dout northwestern province of Idlib. In a call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Mr. Trump "expressed concern over the violence in Idlib, Syria and... conveyed the United States' desire to

8 killed in suicide attack in Quetta

At least eight people, including two police officers, were killed and several others wounded in a suicide blast on Monday in south-western Pakistan, officials said.

The suicide attack took place in Quetta in Balochistan province, which remains rife with insurgent activity.

The young suicide bomber was trying to enter a religious rally but the police intercepted him at a security barrier. "As police were searching him, he detonated his vest, resulting in the killing of eight people while injuring 23 others," a police officer said.

Pak. no longer a terror 'safe haven': Imran

Prime Minister says his administration fully supports the Afghan peace process

There are no "safe havens" for terror groups in Pakistan "right now", Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Monday while admitting publicly that it was possibly not the case under previous regimes.



Imran Khan

Addressing an international conference marking 40 years of hosting Afghan refugees in the country, he said Pakistan seeks peace in Afghanistan and instability in the country was not in its interest.

Mr. Khan's assertion on terror safe havens came as the Financial Action Task Force, the global anti-money laundering watchdog, began a crucial meeting in Paris where Pakistan is trying to

were operating in the country after 9/11 in the Afghan refugee camps, The News reported.

Mr. Khan's comments came after Sarwar Danish, Afghanistan's second Vice-President, accused Pakistan of allowing the Taliban to recruit new fighters from refugee camps.

Mr. Khan said that while Pakistan cannot fully guarantee that no Taliban militants are hiding among the huge number of Afghans living in the country, his government had done all it can to prevent attacks in Afghanistan, including by building a border fence.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who is on a three-day visit to Pakistan,

credited the nation for supporting Afghan refugees.

"For 40 years, the people of Afghanistan have faced successive crises, for 40 years, the people of Pakistan have responded with solidarity," Mr. Guterres said, while calling on the international community to do more.

Mr. Guterres had earlier termed the improved security situation in Pakistan as "absolutely remarkable", Dawn News reported. "We are witnessing the state becoming present, both from the point of view of security [... and] basic service, development in an absolutely remarkable transformation," he said at a seminar at the National University of Sciences and Technology.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12861

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and a QR code for an interactive version.

- 12 Studied country's extended borders (7)
13 Knowing finally the paint's to be mixed (7)
14 Because of a song only... (3,2)
15 ...soldiers and spies have reactionary tendencies (8)
16 Bulb lit up by accident (5)
17 Play's in American city, by the way (7)
18 Dear Mike's new profession (8)
19 Making friends with cricket players, part of children's code (7,7)
20 Send back watch (5)
21 One writing in Tamil dealt with union affairs (7)
22 Rated a book as old (6)
23 Not good to have set up the last fighting unit (7)
24 Field where soldiers enter one by one (5)
25 Two drinks over mid afternoon? There is mortification (7)
26 Posed say with French composer (5)
27 Happy to take on, dog's tail is stretched (9)
28 A flower takes form, it's of inferior quality (8)
29 Weighed down with last of the tomatoes rotten (6)
30 Crime syndicates growing racket in the country (8)
31 Alien entered England's borders, was no longer friendly (9)
32 Depoliticise conversion, losing sleep is stupid (7)
33 One writing in Tamil dealt with union affairs (7)
34 Rated a book as old (6)
35 Field where soldiers enter one by one (5)

SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzle grid with difficulty rating stars.

Solution to puzzle 12860 and solution to yesterday's Sudoku.

FAITH

Word of God

The Padma Purana features a conversation between Lord Narayana and Lakshmi on the Bhagavad Gita. Siva quotes this to Parvati who wishes to know in detail the merits of this text spoken by the Lord Himself.

MARKET WATCH

	17-02-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	41055	-0.49
US Dollar	71.29	0.11
Gold	41565	-0.55
Brent oil	57.25	-0.03

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	362.80	-4.05
Asian Paints	1881.40	4.35
Axis Bank	738.40	1.90
Bajaj Auto	3075.60	-70.80
Bajaj Finserv	9528.85	-161.65
Bajaj Finance	4776.65	-5.10
Bharti Airtel	564.85	-0.15
BPL	461.65	-14.80
Britannia Ind	3084.10	-12.55
Cipla	431.90	-15.20
Coal India	167.85	-6.90
Dr Reddys Lab	3295.55	-8.75
Eicher Motors	18535.90	-167.65
GAIL (India)	118.90	-4.55
Grasim Ind	737.40	-5.65
HCL Tech	613.45	-8.20
HDFC	2350.25	-51.50
HDFC Bank	1217.15	-2.20
Hero MotoCorp	2283.35	-73.15
Hindalco	190.25	-3.75
Hind Unilever	2252.60	-2.45
ICICI Bank	541.60	-4.20
IndusInd Bank	1172.95	-3.05
Bharti Infratel	235.00	-0.45
Infosys	789.45	3.00
Indian Oil Corp	111.80	-3.30
ITC	204.80	-2.90
JSW Steel	288.15	-1.00
Kotak Bank	1691.10	10.15
L&T	1280.20	-14.95
M&M	522.75	-0.25
Maruti Suzuki	6906.75	-7.05
Nestle India Ltd.	16588.45	232.00
NTPC	110.30	-2.40
ONGC	99.95	-3.35
PowerGrid Corp	183.60	-0.50
Reliance Ind	1478.25	-9.35
State Bank	314.20	-5.20
Sun Pharma	408.40	-10.15
Tata Motors	169.10	0.00
Tata Steel	436.85	2.30
TCS	2203.25	19.05
Tech Mahindra	833.25	-0.90
Titan	1316.05	22.60
UltraTech Cement	4449.85	15.50
UPL	595.00	3.35
Vedanta	142.10	1.00
Wipro	243.80	0.90
YES Bank	37.15	-1.75
Zee Entertainment	239.20	0.45

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on February 17

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	71.09	71.41
Euro	77.04	77.42
British Pound	92.52	92.94
Japanese Yen (100)	64.66	64.98
Chinese Yuan	10.18	10.23
Swiss Franc	72.37	72.73
Singapore Dollar	51.18	51.41
Canadian Dollar	53.75	53.99
Malaysian Ringgit	17.13	17.23

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

February 17 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	50.2	(50)
22 ct gold (1g)	3902	(3924)

SEBI caps fees for investment advisers

Board okays separation of advisory, distribution to minimise conflict of interest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has amended the regulatory framework for investment advisers to introduce a cap on the maximum fee such entities can charge to investors while segregating the advisory and distribution activities to minimise conflict of interest issues.

2.5% of assets

The board of the capital markets watchdog, which met in Mumbai, approved the amendment in the SEBI (Investment Advisers) Regulations 2013, which also stipulated that a person dealing in distribution of securities cannot use the nomenclature 'Independent Financial Adviser' or 'Wealth Adviser' without registering as an investment adviser with the regulator.

While the regulator did



SEBI Chairman Ajay Tyagi, right, and Member G. Mahalingam, at a press conference in Mumbai on Monday. ■SHASHI ASHWAL

not specify the upper limit of fees, a consultation paper floated by SEBI in January had proposed capping the fees at 2.5% of the assets under advice or a fixed fee of ₹75,000 per year per family.

Further, an Individual Investment Adviser will not be able to provide distribution

services, stated a release by the regulator. On a different note, the regulator also said that Karvy Stock Broking, which is under the regulatory scanner for pledging client securities to raise funds for itself, will make good the payout shortfall by March.

The shortfall in payout, after factoring in the available securities and funds of Karvy Group, is estimated at about ₹680 cr.

Karvy Group is in the process of selling stake in a group company and the term sheet has already been signed, said SEBI chairman Ajay Tyagi while addressing the media after the board meeting.

The shortfall in payout, after factoring in the available securities and funds of the group, is estimated at about ₹680 crore.

As per the SEBI chairman, Karvy Stock Broking's outstanding payment obligations are pegged at ₹1,189 crore while the group has available funds amounting to ₹511 crore.

Among other things, the

regulator has made it mandatory for sponsors of mutual funds to invest in close ended schemes. Currently, such a requirement is mandatory for all kinds of schemes except close-ended ones.

Circular soon

Mr. Tyagi added that the regulator was examining the issue of categorisation of funds and would soon come out with a circular.

This is on the back of representation from the industry that fund houses were finding it difficult to invest, especially in the small-cap universe.

The regulator has also amended the SEBI (Depositories and Participants) Regulations to include a clause that would state that pledge would include re-pledge of securities for margin and/or settlement obligations of the client.

Response to long-term repo encouraging: RBI

Bids far exceed notified amount

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The response to the first long-term repo auction, which was conducted on Monday, was highly encouraging, the Reserve Bank of India said. The central bank has received total bids of ₹1.94 lakh crore, for the three year repo, compared with the notified amount of ₹25,000 crore.

"The response to the long term repo operation (LTRO) has been highly encouraging. The total bids that were received amounted to ₹1,94,414 crore, implying a bid-to-cover ratio (i.e., the quantum of bids received relative to the amount announced) of 7.8," RBI said in a statement after the first auction on Monday.

"The total amount of bids has, in fact, exceeded the aggregate amount of ₹1 lakh crore proposed to be of-

fered under the LTRO scheme." RBI will conduct the second issue for ₹25,000 crore on February 24 which will have a 1-year tenor.

In the sixth bimonthly monetary policy review earlier this month, the central bank, while keeping the key interest rate unchanged, had announced that it would conduct term repos of one-year and three-year tenors up to a total amount of ₹1 lakh crore at the policy repo rate, which is 5.15%.

These will allow banks to garner funds cheaper than the prevailing market and in turn, help them to reduce interest rate costs. "This should encourage banks to undertake maturity transformation smoothly and seamlessly so as to augment credit flows to productive sectors," RBI had said while making the announcement.

Moody's cuts India GDP forecast; 'demand, credit growth critical'

Improved indicators indicate economy may have stabilised

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Moody's has revised its growth forecasts for India downward to 5.4% for 2020 and 5.8% for 2021, from its previous projections of 6.6% and 6.7%, respectively.

It has also revised its global GDP growth forecast down, given the adverse impact of the coronavirus on the world economy.

"We now expect G-20 economies to collectively grow 2.4% in 2020, a softer rate than last year, followed by a pick-up to 2.8% in 2021," Moody's said in a report.

"We have reduced our growth forecast for China to 5.2% in 2020 and maintain

our expectation of 5.7% growth in 2021," it said.

Moody's also lowered growth projections for Mexico and South Africa, as it has for India, as a reflection of domestic challenges in these countries rather than external factors.

On India, it said that the economic recovery would likely be shallow. "India's economy has decelerated rapidly over the last two years. Improvements in the latest high frequency indicators such as PMI data suggest that the economy may have stabilised," it said.

"While the economy may well begin to recover in the current quarter, we expect

any recovery to be slower than we had previously expected," it added.

A key to stronger economic momentum would be the revival of domestic demand, both rural and urban. But equally important is the resumption of credit growth in the economy, Moody's said.

"As data from the RBI shows, credit impulse in the economy has deteriorated throughout the last year as a result of the drying up of lending from non-bank financial institutions as well as from banks. Banks have been both unwilling to lend and to lower lending rates despite successive interest rate cuts by [RBI]," it said.

SP Group wants presence in Tata board

Cross appeal in SC seeks more incisive and relevant relief from NCLAT order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Shapoorji Pallonji Mistry Group (SP Group), which owns 18.32% in Tata Sons Ltd., has filed a limited cross appeal in the Supreme Court arguing that it deserved a more incisive and relevant relief from the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order, including a proportionate representation on the board of Tata Sons.

An SP Group spokesperson confirmed the development, but refused to divulge further details. A copy of the appeals reviewed by *The Hindu* essentially argues that the NCLAT had arrived at a clear and unequivocal finding of prejudicial conduct by the majority share-



Representation on Tata Sons' board was sought to help protect SP Group's investments in future. ■PRASHANT NARKE

holders of Tata Sons, but failed to provide certain important reliefs that would have put an end to the oppressive conduct of the majority.

The appeals seek proportionate representation on the Board of Tata Sons to ensure that its interests and in-

vestments, now worth over ₹1 lakh crore, were protected in future. The prime driver of the appeals is to secure deletion of certain specific provisions in the Articles of Association of Tata Sons.

The SP Group also prayed 'to delete the necessity of affirmative vote in the hands of

select directors under Article 121 that enables them to override the views of the entire board of directors or alternatively the requirement of an affirmative vote conferred on directors nominated under Article 104B should be restricted to matters covered by Article 121A and such rights be extended to the majority directors of the appellants group as appointed under (i) above."

A Tata Sons spokesperson declined to offer any comment. The appellants argued that while the manifest abuse of power and conduct lacking in probity had been explicitly found by the NCLAT in the manner of the removal of Cyrus Mistry, reinstatement in office was not sought.

RIL to consolidate media, distribution businesses

To merge the entities into Network18

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) plans to consolidate its media and distribution businesses spread across multiple entities into Network18, in a move that will make Network18 an integrated media and distribution company with a revenue of ₹8,000 crore.

"Under the Scheme of Arrangement, TV18 Broadcast, Hathway Cable & Datacom and Den Networks will merge into Network18 Media & Investments," the company said in a statement, adding that the appointed date for the merger shall be February 1, 2020.

The board of directors of the respective companies

approved the Scheme of Amalgamation and Arrangement at their meetings held on Monday.

Shares ratio

Under the scheme, 92 shares of Network18 will be given for every 100 shares of TV18, 78 shares of Network18 for every 100 shares of Hathway, and 191 shares of Network18 will be given for every 100 shares of Den.

The broadcasting business will be housed in Network18 and the cable and ISP businesses in two separate wholly owned subsidiaries of Network18.

RIL said the restructuring shall create value-chain integration and render substantial economies of scale.

Fiscal deficit target realistic: FM

A lot of consultation preceded 'pragmatic' Budget, she says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

The fiscal deficit mentioned in the budget proposal 2020-21 was 'absolutely realistic' in terms of the scope of revenue generation, scope of investments and projection for economic growth and consumption, said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Addressing a media conference here on Friday, the Minister said, "We have been absolutely realistic with all the figures, that we can spend or borrow, presented in the budget. A fiscal deficit target of 3.5% for next fiscal is the real picture."

On inflation, she said the government was hopeful. She cited the case of seasonal, perishable commodities which make up a significant



Nirmala Sitharaman

size in the basket; except for seasonal fluctuation, prices of most goods, particularly food products, have been kept well within acceptable norms, she said.

Responding to a query on relief for telecom companies, Ms Sitharaman said the Telecom Ministry would decide on the payment of adjusted gross revenue (AGR)

arrears by defaulting telecom firms, as recently directed by the Supreme Court. "The concerned Ministry has been engaging with telecom players since the court's ruling. I will wait to hear the Telecom Ministry's decision."

It may be recalled that Justice Arun Mishra-led bench on February 14 ordered Airtel and Vodafone Idea to pay their AGR dues immediately to avoid contempt of court.

'Congenial environment' Speaking at the fifth post-Budget interactive session, she said a lot of preparation and consultation had gone into drafting a pragmatic, forward-looking Budget, which was also designed to ensure a congenial environment for taxpayers.

Domestic air traffic rose 2.2% in Jan., says DGCA

'Airlines ferried 1.27 crore passengers'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Domestic aviation traffic grew at 2.2% last month as compared to the same period last year, according to the DGCA's monthly report.

Indian airlines ferried a total of 1.27 crore passengers in January 2020 as compared to 1.25 crore in January 2019.

Gurgaon-based SpiceJet maintained its lead in capacity utilisation with 91.5% of seats sold, followed by Go Air (88.7%), IndiGo (87.8%) and Vistara (83.5%).

Air Asia was the most punctual airline in the month, with 75.7% of its flight departing and arriving on time. It was followed by IndiGo (74%), Vistara

(70.2%), GoAir (69.4%) and SpiceJet (65.3%).

IndiGo cornered 47.9% of the market share, while SpiceJet, at the second place, enjoyed 16.6% of the share. Air India had 11.6% of the total market share.

Air India saw the highest rate of cancellations, with 4.12% of its total flights being cancelled, according to government data.

More than 2.8 lakh passengers were affected by delays and cancellations and received a total of ₹2.26 crore in compensation from different airlines. Poor weather was responsible for as many 52% of cancellations, followed by technical glitches, which led to 24.1% of flights being affected.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

State-owned Indian Overseas Bank is exploring options to raise funds through a follow-on public offer (FPO) during the next financial year.

The bank was comfortable after the recent capital infusion of ₹4,360 crore, but raising money through FPO is on the cards. "We plan to raise funds through FPO probably during the second quarter of the next fiscal," IOB's executive director Ajay Kumar Srivastava said.

In an informal chat with reporters here on Monday, he said the bank was in the process of improving performance in terms of controlling net non-performing assets. It had successfully brought down net NPAs during the last quarter ended December 31 as compared to the year earlier period.

In quantitative terms, the net NPAs, which were around ₹17,000 crore in December 2018, had been brought down to ₹7,000 crore by the end of third quarter this fiscal. The net NPA was at 5.8%, below the 6% stipulated by the RBI. "We expect to clock net profit by the end of the fourth quarter and request the regulator to bring us out of the prompt corrective action framework which intends to help financially weak banks back to health before going for the FPO," he said.

IOB's net interest margin was currently about 1.94% and it was expected to touch the 2% level by the end of the current quarter. He, however, said it would take another three to four quarters for reaching 3% NIM. He said the Centre held nearly 95% of the stake in the bank and LIC had another 2%.

Godrej arm buys ₹1,359 cr. land in Delhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Godrej Properties Ltd. (GPL), in one of the largest land transactions in the country, has announced the purchase of 26 acres land in Ashok Vihar, Delhi, for ₹1,359 crore. The company will build a residential project on the land.

The payment will be made in instalments over several years as stipulated in the tender documents. Pirojsha Godrej, executive chairman, Godrej Properties said, "We believe this project is one of the most exciting projects in our development portfolio and will contribute significantly to the growth of our business in NCR. We will seek to ensure a landmark project that delivers an outstanding lifestyle for its residents."

JSW Energy to buy GMR Odisha unit for ₹5,321 cr.

Plans to reach 10,000 MW by 2025

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

JSW Energy has entered into exclusive discussions with GMR Energy Limited (GEL) for potential acquisition of its subsidiary, GMR Kamalanga Energy Limited (GKEL), which owns and operates a 1,050 MW (3x350 MW) thermal power plant in Odisha, for an enterprise value of ₹5,321 crore.

Prashant Jain, joint managing director and CEO JSW Energy said, "With GMR's Kamalanga and Hind Bharat acquisition, our total installed capacity will be 6,350 MW of which 1,640 MW will be renewable. Going forward, we are planning to add 3,500 MW of renewable capacity to reach a total capacity of 10,000 MW by 2020."

JSW Energy has signed a

Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) with GEL to acquire 100% stake in GKEL for ₹5,321 crore subject to working capital and other adjustments.

This acquisition will expand the company's presence in the eastern region of the country and further diversify its fuel mix and off-take arrangements, besides taking the overall installed capacity of the company to 5,609 MW.

When asked about funding the acquisition, Mr. Jain said, "We will take existing debt of ₹3,951 crore in our books and will pay ₹1,370 crore on closing of the deal and another ₹755 crore on completion of certain milestones. We have strong balance sheet with debt equity ratio of 0.76:1. So, funding will not be problem."

CARE Ratings downgrades Vodafone Idea

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Care Ratings Limited (CARE), has downgraded its rating on long-term bank facilities and non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of Vodafone Idea to CARE BB- (under credit watch with negative implications).

The ratings were downgraded on account of a significant erosion in the overall risk profile of the company while taking cognisance of the financial impact after not being granted relief on the modification plea of February 14, 2020 in which telecom companies sought a new schedule of adjusted gross revenue dues by the Supreme Court, and significant losses to the tune of ₹6,453 crore in Q3FY20, Care said.

NCLAT allows JSW Steel to acquire Bhushan Power

Tribunal provides immunity from prosecution by ED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal on Monday allowed JSW Steel to acquire of Bhushan Power & Steel Ltd. for ₹19,700 crore by providing it immunity from prosecution by Enforcement Directorate.

A two-member bench headed by Chairman Justice S.J. Mukhopadhyaya, said that JSW Steel would be immune from the acts done by the former promoters of Bhushan Power & Steel Ltd. (BPSL). However, it said that prosecution against the former promoters under the Money Laundering Act by the Enforcement Directorate could continue. It has also rejected the petitions filed by operational creditors, seeking higher claims.



BPSL's Ebitda earned during its insolvency resolution period will be given to JSW Steel. ■B. M. SIDDALINGASWAMY

The Bench said that the Ebitda (earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization) earned by BPSL during its Corporate Insolvency resolution period will be given to JSW Steel.

On October 10, the ED had attached assets worth over ₹4,025 crore of debt-ridden BPSL in connection

with its money laundering probe linked to an alleged bank loan fraud by its former promoters.

JSW Steel, which emerged as the successful resolution applicant with its ₹19,700 crore bid for BPSL, filed an appeal against the ED's move before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).

Drape side story

RANJANI GOVIND

The Registry of Sarees in Bengaluru released *Pleated*, by Aishwarya Rao, with illustrations by Riddhi Desai. Aishwarya, born in Bengaluru and raised in Chennai says she wrote the book for her Amamma (grandmother). Her grandmother's colourful collection of saris is woven into the uniquely-designed book. The book opens out like an accordion echoing the pleats of a sari and is printed on both sides. "*Pleated* is neither an authority on saris, nor a comprehensive tome on the garment and colours," says Aishwarya who studied Communications at Symbiosis (Pune) before doing a Masters in Business Administration from The University of Texas.

Complex and inspirational characters from South India such as M. S. Subbulakshmi, J. Jayalalitha and Bangalore Nagarathnamma people the book. Visual artist, designer and illustrator, Riddhi says she fell in love with textiles when she visited the Calico Museum of Textiles in Ahmedabad. Aishwarya and Riddhi speak about their book, in this conversation.

How did you two come together?

Aishwarya: I started writing Amamma's story and realised that some of my favourite books combined the power of words and visuals. I reached out to Riddhi on Instagram. I had been a silent fan of her work. We met for the first time over coffee and it felt like the pieces of a puzzle had fallen into place.

What was the concept behind the book?

Aishwarya: As you go through Amamma's story, you will notice how untraditional and untraditional she is. From wearing colours she liked and living a minimalistic life to looking beyond religion, caste and colour,

Aishwarya Rao and Riddhi Desai talk of *Pleated*, a uniquely designed book on saris



Design duo
Riddhi and Aishwarya
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

my Amamma displayed an independence of thought. She wasn't the only one...There were other bold, brave women at a time when feminism was not a trend. The women belonged to a time and society that loved to stereotype and demanded adherence to a norm. Everything you wore and the way you wore it acquired meanings and told a story. For example, the sari brooch spoke of sophistication while lipstick suggested a slight stain in character – women who wore make up were labelled provocative. These women, however, refused to be stereotyped and that is why they are featured in *Pleated*.

Riddhi: I wanted to showcase the life of



Raji (Aishwarya's Amamma) and other bold women through the pleats of the sari. One side of the book celebrates the Kanjeevaram sari and *korvai* border where the illustrated motifs come together to share Amamma's story. The other side of *Pleated* is a celebration of women from South India, with illustrations and details inspired by Indian architecture.

How did you choose the other women in the book?

Aishwarya: This book is not only about Amamma's collection of Kanjeevarams, Arani Pattus or Sungudi saris. Her saris were functional.

However, her unique choice of colours combined with standard and simple borders made many of her saris statement pieces. The chapter titles *Karuppu* (black) *Vadamalli* (globe amaranth) reflect that thought. I wanted a book to ex-



plore the idea of what if the most traditionally dressed women were actually our most liberal thinkers, our own rebel girls.

You have to look beyond what they are wearing. As you look beyond M. S.'s signature drape, you find a woman who expressed her love for a co-star rather uninhibitedly, a woman who sang in praise of Allah and Jesus without a second thought.

How long did you take to write the book?

Aishwarya: I started working on the front side (Amamma's story) from August 2018. The book took 18 months. This was a passion project. I am not a regular author. My day job as an eCommerce consultant is both incredibly busy and unimaginative. I worked on *Pleated* after hours and on weekends.

Could you comment on the structure?

Riddhi: The format of the book was finalised first and then the design and illustration followed. It took us a year from the end of 2018. The accordion-fold format was the first thread of our conversation.

Could you elaborate on the illustrations?

Riddhi: The artworks of the women, real and mythological, were studied from different points of time. I didn't have access to a colour image of Sarojini Naidu or a middle-aged Rukmini Devi. To visually translate the text on jewels, I read the Tamil epic *Silappadikaram* for the description of the courtesan, Madhavi. I don't recall a depiction of clothing; for me the jewels on Madhavi were her drape. There was an equal amount of time spent on research as much as execution.

From Kanjeevaram designs, colours, motifs, its symbolism to the studies done on the lives of the women. Skin tones of the women were carefully worked on: Draupadi (also called Krishna because of her complexion) is rarely depicted in dark skin tones.

All the women's illustrations were sketched first and then rendered in Photoshop. Padmini, M. S., and Jayalalitha are all carefully rendered. I was thrilled when The Registry of Sarees called us to say how much they loved the book.

#DELHI MOVES



ANAT KAUR

Amidst the hustle and bustle of Gur Mandi in North Delhi, is the Guru Prem Nath *akhara*, a regular two-storey building. The reception area has photos of wrestlers like Divya Kakran and Unnati Rathore on its paint-peeling wall.

On the ground floor is a traditional mud pit, made soft with turmeric, milk, curd, henna, and gravel-less mud rolled together. On the first floor, is a modern wrestling mat, where kids warm up in groups and practise their moves in four-minute sessions. They halt and greet every visitor who walks in.

Vikram Kumar Sonkar – he's a former wrestler whose father, the Arjuna awardee wrestler Prem Nath founded the space – is presently the head coach and owner of the *akhara*, and does not charge the trainees. The *akhara*, adopted by Sports Authority of India, needs more attention.

"Every five years, the mat has to be replaced with a new one to avoid

The Akhara GIRLS

The Guru Prem Nath wrestling centre in the city is overcoming a sporting taboo



injuries. The mat costs around ₹3-3.5 lakh. We have been waiting for the new one for a very long time. The current condition of the mat can cause injury to the wrestlers," says Sonkar.

Regardless, the 46-year-old *akhara* is today breaking long-held gender-based taboos and conventions: Girls outnumber boys here.

"There are 80 girls out of 150 students. They are very talented and most of the girls have defeated boys

in their villages. The 2018 Commonwealth Games bronze medalist Divya Kakran is still my student, whenever she is in Delhi, she trains here," says Sonkar, who coached the Greco-Roman wrestling team in the 2014 Asian Games.

Badges of honour

One of the reasons that female participation in wrestling has been slow to catch on, is regular physical injury and bruising. Deformed, or

"cauliflower ears" is a common sight with wrestlers. But cousins Shivani Singh and Simran Pawar say that it is "a matter of pride" for wrestlers to have one.

This has also kept families away from 'sending' girls to the mat. But Kavita and Rani, mothers of Neha, 13, and Sheetal, 14, accompany them to the *akhara* daily. "Initially I used to be scared about Neha getting injured but one can get injured at home also," says Kavita. "So, I am not afraid of it any more. I give her massages when we go back home to soothe her muscles," she adds. They came from Nahari in Sonapat to Azadpur in Delhi, three months ago, for training.

A force to reckon with
Grapplers showcasing the art of training
• V.V. KRISHNAN



Miles to go

Neha's family is an example of those who have moved from neighbouring towns to be closer to the Prem Nath *akhara*, to devote more time towards learning.

Many of the students here also make long daily commutes, from places like Burari, a town in the North Delhi district.

Sonkar refers to Manya Rajput, 10, who has won the title of "Nau Sherwaan" (nine bouts in succession) and claims that she can be "the next big thing in wrestling".

Another gifted girl is Anjali Sharma, 11, he says.

The pride of the *akhara* is the 18-year-old Unnati Rathore, who comes from a family of wrestlers.

"I want to make this *akhara*, my family, and my country proud," she says despite nursing an operated left shoulder while fighting in a competition six months ago. Rathore likes India's 2020 Olympic medal hopeful, Vinesh Phogat, but she refers to United States' wrestler Helen Louise Maroulis, a gold medalist in the 53 kg category, at the 2016 Rio Olympics, as her favourite.

The growing number of girls wanting to pursue wrestling is a sign of the times. It is no more a taboo and, as Sonkar observes, women wrestlers are set to bring glory in times to come at the world level.

PEOPLE

Paint and glory

Up close and personal with legendary artists at this frame shop in Kolkata



How often do you get to look at – even touch and feel – a Jamini Roy or a Nandalal Bose or an S.H. Raza, as if you were browsing in a supermarket?

At the Salt Lake City branch of Chemould, the famed framemakers in Kolkata, you can. Works of several legends rest casually on the walls of this tiny shop, as if they're recently-framed pictures waiting to be collected by customers. You realise their value only when you ask for the price and subsequently look at the signature.

"It is no fun admiring creations of great artists from a distance. You should be able to get intimate with them. Only then you can appreciate art," says Arnab Chakraverty, 42, whose family is in the business of importing frames. They bought over Chemould – started in Park Street in 1941 by celebrated art patron Keku Gandhi – in 2008.

In 2011 they revived the art gallery that Chemould had once been known for, and on Valentine's Day in 2014 Chakraverty opened a branch in FE Block of Salt Lake City. "My wife Debina is an artist herself; she had won the President's Medal when she was barely 13. After I got married I began to appreciate art. Today I have works of almost all the big artists you can think of: M.F. Husain, Jamini Roy, Nandalal Bose, Bikash Bhattacharya, F.N. Souza (in picture in his left hand), Ganesh Pyne, V.S. Gaitonde, Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Gopal Ghose and many more," says Chakraverty.

Works of Husain, which command the highest price, about ₹40 lakh each, are not displayed in the shop, but those of most others are, including one by Nicholas Roerich (in picture in his right hand). Chakraverty's collection includes mica paintings (the oldest dates back to 1830), and also Kalighat and Dutch Bengal art.

"Earlier I hardly had people coming into the shop, but now there is some awareness. I am even getting a few customers," says Chakraverty. Each work of art comes with the certificate of provenance and authenticity, which specifies where it was sourced from. "No one would spend ₹30 or 40 lakh – that's the cost of a small apartment – on a painting whose authenticity they are not sure of," he says.

He recalls an incident from 2018, when he sold two works of artist Ram Kumar to a customer from Jamshedpur. "Someone later told the customer that the paintings may not be genuine. I told him that he was free to return them, but he liked them so much that he didn't want to part with them and took them to Ram Kumar himself, who was 94 at the time, for verification. Ram Kumar had told him the works were indeed his. Then, exactly three days later, the artist died."

BISHWANATH GHOSH

PRODUCTS

Milk choices



Aadvik Foods that has launched flavoured camel milk powder in banana and chocolate, an addition to their existing raw camel milk powder. They freeze-dry the milk to make the powder at their Vadodara manufacturing plant. The milk itself, they claim, is sourced from camel breeders from Gujarat and Rajasthan. The brand has a number of camel milk products, including body butter, soap, chocolate, along with Camel Milk Powder (plain and flavoured). They also do goat and cow milk products.

Available at Aadvikfoods.com, ₹650 for 150 gm and ₹1,200 for 300 gm

Contact us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



PERFORMANCE

Tabla and vocal

Swarit Foundation is holding the 11th Smaran concert series, featuring young Indian classical musicians and dancers. The event will have a solo tabla recital by Ishaan Ghosh, a disciple of Pt. Nayan Ghosh, accompanied by Mudassar Khan on the sarangi. This will be followed by a Dhrupad vocal recital by Dr. Aditi Sharma Garg.

VENUE: Amaltas Hall, India Habitat Centre
TIME: 7 p.m.



RETAIL

Crafts mela

Select Citywalk is hosting Cottage Crafts Mela that will have a range of handloom and handicrafts products under one roof. Organised by the Central Cottage Industries, this week-long mela, which begins today, will showcase various products like wood carvings, leather products, and other handicrafts.

VENUE: The Plaza, Saket
TIME: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.



FOOD

New menu

European cuisine and bar The Irish House has introduced a new menu titled All Good Inside, which features grilled and baked options. Some key items include: Pita Pan (baked pita chips), German Imbiss (grilled sausages in a German 'curry'), Drunken Waffle Wich (waffle sandwich with bourbon cream).

VENUE: Nehru Place and Noida outlets
TIME: 12 noon - 12 midnight



FAIR

Handmade products

The Small Industries Development Bank of India has organised a week-long Swavalamban Bazaar, that will showcase the products of 50 artisans from diverse parts of the country. On till 20th February, the collection on sale includes paintings, textiles, hand embroidery, jewellery, healthcare products, and wooden toys.

VENUE: IGNCA, Janpath
TIME: 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.



EXHIBITION

Art and design

Stir Gallery has its second edition of the art and design exhibition titled Materiology 2, with the theme "What happens when yesterday becomes tomorrow?" Curated by Amit Gupta and Pramiti Madhavji, the show is a fun interplay of narratives that tie in yesterday's memories, today's actuality, and tomorrow's dreams.

VENUE: 2 North Drive, DLF Chhatrapur Farms
TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Kogo is a device-app combo which leverages Artificial Intelligence, enabling you to track your journey and create multimedia travel stories

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

We (two other journalists and I) are in transit from Jodhpur to Khimsar. A two-hour, 100-kilometre ride. The sky has changed from glimmering golden orange to purplish black. After crossing centuries-old forts and temples, we are on a barren, almost empty highway. Just a few *dhabas*, fuel stations and dirty-green thorny plants to look at from the car window. The phone, to preserve charge, has been switched off. A prolonged period of inactivity, the lack of interesting sights, the near-constant speed and the full-blast AC of the vehicle cause torpor. Which is when we decide it is the best time for a *chai* break.

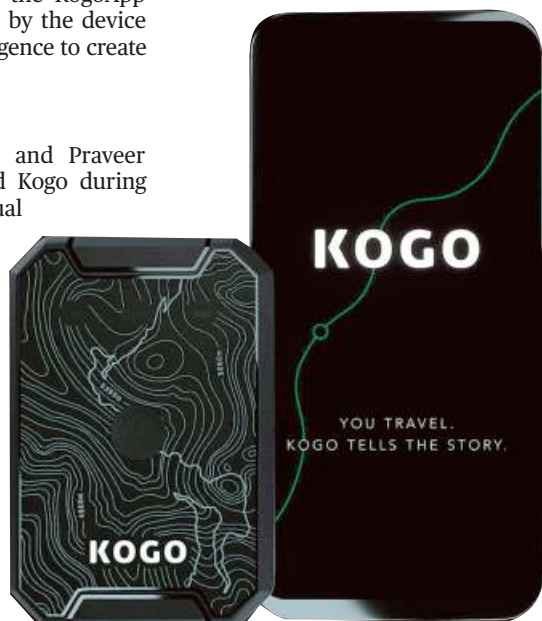
The hot and spicy *moong dal pakoras* served with fried green chilli at the Nagori Cold Drinks tea stall might not be world famous. But it is now one of my favourite snacks. With the magnificent forts and the spectacular sand dunes of Khimsar, I will also cherish the small tea stall in Bawari during my two-day stay in Rajasthan. And, thanks to Kogo, I can locate this little-known roadside stall and suggest its *moong dal pakora*.

Kogo, launched in January, is a device-app combo that enables you to minutely track your road trips and effortlessly create multimedia travel stories with them. The soapbar-sized, octagonal gadget (KogoBOT) – which you can carry or attach to your vehicle – has a dedicated GPS and multiple sensors to map the journey. And, the KogoApp takes the data captured by the device and uses Artificial Intelligence to create stories of your travels.

Origin story
Raj K. Gopalakrishnan and Praveer Kochhar conceptualised Kogo during one of their many annual trips to Spiti Valley. “We were coming back from the Sangla Valley,” says Praveer, “And, we were arguing about the location of a place where we had some amazing Maggi with chicken on our previous trip. We spent about an hour-and-a-half trying to zero-in on the place but we couldn’t. That is when we were thought, ‘We travel so much. So,



A travelogue bot for the roadtripper



why can't we log these things?" What is the need for a new device when your phone can do it?

Praveer answers, “I have used a dozen tracking apps. A lot of these apps use the phone's GPS. For long-duration trips, you need to have the app running all the time in the foreground for the GPS to function. But if you have to use say, WhatsApp or Facebook, then, the apps that aren't being used go to the background.” In an effort to reduce power consumption, the latest versions of Android limit background apps to receive location updates only a few times every hour, which reduces the mapping accuracy.

Secondly, the KogoBOT is a powerhouse. It can last up to seven days on a single full charge, and save up to 10 days of data even when there is no network.

Praveer's third reason is privacy. “We foresee that permanent taking of location from mobile phones is going to be completely absent. It might even hap-



pen within the next year. It would be infringing on your privacy if your phone is constantly sending data. The beauty of Kogo is you can switch it off whenever you want.”

When does the tracking begin and end on Kogo? “The tracking happens only after you start a trip on the app and are moving. When you are stationary for 20 seconds, the device goes into sleep, so it can conserve battery. The device's vibration sensor knows when you are moving, so, it wakes up and starts tracking again.” Once you end the trip, the device – if it is on and moving – sends what Praveer calls “location pings” once in three minutes. And, it stops tracking when switched off.

The KogoApp is a work in progress. It, for instance, doesn't have enough photo or video-editing options. Video streaming is often slow. The destination can't be changed after the trip starts.

Stuck on you The KogoBOT is a soapbar-sized, octagonal device that can be attached to your vehicle • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

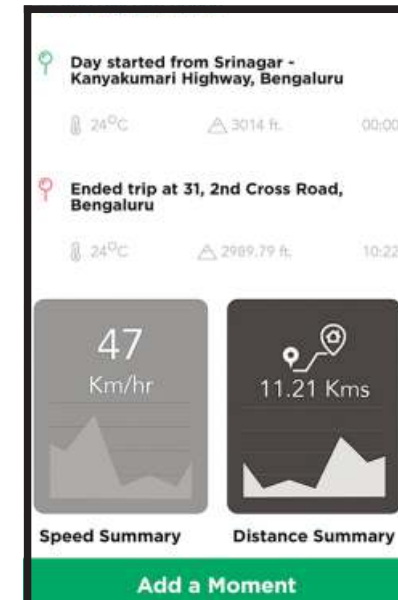
How Kogo works

Start a trip by entering the destination and choose your sharing preference.

Kogo will create a title for the trip (which you can edit) and start tracking the journey.

After the trip, you can view the details of your trip: route, time, temperature, stops and others.

You can upload pictures and videos of your journey even after the trip; Kogo will use the files' timestamp to chronologically slot it in your story.



What is in store?

Praveer promises significant additions to the app in the next few months. “You will have the option to discuss a trip with other users. The second thing is: you will be able to book experiences on the app. For example, we have partnered with Homestays of India, which has over 100 properties across India.”

The KogoBOT, priced ₹7,749 (including a one-year subscription of the KogoApp as an introductory offer), caters mainly to regular road-trippers – occasional travellers might consider it an expensive option. Praveer, however, reckons this niche audience is sufficient for Kogo's growth.

“In India, we identified about 1.3 crore serious travellers. Our aim for the next three years is to reach 300,000 of them and 450,000 outside India.” Kogo's targeting to cover a million kilometres within a year, for which the company has partnered with JAWA Motorcycle Company to cover 3,00,000 kilometres.

“This is just the start,” says Praveer.

The writer was in Jodhpur at the invitation of Kogo.

POOCH CAFE



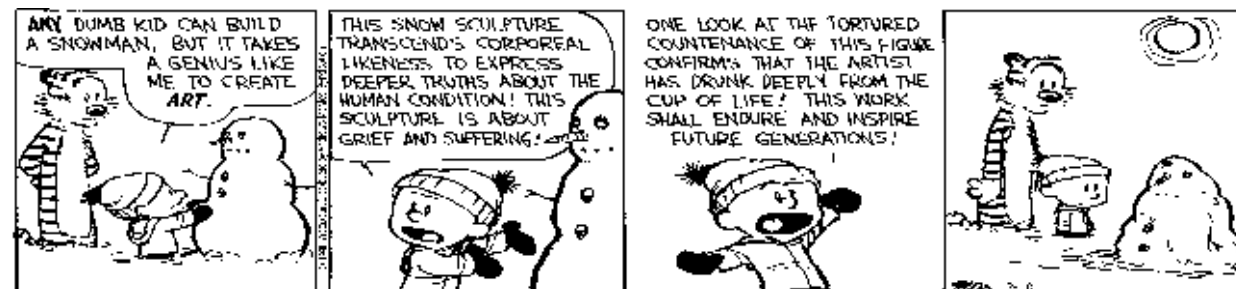
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



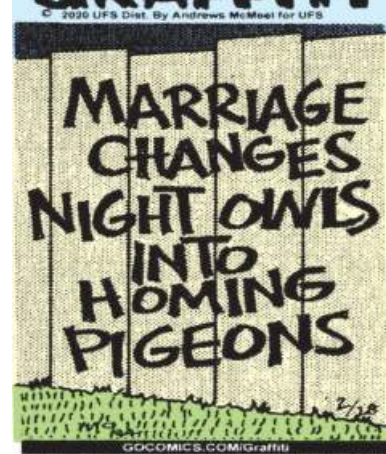
CALVIN AND HOBBS



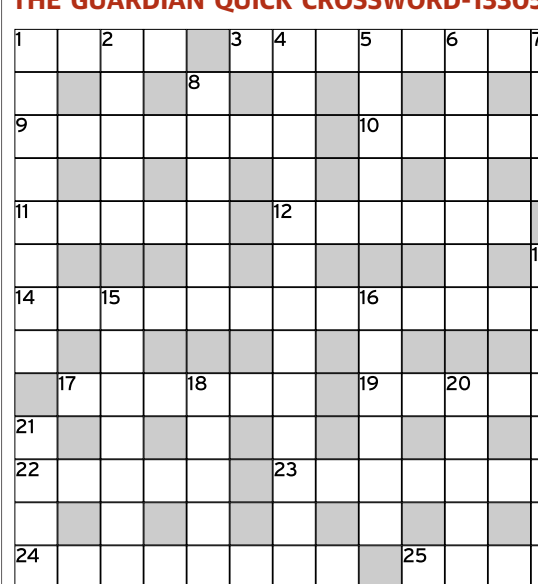
TIGER



GRAFFITI



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13305

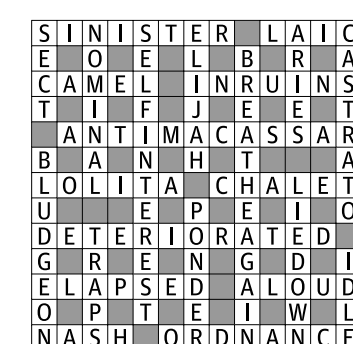


To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

- 6 Breach of the law (7)
- 7 Affair of honour (4)
- 8 Fortress (8)
- 13 Follower (8)
- 15 Discolour – sully (7)
- 16 (Musically) having a flexible tempo – our tab (anag) (6)
- 18 Poison (5)
- 20 Treat badly (5)
- 21 Oxen from Tibet (4)

The solution will appear on February 19, 2020. Solution No. 13304

- Across
- 1 Just (4)
- 3 Temporary structure around a building (8)
- 9 Blurt out (7)
- 10 Tactless remark (5)
- 11 Precipitation (5)
- 12 Position on a scale (6)
- 14 Involved in the most important part of a venture (2,3,5,3)
- 17 Cowardly (6)
- 19 Fire (5)
- 22 Foreign (5)
- 23 Push in (7)
- 24 Duplicitous (8)
- 25 Disease with a high death rate (4)
- Down
- 1 In foreign parts (8)
- 2 Riches (5)
- 4 Grasp – knowledge (13)
- 5 Campaign against – quarrel (5)



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Hamilton, Messi clinch World Sportsman of the Year honours

The Laureus Award is shared for the first time in its 20-year history; Sporting Moment Award goes to Tendulkar for the 2011 World Cup triumph



A legend arrives: Sachin Tendulkar at the 2020 Laureus World Sports Awards in Berlin on Monday. ■ AP

STAN RAYAN
BERLIN

Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton and footballer Lionel Messi were declared joint winners of the prestigious Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award at a glittering ceremony on Monday.

The Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000-2020) public fan vote was won by Sachin Tendulkar. Voted by

sports fans around the world, the Award celebrated moments from the past two decades where sport has unified people in the most extraordinary way.

Tendulkar, who was part of the victorious 2011 ICC World Cup-winning team, was carried on the shoulders by his teammates.

The victory could not have been more historic, as it was

India's first World Cup win on home soil and its second ever.

Sensational tie

Six-time Formula One World champion Hamilton and six-time FIFA World Player of the Year Messi were so close in terms of their achievements in 2019 that even the ultimate sporting jury, the Laureus World Sports Academy,



Frozen in time: Sachin Tendulkar being carried on his teammates' shoulders after India's 2011 World Cup triumph was voted the Sporting Moment (2000-2020). ■ FILE PHOTO

could not split them, with the voting being tied for the very first time in the 20-year history of the Laureus Awards.

The duo pipped golfing great Tiger Woods, Kenyan marathoner Eliud Kipchoge, tennis legend Rafael Nadal and MotoGP champion Marc Marquez to the award.

The 2019 Rugby World Cup winner South Africa

won its second Laureus World Team of the Year Award, beating Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool and the US women's football team, among others.

The memory of Siya Kolisi, South Africa's historic first black Test rugby captain, lifting the Webb Ellis Trophy in Yokohama, was an iconic moment in sport. The team's victory united communities

back in South Africa, and was proof of sport's ability to change the world. The winners were revealed as sportsperson gathered together to be part of the most important annual awards ceremony, this year celebrating the 20th anniversary of Laureus.

The event was hosted by actor Hugh Grant and the legends of sport, past and present, were treated to enter-



Laureus Award winners	
World Sportsman of the Year: Lewis Hamilton and Lionel Messi	World Action Sportsman of the Year: Chloe Kim
World Team of the Year: South Africa Men's Rugby Team	Best Sporting Moment: 'Carried on the shoulders of a nation' - Sachin Tendulkar
World Breakthrough of the Year: Egan Bernal	Lifetime Achievement Award: Dirk Nowitzki
World Comeback of the Year: Sophia Flörsch	Exceptional Achievement Award: Spanish Basketball Federation
World Sportsman of the Year with a Disability: Oksana Masters	Sport for Good Award: South Bronx United

tainment from British singer-songwriter Liam Payne, former member of One Direction. A tribute was paid to American basketball legend Kobe Bryant, who recently died in a helicopter crash.

Biles wins it

American gymnast Simone Biles confirmed her place in the history of Laureus, win-

ning her third coveted Laureus Sportsman of the Year Award as she continued to push the boundaries of the sport.

She beat American footballer Megan Rapinoe, Japanese tennis sensation Naomi Osaka, American track and field athlete Allyson Felix and skier Mikaela Shiffrin. *(The author is in Berlin at the invitation of Laureus).*

Chasing one rabbit at a time, says Kipchoge

STAN RAYAN
BERLIN

He safely skirted the shoes issue and did not specify when he would run a sub-two hours marathon under approved conditions and with the World Athletics' approved footwear but on Monday Olympic champion Eliud Kipchoge spoke fondly about the rabbits he was chasing in life.

"I always say, I'm chasing one rabbit at a time. And the rabbit I'm chasing, as we are sitting here now, is the London Marathon (on April 26). So, after London Marathon, I will tell you about the next rabbit," said the Kenyan, in reply to a query from *The Hindu* here on Monday.

World record in London? So, can we expect a World record in London?

"Not at all but you can expect a good race, a fruitful



Reason to smile: Eliud Kipchoge says running gave him freedom. ■ AP

race and a race which will get the fans up," said the 35-year-old.

He said the Nike AlphaFly shoes, with which he made history becoming the first marathoner to break the two-hour barrier in Vienna in October and which forced the world body to bring in

new regulations for shoes because it felt that they gave the athletes an unfair advantage, were good.

"I think the shoes are good, the shoes I used were extremely cool," said the 35-year-old.

But the World Athletics have not been approved

them, isn't it?"
"Anyway, you can check with Nike. But I think they are good," said Kipchoge.

Freedom

Despite being the world's best, Kipchoge is a soft-spoken man, almost whispering his answers. "The team is giving him freedom and that is why one often sees him smiling while finishing a marathon.

"They say running is the only place where you can get freedom. So, when you see me smiling, you know that I'm free in this world. I'm really exercising this freedom when I'm running."

He explained that running in teams back home gave him strength. "The team is what gives me strength. The team is what makes me run as fast and forceful. Without the team, I can tell you nothing will happen."

Australia will be favourite down under: Waugh

STAN RAYAN
BERLIN

When Sachin Tendulkar points out someone as the cricketer who reminds him of himself, there is bound to be a lot of interest on the player. But former Australian captain Steve Waugh does not think Marnus Labuschagne could turn out to be someone like Tendulkar though he is very impressed with 25-year-old.

"Maybe he's trying to put him off by saying so. I don't think so but look, Sachin has got every right to say that. "Maybe he saw something, in my opinion, his temperament or the way he goes about his batting," said Waugh on the sidelines of the 20th Laureus World Sports Awards celebrations here.

"He has appetite for runs and tries exceptionally hard. I was really impressed with



Steve Waugh. ■ STAN RAYAN

him when he stood out at the Ashes. He wanted to make a difference, he wanted to be the next player to do well.

"He came a long way from the back of the pack... 12 months ago he was just in the top 26 players in Australia, now he is the fourth-ranked Test batsman in the world. So, it's been an incredible transformation."

Was he trying to brush away the pressure on Labuschagne? With Tendulkar's praise, the spotlight will be on Labuschagne, who recently won Australia's Player-of-the-Year award, as India travels down under towards the end of the year for a four-match Test series.

India had beaten Australia 2-1 for its first-ever Test series win down under early last year, but Waugh felt the Aussies would start favourites this time.

"Australia will be the favourite because we are playing in Australia and we know the pitches well and the day-night Test is something reasonably new."

"I like the way Virat Kohli is taking that challenge. If you want to be the best side in the world, you have to win away from home as much as you can," he said.

"As you said they won the

series last time... you can't take anything away from India but the fact is, we did not have two of our best batsmen last time and now Labuschagne has come out of nowhere.

"Our bowling attack is settled and there are no weaknesses in the Australian side. India does not have weaknesses too; so it's going to be potentially a great series."

"India has the best fast bowling attack in India. When they are playing in India they are best attack in the world. When cricket is played in Australia, I think Australia is the best fast bowling attack in the world," he said.

Slight edge

"So, when they come to Australia, I think we will have a slight edge. And if we go to India, India will have a slight edge."

'Young India a top contender'

Harmanpreet feels that the side has grown substantially



Team leaders: (front row) Harmanpreet Kaur, West Indies' Stafanie Taylor, Australia's Meg Lanning, Sri Lanka's Chamari Atapattu, Pakistan's Bismah Maroof and (back row) Thailand's Sornnarin Tippoch, New Zealand's Sophie Devine, South Africa's Dane van Niekerk, England's Heather Knight and Bangladesh's Salma Khatun. ■ AFP

T20 WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SYDNEY

The void left by legends such as Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami is not easy to fill, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur said on Monday but also asserted that her young side had grown substantially to be a top contender for this month's women's T20 World Cup.

The average age of India's squad in Australia is 22.8 with Harmanpreet being among the seasoned ones.

"We already miss the experience they shared with us, but these young girls are showing their talent and ability," said the 29-year-old,

speaking at the captains' media day at Taronga Zoo here.

The ICC Women's T20 World Cup will open with a clash between India and defending champion and hosts Australia in Adelaide on February 21.

"In the last two years I've gone from being the youngest to one of the oldest in the team," she said. "They never show that they're young, they can always do what we expect of them. The team is looking in really good shape and showing what they can do with extra responsibility," she said.

She is still not over the disappointment of missing the ODI world title in 2017

and Harmanpreet said the T20 World Cup trophy would go a long way in making up for that debacle.

"Our team is growing day by day, everyone is looking so positive," Harmanpreet said. "It's going to be very big if we win, I was very surprised at all the reaction from 2017. My parents didn't tell me, they didn't want us to feel the pressure."

Reward to be reaped

She is well aware what a long run in an ICC tournament can do for her country. "If we win the World Cup, there's no doubt things will change. That tournament would bring a lot of confidence to the girls."

Boult back for Test series

INDIA IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WELLINGTON

Fit-again senior pacer Trent Boult has been named in the 13-member New Zealand squad for the first Test against India starting here on February 21.

According to a media release issued by New Zealand Cricket, the 6' 8" pacer Kyle Jamieson, who made his ODI debut against India in the recent series, has also earned his call-up in the Test squad, which will have slow left-arm orthodox Ajaz Patel as the only spinner.

Boult's comeback is a big

boost for the New Zealand side as he missed the entire limited-overs leg due to a fractured right hand sustained during the Boxing Day Test against Australia at the MCG.

"It's terrific to have Trent back with us and we're looking forward to the energy and experience he adds to the group alongside

The squad:

Kane Williamson (Capt.), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Colin de Grandhomme, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner and B-J. Watling.

Faf du Plessis steps down as captain

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG

Faf du Plessis announced on Monday he was stepping down as South Africa cricket captain with immediate effect.

du Plessis, 35, said he needed to take "a step back" from the captaincy in order to help the next generation of leaders under Quinton de Kock to emerge. de Kock led the team in the recent ODIs and T20Is against England while du Plessis was rested.

du Plessis said he wanted to concentrate on doing well as a batsman.

The squad (for Australia T20Is): Quinton de Kock (Capt., wk), Temba Bavuma, Faf du Plessis, Bjorn Fortuin,



Faf du Plessis. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Heinrich Klaasen, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Jon-Jon Smuts, Dale Steyn, Pite van Biljon and Rassie van der Dussen.

The fixtures: Feb. 21, Johannesburg; Feb. 23, Port Elizabeth; Feb. 26, Cape Town.

Humpy triumphs in Cairns Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ST LOUIS

World rapid champion K. Humpy claimed her second title in the last two months by emerging triumphant at the Cairns Cup chess following a draw against compatriot D. Harika in the ninth and final round here. Humpy, who was crowned World champion in the last week of December, finished with six points. The icing on the cake is that Humpy would be gaining five ELO rating points and moving to No. 2 in the world list.

The results: **Ninth round:** K. Humpy drew with D. Harika; Valentina Gunina drew with Kateryna Lagno;



Incredible: Humpy is now World No. 2. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Alexandra Kosteniuk lost to Wenjun Ju; Irina Krush bt Nana Dzagnidze; Carissa Yip drew with Mariya Muzychuk. **Final standings:** 1. K. Humpy 6 points, 2 Wenjun Ju 5.5, 3. Ma-

riya Muzychuk 5, 4. Alexandra Kosteniuk 5, 5. D Harika, 4.5, Kateryna Lagno 4.5, 7. Irina Krush 4, Carissa Yip 4, 9. Nana Dzagnidze 4, 10. Valentina Gunina 2.5.

A special feeling, says Humpy

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

Playing for the first time in the second edition of the Cairns Cup, said to be one of the toughest women's events, World rapid chess champion Koneru Humpy re-asserted her supremacy winning the title with 6 points from nine rounds picking up the \$45,000 winner's purse in St. Louis on Monday.

"This is a really strong field with an average rating of ELO 2500+," 32-year-old Humpy told *The Hindu* from US. The tough field included two Americans and the top eight players including reigning World champion Ju Wenjun

featuring in the round-robin format.

"Winning Cairns Cup is a special feeling for it reminds that the World championship title was no flash in the pan," she said.

"The toughest match was against Alexandra Kosteniuk in the seventh round, which was a long battle and I could manage to keep my unbeaten record against her," she said. "It was a close race for the top spot till the eighth round. Wenjun lost her game and I managed to draw my game giving me the slender half-a-point lead which eventually proved decisive."

"The best part of this

victory is that I will be gaining crucial five ELO points and moving back to World No. 2 ranking and towards my goal being No.1 one day," she said.

"The next big event is the Grand Prix in Italy this may and then I will be playing in the PSPB tournaments as part of my commitment to my employers," the Chief Manager (HR) in ONGC said.

One her targets she said, "since I am leading the FIDE Women's Grand Prix Series right now, I want to finish it off on a high and then aim to qualify for the Candidates scheduled later this year."

TV PICKS

Champions League: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 1.20 a.m. (Wednesday)

IN BRIEF



Team LeBron outguns Team Giannis

LOS ANGELES
Kawhi Leonard stole the show on the floor and Magic Johnson took centre stage in an emotional pre-game ceremony on a night the NBA paid tribute to the late Kobe Bryant. Anthony Davis sank one of two free-throws to cap a thrilling 157-155 win over Team Giannis in NBA All-Star game.

East Bengal downs Arrows

MUMBAI
East Bengal defeated Indian Arrows 3-1 in their I-League game here on Monday. **The results:** East Bengal 3 (Jaime Colorado 5, Asheer Akhtar 62, Lalrindika Ralte 67) bt Indian Arrows 1 (Vikram Pratap Singh 54). PTI

Odisha — keeping the momentum going

Coach Parida wants his boys to target semi first, then final

RANJI TROPHY

V.S. ARAVIND
CHENNAI

Odisha has qualified for the Ranji Trophy quarterfinals after a gap of three years following a draw against Jharkhand. It was a remarkable outing for the Subhanshu Senapati-led side which finished second in Group C (38 points) behind Jammu & Kashmir.

This achievement wouldn't have been possible without the guidance of former domestic batting stalwart and current coach Rashmi Ranjan Parida.

Moment of pride

"We aimed to progress to the Elite Group A & B and to achieve that we had to be among the top two. That was the aim that the boys had and finally we are there," Parida told *Sportstar* from Bhubaneswar.

"It's a moment of pride and we are happy with our achievement. Having said



Going places: Confidence in their ability to win matches has brought Odisha thus far.

* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

that, we aim to reach the semi and then the final. It is not an impossible task," he said.

Odisha began its season with three straight wins against Chhattisgarh, Services and Uttarakhand.

The team next salvaged a draw against Tripura and then pulled off a stunning

one-wicket away win against Haryana.

"Winning the first three games gave us the momentum. It was a massive boost and beating Haryana in Roshak was very satisfying. We knew we had the arsenal to win games," Parida stated.

However, in its next fix-

ture, Odisha suffered a four-wicket loss at home to J&K before bouncing back to beat Assam and Maharashtra.

"It's a long season and I knew we would suffer a loss here and there.

"But we never allowed the momentum to slip away and came back strongly. It's been

an incredible journey and credit goes to the entire team. There were individual flashes of individual brilliance, but overall it was a team effort," he said.

The 2016 knockout

During the 2016 quarterfinal, Odisha lost to Gujarat, with rival opener Samit Gohel scoring an unbeaten 359 and breaking the world record for the highest score by an opener carrying his bat in first-class cricket. Gujarat qualified for the semifinal based on first-innings lead.

Asked how his side is preparing for the high-pressure match, Rashmi said, "Look it's all about mental strength and the boys are ready for it. Except for Basant, Biplab and Govind the rest haven't played a knockout.

"So it's a chance for them to express themselves and create something special. Bengal will come hard but we are ready for it. Quarterfinal has its charm."

BCCI withholds subsidy to DDCA

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided to withhold the annual subsidy to Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA). The move was expected following complaints by some important members of the unit.

"We have stopped the subsidy," BCCI president Sourav Ganguly revealed to *The Hindu*. Ganguly was here to attend the Apex Council meeting where it was also decided to appoint an ad-hoc committee to administer DDCA.

DDCA had been in the news for all wrong reasons for long. It was put under an administrator twice — Justice (Retd) Mukul Mudgal and Justice (Retd) Vikramjit Sen — before Rajat Sharma took charge following the elections.

After Rajat resigned, the DDCA remains embroiled in increasing controversy related to administration.

The support staff of the Delhi teams (senior and junior) have not been paid for more than four seasons now. "Some coaches were paid by Mudgal and Sen administration because they could produce the contracts. But many former players have served as coaches and selectors without being handed a contract," said a former player who has sent many representations to claim his dues.

According to a senior DDCA official, the dues have been withheld for lack of clarity as far as terms of payment are concerned. "How do we know who is to be paid what amount? There are no contracts." He insisted, "the only way out is for the Board to take a decision."

Various members of the DDCA have, meanwhile, sought intervention from the Board, pointing out incidents of financial irregularities and misconduct during the Annual General Meeting in December.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

ISL table

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
FC Goa (Q)	17	11	3	3	41	23	18	36
ATK (Q)	17	10	3	4	31	14	17	33
Bengaluru (Q)	17	8	5	4	20	11	9	29
Mumbai	17	7	5	5	25	28	-3	26
Chennaiyin FC	16	7	4	5	29	24	5	25
Odisha	17	7	3	7	24	27	-3	24
Kerala Blasters	17	4	6	7	25	28	-3	18
Jamshedpur	17	4	6	7	22	30	-8	18
NEU FC	16	2	7	7	13	23	-10	13
Hyderabad	17	1	4	12	16	38	-22	7

I-league standings

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Mohun Bagan	12	9	2	1	27	11	16	29
Punjab	13	5	6	2	18	15	3	21
Gokulam	11	5	2	4	14	13	1	17
TRAU	13	4	4	5	12	20	-8	16
Churchill	10	5	1	4	19	13	6	16
Real Kashmir	10	4	3	3	11	9	2	15
East Bengal	12	4	3	5	16	14	2	15
Chennai City	12	4	3	5	14	17	-3	15
Aizawl	12	3	5	4	14	15	-1	14
NEROCA	13	3	3	7	18	27	-9	12
Arrows	12	2	2	8	6	15	-9	8

Ankita is the top seed

SPORTS BUREAU
JODHPUR

Ankita Raina will be the top seed and play her first round against Bojana Marinovic of Serbia in the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the Sardar Club in Ratanada from Tuesday.

While Ankita has been able to continue from where she left last year, by winning a double crown in a similar event already this season, the focus could be on the return of Karman Kaur Thandi.

It will be a good chance for the Indian FedCup players to compete together in a tournament, before the competition in Dubai, as Rutuja Bhosale, Riya Bhatia and Sowjanya Bavisetti would also be playing in the tournament apart from Ankita and Karman.

Nidhi Chilumula, Mihika Yadav, Jennifer Luikham, Vaidehi Chaudhari, Sri Vaishnavi Peddi Reddy, Zeel Desai, Humera Shaik, Sathwika Sama, Saumya Vig and Soha Sadiq will be the other

Indian players in action, trying to move forward in the main event.

The results:
Qualifying singles (second and final round): Soha Sadiq bt Supapitch Kuearum (Tha) 6-2, 1-6, [10-5]; Nidhi Chilumula bt Sonashe Bhatnagar 6-0, 6-4; Ekaterina Nikiforova (Rus) bt Nidra Rajmohan 6-2, 6-1; Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Ashmitha Easwaramurthy 4-6, 6-3, [10-4]; Sri Vaishnavi Peddi Reddy bt Prerna Bhabri 6-4, 1-6, [10-8]; Saumya Vig bt Muskan Mahajan (US) 6-4, 6-1; Humera Shaik bt Rashi Malviya 6-1, 6-2; Shria Aturu (US) bt Arthi Muniyan 3-6, 7-6(2), [10-4].

First round: Soha bt Kriti Tomar 6-0, 6-1; Sonashe bt Prathusha Rachapudi 6-4, 6-1; Nikiforova bt Vanshita Pathania 6-4, 6-4; Nidra bt Lakshanya Choudhary 7-5, 6-0; Ashmitha bt Vaidehi Narsinghani 6-0, 6-0; Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Aayushi Tanwar 6-1, 7-5; Sri Vaishnavi bt Renee Singh 6-0, 6-0; Prerna bt Prathiba Prasad 6-2, 6-4; Saumya bt Shilpi Das 6-0, 6-2; Muskan bt Pooja Ingale 4-6, 6-0, [10-8]; Humera bt Dakshata Patel 6-0, 6-1; Rashi bt Snehal Mane 7-6 (4), 6-2; Arthi bt Minami Akiyama (Jpn) 6-4, 6-3; Shria bt Jigyasa Narsinghani 7-5, 6-2.

India to host 2021 FIH junior men's WC

Women's Junior World Cup to be held at Potchefstroom

HOCKEY

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

India will host the 2021 Junior Men's Hockey World Cup, making it the second big-ticket event awarded to the country for the second time on the trot.

The defending champion had hosted the 2016 edition as well, becoming the first host nation to lift the trophy defeating Belgium 2-1 in the final.

On Monday, the FIH named India as the host for the next edition, ensuring the marquee event in the sport remains within the

country at both senior and junior levels.

India has already been named as the host for the 2023 Men's World Cup. However, while the senior event would be held in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, the venue and dates for the junior event would be decided later.

The FIH, meanwhile, also decided that the next women's Junior World Cup will be held for the first time ever in Africa, naming Potchefstroom, South Africa, as the host.

The 16-team men's event would include six from Europe, four from Asia and two each from Africa, Oceania and Pan America. For the women, Pan-Am gets an extra spot and Asia loses one.

Saina and Srikanth chase Olympic berth

Women's Junior World Cup to be held at Potchefstroom

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Khelo University Games anthem launched

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

The Khelo India University Games anthem was launched by Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijju at a function held at his residence here on Monday. Sung, written and composed by former Haryana Ranji Trophy batsman Padamjeet Sehrawat, the peppy number exhorts the youth to participate in sports with an aim to shine and move ahead.

Speaking on the occasion, Rijju reiterated the need to promote sports at the school and university level, with focus on progressing to excel at the international level.

"We have to have a structured format to improve Indian sport and the Khelo India University Games (starting February 22) is a part in that direction.



Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijju, centre, at the launch of the anthem. * SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"We are aiming to make India a sports powerhouse," he said.

Shooters Manu Bhaker, Anish Bhanwala and Sandeep Rajput were also present at the launch. "The KIUG is a great platform for budding talent. It is important to strengthen the un-

iversity structure as more talent comes through the ranks. It will help us build super athletes," said Bhaker.

Rijju noted, "It is going to be an eventful year for Indian sports because universities will get such a huge platform to showcase their potential.

"It is going to help us set up a huge pool to identify and support sportsmen."

The KIUG will have 17 disciplines with 3399 athletes from 159 universities slated to participate.

Indian Oil Corporation is the main sponsor.

Akashima clinches Godolphin Barb Million

HYDERABAD: Deshmukh trained, Akashima ridden by Ajeeth Kumar won the Godolphin Barb Million, the chief event of the races held here on Monday (Feb.17). The winner is owned by Mr. P. Aditya P. Thackersey.

1 PLEASURE HUNT PLATE (Div. I), (1,100m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Cat. II), (Terms): ELMIRA (Ajit Singh) 1, Spicy Star (Ashhad Asbar) 2, Fleur (Md. Ismail) 3 and Moringa (Ajeeth Kumar) 4. 3-1/4, shd and nk. Im, 5.85s. ₹ 11 (w), 5, 6 and 12 (p), SHP: 21, FP: 39, Q: 24, Tla: 351. Favourite: Elmira. Owner: Mr. M. Ramakrishna Reddy. Trainer: L.D.Silva.

2 SEVEN HILLS PLATE (Div. II), (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): ICE WARRIOR (Nakhat Singh) 1, Barbosella (Ajeeth Kumar) 2, Sun Dancer (I. Chisty) 3 and Alta Vita (Afroz Khan) 4. 1-1/4, nk and 1-1/4, Im, 39.25s. ₹ 13 (w), 8, 5 and 13 (p), SHP: 16, FP: 29, Q: 13, Tla: 159. Favourite: Barbosella. Owner: Mr. A.C. Muthiah. Trainer: Satheesh.

3 PLEASURE HUNT PLATE (Div. II), (1,100m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Cat. II), (Terms): APPENZELLE (Kiran Naidu) 1, Lamha (Suraj Narredu) 2, O'Sheehan (I. Chisty) 3

and New Role (B.R. Kumar) 4. 2-1/2, nk and 3-1/4, Im, 7.45s. ₹ 9 (w), 5, 6 and 5 (p), SHP: 13, FP: 23, Q: 12, Tla: 33. Favourite: Appenzelle. Owner: Mr. S. Pathy. Trainer: D. Netto.

4 KING'S CROWN PLATE (Div. II), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): SECRET COMMAND (P.S. Chouhan) 1, Star Racer (Mukesh Kumar) 2, Sputnic (Kiran Naidu) 3 and Spice Up (Nakhat Singh) 4. Shd, 1-1/2 and nk. Im, 6.58s. ₹ 9 (w), 6, 7 and 10 (p), SHP: 18, FP: 26, Q: 17, Tla: 67. Favourite: Secret Command. Owners: Mr. K. Mallikarjuna Rao & Mr. Sanjay R. Goyal. Trainer: Prasad Raju.

5 M.C.E.M.E ROLLING TROPHY (Div. II), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): MAKRAM (Afroz Khan) 1, Ashka Ashka Ashka (Santosh Raj) 2, Incredible (Mukesh Kumar) 3 and Are Of History (Surya Prakash) 4. 1-1/2 and nk. Im, 4.78s. ₹ 89 (w), 13, 30 and 8 (p), SHP: 64, FP: 1,764, Q: 1,051, Tla: 11,942. Favourite: Esteve. Owner: Mr. Syed Abdul Subhan. Trainer: M.F. Alikhan.

6 GODOLPHIN BARB MILLION (1,400m), 3-y-o only (Terms): AKASHIMA (Ajeeth Kumar) 1, Artemis Arrow (David Egan) 2,

Amyra (I. Chisty) 3 and Peaky Blinders (Nakhat Singh) 4. 3-1/4, hd and 1-1/4, Im, 24.57s. ₹ 7 (w), 6, 6 and 8 (p), SHP: 12, FP: 15, Q: 12, Tla: 28. Favourite: Akashima. Owner: Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey. Trainer: Deshmukh.

7 SEVEN HILLS PLATE (Div. I), (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): SOLO WINNER (Jitendra Singh) 1, Red Snapper (Santosh Raj) 2, Tiger Of The Sea (Surya Prakash) 3 and Super Act (A.A. Vikram) 4. 1/2, 4 and 1-1/2, Im, 38.93s. ₹ 13 (w), 5, 10 & 8 (p), SHP: 25, FP: 139, Q: 89, Tla: 397. Favourite: Solo Winner. Owner: M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust rep. by Mr. A.C. Muthiah. Trainer: Satheesh.

8 M.C.E.M.E ROLLING TROPHY (Div. II), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): YOURS FOREVER (Surya Prakash) 1, Rapid Fire (Mukesh Kumar) 2, Sitara (Suraj Narredu) 3 and Dancing Doll (David Egan) 4. 1-1/4, 1 and nk. Im, 4.56s. ₹ 31 (w), 10, 10 and 7 (p), SHP: 36, FP: 362, Q: 191, Tla: 771. Favourite: Sitara. Owner: Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey. Trainer: Deshmukh.

9 DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY MEMORIAL CUP (1,600m), 4-y-o &

over, (Cat. II), (Terms): RIKKI TIKKI TAVI (David Egan) 1, Exclusive Blue (Ashhad Asbar) 2, Nayadeep (Irvan Singh) 3 and Durango (Aneel) 4. 1-1/4, 1/2 and 3/4, Im 38.27s. ₹ 8 (w), 6, 5 and 12 (p), SHP: 16, FP: 25, Q: 15, Tla: 88. Favourite: Rikki Tikki Tavi. Owners: M/s. Poonawalla Racing & Breeding, Pvt.Ltd.rep. by Mr. Z.S. Poonawalla & Ms. S.Z. Poonawalla & M/s. Vijay Kumar Farms.P.Ltd.rep. by M/s. Vijay Kumar Gupta. Trainer: Laxman Singh.

10 KING'S CROWN PLATE (Div. I), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): GUSTY NOTE (A.A. Vikram) 1, Merry Dane (Gopal Singh) 2, Dillon (Kuldeep Singh) 3 and Whiskery (Md. Ismail) 4. 2-3/4, 3/4 and shd. Im, 6.04s. ₹ 109 (w), 20, 13 and 16 (p), SHP: 57, FP: 2,885, Q: 1,216, Tla: 22,067. Favourite: Ashwa Yudh Vijeta. Owners: Wg. Cdr. D.S. Gill, M/s. Rajesh Sanghani & T. Amarendra Reddy. Trainer: D. Netto.

Jkt (t): ₹ 5,191 (32 tkts), Runner up: ₹ 82 (859 tkts), Jkt (d): 1,976 (48 tkts), Runner up: ₹ 187 (1,755 tkts), Mini Jkt (t): 2,499 (55 tkts), (d): 10,515 (five tkts), Tr (d): ₹ 96 (350 tkts), (t): 1,598 (78 tkts), (t): 1,714 (41 tkts).

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