

HC reads Delhi Police the riot act

Plays video clips in court room

Orders rehab, shelters for affected

Justice Muralidhar transferred

Won't allow another 1984 under our watch, file FIRs over hate speeches: Bench

PRITAMPAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

COMING DOWN on hate speeches made by BJP leaders and expressing "anguish" over the communal violence in northeast Delhi that has left at least 27 people dead, the Delhi High Court Wednesday questioned the conduct of Delhi Police and directed it to register FIRs against those who made the speeches, saying "this city has seen enough violence" and "let it not repeat 1984" when anti-Sikh riots claimed over 2,700 lives in Delhi alone.

At a hearing marked by testy exchanges after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said this was not the time to lodge FIRs over the speeches and that it would done at a more "appropriate" or "conducive" stage, the bench of Justices S Muralidhar and Talwanti Singh directed Special



Justice S Muralidhar, Justice Talwanti Singh

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



'I GIVE YOU MY WORD OF HONOUR'

NSA Ajit Doval in Maujpur, in northeast Delhi, on Wednesday. Abhinav Saha REPORT, PAGE 7

IB staffer's body found in drain, toll now 27; day calm, incidents at night

ABHISHEK ANGAD
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE BODY of a 25-year-old Intelligence Bureau security assistant, who had been missing since Tuesday evening, was on Wednesday found inside a drain



Ankit Sharma, his family (right)

in northeast Delhi's Chand Bagh area.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Abhishek Angad

Police fumbling, NSA Doval steps in, signals PM message

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

BARELY HOURS after National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, accompanied by senior Delhi Police officers, walked the streets of riot-hit areas of northeast Delhi going door to door and assuring residents of safety, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that he "had an extensive review on the situation prevailing in various parts of Delhi." The signal couldn't have been more loud and clear: South Block had swung into action to restore normalcy in the national capital wracked by violence that had claimed 27 lives by Wednesday.

Indeed, this was foreshadowed the previous night after the Delhi Police machinery, reporting to Union Home Ministry

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

IN CONVERSATION



CEA KV Subramanian with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, Indian Express Group, and P Vaidyanathan Iyer, Executive Editor-National Affairs, The Indian Express, at the Express Adda in Mumbai on Wednesday. Amit Chakravarty

Tax holiday: I-T firms cite slowdown to ask for delay in sunset clause

SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

EVEN AS Indian IT companies are being lured by countries including Vietnam with zero or significantly lower tax rate (than in India) if they set up campus in their country, which some companies are seriously considering, the Indian government is not looking to extend the sunset clause that will come to an end on March 31, 2020.

This would bring an end to the tax benefits for Special Economic Zones that become operational beyond March 31 this year.

As per the sunset clause, all SEZs that are operational after March 31, 2020 will not be given income tax exemptions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

EXPLAINED
Affects 65% of SEZs

AS OF December 2019, about 419 SEZs had been cleared, of which IT and related sectors account for over 65%. Of these, 351 have been notified, 234 are operational and over 5,100 units have been approved. Section 10AA of the IT Act provided for a phased tax-holiday for SEZ units for a period of 15 years to units commencing activity before March 31, 2020.

set to meet President today

Cong says deliberate inaction, set to meet President today

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

ALLEGING A "well planned conspiracy" behind the violence in Delhi, the Congress on Wednesday demanded the resignation of Home Minister Amit Shah, holding him responsible for "a colossal failure of duty". It

While party leaders admitted that the Delhi violence was communal, they said the seeds of the unrest were sown by the BJP's decision to push the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

As riots hit hospital, a court order became healing touch

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

A DAZED 16-year-old Sahil walked into Al Hind Hospital in Old Mustafabad Wednesday afternoon with a bloody scar across his head. He had been hit by a stone late Tuesday, caught in the violence in his neighbour-

hood. A team of doctors rushed to deftly stitch and bandage the wound. "Thank you, Doctor Saheb," the boy said softly.

Over the last four hours, Sahil was the seventh patient to walk into this hospital that became a lifeline for residents in the riot-hit Mustafabad area of northeast Delhi.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INSIDE



FROM ASSEMBLY, CM TO SHAH: CALL ARMY

WHEN THEY STOOD UP FOR EACH OTHER
PAGES 3, 6, 7

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE-CIVIL SERVICES

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THE REALME BLOG: DESIGNS ON THE COSTLIER SEGMENT, BUT SAME DESIGN ON ALL ITS PHONES?

Clearly, Realme does not want to make the mistake Xiaomi did by putting all its might behind 'sasta' phones but we seriously hope the upcoming phones from Realme don't look like the old ones.

ENT SPECIAL



THAPPAD CO-WRITER TALKS ABOUT FILM

Mrunmayee Lagoo speaks on working with a male director

FULL COVERAGE



SHAH SHOULD RESIGN: SONIA GANDHI

Says Centre responsible for violence that claimed at least 27 lives

EXPRESS AUDIO

Voices from the ground explain why Northeast Delhi burned for 3 days

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Reporters and locals detail what they experienced during the Northeast Delhi communal clashes and what police reforms are needed

FROM PAGE ONE

Delhi HC

Commissioner of Police Praveer Ranjan, who was present in the court room, to sit with the Delhi Police Commissioner and take a "conscious decision" on registration of FIRs against the BJP leaders who made the hate speeches and also others in the knowledge of the police.

Mehta had sought to adjourn proceedings until Thursday, saying "the nature of prayers in the petition was not urgent". But the bench, hearing a petition by activists Harsh Mander and Farah Naqvi that sought registration of FIRs, went ahead and said it needed to be informed about the action taken by Thursday.

Incidentally, Justice Muralidhar was transferred out of Delhi High Court on Wednesday. The Ministry of Law & Justice, in a notification, said the President, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, had transferred Justice Muralidhar to the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The hearing Thursday will be before the bench headed by Chief Justice D N Patel who was not holding court Wednesday. Justice Muralidhar, taking up another petition while on a different bench with Justice A J

Bhambhani Wednesday, also passed a string of directions on safe passage for the bodies of the victims, their proper burial/cremation, adequate number of helplines and help desks, besides rehabilitation and trauma counselling of those affected.

In scenes rarely witnessed in open court, Justices Muralidhar and Singh ordered that video clips of four hate speeches be played in the court room after the Solicitor General and one of the police officers present there claimed they had not seen or heard all the speeches.

The clips played were of a speech made by BJP leader Kapil Mishra in Maujpur, issuing an ultimatum to Delhi Police to clear the anti-CAA protesters; Union Minister Anurag Thakur's election campaign speech where he chanted "Desh ke gaddaron ko" and had the crowd responding "goli maaro..."; BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh's comment "these people will enter your homes and rape your sisters and daughters"; slogans such as "police ke hatyaaron ko, goli maaro..." raised by a crowd led by BJP MLA Abhay Verma in Laxmi Nagar.

"What is worrying us that the same slogans have been raised repeatedly and if an FIR is not registered, it would send a wrong

message to society. You (SG Mehta) say that it is not an appropriate stage. As per you, when will it be that stage? After the city has burnt down? How many more lives have to be lost?... Why are you not showing alacrity when it comes to registration of FIR in these cases? We want peace to prevail. This city has seen enough violence. Let it not repeat 1984," the bench said.

Earlier, Mehta said 11 FIRs had already been registered. When he said "the nature of prayers in the petition was not urgent and could be heard on Thursday", the bench said: "A law officer has the highest trust of the judiciary. You have flagged the issue of urgency before us. Why, as a law officer, do you think prayer 1 (on registration of FIR) is not urgent?"

Mehta said, "The prayer came after 20 days of the statement. Let us not make it unpleasant." At this, Justice Muralidhar said "the situation out there is unpleasant".

The court also witnessed a tussle between Mehta and Delhi government standing counsel (criminal) Rahul Mehra who said he had the mandate to represent the police in the High Court and he saw "no reason why an FIR in the matter should not be regis-

tered". Mehra, who was assisted by advocate Chaitanya Gosain, submitted "this cannot be the stand of the Delhi Police because it has to come through me. I have to go through the status report and satisfy my conscience".

Justice Muralidhar said: "You acknowledge the occurrence of a crime by registering an FIR. If you don't register an FIR, how will you take action? The more you delay, these speeches (will) lead to more speeches."

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for the petitioners, pressed for directions from the court, including "strong words on how the police should act... you are a Constitutional court. Please don't hold back even for a minute. As we speak, attacks are taking place".

At one point during the hearing, Justice Muralidhar said it was the court's Constitutional duty to protect the law. "This is not anger, this is anguish. A Constitutional court's anguish is very serious and everyone should take it seriously," he said.

At a separate hearing of a plea by documentary film maker Rahul Roy who sought safe passage for those injured and stuck at the Al Hind Hospital in north-east Delhi, the bench of Justices

Muralidhar and Bhambhani said this is the time to build confidence and every affected person should be visited by the highest functionaries of the state like Chief Minister or Deputy Chief Minister.

It issued directions for the safe passage of the bodies of the victims, proper information to their relatives and friends to facilitate collection of bodies, and burial/cremation with utmost dignity and security minus any hindrance. The bench directed there should be adequate number of help desks and helplines, for which publicity should be given, so that the victims should reach it.

On those displaced by the riots, the bench said "if there are not enough shelters, the Delhi government, on war-footing, (must) ensure that adequate number of such shelters are set up to provide rehabilitation to such displaced victims". The court appointed advocate Zubeda Begum as amicus curiae to coordinate between the victims and the different agencies.

NSA steps in

under Amit Shah, had been ineffective in tamping down violence and arson that raged right through Tuesday. Soon after US President Donald Trump left India after his two-day visit, Doval was pressed into action.

The NSA, who had earlier taken over the reins of law and order in Jammu and Kashmir post scrapping of Article 370 in August, was seen walking down the lanes and bylanes of several neighbourhoods in the affected district including Maujpur and Chauhan Bangar. At one place, when a student told him that she was fearful and needed protection, he said: "I give you my word of honour."

Sources said Doval took a "stern view" of the police's handling of the situation and questioned how a gathering of protesters was allowed underneath the Jafra Metro station Saturday night.

It clearly indicated the PMO's lack of faith in the ability of Delhi police leadership in controlling the situation. After taking stock of the situation both on Tuesday and Wednesday, Doval briefed Shah.

Incidentally, on Wednesday, Shah held a series of meeting on various issues which included a Group of Ministers (GoM) with Cabinet colleagues Narendra Tomar and Ram Vilas Paswan. He had another meeting with Railway and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal. These meetings were preceded by another one with Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla and a senior IB official. However, officials said this meeting was not on Delhi violence.

The situation in Delhi was also not discussed in the Union Cabinet meeting held Wednesday morning.

Admitting that the Delhi po-

lice could not bring the situation under control, BJP sources said the government was keen on putting the "administration" into action to contain the violence.

Asked why the NSA had to step in, BJP General Secretary Anil Jain said the government wanted to handle things using the administration. "If the Home Minister takes a round of the Delhi streets, it would not send the right message. We wanted the situation to be brought under control using the administration only. The NSA visited these areas after consultation with the Home Minister," Jain said.

Doval, incidentally, holds a Cabinet rank and does not report to the Home Minister. It is also rare to see the NSA involved in a local law-and-order situation.

In fact, both of Shah's deputies in the Ministry, G Kishan Reddy and Nityanand Rai, were also not pressed into the field.

On Wednesday afternoon, Modi tweeted: "Had an extensive review on the situation prevailing in various parts of Delhi. Police and other agencies are working on the ground to ensure peace and normalcy... Peace and harmony are central to our ethos. I appeal to my sisters and brothers of Delhi to maintain peace and brotherhood at all times. It is important that there is calm and normalcy is restored at the earliest."

Home Ministry sources said Shah was present in the review meeting.

Government and party sources said that the Delhi police, despite having adequate forces at their disposal, failed to react promptly. "The police failed so miserably that the Home Minister had to seek information from the party cadres and MLAs on the ground. Until 3 am, based on information provided by party cadres, the Home Minister kept passing on instructions to the police. He was informed by party-men that the police initially kept sitting in their vehicles watching their mobile phones," said a senior government official.

Political observers see the fielding of Doval as the Prime Minister's assertion on the issue of developments linked to changes in the citizenship law which have triggered protests across the country. This echoes his earlier recalibration on the National Register of Citizens. So while Shah's refrain had been that the government will bring in both the CAA and the NRC via the NPR to keep illegal immigrants away, while launching party's campaign for Delhi elections, Modi distanced the Government from a nationwide NRC. "Lies are being spread," he had said at a Ramlila rally in December. "From the time my government came in 2014 till today, I want to tell this truth to 130 crore people of this country, that there has been no discussion on NRC. No talk at all."

(INPUTS FROM MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL)

IB staffer

The family of the 25-year-old victim, Ankit Sharma, said he returned to his Khajuri Khas residence around 5 pm on Tuesday, and was curious about what was going on in his locality, one of many hit by the Northeast Delhi violence.

A large crowd had gathered in Chand Bagh a few blocks away and Sharma stepped out to see what was happening. On the way he met his father Ravinder Sharma, a Delhi Police assistant sub-inspector in Delhi police, who reminded him of the tense situation. "Take care of yourself," he said. Sharma replied: "Don't worry."

On Wednesday, Ankit's body was pulled out from a drain in Chand Bagh. His father stood nearby: "Mera beta isi mein hoga (this must be my son)," he said. As the body was taken out, Ravinder rushed forward and his worst fears came true. There were multiple injuries on the body. His father wept, unable to say a word.

Ankit is among 27 people who have lost their lives in violence at Northeast Delhi over the last three days. While Wednesday passed off without incident, police phones began to ring again past midnight, with an officer saying fresh reports of violence were coming in from Khajuri Khas.

Meanwhile, the true extent of the riots was revealed as the toll continued to rise. And while Delhi Police has by now lodged 18 FIRs and arrested 106 people, the bloodshed paints a grim picture of how a volatile situation turned communal right under the police's nose.

At Ankit's home, his mother Sudha was inconsolable, as angry crowds chanted outside: "Desh ke gaddaron ko, goli maaron saalon ko." His father later said: "Sab political bana diya hai."

The family had been in turmoil since Tuesday night itself - when he failed to return home by 8 pm, they had started looking at hospitals and police stations.

"We contacted his friends, but no one knew anything. Then everyone started saying he must have been injured and suggested that we check the hospitals. Somebody said four persons had sustained bullet injuries and that we should go to the police station," Sudha said.

His brother Ankur said: "When we reached Khajuri Khas police station, we were asked to go to the one Gokalpuri. From there we were asked to go to GTB Hospital."

Sudha added: "Koi bola 55 number mein jao, koi bola 50 mein jao, 25 mein jao. Upar, neeche karte rahe, lekin Ankit nahi mila."

She said the family then rushed to the AIIMS trauma centre. "Someone said a 21-year-old Ankit had been admitted. We thought there might have been some error... but he wasn't my son... then someone suggested to mortuary. With a heavy heart, I rushed there too but no one was willing to show me any bodies. It was 2.30 am already; we left and came to the police station."

Hospital

Over the last two days, doctors at the hospital said they attended to scores of patients with bullet injuries, pellet injuries and skull fractures - they also recorded seven deaths, including four declared brought dead.

But since Monday, there was no room for any patient inside and the violence had, effectively, walled off the hospital from the city - its supplies depleting, patients stranded.

That changed Tuesday night when the Delhi High Court, well past midnight, ordered the police to ensure safe passage for the evacuation from Al Hind of those critical.

By the time the order came, things were dire: the first line of defence of just four doctors had

just four bed rests, no ventilators, neither an ICU nor a blood bank. All they had left was one oxygen cylinder, medicines foraged by compounding who made their way through riot-hit areas, and empty paint cans for disposal bins.

"For two days, hospitals had been turning away our patients. We don't have the infrastructure to treat them. I saw a dead man being brought into my hospital, and the least I could do was convince the family to get the post-mortem conducted," said Dr M A Anwar, who runs the hospital.

With the court order came hope. So when he was informed by a local hospital in Karkardooma Wednesday that they would not admit his patient, he shouted a warning into his phone about "contempt of court" and turned to his patients.

Over the last two days, Anwar and his team of doctors have rushed back and forth between the hospital and police barricades, arguing with policemen to let them get their patients to GTB Hospital in Dilshad Garden 8 km away, the nearest facility with the equipment needed.

Tuesday was a challenge. Riot victims came in with skull injuries, one with a bullet in the ear. "We had to make calls to others in the medical community. I spoke to doctors at AIIMS and begged them for help. The policemen at the barricades told us that a head constable had died and they did not have the time for my patients," Anwar said.

A few late-night phone calls to senior police officers helped them cross the barricades. But just when they got out of the narrow lanes, their ambulance was pelted by stones and chased by sword-wielding mobs. Doctors said they begged with the mobs to let them go, and escaped with their lives.

Back in the hospital, meanwhile, the medicines ran out. "We were short of painkillers, antibiotics, injections and dressing material," said Waseem Akram, the hospital compounder.

When the influx of patients increased Tuesday, the doctors were overwhelmed. However, the team of 10 nursing staff rushed to keep up. One of them said the least they could do was check patients' vitals, while doctors laid out carpets on the first floor and tied ropes across the rooms from where they hung drip feeds.

Relief finally arrived from the High Court.

In an order issued Tuesday night (12.30 am Wednesday) a two-judge bench - Justice S Muralidhar and Justice Anup J Bhambhani - referred to a call received by Justice Muralidhar from Suroor Mander, an advocate, that "certain grievously wounded victims of the riots taking place in the North Eastern district of Delhi, were unable to be removed from the Al Hind Hospital... a fairly small hospital which lacks the facilities... for treatment at the GTB Hospital in Dilshad Garden."

Noting that the plea "prayed for urgent orders for safe passage of the ambulances", the bench directed police "to ensure such safe passage by deploying all the resources at its command" so that "the injured victims receive immediate emergency treatment, if not at the GTB Hospital, then at the LNJP Hospital or Maulana Azad or any other government hospital."

Following the order, scores of patients were shifted. But they left behind scenes from a nightmare. In the casualty section were a 16-year-old girl, who was pelted with stones while looking for milk; a 24-year-old man with a bullet lodged in his shoulder for the last two days; and, an 82-year-old man with an injured leg after his house was set on fire.



Lt. Governor, Delhi

APPEAL

My dear fellow residents of Delhi,

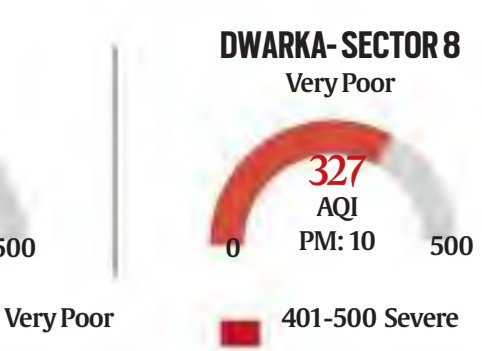
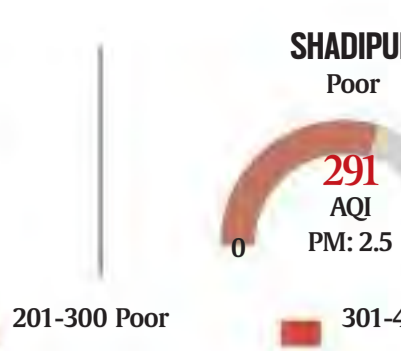
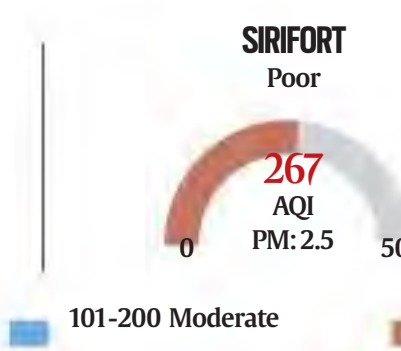
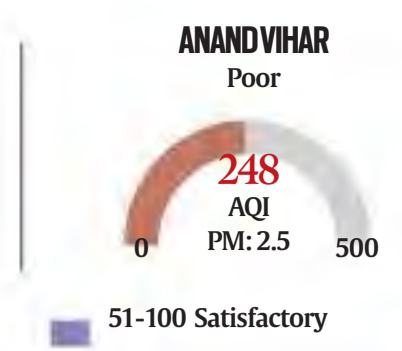
In the wake of recent violent incidents that occurred in some parts of Delhi over past few days, I appeal to you all to maintain public order and peace. Violence in a civilized society is unacceptable; we all should maintain mutual brotherhood and harmony.

I sincerely request to you all to beware of fake news. Do not lend ears to rumor mongers. Do not be part of any mob. Avoid circulating unconfirmed messages on social media. Do not post or share any kind of inflammatory remarks. Follow government advisories and exercise restraint. In case of any suspicious activity, please inform Police Control Room immediately. (phone no- 100, 112, 011-22829334, 011-22829335).

Delhi police and all concerned agencies are making earnest efforts to restore normalcy. I urge you to cooperate with Police and Administration in maintaining peace and harmony.

-Anil Baijal

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NORTHEAST DELHI VIOLENCE

From Assembly, CM to Shah: Call Army if necessary

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh lashes out at Centre, says his party doesn't have power to call Army

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal Wednesday appealed from the Delhi Assembly to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to call in the Army to control the situation in the capital if violence continues to escalate.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal said he had written to Shah, asking that curfew be imposed and the Army called in.

"The Army should be called in and a curfew imposed in other affected areas immediately. I'm writing to Honourable HM to this effect," he tweeted in the morning.

He also announced a Rs 1 crore ex-gratia to the family of head constable Ratan Lal and a government job to one of his family members. Lal was killed during Monday's violence.

In his first address to the Delhi Assembly after the new government came to power, Kejriwal said the Delhi Police tried to control the situation but was unable to do it.

"...Police tried to control things but the atmosphere was such that their numbers were low. In a few cases, when we spoke to the policemen on the ground, we were told they have not got orders to intervene; I don't know what the reason was. We also saw videos of some policemen, some bad apples, helping the miscreants. These should be investigated," he said.

Violence broke out in Northeast Delhi Sunday evening and the area remained on boil



Kejriwal and Sisodia interact with residents of Shiv Vihar in Northeast Delhi's Mustafabad, Wednesday; (right) in his first address to the newly elected Assembly earlier in the day, the CM said 'a few bad apples' had created problems

through Monday and Tuesday. Twenty-seven people have died so far and at least 300 have been injured.

Referring to the US President and First Lady's visit to Delhi, Kejriwal said: "For the last three days, Delhi received worldwide coverage for mainly two reasons — the Delhi government schools and its 'happiness curriculum'. US First Lady Melania Trump visited a Delhi government school... After attending a happiness class, Mrs Trump said this class must be replicated not only across India and the US but worldwide... The second news, however, was when President Donald Trump was in India, the capital city of Delhi was burning... We have to decide on the pictures we want to present to the world," he said.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, meanwhile, criticised Shah for his handling of the situation. "Amit Shah ji, wake up. You call an all-party meeting on Tuesday morning, but it is only a formality. One can see that BJP's Kapil Mishra is inciting violence.



"Amit Shah ji, wake up. You call an all-party meeting, but it is only a formality... Why was a curfew not imposed? Why were borders not sealed?... Under Delhi Police Act, 1978, power to call additional forces is with the Police Commissioner, not the state government or its functionaries."

SANJAY SINGH
AAP RAJYA SABHA MP

BJP Laxmi Nagar MLA Abhay Verma was on the street in the constituency with a crowd that was shouting slogans to incite violence. A BJP functionary tweets the violence is the cost people are paying for free *bijli-paani*. Are you threatening people because they voted for a government that wants to support the people? Why was a curfew not imposed? Why were borders not sealed? AAP has been asking that the Army be deployed, since yesterday," he said.

Asked why the government had not requisitioned the Army through the district magistrate earlier, Singh said: "Under Delhi Police Act, 1978, powers to call additional forces is with the state government or its functionaries."

In Delhi, which is a Union Territory with special provisions, police is directly under the control of the Home Ministry.

At the Delhi Assembly, Kejriwal said the people of Delhi had two choices: "We either stand together to build a bright

future for Delhi or we count the bodies on each side and draw pleasure from killing the 'other'. We need to say that this is enough. A modern Delhi will not be built like this".

Appealing to the people to give up violence, the CM said: "All of this has not been done by the 'aam aadmi'. This has been done by some anti-social, political and external elements... Over 20 have been killed. Vir Bhan has died, he was a Hindu. Mohammad Mubaraq has died, he was a Muslim. Parvesh was killed, he was a Hindu. Zakir has died. He was a Muslim... police were also killed. I also have a list of the injured. Both Hindus and Muslims are suffering. Rahul Solanki was killed when he went out to buy something for his house. If someone goes and tells his mother to not worry because 10 Muslims have been killed to avenge the death of her son, what would she do with that."

He added that many stories of unity were also heard from several parts of the city amid the chaos.

"Many stories of unity were also heard from several parts of the capital. It was observed that all the Hindus got together to save a Muslim residing in their area. Somewhere it was learnt that there is a Hindu in the Muslim-dominated area, all the Muslims saved his life. This is our Delhi. This is the future of Delhi."



"Vir Bhan has died, he was a Hindu. Mohammad Mubaraq has died, he was a Muslim. Parvesh was killed, he was a Hindu. Zakir has died. He was a Muslim... police were also killed. I also have a list of the injured. Both Hindus and Muslims are suffering."

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
CHIEF MINISTER, SPEAKING INSIDE THE DELHI ASSEMBLY

CM heads to riot-hit Shiv Vihar to take stock of situation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal, along with Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and AAP leader Gopal Rai, visited riot-affected Shiv Vihar in Northeast Delhi on Wednesday evening. Violence has rocked areas of Northeast Delhi since Sunday evening, after an alleged clash between pro- and anti-CAA groups.

Around 7 pm, it was announced that the CM would visit some of the riot-affected areas in the capital.

Before heading to Shiv Vihar, Kejriwal, along with Sisodia and AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, held a meeting with the DCP (Northeast) and other sen-

ior police officers to get an update about the situation in the violence-stricken areas.

At Shiv Vihar, the CM met with the area's residents and enquired if the situation was better in their locality. He spoke to several locals, and lent them an ear as they vented about the violence that had transpired.

While conversing with a local, the CM asked if the violence had settled down, to which the residents informed that they are trying to help each other.

The lanes saw a large number of CRPF personnel deployed at intervals to ensure there were no more clashes among people. The visit lasted around 35 minutes. Kejriwal was also accompanied by police officers and the district magistrate.

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - III, DELHI
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Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.

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AXIS BANK LTD. vs. Applicant

TANMAY JHA & ORS. ...Defendants

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T 5, New Teachers Flats, Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University, New Delhi-110007

D-2
Aruna Jha T 5, New Teachers Flats, Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University, New Delhi-110007

D-3
Anarpal Patel Platinum Through Its Directors B-113, Second Floor, Lajpat Nagar, Delhi-110024

Also At: C-56/40, Sector, Noida-201301

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal 21/04/2020 at 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 10th day of JAN, 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal

Assistant Registrar, DRT-III, New Delhi

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- ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR:** Education-4, Mass Communication & Journalism-1, Social Work-1, Chemistry-1, Economics-2, Sociology-1, English-1, Public Administration-1, History-1, History (DDE)-1.
- ASSISTANT PROFESSORS:** Education-9, Kashmiri-1.
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- ON DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS:** Section Officer-1, Assistant-3, Lower Division Clerk-4, Instructors (Polytechnic)-4, Library Assistant-1, Library Attendant (Tenure)-1.

Application Forms along with Information Booklet relating to qualifications, experience, etc., can be downloaded from University website: www.manuu.edu.in. The last date for receipt of filled-in applications is 27th March, 2020.

Sd/-
REGISTRAR I/c

BRIEFLY

Properties in CP under scanner

New Delhi: The monitoring committee has directed the NDMC chairman to take punitive action against all properties at Connaught Place which have constructed basements violative of the 2021 Master Plan.

Transgender person shot

Gurgaon: Over a year after a transgender person was shot dead in Gurgaon, an accused in the case — another transgender — was shot at outside the district court allegedly by three bike-borne assailants Wednesday. **ENS**

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APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s) as per column (ii) that the below described immovable properties as per column (iii) mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of erstwhile Capital First Home Finance Limited and Capital First Limited now IDFC FIRST Bank Limited, will be sold on 'As is where is', 'As is what is', and 'Whatever there is' On 17.03.2020 for Sr no 1, and Sr no 2 & 3 on 28.03.2020, as described hereunder, for the recovery of amount due from Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s) as per column (i), due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Home Finance Limited and Capital First Limited).

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in IDFC FIRST Bank website i.e. www.idfcfirstbank.com.

Sr. No	(i) Demand Notice Date and Amount	(ii) Name Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s)	(iii) PROPERTY ADDRESS	(iv) Reserve Price Amount	(v) EMD Amount	(vi) Last Date & Time Of Submission Of EMD And Documents (online) On/before	(vii) Date and Time of Auction	(viii) Name and Mobile No of Authorized officer
1	INR 2213407.2/- AS ON 25/10/2018	Mahender Singh, Rekha Ramsham	House No. 212 Area Measuring 311, Sq. yards i.e 260.02 Sq. mtr Comprised In Khasra No. 664 Vikas Nagar Colony Village Loni, Pargana Loni, Tehsil Loni, Ghaziabad-uttar Pradesh	INR 21,00,000/-	INR 2100000/-	16.03.2020 10.00 am to 5pm	17.03.2020 11.00 TO 1.00 PM	MR. ROHIT DUDEJA MOB- 7838324723 E-MAIL: rohit.dudeja@idfcfirstbank.com
2	INR 1978798/- AS ON 01.06.2019	Wajid Altaf, Samareen Abdunoukhan	Flat No G-4, Ground Floor, Mig Type Back Side Without Roof Rights, plot No C 1/87, DLF Dishad Extn-ii, vill: trahampur, Ghaziabad	INR 1800000/-	INR 1800000/-	27.03.2020 10.00 am to 5pm	28.03.2020 11.00 TO 1.00 PM	MR. ROHIT DUDEJA MOB- 7838324723 E-MAIL: rohit.dudeja@idfcfirstbank.com
3	INR 2927529/- AS ON 03.09.2018	Prabhakar Singh, Neetu Singh	Flat No. GF-2, Rear Side, Western Portion, Built On Plot No. 1/208, Sector-1 Yasundhara, Ghaziabad	INR 1900000	INR 1900000	27.03.2020 10.00 am to 5.00pm	28.03.2020 11.00 TO 1.00 PM	MR. ROHIT DUDEJA MOB- 7838324723 E-MAIL: rohit.dudeja@idfcfirstbank.com

Disclaimer: Please note that the said notice is issued for sale of immovable property only and IDFC FIRST Bank Limited has no right to sale the movable assets, if any, present at the immovable property.

Sd/-
Authorised Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(Formerly known as Capital First Home Finance Limited/ Capital First Limited)

Date : 26.02.2020

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at 5:00 pm

Feb 28 to Mar 1, 2020 | 11:00 am - 8:00 pm

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INTERVIEW GUIDANCE

CIVIL SERVICES

Preparing for the UPSC Personality Test: Debunking the myths

VISION IAS is India's premier research and training institute for civil services examination. It is driven by core values of innovation and excellence and this has led to its spectacular rise in popularity among aspirants within a short span of time. It has bagged nine in top 10 selections in UPSC CSE 2018 from various courses like Test Series Programmes, Classroom Programmes, Interview Guidance Programmes, etc. This is an excerpt from a tête-à-tête with VISION IAS experts.

What is the importance of Personality Test in Civil Services Examination?

Personality Test in the Civil Services Examination conducted by UPSC is the final stage in a candidate's journey towards clearing the Civil Services Exam in India. That this is the only stage in the examination process wherein the members of UPSC meet the candidate in-person is an indication of its importance. It plays an important role in identifying the most suitable candidates for discharging public duties as a civil servant.

For the candidates too, the Personality Test is a crucial aspect of their overall performance in the Civil Services Examination. A good performance and a good score in the Personality Test not only brightens a candidate's chances of being in the final merit list but also plays a critical role in getting entry into a service of one's choice as well as the desired cadre.

Personality Test does not require any special preparation: myth or reality?

A common misconception related to Personality Test is that it requires no special preparation at all. It is argued by some that one's knowledge has already been tested in the previous two stages, viz. the Preliminary and written Mains Examination and it is nearly impossible to change the key traits of one's personality, so there is nothing more one needs to do, in particular, to prepare for the Personality Test. However, there can be nothing farther from reality.

While it might not be a test of one's ability to retain and reproduce facts, figures and other crucial pieces of information, the board members do make an attempt to know how a candidate sees himself and applies his mind to critical issues

surrounding him. It is through a candidate's responses to their questions that the board members get an insight into his personal traits like honesty, integrity among others.

So, it is important that candidates learn not only to focus on their strengths and inherent positive traits but also realise their limitations as well as personal prejudices and biases. This can only happen if the candidate has spent adequate time and effort to prepare for this last stage of the examination.

What qualities is the UPSC seeking in candidates interested in entering the civil services?

Since a civil servant is responsible for enforcement of laws in a fair and transparent manner, so as to ensure administrative justice, the members in the UPSC board are looking for certain key personality traits in candidates aspiring to join the higher civil services.

First and foremost, among these are honesty and integrity. So, the candidate has to be sure of not only what one knows but also what one doesn't know. Also, since attention to details is important for a civil servant, one should be very careful in filling up the different fields of his Detailed Application Form (DAF) and being alert during the Personality Test.

The candidate is also expected to be curious about everything happening around him and this is reflected through his knowledge of current issues. Because civil servants are expected to be objective and rational, it is important that the answers given by candidates are based on facts rather than reflecting their personal prejudices and biases.

Moreover, since one's hobbies, extra-curricular etc., are a reflection of one's lived experiences, the candidate should be careful while filling these up in the DAF and be sure of everything mentioned therein. Lastly, adherence to the law of the land and upholding the rule of law are most desirable traits for candidates aspiring for higher civil services.

What can a candidate do to perform well in the Personality Test?

Personality Test is a purpose-driven conversation in a formal setting aimed at choosing the best candidates for the administration of the country.

Whether a candidate is objective and rational is reflected not only through his conduct and performance in the Personality Test but also through his DAF. The DAF should reflect his determination, application of mind, forthright attitude, honesty as well as a firm self-appraisal.

It is here that the Personality Development Programme offered by Vision IAS can make a difference. Each student of the programme is assigned a mentor who guides and prepares him for the Personality Test conducted by UPSC. An in-person one-to-one DAF Analysis session is conducted for all students of the programme. During this session, not only is the DAF discussed in detail but the mentor also helps in preparing a plan for the student and charting a future course of action for him.

Our mentors explain why a casual mindset is not desirable and how the student should reflect his determination to succeed and get selected in the civil services. They also stress upon objectivity in both filling the details in the DAF and answering questions posed by the board members during the Personality Test.

While it is not possible to make an accurate assessment of the questions that are likely to be asked by the board members in UPSC, preparing oneself thoroughly with the DAF and current issues of national and global importance helps in ensuring that the students are confident enough to do well in the Personality Test.

It is important here to realise that "Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win".

Going with this spirit, in subsequent stages of Vision IAS' Personality Development Programme, the students are given an opportunity to appear for mock interviews with senior faculty of Vision IAS and retired civil servants. The organisation strives for the best to make sure that these mock interviews are as close as possible to those conducted by UPSC.

Our experience has shown that with right guidance and appropriate support one can develop the capacity for self-inspection, learn to focus on positives and be confident as well as optimistic, and this is the role that Vision IAS would like to take up for its vast student community.

Drishti IAS: Interview Guidance programme

THE UPSC mains results are out and students who have qualified for the UPSC Personality Test (or interview) must have already immersed themselves in preparations. As it is the final and deciding stage of the three-stage Civil Service Examination (CSE), one cannot afford to take it casually.

More often than not, a good interview score ensures selection as well as plays a major part in the final allocation of services. The UPSC Interview is not just a test of one's knowledge and aptitude but it is an in-depth analysis of the candidate's overall attitude. The interview wants to test whether the candidate possesses the requisite 'personality' — fit for the rigorous and challenging job of a bureaucrat — and it takes years of conditioning, learning and unlearning to develop this 'personality'.

A bureaucrat in India needs to face challenging situations, take up daunting tasks and make difficult decisions. No doubt, the interviewers sitting in the panel try to probe the candidate's personality for the presence of attributes like a clear mind, a sharp vision and an empathetic attitude. Most of the times, it is not the lack of qualities in a candidate to become a good bureaucrat which leads to a low interview score, but it is the inability to properly project one's qualities during the course of interview that poses a hurdle.

However, proper guidance, regular practice and feedback can go a long way in shaping one's acumen, confidence and ability to remain calm under pressure and to project one's qualities correctly during the interview. Here we should

welcome the role of mock interviews.

Mock interviews not only help brush up our knowledge and command over expression, they also serve as a medium of support during the mentally draining period between Mains qualification and the Personality Test. It has now become a common practice among candidates to opt for mock interviews after the Mains results are declared but the challenge often is whom to choose between so many coaching institutes. Selection of the wrong institute may even cause harm to one's ability to succeed in the CSE.

Drishti IAS's Interview Guidance programme is different from the rest. It adheres as strictly as possible to the observations of the Kothari Committee constituted by the UPSC to list the qualities that should be rated in the personality test.

Combining the traditional methods of interaction with new age advancements, Drishti IAS comes up with a mock interview process that enables the candidates to correctly project the personality, clarity, confidence and the traits that UPSC looks for. The extensive research that goes into developing each and every step of Drishti IAS's mock interview programme had led to an overwhelming result in 2018 when over 80 candidates of this programme made it to the final merit list, thus fulfilling their dream.

As a believer of constant evolution, Drishti IAS has put together a panel of extremely competent members in a set-up to resemble that of UPSC. Drishti IAS is all the more excited to have you in the programme and produce unmatched results this year as well.



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INTERVIEW GUIDANCE CIVIL SERVICES

Cracking the Civil Services Interview

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“THE biggest secret to living your dream, is getting one step closer every day.” NEXT IAS interview guidance programme strictly sticks to the above quote by offering a number of sessions (ten in number) which takes you closer to your dream each day.

UPSC interview is the last and the most important stage of the Civil Services Examination. Thus it is also an integral part of the Next IAS GS foundation course. The foundation course curriculum is well planned and an innovative teaching pedagogy is followed to obtain target oriented results. Updated and revised study material is provided along with the short notes dictated by subject experts. Audio visual, PowerPoint presentations and other interactive modes of learning platforms make teaching more interesting and develop a better understanding among students. The focus on developing deep understanding about the issues in its various dimensions not only helps students to score good in the prelims and mains examination but also perform brilliantly in the UPSC interviews as well.

The Next IAS GS Foundation course not only consists of extensive 700 plus classroom lectures but also current affairs lectures, classroom test discussions and motivation lectures by selected candidates at regular interval. Also there is a dedicated 24x7 academic coach for each student to act as his friend, philosopher and guide at each step of his preparation. This comprehensive approach builds and refine student's aptitude towards becoming a civil servant. Special care has been taken to align the teaching style and tests as per similar quality, environment and pattern to civil services examination. This philosophy is followed at Next IAS interview programme as well.

NEXT IAS team has analysed the UPSC interview pattern which directly shows



Mr B Singh, CMD, NEXT IAS

the track — where the UPSC panel emphasise, what type of questions they ask, and what answers do they expect. This not being the conventional paper in which one wrong answer can be compensated by other correct answer; in interview every word counts, and every wrong answer can lead the interview in another direction and then recovery of which is not possible during the entire interview. Henceforth, this point makes it imperative to have a proper interview handling guidance and that too from best mentors.

The protagonist of the programme is one to one DAF discussions. This session gives support to confront the fear of interview. The two parts of this session: technical and general. The technical part focuses mainly on candidates with either engineering optional or candidates having engineering background. The general part focuses on strengths and weaknesses of the candidate, participation in

various extracurricular activities, etc.

It is of paramount importance that aspirant not only be well versed with current issues but also with other dimensions of the DAF. For this, comprehensive sessions on not only current affairs and home state are conducted but also there is the exclusive session for engineers. These sessions will be conducted stream wise by our expert faculties, covering concepts and areas of applications of engineering subjects Civil, Mechanical and Electrical. Along with this there will be exclusive sessions on IFoS, Philosophy, and Sociology by the expert team of NEXT IAS.

We believe that a person is not afraid of the same fear twice. Therefore, our programme provides practice mock and 2 mock interviews. Talking about practice mock, it is conducted to ensure no important questions are left unpracticed before appearing in the real interview.

The two mock interviews are conducted by a 5-member panel of retired and renowned civil servants, personality and HR experts, psychologists, and senior subject matter experts. For engineers, there will be technical experts in the panel for better preparation. The composition and conduct of the board is very close to real UPSC panel experience.

We take as gospel the quote “Self-analysis is a daily self-push in one's personal level growth.” Hence, each mock interview will be video recorded and the recording of the same will be made available to the candidate for self betterment.

NEXT IAS will not leave your hand until you become a civil servant only if you have the guts and you are willing to sweat. You dream it and we will make it happen.

All the best!

Apart from the offline interview guidance course, we will also provide online support to outstation candidates.

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	12 April 9 AM

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प्रारंभिक, मुख्य परीक्षा और निबंध के लिए महत्वपूर्ण सभी टॉपिक का विस्तृत कवरेज
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Ph : 8800338066, 8800776445

DELHI

JAIPUR

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Saket : 316/274, Westend Marg, Saidulajab, Near Saket Metro Station ☎ 8800776445, 011-45124642

A-1, Lion's Colony, Sitabari, Near The Theme Hotel, Tonk Road, Jaipur ☎ 9358200511, 9358200522



Residents say they must take turns standing guard at the gates for at least a week. Express

Amid chaos, a mohalla is an island of calm, and an example

SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE REMAINS of the riot — burnt shops, shattered glass, teargas shells and presence of paramilitary forces — made Maujpur main road look like a ghost town Wednesday. But in gali numbers 4 and 6 of Gurdwara Mohalla, less than 100 metres away, the scenes were starkly different.

While police in riot gear and paramilitary forces kept a tight vigil on the main road, locals such as Balpreet Singh Kalsi (26), Mohd Imran (33) and Champa Verma (52) held fort at the two "mixed lanes".

Kalsi, who lives opposite the gurdwara at gali number 4, told *The Indian Express*, "My grandfather died in the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. My father has told me horror stories from the time. My grandfather went missing from Maujpur Chowk while waiting for help. I can't let a repeat of

that happen again. This is a mixed lane of Sikh, Hindu and Muslim families and we take turns to give *pehra* (stand guard) at various points of the colony 24x7."

In gali number 6 lives Mohd Imran with his wife and two toddlers, surrounded by Hindu neighbours. "These neighbours are like family, we have an understanding that if I am in trouble, they will protect me, and if they are in trouble, I will protect them," he said.

To ensure no violence takes place inside their lane, residents collected Rs 4,000 on Tuesday and got a metal gate fixed at the colony so non-residents cannot come in. "Another gate of the colony was damaged in the violence and we immediately got that fixed too. We will give *pehra* for a week," said Imran.

In fact, in gali number 4, at least "40 non-resident Muslims" rushed inside Tuesday afternoon, but were stopped by the young men of the neighbourhood on

pehra duty, said Salman Ansari, a local. He added, "They had sticks and seemed angry... They could have harmed the non-Muslim homes in the area. We made sure they couldn't proceed."

Members of the colony also have a WhatsApp group called "V68," after resident Palvinder Singh Khalsa's house address, where they quell rumours and keep each other informed about any suspicious movement. "On Tuesday night, there was a rumour that the gurdwara had been set on fire and around 200 Sikh men wanted to rush here. I had to tell them that I am standing in front of it and there was no fire," said Khalsa.

In a Hindu locality nearby called Mata Mandir Marg as well, residents were vigilant. "We give *pehra* all night, and if a Muslim local comes in, we ensure he reaches his lane unharmed, we escort him. All the violence has been meted out by outsiders; our colonies are not like this," said a resident.

YAMUNA VIHAR AND CHAND BAGH

Left charred: Petrol pump, coaching centre & a school

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

UNTIL RECENTLY, the Yamuna Vihar and Chand Bagh neighbourhoods were one wide road apart — the National Highway 9, which cuts through North East Delhi.

The distance gradually grew as an anti-CAA protest raged in the area. Over Monday and Tuesday, the gulf widened further, leaving a gaping hole in the middle — one that cannot be seen, but felt.

On Wednesday, it could be felt in the words of Sumit Rohilla, whose private coaching academy in Yamuna Vihar was targeted by rioters "from Chand Bagh".

"The protests had crossed over 40 days. We didn't say a word. We are working professionals and have little time to care about these things. Monday marked a rupture. The way they came for us sent shivers down our spine. Our students were inside when the mob came," said Rohilla, pointing to the shattered window panes of his institute.

A few buildings away stood the Horizon Engineering and Medical Entrances Coaching Institute, owned and run by Navneet Gupta. "The howling mob continuously tried to break open our gates, which the CCTVs installed on the entrance let us see inside. Then they smashed the CCTVs. We are fortunate as the police arrived on time and rescued the students," Gupta said.

Charred remains of many cars and bikes lined the road, on



Charred vehicles at a petrol pump torched by rioters in Chand Bagh. Gajendra Yadav

which also stood a burnt-down restaurant, owned by a Hindu resident.

The gap could also be felt in cold stares that young men from both sides, separated by an iron grill on the middle of the highway, threw at each other. On the Yamuna Vihar side stood a torched Indian Oil petrol pump and on the Chand Bagh side a car showroom, owned by a Muslim but being run in partnership with Hindus.

Inside the narrow lanes and bylanes of Chand Bagh, a predominantly Muslim locality, men in the Hindu pockets maintained vigil. "We have not been attacked by anyone. But we are taking all precautions.

We are having sleepless nights," said a Hindu youth, wishing to remain anonymous, in Block D of Chand Bagh.

Mohammed Shahid, a resident of Munge Nagar inside Chand Bagh, who was huddled with the Hindu men, insisted the Hindus of the area were not targeted and the temples were also protected from any act of desecration.

Shahid denied involvement of the local Muslims in the torching of the shops and the petrol pump, but the Hindus on the other side said they have documented evidence to prove their "active participation".

In neighbouring Brijpuri, where a mosque and a madrasa

were set afire Wednesday, at least four Hindu households were also torched and ransacked. The four houses, standing next to each other close to the private school that was also attacked, were emptied Wednesday.

Outside Arun Modern Public Senior Secondary school, Jyoti Rani was trying to pick up the pieces. "There is nothing left to call this a school anymore," she said. The school is owned by former Ghonda MLA Bhisham Sharma. He said, "The mobs broke into the school and targeted the administration block. They, however, could not target the classrooms. I will file an FIR into the incident."

Stone pelting charge against AAP man, he denies it

New Delhi: As a video emerged on Wednesday of men pelting stones from what police said is AAP corporator Mohammed Tahir Hussain's residence, the latter denied the claim.

While the party did not comment on the allegation, Hussain, in a video released during the day, said: "The news being circulated about me is false. This fake news is a consequence of dirty politics, they want to defame me. After (BJP leader) Kapil Mishra gave a hate speech, the situation in Delhi hasn't been good. There are several incidents of stone-pelting and riots. The day before yesterday, there were riots in my area as well. We immediately contacted Delhi Police. An angry mob broke into my office and climbed atop it. So I called police. They came after an hour and controlled the situation. They checked the entire office and escorted my family safely out of the building." ENS

Sit-in protest cleared at Khureji Khas

New Delhi: The sit-in protest at Shahdara's Khureji Khas was cleared on Wednesday, with locals alleging that Delhi Police personnel vandalised the protest site and detained women. The women in the area have been protesting since December against the new citizenship law.

It was also alleged that police hit lawyers who went to the station to free the women. Police, however, denied the charge and said they used "mild force to remove protesters blocking the road." ENS

Violence down, cop presence up: 'Upar se order aa gaya'

DIPANKARGHOSE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

IT IS noon at Gokalpuri police station, and there is silence. The public facilitation desk, the first cubicle after the entrance, is empty. As is the SHO's room. Three women constables sit at the reception, looking into their mobile phones. "Thana khaali hai. Sab field mein hai. Teen din se yahi haal hai," they said to people who occasionally walk in. And yet, something has changed from Tuesday to Wednesday — after widespread violence, a tenuous calm.

Less than 100 metres away, at the Gokalpuri tyre market set ablaze over the last three days, a lone constable from the police station sat on the pavement and watched fire officials at work. On Tuesday, he had stood at the entrance, watching as men with bikes, lathis in their hands, sped past raising slogans. He has one explanation for what changed overnight: "Upar se order aa gaya raat ko... Ab sab shaant hai."

Two and a half kilometres away, at 1 pm at Jafraabad police station, inspector Lekhpal Singh got off his Gypsy and walks inside, a bulletproof jacket strapped to his torso. He stopped only for a

glass of water. Asked by *The Indian Express* if the situation around him is calm, he said, "Ask quickly. I have to go back out again. Everything is calm and we have controlled the situation. No FIRs have been registered and no detentions have happened at this police station." In five minutes, he left again.

Standing at the door, constable Sunil Kumar kept a hawk's eye on civilians standing in the lanes. Occasionally, he shouted out, "Andar jaiye, shoot at sight orders hai." The road outside the Jafraabad police station bears witness to the worst of the violence. Every lane is littered with stones, burnt shops and cars. Maujpur Chowk is within 500 metres. Kumar said, "For the first three days, what could we do? There was no force with us. This police station has 80 people at full strength, discounting personnel on leave. They were so many, and if we had acted against the rioters at low strength, it could have been worse. From yesterday evening, the paramilitary began to pour in. By early morning, everyone was stationed in the right places, and nothing has happened since."

Around 2 pm, at Bhajanpura police station, senior police officers walked out of the prem-

ises, leading a flag march through the streets. In Khajuri Khas, DCP (Northeast) Ved Prakash Surya drove around in his car in a convoy to restore confidence. For the lower ranks of the Delhi Police constabulary, there was a clear sign at midnight. "We saw on the news that NSA Ajit Doval had come to the ground, and was taking a meeting of senior police officials. That is when we were all aware there was now intent to act," a constable at Bhajanpura said.

As he spoke, he watched videos of the violence that engulfed the area, in particular of shots being fired at police personnel by a man identified by the police as Shahrulk.

At Seelampur police station, situated in the middle of a colony with a mixed demographic, a constable watched two families pass by, bags in hand, ostensibly leaving their homes until things return to normal. "Aren't we allowed to have a religious preference? But if a sahab says stop the violence and control everyone, we control everyone. It does not matter what religion they are. We are clear today that there can be no more loss of life. And we will protect them," he said.

3 mosques targeted, school burnt, shops & homes looted

SOURAV ROY BARMAN & ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

A SAFFRON flag inscribed with 'Jai Shri Ram' fluttered on top of a minaret and a Tricolour lay mangled a step below. On Tuesday, rioters had desecrated the mosque and set it on fire, and torched and looted at least four homes underneath. Videos of men climbing the minaret had been circulated through Tuesday.

This was one of two mosques, a kilometre apart, targeted inside Ashok Nagar, between noon and 3 pm. Two kilometres away in Brijpuri, another mosque was desecrated by rioters and torched.

Eyewitnesses told *The Indian Express* Wednesday that a mob trooped into the neighbourhood around 12 pm Tuesday. "First they pelted the mosque with stones and then broke open its gates, climbed up the

rooms were charred, even as smoke continued to billow out of the ashes. Beds, mattresses, ceiling fans and buckets, lay scattered, half-burnt.

In Ashok Nagar's E Block, the mob attacked another mosque around 3 pm Tuesday. Two meat shops, owned by Akbar Qureshi, were also ransacked. A few kilometres away in Brijpuri, armed men torched a mosque and a madrasa Tuesday evening.

A few blocks away, a school was torched. As per eyewitnesses who were inside Ferooqia masjid offering evening *namaz*, a group of armed men broke the doors of the mosque and assaulted those inside.

Mohammad Masjud, an eyewitness, said, "They were wearing helmets and we could not see their faces. They hurled petrol bombs." The mosque is next to the Mustafabad anti-CAA protest site, which was also torched.

TAMIL NADU HOUSING BOARD - SALEM CIRCLE @ COIMBATORE
SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO : 20 /2019-2020 Dated : 25.02.2020

Sealed tenders with name of work, reference No., due date and the name of tenderer duly super-scribed on the cover (under Pre-qualification system) are invited for the following works, so as to reach the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Salem Circle, Cowly Brown Road, R.S. Puram, Coimbatore - 2 upto 3.00 P.M. (as per office clock) on the date mentioned below. The tenders will be opened by the undersigned at his office at 3.15 P.M. on the same day in the presence of the tenderer or their agent who choose to be present.

Sl. No.	Description of Work	Approximate value (Rs. in lakhs)	EMD in Rupees	Cost of Tender Schedule in Rs. (Non-refundable)	Period during which the tender schedule for sale	Last date of receipt and opening of tender
1	Construction of 60 HIG Flats (Stilt + 5 floors) @ Ganapathy Block IV in S.F.No. 132pt, 141 pt, 151 pt, 163 pt and 164 pt Village No. 51 (Pocket-1) & Construction of 50 HIG Flats (Stilt + 4 floors) @ Ganapathy Block IV (Pocket-2) in S.F.No. 52 pt & 7 pt (Pocket-2) Ganapathy Village, Coimbatore District. SCC/289/2017.	4030.00 lakhs	20,25,000/-	15,000/- + 5% GST	06.03.2020 to 12.03.2020	13.03.2020
2	Area development works for 88 plots (6 HIG, 47 MIG, 9 LIG and 26 EWS) in S.F.No. 845 at Kalapatty to the extent of 3.92 Acres Kalapatty village, in Coimbatore District. SCC/363/2018.	178.00 lakhs	99,000/-	15,000/- + 5% GST	06.03.2020 to 12.03.2020	13.03.2020
3	Construction of Multi storied office cum Shopping complex and 63 Residential Flats (Parking in under ground and Basement) floor office cum shopping complex in First floor and 63 Residential in succeeding 7 floors at E.V.Road, Periyar Nagar, Erode under S.F.Scheme.	2315.00 lakhs	11,67,500/-	15,000/- + 5% GST	13.03.2020 to 19.03.2020	20.03.2020

CONDITIONS FOR ISSUE OF TENDER SCHEDULES:
1. The tenders registered (the registration certificate should be reclassified and renewed upto date) under class-II in TNHB, P.W.D., T.N.P.C., T.N.S.C.B. and other Govt. Departments with appropriate monetary limit are eligible to participate in the tender. 2. The tenderer should have executed works of similar nature costing more than 50% of the value of the work put to tender as a single tender within the last 5 years period. Further particulars and tender documents can be had from the office of the Superintending Engineer, Salem Circle, Cowly Brown Road, R.S. Puram, Coimbatore-2 on request in writing on payment of the prescribed cost in the form of Demand Draft in favour of the Exe. Engr. & Adm. Officer, Coimbatore Housing Unit for serial no. 1 & 2, Exe. Engr. & Adm. Officer, Erode Housing Unit for serial no. 3 on all working days between 11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. on the date mentioned in the column No. 6 of the table above.
NOTE: 1. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons therefor. 2. The tender documents will be issued only after verifying credentials produced by the intending tenderer regarding their registration, previous performance, nature and value of the work done etc. 3. The tender schedule can also be downloaded from the Website www.tenders.in.gov.in at free of cost.
Cowly Brown Road, R.S. Puram, Coimbatore-2, Phone : 0422-2469606
Superintending Engineer, Salem Circle, Coimbatore.
DIPR/1094/TENDER/2020

TAMIL NADU HOUSING BOARD - MADURAI CIRCLE
Tender Notice No. : 11/2019-2020 Date : 25.02.2020

Sealed tenders with prequalification system (SI.No. 1 & 2) duly super-scribed on the covers with Name of work, Reference No., Due Date and Name of the Tenderer are invited for the following work so as to reach the office of the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Ellisnagar, Madurai - 16 up to 11.00 A.M. (as per office clock) on the date mentioned below. The tenders will be opened by the undersigned at his office at 11.30 AM on the same day in the presence of the tenderer or their agent who choose to be present.

Sl. No.	Description of Work	Approximate value (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD in Rs.	Tender due date	Period of Sale
1	Area Development Scheme for 88 Plots in S.No. 77/pt at Thoppur Area - IV and 255 Plots in S.No. 30/2B & 3, 32/1 & 2 at Uchappatti Area - VII in Madurai District. (Pre-Qualification Tender).	543.00	2,81,500/-	13.03.2020	06.03.2020 to 12.03.2020
2	Construction of 15 MIG Flats (Stilt + 5 Floors) in Plot No. I, II & III of Pudukkottai NHS in T.S.No. 33 of Pudukkottai (V) in Pudukkottai District under SFS (Phase-II) (Pre-Qualification Tender)	336.15	1,78,100/-	13.03.2020	06.03.2020 to 12.03.2020
3	Area Development Scheme for 33 MIG Plots in S.No. 40/1B, 2 & 4 at Thathaneri Village and 18 Plots in S.No. 24/9pt, 10, 11 & 12 at Thathaneri Village in Madurai District.	74.29	47,200/-	13.03.2020	06.03.2020 to 12.03.2020
4	Area Development Scheme for 22 Plots at Kottaiappatti Village in Virudhunagar District.	56.79	38,400/-	13.03.2020	06.03.2020 to 12.03.2020

Time for receipt and opening of tender on due date upto 11.00 AM & 11.30 AM respectively, Cost of Tender Schedule (Non refundable) = Rs. 15,750/- (including Tax). Further particulars and tender documents can be had from the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Ellisnagar, Madurai - 16. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tender documents without assigning any reasons therefor. The tender schedule can also be downloaded from the website www.tenders.in.gov.in at free of cost.
Tamil Nadu Housing Board, Madurai Circle, Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Ellisnagar, Madurai - 16. Phone : 0452 - 2600901
DIPR / 1111 / TENDER / 2020

TIRUNELVELI SMART CITY LIMITED
SMART CITIES MISSION
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (NIT)
Tender Notice No.25/Smart City/2018-19/SCM Dated: 24.02.2020
The Managing Director, Tirunelveli Smart City Limited, Tirunelveli hereby invites Bids through both on-line and off-line from eligible bidders for the following works:

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimate Amount Rs. in crores	Bid Security Rs. in Lakhs	Period of Completion
1	Re-development of VOC stadium at Palayamkottai.	14.95	14.95	18 months
2	Providing Road Divider and Widening of road with Greenery for Sudalakkoil, Perumalapuram and STC College road.	13.45	13.45	9 months
3	Improvement of Drive way and Bus bay area in Bharath Ratna Dr. MGR Bus Stand.	14.27	14.27	9 months
4	Providing Science Park near Tirunelveli New Bus Stand.	4.94	4.94	12 months
5	Removal of the legacy waste of 217660cum through Bio-mining process to reclaim the existing dump yard located at Ramayanpatti.	14.50	14.50	24 months
6	Procurement of vehicles and equipments for solid waste management and liquid waste management.	5.00	5.00	3 months
7	Re-development of Anganwadi buildings Phase-II in Tirunelveli City Municipal Corporation. (2' call)	3.67	3.67	12 months

A two cover bidding procedure will be adopted. The bidders shall satisfy the qualification criteria and the financial criteria as mentioned in the Bid document. The bidding documents will be available from 28.02.2020 to 31.03.2020. A pre-bid meeting to be held on 12.03.2020 at 11.00 hours. Tender documents can be downloaded from the website <https://tntenders.gov.in>. The bidder shall upload their bids on or before 15.00 hours on 31.03.2020. The tender will be opened at 15.30 hours on 01.04.2020.
Email ID: commr.tirunelveli@tn.gov.in Managing Director
Office : 0462 - 2329328 Tirunelveli Smart City Limited,
Fax : (0462) - 2329327 Tirunelveli Corporation Office,
S.N.High Road, Tirunelveli - 627001.
Managing Director
Tirunelveli Smart City Limited.
DIPR / 1098 / TENDER / 2020

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
NABARD & RURAL ROADS CIRCLE,
CHENGALPATTU
TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No.27/2019-20/SDO/Dated:26.02.2020

For and on behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu Item wise tender through online only will be received upto 30.03.2020, 15.00 hours by the Superintending Engineer(H) NABARD & Rural Roads, Chengalpattu Circle for One bridge work in respect of Vellore(H) NABARD & Rural Roads Division under State Fund.

Details of Name of work, approximate value of work, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 06.03.2020 onwards in the Government website <https://tntenders.gov.in> If any Changes / Corrections / Amendments etc to the tender, it will be published on the above Government website only.
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (H) NABARD & RURAL ROADS CIRCLE, CHENGALPATTU-1
DIPR/1110/TENDER/2020

HARYANA GOVERNMENT
TENDER NOTICE

Sl. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./ AUTH.	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH.	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/E-MAIL
1.	THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	SOLVENT FLEX / BANNER, SOLVENT PRINTING FLEX WITH 18-20 GAUGE 1" SQUARE PIPE, GLOW SIGN BOARD & DIGITAL VINYLE PRINT.	28.02.2020 18.03.2020	20000/-	http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in	0171-2540614, 9996648121 milklplam@vitambala.com
2.	THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	PEST CONTROL SERVICE	28.02.2020 18.03.2020	20000/-	http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in	0171-2540614, 9996648121 milklplam@vitambala.com
3.	MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE SAMPLA	CONST. OF DINING HALL, KITCHEN AND FIBER SHED IN ARRAN SCHOOL IN SAMPLA, REPAIR OF ARRAN SCHOOL, NEAR EXCHANGE IN SAMPLA AND CONST. OF TOILET AND REPAIR OF ARRAN SCHOOL NEAR EXCHANGE IN SAMPLA	CLOSING DATE 03.03.2020	34.55 lacs	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	Secretary
4.	KURUSHETRA DEVELOPMENT BOARD	SUPPLY OF 68 NOS. LED STREET LIGHT 130 W (MAKE OF HAVELL'S/C & S/SYSKA)	CLOSING DATE 05.03.2020	50000/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01744-270187 kdkdkr@gmail.com
5.	HSAM BOARD, BHIWANI	CONSTRUCTION OF LINK ROAD FROM VILLAGE BEHAL TO GOKALPUR IN LOHARU CONSTITUENCY DISTT. BHIWANI (ID-9940), + 9 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 19.03.2020	12.02 CRORE	http://etender.hry.nic.in .	xenbihwani2.hsamb@gmail.com
6.	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION GURUGRAM	RENOVATION AND BEAUTIFICATION OF WELL IN SUNAR WALA MOHALLA IN WARD NO.08, UNDER DIV-II, MUNICIPAL CORPORATION GURUGRAM. + 1 OTHER WORK	25.02.2020 05.03.2020	49.07 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	MCG.ee@mog.gov.in
7.	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION FARIDABAD	LAYING OF PERIPHERAL SEWER LINE, CONSTRUCTION OF INTERMEDIATE PUMPING STATION AND STP ON SBR TECHNOLOGY (100MLD AT PRATAPGARH+80 MLD AT MIRZAPUR) ALONG WITH O&M FOR 6YEARS INCLUDING 1 YEAR AS DEFECT LIABILITY PERIOD, IN FARIDABAD TOWN	20.02.2020 17.03.2020	33347.96 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9971673003 dhakarjijay@gmail.com
8.	MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BAHADURGARH	SPL REPAIR WITH (MASTIC PROVISION) MALIK MEDICOS TO DEEPRK SANGWAN HOUSE AND ITS APPROACHES IN WARD NO 7 + 15 OTHER WORK	CLOSING DATE 17.03.2020	EMD 6.27 LACS	ETENDERS.HRY.NIC.IN	9466076249 SSUMITNANDAL@GMAIL.COM

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in



A school in Mustafabad that was targeted during the violence in Northeast Delhi. Several public properties suffered damage in the violence. Praveen Khanna

LONG WAIT OUTSIDE MORTUARIES

Among dead: Newlywed, father, 85-yr-old woman

ASTHA SAXENA, SUKRITA BARUAH & ANANYA TIWARI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

A NEWLY married man, a carpenter, a DJ, a businessman, a construction worker and a father who went to buy toffees for his children — they are among the 27 people who died during the violent clashes that gripped several areas of Northeast Delhi for the past three days. While the bodies lay inside mortuaries, grieving families waited outside to take them home. While the toll stood at 13 on Tuesday night, it reached 27 on Wednesday as either those already injured succumbed or others came in with wounds suffered over the past two days.

Those identified at GTB Hospital so far are Deepak Kumar (34); Ishaq Khan (24); Mohd Mudassar (30); Vir Bhan (50); Mohd Mubarak Hussain (28); Shan Mohd (35); Parvesh (48); Zakhir (24); Mehtaab (22); Ashfaq (22); Rahul Solanki (26); Shahid (25); Mohd Furkan (30); Rahul Thakur (23); Ratan Lal (42); Ankit Sharma (26); Dilbar; Mohsin Ali (24) and Vinod Kumar (50). Two deaths were reported from Lok Nayak Hospital, Mahruf Ali (30) and Aman (17). The rest were yet to be identified.

Ashfaq Hussain (22), a resident of Mustafabad, was returning from work on Tuesday when he was stabbed twice in the neck. He had also sustained five bullet injuries. An electrician, he died later that night at Al Hind Hospital. His body was brought to GTB Hospital in the morning.

His wife, Tasneem, said they got married on February 14. "He wanted to come home early from work, but he could not make it because of the violence," said his aunt, Azra Khatoo. After waiting several hours, Hussain's family left at 7.30 pm and said they will return Thursday for the body.

Twenty five deaths were reported at GTB Hospital, while two more were reported from Lok Nayak Hospital. A total of 330 people sustained injuries.

Aman was out to buy milk when he was shot in his face at Jafraabad Metro station, said a volunteer for a lawyers' collective who spoke to the family. The bullet cut through his cheeks.

Vivek Chaudhary (19), who was admitted to the neuro-surgery ward of the hospital after a water motor was pushed inside his head, was operated successfully on Wednesday. Doctors at the hospital removed the machine. His sister, Babita sat close to his bed while Chaudhary was unconscious after the surgery.

Taking the body of his father, Nitin Kumar (25) recalled how they were attacked by a group of men while they were heading to buy medicine in Brahmpuri. With a bandage on his head and a swollen eye, Kumar told *The Indian Express*: "The mob also set my bike on fire. My father and I were lying on the road... some people took us to the hospital."



Families of those who died in the violence wait outside GTB Hospital on Wednesday. Amit Mehra

Another victim, Mehtab (21), had stepped out in Brijpuri on Tuesday evening to buy milk. As he walked away, a group grabbed him by the collar and dragged him. We banged on the gates and pleaded with them to let him go. A while later, his sister received a call saying 'Mahtab ko aag ke hawale kiya gaya hai,' alleged his sister-in-law, Yasmin.

On Wednesday evening, 24-year-old Mohsin Ali's family came running to the mortuary in search of their son, who hadn't returned home since Tuesday evening. At 6.30 pm, they found his body inside. A native of Hapur, Ali got married two months ago. He sustained injuries to his head.

While the hospital handed over five bodies on Wednesday evening, other families expressed anger over the delay. Zakir Saifi (26), a resident of Brijpuri who worked as a welder, also died on Tuesday evening. His sister Sitara said: "He went to pray in a mosque near Brijpuri Puliyan and was shot on the way. Our brother has a shop there and we found out about the incident. He was shot and stabbed."

At Lok Nayak Hospital, families of Maruf Ali and Aman came to identify the bodies. Ali, a resident of Bhajanpura, was with a group of men when another group shot at him. Firoz, his brother-in-law, said, "We heard sloganeering and shots being fired. Then a group shot at us."

Acid attacks

At least four people suffered acid burns in the violence. In Shiv Vihar, as shops were being torched and looted, a family of five sought refuge on the terrace of a two-storey house. Unbeknownst to them, men below flung acid bottles to the terrace. One of them hit Mohd Vakeel (52), who owns a shop at Shiv Vihar, in the face. A few drops splashed on his daughter Anam (19).

Elderly woman dead

An 85-year-old woman, Akbari, died after her family's home in Gamri village was set on fire, said her family. Her son, Mohammad Saeed Salmani, operated a garments workshop on the first two floors of his house. He said: "On Tuesday, I had stepped out of my home to buy milk. When I came back, there were 100-150 people in front of our gali. They broke through the gate, set fire to the first two floors... My children and wife ran but my mother had difficulty moving because of her age."

On day out, Doval lends ear to residents: 'Sir, not able to sleep, we don't feel safe'

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

VISITING RIOT-HIT areas in Northeast Delhi Wednesday, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval Wednesday assured locals that "peace will prevail". This is the second visit by Doval to the area in less than 24 hours. On Tuesday night, he toured riot-hit areas in the district and sought details of the dead and injured.

On Wednesday afternoon, Doval interacted with locals in Maujpur and Jafraabad. And though he was greeted by slogans of 'Delhi Police zindabad' in both areas, two residents from Jafraabad aired their complaints.

Ifra Parvez, an MA political science student from Jamia Millia Islamia, rushed to Doval and said, "Whatever is happening, sir, we are not able to sleep."

Doval replied, "No, you please sleep..." Parvez replied, "Sir, please let me complete. We feel so uncomfortable. I am a student, I am not able to go to study. Our brothers are trying to protect us sir, please. People's shops have been burnt, the police is not doing anything. We are not safe."

Doval told Parvez, "You please listen and understand... you don't have to worry. It is the responsibility of the government, it is the responsibility of the police. Everybody will stand up to their responsibilities... I give you my word of honour."

After meeting the NSA, Parvez told *The Indian Express*, "I went up to Doval because they will not listen to our brothers. I wanted to make a point. I believe in Doval. He spoke to me politely. Our problem is with the Delhi Police. They are not doing their jobs. India has such respect — we spend Eid and Diwali together."



NSA Ajit Doval visited violence-hit areas in Northeast Delhi on Wednesday. Abhinav Saha

Why is India not together now?" Hakim Zulfiqar, a local resident from Jafraabad, told Doval, "RSS terrorism has spread beyond the Yamuna. Where

Muslims are in a minority they are killing them."

Doval replied, "Aisa nahi hota." As Delhi Police officers moved Zulfiqar back, the crowd

started to clap in support of him and said: "Sahi baat bol rahe hain." Zulfiqar, later told *The Indian Express*, "He should have listened to what I had to say. You cannot see with one eye."

Doval later told reporters at Jafraabad, "I have been told that this is the area where there was maximum violence and the most number of bullets were fired. I am seeing today that there is total peace, everyone is saying they want peace. I am confident that there will be peace."

In Maujpur, the locals were satisfied with Doval's arrival. Doval walked into local lanes and interacted briefly with locals, asking one of them, Manoj, if everything was alright. Manoj nodded, as Doval left the area.

Manoj later told *The Indian Express*, "Such a big man has come to this area. It has given us so much confidence."

In riot-hit areas, schoolkids still look beyond religion

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

AFTER THREE days of arson and violence in areas surrounding his neighbourhood in Northeast Delhi's Maujpur, 15-year-old Sambhav left home for his first-ever board examination on Wednesday morning.

"There was a lot of violence since Sunday, so he was unable to study very well. We locked ourselves inside our homes. He kept running to the windows to see what was happening outside. I thought his exam would get affected by this but he called me and said it went well," said his mother Meenakshi Singh, waiting for him to return home in the afternoon.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) postponed Wednesday's Class X and XII board examinations for 86 centres in Northeast Delhi. However, many students in the area study in schools outside the region, including Sambhav, who is a student of DAV Centenary Public School, Chander Nagar.

Schools in Northeast Delhi were shut by the Delhi government on both Tuesday and Wednesday, and all internal exams in the district were postponed as well.

Away from school and under the shadow of widespread violence, children in the region are also learning how to deal with the polarisation and violence in their own ways.

TAKE DECISION ON EXAMS: HC

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Wednesday asked the CBSE to take a decision on rescheduling of board exams at centres in riot-affected areas of Northeast Delhi by 5 pm, and to inform the public by 6 pm. Justice Rajiv Shakdher told the CBSE that the rescheduling of postponed exams is to be done keeping in mind entrance tests of Class XII students. ENS

As the tense atmosphere calmed down on Wednesday, three teenagers — Shoaib (16), Sameer (17) and Akash (19) — made their way to their friend Vinay's house in Gurudwara mohalla. Together, they are a quartet of best friends. Shoaib, Sameer and Vinay are classmates in Class XI at Jafraabad Public School.

"As we were stuck in our homes during the violence, we called each other up to ask if everyone was fine. We have many students of both religions in our class and we're all friends," said Shoaib.

When asked if they understood why the violence had happened, Sameer said, "Our teachers had already told us these things are said by politicians to divide people and that we

shouldn't be affected by them."

Similarly, on Tuesday evening, Vipin Kumar (12), a student of Government Boys Senior Secondary School, Ghonda, made two calls — one to his teacher to inquire if school was shut for a few more days, and another to his classmate Ayan to inquire if he was okay. "I asked 'Ayan, tum theek ho naa?' and he asked me 'tum theek ho naa?' He is okay. He lives in Noor Ilahi in Shahdara. Our teachers have taught us that 'Hindu-Muslim-Sikh-Isai'."

For others, the polarisation is likely to extend to their friendships ahead. Madhu Agarwal has twin sons, Shivansh and Divyansh, studying in Class VII at Victor Public School in Maujpur. She plans to change their school in the coming academic years as "there are too many Muslims in the school".

"The children are friends with each other but we have asked them to stay away from Muslim children, even after they return to school after this. They may not understand all this but they might learn *gandi baat* from them," she said. All schools in Northeast Delhi will continue to remain shut on Thursday.

The CBSE announced that the Class XII English board exam scheduled to take place on Thursday stands postponed as well. Schools have also been targeted during the course of the violence, with schools being burnt in Khajuri Khas, Shiv Vihar and Brijpuri.



People pay last respects to Delhi Police Head Constable Ratan Lal (below), who was killed in the violence in Northeast Delhi, in Rajasthan's Sikar district, Wednesday. PTI

Delhi govt announces Rs 1 cr relief for cop's kin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE DELHI government will give a compensation of Rs 1 crore to the family of Head Constable Ratan Lal, who was killed in violence in Northeast Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced Wednesday.

"As per the Delhi government's policy, we will give Rs 1 crore to Head Constable Ratan Lal's family," he said in the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

Kejriwal had visited Lal's family on Tuesday. "Politics of hatred and violence will not be tolerated. Common man of Delhi did not indulge in violence; outsiders, some political elements are involved in it," Kejriwal said.

On Wednesday, Lal's funeral



was conducted at his ancestral village in Rajasthan's Sikar district with full state honours in the presence of his family members, relatives and senior officials from the district administration and police.

A resident of Burari, Lal is survived by his wife and three children — two daughters aged 15 and 17 and a boy aged 7.

8 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



Senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi along with party workers being stopped at Janpath Road while they were heading towards Gandhi Smriti in New Delhi on Wednesday. Priyanka was leading a peace march. Prem Nath Pandey

FACE OF PROTESTS

SHE TOOK part in a sit-in at India Gate in December last year to protest the police action at Jamia Millia Islamia and then travelled to many towns in Uttar Pradesh to meet families of those who died during the course of protests against the CAA. On Tuesday, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra led the Congress's peace march in Delhi. So, is the party general secretary emerging as the Congress's face for street protests in the absence of brother, and former party chief, Rahul Gandhi? Rahul is again said to be travelling abroad, and senior party leaders are as usual unaware of his whereabouts. Many, in fact, are wondering what could be the reason behind his frequent visits abroad.

HEARING BY CHANCE

A DAY after the Delhi High Court bench headed by Justice S Muralidhar pulled up the Delhi Police and the Solicitor General representing the Union government while hearing a plea seeking safe passage for those injured in Delhi riots, the case will be heard by a different bench headed by Chief Justice D N Patel on Thursday. Curiously, the case was heard by Justice Muralidhar in the first place since Chief Justice Patel was on personal leave since Monday. He returns to court on Thursday. On Tuesday night, since the CJ was on leave, the second most-senior judge, Justice G S Sistani, constituted a bench of Justices S Muralidhar (third most-senior judge) and Anup Bhambani. Justice Sistani, who would have heard the mentioning of urgent cases, was also on leave on Wednesday, leaving Justice Muralidhar in charge.

PARIS-BOUND

INDIAN ENVOY to Singapore Jawed Ashraf has now been named as the next envoy to France. Ashraf, who had served as Joint Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office under both Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi, is known within the official establishment as Modi's speechwriter for diplomatic occasions. A career diplomat, Ashraf has served in the US and also as Joint Secretary (Americas) in the Ministry of External Affairs.

NO CAKES, PLEASE

FOR POLITICIANS, a quiet birthday celebration seems to be almost ruled out. Despite repeated requests not to bring cakes to celebrate his birthday, BJP general secretary Anil Jain received nearly 40 cakes on his 61st birthday on Tuesday. Jain, BJP's Haryana in-charge, distributed some of them among people who came to greet him and invited people from areas where an NGO run by his wife works. He cut the cake with two other children among them who celebrate their birthdays this month. Jain is now being advised to send messages to friends and well-wishers to contribute for some social cause instead of bringing him cakes on birthday.

SENIOR'S ADVICE

THE CONGRESS wanted to meet President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday and urge him to direct the Centre to take effective action to restore peace in Delhi. But midway through a meeting of the Congress Working Committee, the party got a message from Rashtrapati Bhavan that Kovind was not available, and will meet them on Thursday. Some CWC members argued that the party should nevertheless march ahead and leave the memorandum at the Rashtrapati Bhavan gate. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh then pointed out it would not be proper and reflect poorly on the party since the President has already agreed to meet them, a view endorsed by several veterans. Singh's view prevailed, and the party deferred its plan.

Naveen becomes BJD chief for 8th consecutive time

SAMPAD PATNAIK BHUBANESWAR, FEBRUARY 26



ODISHA CHIEF Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday became the president of the BJD for the eighth consecutive time. Greeting four-and-a-half crore Odia people and members of his party, he said, "BJD does not fight elections to win or lose, but fights to win the love of the people and to serve them. As Biju Babu (former CM Biju Patnaik) said, people are the masters in democracy and we are there to serve them." The BJD has been in power since 2000. Patnaik is currently serving his fifth continuous term as CM. "The CM has truly followed Biju Babu's philosophy of serving people," said senior BJD leader A U Singh Deo. BJD MP Prasanna Acharya said the people of Odisha love the Chief Minister and said that the party

will continue to remain powerful in Odisha. The organisational polls of the BJD, conducted in different phases, concluded with the declaration after the state council meeting at the party headquarters here on Wednesday. Out of the 355 council members, 80 were elected as state executive members. On February 21, the party had declared the names of 33 organisational district presidents. Patnaik filed his nomination papers for the BJD's top post on February 23. He was the lone leader to file nomination for the post. The organisational elections are held in the BJD every three years. WITHPTIINPUTS

Nitish resolution against NRC, Tejashwi in loop, ally BJP not

SANTOSH SINGH & LIZ MATHEW PATNA/NEW DELHI, FEB 26

TAKEN BY surprise over Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's last-minute decision to pass a resolution in Assembly against the NRC, and to adopt NPR in its 2010 format, an embarrassed BJP seems to have decided to swallow it - at a time it desperately seeks to avoid any prospects for a third consecutive defeat in state elections after Jharkhand and Delhi.

Bihar is scheduled to go to the polls later this year, and multiple BJP leaders admitted that the party is in no position to contest without Nitish's JD(U) as an alliance partner.

BJP leaders - both at the central and state level - admitted that Nitish did not keep them in the loop about the resolution, and did not discuss it at either the NDA legislators' meeting a day before, or even at the recent meeting with BJP national president JP Nadda.

Senior BJP leader and Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi, currently the only senior BJP leader defending Nitish, however, said it would be "wrong to assume that we were not taken into confidence". He told The Indian Express: "It is true that we did not discuss the passing of resolution in the NDA meet on Monday. (But) since Nitish Kumar has already made his stand clear on NRC after the Prime Minister's clarification (that proposal for a nationwide NRC has not been discussed yet), it is a non-issue. As for NPR, it is not a policy decision, or part of the party

EXPLAINED CM's move to leave ally with no choice

THE PASSAGE of NPR-NRC resolution could be another political masterstroke by Nitish Kumar, leaving ally BJP no choice and robbing opposition parties of a key political issue on which they could have mobilised support from those opposing CAA-NRC-NPR, especially Muslims, who constitute 17 per cent of Bihar's population. The resolution may also have taken some steam out of CPI leader Kanhaiya Kumar's rally at Patna's Gandhi Maidan, scheduled for Thursday. After its electoral debacle in Jharkhand and Delhi, the BJP, which lost one of its oldest allies, Shiv Sena after the Maharashtra polls, could be under pressure to fight the election together for an emphatic win.

manifesto...that the format of questions cannot change."

The Union government, he said, "sought our suggestion (on NOR), and we suggested sticking to the 2010 format". Sushil Modi added that the resolution does not say that the government will not implement NRC but only reads, "there is no need of NRC in Bihar".

While leaders at the national level refused to comment on it officially, privately many of them said the resolution came as a "shock". One leader said, "I do not know what happened. It's a JD(U) government (with BJP as the smaller partner), and the Chief Minister took the decision."

On Tuesday, the resolution was brought in in a dramatic fashion in the House following Opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav's demand for a discussion on CAA-NPR-NRC. After the Speaker allowed it, the Chief

Minister, while speaking on it, initially referred to statements by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and RJD leaders Lalu Prasad and Raghuvansh Prasad Singh on atrocities against minorities in Pakistan. This was seen as going along expected lines by an NDA leader.

But during a break in the Assembly session, Nitish is learnt to have met Opposition leaders, including RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, and there was a unanimous decision to bring in resolution that there would be no NRC in Bihar with reference to the PM's statement on it, and adopting NPR only in its 2010, UPA-era format. There was, however, no message on the resolution to Nitish's ally BJP.

Some BJP leaders - Sanjeev Chourasia, Nitin Navin, Vinod Singh, among others - apparently got wind of the development and appeared uncomfortable, but they remained silent. In the

House, the party was left with no option but to back the resolution.

The central leadership thereafter reportedly asked state leaders not to speak against it publicly. BJP state president Sanjay Jaiswal did not comment on the resolution. The first and only reaction on the BJP's official stand came with Sushil Modi's tweet late Tuesday evening. He posted: "PM Narendra Modi had already clarified that there would be no NRC. Now Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution that NRC would not be implemented and NPR would be implemented as per 2010 format. There is no need to produce any document in proof...nobody would now get a chance to mislead people on citizenship and do politics over it."

On Wednesday, Modi defended it and said the government is committed to implement CAA in Bihar.

IJP patriarch and Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan said, "We were all along saying that NPR in its old format should be followed. We welcome the Bihar Assembly's resolution. The PM has already clarified that there would be no NRC."

In Delhi, BJP leaders tried to maintain that the state's decision to implement NPR is "fine", because the "questions it decided to avoid are optional."

Maintaining that the BJP does not have "many choices" in Bihar, but to go with Nitish and his party, a senior party leader said, "Contesting a state election, which is just months away, alone would make it a triangular fight. Any split in our joint support base would help RJD."

Now, Tamil Nadu CM: Resolution against NRC under consideration

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 26



Edappadi K Palaniswami

THE DEMAND to pass a resolution against the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Tamil Nadu Assembly is under consideration, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami said on Wednesday.

Palaniswami's brief response to a question in this regard marks a significant change from the state government's earlier position. It had so far blamed Opposition DMK for "misleading" people in the ongoing protests against the NRC and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

While interacting with the media at Mukkombu, near Trichy, on Wednesday, Palaniswami was asked whether his government plans to pass a resolution against NRC in the Assembly, especially after Bihar, where BJP is in power in alliance with JD(U), passed a unanimous resolution in the House stating that National Population Register (NPR) be implemented "in its 2010 form" with one amendment. Palaniswami replied, "It is under consideration of the government."

The Chief Minister's remarks come days after massive protest rallies against the CAA and NRC led by minority communities were held in the state - a rally in Chennai alone had at least 15,000 people.

Refusing to comment on the violence and killings in Delhi, Palaniswami blamed the DMK for the NPR process. He said: "The Census process is going on for long, but NPR was brought in by the UPA, which included the

DMK, in 2010. Even if the revised NPR seeks more information such as language, details of parents, assets and certain identities, the Centre has now clarified that none of these information are mandatory to be shared. It is clear that there is no need to submit documents - all that is optional."

Asked why he excluded Trichy and Ariyalur districts from the state government's recent announcement, declaring Cauvery delta as a protected agricultural zone, the CM said the Cauvery Delta region was declared a Protected Special Agricultural Zone (PSAZ) to protect the region from methane extraction projects. He said: "Even if I made an announcement earlier, I realised after discussions with officials that including districts like Trichy, Ariyalur or Karur as a protected zone was not necessary because these regions were not affected by methane extraction projects."

Besides, he said, these districts have many industries, and making them part of PSAZ will affect those industries and jobs. He added that the declaration of PSAZ is a state's decision, and the Centre's permission is not required.

NO NEW TAX PROPOSED

Gujarat Budget: focus on farm, education, health

PARIMAL DABHI GANDHINAGAR, FEBRUARY 26

THE GUJARAT government announced several schemes for farmers to help boost harvest and tide over bad weather conditions in the Rs 2,17,287-crore Budget tabled by Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel, who also holds the Finance portfolio, in the Assembly on Wednesday.

Among the key announcements were one urban health centre for every 10,000 people, relief in electricity duty for around 30 lakh consumers, developing 500 schools in the state as Schools of Excellence, and a scheme for NRIs to give back to the community. These are seen as targeted for the local body elections to be held at end of this year.

The Madar-e-Watan scheme is a new scheme under which the government proposes to contribute an equal share of the sum spent by an NRI for the development of facilities, including schools, classrooms, smart-classes, anganwadis, cemetaries, dispensaries, roads, water tanks, ponds and toilets, in his/her hometown in Gujarat.

The Budget has proposed allocation of Rs 200 crore to implement this scheme.

In keeping with the long-standing demand of farmers for power supply to irrigate fields in the daytime, the government

announced the Dinkar Yojana. The electricity duty relief will cover shopkeepers, cold storages, religious places and dharamshalas, Patel announced. Elections to six municipal corporations, 30 district panchayats, 230 taluka panchayats and 27 municipalities are due later this year.

In another scheme for farmers - Mukhya Mantri Pak Sangrah Yojana - the government has allocated Rs 300 crore. The scheme aims to prevent crop loss due to factors such as unseasonal rain, cyclone, excessive rain, insect menace, etc. Under this, farmers will be provided subvention of Rs 30,000 per unit for construction of on farm storage structure in the farm.

Construction for such a structure will be exempted from Non-Agriculture (NA) permission of the Revenue Department.

In education sector, the government announced 'Schools of Excellence' project with allocation of Rs 250 crore. Under this, 500 schools will be developed as Schools of Excellence.

The Deputy Chief Minister also announced that 7,000 new classrooms of primary schools will be built in the year. An allocation of Rs 650 crore was earmarked for this.

No new taxes were proposed in the Budget, which has surplus estimates of Rs 275 crore.

SC notice to J&K on plea challenging Mehbooba detention

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Jammu and Kashmir administration on a plea challenging the detention of former CM Mehbooba Mufti under the Public Safety Act, 1978.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra, Vineet Saran and M R Shah, which took up the plea by Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti, asked her counsel why she had not approached the J&K High Court. The counsel pointed out that the Supreme Court had already been seized of a similar petition challenging the detention of Omar Abdullah, also a former CM.

The plea said the detention order signed by District Magistrate, Srinagar, was wholly and substantially based on the recommendation of and the dossier prepared by Senior Superintendent of Police, Srinagar. "No other material showing the facts on which the grounds of (detention) were based were given," it said, adding that "the Impugned Dossier...is replete with personal remarks in bad taste...".

It said Mehbooba was already under detention from August 5, 2019 when Parliament passed the amendments to Article 370 and that the "foremost reason" cited for continued detention under PSA was that the maximum period of detention under CrPC was expiring.



Azam Khan and his son Abdullah in Rampur on Wednesday. Express

SON ABDULLAH'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE 'FORGED'

SP leader Azam Khan, his wife and son sent to judicial custody

ASAD REHMAN LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 26

SENIOR SAMAJWADI Party (SP) leader and Rampur MP Azam Khan, his wife and local MLA Tanzeen Fatima and his son Abdullah Azam Khan were sent to jail on Wednesday after they surrendered before a local court in connection with a forgery case.

The three surrendered after their bail applications were rejected. The next hearing in this matter will be held on March 2.

The Allahabad High Court in December cancelled Abdullah's Assembly membership on the grounds that he forged his date of birth. His plea against the order is pending in the Supreme Court. He

had been elected MLA from Swar.

Additional District Government Counsel (criminal) Ram Avtar Saini said, "Azam Khan, Tanzin and Abdullah surrendered in the court on Wednesday afternoon... The next hearing in the case is scheduled for March 2. Till then, they will be in judicial custody. The court had on Tuesday ordered attachment of their properties in the case where Abdullah Azam Khan had allegedly used two birth certificates. That is the main case for which the three were sent to judicial custody."

Saini added that the court has asked police stations to submit reports on Azam's culpability in 11 other cases on Thursday.

The FIR in the case in which the three have been sent to jail was

lodged on January 3 last year following a complaint by local BJP leader Akash Saxena at Ganj police station. The complaint alleged, "In a conspiracy by Azam Khan, Tanzeen Fatima, they got two birth certificates made for their son - one which said he was born in Rampur and another that said he was born in Lucknow. These certificates were used for their personal gains," stated the complaint.

The FIR was registered under IPC sections 193 (false evidence), 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery).

SP state president Naresh Uttam Patel alleged that the state government had "targeted" Azam Khan to "ruin his image but he will get justice." "Since the BJP government came to power, it has been repeatedly humiliating Azam."

STRIVING FOR GENDER EQUAL WORLD

In a first, govt plans Women's Day campaign on large scale

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

IN A first, the Union government is preparing a 10-day campaign for the International Women's Day, with plans to organise seminars, workshops and Ted Talks across the country.

March 8 is observed as International Women's Day. The international theme for Women's Day this year is "Each for Equal" striving for a gender-

equal world.

The government, it is learnt, has asked ministries and regional centres to organise programmes on designated days.

For the first seven days of March, the campaign will be on seven identified themes: education, health and nutrition, empowerment of women, skills and entrepreneurship and participation in sports, special circumstances (divyang, northeast, islands, tribal), rural women and agriculture, and urban women.

The empowerment theme will celebrate women in the armed and police forces, mining, the ISRO, women in leadership positions, and security.

On March 6, when the theme is rural women, the focus will be on inventions by women, organic food processing, cash benefits through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme to pregnant women, and cervical cancer and vasectomy through Ayushman Bharat. The following day, the theme of urban women will fo-

cus on best practices such as the Gujarat command and control centre for safety of women, according to information.

A senior official from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry said: "This is the first time the government is preparing to observe International Women's Day at such a scale. This is Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani's vision and she wants every ministry to organise functions on the relevant themes so that all aspects are

covered. MPs, too, will be roped in to give Women's Day messages, and every ministry will tweet on the issue between March 1 and 10, organise programmes, and publish articles in newspapers on women's issues."

An amount of Rs 50 lakh, at the rate of Rs 10 lakh per DG zone of north, east, northeast, south and west, has been earmarked for the purpose, the official said.

As per plan, 15 round table discussions, workshops, semi-

nars and Ted Talks will be organised on these themes at various central universities and institutions across the country. A report on the campaign will have to be submitted to the I&B Ministry by March 11, officials said.

Among the venues for the seminars, workshops, etc, are Anna University, Chennai; University College for Women, Hyderabad; Central University, Puducherry; Mysuru University; ISB, Hyderabad; AIIMS, Mangalagiri.

9 EXPRESS NETWORK



NORTH

Teen killed in celebratory firing during wedding in UP

Badaun: A teenager was killed in celebratory firing during a marriage ceremony at a village in Uttar Pradesh's Badaun district, police said on Wednesday. Banti (13) had come to his maternal aunt's place in Salempur village of Alapur in Badaun district to attend a marriage function. He was hit on the

head by a bullet during celebratory firing on Tuesday night, the police added. Banti was rushed to a hospital where he was declared dead, the police further said. Police have registered an FIR in this connection and a search is on to trace the persons involved in the firing. **PTI**



Tibetans perform a traditional dance to mark the third day of the Tibetan New Year celebrations, in Dharamsala on Wednesday. **AP**

EAST

Police foil ULFA(I) bid to recruit youths in Assam

Guwahati: A joint team of the Army and the Assam Police cracked down on the banned ULFA(I)'s attempt to recruit youths in Tinsukia district and arrested four cadres along with arms, officials said on Wednesday. The team also rescued four minor recruits from the captivity of ULFA(I), an Army official told PTI. "This was the biggest re-

ruitment network in recent times of ULFA(I)... the senior official said. Two 7.65 mm pistols, one .22 mm pistol, a number of live bullets, three ULFA(I) flags and a pair of jungle shoes were seized, he added. "This was a part of the series of successful operations to save the youths from getting misguided by joining the ULFA(I)," he said. **PTI**

WEST

Auto driver killed in scuffle over Rs 5 in Mumbai

Mumbai: A 68-year-old auto driver was allegedly beaten to death by employees of a gas station in Mumbai following a spat over Rs 5, police said on Wednesday. Ramdular Sarju Yadav and his son had filled gas worth Rs 205 and handed a Rs 500-note to an attendant. Instead of returning the balance amount of Rs 295, the man gave Rs 5 less. When

Yadav demanded Rs 5, attendant Santosh Jadhav abused him and his son and the other attendants started hitting them, the official said. Yadav fell unconscious and was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he was declared dead, the official added. "We have arrested five gas station employees," senior police inspector Namdev Shinde said. **PTI**

SOUTH

Man shoots at woman, then tries to kill self: Police

Bengaluru: A 25-year-old woman from Odisha was shot at and injured, allegedly by her friend, near Marathahalli in Bengaluru, police said on Wednesday. The man, also from Odisha, allegedly attempted suicide later, police said. The woman and the man were found in an unconscious state with injuries and hospi-

talised, police said. According to the police, the man shot at the woman once with a country-made 7.65 mm pistol outside her paying guest accommodation and fled as she collapsed on the roadside. The man was found in an injured condition in the early hours of Wednesday near Marathahalli bridge, said police. **PTI**

Delhi violence: BJP hits back at Congress, raises 1984 riots

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

COUNTERING THE Congress's demand for Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation, the BJP on Wednesday accused the Opposition party of "politicising" the issue.

"At a time when the country should be standing together, Sonia Gandhi and the Congress want to do politics. We don't want to join issue with them, except to remind them about their responsibility in such situations," Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told *The Indian Express*. "It's time for the Congress to reflect on its stand on issues related to national interest. The party should realise that national interest is above political interest," he said.

His Cabinet colleague, Prakash Javadekar, said: "There is no demand more laudable than this, because Amit Shah has been working since Day 1 to handle the situation."

"Such comments and politics by the Congress will not help the morale of the police. We appeal to them not to do politics on the issue," Javadekar told reporters,

as he urged all parties to work together for peace.

"Playing a blame game at this time is wrong... At such a time, attacking the government and politicising violence is dirty politics," he said. "Those whose hands are tainted with the blood of innocent Sikhs in 1984 are now talking about checking the violence... they themselves had supported violence," Javadekar said.

"We have faith that the truth will come out after police investigations about who pelted stones, who fired bullets, who attacked the policemen, who indulged in arson and who instigated them for two months," he said. Defending Shah, Javadekar said the "home minister is working continuously, whether from Delhi or outside, with the police".

Javadekar, however, parried questions on party leader Kapil Mishra's statements, saying the matter was being heard by the Delhi High Court. On Sunday, Mishra, a former MLA from Karawal Nagar, had threatened anti-CAA protesters and issued an ultimatum to the Delhi Police to get Jafraabad and Chand Bagh road cleared of protesters. Prasad said the Congress had

behaved irresponsibly even during US President Donald Trump's visit. "Yesterday, Mr Trump was showering praise on India's potential and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but the Congress party boycotted the function just because Sonia Gandhi was not invited. The party could not go beyond family interests even on an occasion like this," he said.

Prasad said the previous Congress-led UPA government had never bothered to invite either Rajnath Singh or Nitin Gadkari — both former BJP presidents — during earlier visits by then US Presidents. "They were presidents of a recognised main Opposition party during these visits, whereas the Congress does not have that kind of strength in Lok Sabha," he said.

Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson G V L Narasimha Rao also raised the 1984 riots to hit back at the Congress. "Home Minister has given orders for strictest action against rioters. SoniaG, what about your late husband Rajiv Gandhi who allowed Congress goons to kill 3,000 Sikhs in Delhi & later justified violence, promoted rioters. Would you consider returning Bharat Ratna awarded to him?," he tweeted.

MHA officials dismiss Sonia criticism, say Shah took control

New Delhi: Reacting to Congress president Sonia Gandhi's comments on inaction on part of Home Minister Amit Shah as rioting escalated in Delhi, sources in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Wednesday said Shah took control of the situation the moment he arrived from Ahmedabad on Monday evening.

Late at night, he held a meeting with Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik and Intelligence Bureau chief Arvind Kumar to take stock of the situation, and kept monitoring the situation until early Tuesday morning, the sources said. He held a series of meetings on Tuesday, including one with Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, where a call for peace was made and a road map drawn to handle the situation. He also instructed Delhi Police to start a dialogue process with the public in collaboration with local peace committees and create an atmosphere of trust, sources pointed out. **ENS**

Shaheen Bagh sit-in: SC puts off hearing to March 23

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

TERMINING THE turn of events in Delhi, which has seen violence since Sunday, as "unfortunate", the Supreme Court said on Wednesday that "it is time all stakeholders... started lowering the temperature and their blood pressure".

"This is not how the society should behave. Differences of opinion can happen even within a family... This is a matter of debate. But unfortunately, debate has degenerated into something else," said Justice S K Kaul.

The bench, which included Justice K M Joseph, was hearing two PILs seeking removal of protesters at Shaheen Bagh.

Saying that "the environment is not conducive", the court declined to pass any direction and deferred the hearing till March 23. However, the bench made it clear that it had not restrained the police from taking action under the law. "Let the system work. Police has the authority. We have not restrained anyone," said Justice Kaul.

It also refused to entertain applications by Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad and others, seeking intervention in the situation in Delhi, saying it did not want to expand the scope of the matter before it and the Delhi High Court, where a petition is pending, was the right forum to take appropriate action.

The bench said the limited question before it was whether the protesters can sit on a public road, adding, "there are many unfortunate incidents which have occurred after that and that is not the subject matter before us".

Appearing for the Delhi Police, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said "this should not be construed

as licence to continue what they are doing".

The court said it had perused a report submitted by the interlocutors deputed by it to negotiate with the Shaheen Bagh protesters, but there were "too many ifs and buts".

The hearing witnessed sharp exchanges between Justice Joseph and Mehta.

Justice Joseph said he wanted to say something on the situation, but the SG urged him not to say anything that would have an impact on the matter.

"I will, because my loyalty is to the Constitution and the nation," said Justice Joseph.

"The government's loyalty is also to the Constitution and nation," said Mehta.

"Problem is the lack of professionalisation of police and lack of independence for police to act across the board," said Justice Joseph. "Unless you get the police to act... Look at the way the police in the UK or USA function," he said, adding that they (UK, US police) don't have to wait for orders to act.

The SG replied that "if the police here start working like the police in the US or UK, this court would be the first institution to come in between".

Justice Joseph said the directions given by the SC in the Prakash Singh case to make the police more independent had not been implemented yet. "Prakash Singh needs to be followed... Please don't misunderstand me," he said.

"It's not me who misunderstands," replied Mehta.

Intervening, Justice Kaul said what was being conveyed was that "all over the country, different state governments have been reluctant to implement Prakash Singh" and this may be an occasion to revisit and implement.

Rajini blames Centre's intel failure for Delhi violence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 26

ACTOR RAJINIKANTH on Wednesday said the violence in Delhi was a failure of the Central government. The actor, who is likely to announce a political party in two months, said the government should resign if it cannot stop the violence with an iron hand.

Speaking to mediapersons outside his Poes Garden residence, Rajinikanth "strongly condemned" the Centre for the law and order situation in the capital. "It was the intelligence failure of the Centre. Especially when there was a visit of US President, they should have been vigilant. They should have stopped this violence with an iron hand. I hope the Centre will be vigilant at least now," he said.

"Intelligence failure means it is the failure of the Union Home Ministry, isn't it? They have to answer for this," he added. "It is very clear that certain people, certain groups are using religion to instigate violence. This is taking a wrong turn," he said.

Rajinikanth, who had earlier stated that Citizenship (Amendment) Act will not affect Indian Muslims, reiterated his stand. He clarified that he does not support the protests against CAA and said protests against NRC are baseless when it has not been implemented yet. Rajinikanth said his only demand is the violence be stopped with an iron hand. "If they (government) cannot do it, they should resign and go, that's it".

He said CAA cannot be withdrawn now even if there are massive protests. Asking how the Act cleared by Parliament can be cancelled, he said he was being labelled a BJP man for "saying the truth".



CPM leaders Biman Bose, Mohammed Salim and Sujana Chakraborty at a protest against the violence in parts of Delhi, in Kolkata on Monday. **Partha Paul**

Delhi violence 'chilling replay' of Gujarat riots: Left

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

LAUNCHING A scathing attack on the government over the riots in Delhi, the Left parties on Wednesday said the violence is a "chilling replay" of the "communal genocide" in Gujarat in 2002 and argued that the only way to restore peace is by calling in the Army.

Addressing a press meet with CPI general secretary D Raja, CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury said, "Violence is happening under the sanction of police and the authorities which control Delhi Police... powers that govern them." Yechury said the police was not only inefficient but complicit.

Raja said in 2002, the then Prime Minister A B Vajpayee had told then Chief Minister Narendra Modi to follow raj dharma. "Now in Delhi that line of raj dharma has been violated... here we can't think of anyone like Vajpayee who can

warn the government... here also the same duo is at the helm of affairs... Amit Shah should be held answerable for the violence... The situation demands that the Supreme Court must act suo motu, order a thorough probe and consider deployment of Army."

Yechury said it was inexplicable as to why the police did not impose Section 144 earlier. "Even the curfew was imposed last night... Under the curfew there were armed people moving around attacking, razing shops and markets... What is meaning of such imposition of curfew?... What is happening now is a very chilling replay of the communal genocide unleashed in 2002 when our prime minister was the state's chief minister. That pattern is very, very clear," he said.

Both Raja and Yechury questioned the role of Home Minister Amit Shah in dealing with the violence and blamed him for not being able to contain the situation.

US embassy issues advisory for its citizens

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

A DAY after US President Donald Trump departed from India after a two-day visit amid clashes in Delhi, the US embassy on Wednesday issued a security advisory — the first foreign mission to do so — for its nationals in India.

Classified as a "security alert", the US embassy said, "US citizens in India should exercise caution in light of violent demonstrations in Northeast Delhi and avoid all areas with demonstrations."

"It is important that you monitor local media outlets for updates on demonstrations, road and Metro closures, and possible curfews. The Government of India-imposed law that prohibits political gatherings of four or more people — known as Section 144 — remains in effect in certain areas," it said.

Justice Muralidhar transferred to Punjab & Haryana HC

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

ON THE day he pulled up the Delhi Police over its inaction in filing FIRs against the BJP leaders who made hate speeches, Justice S Muralidhar of the Delhi High Court was transferred to the Punjab and Haryana High Court following approval of a February 12 recommendation to the effect from the Supreme Court Collegium.

A notification from the Department of Justice in the Ministry of Law and Justice said: "In exercise of the power conferred by clause (1) of Article 222 of the Constitution of India, the President, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, is pleased to transfer Shri Justice S Muralidhar, Judge of the Delhi High Court, as a Judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court and to direct him to assume charge of his office in the Punjab

and Haryana High Court."

The notification follows the recommendation passed by the Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India S A Bobde. Protesting Justice Muralidhar's transfer, the Delhi High Court Bar Association had urged the Collegium to "revisit" and recall its recommendation, saying such transfers "tend to erode and dislodge the faith of the common litigant in the justice dispensation system".

Known for his bold pronouncements on communal violence and personal liberty, Justice Muralidhar delivered the Hashimpura verdict, convicting personnel of the Uttar Pradesh PAC for the 1987 mass killings, and also convicted Congress leader Sajjan Kumar for his role in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. He was part of the two-judge bench along with then Chief Justice AP Shah that delivered the landmark verdict decriminalising homosexuality.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Plane delivers medical equipment in Wuhan, leaves with stranded Indians

SHUBHAJIT ROY & SOWMIYA ASHOK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THREE DAYS after India and China had a public face-off over the delay in permission to send a flight with relief supplies, a special Indian Air Force (IAF) flight carrying around 15 tonnes of masks, gloves and other emergency medical equipment departed for Wuhan on Wednesday. Later in the night, the PTI reported that the plane delivered the supplies and left for India with 112 Indians and foreign nationals stranded there.

An official statement from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said this assistance was provided

in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak in China and the request made by the country for medical equipment. The coronavirus outbreak has been declared a Public Health Emergency by the World Health Organization.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had written to Chinese President Xi Jinping on February 8 and expressed solidarity. He had also offered assistance to China.

"The assistance being sent today is also a mark of friendship and solidarity from the people of India towards the people of China as the two countries also celebrate 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations this year," said the MEA statement. "The IAF flight will also bring

back some Indian and foreign nationals from some of the neighbouring countries who have sought assistance in travelling to India in keeping with Prime Minister Modi's neighbourhood first policy," it said.

The flight to send relief supplies to Wuhan and to bring back stranded Indians and nationals from neighbouring countries had become a bone of contention between India and China. Sources on Saturday said China is "deliberately delaying" permission for the IAF plane. When contacted, a Chinese Embassy spokesperson had said there was no deliberate delay in grant of permission to the Indian plane, adding that China always attaches great importance

to health and safety of Indian nationals living in the country.

India had earlier evacuated 647 Indians from Wuhan in two separate flights.

On Wednesday, vehicles were organised from across the coronavirus-hit Hubei province to transport Indian nationals to the airport in Wuhan. A PhD scholar in Wuhan told *The Indian Express* that people from Myanmar, Madagascar and Bangladesh were also on the bus on which she was transported to the airport. While most of those brought back in the earlier evacuations were students pursuing medical courses, those who left now work there and had stayed back as they were unsure when workplaces will reopen.

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 26

THREE WEEKS since they were quarantined on a luxury cruise off Yokohama port in Japan after a person who disembarked in Hong Kong in January was diagnosed with coronavirus, the 122 Indian crew members on board have disembarked and are likely to be flown back on Thursday.

According to one crew member, a resident of West Bengal, they will be flown to Delhi by a special flight by 5 am Thursday and quarantined for 14 more days.

The 30-year-old, who belongs to Uttar Dinajpur district had earlier put up videos on social media,



The Diamond Princess cruise ship in Yokohama Tuesday. **AP**

reaching out to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and urging them to get the Japanese government to separately quarantine those infected and uninfected on board the

Diamond Princess. "The Indian Embassy in Tokyo and our company were trying to get us back, and last week we underwent tests. Recently, the test results came negative and showed that we are

uninfected," the 30-year-old said through WhatsApp. "Around 1 pm local time, 122 Indian crew, including me, disembarked and got into six buses at Yokohama port. We are being taken to Tokyo (Henada) airport."

"We have been told that we will be kept in quarantine at a special facility for 14 more days and will undergo tests. Thereafter, we can return home," he said.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* from Silliguri, the crew member's brother said, "We are so happy that my brother is finally returning, and will be home in a few days. I spoke with him today. We will not go to Delhi since we will not be allowed to meet him — we will wait for his return home."

24 killed, 5 injured as bus with wedding party plunges into river in Rajasthan

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 26

AT LEAST 24 people died and five others sustained injuries as a private bus ferrying a wedding party fell into a river on Lalsot-Kota highway in Rajasthan's Bundi district on Wednesday morning, police said.

Suresh Kumar, Station House Officer at Lakheri police station, said, "The private bus, carrying 28 people, fell into the Mej river in Papri village today morning sometime before 10 am. We were informed by eyewitnesses — who were bathing in the river — and rushed to the spot."

Kumar said that 11 men, 10 women and three children died in the accident, while five others are undergoing treatment in Kota.

"They were headed for a Bhaat (wedding ritual) ceremony," Kumar said.

"As per eyewitnesses, the bus gradually submerged in the water, which is about 12 feet deep," he said. The accident took place on a bridge.

As per police, the accident took place as the driver dozed off while driving.

Bundi District Magistrate



Volunteers look for survivors in a bus after it fell into Mej river on Lalsot-Kota highway, in Bundi district on Wednesday. PTI

Antar Singh Nehra said that Rs 2 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund has been announced as ex-gratia sum to the kin of each of the deceased, and Rs 40,000 for each of the injured. He said that locals have demanded widening of the bridge and installation of barriers on either side.

"We will take it up with the concerned department," Nehra

said. Former minister Babulal Nagar, who reached the spot, had to bear the brunt of angry locals, who allegedly hurled dirt on him.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said, "I am deeply saddened to learn about the tragic accident in Bundi in which 24 people have lost lives after the bus fell into river Mej. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved fami-

lies who have lost their loved ones in this tragedy. I wish a speedy recovery to all injured."

Deputy Chief Minister and state Congress president Sachin Pilot also condoled the deaths and prayed for the peace of departed souls.

The Prime Minister's Office too took to Twitter, and said, "I am extremely saddened by the news of a bus falling in a river in Bundi. Many people have lost their lives."

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who is also the local MP, said that he was saddened and disturbed by the loss of lives.

"I have spoken to the district administration and given instructions to speed up the relief work," he said.

Nehra said three of the injured are in a state of trauma and have been sent to a hospital in Kota for treatment.

Two of the injured were discharged after receiving treatment, Nehra further said. After being discharged, the two persons claimed that the bus lost control as one of the wheels came off, the collector quoted them as saying.

The five injured persons were identified as Murlu (55), a resident of Basant Vihar, Ganeshpal area of Kota city;

Deepak Sindhi (18), son of Narayan; Amit (35); Kannu (13), daughter of Suresh; Manju (35), wife of Mahavir Dhobi, Lakheri SI Kumar said.

According to Murlu, his family was headed to Sawai Madhopur city to conduct a wedding ritual to his sister following his niece's wedding when the bus driver reportedly lost control and plunged the vehicle into the river from a height of 20-25 feet.

DSP Shyamsunder Vishoni said the bus has still not been pulled out of the river and efforts are still on.

The actual cause of the accident would be ascertained only after a thorough investigation into the matter, the DSP said.

The autopsy of all 24 bodies was done at a government hospital in Lakheri. Later, they were sent to Kota to be handed over to the family members, the policeman said.

Meanwhile, Ramdev Dhobi, younger brother of one of the deceased, said, "Besides my elder brother Ramesh Dhobi, I have lost my entire maternal family including four maternal uncles, two maternal aunts, their husbands and children. All of them are gone in the accident."

WITH PTI INPUTS

Four students booked in sedition cases struggle to get lawyers

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 26



Amulya Leona was booked after she started a speech with "Pakistan Zindabad"

DESPITE THE Karnataka High Court observing last week that it is unethical and illegal for lawyers to pass resolutions against representing anyone in court, a 19-year-old girl and three engineering students from Kashmir, who are accused in separate sedition cases, are facing an uphill task in getting legal representation.

Amulya Leona Noronha, a college student, was booked for sedition after she started a speech with "Pakistan Zindabad" at an anti-CAA protest in Bengaluru. On Wednesday, police had to produce her at the home of a magistrate for a custody remand after local advocate groups ensured that she did not find representation in court.

According to police sources, they were also apprehensive that the girl may be attacked if she was taken to court.

With no representation, Amulya's bail plea was not taken up by the magistrate on Monday and a request for police custody also remained in limbo.

A few women advocates who wanted to represent her were forced to leave the court on Monday after the other lawyers objected to the "anti-national" being represented in court. "We were asked to leave," an advocate said.

A senior lawyer opposed to

Amulya being represented said, "If such people are represented, then more people will start saying such things."

Basit Aashiq Sofi from Baramulla in Kashmir, and Talib Majeed and Amir Mohiuddin Wani from Anantnag are facing a similar problem. The three, who are students of a Hubballi college, were arrested on Feb 15 on charges of sedition over a video in which they were purportedly seen singing along to a song with the words "Pakistan Zindabad".

Subsequently, the Hubballi Bar Association passed a resolution that no lawyers will represent the youths in court on account of their "anti-national" act. On Feb 17, when they were produced in court, the three were attacked by a mob. Despite a group of 24 human rights lawyers obtaining a directive from the high court on Feb 20 that stated that the Bar Association's resolution is illegal, an attempt to file a plea for the bail of the Kashmiri students was

thwarted by the lawyers opposed to them being represented.

On Wednesday, when the issue was brought up before a division bench of the high court, it observed that it was "sheer militancy" to disallow representation for the accused. The court has now summoned representatives of the Bar Association.

On Feb 20, the division bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay Sreeniva Oka and Justice Hemant Chandangoudar quoted Supreme Court order in the A S Mohammed Rafi vs State of Tamil Nadu case and said resolutions opposing representation as "passed by the Bar Associations are wholly illegal and against all traditions of the Bar and against professional ethics".

"Moreover, such resolutions tend to take away the constitutional right of the accused to be defended by an advocate of his choice. In view of the resolution passed by the fourth respondent, it may not be possible even for the Legal Aid lawyers who are members of the fourth respondent to defend the accused," the division bench observed. "In the petition, it is pointed out that on 17th February, 2020, when the accused were produced before the Court of the learned JMFC I Class at Hubballi, they could not be represented by any advocate and the accused, who are students, were assaulted in the Court premises itself," the court observed.

J&K shall forever be integral part: India at UNHRC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

JAMMU AND Kashmir "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of India, top Indian diplomat Vikas Swarup asserted at the UN Human Rights Council's (UNHRC) meeting in Geneva on Wednesday, a day after Pakistan sought the international community's intervention on the Kashmir issue.

Speaking at the 43rd session of the UNHRC, being held from February 24 to March 20, Swarup, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, described Pakistan as the "epicentre of global terrorism".

He called for decisive action against those who direct, control

fund and shelter terrorists - an obvious reference to Pakistan, which is accused by its neighbours of providing safe havens to terror groups.

"It is more than a little ironical that a nation that has become the world's leading exporter of terror and violence seeks to lecture others about human rights," Swarup said.

"Jammu and Kashmir was, is and shall forever remain an integral part of India," he said.

This comes a day after Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari alleged that India continues to violate human rights of Kashmiris and demanded immediate repeal of all actions by New Delhi on August 5 last year, when special status granted by the

Constitution to the erstwhile state was scrapped.

Swarup said transformative changes "wrought by our Parliament last August were meant to strengthen the integration of the state. It was intended to ensure the extension of all progressive legislation passed for the entire country to cover this region, and to resume the pace of socioeconomic development in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir."

Despite Pakistan's best efforts over the decades to destabilise J&K through externally instigated terror and a campaign of canards and untruth, the situation on the ground is quite normal, he said.

"Most temporary restrictions -- imposed solely to ensure

safety of the people from Pakistani-trained terrorist attacks -- have already been removed, political processes have resumed, telecom facilities have been largely restored, development activities are being undertaken at a rapid pace, and there is access for all to education and healthcare," Swarup said.

He said schools, colleges and universities have resumed and regular examinations are being held. Hospitals, clinics and pharmacies are well-stocked and staffing is at full capacity, he added.

"These have been achieved despite Pakistan's frenetic attempts to promote both violence within our territory -- with an 81-per cent increase in infiltration attempts since last August -- and disinformation outside.



Union ministers Prakash Javadekar and Smriti Irani at a press conference after a Cabinet meeting, in New Delhi on Wednesday. Prem Nath Pandey

Cabinet clears surrogacy Bill; covers widows, divorcee women

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE GOVERNMENT on Wednesday approved the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020, which allows a "willing" woman to be a surrogate mother and proposes that widows and divorced women can also benefit from its provisions, besides infertile Indian couples.

The Cabinet under Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the decision as the government accepted and incorporated all the recommendations of a Rajya Sabha Select Committee in the Bill.

The Bill is aimed at banning commercial surrogacy and allowing altruistic surrogacy, Union minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters.

Women and Child Development Minister Smriti

The Bill is aimed at banning commercial surrogacy and allowing altruistic surrogacy, Union minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters

Irani said the Bill proposes that only Indian couples, with both partners being of Indian origin, can opt for surrogacy in the country.

She said that Prime Minister Modi has led from the front with a liberal view on the issues of reproductive rights of women, be it medical termination of pregnancy, the Assisted Reproductive Technology Regulation Bill or the surrogacy Bill.

The amended Bill is a reformed version of the draft leg-

islation, which was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 2019, but its provisions, including that only a close relative of a couple can be a surrogate mother, had invited criticism leading the government to send the Bill to the Select Committee, headed by BJP MP Bhpendra Yadav.

The amended Bill is likely to be tabled in the second half of the Budget Session beginning next month.

The Bill also proposes to regulate surrogacy by establishing National Surrogacy Board at the central level and State Surrogacy Board and appropriate authorities in states and Union Territories respectively.

The proposed insurance cover for surrogate mother has now been increased to 36 months from 16 months provided in the earlier version.

Cabinet nod for order adopting central laws in Concurrent List for J&K

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE CABINET on Wednesday approved the issuance of an order which will allow 37 central laws in the Concurrent List to be implemented in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said after the meeting.

In August last year, the Centre announced the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two Union Territories. The new territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh came into being on October 31, 2019.

An official statement later said all the Central laws, applicable to the whole of India except the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir before October 31, 2019 are now applicable to Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir from October 31, 2019.

"...It is necessary to adapt the central laws made under the Concurrent List, with required modifications and amendments, for ensuring administrative effectiveness and smooth transition with respect to the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir thereby removing any ambiguity in their application in line with the Constitution of India," it said.

The order will be issued under the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, the statement said.

'J&K situation better, ceasefire violations by Pak up'

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

EVEN AS internal security situation in the new union territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been improving since August 5 last year, when special status to the erstwhile state under Article 370 was scrapped, Pakistan has resorted to more ceasefire violations, including more calibre escalations, according to sources in the defence establishment.

While there had been 1,629 cases of ceasefire violations in 2018, according to government figures, there were 1,551 similar cases after August 5 in 2019. January this year saw 367 ceasefire violations, significantly higher than 203 cases in January 2019.

But Pakistan, sources said, has been upping the ante with calibre escalation, meaning use of artillery instead of gun-firing by soldiers.

Last week, Army Chief General MM Naravane had said that since Pakistan has been trying to push infiltrators into India, it resorts to such ceasefire violations to provide them cover.

Sources said most of these violations are in south Kashmir or in Pir Panjal areas. "Our targets have been Pakistan's gun areas and Army posts," a source said. Pakistan has more targets, the source explained, since India maintains a larger presence in the area, largely because Indian forces are present for anti-infiltration measures as well as for domination of the Line of Control (LoC).

Pakistan, on the other hand,

needs troops only for domination of the LoC, sources pointed out.

According to them, terrorist-initiated incidents and recruitment of locals has seen a decline in J&K over the months. While 2018 saw 219 locals being recruited by terror groups, the number was down to 119 last year. Two of every three locals recruited by terror outfits in J&K continue to come from Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam, a source said.

Incidents of violence related to terrorism have also seen a sharp downturn since August 5, 2019, sources mentioned. Compared to 318 such incidents in 2018, last year only saw 173 cases. Between August and December 2019, there were only 65 such cases, compared to 156 cases in the same period the year before. Given the re-

duced terror activity in the region since August 5, 2019, this has also led to fewer confrontations, and consequently fewer terrorists being killed, sources maintained. While 215 terrorists were killed in the hinterland in 2018, 152 were killed in 2019 in the hinterland, including only 25 between August and December. January 2020 has seen 18 terrorists being killed.

Improving internal security situation has led to a gradual revocation of the communication restrictions in the Valley, keeping some limits on speed and content, according to a source. Similarly, the improved situation has also led to the government releasing nine political leaders in December last year and January this year, and revocation of the Public Safety Act slapped on 27 people in Dec.

FROM PAGE ONE

Cong says deliberate inaction, set to meet President today

"discriminatory" citizenship law. They said the protests, which started in mid-December, have claimed about 50 lives across the country.

Referring to incidents of lynching in the Narendra Modi-led government's first term, Congress leaders said the violence in the second term, even as the government is yet to complete a year in office, has been on a different scale, triggered by the BJP's political moves.

Party sources said an emergency meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) was convened to make a strong statement against the BJP's "polarising politics", in the wake of the violence in Delhi.

Addressing a press conference after the CWC meeting, party chief Sonia Gandhi said: "The deliberate inaction of the central and state governments in the last 72 hours has resulted in 20 lives being lost so far... It is the collective failure of the two governments that has resulted in a great tragedy in the capital city."

By evening, the toll had climbed to 27.

Sonia said it was "rather

shocking" that the top leadership of the central and Delhi governments were silent, and questioned the whereabouts of Shah and Kejriwal since Sunday.

"What were the reports given by the intelligence agencies in the days immediately after the conclusion of the Delhi elections and leading up to today... what was the strength of the police force deployed on Sunday night, when there were clear indications that violence would break out (and) why were additional security forces not called immediately when it was clear that the situation was beyond the control of the Delhi Police," she said.

"(A B) Vajpayeeji, whenever there was a crisis of any kind, whether in Kashmir or in any part of the country, the first thing he used to do... he used to himself call all party leaders and he himself, on many occasions, actually took those meetings. But unfortunately and sadly, we have to say that ever since the Modi government has come, since 2014... no such meeting has ever been called. The only one was when the Home Minister called

a meeting just now, and they only called the Delhi representatives, not an all-party meeting. It is a sad fact, but it is the truth," said Sonia.

Reading from the CWC resolution, Sonia said the "Chief Minister of Delhi must be visible in the affected areas and in constant communication with the people."

Targeting the BJP, she said: "Several leaders of the BJP (had) made inflammatory statements clearly intended to create an atmosphere of fear and hate."

While Sonia did take any names, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra later said, "what BJP leader Kapil Mishra has said is shameful and the government not doing anything is even more shameful." Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi did not attend the CWC meeting since he was abroad.

The Congress earlier planned to march from the AICC headquarters to Rashtrapati Bhavan to meet President Ram Nath Kovind and hand him a memorandum. But it later said "the President of India communi-

cated to Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad that he is unavailable today and has given us time for tomorrow." Senior party leaders are scheduled to meet the President on Thursday.

"The tragic events since last Sunday have a history, design and pattern. It was evident even during the Delhi elections. Several leaders of the BJP made inflammatory statements clearly intended to create an atmosphere of fear and hate. The last of these statements was made on Sunday, when a BJP leader gave an ultimatum of three days to the Delhi Police and warned that 'after three days don't tell us anything'," the CWC said in its resolution.

"After reviewing the situation, the CWC is of the firm opinion that what has happened in Delhi is a colossal failure of duty for which the entire responsibility must be borne by the central government, and particularly the Home Minister, and calls upon the Home Minister to tender his resignation immediately. The Chief Minister and the Delhi government are equally responsible

for not activating the administration to reach out to the people to maintain peace and harmony," it said.

The CWC said "adequate security forces must be deployed immediately to bring the situation under control". Sources said some CWC members felt the party should demand deployment of the Army, but many felt the party should be cautious when it comes to the Army.

Asked why the CWC had not demanded deployment of the Army, Sonia said: "We have in our resolution mentioned precisely that... the need of paramilitary forces. And the first step is paramilitary."

The Congress also demanded formation of peace committees in every mohalla, consisting of members of all communities, and said senior civil servants must be deployed in each district to take charge of the administration and ensure that the administrative machinery responds to the evolving situation.

The party also held a peace march, led by Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, from the AICC headquarters to Gandhi Smriti.

Tax holiday: I-T firms cite slowdown to ask for delay in sunset clause

All those that get operational till March 31, 2020 get a phased tax holiday for 15 years on export income.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Revenue Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Ajay Bhushan Pandey, said that the sunset clause will not be extended and said: "If the sun has set, it has set."

"Once a sunset is announced and that, too, well in advance, and if we are going for exemption-free regime, from the point of view of stability in taxation policy, I think if the sun has set, it has set," said Pandey speaking at Idea Exchange at *The Indian Express* (detailed interview to be published on Sunday).

When asked if there was no question of extending the sunset clause, he said, "At least at the official level, No. I can speak for myself and it is the stated policy of the government."

He further said that since the sunset clause was announced well in advance, these companies had a choice and they had to organise their affairs in a certain manner that any unit which is set up till

March 2020, they will continue to get exemptions for 15 years.

While industry players have been arguing that the government needs to extend the sunset clause in current times when economic growth is low and the sector has the potential for big job creation, Pandey said, "I won't buy this argument and if I buy these arguments then these exemptions will never go away. We now have a good regime where we have 15 per cent tax rate and we feel it is a good enough incentive."

Earlier, a top official with a leading Indian software company said that his company is seriously considering to set up campus in Vietnam or any other country offering favourable tax treatment. "They are offering very favourable taxation treatment if we set up campus there. While we are seriously looking at the option, we will see if the Indian government extends the sunset clause that is coming to an end in March 2020," said the official.

While IT companies say they are looking at other countries, an-

alysts do not see it as a big threat.

"It is important to see what kind of skill set is available in Vietnam or other countries that may be offering low tax rates. For the IT sector, a large number of quality skilled labour holds the key and I don't think Vietnam or some other country has enough of such talent," said Pankaj Pandey, head of research at ICICI Securities.

A top official with a leading mutual fund said that everyone wants incentives to continue and the fact that some countries are offering attractive tax rates to Indian IT companies is a good negotiation chip for the industry players.

Earlier, in September, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a sharp cut in the corporate tax rate to 22 per cent from 30 per cent without availing exemptions. She also said that the tax rate for new manufacturing companies that start production before March 2023 and incorporated on or after October 1, 2019, would be down to 15 per cent from 25 per cent.

Kerala High Court bans agitations on campus

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
FEBRUARY 26

ACTING ON a bunch of petitions by managements of colleges and schools, the Kerala High Court on Wednesday banned all forms of agitations on campus.

Delivering the verdict, a bench of Justice P B Suresh Kumar said educational institutions are meant for academic-related activities and not protests and no one has the right to violate fundamental rights of other students. "Educational institutions can be made a venue for peaceful discussions," said the court.

The judgment was delivered on a batch of petitions filed by various college and school managements over the past three years, some of them seeking police protection from agitators and others seeking orders to implement the court's earlier order banning campus politics.

The court on Wednesday ob-

Campuses are venues for constructive debates and there should not be any agitation that affects academic atmosphere on campuses, court said

served that students should not be asked to boycott classes. It also said agitations are not permissible on the campus of a school or college. Right to education is a fundamental right and nobody has the right to violate that right, the court said. Campuses are venues for constructive debates and there should not be any form of agitation that affects the academic atmosphere on campuses, it added.

Student wings of political parties have taken exception to the court ruling.

SFI, the students' wing of the ruling CPM, said in a statement

that the verdict infringes upon fundamental rights. Campus politics has a larger role in socialising students and instilling in them the values of democracy and secularism, it said. Presence of student organisations has become imperative at a time when their right to education is often violated by the approach of managements or governments, said SFI state secretary K M Sachin Dev.

In fact, the CPM-led government in Kerala has initiated a process to allow politics on campus even though the high court prohibited campus politics in 2017. In November last year, the cabinet ratified a draft Bill regarding formation of student unions in all educational institutions, including self-financing colleges. The proposed legislation envisages a grievance cell in all campuses to address students' issues. The government last month informed the Assembly that the new law would be framed only after factoring in the court verdicts against campus politics.

SC lawyers' association criticises SC judge's PM praise

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

A DAY after the Bar Association of India expressed "deep concern and dismay" over Supreme Court judge Justice Arun Mishra's praise for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) also expressed "deep sense of anguish and concern" at the devel-

opment on Wednesday. "The SCBA believes that independence of the judiciary is basic structure of the Constitution and such independence (should) be preserved in letter and spirit," the SCBA said in a statement.

The association, headed by senior advocate Dushyant Dave, also called upon judges to "not make statements in future (and) not show any proximity or closeness to the executive, including



Justice Arun Mishra

higher functionaries".

The SCBA said such "proximity and familiarity may impact the decision-making process" of

the judges and may give rise to "justifiable doubts in the minds of litigants about the outcome."

In a statement on Tuesday, Bar Association of India president Lalit Bhasin had said, "It is a foundational obligation of judges to maintain a discreet and dignified distance from the executive branch of the government."

Delivering the vote of thanks at the inaugural function of the

International Judicial Conference on Saturday, Justice Mishra had referred to Modi as "internationally acclaimed visionary" and a "versatile genius, who thinks globally and acts locally".

He had said, "India is a responsible and most friendly member of the international community under the stewardship of internationally acclaimed visionary Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi."

Kerala: Man held for hate speech

Thiruvananthapuram: A Bajrang Dal worker in Kerala was arrested on Wednesday on charges of promoting communal hatred after he made a hate speech on the Delhi violence on social media.

Police said Sreejith Raveendran, 24, is from Agali in Palakkad. An active Bajrang Dal worker for past two years, Sreejith posted his hate speech video on Tuesday, hours after Kerala DGP issued a warning

that stern action would be taken against those who foment communal hatred through social media. The police acted upon a complaint from DYFI, the youth wing of CPM. Sreejith has a history of making hate comments on social media, said the police.

In his hate speech, Sreejith said he expected Home Minister Amit Shah would give a fitting reply to Shaheen Bhag protesters after the return of US President Donald Trump. **ENS**

Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India Sardar Patel National Unity Award

Government of India has instituted Sardar Patel National Unity Award as the highest civilian award in the field of contribution to the unity and integrity of India keeping in view of the contribution made by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to the integration of independent India and in order to promote the unity and integrity of the country. The notification in this regard was issued on 20th September, 2019.

Any Indian citizen/ institution/ organization in India can nominate any person/ institution/ organization or themselves for this award. Nomination can be made by 30th April, 2020. The details in this regard may be seen on the website of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India i.e. www.nationalunityawards.mha.gov.in.

davp 19101/11/0025/1920

Elgar Parishad case: 9 arrested shifted from Pune to Mumbai jails

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, FEBRUARY 26

ALL NINE arrested accused in the Elgar Parishad case were shifted from Yerawada Central Prison in Pune to two jails in Mumbai on Wednesday.

The seven male accused — Surendra Gadling, Mahesh Raut, Sudhir Dhawale, Rona Wilson, Arun Ferreira, Vernon Gonsalves and P Varavara Rao — were shifted to Arthur Road jail. The female accused, Shoma Sen and Sudha Bharadwaj, were shifted to the Byculla women's prison.

The accused, most of them prominent activists, were arrested in June and August 2018 and were lodged in Yerawada jail since then, as courts repeatedly denied their bail pleas.

The case, probed by the Pune City Police for more than one-and-a-half years, was transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) by the Centre in January. The transfer came within days of NCP chief Sharad Pawar, whose party is a constituent in the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi government, and state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh raising questions about the Pune police probe in the case.

The NIA had lodged a separate FIR in Mumbai on January 24.

A special court in Pune, where the hearing of the case was on, had passed an order earlier this month to send all court records seized in the case to the special NIA court in Mumbai. It had also directed the agency to produce all arrested accused before the special NIA court in Mumbai on or before February 28.

NIA then received orders from the special court in Mumbai regarding shifting of the accused from Pune to Mumbai.

Yerawada jail superintendent U T Pawar confirmed that the nine accused in the Elgar Parishad case were shifted from Yerawada Central Prison to prisons in Mumbai, as per directions of the NIA special court. NIA officials took the nine accused into their custody from Yerawada prison at about 1 pm and took them to Mumbai, said sources.

Pune City Police had booked 23 persons in connection with the Elgar Parishad case, including the nine arrested accused, under sections of Indian Penal Code and the stringent UAPA. The NIA has, in its FIR, named 11 people, including the nine arrested accused and two others, activists Anand Telumbde and Gautam Navlakha.

Elgar Parishad, an evening conclave, was organised at Pune's Shanwar Wada on December 31, 2017, a day before the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Bhima Koregaon, when lakhs of Dalits gather to pay their respects at the Jaystambh (war memorial) in Perne village. On January 1, 2018, the day of the anniversary, violence had broken out at Koregaon Bhima, in which one person was killed. Pune Police claimed the speeches at Elgar Parishad contributed to the violence, and organisers of the event had links with the banned CPI-Maoist.

The police alleged that Elgar Parishad was organised as per the plans and with funds of the banned outfit.

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS CAPITAL FIRST LIMITED)
CIN : L6510TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai - 600031. TEL: +91 44 4564 4000 | FAX: +91 44 4564 4022.
Authorized Officer - Rohit Dudgeja | Contact Number - 7898324723

APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)]
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

Private Treaty Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor. The physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of IDFC First Bank Limited (erstwhile known as Capital First Home Finance Limited now amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 16-03-2020 or thereafter, for recovery of INR 59237447/- as on 10-May-19 due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Home Finance Limited) from SUPRA ENTERPRISES, PUSHPA DEVI KEJRIWAL, UMANG KEJRIWAL, Sushil Kumar Kejriwal as Co-Borrowers (Borrower-Co-borrower(s)). The Reserve Price will be INR 3,40,00,000/- (Rupees Three Crore Forty Lacs Only)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY BEARING FRONT PORTION OF GROUND FLOOR PLOT NO-4, COMMONLY KNOWN AS BP-4 MATHURA ROAD, JANGPURA-A, NEW-DELHI

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in website i.e. www.idfcfirstbank.com.

Sd/-
Authorised Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(Erstwhile Capital First Home Finance Limited/Capital First Ltd
Now merged with IDFC Bank Limited)

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 one state to another

Before the Regional Director, Northern Region, B-2 Wing, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi - 110003.

In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013: Section 13(4) of Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 30(5) (a) of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014

AND

In the matter of **Excelling Geo & Engineering Consultant Private Limited** having its registered office at 58-B, Flat -A-2, F/F Ward No-4, Mehrauli, Near Mayr House New Delhi-110030, (Applicant)

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Company proposes to make application to the Central Government (Regional Director, Northern Region, B-2 Wing, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi - 110003) 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 Saturday, 22nd Day of February, 2019 to enable the company to change its Registered office from "State of Delhi" to the "State of Haryana".

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the Company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form 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, 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 to the applicant Company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:

Excelling Geo & Engineering Consultant Private Limited
(CIN: U74999DL2015PTC278733)
58-B, Flat -A-2, F/F Ward No-4, Mehrauli, Near Mayr House Delhi-110030.
Email: amitabhsharan.geo@egmail.com

For and On Behalf of the Applicant
Excelling Geo & Engineering Consultant Private Limited
AMITABH SHARAN
Director
DIN: 05019457

Date: 27/02/2020
Place: NEW DELHI.

GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI
DEPARTMENT OF TRAINING & TECHNICAL EDUCATION
MUNI MAYA RAM MARG, PITAMPURA, DELHI-110034

ADMISSION NOTICE

Applications are invited for admission to one year full time certificate courses for the Academic Session March 2020 - February 2021 from the candidates who have passed 12th class (All Streams) with English as a subject in the following World Class Skill Centres in Delhi.

WORLD CLASS SKILL CENTRES

- WCSC Vivek Vihar
- WCSC IITD Dwarka
- WCSC SSE Jhandewalan
- WCSC IBBS Pusa
- WCSC RIT Rajokari
- WCSC SSE Wazirpur
- WCSC DPSRU Pushp Vihar

COURSES

• Hospitality Operations	• Sports Fitness & Yoga Application
• Retail Services	• Beauty & Wellness Consultant
• Finance Executive	• Digital Marketing & Data Analytics
• Food Production	• Digital Marketing & Web Development#
• Sports Digitization & Performance Management	

Please note for this particular course eligibility is 12th pass (all streams) with English and Maths as a compulsory subject

Application Form along with Information Bulletin including eligibility criteria for courses and other details can be download from the Department's Website www.tte.delhigovt.nic.in (with effect from 24th February 2020)

Phone No 011-22144948 , 011-22144897: Email: admissionwsc@gmail.com

Last Date To Apply : 20th March 2020

Downloaded application form, duly Filled in, along with registration fee of Rs. 150/- in cash and self-attested photocopies of all Educational/Aadhar/Caste Certificates must be submitted in person at any nearby World Class Skill Centre, latest by 20th March 2020 up to 4 PM but admission counselling will be held at Centralized Admission Centre WCSC, Vivek Vihar, Delhi-110095. (Nearest Metro Station is Jhilmil -Red Line)

Any update, corrigendum etc. to this advertisement will be posted on department website only, Hence, candidates are requested to keep in regular touch with the department website www.tte.delhigovt.nic.in

DIP/Shabdarth/1405/19-20

SKILLS THAT SHAPE THE WORLD

The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
cordially invites you to a Talk

ON

"Marital Peril among the Urban Poor: Two case studies from a Muslim Neighbourhood"

by

Dr. Geetika Bapna
Junior Fellow, NMML

Friday, 28 February 2020 at 3.00pm

Venue: Seminar Room, Library Building
Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
Teen Murti House, New Delhi-110011

For More info, please visit: Website: <http://nehrumemorial.nic.in> or Contact us on: ccs2nmml@gmail.com
For live webcast, please visit: www.facebook.com/NehruMemorialLibrary/; www.youtube.com/user/nehrumemoriallibrary

All are Welcome

Public Auction Notice
Debts Recovery Tribunal
A, B & F Wings, Karpuri Thakur Sadan, Ashiana Digha Road, Patna-800025
Punjab National Bank, at East Gandhi Maidan, Patna

Vs
M/s Khusboo Vatika and others
(In R.P. Case No. 674/2017 arising out of Certificate No. OA.165/2017)

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

As per order dated 31/01/2020, under mentioned property will be sold by public online e-Auction on the date and time mentioned herein for recovery of Rs. 1,34,95,584.00 from M/s Khusboo Vatika and others, the sum is recoverable together with interest, cost, charges, as per the certificate. The auction sale will be by way of online e-Auction.

Description of Property:

Sl. No./ Lot No.	Description of Property	Reserve Price	EMD	Date and time of Auction
1.	(i) All that part and parcel of IP in the name of Shri Maan Singh, S/o Sri Vishwanath Singh, bearing Sale Deed No.5346 Dated 27.05.2006, Mauza-Diliya, Thana-Sasaram, Survey Plot No.141, Khata No.17, Thana No.138, District-Rohtas, Area 7.75 Decimal Boundaries of Sale Deed No.5346 North-Sri Din Dayal, South-Sri Jagarnath Singh & Others, East-Niz, West-Chhawar (ii) All that part and parcel of IP in the name of Smt. Sushila Devi, W/o Sri Maan Singh, bearing Sale Deed No.5347 Dated 27.05.2006, Mauza-Diliya, Thana-Sasaram, Survey Plot No.141, Khata No.17, Thana No.138, District-Rohtas, Area 7.75 Decimal Boundaries of Sale Deed No.5347 North-Sri Din Dayal, South-Sri Jagarnath Singh & Others, East-Nirmal Mahto, West- Man Singh	Rs. 1,05,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Five Lacs only)	Rs. 10,50,000/- (Rupees Ten Lac Fifty Thousand only) on or before 26/03/2020 upto 4.00 P.M.	28/03/2020 between 12.30 P.M. to 4.00 P.M. with auto extension clause in case of bid in last 5 minutes before closing if required

Service Provider:- Punjab National Bank.
Address of Service Provider - Punjab National Bank, Circle Office, Patna
Website:- <http://www.pnbindia.biz>
Contact Person:- Awadhesh Tiwari, Chief Manager, E-mail Address : coptnsamd@pnb.co.in, Mobile No.9994901150.

Facilitating Agencies:

- Branch Head : Shri Nishant Kumar, Punjab National Bank, East Gandhi Maidan Branch, Patna, E-mail - bo3041@pnb.co.in, Mobile No.9771464826.
- Shri Sachita Nand Jha, Senior Manager (2nd Man), Punjab National Bank, East Gandhi Maidan Branch, Patna. E-mail Address: bo3041@pnb.co.in, Mobile No.9334503060

ACCOUNT DETAIL FOR ONLINE MONEY TRANSFER

ACCOUNT NO. & NAME	NAME	IFSC CODE
3041003171160 (Non-Customer Account No.)	PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK	PUNB0304100

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF SALE:-

- The property shall be sold "as is where is basis".
- The intending bidders should register the participation with the service provider well in advance and get user ID and password for participating in E-auction. It can be procured only when the requisite Earnest Money Deposit be paid by prescribed mode.
- To take part in Auction, each bidder shall deposit Earnest Money (EMD) @ of 10% of the Reserve Price which shall be paid by electronic transfer to the concerned Bank's EMD Account or through DD/ Pay Order drawn in favour of Recovery Officer, DRT., Patna alongwith copy of PAN card, Address proof and Identity proof with E-mail ID, Mobile No. of bidder. The Envelop containing EMD alongwith details of documents should be superscribed R.P. No.674/2017 and in case of the company copy of resolution by the Board members of the company or any other document confirming representation/attorney of the company should reach on or before 4.00 P.M. of 26/03/2020 in the office of Recovery Officer, DRT., Patna or should credit the amount in respective Bank's/Financial Institution's account. EMD received thereafter shall not be considered.
- The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% of the sale proceeds (including EMD) on the next working day of sale through the mode as stated above.
- The purchaser shall deposit the balance 75% of the sale proceeds before the undersigned on or before 15th day from the date of sale of the Property, exclusive of such day, or if the 15th day be Sunday or other holiday then on the first office day after the 15th day alongwith the poundage fee @ 2% upto Rs. 1,000/- and @ 1% on the excess of such gross amount over Rs. 1,000/- by prescribed mode as stated above.
- In case of default of payment within the prescribed period, the property shall be resold, after the issue of fresh proclamation of sale. The deposit, after defraying the expenses of the sale, may, if the undersigned thinks fit, be forfeited to the Government and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may subsequently be sold.
- The Recovery Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or bids or to postpone or cancel the e-auction without assigning any reasons.
- EMD of unsuccessful bidder shall be returned the same day of auction by DRT/Bank by credit to the account of bidder mention in bid form.
- Prospective bidder may avail online training from service provider.
- Prospective bidders are advised to go through the website for details terms & conditions of sale before submitting their bids or contact Branch Manager of the concerned Branch.

Dated : 24.02.2020

(Kumar Rajiv Ranjan)
Recovery Officer

Remove songs glorifying violence, drugs from social media: Punjab to I&B, IT

DIVYA GOYAL LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 26

CONTINUING ITS crackdown on Punjabi singers and artistes promoting violence, liquor and drugs through songs and films, the

Punjab government has now written to the Union Ministries of Information & Broadcasting (I&B) and Electronics and Information Technology to get such content removed from YouTube and other social media platforms.

by Punjab and Haryana High Court advocate H C Arora to the Punjab DGP and other officials concerned, the state's Home Secretary has written to both central ministries to take steps and get inappropriate content removed from YouTube and other social media platforms.

live shows, the letter says, "...You are requested to take up the matter with all concerned to remove all songs glorifying liquor, wine, drugs and violence from YouTube and other social media platforms too in Punjab state as these songs are misleading the younger generation and have a huge impact on school children and college students. A complete ban on such songs is not possible without removing them from social media platforms..."

TELANGANA

Police face heat after video shows cop kicking suicide victim's father

RAHUL V PISHARODY HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 26

TELANGANA POLICE have drawn criticism over a video that purportedly shows a constable kicking a man as he holds on to a freezer box containing the body of his daughter who allegedly committed suicide. Police have said the man was trying to stop them from shifting the body for postmortem on Wednesday and that the constable "accidentally" kicked him.



A video grab of the policeman kicking Chandrasekhar

The man in the video is S Chandrasekhar, father of B Sandhya Rani (16), a first-year intermediate student of Narayana Junior College near Patancheru on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The teenager allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself in the hostel bathroom. Her family members have accused the college authorities of negligence and were on Wednesday protesting against shifting of the body for post-mortem.

In the video, policemen could be seen rushing with the freezer box. As they reach a gate, Chandrasekhar could be seen falling to the ground and appealing to them to leave the body and a police constable could be seen kicking him. Earlier, based on the father's complaint, BDL Bhanur police registered a case of negligence

against the college management. The teenager's family has alleged that the college management did not inform them that she was seriously ill and did not provide her adequate treatment, said police. The family has accused police of inaction. Speaking to The Indian Express, Circle Inspector Ram Reddy of BDL Bhanur police station said it was an "unfortunate incident" and added that video clip does not show what led to

the incident. "Stones were thrown at us. They broke open the doors of mortuary and tried to take away the body forcibly. They wanted to take the body to the college hostel and sit on a protest. We had to take the body back and in the process, it happened accidentally," he said, adding that the body will be handed over to the parents after the autopsy.

In-charge SP of Sangareddy district, Chandana Deepti, told The Indian Express that the constable in question has been attached to the headquarters pending an inquiry and suitable action will be taken against him.

"The girl committed suicide day before yesterday. Her body was in the mortuary and some relatives broke the glass of mortuary today and tried to take the body to the main road to possibly stop the traffic. The police tried to bring it back and in the process, her father tried to obstruct police. One of the policemen seems to have kicked him. The video has been examined and action has been initiated," she said.

She denied allegations of police inaction.

केन्द्रीय पूर्वी संयंत्र, खादी और ग्रामोद्योग आयोग... निविदा सूचना... 25.02.2020

Women and Child Development Room NO. 213, 214, Second Floor Mini secretariat, Panipat... महिला एवं बाल विकास विभाग, पानीपत...

BIHAR SCHOOL EXAMINATION BOARD CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER NOTICE NO. - PR 63/2020

DEVI AHILYA VISHWAVIDYALAYA Central Library Building, Takshashila Campus Khandwa Road, Indore - 452017

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT CORRIGENDUM... The following amendments are made in the tenders invited by the Executive Engineer National Highway Division HP,PWD Hamirpur vide letter No. 14405 dated 22.02.2020:-

KASHMIR POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED (KPDC) (Fully Owned Government of J&K Undertaking) OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (Planning) PLANNING & PROCUREMENT WING, KASHMIR

EXTENSION NOTICE In view of the requests from the prospective Bidders and to ensure fair participatoin, extension in critical dates is given to e-NIT No.: SE/EPL/e-NIT-04 of 2019-20 dated 04.02.2020, "PURCHASE OF 33KV Control & Relay Panels with Numerical Relays, SCADA compatible with L/R Switch on Panel for 33/11kv Power Transformers" detailed as under.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA

Parmanandpur, Railway Station Road, Bhawanipatna, Dist: Kalahandi, PIN -766002 NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Identification No. EEPH-BHPT-13 of 2019-20 Dt 24.02.2020 e-Procurement Notice

PROFORMA-1 GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION, YAVATMAL

E-Tender Notice No. 55 Year 2019-20 Government of Maharashtra Public Works Department through Executive Engineer, Public Works Division, Yavatmal inviting online E-Tender in B-1 Form from Register/Non Register Contractor.

बिहार सरकार जल संसाधन विभाग कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय बागमती प्रमण्डल, सीतामढ़ी

उ.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा सूचना निम्नलिखित कार्य/ आपूर्ति हेतु ई-निविदाओं दो भागों में जी.एस.टी. में पंजीकृत, प्रतिष्ठित एवं अनुभवी ठेकेदारों/ फर्मों से आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा के प्रथम भाग (ऑन-लाइन) में निविदा मूल्य (Tender Cost) तथा धरोहर राशि (Earnest Money) को पृथक-पृथक आर.टी.जी.एस./ एन.ई.एफ.टी. के माध्यम से अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, अमरौहा के भारतीय स्टेट बैंक, खाता-जोया (जिला-अमरौहा) में संचालित चालू खाता सं. (Current Account)- 30723557626, IFSC Code- SBIN 0007413, MICR No. 244002026 में निविदा खुलने की तिथि से एक दिवस पूर्व जमा करके, दोनों राशियों का अलग-अलग यूटीआर नं., खातेदार का नाम व खाता सं., निविदा सं., जारी करने वाले बैंक अधिकारी तथा निविदादाता द्वारा प्रति हस्ताक्षरित करके निविदा के प्रथम भाग के साथ ई-निविदा पोर्टल 'http://etender.up.nic.in' पर अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा। इसके अतिरिक्त प्रथम भाग के साथ इ-कम टेक्स रिटर्न, पैन नं. जी.एस.टी. पंजीकरण प्रपत्र की छायाप्रति, अनुभव सम्बन्धी प्रपत्र तथा पात्रता के अन्य निरूपण एवं शर्तों (Pre-qualifications) से सम्बन्धित दस्तावेजों की स्वहस्ताक्षरित छाया प्रति भी अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है। द्वितीय भाग में केवल दरें होनी चाहिए। निविदा के दोनों भाग निविदा खुलने की तिथि को 12.00 बजे तक उपरोक्त वेबसाइट पर अवश्य अपलोड किये जा सकेंगे। निविदाओं का प्रथम भाग दोपहर 14:00 बजे खोला जाएगा। जिसके परीक्षणपरान्त वित्तीय भाग (भाग-द्वितीय) खोला जायेगा। उक्त तिथि को अवकाश होने पर निविदायें अगले कार्यदिवस में निर्धारित वेबसाइट 'http://etender.up.nic.in' पर ही Upload/Download करना है, अन्य माध्यम से निविदाओं को स्वीकार नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा प्रपत्र उपरोक्त पोर्टल वेबसाइट पर निविदा submit करने की तिथि तक उपलब्ध रहेंगे। दरों की वैधता निविदा खुलने की तिथि से कम से कम 90 दिन होनी चाहिये। अन्य नियम व शर्त

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY E-TENDER Divl. Rly. Manager, N.W.Rly, Bikaner for and on behalf of President of India

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS The Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division No. II, Irrigation & Flood Control Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, I&FC Wing, Vikas Bhawan-II, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054 invites on behalf of the President of India, online tender from approved specialized agency/ eligible contractor by I&FC Department or Manufacturer/ Authorized Dealer of Transformers & sub-station equipments etc. for the following works:

Vanzara gets post-retirement promotion

EXRESS NEWS SERVICE AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 26

FORMER IPS officer DG Vanzara, who was accused in alleged fake encounter cases and later discharged, was Tuesday promoted — six years after retirement — to the post of Inspector General of Police by a special order of the Gujarat government.

Vanzara is now entitled to pension and arrears of salary pending from September 2007, the year he was arrested. The 1987-batch IPS officer retired as Deputy Inspector General on May 31, 2014, after eight years in jail, for his alleged involvement in extrajudicial killings. In 2017 and 2019, CBI courts acquitted him of all charges in these cases.

The notification issued by Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Sangeeta Singh, states: "Shri DG Vanzara, IPS (GJ 1987) who has been retired in DGIP Grade on 31.05.2014 is promoted to the IGP grade with deemed date in the Pay Band 4 : Rs 37400-67000, Grade pay Rs 10000 (pre revised) with effect from 29.09.2007. The orders regarding payment of arrears with respect to deemed date promotion to Shri DG Vanzara IPS (GJ 1987) will be issued separately by the Home Department."

Vanzara told The Indian Express that he did not apply or seek arrears and pension after he was given clean chit in the alleged fake encounter cases. He said the promotion was granted as per procedure.

"I was jailed in April 2007. At the time my promotion was being reviewed by the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC)," he said. "Had I not been in jail, I would have been promoted to I-G then itself. However, due to the criminal cases, my promotion was kept in a sealed cover. Now that I am out of jail and have received clean chit from the judiciary, as per government protocol the sealed cover is to be opened and my promotion granted."

What action will be taken if identity of rape victim is out on social media: HC

EXRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 26

THE BOMBAY High Court on Wednesday asked the state government to inform what action it will take in cases where identity of rape victims is revealed on social media and to inform its stand on such cases.

A division bench of Justice Ranjit V More and Justice Surendra P Tavade was hearing a PIL filed by a victim, seeking directions for expeditious disposal of rape cases and for protection of the identity of victims online and in the media.

The bench said revealing names of rape victims was a cognizable offence under Section 228A of the Indian Penal Code, with imprisonment of up to two years, and the state should come up with a stand during the next hearing. In the plea, the petitioner pointed out that in the recent Hyderabad rape and murder case, the victim's name and photograph were widely published across Twitter and other platforms.

It was argued that although several media platforms breached the obligation to protect identity of victims, the government has not acted against them. The lawyer for the petitioner said the content is still available online.



DG Vanzara

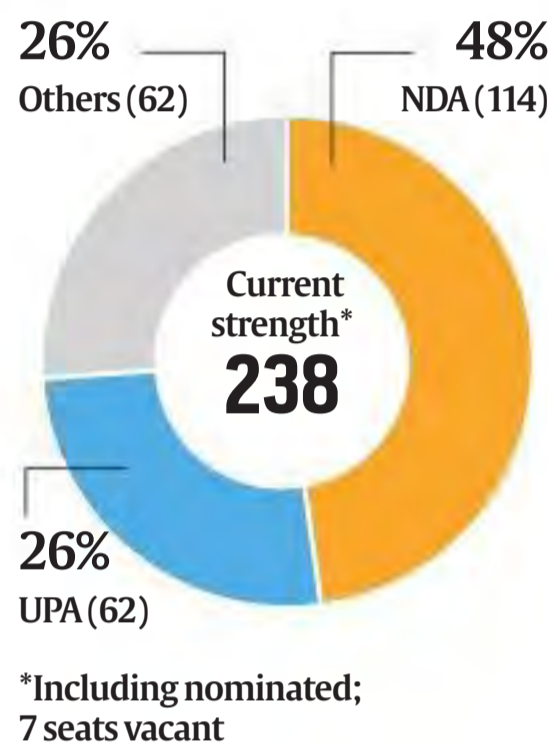
TELLING NUMBERS

Rajya Sabha polls: 55 seats, and the parties that vacate them

STATE	VACANCIES	OUTGOING BREAKUP
Maharashtra	7	NCP 2, Congress 1, Shiv Sena 1, BJP 1, RPI(A) 1, Independent 1
Tamil Nadu	6	AIADMK 4, DMK 1, CPM 1
West Bengal	5	Trinamool 4, Independent 1
Bihar	5	JD(U) 3, BJP 2
Odisha	4	BJD 3, Congress 1
Gujarat	4	BJP 3, Congress 1
Andhra Pradesh	4	Congress 2, TRS 1, TDP 1
Assam	3	Congress 2, BPF 1
Madhya Pradesh	3	BJP 2, Congress 1
Rajasthan	3	BJP 3
Telangana	2	BJP 1, Congress 1
Chhattisgarh	2	BJP 1, Congress 1
Haryana	2	Congress 1, INLD 1
Jharkhand	2	RJD 1, Others 1
Himachal Pradesh	1	Congress 1
Manipur	1	BJP 1
Meghalaya	1	Congress 1

THE ELECTION Commission has announced elections to 55 Rajya Sabha seats spread across 17 states. As reported in *The Indian Express*, 51 of these states will fall vacant on different dates in April due to retirement of sitting members, while four are already vacant. The latter four include one in Odisha (a BJD member who has won a Lok Sabha seat), two in Assam held by former Congress members who are now in BJP, and one in Haryana held by a former INLD member who joined the BJP before the Assembly elections there.

In the table, a look at the current holding pattern of the 55 Rajya Sabha seats going to polls.



THIS WORD MEANS

HENNEGUYA SALMINICOLA

Discovered, an animal that does not breathe

ANIMALS, INCLUDING humans, need energy to perform the various tasks that are essential for survival. Aerobic respiration is one such chemical reaction through which organisms take in oxygen and release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Through this mechanism, energy is transferred to cells, which can use it for multiple purposes — for instance, to burn food. Now, researchers at Tel Aviv University (TAU) have discovered a non-oxygen breathing animal, which significantly changes one of science's assumptions about the animal world — that all animals use aerobic respiration and therefore, oxygen.

It also challenges what may be generally thought of as evolution in organisms — that they become more complex as they evolve. In the case of this non-oxygen breathing organism, evolution turned it into a simpler organism that shed "unnecessary genes" responsible for aerobic respiration. The organism is *Henneguya salminicola*, a fewer-than-10-celled microscopic parasite that lives in salmon muscle. According

to the researchers, as the organism evolved, it gave up breathing and stopped the consumption of oxygen for the production of energy — which means it relies on anaerobic respiration (through which cells extract energy without using oxygen).

Other organisms such as fungi and amoebas that are found in anaerobic environments lost the ability to breathe over time. The new study shows that the same can happen in the case of animals, too.

That the parasite does not require oxygen was discovered by accident while assembling its genome sequence. One of the researchers saw that it did not have a mitochondrial genome. Mitochondria is the "powerhouse" of the cell, which captures oxygen to make energy — its absence in the *H. salminicola* genome indicates that the parasite does not breathe oxygen. ('A cnidarian parasite of salmon (*Myxozoa*: *Henneguya*) lacks a mitochondrial genome', *Yahalomi et al. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, February 24, 2020)

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Authority to protect consumer

Govt has set the ball rolling for a Central Consumer Protection Authority under the new Consumer Protection Act. A look at its expected structure and its scope, including a crackdown on false ads

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

LAST WEEK, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan announced that a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will be established by the first week of April. This was after the Minister held consultations with industry representatives about the role and functioning of a proposed CCPA.

What is the CCPA?

The authority is being constituted under Section 10(1) of The Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The Act replaced The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, and seeks to widen its scope in addressing consumer concerns. The new Act recognises offences such as providing false information regarding the quality or quantity of a good or service, and misleading advertisements. It also specifies action to be taken if goods and services are found "dangerous, hazardous or unsafe".

The CCPA, introduced in the new Act, aims to protect the rights of the consumer by cracking down on unfair trade practices, and false and misleading advertisements that are detrimental to the interests of the public and consumers.

The CCPA will have the powers to inquire or investigate into matters relating to violations of consumer rights or unfair trade practices *suo motu*, or on a complaint received, or on a direction from the central government. Sources said the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution is in the process of finalising the rules relating to the composition and functioning of the CCPA, and these are expected to be notified by April.

What can the possible structure be?

Sources said the proposed authority will be a lean body with a Chief Commissioner as head, and only two other commissioners as



Union Minister of Food and Consumer Affairs Ram Vilas Paswan during a quality check at an FCI godown in Patna in 2014. *Prashant Ravi/Express Archive*

members — one of whom will deal with matters relating to goods while the other will look into cases relating to services. It will be headquartered in the National Capital Region of Delhi but the central government may set up regional offices in other parts of the country.

The CCPA will have an Investigation Wing that will be headed by a Director General. District Collectors too, will have the power to investigate complaints of violations of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and false or misleading advertisements.

What kind of goods, and food items in particular, can be classified as "dangerous, hazardous or unsafe"?

This is not specified in the notification of the Act. Regarding food, an official said the CCPA will ensure that all standards on packaged food items set by regulators such as the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) are being followed.

What will the CCPA do if any goods or

services are found not meeting these standards?

Under Section 20 of The Consumer Protection Act, the proposed authority will have powers to recall goods or withdrawal of services that are "dangerous, hazardous or unsafe; pass an order for refund the prices of goods or services so recalled to purchasers of such goods or services; and discontinuation of practices which are unfair and prejudicial to consumer's interest".

For manufacture, selling, storage, distribution, or import of adulterated products, the penalties are:

- If injury is not caused to a consumer, fine up to Rs 1 lakh with imprisonment up to six months;
- If injury is caused, fine up to Rs 3 lakh with imprisonment up to one year;
- If grievous hurt is caused, fine up to Rs 5 lakh with imprisonment up to 7 years;
- In case of death, fine of Rs 10 lakh or more with a minimum imprisonment of 7 years, extendable to imprisonment for life.

How will it deal with false or misleading advertisements?

Section 21 of the new Act defines the powers given to the CCPA to crack down on false or misleading advertisements. According to these provisions, if the CCPA is satisfied after investigation that any advertisement is false or misleading and is harmful to the interest of any consumer, or is in contravention of consumer rights, the CCPA may issue directions to the trader, manufacturer, endorser, advertiser, or publisher to discontinue such an advertisement, or modify it in a manner specified by the authority, within a given time. The authority may also impose a penalty up to Rs 10 lakh, with imprisonment up to two years, on the manufacturer or endorser of false and misleading advertisements. The penalty may go up to Rs 50 lakh, with imprisonment up to five years, for every subsequent offence committed by the same manufacturer or endorser.

CCPA may ban the endorser of a false or misleading advertisement from making endorsement of any products or services in the future, for a period that may extend to one year. The ban may extend up to three years in every subsequent violation of the Act.

What other powers will the CCPA have?

While conducting an investigation after preliminary inquiry, officers of the CCPA's Investigation Wing will have the powers to enter any premise and search for any document or article, and to seize these. For search and seizure, the CCPA will have similar powers given under the provisions of The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

The CCPA can file complaints of violation of consumer rights or unfair trade practices before the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, and the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. It will issue safety notices to alert consumers against dangerous or hazardous or unsafe goods or services.

What InSight has told us about Mars so far

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

IT'S NOW more than a year since NASA's InSight lander mission touched down on Mars on November 26, 2018. What lessons has the mission provided in its first year on the Red Planet? This week, NASA published a set of six papers - five in the journal *Nature*, one in *Nature Geoscience* - to reveal "a planet alive with quakes, dust devils and strange magnetic pulses".

What is InSight

InSight is the first mission dedicated to looking deep beneath the Martian surface. Among its science tools are a seismometer for detecting quakes, sensors for gauging wind and air pressure, a magnetometer, and a heat flow probe designed to take the planet's temperature.

The InSight mission is part of NASA's Discovery Program. It is being supported by a number of European partners, which include France's Centre National d'Études Spatiales (CNES), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), and the United Kingdom Space Agency (UKSA).

Underground: rumbles

Mars trembles more often than expected, but also more mildly. This emerged from readings of the ultra-sensitive seismometer, called the Seismic Experiment for Interior



Artist's conception of NASA's InSight lander on Mars. *IPGP/Nicolas Sarter via NASA*

Structure (SEIS). The instrument enables scientists to "hear" multiple trembling events from hundreds to thousands of miles away.

Mars doesn't have tectonic plates like Earth, but it does have volcanically active regions that can cause rumbles. SEIS has found more than 450 seismic signals to date, the majority of which are believed to be quakes (as opposed to data noise created by environmental factors, like wind). The largest quake was just about magnitude 4.0 in size.

Seismic waves are affected by the materials they move through. As such, they help scientists study the composition of the

planet's inner structure. Mars can help the team better understand how all rocky planets — including Earth — first formed.

The surface: magnetism

Billions of years ago, Mars had a magnetic field. Although it is no longer present, it left behind what NASA describes as "ghosts" - magnetised rocks that are now between 61 m to several km below ground. InSight is equipped with a magnetometer, which has detected magnetic signals.

At a Martian site called Homestead hollow, the magnetic signals are 10 times stronger than what was predicted earlier (based on data from orbiting spacecraft). Because InSight's measurements are more local, they are more precise.

At InSight's location, most surface rocks are too young to have been magnetised by the former magnetic field. "This magnetism must be coming from ancient rocks underground," Catherine Johnson, planetary scientist with the University of British Columbia and the Planetary Science Institute, said in a statement issued by NASA. Scientists are now using these data and what was previously known to understand the magnetised layers below InSight.

In addition, scientists on Earth are intrigued by how these Martian signals change over time. The measurements vary by day and night; they also tend to pulse around midnight. Theories are still being formed as to what causes such changes.

In the wind: dust devils

InSight measures wind speed, direction and air pressure nearly continuously. Weather sensors have detected thousands of passing whirlwinds, which are called dust devils when they pick up grit and become visible. The site has more whirlwinds than any other place where a landing has been made on Mars while carrying weather sensors.

Despite all that activity in the wind and frequent imaging, InSight's cameras have yet to see dust devils. But SEIS can feel these whirlwinds pulling on the surface. "Whirlwinds are perfect for subsurface seismic exploration," said Philippe Lognonné of Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris (IPGP), principal investigator of SEIS.

The core: still to come

InSight has two radios. One is for regularly sending and receiving data. The other radio, which is more powerful, is designed to measure the "wobble" of Mars as it spins. This X-band radio, also known as the Rotation and Interior Structure Experiment (RISE), can eventually reveal whether the planet's core is solid or liquid. A solid core would cause Mars to wobble less than a liquid one would.

This first year of data is just a start, NASA said in the statement. When it is two years on Earth, Mars will have completed one year. A full Martian year will give scientists a much better idea of the size and speed of the planet's wobble, NASA said.

Why Army doesn't want police, paramilitary forces to copy its 'combat' uniform

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 26

THE ARMY has asked the Ministries of Defence and Home Affairs to issue guidelines to ensure that state police forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) do not wear the 'disruptive pattern' uniform, commonly referred to as 'combat uniform', while on law and order duties such as riot control.

Why has the Army sought these guidelines?

On January 23, following clashes between pro- and anti-CAA groups in Northeast Delhi's Jafraabad, pictures emerged of security forces personnel wearing combat pattern uniforms closely resembling that of the Indian Army's, being deployed in the area. As the pictures and videos went viral on social media — some were posted on Twitter by the news agency ANI — word spread that the Army had been called out in the area.

That evening, ANI, quoting "Indian Army sources", tweeted that the Army would "take action against state police forces and

private security agencies wearing military camouflage uniform", because "there are policy guidelines which prohibit paramilitary and state police forces from wearing uniforms donned by the military". (Some users on social media had pointed out that security guards at Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia too, wore Army pattern uniforms.)

The following day, the Army issued a statement on its official Twitter handle clarifying that it "wasn't deployed for Internal Security Duties". The Army also wrote formally to the government, saying "combat dress should not be worn" by paramilitary forces "while being employed to handle law & order situations as well as while being deployed in urban areas affected by terrorism, as the surroundings do not demand such a requirement".

The Army said that "use of distinctly different (both in colour and pattern) disruptive dress by CAPFs and State Police forces should be restricted only to employment in jungle terrain in Left Wing Extremism affected areas". Also, the "sale of Army pattern clothes in the open market needs to be regulated".

Has the Army expressed these concerns



The Army issued a clarification on its official Twitter handle after pictures and videos of personnel wearing 'combat' uniforms appeared.

earlier, too?

Yes. The Army has made this request repeatedly over the past several years, as more and more CAPF and state police forces personnel have begun to wear the combat pattern uniform during riot-control duties. Some CAPFs have even copied routine uniform items of the Army's senior ranks such as stars on collar tabs. While the patterns on the uniforms have sometimes been slightly different from the Army's, the Army has argued that the average citizen is unable to distinguish between them — and an erroneous impression is created that the Army has been deployed.

The issue was discussed in the government in 2004, 2012, 2013, and 2015 — to no avail. In 2016, Army personnel conducting flag marches in Haryana during the Jat agitation were forced to carry signs saying 'ARMY' in bold letters to announce their presence. That same year, after terrorists wearing combat pattern uniforms attacked the Pathankot air base, the Army issued directions in the border areas of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir saying it was illegal to sell such patterned cloth in markets.

What are the rules on wearing such uniforms?

Section 171 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 ("Wearing garb or carrying token used by public servant with fraudulent intent") says: "Whoever, not belonging to a certain class of public servants, wears any garb or carries any token resembling any garb or token used by that class of public servants, with the intention that it may be believed, or with the knowledge that it is likely to be believed, that he belongs to that class of public servants, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine which may extend to two hundred rupees, or with both."

Also, Section 21 of The Private Security Agencies (Regulation) Act, 2005 ("Penalty for unauthorised use of certain uniforms") says: "If any private security guard or supervisor wears the uniform of the Army, Air Force, Navy or any other armed forces of the Union or Police or any dress having the appearance or bearing any of the distinctive marks of that uniform, he and the proprietor of the private security agency shall be punishable with im-

prisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both."

When did the Army adopt the combat uniform?

Before 1947, the Indian Army had only one type of khaki uniform. Independent India adopted as the Army's uniform the olive green that its soldiers fighting in the jungles of the Northeast and Burma during World War II wore. Disruptive pattern 'combat' uniforms — worn by the German *Waffen-SS* and *Luftwaffe* in the War's European theatre and by US Marines in the Pacific theatre — were introduced in the Indian Army in the late eighties, when the Indian Peacekeeping Force went to fight the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the jungles of northern Sri Lanka.

The pattern of the camouflage was revised in 2005, when Gen JJ Singh was the Army Chief. Gen Singh also introduced a watermark on the uniform in the shape of the Army emblem of crossed swords, and the words 'Indian Army', in a bid to discourage police forces from copying it.



WORDLY WISE
 VIOLENCE IS THE LAST REFUGE
 OF THE INCOMPETENT.
 — ISAAC ASIMOV

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

27 TOO MANY

It took so many to die in Delhi for New Delhi to wake up. That delay will hang in the air long after the streets fall silent

THIS MOMENT IS one that Delhi, centrepiece of the world's largest democracy now claiming a shinier spotlight on the world stage, had not thought could come again. After all, large-scale communal violence was a thing of the past in this city. Admittedly, there were still eruptions, but they were aberrations in a darker hinterland, away from the bright lights of India's capital. That confidence, that complacency, stands shattered by the violence that convulsed northeastern parts of the metropolis over at least three days, leaving at least 27 dead, and many times that number injured. Since Sunday, the terrible fact is also this: Violence sparked by the new citizenship law has taken a higher toll in Delhi than even across Uttar Pradesh, which saw people's agitation and a brutal police crackdown by the Yogi Adityanath government in December. Given that the several anti-CAA protests across the country have been overwhelmingly law-abiding and peaceful, the violence that raged seemingly unchecked in Delhi takes the death toll to over 50 in the eight months since the Narendra Modi government returned to power last May and poses grave questions that need urgent answers.

Soon after President Donald Trump flew back to America, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval visited affected areas but this visible monitoring and outreach arrived late to the crime scenes. On Wednesday, too, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted an appeal for restoration of "peace and brotherhood" and "calm and normalcy". On Wednesday, again, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal suggested to the Centre that the Army could be called in. The inexplicable pusillanimity of the recently re-elected AAP government in this moment will remain a blot on its record. But far more than the AAP, which sought to toss the ball to the Centre when it was not striking a pose at Rajghat, it is Delhi Police, which reports to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, that will carry the stain. Over the last few days, as violence raged and lives were lost, the very modern and pampered police force, which went on an unprovoked rampage on the campus in Jamia Millia Islamia and looked on as goons invaded JNU, appeared to be absent, complicit or ineffective. It even needed the Delhi High Court to, in a post-midnight ruling, direct the police to give safe passage to the injured to hospitals and to register FIRs against those whose hate speech may have fuelled the violence, without delay.

It is the delay that will hang in the air, when all is calm again. Delay that the ruling party deploys as political tactic and strategy. Delay that allows a part of a city to burn before action is taken or a political intervention is made. Delay that sharpens minority fears and anxieties about a discriminatory law and gives room for majoritarianism to swell and grow. Delay that provides, nurtures, the space for hate speech, and for gruesome images and videos of communal polarisation and poison to spread and echo. The violence in Delhi will, it must, die down. But it will take sustained political effort and wisdom to make the scars of delay fade away. That's the task ahead.

KILLER MEDICINE

Deaths of children due to spurious cough syrup point to glaring deficiencies in drug regulation that need urgent addressing

THE DEATHS OF 11 children in Jammu's Udhampur district should drive home the dire urgency of plugging loopholes in the country's drug regulatory regime. Initial investigations point to a cough syrup, Cold Best-PC. A laboratory in PGIMER Chandigarh has found the presence of the toxic compound, Diethylene Glycol, in samples from a batch of the medicine manufactured by the Himachal Pradesh-based Digital Vision. The state's drug regulator has suspended the company's manufacturing licence. But Digital Vision's track record — in the last five years, drugs manufactured by it have been red-flagged more than once by the country's apex drug regulatory authority, the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), as well as by regulators in Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and J&K — should have been reason enough for regulators to be more vigilant about the company's production practices.

Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, regulating the manufacture, sale and distribution of drugs is primarily the concern of state authorities. The CDSCO is responsible for laying down the standards of drugs, coordinating the activities of state regulatory authorities and providing them expert advice. But by all accounts, there is scarcely any information-sharing between the Centre and the states and among states. The CDSCO has not issued binding guidelines to state regulators for recalling medicines that are not of standard quality (NSQ). A batch of drugs that is deemed NSQ in one state could find its way to the market in another. Himachal's drug control authority has seized or recalled at least 1,500 bottles of Cold Best-PC. But by the agency's own admission, more than 3,000 bottles of the batch of cough syrup deemed substandard by PGIMER made its way to the market.

For more than 30 years, India has been the largest supplier of generic medicines in the world. However, the country's pharma industry has never answered satisfactorily the questions that have been asked about the quality of its products. In 2015, the EU banned 700 drugs produced in the country. Last year, Indian drug manufacturers received at least 20 letters of warning from the US FDA over the quality of their products. Last year, the Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India, which implements the Pradhan Mantri Janaushadhi Pariyojana, found 25 batches of drugs supplied to the Centre's flagship affordable medicine programme to be substandard. Drugs of questionable quality prolong illness, cause antibiotic resistance, and, as in the case of Cold Best-PC, even death.

IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD

Country owes its players a safety net. They must not be left to fend for themselves in case of injury

THE LEAST THE country can do for its athletes, whose medals it piggybacks on in the good times, is provide them the comforting cloak of a health insurance cover for the bad times. While sweat and tears can scarcely be compensated in an international athlete's life, the blood shed while competing, or bones and tendons broken, necessitate a safety net. Shuttler Ajay Jayaram is the latest in a long line of athletes who have felt let down after being left to fend for themselves while nursing injuries. Like inconsiderate consumers of human feats of athletic excellence, sports fans and federations and governments conveniently ignore — to use a baseball idiom — the Charley horses, limping equines who are out of the race for now.

From cricket to hockey to individual sports, sportspersons who witness an abrupt pause in their high-flying career are numerous. Greeting them back home, however, is deafening silence. The mental turmoil that this sudden withdrawal of attention can cause is something no one seems to care about. There are hardly any provisions, either, for picking up the tab for the treatment, let alone for paving the way for return to competition.

This year has seen an even more cruel development — as desperate sports fans have taken to social media to literally shame athletes for not recovering quickly enough from their injuries. It's a strangely transactional love that sports followers extend to their heroes — minute dissection of every moment spent on the field when they are fit and in fine fettle and a callous dismissal when they are down and out. This dismal syndrome of neglect must be broken.

The Delhi darkness

Our republic cannot become what our rulers want it to be: A nation that measures itself by cruelties it can inflict



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

INDIA IS DESCENDING into a night of dread and despair. The ongoing riots in Delhi are not a tactical aberration, some absent-minded lapse of attention. They have been in the making for a while, and represent the future that our ruling classes, with our aid and support, have imagined for us. The idea is to carpet bomb the Indian republic as we know it, and replace it with a regime that thrives on cruelty, fear, division and violence. Even as the politics of revenge starts, it is important not to forget the dynamics that led up to this moment.

As was clear from the start, the purpose of the CAA was not to solve the problem of non-Muslims refugees from our neighbouring states. That objective could have been achieved by a bill that did not discriminate on the basis of religion and did not align religious identity with the prospects of citizenship. The assurances of delinking the NRC, CAA and NPR processes were never credibly made. The result was a civic cruelty of the worst kind, where millions of ordinary Indians, especially Muslims, were made uncertain about what this process meant for them. The spectre of camps is too hard to ignore. The protests and violence could have been easily stopped, and still can be halted, if the government commits to legislation that does not discriminate, and a process that does not put the civic standing of anyone living in India at risk. The effect of the government's refusal to do this was to humiliate minorities, and keep the issue on the boil.

The Supreme Court gave the cruelest blow of all. By refusing to send a clear signal on basic rights of habeas corpus, the checks against preventive detention, the court decimated the Constitution that binds us together. By systematically appearing to side with government on practically every issue, by delaying hearings on something as fundamental as discrimination, by genuflecting paeans to the Great Leader, it dashed all hopes of fair constitutional adjudication. Citizens had to turn to other non-violent means of civic protest.

These non-violent civic protests, spear-headed by women, minorities and students, resolutely stuck to a grammar of non-violence and constitutionalism. This was despite repeated provocation and the fact that it is legally difficult to protest in India. There was

some violence in states like UP. But that was used as a pretext to unleash an unprecedented reign of repression and cruelty by the government. There was always the danger that long and sustained protests with no attempt at a dialogue open the way for radical elements to take over. In fact, the government was waiting for even the slightest hint of that radicalisation which leaders like Waris Pathan, or a gun-brandishing hothead would obligingly provide. But it is important to remember: The government uses the fear of radicalism as a pretext, far in excess of the reality of the phenomenon.

The real cruelty was the government's strategy. In Delhi, the protests were allowed to continue in Shaheen Bagh, not because the government was soft. It thought it could use the protest as pretext to consolidate majoritarian sentiment: Look at these minorities blocking roads and standing against Hindu rights, went the refrain. The BJP's poisonous campaign during the Delhi election was a classic Catch 22. First, we discriminate. Then we make sure there is no institutional redress. If there is protest, we use it as further proof of the perfidy of minorities, intellectuals and other so-called anti-nationals. BJP leaders then call for violence to be unleashed, and when violence is unleashed, we blame them for violence. Never has a more diabolical moral circle been created.

Meanwhile, other institutions merrily failed us. So many brave reporters have put their lives on the line to bring us reports from the frontline. But the institution of the media failed to put the requisite pressure on the government. They are too much in awe or too intimidated by the Home Minister to press basic questions of accountability. The Opposition parties have been like deer caught in a headlight at best, morally mendacious at worst. The Delhi CM is reduced to staging photo-ops at Rajghat; the rest of the Opposition seems to muster about as much energy as it takes to put out a tweet. It has more consultants than convictions or courage.

It is the first time in independent India that minorities cannot turn to any electoral formation or force to provide even basic protection. This is the depth of corrosion of normal politics. Such a deep political vacuum is bound to be filled by forces we cannot predict.

Meanwhile, so much of civil society resembles a scene of moral desolation. The casual legitimisation of violence against minorities and the inversion of all moral values is at an unprecedented level. People cheer as "Jai Shri Ram" has moved from being a call to piety to almost a call for killing. Someday a sociologist will have to decipher the phenomenon of hordes of young men now looking to feel alive, to get a sense of purpose, by participating in mayhem. Even apart from the communal angle, the availability of this mass of young men on the streets betokens a society that increasingly has little sense of its own future.

The national anthem is sung while brutal assaults take place, mosques nonchalantly "conquered". And we are back to a barbarism where crowds threaten to strip you to ascertain if you have a right to any civic standing. The purpose is to strip us of all the decencies of ordinary humanity; the only thing that matters will be the identity that can be inscribed on your body.

The moral resistance to this brutalisation is feeble. And then there is the abdication of the state. Even as policeman themselves become victim of the games their masters play, there is no doubt that the state could have stopped the violence more quickly if it had wanted.

The Delhi violence will hopefully stop, but it is just an event in a larger chain. If the literature on riots is any guide, the Delhi riots look more like a prelude to a possible pogrom, or at least ghettoisation. The state looks for a pretext to crack down; the crack down is disproportionately targeted at particular communities, especially their businesses; the police and political establishment are bystanders or egging on the violence.

The government can still do the right thing: Ensure fair law and order, and address the underlying anxiety it has itself produced. India will have to mobilise in full force to resist this brutalisation. Otherwise our republic will become what our rulers want it to be: A charnel house of rotted moralities, a nation that measures itself by the cruelties it can inflict.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

COST OF A SPECTACLE

Trump succeeded in boosting the American economy when India is in a slowdown



D RAJA

THE SPECTACLE PUT up at huge public expense by the Narendra Modi government to welcome President Donald Trump in Gujarat speaks volumes about the penchant for exhibitionism and the utter servility of the people in power towards the US. A most gross act was to construct a wall to hide a slum that fell on the route that Trump's cavalcade followed. The Modi regime, instead of wiping out poverty, chose to hide poverty-stricken people out of sight to make a false impression on a visiting dignitary. The action is an affront to the dignity and poise of the people of India.

The splurge of public funds at a time when the Indian economy is going through an unprecedented slowdown is unacceptable. Even President Trump's visit to the sacred Sabarmati Ashram, where in the visitors' book he expressed thanks to Prime Minister Modi but failed to mention Mahatma Gandhi, whose 150th birth anniversary is being celebrated across the nation, was in contrast to the ethos and legacy of the Ashram: Sabarmati was the nursery of satyagraha and the nucleus of the freedom movement till 1930, the year of the epoch-making Salt Satyagraha. The chest-thumping and muscular mannerism that dominated the welcome accorded to President Trump in Gujarat constituted an affront to Gandhian grace and decency. The whole extravaganza made it appear

that a lord and master was being welcomed by a serf. By any yardstick, India stood diminished in stature. Anyone with some sense of culture and civility would have felt embarrassed. Further, President Trump chose the soil of Gandhi's Gujarat to announce that America will sell weapons, missiles and war planes worth billions of dollars to India. So patronising!

I am reminded of Gandhi's own words. In 1936, he wrote: "When Americans come and ask me what service they could render, I tell them, if you dangle your millions before us, you will make beggars of us, and demoralise us. But in one thing I don't mind being a beggar. You can ask your engineers and agricultural experts to place their services at our disposal. They must come to us not as lords and masters, but as voluntary workers."

It is instructive that then President of India, KR Narayanan, quoted these words of Gandhi in his banquet speech when President Bill Clinton was visiting India. An Indian newspaper reported the elaborate manner in which the government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee welcomed Clinton and commented that the round-the-clock effort to beautify Delhi for the American president gave the impression that the viceroy of India was visiting Delhi. President Narayanan also ticked off President Clinton, who had described the Indian subcontinent as a danger-

ous place and Kashmir as a potential theatre of nuclear war. Narayanan said: "These alarmist descriptions will only encourage those who want to break the peace and indulge in terrorism and violence. The danger is not from us who have declared solemnly that we will not be the first to use nuclear weapons; but rather it is from those who refuse to make any such commitment."

His upfront remarks that President Clinton was making alarmist statements prompted senior communist leader Hiren Mukherjee to say that President Narayanan was the only saving grace in a situation marked by an all out attempt to please President Clinton at the cost of India's honour and dignity. There is no one like President Narayanan today to uphold the dignity of India and Indians.

Whatever the deals clinched between the US and India, Trump has succeeded in getting the Modi government to boost the American economy at a time when the Indian economy is in shambles. Now, Delhi has joined a global comprehensive strategic partnership with the US, thereby undermining India's independent foreign policy.

We, the people of India, have to stand up to defend the country and its interests. That is the only hope for the future.

The writer is general secretary, CPI

FEBRUARY 27, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

JANATA CRISIS ON
 THE JANATA PARTY plunged from the crisis over the Jana Sangh faction's demand for disciplinary action against its parliamentary party leader, into a fresh one. Jagjivan Ram is now insisting on solving the dual membership issue and the Jana Sangh faction is "determined" to have the "RSS bogey buried once and for all". Hectic "peace efforts" since the dramatic boycott of the meeting of the national executive by the Jana Sangh faction failed to produce any solution.

BIHAR MASSACRE
 FOURTEEN HARIJANS, INCLUDING four women and six children were brutally killed

in Pipra village in Bihar in an apparently pre-planned shooting-cum-arson assault launched by unidentified miscreants. Thirteen died on the spot and one of the four injured succumbed to injuries later. The attack was carried out by an armed mob of about 200.

LAND ACT
 THE UNION MINISTER for works and housing, P C Sethi, hinted that the Urban Land Ceiling Act could be scrapped or at least drastically amended. Addressing a press conference in Delhi, Sethi said there were several lacunae in the Act. It had given rise to corruption, had pushed up land prices and brought

private building activity to a standstill. "We will consider whether it has to be completely scrapped, or only the loopholes have to be plugged," he declared.

CARTER SUPPORT
 PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER offered to support a neutral Afghanistan if the Soviet Union withdraws promptly from the country. Carter's comments, in response to a letter from the Yugoslav President Josip Tito, followed an apparent offer by the Soviet Union to withdraw "as soon as all forms of outside interference directed against the government and people of Afghanistan are fully terminated."



Capital omen

Minorities in India are coming to believe that there is a campaign to make them second-class citizens. This perception must be dispelled



NAJEEB JUNG

DELHI, OVER THE past four days has been witness to unprecedented riots. So far, over 20 lives have reportedly been lost, scores injured. There are accusations of partisanship against the Delhi Police, which has shown remarkable ineptitude over the past few months. It is unimaginable that an 80,000-strong force, with an annual budget of over Rs 8,000 crore, well-trained and equipped, is unable to control riots that are limited just to a part of the national capital, and, that too at a time when India was hosting the American president. These riots will shift the global focus on India, which anyway has been fixed in recent times on the Indian government's actions and pronouncements on the NPR/NRC and CAA. With shoot-at-sight orders now in place in some parts of northeast Delhi, we can presume that peace will be restored. It will now be incumbent on Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to ensure that the civil administration is on the ground forming interfaith peace committees, and ensuring all logistical help including emotional support that people need at such times.

Home Minister Amit Shah's belligerent speeches in Parliament and during election campaigns to introduce a pan-India NRC, and eliminate "termites", fuelled fears of a life bereft of home and hearth — and a future in detention camps. The NRC campaign was so insidious that even the prime minister's assurance — that the government did not intend to introduce NRC — did not reassure people. All this was followed by an election campaign in Delhi that was bitter and communal. A minister in the Union cabinet, a Delhi MP and a prospective MLA candidate spoke a language that has never been used even in the most hard-fought elections. No action was taken against these people and it gave licence to Kapil Mishra (the prospective MLA candidate) to lead a mob in northeast Delhi that kicked started this grim situation. As if to conclusively prove its incompetence, the Delhi Police has still not taken any action against Mishra.

Fortunately, most NPR/NRC/CAA protests (barring a handful) have been peaceful and, while a majority of participants are Muslims, there has been enthusiastic participation from other religious communities too. The most interesting aspect has been the significant role of Muslim women. With a copy of the Constitution in hand, they read the Preamble, sing the national anthem and Vande Mataram as well — a far cry from the time a Muslim MP walked out of the Lok Sabha when the national song was being sung. These women see the irony that as they fight to be Indian, it's their nationalism and patriotism that is being challenged.

The combination of NPR/NRC/CAA, and the speed at which these were introduced — and the communal speeches of members of the ruling dispensation — have shaken the confidence of not just Muslims but all minorities in India. Christians have long been at the receiving end. The murder of Graham



CR Sasikumar

Staines and his sons was not a one-off incident. There have been repeated instances of churches being vandalised, and harassment of the Christian clergy and nuns. The Sikh community watches with consternation (1984 is never far from their mind), and their sympathy with the anti-CAA protestors is evident from the large Sikh presence at Shaheen Bagh, and the langar they have managed there.

Today, Shaheen Bagh has become a symbol of a unique resistance: Students, women, Dalits, and minorities are speaking with a new confidence. They do not fear the police danda or the local politician, nor do they fear being called a Dalit or a minority. It is, as Nehru said, the soul of India, long suppressed, finding utterance. Women at Shaheen Bagh have been sitting in peace and, even in difficult times, they have kept up their spirits through patriotic songs. They welcome visitors and no communal/religious speech is allowed. Stand-up artists, singers, film stars, writers, teachers, come and speak here.

The government thought that doing away with triple talaq among Muslim women would release them from male oppression and that would help with their votes. These women have gone much farther. They speak of the hollowness of the government's claims to Muslim women, even as thousands brave the winter nights with no one from the government either paying a visit or showing any interest in dialogue. Undeniably, there have been law and order issues during some protests but, by and large, the non-participating public have understood the mood with a degree of empathy, and have borne inconveniences with compassion and understanding.

The fact is, the protests will not cease. Minorities in India are slowly coming to believe that there is a campaign to make them second-class citizens. Whether this perception is true or not is not the question. Such a thought is dangerous in itself and must be dispelled. Government spokespersons have repeatedly said that the CAA does not take away anyone's nationality. But what happens to Muslims and Jews who are unable to meet

The fact is, that the ongoing protests will not cease. Minorities in India are slowly coming to believe that there is a campaign to make them second-class citizens. Whether this perception is true or not is not the question. Such a thought is dangerous in itself and must be dispelled. It is difficult to comprehend why the government is not understanding the impracticality of going through with the NPR exercise. A number of state governments have already declined to carry it out.

the requirements under the NPR (even presuming that a pan-India NRC is not introduced)? What happens to those who are put in the "doubtful" category under the NPR? Will Muslims and Jews be packed off to detention camps or forcibly pushed across our borders? For Jews, however small their number, it's back to the Holocaust nightmare. There are horror stories emanating from detention camps. Can a 200-million community, or should a population that large, live in fear rather than contribute to the overall development of the country?

It is difficult to comprehend why the government is not understanding the impracticality of going through with the NPR. A number of state governments have already declined to carry it out. Some like Bihar (where the BJP is part of the ruling alliance) have indicated the inability to adopt the NPR in its present form. How does the government expect the enumerators to collect data then? There is fear of violence, and even if this were not the case, there would likely be incorrect information given — or a simple denial to give information. Therefore, this exercise becomes a non-starter. Indeed, if any attempt is made to carry this out, it would risk diluting the entire census data, thereby harming the country's planning process.

So, it is of prime importance that the government immediately take steps to initiate dialogue on these fraught issues. The protests are not as leaderless as they seem. There are community leaders who can be spoken to. The government must engage political parties, teachers, journalists and other opinion makers and immediately start a dialogue process. The concerns of all must be addressed and the prime minister's promise of winning "sabka vishwas" must be upheld. For the present, let it be said, that if the price of proving their nationalism and patriotism is blood, then the minorities of India have overpaid. Jinnah was wrong in his two-nation theory and the India of today shall not prove him right.

The writer is a former civil servant and was lieutenant governor of Delhi

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The US media ridicules China as the "real sick man of the Asia," and the US government constantly suppresses Chinese media's operations in the US. Why can't China do something to express our attitude and temper?" — GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Secular hypocrisies

Marginalised intellectuals are using discourse of secularism to stoke imaginary fears of majoritarianism



RAKESH SINHA

THE MOB FRENZY in Delhi which has claimed at least 23 lives — including of policeman Ratan Lal — unlike communal disturbances in the past, is not a consequence of an immediate provocation or local feuds. It is sociologically distinct in nature.

Since the 1990s, a generation of Indians has been groomed in predominantly Marxist and Nehruvian intellectual and political discourses. These theories construed a notion of Hindu majoritarianism as a threat to the political rights and identities of the minorities, especially Muslims. The old narrative of secularism, espoused by both the political and intellectual class, witnessed challenges from the new Hindutva thought leadership and the mass upsurge against the politics and policy of appeasement. Whenever cultural and social issues are fought politically, bitter binaries are created.

This class witnessed the erosion of their hegemony and alienation from the majority community due to their prejudices and unwillingness to re-examine their intellectual positions. They used their intellectualism to mutate even issues mandated by the Constitution after a protracted debate in the Constituent Assembly — Article 370, Uniform Civil Code, the abolition of triple talaq, cow protection — as a challenge to minority rights. Moreover, the Muslim intelligentsia showed their recalcitrance on cultural issues like the Ram temple. They identified themselves with the cruelties committed by foreign aggressors.

Further, the Shaheen Bagh protest, which is being led largely by Muslim elites and Left-inclined intellectuals, has built a narrative that the Citizenship Amendment Act is not merely discriminatory and exclusionary but also a precursor to the NRC, meant to disenfranchise Muslims. Baseless propaganda has been given an intellectual mask and the veneer of a secular battle. The paradoxical nature of the protesters is obvious from their avoiding the question: How does relief to the victims of religious persecution in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan reverse the basic premise of the Indian Republic?

At the same time, the protesters vociferously believe in linking welfare schemes, government scholarships, jobs, etc, with religion and in separate structures for minorities like the National Commission for Minorities and minority affairs ministry, as essential to secular democracy! Shaheen Bagh created a ghost of brute majoritarianism. Wicked demagogues have attempted to fuel popular discontent among minorities by using demonic lies.

The discourse on secularism can be unyielding if it means to further narrow political goals. Has the Narendra Modi regime ushered Hindu majoritarian rule? The answer must be based on both facts and ideals. Since 2014, no programme of the government has been contested by anyone of fame as directly

or indirectly favouring Hindus and ignoring minorities. The economic integration of the deprived masses through welfare measures was countered by pseudo-secular intellectuals with socially unpalatable political invective. Ending of the policy of appeasement requires a new discourse, which cannot be digested by this class of intellectuals.

Marginalised self-proclaimed activists found respectable spaces to spread their venom. Their consciously managed battles in TV studios and on social media platforms killed both truth and authenticity. An illustration can be seen in an article in *The New York Times* ("Modi's lost in Delhi. It doesn't matter", February 13). Asim Ali, an Indian, wrote: "...seventy years after independence, India's Muslims are still fighting for equal citizenship... it is no longer acceptable to speak about equal citizenship and political rights of Indian Muslims or speak out against the violence and hostility they encounter." Can there be a bigger travesty than to say that Muslims are being treated as second-class citizens in India? Such polemical and provocative writings or speeches weaken democratic norms. This irreparably damages not only India's reputation and our secular tradition but also leads to conflict, polarisation, hate mongering and fears of exclusion. David Runciman rightly says in *How Democracy Ends*: "Democracy is a civil war without the fighting. Failures come when proxy battles come into real ones."

The pre-requisite for a healthy debate is to labouriously clean up the discourse and for thought leadership to be undertaken by serious intellectuals. There is a need to bring greater precision in understanding ideologies and organisations. RSS Sarsanghachalak Mohan Bhagwat's three-day interaction in Vigyan Bhawan in 2019 was an effort to reach out to both ordinary activists and elite opponents. However, this did not serve the prevalent narrative of secularism, which is based on three ingredients: Ignoring cultural ethos, stigmatising the RSS and Modi, and projecting a binary between the state and minorities. The principal challenge is to understand the Indian tradition of secularism which does not contain, except the colonial era onwards, a majority-minority binary. It is not the constitutional guarantees but mutual trust and goodwill that ensure fraternity. What Madan Mohan Malaviya said to Maulana Masood Ali at the 1927 session of the Congress in Madras encapsulates this debate: "What safeguards do you want from the Secretary of the State in India? We are here... what better safeguards you want?"

Multiculturalism survives not because it allows people of all religious and cultural shades to enjoy the fruits of freedom but because all people genuinely believe in diversity and cultural and historical legacies beyond their religious limitations. The western notion of secularism cannot resolve the challenges the Indian civil society faces. Secularism is based on the historical experiences and normative ideals of a society. The Shaheen Bagh protest cannot help by propagating an imaginary fear of majoritarianism. Representative democracy can not be substituted by plebiscite-ary democracy because the powerful elites known as left-liberals do not like the party in power.

The writer is a BJP Rajya Sabha MP



ARVIND P DATAR

An unreasonable levy

Government should grant relief to telecom companies, waive interest and penalty

EVERY TELECOM COMPANY has to pay a licence fee of 8 per cent of its "adjusted gross revenue". There have been disputes as to whether certain items should be included in calculating AGR. The very wide interpretation given to this expression by the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) has been accepted by the Supreme Court and the telecom sector now faces a demand of around Rs 93,000 crore. Apart from the threat of loss of thousands of jobs, there is an even greater threat of a domino effect on banks and collateral services that are intertwined with the sector. And lurking in the shadows are even more staggering demands from public sector companies such as GAIL, Oil India and Power Grid Corporation of India.

It is necessary to understand the genesis of the AGR problem, and whether the telecom sector deserves to be in the critical situation that it now faces. As part of the process of liberalisation, the National Telecom Policy was announced in 1994 and licences were awarded to private companies on the payment of a fixed annual licence fee. This was replaced by a "revenue sharing model" in 1999 and licencees had to pay a licence fee of 8 per cent of their AGR, which was the gross revenue, reduced by certain specified charges, service tax and excise duty.

The dispute between the telecom operators and the DoT over the past 15 years was mainly on two issues: First, whether the licence fee had to be paid only on revenue

earned from telecom services and, second, what were the items that had to be excluded from gross revenue.

In July 2006, the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) had ruled that revenue from non-licensed activities could not be included to calculate gross revenue. The licence fee had to be paid only on the revenue from licensed activities. In another order passed in August 2007, the TDSAT, among others, ruled that bad debts, waivers and discounts should be excluded from AGR. In 2015, TDSAT ruled that discounts would not normally be included in AGR; however, if the invoice was for the full amount and the discount was given separately (or later), then it was not deductible. In the Supreme Court verdict, every contention of the telecom licencees was rejected and it was held that the licence fee was to be paid on "gross revenue, without any set-off, including the discounts given". With the review petitions being dismissed, the telecom companies now have to pay a licence fee of 8 per cent on revenue they never received and a further interest and penalty on this notional revenue.

Such an interpretation is indeed unique. As a general rule, tax or duty is levied only on the consideration actually received and never on the discount that is offered to customers. The accusation that the telecom companies' conduct was unfair and that they deliberately avoided payment is also

not accurate. The figures submitted by the DoT to the Court indicate that the total licence fee that was due from the top 16 telecom companies was Rs 1,09,278 crore, of which Rs 86,089 crore or approximately 80 per cent was paid. Therefore, the disputed dues were Rs 23,188 crore. The compound interest on this was Rs 41,650 crore, the penalty was Rs 10,923 crore and the interest on penalty was another Rs 16,878 crore. Out of a staggering demand of Rs 92,641 crore, interest and penalty constitutes around Rs 70,000 crore.

As there was a genuine dispute on what constituted AGR, there is no justification to levy compound interest. As regards the penalty, it has been repeatedly held by the Supreme Court that penalty should not be levied unless a company acts in deliberate defiance of the law.

The plight of non-telecom companies is even worse. It is grossly unfair to claim that an oil and gas company, which is granted a licence and whose income from telecom services is just a fraction of its total revenue, has to pay licence fee of 8 per cent on its entire income. It is indeed distressing that the DoT should even contemplate such an erroneous interpretation of "gross revenue". If this interpretation is upheld, GAIL would have to pay Rs 1.8 lakh crore, and Oil India and Power Grid Corporation would have to pay Rs 48,000 crore and Rs 22,000 crore (including interest and penalty) respectively.

In view of the implications not only for the telecom sector but for other sectors as well, the government should consider granting relief. As regards telecom companies, interest and penalty should be waived, because there has been a bona fide dispute about the components of gross revenue. The government has the necessary power to waive them if it is necessary to do so in public interest. These are contractual dues and there is no impediment in granting total or partial waiver. There is ample legal justification to waive interest and penalty. The government can also clarify that gross revenue does not include non-telecom revenue and licence fees will be restricted only to revenue from telecom services. This will eliminate the untenable demands that have been made against the non-telecom PSUs.

The cancellation of 2G licences by the Supreme Court led to the closure of several smaller players and dried up foreign investments in the sector. The current crisis is equally serious. While the DoT is fully justified in maximising the collection of licence fee, it must be done reasonably and equitably. If it insists that gross revenue includes every penny that is earned by a licensee, it will be devastating not just for a few companies, but for the economy as well.

The writer is a senior advocate practicing in the Supreme Court. He had appeared for a telecom company before the Supreme Court

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POLICE AND US

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Cop out in Delhi' (IE, February 27). The article is right to point out the failure of leadership in India. The home minister takes big decisions on Article 370 and the CAA, while simultaneously failing to maintain basic law and order. But we can't blame just the home minister. Law-makers and civil and political society must act to restore communal harmony. Or is it too late already?

Abhinav Kushwah, Ghaziabad

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Cop out in Delhi' (IE, February 27). The National Human Rights Commission has made it clear that "with every passing year, the evidence before the Commission mounts that there must be major police reforms in the country if the human rights situation is to be improved". We must not forget that the police force comes from the society. A khaki uniform does not lead to change of mentality. But if we do not begin now, with the police, then with who and when?

Ankita Srivastava, Delhi

INDIA FIRST

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Trumping the naysayers' (IE, February 26). Delhi's relationship with Washington will depend on the kind of cooperation it can deliver on trade. Since assuming office, Donald Trump has undertaken a massive reorientation of US trade policy. As far as countering China is concerned,

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

India should only protect its own strategic interests.

Mayank Kumar, Delhi

IRAN BETRAYED

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Old wine in old bottle' (IE, February 26). The victory of the hardliners in Iran's elections is a direct consequence of the betrayals of the western powers in keeping to their commitment to the JCPOA. The fallout of the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal could have been arrested had the European signatories been sincere about the sovereign guarantee they extended towards the pact. In the face of this betrayal, conservative elements managed to come to power.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata



EGYPT
HOSNI MUBARAK LAID TO REST

Egypt held a full-honours military funeral on Wednesday for the country's former autocratic President Hosni Mubarak, who held power for decades before he was ousted in the 2011 Arab Spring. The funeral, replete with cannon fire and a horse-drawn carriage carrying his coffin, highlighted the wartime achievements of Mubarak.

TOP OF THE WORLD



BRITAIN
Call me Harry, prince says as royal exit looms

Edinburgh: Prince Harry asked to be introduced as just "Harry" at an event on Wednesday, kicking off a final round of public engagements before he and wife Meghan step back from their royal duties. The Duke of Sussex, a grandson of Queen Elizabeth II, will stop using "His Royal Highness" from the end of March when the couple stop being working royals. But at a conference in Edinburgh for his sustainable tourism project Travalyt, it emerged he was already adopting a more informal approach. "He's made it clear that we are all just to call him Harry, so ladies and gentlemen — please give a big, warm Scottish welcome to Harry," host Ayesha Hazarika said. Harry's announcement came as he wanted to step back from their royal positions had rocked the monarchy.

MALAYSIA
Mahathir and Anwar in new showdown

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's decades-old political rivals Mahathir Mohamad and Anwar Ibrahim set out claims to lead the Southeast Asian country on Wednesday after Mahathir's shock resignation as prime minister sparked turmoil. Mahathir proposed a unified administration without political party allegiances at a time Malaysia faces a flagging economy and the impact of the new coronavirus. Anwar later said he opposed forming a "back-door government" and that three parties from the former Pakatan ruling coalition had proposed his name to the king as candidate for prime minister.

VATICAN
For Lent, give up trolling, Pope tells Catholics

Vatican City: During Lent, Catholics are called on to give up something, like sweets. On Wednesday, Pope Francis added a modern twist to the list of things to quit during the season and beyond: insulting people on social media. The pope made his appeal to tone things down while speaking to tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square for his general audience on Ash Wednesday, the start of the 40-day season that leads up to Easter.

CORONAVIRUS: NEARLY 80,000 INFECTED, OVER 2,700 DEAD

Pandemic likely, US warns as virus spreads across globe

Pakistan confirms first two cases; South America's first case reported in Brazil

REUTERS & PTI
SHANGHAI, ISLAMABAD, FEB 26

ASIA REPORTED hundreds of new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, including an American soldier stationed in South Korea, as the United States warned of a pandemic, the disease spread in Europe and Brazil confirmed Latin America's first infection.

Pakistan also confirmed its first two cases of the coronavirus on Wednesday.

"I can confirm first two cases of coronavirus in Pakistan. Both cases are being taken care of according to clinical standard protocols & both of them are stable," Dr Zafar Mirza, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health, tweeted. At least one of them had travelled to Iran, according to the Sindh health department.

The disease is believed to have originated in a market selling wildlife in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year and has infected about 80,000 people and killed more than 2,700, the vast majority in China.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urged Americans to prepare, saying that while the immediate risk there was low the global situation suggested a pandemic was likely.

"It's not a question of if. It's a question of when and how many people will be infected," the CDC's principal deputy director, Anne Schuchat, said on Tuesday.

The United States has reported 57 cases of the virus. President Donald Trump, back in Washington after a visit to India, said on Twitter that he would meet US officials for a briefing on the coronavirus on Wednesday.

Dr Bruce Aylward, head of a joint WHO-Chinese mission on the outbreak, told reporters on his return to Geneva that world



At a market in Seoul, South Korea, on Wednesday. Reuters

EXPLAINED
Virus screening may be missing over half of cases

A STUDY by researchers in the US and Britain has shown that the screening of travellers when leaving or entering a country could be missing more than half of COVID-19 cases. Even the best screening procedures at airports are likely to miss many cases, the study said, because of the nature of the virus. The new coronavirus has an incubation period of up to 14 days, which means it may take up to two weeks after someone contracts the virus for the person to show any symptoms. This means that screening mechanisms like temperature checks and looking for other symptoms may not be enough to flag someone who has the virus.

preparations should not wait. "Think the virus is going to show up tomorrow. If you don't think that way, you're not going to be ready," he said. "This a rapidly escalating epidemic in different places that we have got to tackle super-fast to prevent a pandemic."

South Korea, which with 1,261 cases has the most outside China, reported 284 new ones including a US soldier, as authorities readied an ambitious plan to test more than 200,000 members of a church at the centre of

the outbreak. The US military said a 23-year-old soldier based in Camp Carroll, about 20 km from Daegu, had been infected and was in self-quarantine at home.

Brazil reported the first case in Latin America, a source said on Wednesday — a 61-year-old who had visited Italy.

In Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for sports and cultural events to be scrapped or curtailed for two weeks to stem the virus as concern mounted for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Coronavirus cases emerging faster outside China: WHO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GENEVA, FEBRUARY 26

THERE ARE now more new cases of the coronavirus reported each day outside China than inside the hardest-hit country, the World Health Organisation said on Wednesday.

"Yesterday, the number of new cases reported outside China exceeded the number of new cases in China for the first time," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told diplomats in Geneva, according to a written version of his speech.

The UN health agency put the number of new cases in China at 411 on Tuesday and those registered outside the country stood at 427.

Governments worldwide are scrambling to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus after a surge of infections in Italy, Iran and South Korea.

Tedros said the "sudden increase of cases" in those countries was "deeply concerning", adding that a WHO team would travel to Iran this weekend to evaluate the situation.

While new case numbers and deaths are dwindling at the disease epicentre in China, the country remains by far the hardest hit.

But WHO has said the epidemic in China peaked and on February 2 and has been declining since. Tedros acknowledged that the hike in cases outside China had prompted a push for a pandemic to be declared.

U.S. DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Sanders faces brunt of attacks at debate in South Carolina

STEVE PEOPLES, MEG KINNARD & AAMER MADHANI
CHARLESTON, FEBRUARY 26

DEMOCRATS UNLEASHED a roaring assault against Bernie Sanders and seized on Mike Bloomberg's past with women in the workplace during a contentious debate that tested the strength of the two men at the center of the party's presidential nomination fight.

As the undeniable Democratic front-runner, Sanders faced the brunt of the attacks for much of the night, and for one of the few times, fellow progressive Elizabeth Warren was among the critics. The Massachusetts senator pressed the case that she could execute ideas that the Vermont senator could only talk about.

"Bernie and I agree on a lot of things," she said. "But I think I would make a better president than Bernie."

A group of moderates, meanwhile, fought to emerge as the chief Sanders alternative.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, who is seeking a strong win in South Carolina to keep his campaign afloat, argued only he has the experience to lead in the world. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar repeatedly contended that she alone could win the votes of battleground state moderates. And former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg pointed to Sanders' self-described democratic socialism and his recent comments expressing admiration for Cuban dictator Fidel Castro's push for education.

"I am not looking forward to a scenario where it comes down to Donald Trump with his nostalgia for the social order of the 1950s and Bernie Sanders with a nostalgia for the revolutionary politics of the 1960s," Buttigieg declared. But the moderates did little to draw separation among themselves, a dynamic that has so far only benefited the Vermont senator. Sanders fought back throughout the night, pointing to



Democratic 2020 US presidential candidates Michael Bloomberg, Pete Buttigieg, Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden, Amy Klobuchar and Tom Steyer in Charleston, South Carolina, on Tuesday. Reuters

HEAT ON BERNIE

Bernie and I agree on a lot of things, but I think I would make a better president than Bernie... We need a president who is going to dig in and actually do the hard work.

ELIZABETH WARREN

Vladimir Putin thinks that Donald Trump should be president of the United States and that's why Russia is helping you (Bernie Sanders) get elected, so you lose to him.

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG

If you think the last four years has been chaotic, divisive, toxic, exhausting, imagine spending the better part of 2020 with Bernie Sanders versus Donald Trump.

PETE BUTTIGIEG

We are looking at a party that has decided we're either going to support someone who is a democratic socialist (Sanders) or someone who has a long history of being a Republican (Bloomberg).

TOM STEYER

SANDERS HAS HIS SAY
If you want to beat Trump, what you're going to need is an unprecedented grassroots movement of black and white and Latino, Native American and Asian, people who are standing up and fighting for justice. That's what our movement is about.

polls that showed him beating the Republican president and noting all the recent attention he's gotten: "I'm hearing my name mentioned a little bit tonight. I wonder why." AP

Anti-migrant party leader to be Slovenia PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LJUBLJANA, FEBRUARY 26

THE LEADER of an anti-migrant party was nominated on Wednesday as prime minister of Slovenia, setting him on track for a return to high office after a nearly seven-year absence.

"I hope our collaboration will be constructive and for the benefit of our state and our people," President Borut Pahor said after nominating Janez Jansa for premier.

Parliament has yet to confirm Jansa as the premier, which is expected to happen next week.

Jansa's Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) party announced on Tuesday that it had agreed with three other parties to form a coalition government.

The previous centre-left government fell in January when then premier Marjan Sarec stepped down amid infighting in his minority five-party coalition.

Along-time leader of the anti-migrant SDS and ally of Hungarian nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Jansa, 61, led two previous governments before being forced to step down in 2013 over a corruption scandal.

Pak govt declares Sharif absconder for violating terms of his bail: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 26

PAKISTAN'S FORMER prime minister Nawaz Sharif has been declared an "absconder" by the government for violating the bail requirements by not presenting his medical report from his doctors in London, according to a media report on Wednesday.

Sharif, 70, left for London in November last for treatment after the Lahore High Court allowed him to go abroad on medical grounds for four weeks.

According to Sharif's physician, the three-time prime minister is suffering from complex multi-vessel coronary artery disease and substantial ischemic and threatened myocardium for which he is due to undergo surgery.

The government on Tuesday decided not to extend the bail of Sharif and declared him an "absconder" for violating the bail requirements by not presenting his medical report before a board formed on the order of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), Dawn newspaper reported.



Sharif, 70, left for London in November for treatment

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the federal Cabinet presided by PM Imran Khan.

"After Nawaz Sharif failed to submit his medical report of any hospital in London, the medical board rejected a medical certificate sent by him and (the government) declared him an absconder," Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information Firdous Ashiq Awan said at a post-Cabinet meeting press conference.

"From today, Nawaz Sharif is an absconder according to the law of land and if he does not return to the country he will be declared a proclaimed offender," Awan said.

German court scraps ban on assisted suicide

REUTERS
KARLSRUHE, FEBRUARY 26

A GERMAN law that bans assisted suicide services breaches the constitution, the country's top court ruled on Wednesday in a landmark decision in favour of groups that help people die when they choose.

The plaintiffs wanted to overturn a law that has since 2015 outlawed assisted suicide undertaken by organisations or doctors who accepted a fee for their help.

"The prohibition of assisted suicide services...violates the Basic Law and is void," the Constitutional Court in



The Second Senate of the Federal Constitutional Court announced the ruling in Karlsruhe, Germany, Wednesday. AP

Karlsruhe said in its ruling. Lawmakers must now draw up new rules to reflect the decision.

Euthanasia is particularly sensitive in Germany due to the

legacy of the Holocaust, when Nazis killed and carried out inhumane experiments on Jews.

Because of existing German law, some people seek euthanasia via relatives or go abroad.

In its ruling, the court said Germany's constitution includes a right to a self-determined death which encompasses the freedom to take one's own life and use assistance provided voluntarily by third parties.

This decision by an individual must be respected, the court said. Some had argued against changing the law, fearing premature action in cases not properly based on a wish to die.

Only a few countries in the world have legalised euthanasia whereby a doctor administers lethal doses of drugs to patients willing to die, or people perform the action themselves.

Harvard's expansive use of race in admissions violates civil rights law: US Supreme Court told

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 26

THE "EXPANSIVE use of race" in the admission process of the prestigious Harvard University violates the civil rights law, the Trump administration has told the US Supreme Court as the justice department continues its probe into the allegations that

the Ivy League college discriminated against Asian-Americans.

The US Department of Justice (DOJ) in 2017 launched an investigation into Harvard's admission process after a complaint was filed by more than 60 Asian-American organisations.

Indian-Americans feel that they get discriminated by the Massachusetts-based university under its current admission pol-

icy. The investigation is underway. Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreiband for the Civil Rights Division said that race discrimination hurts people and is never benign after the DOJ on Monday filed an amicus brief in Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. versus President and Fellows of Harvard College.

In its amicus brief, the US explains that Harvard's expansive use of race in its admissions

process violates federal civil-rights law and Supreme Court precedent.

"Unconstitutionally partitioning Americans into racial and ethnic blocs harms all involved by fostering stereotypes, bitterness and division among the American people. The Department of Justice will continue to fight against illegal race discrimination," Dreiband said. PTI

BIOLOGISTS AND AN ASTRONOMER COLLABORATE TO LOOK INTO HOW SOLAR WEATHER AFFECTS WHALE MIGRATION

Study examines bizarre correlation between sunspots and stranded whales

JOSHUA SOKOL
FEBRUARY 26

AS AN astronomer at Chicago's Adler Planetarium, Lucianne Walkowicz usually has to stretch to connect the peculiarities of space physics with things that people experience on Earth.

Then came the email about whales.

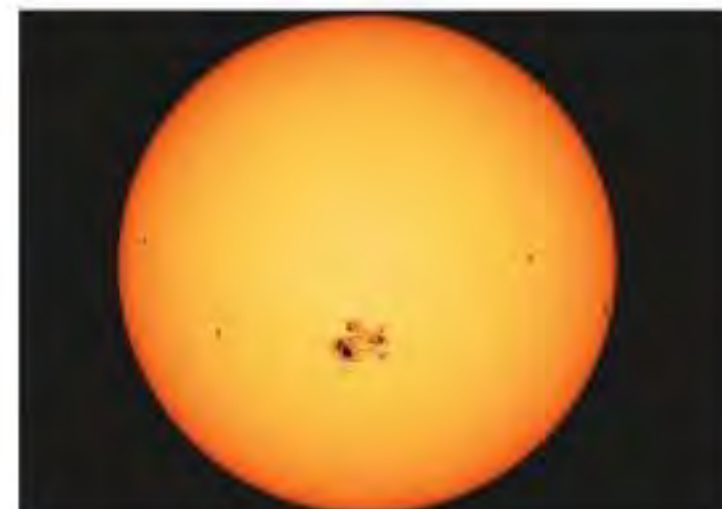
Sönke Johnsen, a biologist at Duke University, told Walkowicz that his team had stumbled upon a bizarre correlation: When the surface of the sun was pocked

with dark sunspots, an indicator of solar storms, gray whales and other cetacean species seemed more likely to strand themselves on beaches. The team just needed an astronomer's help wrangling the data. "This was like a dream request," Walkowicz said. "And I finally got to do something in marine biology, even though I didn't study it."

With that assistance, there is some evidence of this peculiar correlation, the researchers said in a paper published Monday in Current Biology. "The study convinced me

there is a relationship between solar activity and whale strandings," said Kenneth Lohmann, a biologist at the University of North Carolina who did not participate in the research.

This coincidence across 93 million miles of space is more plausible than it might seem. Sunspots are a harbinger of heightened solar weather, marking times when the tangled plasma of the sun's atmosphere coughs out more photons and charged particles than usual. These disturbances sail outward and smash into our planet's magnetic field, creating colorful



light shows like the aurora borealis and sometimes disrupting communications.

Sunspots are an indication of solar storms.

NASA via NYT

Biologists have already demonstrated that many animals can navigate by somehow

sensing Earth's magnetic field lines. Gray whales, which migrate over 10,000 miles a year through a featureless expanse of blue, might be relying on a similar hidden sense. But unlike a migrating bird, a whale is not easily placed in a magnetised box for controlled experiments.

Instead, Jesse Granger, a Duke University graduate student, looked at whale strandings, which previous studies had suggested seemed to track with sunspot activity.

Sunspot activity waxes and wanes, oscillating over an 11-year

period. These strandings followed the same pattern. "They showed the exact same cycle as the sunspots," Granger said.

Granger noted that the research won't help stop whale strandings. "I'm really trying to make sure that I don't get someone who hears this story and is like, 'Oh, I can start blasting sonar wherever I want, because it's only the sunspots,'" Granger said.

Instead, she hopes to unlock the secrets of magnetic navigation. Aside from sunspot counts, the team also compared strandings with two other markers that

also accompany solar squalls. One measure, of how much Earth's magnetic field was distorted on a given day as it was buffeted by particles from the sun, didn't seem to matter. But whales appeared to be most sensitive to solar radio frequency noise that intensified during solar storms.

That correlation, if confirmed, suggests that the radio noise is jamming the gray whales' hypothesized magnetic sensors. Alternatively, Lohmann said, solar activity might also be affecting some other part of whale physiology. NYT

17 ECONOMY

GOLD	RUPEE	OIL	SILVER
₹43,502	₹71.65	\$55.09	₹48,146

*Indian basket as on February 25, 2020

SENSEX: 39,888.96 ▼ 392.24 NIFTY: 11,678.50 ▼ 119.40 NIKKEI: 22,426.19 ▼ 179.22 HANG SENG: 26,696.49 ▼ 196.74 FTSE: 6,983.65 ▼ 34.23 DAX: 12,673.94 ▼ 116.55

*International market data till 1900 IST

'CENTRE CLOSELY MONITORING IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON ECONOMY'

FM on MSME loan restructuring: 5.28 lakh accounts cleared, rest to be done by Mar 15

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

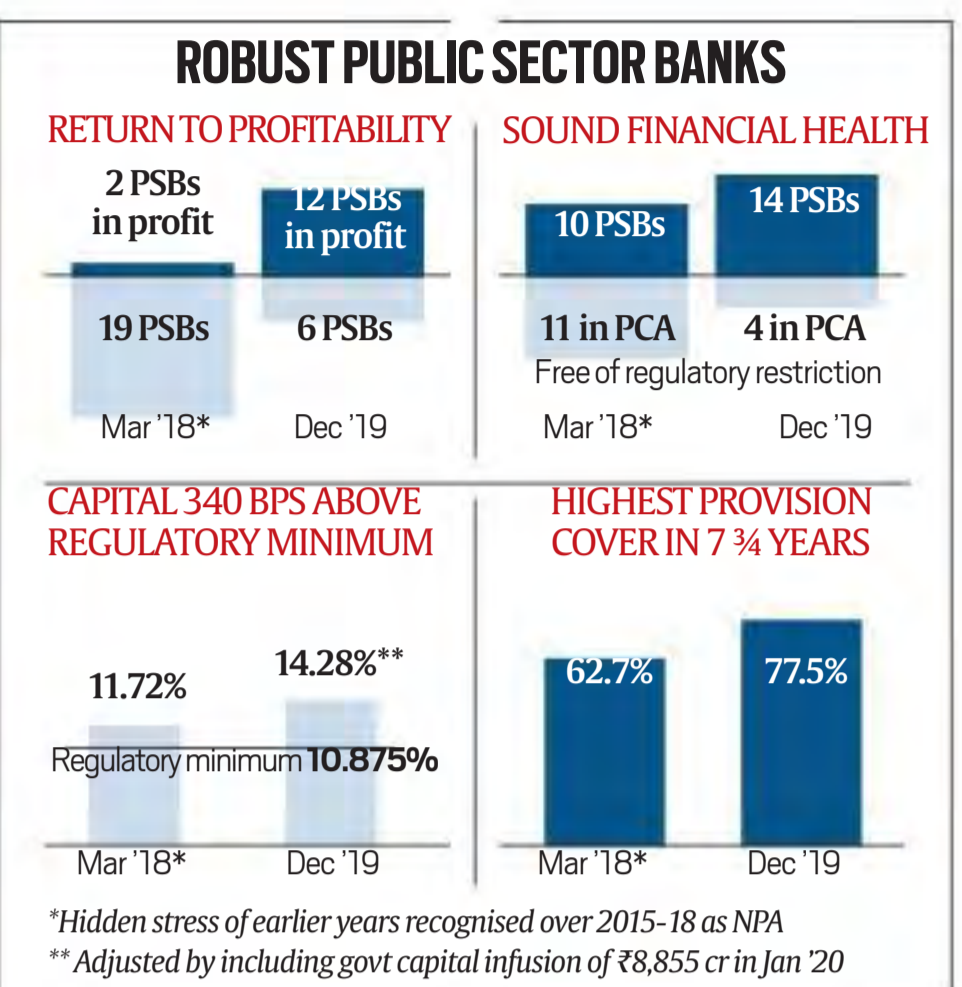
FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday asked public sector banks (PSBs) to clear all pending MSME loan restructuring cases along with disbursement of all sanctioned loans by March 15. In order to push credit deployment in the economy, the minister said she will continue to hold meetings with bankers as "many of our branch level officials do not even have enough information on all our (government) schemes."



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at an Indian Banks' Association function, in New Delhi. PTI

Of the total 5.53 lakh MSME accounts identified for restructuring, 5.28 lakh accounts have been restructured and the remaining will be cleared by March 15, she said while speaking to reporters her after the Indian Banks' Association function on 'EASE 3.0: Smart, Tech-Enabled Banking for Aspiring India'. She also reviewed various government schemes for MSMEs with Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Nitin Gadkari.

The FM said the Central government is "closely monitoring" the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the Indian economy. "Secretary-level officials are en-



Over 2,700 people have died due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), while the number of those infected is across the globe is around 80,000. In the wake of the virus outbreak, whose epicentre is China, many airlines — including Indian carriers — have cancelled some of their overseas flights.

To a query on the challenges facing the recently announced merger of banks, Sitharaman said "there is absolutely no uncertainty" on the consolidation process and the banks are going as per schedule to complete the integration. The government last September announced a mega amalgamation plan that merged 10 PSBs into four large entities. Four new sets of mergers are in process — Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce and

United Bank of India merging to form the country's second-largest lender; amalgamation of Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank; Union Bank of India acquiring Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank; Indian Bank merging with Allahabad Bank.

Sitharaman also unveiled EASE 3.0, the public sector bank reforms agenda 2020-21 for smart, tech-enabled banking, which seeks to enhance ease of banking in all customer experiences, using technology, fintech, alternate data and analytics.

EASE is an Enhanced Access & Service Excellence index which ranks state-owned banks on several parameters to assess their performance and provide inputs for improvement.

As part of the EASE initiative during March 2018 to December 2019, banks worked on improvement in customer outreach, with dedicated marketing force increasing from 8,920 to 17,617 and turnaround time for loans reducing by 67 per cent from the average of nearly 30 days to nearly 10 days, the Finance Ministry said. Nearly 80 per cent of PSB customers now have access to over 35 services on mobile/internet banking, 23 services on call centres — nearly doubling over last 18 months.

'IT ecosystem has developed beyond recognition; looking to revisit Act'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE GOVERNMENT is looking to revamp the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, to include provisions for dealing strongly with newer issues such as cybercrime, Union Communications and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Wednesday.

The 20-year old Act needs to be revamped to bring it in consonance with newer technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain, Prasad said.

"A thinking process is on to revisit the IT Act. The IT ecosystem has developed beyond recognition over the past 20 years when the IT Act was initially made. "New technologies have become very pronounced. The whole ecosystem of consumers has changed vastly. And so have the challenges," Prasad said, adding that it will factor in the Supreme Court's judgment on privacy and data protection.

A team of experts from major information technology companies and governance will soon be formed to be looked into this, Prasad said.

The minister was talking to media persons after a meeting with Microsoft chief executive officer Satya Nadella, who is on a three-day visit to India.

While Prasad refused to provide details about his meeting with Nadella, senior ministry of-



Union Communications and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, in New Delhi on Wednesday. Anil Sharma

officials said that the two discussed details about the data intermediary guidelines and the new Personal Data Protection Bill proposed to be tabled in Parliament soon.

"We conveyed to them (Microsoft) in very clear terms that we will never compromise on our data sovereignty. They have said that whatever the law is made, we will follow it" a senior official said, adding that Nadella and Prasad also discussed the finer nuances of the Personal Data Protection Bill.

"What he (Nadella) said was when GDPR (General Data

Protection Regulation) came, some European local businesses were affected. So India should come out with a law which benefits local businesses," the official added.

The Central government's new rules on intermediary guidelines is also a work in progress, officials said, adding that the Law Ministry was vetting the rules suggested by the IT Ministry.

We are balancing both so that this innovative platform is not abused by a few and there is no helplessness at the level of intermediary. Accountability has to be there," the official said.

GDP WATCH

SBI REPORT

'Oct-Dec growth to be flat at 4.5%; virus impact may come in with a lag'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 26

THE IMPACT of the deadly coronavirus on India could happen with a lag, as the economic impact is expected to accrue from supply chain risk, a State Bank of India (SBI) report has said.

"We are worried that the impact of coronavirus on India could now happen with a lag. The outbreak is now expected to cause a growth erosion of 100 bps in China alone. New hotspots have emerged in South Korea (977 cases) and in Italy (229 cases) and these will result in more quarantines, border closures and disruptions in economic relations," the SBI research report said.

"Thus, the cost of death even though might be limited, the economic impact could be significantly large. Although number of cases of COVID-19 in India are less, the economic impact is expected to accrue from supply chain risk which may link up with exports as in pharmaceutical sectors," the SBI report added.

More crucially, data for the April-December period of 2019 for India's imports shows that there are 19 HS categories in which China has more than half the share of imports and these are mostly consumer goods, it stated.

"With China, in the grip of coronavirus, immediately finding other markets for imports of these commodities is thus going to be difficult. This can impact local importers and in turn consumers adversely," the report said.

According to the SBI report, its composite leading indicator (index of 33 major leading indicators) suggests that gross domestic product (GDP) growth will remain flat at 4.5 per cent during Q3 of financial year 2019-20. "Our 33 high frequency leading indicators reveal that acceleration rate, which was 65 per cent in Q1 of FY19, has declined sharply to 22 per

EXPLAINED

Supply chain risk, virus effect may hit exports

THE GDP growth rate is expected to be flat in the October-December quarter from the previous quarter at 4.5 per cent, but there are warnings about the future outlook of the economic growth rate, especially with the coronavirus outbreak expected to impact the country's growth with a lag. SBI, in its economic research report, said that though the number of COVID-19 cases in India are less, the economic impact is expected to accrue from supply chain risks which may link up with exports, especially the pharmaceutical sector.

Frequent GDP revisions, however, may help the overall growth figure of FY20 to rise to 4.7 per cent from 4.6 per cent, gaining support from the recent downward revision in the growth rate for FY2019 to 6.1 per cent from 6.8 per cent.

cent in Q3 of FY20," SBI said. "We expect the gap between GVA (gross value added) and GDP to widen further in FY20 as the transfer of the government payments is witnessing a slowdown in Q4 of FY20. "Interestingly, with the FY19 GDP growth being revised downwards steeply to 6.1 per cent in FY19, it indicates that the growth slowdown was much more significantly entrenched and had started from April 17 onwards/FY18 after reaching a peak of 8.3 per cent in FY17 and only worsened in FY19 (post the IL&FS crisis), and in FY20 it has reached its nadir with growth projected at 5 per cent by CSO (with a downward bias)," it said.

'Rise in deposit insurance cover may push up premium by over 50%

In its analysis of the hike in deposit insurance to ₹5 lakh from ₹1 lakh, CARE Ratings said the insurance premium will go up by 20 per cent, with the possibility of the government increasing the limit on premium collected by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)

MOVEMENT IN INSURANCE COVERAGE LIMIT

EFFECTIVE FROM	INSURANCE LIMIT (₹)
January 1, 1968	5,000
April 1, 1970	10,000
January 1, 1976	20,000
July 1, 1980	30,000
May 1, 1993	100,000
February 2020	500,000

Source: DICGC ARFY19, Union Budget 2020-21

15 paise per ₹100 limit: As per DICGC Act 1961, premium payable by any insured bank would not exceed 15 paise per annum for every ₹100 of the total amount of deposits in that bank at the end of that period

Rising premium: Initially, rate of premium was fixed at 5 paise per annum for every ₹100 of total amount of deposit. It was reduced to 4 paise from October 1, 1971, again raised to 5 paise and further to 8 paise from April 1, 2004 and finally to 10 paise from April 1, 2005

20% hike: After the hike in deposit insurance cover to ₹5 lakh, insurance premium has been raised to 12 paise per annum for every ₹100 worth of deposits, from 10 paise per annum for every ₹100 earlier — a rise of 20%. Though this 20% hike is within overall limit of 15 paise, upper limit could be further enhanced, which could lead to over 50% rise in premium, CARE Ratings said

92% cover: For the last decade, even with insurance coverage at ₹1,00,000, average cover has been around 92%, indicating presence of many small deposit holders in the banking system. This level of coverage is lower than the high of 99.4% coverage achieved in FY95

Growth of Deposit Insurance Fund: Deposit Insurance Fund has grown at nearly twice the rate of growth in assessable deposits, which can be explained by relative difference in the growth rates in premium income and investment income



PERCENTAGE OF INSURED DEPOSITS

BANK GROUP	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
PSBs	31.4	31.5	31.5	30.9
PVBs	19.9	18.9	18.2	17.4
FBS	2.7	2.7	3.1	3.0
RRBs	61.5	62.0	61.4	59.5
CoopB	51.2	48.1	47.0	44.5
LABs	36.4	50.0	50.0	57.1
TOTAL	30.1	29.5	29.2	28.1

Note: As on September 30; Source: RBI

28.1% deposits insured: In FY19, insured deposits stood at ₹33,700 billion, accounting for 28.1% of all assessable deposits. This is a steep fall compared with 58.8% in FY06, which can be largely explained by the expansion of the financial sector

₹1 lakh cover: DICGC last revised the deposit insurance cover to ₹1 lakh on May 1, 1993, raising it from ₹30,000, which had been the cover since 1980. The premium paid by insured banks to the Corporation is required to be borne by the banks, and not be passed on to depositors

Fall in premium income: There has been a consistent decrease in premium income as a percentage of total income from 68.3% in FY14 to 62.4% in FY19

Source: CARE Ratings

ADJUSTED GROSS REVENUE DUES

Voda Idea writes to DoT, seeks staggered payment, lower taxes

AASHISHARYAN NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

FACING AN adjusted gross revenue (AGR) payout of more than Rs 53,000 crore, Vodafone Idea Wednesday wrote to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) seeking certain relief measures such as lower tariff and refund of goods and services tax (GST) dues worth nearly Rs 8,000 crore, sources aware of the development told *The Indian Express*.

The telco has sought certain measures such as lower tax and spectrum usage charges, as well as expedited payment of its GST refund of the last financial year.

The company, which had a revenue of Rs 36,858 crore in FY19, is seeking refund of over Rs 8,000 crore.

In its letter to the DoT, the company also sought a payment schedule for staggered payment of AGR dues, and an extended moratorium on payment of licence fees, the sources said.

Vodafone Idea has so far paid Rs 3,500 crore, half of its self-calculated principal AGR dues, and is looking at other avenues to raise funds for full and final payment. It has also been under the scrutiny of rating agencies, which believe that the telco does not have the ability to pay the required AGR dues by March 17.

Talks of the company's bank guarantees being encashed by the DoT, in case it fails to make the

The telco has sought certain measures such as lower tax and spectrum usage charges, as well as expedited payment of its GST refund of the last financial year

payments, have also been doing the rounds.

The company's Mumbai-based chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla had over four days last week met various DoT officials, including Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash.

Earlier, he had also met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad. Following the Supreme Court's February 14, 2020, rap during the hearing on a modification plea filed by telecom and non-telecom companies, Vodafone Idea had said it was ready to clear the AGR dues it owed to the DoT.

In a filing with exchanges on February 15, the company had said that though it would pay the amount so assessed by it within "the next few days", the continuance of the company as a going concern was dependent on the outcome of its modification plea for the order, which had asked the companies to pay the AGR dues within three months.

Sensex falls below 40K-level on rising coronavirus fears

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 26

INDIAN STOCK markets plunged for a fourth session in a row on Wednesday as a sustained sell-off in global markets amid emergence of more coronavirus cases underscored the risk posed to the global economy.

The BSE SENSEX settled the day with a loss of 392.24 points, or 0.97 per cent, at 39,888.96 — the lowest closing in over three weeks — after plunging over 521 points intra-day. In the past four sessions, the Sensex has lost 1,281 points, or 3.11 per cent, mainly due to the virus fears.

The broader NSE Nifty plunged 119.40 points, or 1.01 per cent, to end at 11,678.50 — its worst level since February 3. The NSE index has shed 402.35 points, or 3.33 per cent, in the last four days.

"Increasing concern regarding coronavirus in the world over is impacting global market. The economic impact is expected to be worse than thought earlier, forcing investors to stay away from risky assets," Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Financial Services, said. "The domestic market is bracing for yet another subdued GDP growth, with a forecast of 4.6 to 4.7 per cent in Q3 compared to 4.5 per cent in Q2, which is adding to the fear," he added.

S Ranganathan, head of research, LKP Securities, said, "The spreading of coronavirus globally continued to grip markets today as well with Nifty shedding a further 120 points. Barring select sectors like chemicals, almost all sectors wilted under selling pressure as investors booked profits."

Investors are concerned about how the coronavirus is

weighing on consumer demand, manufacturing supply chains and major economies around the world. The coronavirus spread could cost China, the world's second biggest economy, tens of billions of dollars in lost growth this quarter alone.

Major outbreaks in Japan, Italy and South Korea underscore the risk posed to other big economies from the virus.

In the BSE pack, Sun Pharma was the top loser, followed by Maruti, L&T, Hero Motocorp, Infosys, ONGC and RIL. On the other hand, SBI, HUL, HCL Tech, Asian Paints, and Ultratech Cement ended with gains.

Sectorally, BSE realty, auto and capital goods were among the top losers, dropping as much as 2.16 per cent. Barring telecom, all sectoral indices closed in the red. In the broader market, BSE midcap and smallcap indices fell up to 1.34 per cent.

Bank ATMs start dispensing more of ₹500 instead of ₹2,000

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

IN A move that could see lower availability of Rs 2,000 notes in the market, many banks are increasingly filling their ATMs (automated teller machines) with lower denomination currency notes of Rs 500 or below. Some banks have started recalibrating their ATMs to account for a greater chunk of lower denomination notes. While the Finance Ministry has maintained there is no plan to phase out Rs 2,000 notes, banking industry executives see the proportion of this falling over years.

State-owned Indian Bank has already announced it has decided to stop using Rs 2,000 notes in their ATMs and more lenders are going slow on dispensing this currency through their ATMs. The high-value currency note was introduced along with a new Rs 500

While Finance Ministry has maintained there is no plan to phase out Rs 2,000 notes, banking industry executives see the proportion of this falling over years

note after the Centre, on November 8, 2016, declared old Rs 500 notes and Rs 1,000 notes as invalid, thereby pulling out of the economy nearly 86 per cent of the currency in circulation by value.

On February 11, the Ministry clarified in Parliament that there is "no proposal under consideration" to withdraw Rs 2,000 currency notes from circulation. However, RBI data shows that circulation of this currency has fallen sharply in proportion to the Rs 500 note. As per latest data avail-

able with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the share of Rs 2,000 notes in the total bank notes in circulation fell to 3.0 per cent in FY19 against 3.3 per cent in FY18 and 3.3 per cent in FY17. On the other hand, the share of Rs 500 notes in the total bank notes in circulation rose more than threefold to 19.8 per cent in 2018-19, against 15.1 per cent in 2017-18 and 5.9 per cent in 2016-17. In terms of value, the share of Rs 2,000 notes fell to 31.2 per cent in 2018-19 from 50.2 per cent in 2016-17; meanwhile, the same for Rs 500 notes rose to 51.0 per cent in 2018-19 from 22.5 per cent in 2016-17.

The value of all Rs 2,000 notes issued in 2018-19 stood at Rs 6,58,200 crore, roughly the same as Rs 6,57,100 crore in 2016-17. In contrast, the value of all Rs 500 notes issued in 2018-19 stood at Rs 10,75,900 crore, a more than three-fold surge from Rs 2,94,100 crore in 2016-17.

Ban on onion exports lifted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE CENTRE on Wednesday decided to lift the nearly six-month-old ban on export of onions in a bid to protect the interests of farmers as prices are likely to fall sharply due to bumper rabi crop.

"Since the price of onion has stabilised and there is bumper onion crop, government has decided to lift ban on export of onions. Expected monthly harvest in March is over 40 lakh MT compared to 28.4 lakh MT last year," Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said in a tweet on Wednesday.

The lifting of ban would be effective once the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) issues a notification in this regard.

The GoM on Wednesday also deliberated on whether to reduce or scrap the Minimum Export Price (MEP) on onion to facilitate outbound shipments, the sources said.

The MEP is the rate below which no exports are allowed.

Paswan, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba were present at the meeting.

MCA revises CARO, auditors' reports to be more extensive

RISHI RANJAN KALA NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

IN A bid to check corporate frauds and scams, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has revised the Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, or CARO, under which auditors are now required to report more extensively on many crucial aspects including frauds, loan defaults, whistle blower complaints and benami properties.

Under the amended Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, auditors will have to comment on a total of 50 matters in their audit reports against the earlier 21. The amendments apply to every audit report of companies under Section 143 of the Companies Act, for the financial year 2019-20 and beyond.

AMRG & Associates chief executive Gaurav Mohan said, "Accountability and responsibility on an auditor are on the rise in wake of heightening expectations from all stakeholders, including banks, tax authority, Sebi, MCA and NFRA. Newly inserted CARO report enhances the scope of matters to be contained in the auditor's report of the company, to

50 MATTERS TO BE REPORTED ON

- Under the amended Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, auditors will have to comment on a total of 50 matters in their audit reports against the earlier 21. The amendments apply to every audit report of companies under Section 143 of the Companies Act, for the financial year 2019-20 and beyond.

include details of proceedings under Benami Act, 1988, sanction of working capital limit exceeding Rs 5 crore, GST dues, cash losses, unrecorded transactions accepted in income tax assessments and declaration of company as wilful defaulter by any lender".

These new reporting rules would push auditors to implement stricter audit procedures on companies to ensure higher level of corporate governance, he said.

As per the new norms, the auditor's report on accounts of a company shall include a statement on "whether the company is maintaining proper records showing full particulars, including quantitative details and situation of property, plant and equipment. Also, whether the company is maintaining proper records showing full particulars of intangible assets".

Now, auditors will also have to report on whether the property, plant and equipment have been physically verified by the management at reasonable intervals and if any material discrepancies were noticed on such verification and if so, whether the same have been properly dealt with in the books of account.

According to Sanjeev Singhal, partner at SR Batliboi and Co, the issue of CARO 2020 is indeed a welcome step as auditors are gearing up to report on financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2020.

With significant revisions to audit report last year including key audit matters for listed companies, the new additions to CARO will further enhance auditor's report. FE

FOCUS ON RAISING EXPORTS OF THE 'FUTURISTIC' SEGMENT

Cabinet okays National Technical Textiles Mission with ₹1,480 cr outlay

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE CABINET Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday approved the establishment of a National Technical Textiles Mission to help India position itself as a "global leader" in technical textiles. This includes increasing exports of these "futuristic" segments of textiles by over 40 per cent in the next two years.

The Cabinet has approved a total outlay of Rs 1,480 crore for the project, which will be implemented over four years and aims to promote research, export and skill development in this sector. The Mission has four components to achieve these goals. Technical textiles are products used for functional purposes. They have various applications, ranging from agriculture, roads, railway tracks, sportswear and health on the one end, to bullet-proof and fire-proof jackets, high-altitude combat gear and space applications on the other end of spectrum. India's

Technical textiles are products used for functional purposes. They have various applications, ranging from agriculture, roads, railway tracks, sportswear and health to bullet-proof and fire-proof jackets, space applications etc

technical textiles segment is estimated at \$16 billion — approximately 6 per cent of the global market for this segment.

According to the government, the penetration-level of technical textiles is low in India, varying between 5-10 per cent as opposed to a level of 30-70 per cent in developed countries. "The Mission will aim at an average growth rate of 15-20 per cent per annum, taking the level of the domestic market size to \$40-50 billion by the year 2024..." said an official statement. The mission aims to do this through market development, market promotion, international technical collaborations, investment promotions and 'Make in India' initiatives.

outlay is earmarked for "fundamental" research aimed at "path breaking" technological products in the fibres space, as well as application-based research in segments like agro-textiles, medical textiles and mobile textiles. It will also be used towards the development of biodegradable technical textiles. The Mission also provides for the establishment of an Export Promotion Council for Technical Textiles for "effective coordination and promotion activities".

The government aims to enhance exports of technical textiles to Rs 20,000 crore by 2021-22 from approximately Rs 14,000 crore currently.

The Mission's export promotion component also aims for a 10 per cent average growth in ex-

ports per year up to 2023-24.

The Mission will also aim at improving education, skill development and adequacy of human resources in the country, which the government feels is currently "not adequate to meet the technologically challenging and fast growing technical textiles segment". Arrangements have been made for the skill development of 50,000 people in the technical textiles field, said Textiles Minister Smriti Irani during a briefing on the Cabinet's decision. According to her, the target of the mission is to nullify the burden of this segment on the country's trade deficit over the course of one year.

The Centre will focus on including the usage of technical textiles in "various" flagship missions and programmes of the country, like the Jal Jiban Mission, Swachh Bharat and Ayushman Bharat. A Directorate in the Ministry of Textiles will be made operational for the implementation of this mission, but will move into a sunset phase after four years, according to the release.

Goods procured from SEZs by single brand retailers to qualify for locally sourced norms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

GOODS PROCURED from units in special economic zones (SEZs) by single-brand retailers, owned by foreign companies, would qualify for meeting the mandatory 30 per cent local sourcing conditions, as per a government clarification.

According to the current foreign direct investment (FDI) policy on single brand retail trading, 100 per cent overseas investments are allowed in the sector. But sourcing of 30 per cent of the value of goods procured is mandatory from India for such companies

Sourcing of goods from units located in SEZs would qualify as sourcing from India for the purpose of 30% mandatory sourcing from India for proposals involving FDI beyond 51%, subject to SEZ Act, 2005

having FDI beyond 51 per cent.

The Centre has received representations from various business entities seeking clarification whether sourcing of goods from units located in SEZs would qualify as sourcing from India, as per FDI policy. "As regards, sourcing of goods from units located in SEZs in India, it may be clarified that sourcing of goods from such units

would qualify as sourcing from India for the purpose of 30 per cent mandatory sourcing from India for proposals involving FDI beyond 51 per cent, subject to SEZ Act, 2005," the clarification stated.

However, it said that goods which are proposed to be sourced by a single brand retailer from SEZ units will have to be manufactured in India. It added that com-

pliance with all the conditions enumerated in the FDI policy and as notified under FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act) would continue to be the responsibility of manufacturing entity.

SEZs, developed as export hubs, are treated as foreign territory in terms of customs laws. Procurement of goods and services from units in SEZs are treated as imports. In February 2006, the Centre, for the first time opened the sector for foreign players by allowing 51 per cent FDI. In January 2012, the cap was raised to 100 per cent — up to 49 per cent through automatic route and beyond that through the government approval.

Relaxation on CRR calculations: RBI issues additional clarifications

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 26

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday issued further clarifications on the recently announced relaxation on cash reserve ratio (CRR) calculations for incremental credit extended for automobiles, residential housing and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The central bank explained that to calculate the incremental credit, the outstanding retail loans to the specified segments as on every reporting Friday beginning February 14 up to that of July 31, 2020 will be deducted from the

outstanding credit to the specified segments as on January 31.

"If the difference between the outstanding credit is positive, the equivalent amount of difference (should) be deducted from NDTL (net demand and time liabilities) for the purpose of CRR maintenance. If the difference in credit to any of the specified segment is negative, it should be ignored," RBI said. Lenders were awaiting further clarification on the specifics of the CRR exemption announced on February 6 during RBI's bi-monthly policy review.

RBI also clarified that repayments and non-performing assets would be deducted from the incremental credit. FE

Notification on loans to medium enterprises

Mumbai: The RBI has notified banks to link all new medium enterprise loans to the external benchmark.

"... it has now been decided that all new floating rate loans to the medium enterprises extended by banks from April 1, 2020, shall be linked to the external benchmarks as indicated in the aforesaid circular", the central bank said. FE

BRIEFLY

New toll-free number for helpdesk: GSTN

New Delhi: The Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) has said it has launched a new toll-free number '1800 103 4786' for GST helpdesk, which will be operational 365 days for answering queries related to the indirect tax.

IndiGo: Have responded to Sebi queries

New Delhi: IndiGo Wednesday said it has responded to all queries from markets regulator Sebi regarding related party transactions and asserted that they were entered into in the best interests of the company.

Toyota launches hybrid EV Vellfire

Hyderabad: Toyota Kirloskar Motor Wednesday unveiled their 'Toyota New Vellfire', its new luxurious self-charging hybrid electric vehicle in India. The New Vellfire delivers a powerful driving experience while ensuring low fuel consumption and carbon footprints, it said. PTI

Disney CEO Bob Iger quits, shares fall 2%

New York: Walt Disney Co's Robert Iger will step down as CEO, handing the reins to Disney Parks head Bob Chapek, the company said on Tuesday, with the announcement pulling the company's shares 2 per cent.

Bayer chairman quits amid glyphosate case

Frankfurt: Bayer, the drug and crop protection company that is seeking to settle claims over an alleged cancer-causing effect of weed-killer Roundup, said its non-executive chairman Werner Wenning was stepping down. "I had originally been intending to step down last year when I reached the standard age limit set forth in the Supervisory Board's rules of procedure," Wenning said. REUTERS

Oil falls more than 1% as virus spreads in West Asia, Europe

LAILA KEARNEY NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 26

OIL PRICES fell more than 1 per cent on Wednesday after hundreds of new coronavirus cases reported in Asia, Europe and the Middle East stoked fears that energy demand would decline, while crude oil inventories in the United States grew. Brent crude was down 94 cents, or 1.7 per cent, to \$54.01 a barrel by 12:09 p.m. EST (1709 GMT), while US West Texas Intermediate crude shed 53 cents, or 1.1 per cent, to \$49.37 a barrel.

barrels to 443.3 million barrels, the Energy Information Administration said, which was less than the 2-million-barrel rise analysts had expected.

Goldman Sachs cut its 2020 oil demand growth forecast to 600,000 barrels per day (bpd) from 1.2 million bpd, and lowered its Brent forecast to \$60 a barrel from \$63.

"We see oil prices improving through the year, assuming demand begins to normalise" in the second half, it said.

Authorities around the world battled to prevent the spread of coronavirus, which has now been found in about 30 countries. Gains on Wall Street led stocks across the globe higher, a rebound from a sharp selloff linked to coronavirus worries, but other financial markets felt nagging pressure. The World Health Organization's chief said while the sudden rise in novel coronavirus cases was "deeply concerning", the virus could still be contained and did not amount to a pandemic. REUTERS

Warbug Pincus set to invest ₹1,080 crore in Apollo Tyres

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

APOLLO TYRES on Wednesday said private equity firm Warbug Pincus will invest Rs 1,080 crore (around \$150 million) in the company.

The company's board on Wednesday has approved an issuance of compulsorily convertible preference shares in the company worth Rs 1,080 crore to an affiliate of Warbug Pincus, Apollo Tyres Ltd said in a statement. The investment represents a primary capital infusion into the company and is subject to shareholder and regulatory approvals, it added.

'34 new dollar billionaires from India in 2019; Mukesh Ambani richest in country'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 26

INDIA ADDED around three dollar billionaires every month in 2019, taking the tally to 138 that has helped the country to feature at the third position globally, says a report.

China and the United States occupied the first and second spot with 799 and 626 billionaires, respectively.

In total, India got 34 new billionaires to take the count to 138 on the list, topped by Mukesh Ambani of Reliance Industries with \$67 billion in networth, minting Rs 7 crore every hour, and the number jumps to 170 if Indian-origin billionaires outside

the country are tallied.

According to the ninth edition of the Hurun Global Rich List 2020, which has a list of 2,817 individuals across the globe having a networth of \$1 billion or more, the world has added 480 billionaires in 2019, more than one a day, while China added more than three a week and India did more than three billionaires a month.

However, according to the report, with 799 China is home to more billionaires than the US (626) and India combined and is set to add many more pharma billionaires this year as the communist nation fights a deadly coronavirus epidemic that has already killed more than 2,710 people since mid-January.

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SALEM CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION INVITATIONS FOR BIDS. 1. Implementation of Smart Roads Phase -VI at River side road (Anaimedu Railway Gate to Anandha Bridge and MLCP to Kevis Restaurant and No.2 Pudhu Street in Div-32 and 35) in the ABD Area of Salem City Municipal Corporation Estimate Cost. Rs. 1350.00 Lakhs.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS CIRCLE, COIMBATORE TENDER NOTICE. Tender Notice No.08/2019-20/SDO, Dated: 24.02.2020. For and on behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu Schedule tender through online only will be received upto 27.03.2020, 15.00 hours by the Superintending Engineer (H) Projects Circle, Coimbatore for SI.No.1 under Work Announced by Hon'ble Chief Minister during Budget Demand for 2017-18 CRIDP Scheme pertaining Salem (H) Projects Division.

DELHI JAL BOARD : GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH) II JAL SADAN : LAJPAT NAGAR : NEW DELHI. NIT No. 54/S-II/2019-20 Press Tender. S. No. Name of work Reserve price Date of release of tender in e procurement solution Last date and time for download & RTGS through e procurement solution

Bank of Maharashtra Tender For Empanelment of Media Agencies. Bank of Maharashtra invites sealed applications from eligible Advertising & Media Buying Agencies for empanelment. The last date of submission is 26/03/2020.

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CONCOR invites Online Open E-Tender in Two Bid system for 'Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 300 Watt LED Flood Light Luminaires for High Mast Towers at various terminals of Northern Region' only through e-tendering mode.

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PIPELINE PROTESTS

Shut down Canada

A pipeline through historically native land has sparked protests in Canada



At the camp of First Nations members of the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, who were blocking Canadian National Railway (CN Rail) train tracks as part of a protest against British Columbia's Coastal GasLink pipeline. Reuters

"STOP THE invasion! No pipelines on stolen native land!" So chanted dozens of protesters on a chilly afternoon this week in Vancouver. With placards in hand, they blocked traffic on a busy thoroughfare, doing their part to "shut down Canada". That has become the rallying cry against the Coastal GasLink pipeline, a C\$6.6bn (\$5bn) project which will transport natural gas 670km (420 miles) across British Columbia to the Pacific coast, where a liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant is under construction.

The pipeline is an "invasion", detractors say, because about a quarter of its route passes through land traditionally belonging to the Wet'suwet'en, a First Nations people. Since early February, when police broke up a blockade (with an injunction to do so) local disputes have escalated to national unrest. Allies of the Wet'suwet'en have organised copycat demonstrations far away from the pipeline itself.

None of this has scuppered the plans, but it has disrupted the economy and embarrassed the Liberal government.

Canadian National Railway (CN) shut down lines in the east of the country and temporarily laid off about 450 workers; Via Rail, a passenger service, is doing the same to nearly 1,000. Food, heating fuel, farm exports and commodities are gridlocked. Cars and ships have been unable to get through bridges, ports and the border with the United States. Public sentiment is against the protesters, reckons Janice, a regular rail rider who missed work because of cancellations. A court granted CN an injunction against demonstrators on its rail line in Alberta; fed-up counter-protesters have tried to dismantle blockades themselves.

Justin Trudeau, the prime minister, has asked for patience. He missed the first week or so of chaos because he was abroad, lobbying for a seat on the un-

Security Council. Mounting pressure forced him to cancel his next stop, to Barbados, and hold crisis talks in Ottawa. This is a thorny issue for Mr Trudeau, because he must juggle a trio of promises. He has promised to promote reconciliation with indigenous people—he calls their relationship with

the government Canada's most important. But he has yet to unveil a new set of rules for that relationship that was expected before last year's election. He has promised to protect the environment, but the pipeline will carry a fossil fuel, which many greens would rather leave in the ground. And he has promised to boost economic growth, which exporting gas would obviously help.

Mr Trudeau's timing is unlucky. He has inherited this problem from successive governments which have failed to resolve tensions between national and indigenous laws. Worse, past attempts have contributed to present confusion. An act in 1876 artificially divided the First Nations into elected "band" councils. Hereditary leaders still dispute elected representatives' authority. In the pipeline debate, even as some hereditary chiefs have refused to consent, all 20 elected bands

along the route of the Coastal GasLink signed C\$338m in benefit agreements with the Energy, the company sponsoring the pipeline, plus C\$620m in contract work for indigenous businesses. Protesters (many of them non-indige-

The pipeline is an 'invasion', detractors say, because about a quarter of its route passes through land traditionally belonging to Wet'suwet'en, a First Nations people. Since early February, when police broke up a blockade, local disputes have escalated to national unrest. Allies of the Wet'suwet'en have organised copycat demonstrations far away from the pipeline itself

nous) may jeopardise such investment. Mr Trudeau has ruled out force, despite pressure from Conservatives, who accuse him of weakness, to send in police. Hansen Lee, a retired engineer in Vancouver, worries that such passivity has turned Canada into a "laughing stock". Lawmakers are wary of repeating past showdowns with indigenous leaders that turned bloody. In a dispute over a plan to build a golf course near Oka in 1990 a policeman was killed; in the Ipperwash Provincial Park in 1995 a protester was shot.

A deal to resolve the conflict would probably mean the Canadian government trading land, power and money for an end to protests, claims and court action. Future projects, such as a planned expansion of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline, are sure to reignite debate even if the particulars of the Coastal GasLink are resolved. Mr Trudeau now has a choice: he can exercise power or cede more of it. So far he seems unwilling to do either.

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BANYAN

Mandarins for Mandarin

Singapore has almost wiped out its mother tongues

WHEN SANDY, a young Chinese Singaporean, learned that her grandmother was terminally ill, she signed up for a workshop in the Hokkien language run by LearnDialect.sg, a social enterprise founded to help Singaporeans communicate with the city-state's older Chinese residents—including within their own families. Sandy is fluent in English and Mandarin, the official "mother tongue" of Chinese Singaporeans. Her grandmother spoke little of either. Before she died, Sandy thrilled her by asking in Hokkien, "What was your childhood like?" She was even able to understand some of the answer.

Their language barrier was the product of decades of linguistic engineering. English has been the language of instruction in nearly all schools since 1987, to reinforce Singapore's global competitive edge. But, depending on ethnicity, pupils study a second language—typically Mandarin, Malay or Tamil. These are intended, as Lisa Lim of the University of Sydney puts it, to add "cultural ballast" vis-à-vis English. In the case of Mandarin, its acquisition has been reinforced by the government's annual "Speak Mandarin Campaign", started in 1979.

Mandarin is a standardised version of the language spoken by the people of the vast plains of northern China. Yet hardly any of the Chinese from whom Singaporeans are descended hailed from there. They came instead from the southern provinces of Fujian,

The Speak Mandarin Campaign sought to destroy Chinese Singaporeans' real mother tongues, first by demeaning them as provincial 'dialects' of Mandarin when they are in fact mutually unintelligible languages as different as English, German and Danish

Guangdong and Hainan, and so spoke different languages: Hokkien, Cantonese and Hakka, along with two Hokkien-related tongues, Teochew and Hainanese.

The Speak Mandarin Campaign sought to destroy Chinese Singaporeans' real mother tongues, first by demeaning them as provincial "dialects" of Mandarin when they are in fact mutually unintelligible languages as different as English, German and Danish. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's founding father, who started learning Chinese in his 30s, promoted the now discredited notion that humans have a tightly limited capacity for language: Hokkien and all the rest undermined the official bilingualism by hogging chunks of children's memories. Further, the great tidier disliked the diversity embodied in these languages and

wanted to forge a single Chinese identity—reason enough to foist on Chinese Singaporeans an alien language. Lee also thought that China's opening promised riches to those who could speak its official language.

So dialects were disparaged. In the early 1980s television and radio programming in these languages all but disappeared, cutting many people adrift. "To speak dialect with your child," the government warned, "is to ruin his future." By the campaign's own yardsticks, the success is striking. The use of Chinese vernaculars at home has collapsed, from 76% of Chinese households in 1980 to 16% in 2015. Over the same period, the use of Mandarin rose, from 13% of Chinese households to 46%. But the linguistic engineering has had an unintended consequence: the use of English is now increasing faster, especially among younger families: over 70% of households with children at primary school use it as their main language, undermining Mandarin and vernaculars.

And so a debate about the costs of language policies has grown since Lee's death in 2015. The same year, the 50th anniversary of the nation's founding was accompanied by an outpouring of sentimentality over Singapore's roots. These days officials are a bit readier to tolerate Singapore's linguistic variety. Lee Kuan Yew once called Singlish, the country's vibrant mash-up of English, Malay and Chinese vernaculars, a "handicap".



At a night class for people learning mandarin as a second language in Singapore in 2009. Reuters/File

Lee's son, the prime minister, Lee Hsien Loong, claims to be proud of Singapore's unique form of Mandarin. For instance, the Malay for "market", pasar, has been imported as 'ba sha'. That would be unintelligible to a mainland Chinese. Yet that only highlights a paradox Mr Lee does not acknowledge. On the one hand, he praises Singaporean Mandarin because it supposedly

reinforces a Chinese Singaporean identity. On the other, he frets about others stealing a march in China because of their more fluent Mandarin.

Meanwhile, younger Singaporeans are embracing former mother tongues. Ski Yeo and Eugene Lee were motivated to found LearnDialect.sg upon seeing an elderly Cantonese-speaker in a nursing home strugg-

le to communicate that she was cold. Health workers have signed up to their courses, while others want to say the right things at family gatherings over the lunar new year. There is an uptick in Hokkien television programming. And everyone admits that effete Mandarin is useless for swearing.

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DIRECT BENEFIT TRANSFER



(Above) Landless farmer Balwant Singh Boparai at his field taken on lease in Punjab's Ghudani Kalan village; (inset) tenant farmer Ravinder Singh Gill. Anju Agnihotri Chaba

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 26

FOR OVER a decade now, Balwant Singh Boparai has been cultivating 10 acres in Ghudani Kalan village of Payal tehsil in Punjab's Ludhiana district. The 58-year-old doesn't own the land and takes it on rent at an annual rate of Rs 55,000-60,000 per acre. But despite being a regular farmer of wheat and paddy, there's no record in any official document of his cultivating this land or its owner having given it out on lease. And Boparai refuses to divulge the owner's name ("it will create problems"), even while stating that he is an NRI (non-resident Indian) based in Canada.

Not being either the owner or a registered tenant farmer means that Boparai cannot access any crop credit from the local primary agricultural cooperative society, leave alone benefit from the Punjab government's loan waiver or the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) income support schemes. The "scale of finance", which is used by banks to fix loan limits per acre for various crops, simply does not apply in his case. Even at the time of sale at the agriculture produce market committee (APMC) mandi in Rara Sahib near Ludhiana, the 'J form', which gives details of the crop, quantity and price, mentions only the name of the landowner.

For Boparai, the news that the Narendra Modi government plans to make minimum support price (MSP) payments directly into the bank accounts of farmers, from the ensuing wheat procurement season starting April, offers little comfort. "How will it benefit me? The government doesn't even know that I'm the one tilling this land and growing the wheat being sold. Before implementing such reforms, shouldn't they first do a *Girdawari* (survey of land) and enter the name of the actual *kashitkar* (cultivator) along with the zamindar (owner)?" he asks.

According to him, the current system, where the Food Corporation of India and state agencies undertake grain procurement through *arhatiyas* (commission agents) in APMC mandis, works better for landless tenant farmers. "Yes, the payment is made into the *arhatiya's* account. But that money also comes to us. Moreover, he (*arhatiya*) is the one who is also giving us loans to raise our

Whose crop?

Making MSP or PM-Kisan payments into farmers' accounts can be problematic when the tillers aren't the landowners

crop. If the government now starts transferring MSP money to the zamindar, what will happen to us?", he points out.

Echoing a similar sentiment is Jagjit Singh, 40, who cultivates five out of the 15 acres owned by a zamindar (name not disclosed) of Jhumba village in Bathinda district and tehsil. "Whenever I take my crop to the *mandi*, the *arhatiya* makes sure that the J-form is filled not in my name. And he pays me after deducting interest and loans that I have taken from him. Where will I go if the government pays only the zamindar and the *arhatiya* loses interest in giving me loan that he cannot recover from sale of crop to him?", says this tenant farmer, who has paid Rs 60,000 per acre for growing paddy and wheat this year. "I pay 50% of the rent amount in April (ahead of the paddy season) and the balance 50% in September (before sowing wheat)," adds Singh, who claims to have been cultivating the land rented from the same zamindar (who has three other tenants) for the last 15 years.

Ravinder Singh Gill is the sarpanch of Mehmawal Yusufpur village in Jalandhar district's Shahkot tehsil and farms 70 acres. But he, too, does not own the land that belongs to two NRIs, one living in Canada and the other in the United Kingdom. "Yes, I heard about it. My *arhatiya* even took my bank account number, Aadhaar and other details," when asked about the Narendra Modi government's proposed plan, on which *The Indian Express* had first reported last month ("After fertilisers, Centre wants food subsidy to directly benefit farmers", January 13). The 48-

year-old, unlike the other two farmers, has four acres. But this is land jointly owned with his brother and two cousins. "Whatever land you can call my own is too small. The 70 acres, on which I grow wheat, paddy and potato, is not in my name. So, I can neither avail any crop loan nor receive government benefit against this land," he says.

Boparai, Gill and Jagjit Singh aren't exceptional cases. They represent an estimated 30-35% of Punjab's farmers who cultivate land belonging to others that include government employees, NRIs and permanent urban residents within and outside the state.

Currently, confusion seemingly reigns over the plans to implement direct benefit transfer (DBT) in MSP payments, starting with the wheat crop that will arrive in the *mandis* from April. The Punjab government, at the nudging of the Centre, has made it compulsory for *arhatiyas* to provide bank and Aadhaar numbers of all their farmers. This data is to be linked to the Centre's Public Financial Management System (PFMS) network, which will enable direct payment of MSP monies into the accounts of farmers rather than that of the *arhatiyas*. Punjab has some 48,000 of these *mandi* intermediaries, of which 28,000-odd are active and each dealing with anywhere from 20 to 200 farmers.

The move has predictably met with opposition from the *arhatiyas*, a significant section of which has announced holding of state-wide protests from March 1. In 2018-19 alone, 169.16 lakh tonnes (lt) of paddy and 129.12 lt of wheat got procured from Punjab. These, at their respective MSPs of Rs 1,770

and Rs 1,840 per quintal, would have been worth almost Rs 53,700 crore. At 2.5%, the commission payments over and above this to the *arhatiyas* would have been around Rs 1,342.5 crore.

But it isn't just the *arhatiyas*. "Over a third of our farmers are landless tenants. If MSP payment is transferred directly into bank accounts, only the landowners will benefit. That defeats the very purpose of ensuring MSP for the actual tiller," contends Ravinder Singh Cheema, president of the Punjab Arhatiya Association, which has already petitioned the Punjab and Haryana High Court against the government decision. "*Arhatiyas* and farmers will both see to it that the tractor trolleys loaded with wheat this time will be parked on the National Highways, instead of being transported to APMC mandis," he warns.

Under PM-Kisan, there are 22.40 lakh farmers in Punjab receiving annual income support of Rs 6,000 each. But this list, concedes a senior state agriculture department official, includes only landowning farmers. For collecting the details of landless farmers, the government is, therefore, relying on the *arhatiyas*. The latter are, of course, least inclined to provide that information — save under the threat of not being paid their 2.5% commission fee on the MSP value of procurement.

Kesar Singh Bhangoo, professor of economics at Punjabi University in Patiala, blames the Punjab government for not conducting a single census on landless farmers in the state, "which is why it is having to ask *arhatiyas*". According to Sukhdev Singh Kokri Kalan, general secretary of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ugrahar faction), the government, at a meeting of the Punjab State Farmers & Farm Workers' Commission, had agreed to enter the names of all *kashitkars* along with the zamindars in land revenue records, "but it has not been implemented".

Aniindita Mitra, the director of Punjab's Department of Food and Civil Supplies, maintains that the state government is committed to cover every farmer, including landless tenants, under the PFMS network. "We are in the process of preparing a pro forma for such farmers to be registered with the APMCs concerned. The pro forma, to be issued soon, will carry their bank account numbers with IFSC codes, Aadhaar ID numbers and the quantity of crop sold at the *mandis*," she tells *The Indian Express*.



How much milk does the country produce?

The government's estimates do not square up with NSO household consumption data



HARISH DAMODARAN

WHAT IS India's milk production and how realistic are the estimates put out by the department of animal husbandry and dairying (DAHD)?

The reason for asking this is that the growth in milk output based on official data does not seem to square up with the increase in sales of organised dairies — at least in the recent period.

Take the last 10 years from 2008-09 to 2018-19. During the first half of this period (2008-09 to 2013-14), production registered a 4.2 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 112.2 million tonnes (mt) to 137.7 mt. The second half (2013-14 to 2018-19), however, saw a CAGR of 6.4 per cent, with output rising from 137.7 mt to 187.7 mt.

The above trend, though, isn't reflected in liquid milk marketing by cooperative dairies, which recorded a CAGR of 7.9 per cent in the first period (from 201.03 lakh litres per day to 294.44 LLPD) and only 3.8 per cent during the second (from 294.44 LLPD to 354.53 LLPD). Quite the reverse, in other words.

But it's not only the cooperatives. The country's top 10 private dairy companies reported combined net sales of Rs 15,886.43 crore in 2014-15. That touched Rs 20,357.44 crore in 2018-19, translating into a CAGR of 6.4% in current value terms. Given an average annual wholesale price index inflation of 4.3 per cent for milk during this period, the yearly sales volume growth would work out to just 2.1 per cent or so.

Simply put, the organised dairy sector would have grown by hardly 3 per cent annually in the last five years, which isn't even half of the 6.4 per cent CAGR for milk production, as per DAHD statistics.

Another reason to raise questions on the official output estimates has to do with data from the National Statistical Office's (NSO) household consumer expenditure surveys (HCES). The all-India per capita consumption of milk over 30 days was reported at 3.866 litres for rural and 5.107 litres for urban households in the 2004-05 HCES. These went up to 4.333 litres and 5.422 litres, respectively in 2011-12.

The significant point to note is that the

NSO per capita consumption numbers are way below what one would get from the DAHD's production estimates. The weighted all-India average (rural and urban) daily per capita consumption of milk from the NSO's HCES was 139.3 ml (or 143.5 grams) in 2004-05 and 154.8 ml (159.4 grams) in 2011-12. This was as against the daily per capita availability of 233 grams in 2004-05 and 290 grams in 2011-12 arrived from the DAHD's production estimates of 92.5 mt and 127.9 mt for these two years. It can be seen that the gap between the two per capita numbers, which was 89.5 grams in 2004-05, had widened to 130.6 grams by 2011-12.

The HCES takes into account consumption of milk both in direct liquid form, as well as converted into products (curd, *ghee*, butter, etc) or used for preparation of sweetmeats at home. It excludes non-household consumption — by tea shops, restaurants/*dhabas*, ice-cream and sweetmeat makers, and other institutional users. Such consumption, however, is unlikely to exceed, say, 20 per cent of the milk consumed in households (that too, assuming every fifth meal to be eaten outside). Even adding 20 per cent takes the NSO daily per capita consumption to 191.3 grams in 2011-12.

Now, let's assume that the per capita milk consumption from 2011-12 to 2018-19 grew by 11 per cent, the same rate as during the preceding seven-year period. Again, this is highly unlikely, given the pronounced slowdown in growth of real rural wages and crop prices after 2013-14 (note that the increase in per capita consumption between 2004-05 and 2011-12 took place more in rural than in urban India).

But even 11 per cent growth would mean a per capita daily consumption of 212 grams for 2018-19. This is just over half of the DAHD's corresponding figure of 394 grams derived from an estimated production of 187.7 mt for a population of 1,305 million.

If the 212 grams per capita consumption is used, the actual milk production last year would have been under 101 mt. That is a vast difference over the official estimate of 187.7 mt. It is a serious gap which needs both explaining and filling. Hopefully, the next HCES for 2020-21 will bring greater clarity.

PMFBY 2.0

A revamped crop insurance scheme

The recent tweaks to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, including making it 100% voluntary and capping premiums at 30%, are going to be a game-changer



AMIT MOHAN PRASAD

THE CENTRE has recently revamped the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) that will have far-reaching impact on the implementation of this flagship crop insurance scheme. Launched in the 2016 kharif season, PMFBY makes the insurance companies liable for full risk coverage. Farmers pay a nominal 2% premium rate on the sum insured (the maximum amount that insurance would give in the event of damage) for all kharif crops, with these at 1.5% for rabi and 5% for annual and horticultural crops. The balance premium, vis-à-vis the actuarial rate based on statistical risk assessment, is paid as subsidy to the companies and shared between the Centre and the states on a 50:50 basis.

The revised guidelines, approved by the Union Cabinet last week, provide for alloca-

tion of business to insurance companies for a period of three years. This should incentivise them to implement the scheme in an earnest manner, including by setting up local offices. The absence of certainty of business — due to selection through open tenders now called annually for every cluster of 6-7 districts — has resulted in insurance firms having little functional presence at block or even district level. This has been a general complaint voiced by public representatives and district authorities as well. An additional provision, which grants extra points for outstanding performance by any company and awards tenders even beyond three years, could further incentivise quality service delivery to farmers.

Another significant modification made to the current PMFBY guidelines is that a state government will henceforth not be allowed to operate the scheme for a new kharif season (beginning May-June), if its share of premium subsidy is not released before March 31, with the cut-off date similarly at September 30 for rabi (starting October-November). This should help enforce implementation discipline and timely disposal of claims. The Cabinet has also endorsed use of "smart sampling techniques" and optimisation of the number of crop cutting experi-

PMFBY VITAL STATISTICS (IN RS CRORE)			
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Gross Premium	21874.924	25349.610	29105.980
(a) Farmers' share	4216.422	4395.596	4918.773
(b) Centre's share	8735.212	10442.174	12034.700
(c) States' share	8923.289	10511.840	12152.507
Reported Claims	16774.348	21925.589	23175.992*
Average Premium Rate%	10.69	12.40	12.32

*Claims not fully reported. Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Answer to Lok Sabha un-starred question on 11.02.2020.

ments to be conducted in order to generate relevant yield data for submission to insurance companies. However, only the actual implementation of such technological solutions from the ensuing 2020 kharif season will tell us about the efficacy of this step!

PMFBY has until now been a voluntary scheme only for non-loanee farmers, while mandatory for those availing crop loans from banks. In the case of loanee farmers, banks have been deducting their share of premium (2-5%) against loan accounts on a compulsory basis and remitting the same to the insurance companies. Farmers haven't taken

kindly to this, not the least as the said companies are neither in direct contact with them and nor do they issue any policy certificates, unlike in car or health insurance. Having no policy documents makes them in no position to even take the firms to court in cases of default or delays in claim settlement. The scheme, it would seem, has served to insure the loans of banks more than the crops of farmers. In some cases, farmers have been found to take loans against Kisan Credit Cards for a particular crop that has higher value and is different from the one actually grown by them. This is, in turn, a conse-



PM Modi at a farmers' rally. File

quence of credit limits being linked to the "scale of finance" per acre, which is crop-specific, and farmers wanting to have the maximum possible loans sanctioned. In the event, the bank would manage to have its loan insured, but the farmer cannot get his claim from the insurance company against yield losses for a different crop in his field.

By deciding to make enrolment 100% voluntary for all farmers from 2020 kharif, the Centre has made PMFBY a true insurance scheme. From now on, insurance companies will have to make efforts to create real awareness among farmers about the benefits of crop risk coverage. Crop insurance would, thus, become an informed choice for loanee farmers, just as it already is for their non-loanee counterparts. Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, for instance, have a large number of non-loanee farmers voluntarily opting for PMFBY. On the

other hand, non-loanee coverage forms hardly 2-3% of the total insured farmers in states such as Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, with the scheme not even being implemented in Punjab. The reason for it is access to assured irrigation in these states, which reduces the probability of yield loss and, hence, the need for taking insurance cover. In UP alone, during the 2018-19 rabi season, as against a gross premium of around Rs 700 crore paid to the insurance companies, the compensation to farmers amounted to a paltry Rs 20 crore!

If the number of insured farmers were to fall drastically due to the revamped scheme being made voluntary, there are chances of the actuarial premiums going northwards. At the same time, the Centre has decided to limit the PMFBY premium rates — against which it would bear 50% of the subsidy — to a maximum of 30% in un-irrigated and 25% in irrigated areas. The ball will, then, shift to the insurance companies' court, as they would have to actively seek out farmers and convince them of the importance of crop insurance. Nor can they bid based on actuarial premium calculations that take into account no cap on government subsidy.

The Centre intends to introduce a separate risk cover scheme for water stressed areas, which is a right step. It would be good if the proposed scheme incentivises sowing of crops requiring less water, rather than those that are potentially lucrative but highly risky. It is practically not feasible to implement any crop insurance scheme in areas where the premium rates are naturally bound to cross 30% and more. PMFBY would work best for "normal" agriculture, which is risky enough!

The author is an IAS officer. Views expressed are personal

CROSSWORD 4052



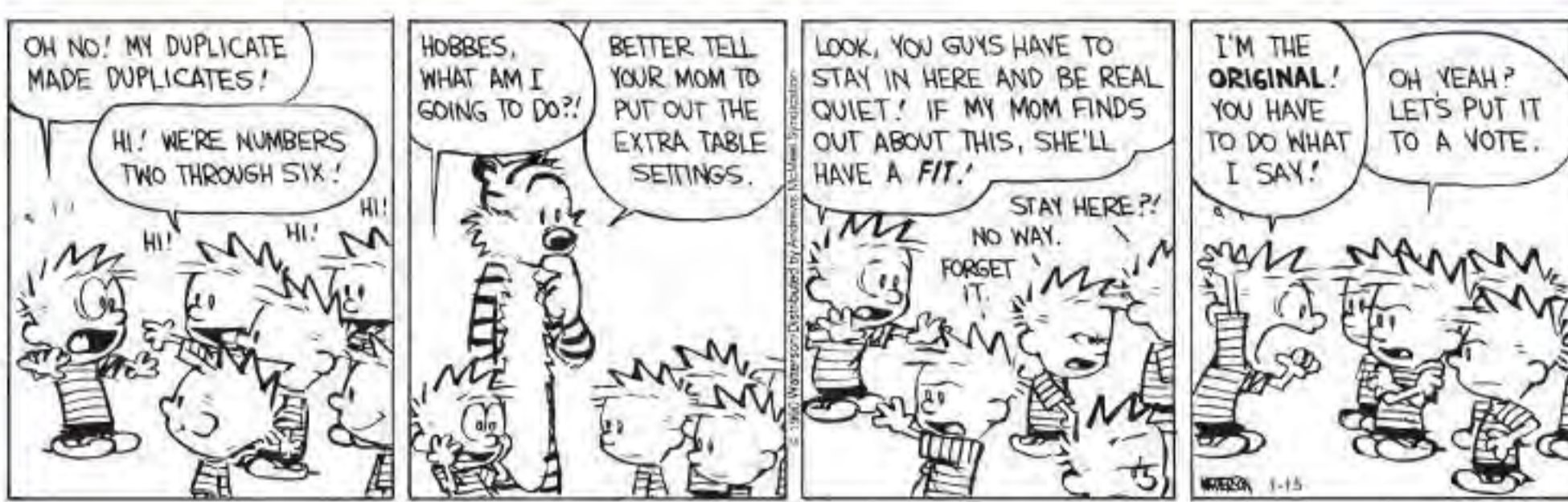
- ACROSS**
- Water lily collection going to America (5)
 - Churchman about to put plate out (7)
 - A tune of vital importance (3)
 - The form aims often take (9)
 - Ancestral family row takes a long time (7)
 - Canny sort of girl? (5)
 - Travelled here and there when badly routed (6)
 - This by itself is only a gradual process (6)
 - Not rounds used in an erratic salvo (5)
 - Tide may change between sunrise and sunset (7)
 - Ivy's associate takes wine in bed, perhaps (9)
 - Old boys (3)
 - Withdraws wrong decrees (7)
 - Dependable form of alloy (5)
- Down**
- A tract of meadow felt to be different (7)
 - Jack upsets aunt with the French spider (9)
 - Dance devised by a doctor in South America (5)
 - It's written and enclosed (6)
 - Old address of Turkish civil service (7)
 - Quietly led this animal will get by (3)
 - Hard wood fashioned by one (5)
 - A monthly gathering in the nursery? (4,2,3)
 - Tried and tested (7)
 - Possibly learnt about Eastern imperialism (7)
 - Do rise above debts admitted to be bad (6)
 - Turn to her or someone else (5)
 - Countryman of fifty under servitude (5)
 - Sounds like a shortage of resin (3)

Solutions Crossword 4051: Across: 1 Tea service, 8 Place, 9 Capital, 10 Settler, 11 Agree, 12 Become, 14 Cherub, 17 Largo, 19 Accuser, 21 Elation, 22 Agony, 23 High-handed. Down: 2 Elastic, 3 Spell, 4 Record, 5 Impeach, 6 Enter, 7 Elderberry, 8 Past belief, 13 Mooring, 15 Restore, 16 Launch, 18 Reach, 20 Chain.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

GUUAR → GUAR

HMRIT → MIRTH

ILMOTU → MIRTH

EELSMY → MIRTH

SOLUTION: MIRTH, MIRTH, MIRTH, MIRTH. Answer: Age is no guarantee of maturity - Lawana Blackwell (8)

SUDOKU 4133

Difficulty Level 3s
Instructions: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4132



राजस्थान आवासन मण्डल
निविदा सूचना संख्या - 19/2019-20

राजस्थान आवासन मण्डल की विभिन्न आवासीय योजनाओं में विभिन्न कार्यों की विड के विरोध उपयुक्त श्रेणी के राजस्थान आवासन मण्डल में सम्मिलित कर एच अथवा विभाग में 'एच' श्रेणी के कर्मचारी संशुद्धि के निमित्त प्रथम में ऑन लाइन ई-प्रोकरेंडिंग पोर्टल से विड आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा की कुल राशि रु. 954.42 लाख (नौ करोड़)

ऑन लाइन विड मिलने की तिथि: 02.03.2020 से 23.03.2020 तक

ऑन लाइन विड पूरा निमित्त प्रथम तक कल की तिथि: 02.03.2020 से 23.03.2020 तक

निविदा अनुबंध विभाग रु. 954.42 लाख तक

निविदा का पूरा अथवा अंश में जमा करने की तिथि: 26.03.2020 तक

ऑन लाइन क्र.सं. 1 की तकनीकी विड खोलने की तिथि: 01.04.2020 तक

ऑन लाइन क्र.सं. 1 की वित्तीय विड खोलने की तिथि: 01.04.2020 तक

सिप्पल नम्बर: RH/1920/MLB/00212

क्र.सं. 1 की विड विड प्रदान से आमंत्रित की जाकर आवासीय अभियानों में ई-प्रोकरेंडिंग के माध्यम से उपरोक्त प्रकार के राजस्थान आवासन मण्डल में सम्मिलित कर एच अथवा विभाग में 'एच' श्रेणी के कर्मचारी संशुद्धि के निमित्त प्रथम में ऑन लाइन ई-प्रोकरेंडिंग पोर्टल से विड आमंत्रित की जाती है।

अतिरिक्त मूल्य अधिसूचना-प्रथम, जयपुर।

पत्र संख्या/सी/19/5586 फोन नं. 0141-2741950

CORRIGENDUM NO. 3

Some modification/correction has been done with reference to the tender notice of different package issued vide this office letter No. 17012-20 on dated 17.01.2020 published in different newspapers on dated 18.01.2020 to 19.01.2020 and corrigendum No. 17739-49 dated 05.02.2020 & corrigendum No. 2 letter No. 18474-83 dated 19.02.2020. Tender stands uploaded on website 19.02.2020 and opened on 26.03.2020, tender ID is 2020_CEPH_89985_1 and some more modification in the Bid Validity of tender read as 90 days instead of 120 days as per bid documents Section-2 Clause 15.1.

The other terms and conditions will remain the same.

NO. PW SE-IIICT/TENDER (PMGSY)/2020-21 Superintending Engineer, 3rd Circle, HPPWD, Solan. 5087/HP

ई-निविदा सूचना

सर्वसाधारण के सूचित किया जाता है कि कार्यालय रक्षा सम्पदा अधिकारी, आगरा मण्डल आगरा छावनी द्वारा सर्वे संख्या 319 (भाग) अमर सिंह गेट के सामने आगरा छावनी स्थित रक्षा भूमि जिसका क्षेत्रफल लगभग 32400.5 वर्ग फुट है, पर एक वर्ष के लिए कार, बस, स्कूटर इत्यादि पार्किंग के लिए इच्छुक व्यक्तियों/फर्म आदि द्वारा भारत सरकार के केन्द्रीय सार्वजनिक खरीद फ्रेमवर्क पोर्टल (Central Public Procurement Portal of Govt. of India) www.eprocure.gov.in के माध्यम से ई-निविदा (E-Tender) आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा की शर्तें उपरोक्त पोर्टल पर अपलोड कर दी गई हैं। दस्तावेज डाउनलोड प्रारम्भ करने का दिनांक 27.02.2020 समय 10:30 बजे से तथा निविदा उपलब्ध करने की अन्तिम तिथि 19.03.2020 समय 17:00 तक रहेगी।

हस्ता./- रक्षा सम्पदा अधिकारी आगरा मण्डल, आगराछावनी (बी.अजीत रेड्डी)

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER P.W.D. (B&R) AMBIKUPUR CIRCLE AMBIKUPUR

Invitation Date :- 22.02.2020

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

01. For tender detail please visit <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>
02. Bid Due Date - 11.03.2020

S. No.	N.I.T.No.	ONLINE SYSTEM NUMBER	Name of work	P.A.C. in lacs	Concern Division
1	253	61456	Construction of Higher Secondary School Building at Bhudkela Distt. Jashpur (C.G.) including Electrification.	110.17	Jashpur
2	254	61468	Construction of High School Building at Charaidand Block Duldula Distt. Jashpur.	69.02	Jashpur
3	255	61463	Construction of High School Building at Dhengni Block Manora Distt. Jashpur.	69.02	Jashpur
4	256	61469	Construction of I No. . D Type, I No. E Type, I No. F Type Residential Qtr. For Judicial Officers at Baikunthpur Distt. Korea Including Electrification Works.	182.09	Manendragarh

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
P.W.D. Ambikapur Circle Ambikapur
77316

FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA
Regional Office Shimla (HP): Lane 1, Sector 2, NEW SHIMLA-171006 (HP) Ph. No. 9177202217. FAX-207218

Notice

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the recruitment of Watchmen by Food Corporation of India, Regional Office, Shimla, (HP) vide Advertisement Notice No. 01/2017/Himachal Pradesh dated 09.10.2017 is hereby cancelled and accordingly advertisement dated 09.10.2017 is withdrawn with immediate effect.

Sd. Asst. Genl. Manager (Pers.) For Genl. Manager (Region)

WESTERN RAILWAY - RAJKOT DIVISION

CONTRACT OF LEASING OUT OF SLRS SPACE FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (05) YEARS IN LUGGAGE COMPARTMENT OF THE FOLLOWING TRAINS

Tender Notice No. 3278/2019-20/5 Date: 24.02.2020 The Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Western Railway, Rajkot invites sealed tender from registered lease holder for the contract of leasing out of SLRS space for a period of five (05) years in luggage compartment of the following trains from registered lease holders over Rajkot division of Western Railway. Compartment wise and train wise details are given below separately:

Sr. No.	Train No.	Frequ-ency of train	Scale of train	Station From TO	Space available in tonnes FSLR 1st FSLR 2nd RSLR 1st	Per Trip in 1 for 403.9 tonne Space
1	22948	Daily	R	Okha Mumbai Central	4 4 4	16.466/-
2	19218	Daily	R	Jamnagar Bandra Terminus	4 4	13.852/-
3	18613	Sun.	R	Rajkot Combalone	4 4	31.877/-
4	19585	Fri.	R	Okha Dehradun	4 4	17.173/-
5	18402	Wed	R	Okha Puri	4	26.517/-
6	19578	Fri. Sat.	R	Jamnagar Tuniwadi	4 (Fri/Sat) 4 (Fr/Sat)	26.236/-
7	22908	Thurs	P	Hapa Medgaon	4 4	10.779/-
8	22939	Thurs	R	Hapa Bilaspur	4 4	17.679/-
9	16734	Tue	P	Okha Ramnagar	4 4	19.214/-
10	19568	Thurs	P	Okha Tulicoin	4 4	17.491/-
11	19573	Mon	S	Okha Jaipur	4 4 4	4.380/-
12	19575	Sat	S	Okha Nathdwara	4 4	4.629/-
13	22969	Thurs	R	Okha Banaras	4*	21.551/-
14	15635	Fri	R	Okha Guwahati	4*	38.813/-
15	22960	Daily (Except Fri)	S	Jamnagar Surat	4 4 4	2.484/-

*When train will run via Chhayapuri instead of Vadodra, Contract will be allotted. Cost of E-Tender Document (Non-Refundable & Non-Transferable): ₹ 1000/- Cost of tender shall be accepted only through online net banking or E-payment gateway. Earnest Money Deposit: ₹ 1,00,000/- Earnest Money Deposit shall be accepted only through online net banking or E-payment gateway. Last Date of issuing Amendment/Corrigendum, if any: Till Bidding start date. Time and Date for closure for Submission of E-Tender Document: Up to 15.00 Hrs. on 20.03.2020 through online website www.treps.gov.in only. Time and Date for Opening of E-tender: 15.30 Hrs. on 20.03.2020 through online website www.treps.gov.in only. Validity of Offer from Date of E-tender Opening: 45 Days. Address for Correspondence: Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Kotli Compound, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Rajkot-360001

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER P.W.D. (B&R) AMBIKUPUR CIRCLE AMBIKUPUR

Invitation Date:- 20/02/2020

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

01. For tender detail please visit <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>
02. Bid Due Date - 09.03.2020

S. No.	N.I.T.No.	Online System Number	Name of work	P.A.C. in lacs	Concern Division
1	244	61378	BT Renewal work under Sub Division Ramanujan on Ramanujan to Wadrafnagar Road in Km. 23 to 25 = 3.00 Km and Km. 26 to 27 = 2.00 Km. and Aaragahi To Tameshwarnagar air strip approach Road (YR) in Km. 1/10,2,3,4,2,4/4 (100m) = 2.50 Km.	151.79	Ramanujan
2	245	61379	BT Renewal work under Sub Division Kusmi on Rajpur Kusmi Road (MDR) Km. 45/6 (100m), 45/8, 45/10, 46 = 1.50 Km. and 53/6 (100m), 53/8, 53/10, 54 = 1.50 Km.	107.60	Ramanujan
3	246	61380	BT Renewal work under Sub Division Kusmi on Jashpur Asta Kusmi Road (SH 12) in Km. 16, 17/2, 17/4, 17/6 (100m) = 1.50 Km. and 15, 13/6 (100m), 13/8, 13/10 = 1.50 Km.	129.12	Ramanujan
4	247	61381	BT Renewal work under Sub Division Ramanujan on Chalgali to Aaragahi Road (YR) in Km. 19 to 23 = 5.00 Km. and Km. 42 to 45 = 4.00 Km.	83.33	Ramanujan
5	248	61382	BT Renewal work under Sub Division Premnagar on Parshurampur Rajpur Road (MDR) in Km. 20 to 23 = 4.00 Km., Premnagar Bakirra Road (MDR) in Km. 6 to 9 = 4.00 Km., Chindia Satpura Road (VR) in Km. 01 to 04 = 4.00 Km., Kamalpur Koudi Devnagar Road in Km. 1, 12, 1, 3, 1, 4 = 4.00 Km., Bhuvneshwarpur Narayanpur Sagarpur Road in Km. 1 to 4 = 4.00 Km. and Shivpur Approach Road Length 1.00 Km.	199.85	Surajpur

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
P.W.D. Ambikapur Circle, Ambikapur
77248

DAY TODAY BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
One set of planets is decidedly hard-nosed, another looks somewhat self-indulgent. This is all very well if your business is pleasure, or vice-versa, but not suitable for those facing a limited routine. If there's any way in which you can persuade a colleague to see the error of their ways then have a go, but with extreme tact.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
The Moon is now swinging into a position which is unhelpful, though necessary. In other words, you may have to take a good long, deep breath and resign yourself to doing something you thought could be put off, perhaps for good. It might actually be much easier to deal with than you thought.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
The whole future is now looking very much brighter, especially if you are angling for adventurous solutions and opportunities. My one word of advice would be to keep an eye on the legal angle, lest you overstep the mark. The last thing you should do is upset people in authority.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
All financial sectors of your chart are now looking dynamic, and also a little stressful. The conditions are therefore ideal for a break with the past, but first you will have to bail out of one particular commitment. Try to set yourself free without letting other people down.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Partners have shed tears of joy as well as of sadness. In fact, you have achieved much that is worthwhile. Continuing in a generally celebratory mood, now looks like a good moment to pull out all the stops, aim for the very best - and thank your lucky stars.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
The Sun, Mercury and Venus are a pretty lively trio of planets, but some features of your chart indicate that you may be in a languid or lethargic mood. If you try to force the pace, then you may overlook certain vital details and get off to a false start.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
You may still be determined to keep yourself to yourself, but do let everyone know what you're up to. Does that sound contradictory? If so, it's because you can now have your cake and eat it. Remember, though, to say only the right things to the appropriate people.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
There is a great deal to be said for looking more closely at family relationships. If you suspect that someone is holding something back, why don't you take the initiative and get them to talk about it? You might find that they're relieved that you've raised uncomfortable questions.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
It is impossible to talk about today's stars in isolation, for you are now on a limited cycle of relatively lively proposals and suggestions. It may seem at first sight that other people are becoming slightly difficult, but a closer inspection will reveal that this is not the case.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Those two mighty planets, Saturn and Jupiter, have such a long-term role in your chart that you sometimes fail to notice their daily impact. However, right now you should latch on to any unusual ideas, especially if they're unashamedly romantic, or just plain weird and wonderful.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Don't confuse liberty with license. In other words, just because everything is about to go your way, don't forget your many responsibilities to other people, not to mention promises which still need to be fulfilled. A partner is waiting for you to keep your word.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
A number of potent planets are teaming up in such a way as to suggest that a new social commitment is coming in your direction. We can't say fairer than that. Ideally, friends and associates are about to recognise your utterly unique and special gifts - and about time, too.

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)
Corporate Identity No. UA40109UP201SGG025967/2358
V.C.V. Gaur Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwal Road, Dehradun-248001
Telephone: 913527432275, Fax: 91352743339

DATE EXTENSION OF e-TENDER NOTICE - II

In reference to this office e-tender specification no. 15 & 16/SE (MM)/2019-20 for sale of AI, received from Transformer and other AI, and Stamping Core Scrub available under EWD Dehradun/Haldwani on 'AS IS WHERE IS BASIS' available to be available in Electricity Workshops Dehradun/Rishikesh/Roorkee/Haldwani/Kashipur/Rudrapur. Due to unavoidable circumstances the tender will be opened on dated 04.03.2020 at 16:30 hrs., and 16:45 hrs. respectively Last Date & time of online request for purchase of tender document & submission of tender in online and offline mode will be on dated 03.03.2020 upto 17:00 hrs.

All other terms and conditions will remain same as per original tender notice. For further details, please visit website www.uktenders.gov.in.

No. : 153/EE(cm)/UPCL/A-2, SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MM) Dt. 25.02.2020

"SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION". Use L.E.D. Bulb to Save Electricity. (Toll Free No. 1912) "Pay Electricity bill online 24x7 from www.upcl.org" (For information on Electricity tariff, consumer may report to Toll Free No. : 1990 180 4155; Fax No. 91352780911)

National Institute of Fashion Technology
(Ministry of Textiles, Government of India)
NIFT Campus, Chheh Kangra, Himachal Pradesh-176001
Phone No.: 01892-260872-5, Fax No. 01892-263872

Tender Notice

File NIFT-KGR/Admin/820/2018 Date:- 27.02.2020

Sealed Tenders are invited for Cafeteria, Students Insurance Services on Annual Rate Contract basis which can be extended upto three years in Single/Two Bid System.

Last Date and Time mentioned against Tender name for Submission of Tenders and also mentioned in the Tender Documents. The Interested Contractor/Firms may visit NIFT Campus on any working day during office hours and contact Administration or NIFT website: <https://nift.ac.in/kangra/tenders> for Tender details. The detail of Cost of the Tender Form is given in each Tender.

Particulars	Cafeteria	Students Insurance
Date of Publication of e-Tender Notifications	27.02.2020	27.02.2020
Sale of Tender Documents Commence from	27.02.2020	27.02.2020
Last Date and Time for Sale of Tender	26.03.2020 at 11.00 hrs.	27.03.2020 at 11.00 hrs.
Last Date for Receipt of duly filled Tender	26.03.2020 at 15.00 hrs.	27.03.2020 at 15.00 hrs.
Date & Time of the Opening of Tender	26.03.2020 at 15.30 hrs.	27.03.2020 at 15.30 hrs.

Joint Director (I/c)
DONATION TO NIFT ARE EXEMPTED UNDER SECTION 80G OF INCOME TAX

GOVT. OF JHARKHAND TRANSPORT (CIVIL AVIATION) DEPARTMENT STATE HANGAR, AIRPORT ROAD, HINOO, RANCHI
TELEFAX NO.-0651-2250319/2251090
Email - govtflyops@gmail.com; cvilaviation.jhr@gmail.com

E-GLOBAL TENDER NOTICE

GLOBAL TENDER FOR PURCHASE OF GLIDING EQUIPMENT FROM ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER (OEM) OR THEIR AUTHORIZED AGENCIES.

E-tenders under two bid system are invited from eligible Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) / their authorized agencies for purchase of Gliding equipments.

Tender reference number :-	CAD sec1/01-PLAN-4/2020/Trans/155, Ranchi
Tender Description :-	E-tender for purchase of gliding equipment from original equipment manufacturer (OEM) or their authorized agencies.
Date and time of publish of tender on website and download of tender document :-	27/02/2020; 1000 Hrs
Starting of Bid Submission :-	27/02/2020; 1000 Hrs
End of Bid Submission :-	10/03/2020; 1800 Hrs
Date and time of opening of bids :-	12/03/2020; 1130 Hrs
Contact Number :-	9835746101 (Mr. Mayank Vatsal)

For further details and application please visit jhrkhandtenders.gov.in

Sd/
Transport (Civil Aviation) Department
PR 225988 (Civil Aviation)19-20/HD (Capt. S. P. Sinha)

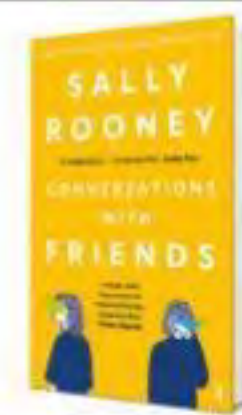
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

The Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division No. II, Irrigation & Flood Control Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, I&FC Wing, Vikas Bhawan-II, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054, Invites on behalf of the president of India, online tender from approved specialized agencies of eligible contractors of I&FC, M.E.S., Railways, CPWD & Deptt. of Central/State Govt. (whose registration details have been verified by the I&FC Deptt.) dealing with similar nature of work for the following works:

N.O.V.: Demolishing and Remodeling of Regulator at out fall of Qudasia Ghat Drain (2nd Call). (H.O.A.: MH 4711 03-800-99-00-53 (Other Drainage Works))

Estimated Cost : Rs. 59,42,593/-
Earnest Money : Rs. 1,18,852/-
Period of completion : (60) Days. Last date & time of submission of tender: upto 3.00 p.m on 04.03.2020. (Tender ID: 2020 JFC, 188422_1)

Note 1) The Tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website <http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
DIP/SHABDARTH/1398/19-20



WORD TO SCREEN

Irish author Sally Rooney's debut novel, *Conversations with Friends* (2017), will be adapted as a 12-part series by BBC. It revolves around two college students who develop a strange bond with a married couple. The film will be directed by Oscar-winning filmmaker Lenny Abrahamson.



Daniel Lismore

Dressed to Feel

For someone who calls himself a 'walking sculptor', Daniel Lismore talks about how clothes and identity are society constructs

SHINY VARGHESE

SOMETIMES A snow god, sometimes a gypsy queen or an Andy Warhol painting, cheeky, irreverent and unusual, Daniel Lismore is everything we only dare to dream. A "walking sculpture", a designer, an activist and writer, he never fails to turn heads dressed in fabric and steel, frills and brocade, ribbons and shells, feathers, crystals and over-sized safety pins. In Delhi, for the India Design ID 2020 recently, his face is wrapped by heavy steel chain mail, with a crown of real crystals on his head, and many more decorating his sleeves. When he sat down to speak to us, his heavily embellished gauntlet lay to the side as he freed his left hand while on the right, he wears metallic hand jewellery. "I am a walking protest," says London-based Lismore. "I questioned the system since I was 15. The way things existed never made sense to me," he adds. That's why growing up in Fillomgley, a village in Warwickshire, England, with his paternal grandparents, who were antique dealers, it wasn't a smooth transition from playing Captain Kirk and Spock to wearing make-up and eight-inch heels.

community, the rain forests, Brexit and climate change. "Good art always says something, and if I am the art then I must say something. There are a lot of people in power who can speak up, but don't," says Lismore.

With his friends such as Lady Gaga, Stephen Fry, and Vivienne Westwood, he has worked on numerous campaigns, has met royalty and dined with dodgy Russians too. "Be it a supermarket in London or the streets of Old Delhi, it's fascinating to see how people respond to me. People are like magpies, curious about everything shiny and different. History has shown how we have bought into the idea of tribalism, we dress and behave in a certain way. I have invented my own way, and this is a part of my journey," says Lismore.

Good art always says something, and if I am the art then I must say something. There are a lot of people in power who can speak up, but don't

His book *Be Yourself, Everyone Else is Already Taken* (Rizzoli; 2017), cued from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, has photos of mannequins cast directly from his own face, each hand-painted to match his make-up. It was the result of the show by the same name in Atlanta, US, which later moved to Miami Art Basel. Lismore presented nearly 30 ensembles, each sumptuously dressed with accessories, baubles and fabric, presenting the connection between dress and identity and the need to assert one's individuality.

"Many don't know how to react to me. They question my identity. Am I man or woman, binary or trans? And then there is the question, is it a performance? Will he sing or dance," says Lismore, in a gentle voice. "I was on a mountain top in Iceland, practising my lines for a TED talk. And there was a snow storm brewing. A man who was hiking up didn't even turn and look at me. He simply carried on. I think the lack of reaction is very progressive. Just because people wear obscure and different clothing, doesn't mean they are abnormal."

He had to go through insults, bulimia, and rejection before he found comfort in the lives of Warhol, David Bowie and Boy George. Soon he found himself living life on his terms, when he was spotted at 15 by a modelling agency. The lanky six-foot-four 'model' found the fashion industry "very predictable". "Not many people have revolutionised the fashion industry," says Lismore, who was told that if he chose to be himself, it was going to be a struggle. "Over the years, I've gained confidence. This is my armour, against the world," says the 35-year-old. Now called "the most flamboyant dresser in England", he won modelling assignments and was on forums to discuss causes of the LGBTQ

Dance and the City

Writer-director Sooni Taraporevala on adapting a real-life fairytale on screen, her film clock ticking and why India needs to nurture indie cinema

ALAKA SAHANI

THE CITY of Mumbai has witnessed many improbable fairytales come true. *Yeh Ballet*, Sooni Taraporevala's second outing as a director, after *Little Zizou* (2008), is based on one such true story. This new Netflix release is inspired by the story of two young boys from the city's slums — Manish Chauhan and Amiruddin Shah — who excel in ballet, an aristocrat among western dance forms, and got admission in Oregon Ballet Theatre School in the US. The movie, a fictionalised version, is as much about the city, with its crazy dynamics and energy, as it is about the journey of its protagonists — two gifted male dancers, played by Achintya Bose and Chauhan. In an interview, Taraporevala, 62, talks about the making of *Yeh Ballet* that captures the essence of Mumbai and the spirit of its youngsters. Excerpts:



A still from *Yeh Ballet* (top); Sooni Taraporevala

There has been a gap of 12 years between your two directorial outings. Has photography kept you busy?

Screenwriting has been my bread and butter since *Salaam Bombay!* (1988). I do that much more than photography. Nowadays, I am just photographing with my phone. After *Little Zizou*, I was working on a large project that I'd written. It was futuristic, sci-fi and very expensive. It never got off the ground. Then, I've written quite a few scripts as work for hire. Those have also not made it to screen. Hence, there has been a gap.

I made a short VR documentary on Manish and Amiruddin some years ago for Anand Gandhi's Memesys Lab. At that time, I had talked to the boys about the possibility of doing a feature on their story one day. Producer Siddharth Roy Kapoor, too, had read about them in the newspaper. So, when he asked me if I'd like to make a feature on them,

My film clock is ticking. I thought I didn't have the personality of a director. When I turned 50, I decided I should give it a shot"

SOONI TARAPOREVALA

I jumped right at it.

What was your process before you got down to writing its script?

Before I started writing, I spoke to both Amir and Manish. I spoke to their families too.

Since the city is so integral to the protagonists' journey, how did it influence your story?

Sometimes locations inform the script. I

found a platform-like space in a fishing village where women dry fish. The movie shows the character of Asif (Bose) and his friends practising in that space and being chased off all the time. Similarly, the locality where the home of Nishu (Chauhan) is shown, there's a temple, a cross and a masjid next to each other. So I mentioned in the script that the residents bow down there. All those things are inspired by the locations.

Both the movies directed by you deal with young protagonists.

It was coincidental. The feeling of family we had among the cast and crew during *Little Zizou* was the same during *Yeh Ballet*. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that our main protagonists were young. So, the vibe was much gentler. Both Achintya and Manish are absolutely fantastic in the film. I could not have asked for anyone better — in terms of acting,

dancing or the hard work they put in.

Chauhan is trained in ballet. Did he have to unlearn for the film?

The film's story starts from the point where he doesn't know what ballet is. He definitely had to unlearn and I used to keep reminding him that you were not a good ballet dancer at the beginning. So remember what you used to be like earlier. Achintya is trained in jazz and contemporary dance. For the film, he trained intensely for six months in ballet, hip hop and break-dancing.

You said you want to now write what you will direct. What's the trigger for that?

Age. My film clock is ticking. Earlier, I thought I didn't have the personality of a director. When I turned 50, I decided I should give it a shot. Platforms like Netflix are a lifesaver for people like me, who've always done independent cinema, without big actors involved.

Do you already have a script in mind?

I have a script that my daughter (Iyanah Bativala) and I wrote together. It's a very contemporary story set in Mumbai. She is studying at Cornell University and is majoring in film. She has a very wicked sense of humour.

You wrote the script of *Salaam Bombay!*, which was nominated for the Oscars. Why have so few Indian movies made the cut?

India has never had a strong independent film culture. If we do have that, then I believe our chances will be better. Because when you see the Oscar-nominated films, which I do because I'm a member of the Academy, they are just really, really good. And they are being made in countries where independent cinema has flourished for a long time.

SNAP SHOTS



Word of Mouth

MIRA, ROYAL DETECTIVE, Disney's upcoming animated series, will have the voices of Indian actor Freida Pinto (*pictured*) and American actor Kal Penn. Pinto will be voicing Queen Shanti in the series, who appoints Mira to be the royal detective, while Penn will be voicing Mikku, one of Mira's mongoose friends. The series will premiere in the US and India in March.

Pressing Matters

FEATURING panel discussions with some of the foremost policy practitioners, academics, and thought leaders, 'CPR Dialogues 2020' will address a wide spectrum of pertinent topics such as air pollution, public education, state capacity, agriculture, geopolitics, technology, and law, among others. Key speakers will include S Jaishankar, Shashi Tharoor, Lant Pritchett, Shyam Saran, Junaid Ahmad, Mukulika Banerjee, James Steinberg, Naina Lal Kidwai and Zalmay Rassoul among others. On March 2 and 3, at India Habitat Centre, Delhi.

70TH BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL: DAY 6

In Between Conversations

Hong Sangsoo's *The Woman Who Ran* shows that dystopia is not the only thing South Korean cinema does well



EXPRESS IN BERLIN

SHUBHRA GUPTA

SOUTH KOREAN cinema is not all dystopia and despair. Hong Sangsoo's delightful *The Woman Who Ran* focusses on the central character of Gamhee as she arrives on the outskirts of Seoul to meet with old friends, and gives us a wonderful look at female lives: what binds them, and what makes them free.

During the conversation that unfolds during the cooking and eating and chatting (Gamhee's friend's flatmate is an ace cook, rustling up some grilled meats for their meal), we discover that Gamhee has been married five years and has never been apart from her husband even for a day. Except on this occasion, when he's away on a business trip, which has set her free to do her own thing.

A visit to a second friend, who is in the middle of some trouble (she is recovering from an accidental tryst with a stranger, who is insisting on becoming more than a one-night stand) takes her into another world altogether.

And during a solo cinema visit, she bumps into a third woman, who is married to a man Gamhee used to be involved with.

All three encounters follow one after another. The progression is linear, and each reveals more about Gamhee than her friends, but each episode is a delicate dive into their lives. The first friend and her flatmate turn out to be a cat lovers, and we discover this when a male neighbour shows up complaining about the 'robber cats' that the women feed. The way in which he, and his complaints, are brushed aside are symptomatic of Hong's vision for this film, gently but firmly female-focussed.

The two other men who show up, one demanding attention from a woman who has no desire to give it, and the other, an ex-boyfriend, are all shown with their backs to us. We never see their faces: it is not important that we do; they are not important enough.

It's a slender wisp of a film, only 77 minutes, and extremely minimalistic in its execution. But the depths that it mines is quite astonishing. At one point, the third woman complains about a TV anchor always repeating himself. How can he be sincere if he is saying the same thing over and over again, she asks. But then Gamhee is doing the repetitive thing herself, by declaring to each friend in our hearing just how her husband of five years decrees that if two people love each



other, they must always be together. When one of herself rolls her eyes, you feel like doing the same. Is Gamhee herself sincere? And where is the husband? We never see him. Does he even exist? Or by not being around physically, has Gamhee pushed him to the periphery of her mind?

Bad Tales, written and directed by Fabio and Damiano D'Innocenzo, is a startlingly disturbing tale of how people can hurt each other even if they are family. It is summer, and in a row of houses, fathers, mothers and children circle each other, some with wariness, some with dwindling trust, as they deal with each other's anger, cruelty and frustrations.

The film doesn't give too many explanations. But as we see a particular father given to violent rages, another who isn't bothered



Stills from *The Woman Who Ran* (above); *Bad Tales*

about his newborn baby, and yet another who is clearly incapable of responsibility, drag his son off into what promises to be a downward spiral, we understand what the film is getting at. Parenthood is not everyone's ideal, and the idea of being a man is a complex thing. Thwarted expectations can turn people into monsters, and it is the children who are the most impacted.

The last 20 minutes gather all these strands into a shocking, tragic end. You want to get angry with these men, who have forced such unhappiness on their close ones. And then you ask yourself: how did they grow up themselves? Did they have any food on the table, or were they also fed on scraps and leftovers, just like one father does? He works as a server in a restaurant, and his idea of a meal for himself and his young boy, is leftover pizza. Day after day. Is this any kind of life? Even death may be better.

Postscript: A star turn is sometimes all a film needs to make itself memorable. I catch *Minamata*, starring Johnny Depp as a washed-out, swirling-in-booze once-great photographer, on the first day of the festival. Based on the real-life story of a celebrated photographer who allows himself to be persuaded to document evidence of a greedy, powerful corporation in Japan which is contaminating the environment by untreated chemicals, *Minamata*, directed by Andrew Levitas, is not a particularly good film. It goes about its intentions loudly, even as we see the harrowing result on humans — limb deformity, deep disability. But Depp gets deep in character, and pulls off a performance, predictable beats and all, which will stay. It is growly, gravelly, more than a little showy, and yet oddly redemptive.

We have got to keep Test cricket alive and moving forward and positive and people coming to the game. And to me, the way to that is Day-Night Test cricket. I am big fan of it. I'm not a big fan of four-day Test cricket. I'm very much a traditionalist — five days — that's Test cricket to me.
GLENN MCGRATH IS NOT A FAN OF FOUR-DAY TEST CRICKET

A farm boy called Tim

Growing up in rural Waitotira, Southee has overcome obstacles to become New Zealand's No.1 bowler



EXPRESS IN NEW ZEALAND

SANDIP G
CHRISTCHURCH, FEBRUARY 26

NEARLY TWO decades ago, a young boy and his father were at the entrance of the Maungakarema Cricket Club, waiting for someone to open the door. Neal Parlane, now the club's coach and then an aspiring first-class cricketer who had come for nets, asked them who they wanted to meet. The father said: "Tim just wants some cricket coaching." Parlane stared at the boy, hardly 12, but strapping for his age. "So do you want to be a cricketer?" The shy lad without any hesitation replied: "Yeah, a Black Cap." Impressed, he quickly buzzed the manager and made the requisite arrangements for his enrolment.

The next day, the boy and his father were again at the entrance when Parlane checked in. He took the boy to the nets and asked him to bowl. The first ball he faced was a full toss, but Parlane noticed his action, neat and fluent, without any jerks, remarkable for a boy of his age and without any formal training. He didn't even think the lad could bowl 22 yards. So, he asked whether he had any prior coaching. He shrugged his head and said a firm "No. I just used bowl in our farm." Parlane asked the whereabouts. He replied: "The Manawatu Waihora Farm."

Parlane immediately got the connect. The boy's father, Murray, was quite renowned in the locality. The Southees, one of the early settlers in the idyllic farming town, owned a sprawling property, 10 dairy farms and dry-stock blocks in Waitotira, 30-odd miles from Whangerei. His next question: "So you come all the way? Your father wants you to be a cricketer, yeah?" Promptly came the reply: "No, I want to be."

That moment was enough to convince Parlane that he was watching a driven boy with not only talent but determination. So every weekend, Murray would drive Tim to the cricket club in the morning and pick him up in the evening. In that time, Tim would just keep bowling. If the batsmen were tired, he would bowl to an imaginary batsman in the nets. "The boy would work his bum off," Parlane says.

His colleague Steve Cunis, now the club's operational manager, was struck by Southee's ability to learn new things. "In a year's time, he might have been just 13, he started swinging the ball, booming out-swingers," says Cunis, a medium-pace himself. His father Bob, who passed away in 2008, too had played an influential role in imparting bowling fundamentals to the quiet but over-eager boy.

At 15, Southee made his club debut. He got a pasting from a burly opening batsman. But Tim didn't show any disappointment, he just kept learning and waiting for his next opportunity. "I think he clean-bowled him when they met next," recalls Cunis. Southee soon became the darling of the club. "He was a likeable boy, always listening, always working hard, no distractions, just focus and eye on detail. And gradually, news spread that a new cricketer talent is in town," he remembers.

So precocious was his talent that they advised him to move to a bigger cricketing school, as the facilities in the Whangarei Boys High School were nothing extraordinary. So they made arrangements to shift him to the famous King's College in Auckland, where his cricketing ambitions soared. "You know how the selection process works. You don't get too much exposure if you are in the deep north," Cunis reflects. For Southee, it was a cultural shift, moving from the gargantuan farm in Waitotira



Since the England series in March 2018, Tim Southee has picked up 71 wickets at 22.81, compared to Trent Boult's 61 at 25.49 and Neil Wagner's 60 at 23.65. AP

to the more urban Auckland. "But he was ready to do anything to be a cricketer. He was so driven," he says. At 31, the drive still burns, reiterated by his multiple comebacks. Every time one thinks Southee is finished, he bounces back with renewed vigour.

One day at King's College, his principal Roy Kelley called Southee for an intense conversation regarding his academics. He was winning laurels for his college with his cricket and rugby skills, but Kelley felt he was lagging behind in academics. So like a typical hard-nosed principal, he decided it's time for some stern words. "I was worried when Tim first came. He was an outstanding rugby player and cricketer, but I just didn't feel he was paying enough attention to his studies. He had fairly good marks, but I thought he could do better," he says.

So Kelley asked the self-effacing, soft-spoken boy: "What do you want to be in life?" Like all teachers, he thought he would ditch sports after a while. Like he told Parlane that morning at the gate of the Maungakarema Cricket Club, Southee replied: "I'll play for the Black Caps one day, sir." The principal turned preachy: "I told him that unless he has the discipline and the desire to do everything well, show the same at cricketer in studies, he wouldn't realise his dreams. Do you want to be a failed sportsman and a failed student? In bad times, you will know the real value of education."

Southee merely nodded his head in approval and left the room. "He listened, worked really hard on his academics and got good marks". On his last day at the college, Kelley told him: "Son, I'm sure you will be an Black Cap one day. The commitment and dedication you have for the sport will take you there."

Four years later, when he made his Test de-

EXPLAINED What makes Southee such a difficult bowler

A CONCOCTION of swing, accuracy and smarts makes him an incredible bowler. While his stock ball is the massive away-curler, he can seam the ball inwards as well as make it hold the line. While he has lost a bit of pace in the last couple of years, his effort ball can still hurry the batsman. What is perhaps more compelling is his ability to set up batsmen. More than the sudden thrill of a quick kill, Southee prefers slow poison. Like a spinner, he would patiently bait the batsmen.

but at the age of 19, Kelley called him again and reminded him of the old conversation. "We laughed over it, but later he told me that he would never forget that conversation in his life." Even now, whenever he sees him on television or reads about him in the papers, he is reminded of that conversation.

It was in 2006, when he was the Northern Districts fast-bowling coach that Vaughn Johnson first stumbled onto Southee. The youngster's reputation preceded him but he

was not willing to believe hearsay. So one day, he attended the U-19 selection trials just to watch him. "He had a lovely seam presentation. The ball didn't wobble as it approached the batsman. Good height. But I thought he was still quite raw, could be a better bowler if he added a few yards of pace. At that point of time, he was bowling in the mid-120kmh."

Johnson didn't hurry him. He would ask him to bowl with a slightly longer run-up in the nets, so that he would get more momentum into his delivery stride. Also, he cut down his leap during the run-up, as he was jumping a bit too much, which in turn was slowing him down. "But in competitive games, I asked him to bowl normally until he fully mastered the new action," he remembers.

At times, even minor alterations could turn counter-intuitive and wreck careers. But Johnson knew his ward wouldn't falter. "He's got a good cricket brain on him, he's streetwise, he's a kid that understands the game and is a very good listener," he says. Southee's cerebral quotient is often understated, or overshadowed in the maverick brilliance of Trent Boult and the swagger of Neil Wagner. Yet, in the last two years he has had more success than them. From the England series in March 2018, Southee has 71 wickets at 22.81, compared to Boult's 61 at 25.49 and Wagner's 60 at 23.65.

There are few better bowlers who have mastered the art of setting up batsmen. There were several instances of it in Wellington, when he worked batsmen with clever changes in angles and trajectories. He went wide off the crease against India's most fluent batsman, Ajinkya Rahane, who thought he was looking to curl the ball in, only for it to hold its line, infusing dilemma. Whether to leave or not. In the end, he was caught it two minds and feathered a nick to the 'keeper.

Fewer still have the inch-perfect out-

swinger that nailed Prithvi Shaw in the first innings. The inward angle and length draws the batsman forward, before the ball deviates away from him. It's quintessential Southee. Quintessential swing bowling. He is a swing bowler, he himself frequently claims, but not merely a swing bowler.

He has various strings to his bow — he can seam the ball with equal felicity, surprise batsmen with the odd explosive ball, has added variations like the leg-cutter and scrambled-seam slower ball. Never mind his Super Over fumbles, look beyond his average of 29, it's time he is rated as one of the finest contemporary fast bowlers. Arguably, New Zealand's best-ever after Richard Hadlee in the subcontinent. In India, he averages 29, in Sri Lanka 15; he has produced match-winning spells in Australia, West Indies and England. But there was a time when his career seemed spiralling down. He took a flight out to Auckland to meet Johnson.

In 2017, Southee was dropped from the squad before the series against South Africa. He was badly hurt and epitaphs were written about Southee as an inheritor of unfulfilled renown, that he had lost his pace and cutting edge. Emerged a raft of seamers like Wagner, Lockie Ferguson and Matt Henry who were gunning for a place.

But Southee wouldn't give up without a fight. Together with Johnson, he dissected his bowling and realised that his non-bowling arm was getting too low when he was releasing the ball, which was hampering the fluency of his action. But more than anything else, he needed a short break and packed his bags for his hometown. Then, one morning, he turned up at the Maungakarema Cricket Club and asked Parlane: "Mate, can I have a bowl?"

WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

Maroof anchors chase; Pak defeat WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CANBERRA, FEBRUARY 26

PAKISTAN CAPTAIN Bismah Maroof anchored the chase with an unbeaten 38-run knock as Pakistan thumped former champions West Indies by eight wickets in their opening match of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, in Canberra on Wednesday.

Diana Baig's fierce spell of fast bowling exposed a struggling Windies top order as they posted 124/7, courtesy Stafanie Taylor (43) and Shemaine Campbelle (43). Pakistan opens Javeria Khan and Muneeba Ali controlled the chase and put on 57, with captain Maroof's unbeaten 39 steering her side to a comfortable win with 10 balls to spare. The Windies top order faltered and found themselves three wickets down within seven overs for the second game in succession.

Hayley Matthews, star of the 2016 Women's T20 World Cup Final, fell for a diamond duck as Diana got the game's first ball to move in the air and rap the opener on the pads.

Lee-Ann Kirby's stand-and-deliver approach yielded three quick boundaries as she lofted Aiman Anwar for four over mid-off and then cover in the fourth over. But she perished on the first ball of the fifth, Diana enticing another heave from the opener who skewed a catch to Muneeba Ali running back at point, departing for 16. Deandra Dottin's troubled stay at the crease ended when she tried to drag Nida Dar from outside off-stump over long-on and could only pick out Iram Javed, departing for one from 10 balls.

Experienced duo of Taylor and Campbelle steadied the ship, the captain improving on the disappointing strike rotation last time out before Campbelle cleared the midwicket rope of Dar. Campbelle missed an attempted reverse sweep off Anam Amin and while given not out on-field, Bismah's referral adjudged her lbw for 43. Taylor put her foot down in the 18th over, carting Aiman's low full toss over midwicket and just clearing the long-on boundary off Nida before picking out Diana on the cow corner fence for 43 from 47 balls.

BRIEF SCORES: Pakistan: 127/2 in 18.2 overs (Bismah Maroof 38 not out) beat **West Indies:** 124/7 in 20 overs (Shemaine Campbelle 43, Stafanie Taylor 43; Diana Baig 2/19) by 8 wickets.

Mandhana doesn't mind sharing limelight with Shafali

Melbourne: She has been the backbone of Indian women's cricket team's batting but swashbuckling India opener Smriti Mandhana is delighted that teen prodigy Shafali Verma is stealing her thunder at the ongoing Women's T20 World Cup as it takes the pressure off her. The 23-year-old Mandhana, who has been a key player for the Indian team in the last two-three years, said Verma is showing she is capable of filling her boots.

"I used to score a lot of our runs in the last two of three years, especially in the Powerplay, but now with Shafali coming in, she's getting the runs in the way I do. It makes the team more balanced," Mandhana said.

"Shafali has been a huge positive coming into the T20 side. The way she's going about her batting, it's so easy to bat alongside her," she said on the eve of India's T20 World Cup group match against New Zealand here on Thursday. Verma has already announced her emergence on the global stage. The 16-year-old has scored 68 runs across two games in this World Cup, including five sixes and seven fours, at an impressive strike rate of 212.

India vs New Zealand: Live on Star Sports: 9.30 am

HUNTING IN A PACK

With Wagner back in the mix, Kiwis may hit India with all-pace attack

SANDIP G
CHRISTCHURCH, FEBRUARY 26

LESS THAN five days after becoming a father, New Zealand bowling's engine room Neil Wagner was soaking in fatherhood on Wednesday. He spoke of the demands of paternity: "I had my phone consistently on Sky Go in the hospital, watching the boys and supporting from afar, and a couple of early mornings (watching on record) while doing the odd nappy change." Then with a typical mean streak, he stressed: "Now back to business and getting back with the boys."

Only that his return has put the team management in a dilemma, as his replacement Kyle Jamieson enjoyed a terrific all-round debut. So did his old pals Trent Boult and Tim Southee and all-rounder Colin de Grandhomme, thus making his return complicated. Wagner, obviously, has been one of the Kiwi bowling pillars in the last two years and would slot himself into the eleven. "Neil Wagner will come back and he's been a force in our team for a long time. He'll be back with us without a doubt," said coach Gary Stead. The New Zealand coach

has a practical solution: To play all four seamers, at the expense of left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel, who bowled a combined six overs in the entire Wellington Test.

"I think we always consider those things. We'll go down there, look at the wicket, we're still three or four days out at this stage, so don't want to make any assumptions before we get down there, but generally the wicket we play on at Hagley has a wee bit in it as well. We've seen in the past guys like Colin de Grandhomme can be useful in those conditions — think back to his debut against Pakistan, then it was useful conditions for him," Stead pointed out.

It would have been different if Mitchell Santner was around, but considering that Ajaz is neither handy with the bat nor thrifty with the ball, the pace-quartet strategy seems logical. The decision, Stead kept reiterating, would depend on the nature of the strip. The numbers at Hagley Oval are stacked heavily in favour of seamers. Of the 92 wickets the home team has plucked, as many as 90 have been credited to them. Boult averages 21, Southee 20, Wagner 26, and de Grandhomme 25. At the same time, the New Zealand spinners could bargain only two wickets, though they tried

PACERS HOLD SWAY

90 Of the 92 wickets New Zealand have picked at the Hagley Oval, 90 have been credited to the pacers. Trent Boult averages 21, Tim Southee 20, Neil Wagner 26 and Colin de Grandhomme 25.

five in six Tests they've played here. While it could be an indication of New Zealand's forte and the dearth of quality spinners, the overwhelming success of the seamers does indicate the usual characteristics of the pitch.

Two other numbers fortify this pattern. First, visiting spinners too have massively struggled here. Apart from Shakib al Hasan and Nathan Lyon, no spinner has managed three or more wickets on this ground.

No spinner features in the top 15 wicket-takers. As significantly, six of the 24 innings have seen scores under 200, nine under 300. Though the strip tends to flatten out and improve for

batting as the match progresses, as most of the pitches in the country do, the tempo of the match is usually decided in the first two days, when it does more than a wee bit. Even in the last two days, the pitch doesn't take much turn, and if at all there is some, it could be slow.

So spinners are generally consigned restrictive duties, which suited Santner but not Patel, who was wayward in the Wellington Test. Patel played in the last Test at Hagley as well, against Sri Lanka in 2018, when he was unused in the first innings and then bowled 12 wicket-less overs in the second, while Sri Lanka's spinners returned figures of 2-207 from 62 overs.

So rather than play a redundant spinner for the sake of it, a pacer of Wagner's or Jamieson's quality could add value, furnishing New Zealand's bowling unit with more venom. Wagner could bounce-barrage the Indians more than his colleagues. He promised it too: "We will obviously continue what we had been doing in the series and make it tough for them. Here, there is obviously a bit more pace and bounce too." The other day, skipper Kane Williamson could only sigh at the cruel irony. "In Australia, most of them got injured. Now we have too many waiting to play."



Neil Wagner is poised to return for the second Test in Christchurch. Reuters

CORONAVIRUS SPILLS ONTO THE FIELD

On Tuesday, the IOC's high-ranking official Dick Pound spoke about the Coronavirus being a threat to the Tokyo Olympics and a final decision to conduct the event to be taken at the end of a three-month window. The multidisciplinary Games could be the biggest sporting casualty but other events have already been cancelled or postponed indefinitely. Following is a list of international sports events hit by the outbreak.

<p>1 FORMULA ONE</p> <p>The Chinese GP on April 19 postponed.</p>	<p>1 TABLE TENNIS</p> <p>The world championship in Busan, South Korea, from March 22-29 pushed back.</p>
<p>1 VOLLEYBALL</p> <p>A beach volleyball tournament, due to be held from April 22 to 26 in Yangzhou, postponed</p>	<p>1 BOXING</p> <p>IOC announced Jordan as hosts of the boxing qualifiers for Asia and Oceania after an event in Wuhan was cancelled.</p>
<p>1 WEIGHT LIFTING</p> <p>Asian championships relocated from Kazakhstan to neighbouring Uzbekistan.</p>	<p>1 HOCKEY</p> <p>Pro League matches between China and Australia, scheduled for March 14-15 in Changzhou, will not be played.</p>

<p>8 GOLF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LPGA golf tour has cancelled the March 5-8 tournament in Hainan. ■ The Honda LPGA Thailand event in Pattaya and the HSBC Women's World Championship in Singapore also cancelled ■ The Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship in Pattaya, Thailand, has been rescheduled ■ The PGA Tour Series-China postponed two qualifying tournaments. ■ The European Tour postponed the Maybank Championship (April 16-19 in Kuala Lumpur) and the Volvo China Open (April 23-26 in Shenzhen). 	<p>7 FOOTBALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Four Serie A games cancelled. ■ Asian Champions League matches postponed. ■ China's 2022 World Cup home qualifiers moved out. ■ AFC Cup group matches postponed. ■ Domestic games in China postponed. ■ South Korea's professional soccer league postponed. ■ Japan's J League postponed.
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<p>1 ATHLETICS</p> <p>World Athletics Indoor meet scheduled for Nanjing in March postponed.</p>	<p>2 BADMINTON</p> <p>China Masters in Hainan postponed. Vietnam International postponed.</p>
<p>3 TENNIS</p> <p>Fed Cup Asia/Oceania event cancelled. China forfeited a Davis Cup tie. Xi'an Open tournament was cancelled.</p>	<p>1 RUGBY SEVENS</p> <p>The Singapore and Hong Kong legs of the World Rugby Sevens Series have been postponed.</p>
<p>1 SPEED SKATING</p> <p>International Skating Union (ISU) has postponed next month's short track speed skating championships in South Korea.</p>	<p>1 MIXED MARTIAL ARTS</p> <p>Asian promotion One Championship will be held on Feb. 28 in Singapore behind closed doors.</p>

*Numbers denote events cancelled or postponed

Why rescheduling of Games is not an option

IF THE coronavirus cases do not subside in the coming months, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) will be faced with two options: either postpone the Tokyo Games or cancel them. Both will have logistical, financial and security implications. Rescheduling an event of this magnitude will be practically impossible. The planning and coordination between all IOC-recognised sports federations is such that no other major event is held while the Olympics are on. It is done to ensure all the best athletes are able to compete at the Olympics and, from the broadcasters' and sponsors' point of view, there is no clash of sports programming. In non-Olympic years, there are several international championships held in the months of July and August, when the Games are generally held. Rescheduling the Olympics would mean they will have to rejig entire sporting calendars - from the World Championships of different sports, to domestic football, baseball and basketball seasons. That in turn would create logistical and financial headaches for those sports. FIFA, for example, faced stiff resistance from several countries when they announced Qatar 2022 will be a winter World Cup, which forced many to change their domestic calendars. So rescheduling or postponing looks a tough option. And with no Plan B in terms of a back-up host, the only options that IOC has - according to its longest-serving mem-

ber Dick Pound - is calling off the Games altogether. Cancelling the Olympics would have the biggest impact on the athletes - who train for a lifetime just to be at the Games. But it could also have a massive financial fallout. In the four-year cycle from 2016 till now, the IOC has generated \$5.7 billion in revenue, according to CNBC. Almost 73 per cent of it comes from selling media rights across the world. The rest is from sponsorships. But if there are no Games, then there will be no sponsorship and no TV rights, and the IOC will have to pay back each of its sponsors as well as the media rights holders. That amount, according to CNN Money, could be roughly \$2.2 billion. There could be other repercussions too. IOC gives back 90 per cent of its revenue to sports in the form of scholarships to athletes, education programmes and international federations, who get a major chunk. So cancellation of the Olympics, the worst-case scenario, would impact all of this. Let us forget the implications on Japan, who have officially spent \$12.6 billion although the country's audit board has estimated the actual sum could be twice that. In fact, the shares of Japan's biggest ad agency, Dentsu, slid to a seven-year low on Wednesday following Pound's interview to the Associated Press the day before, in which he spoke about the possibility of cancellation of the Tokyo Olympics. **ENS**



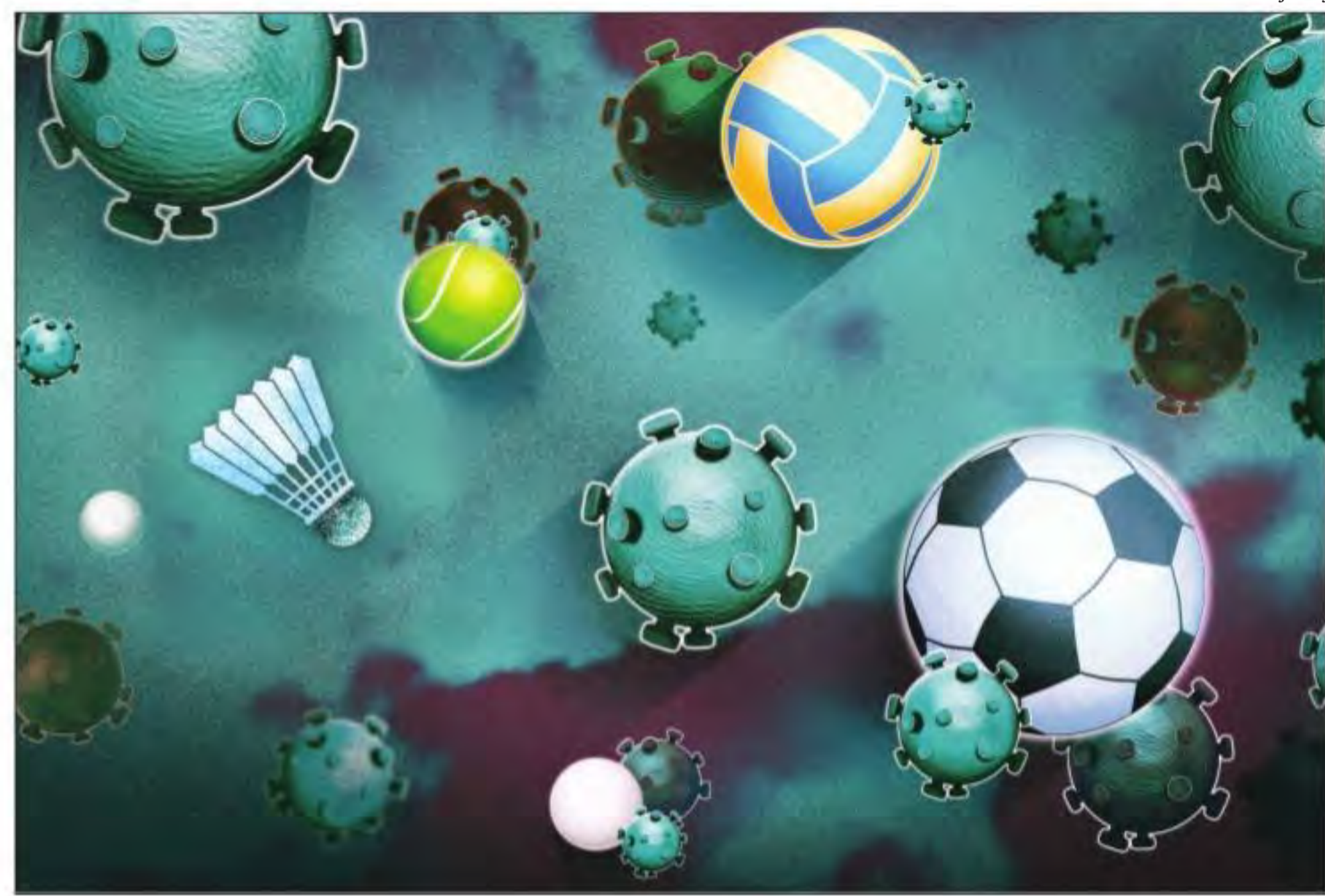
Football catches the flu

Coronavirus has hit the world's most popular sport with matches in Asia and Europe affected

Suvajit Dey

TARIQ PANJA AND JOHN DUERDEN
FEBRUARY 26

IN CHINA, officials struggling to contain the spread of the coronavirus have delayed the start of the soccer season for months, and at least one top-division team has been marooned in the Middle East for weeks, unable to return from a preseason training camp. In South Korea, fans attending matches earlier this month were checked for fever before being allowed inside stadiums, and masks were ubiquitous in the stands in Japan recently - until Tuesday, when officials announced that there will be no league play until at least mid-March. But the effects of the coronavirus on the global soccer calendar have crossed borders, too. Asia's soccer confederation announced three weeks ago that the matches in its biggest club championship involving Chinese teams would not be played for several months, and Vietnam has banned the hosting of sporting events of any kind this month, forcing even more games to be rescheduled. Now the disruption has spread to Europe. In Italy, where the number of confirmed coronavirus cases neared 300 on Tuesday, at least one game - the second leg of a knockout tie on Thursday between Internazionale of Milan and Ludogorets of Bulgaria in the Europa League - is to be played behind closed doors as the authorities continue to restrict public gatherings in the northern region of Lombardy. The decision on Tuesday to play the game without spectators came after the Italian authorities postponed four league games last weekend. Inter Milan, a top contender for the Italian league title, said the decision was a result of several days of talks with health officials in Lombardy and European soccer's governing body, UEFA, over how to stage the game, which could not be canceled because of the lack of alternate dates. The game against Ludogorets is believed to be the first time a European soccer match has had to be played behind closed doors because of a health crisis. Usually such conditions are imposed on teams as a punishment for fan violence or racist episodes. Inter, which is owned by a Chinese company, had already been taking steps to minimize the risks to its staff members from the virus. Nonessential employees have been told to work from home, and the club has purchased stocks of face masks and hand sanitizer for the team's headquarters. The decision to go ahead with Thursday's



match at Milan's cavernous San Siro stadium was confirmed on Tuesday. Inter, which has an even bigger game on Sunday, when it is scheduled to visit first-place Juventus, was one of the four Italian clubs that postponed a match in the country's top league last weekend. Other European countries are now contemplating similar possibilities. On Tuesday, the French club Olympique Lyonnais said in a statement that it had "taken note" of the French authorities' decision to let its match against Juventus in the Champions League proceed "in its initial configuration" on Wednesday night. Up to 3,000 fans of Juventus, a team based in the northern Italian city of Turin, are expected for the game, which is sold out. Asked about the match, Olivier Véran, France's health minister, told RTL radio that the authorities were being vigilant but that there were currently "no scientific and medical arguments" justifying the cancellation of large events in France. "Should we stop Fashion Week?" Véran said. "Should we stop games? Should we

close universities? The answer is no." He added, "We are not closing the borders because we do not know how to, but because it would make no sense at this stage." Health officials and governments in Asia, where sports schedules have been most affected since the virus first started to spread, are facing a far different reality. When Afshin Ghotbi, the Iranian-American coach of the Chinese team Shijiazhuang Ever Bright, was thrown into the air by his soccer players in early November after clinching promotion to the Chinese Super League, he had no inkling that almost four months later, he and his squad would still be waiting for the new season to begin. Shijiazhuang Ever Bright, whose home city of 11 million is about 165 miles southwest of Beijing, should have kicked off its new campaign last weekend. But instead of taking on Chinese superclubs like Guangzhou Evergrande and Shanghai SIPG in front of 40,000 fans, Ghotbi's team is playing preseason games in empty stadiums in Abu Dhabi, its base for five weeks and counting. Team offi-

cials said that they did not expect to play competitive soccer until at least May or even be allowed to return to China before mid-March. "It is a challenge for the players," Ghotbi said. "They are away from their families and psychologically they feel very helpless." To keep his players sharp physically and mentally, he and his coaches have created a points system for intrateam activities, among other distractions. "Even changing the hotel can make a difference," he said. Similar challenges are now being faced across East Asia. South Korea, where the number of confirmed coronavirus cases neared 1,000 on Tuesday, postponed the start of its domestic season indefinitely on Monday. The next day, Japan's J. League announced a delay of three weeks. Individual qualifying matches for the 2022 World Cup and the 2020 Olympics have already been moved; in one extreme example, the China women's soccer team was quarantined inside an Australian hotel, forced to exercise and train in hallways, before it was allowed to play a series of Olympic qualifying games. **NYT**

6 countries pull out of Delhi shooting WC

New Delhi: The novel coronavirus outbreak has prompted six countries, including the deadly disease's epicentre China, to withdraw from next month's shooting World Cup here, the National Rifles Association of India (NRAI) revealed on Wednesday. The ISSF World Cup is slated to be held from March 15 to 26 at the Karni Singh Shooting Range here. "There were some countries which were coming but because of the Coronavirus outbreak, their national policies dictate that they can't come," NRAI President Raninder Singh told reporters. "China have taken a wise decision on their own as a nation. They don't want to infect others and hence won't travel. Taiwan, which has locked down their entire island, Hong Kong, Macau, North Korea and Turkmenistan have also backed out because of national

policies," he added, referring to the domestic travel restrictions imposed by the governments of these countries. Earlier this month, the Indian government refused to grant visas to Chinese grapplers for the Asian Wrestling Championship held here due to the disease which originated from Wuhan and has killed more than 2600 and infected over 80,000 people all over the world. The NRAI chief also informed that Pakistan will also not be competing at the event as the country's shooters are busy familiarising themselves with a new coach. "Don't connect last time to this time. Pakistan were never coming. They have two athletes who have qualified for pistol events for the Tokyo Olympics," he said referring to the denial of visas to Pakistani shooters in last year's World Cup. **PTI**

Sharapova, first Russian No.1, retires in pain

TO UNDERSTAND why Maria Sharapova is retiring from professional tennis at age 32, it helps to know what she can no longer endure. "I look at photos of myself and of the motion where I'm just about to hit the ball, and I'm in the air or just as I'm making contact," she said on Tuesday, "and I can't even look at it because it makes me cringe. I have so much pain." The pain has been a near-constant companion over the last two years for Sharapova, a former No. 1 player who became one of the richest and most globally recognizable athletes of the 21st century but who found herself unable to return to the top of the game after a suspension for using a banned substance in 2016. Since then, she has dealt with recurring tendon damage in her right shoulder and inflammation in her forearms that at times has made it excruciatingly difficult for her to even grip a racket, much less rip a forehand. But she did not falter for lack of persistence. Quite the contrary, in her view. "As I think you've seen throughout my career, my perseverance has been my greatest tool, my greatest strength," she said in an interview. "But I've started feeling like it was becoming a weakness, because the stubbornness that was keeping me going was keeping me going for wrong reasons."

She was suspended in 2016 for using melidonium, a newly banned drug developed for heart patients that Sharapova said she had been taking for years because of a magnesium deficiency, dizziness and a family history of diabetes. She claimed to be unaware that melidonium had recently been added to the World Anti-Doping Agency's list of banned substances. Her suspension was ultimately cut from two years to 15 months on appeal, with an arbitration panel saying that Sharapova should not be considered "an intentional doper."

She recently ruled out having another shoulder operation, but pushing through the pain just led to more pain. Her comeback lasted two seasons and finished with a first-round defeat to 19th-seeded Donna Vekic at the Australian Open on Jan. 20. At the end, Sharapova said she just felt an overwhelming "heaviness." She recently ruled out having another shoulder operation, but pushing through the pain just led to more pain. Her comeback lasted two seasons and finished with a first-round defeat to 19th-seeded Donna Vekic at the Australian Open on Jan. 20. At the end, Sharapova said she just felt an overwhelming "heaviness." "Fourteen hours of my day in the last six months have been just, like, caring for my body," she said. "Before I get on the court every day I'm tied to like an ultrasound machine or another machine or a recovery unit." There will be no farewell tour. "I don't feel I need to go on the court for the entire world and every fan to know that this is my last time on the court," Sharapova said. "Even when I was younger, it was not the way I wanted it to end." A 6-foot-2 Russian who punctuated her flat groundstrokes with piercing shrieks, Sharapova made one of the most extraordinary journeys in sports. If not for the

Chernobyl nuclear disaster, she would surely not be a tennis star. Her parents, Yuri and Yelena, were living in Gomel in present-day Belarus in April 1986 when the reactor exploded in nearby Chernobyl. They eventually fled to Nyagan in distant Siberia to live near family. Sharapova was born there in April 1987, but Yuri soon moved the family to sunny Sochi on the Black Sea, where he discovered tennis and passed it on to his only child. In 1993, when Maria was 6 and post-Soviet Russia was in turmoil, she and her father moved to Florida with less than \$1,000 in Yuri's pocket. Martina Navratilova had noticed Maria's potential at a Moscow clinic and recommended that she train abroad. Sharapova became a global star in 2004 by winning Wimbledon at age 17, upsetting top-seeded Serena Williams in a hard-hitting final. Sharapova won five Grand Slam singles titles in all. Sharapova skied last week for the first time, hitting the slopes in Montana, and then sent a video to her former practice partner, the rising Italian star Jannik Sinner, who was once a promising Alpine skier. "He wrote to me, and he said, 'I think you should keep playing tennis,'" Sharapova said with a loud laugh. For now and very likely for good, Sharapova remains unpersuaded. "Look, would I have loved to have a sixth, a seventh, an eighth Grand Slam trophy?" she said. "That number sounds better, but I could have had zero when I started, and I got myself to a pretty incredible place." **NYT**

Cilic to lead Croatia's charge against India

Former US Open champion Marin Cilic will spearhead the Croatian Davis Cup team when they host India for the World Group qualifier in Zagreb next week. The two-time champions announced a five-man squad on Wednesday, listing the former world no. 3 along with inexperienced Borna Gojo and Davis Cup debutant Nino Serdarusic. Non-playing captain Vedran Martić - for whom this will be the first tie in charge - has also named a strong doubles team with world No.10 Ivan Dodig pairing up with world no. 16 Mate Pavic. The only big name missing from the Croatian squad is current world no.28 Borna Coric. Nonetheless, the European side will be a tricky opponent for the Indians. "This is a good opportunity for us. Coric won't be there but Cilic will, it's better to play one than both," says India Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali. "We still need to make sure we get at least one point on the first day to ease some pressure on the doubles team. The doubles rubber will also be tough. If that goes well, and if Cilic decides to play the fourth rubber, then in the decider we will have Croatia's no. 2 versus our no. 2, and anything can happen there." The last time Cilic, now ranked 36, played a Davis Cup tie was in the 2018 final against France when he won the third singles match

to give his team a 3-1 triumph and a second title in the competition. In 2019 though, he struggled with injuries and form. His absence made way for 21-year-old Gojo in the team. The world no. 276 made his debut in the competition at the World Group Finals last year, but lost both his matches - albeit to then world no. 23 Andrey Rublev and former world no. 1 Rafael Nadal. But with Cilic back in the fold, the tie becomes challenging for India. In comparison, the Indians have named a full squad. World no. 127 Sumit Nagal will lead the away team along with singles players Rajnesh Gunneswaran (134) and Ramkumar Ramanathan (180). The travelling contingent also includes three doubles specialists in Rohan Bopanna (38), Divij Sharan (57), and 46-year-old Leander Paes (114), who is playing his last season as a professional. The 18-time Grand Slam champion's (eight in men's doubles and 10 in the mixed event) selection in the team was based solely on his experience. In that match, they will be playing the Dodig-Pavic duo - who have won seven Grand Slam titles between them. Interestingly, at the ongoing ATP 500 event in Dubai, Paes got the better of Dodig in a first-round doubles match. But on the indoor hard court at the Dom Sportova, where India will get a seventh shot at making the World Group in as many years, with the Cilic in the opposition, they will need much more than bragging rights in doubles.

BRIEFLY

Bengaluru lose in AFC Cup qualifiers

Bengaluru: Bengaluru FC failed to qualify for the group stage of the AFC Cup after they lost the two-legged play-off tie to Maziya of Maldives in a penalty shoot out here on Wednesday. Bengaluru won the second leg 3-2 here on Wednesday but since they had lost to the Maldivian team 1-2 in their away match on February 19, the two sides were tied 4-4 on aggregate and the tie had to be decided on a penalty shoot-out. Maziya won the shootout 4-3 to progress further in the group stage of the AFC Cup.

Sonam beats Sakshi in wrestling trials

Lucknow: Proving her mettle yet again, young Sonam Malik downed Sakshi Malik for the second time in a row, this time by pinning the Olympic medalist, to make it to the Indian team for next month's Olympic Qualifiers here on Wednesday. Sonam failed to win a medal in both the events but impressed during her fifth-place finish in New Delhi. Meanwhile, Kiran won the trial in 76kg. The Asian Olympic Qualifiers will be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from March 27-29. The finalists will qualify for the Tokyo Olympics.

Top stars for India Open badminton

New Delhi: World No. 1 Chen Yufei and defending men's singles champion Viktor Axelsen will headline a star-studded international contingent when the 10th edition of the India Open Super 500 tournament will begin here on March 24. With the Olympic qualification cut-off set to end on April 26, the USD 400,000 event will see a galaxy of stars, including eight of the world's top 10 women singles and three of top 10 men singles players, descending at the Indian capital. Home challenge will be led by world champion PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, and doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Munich Serge over the Bridge

German winger scores a brace as Bayern expose a youthful Chelsea's shortcomings in the 3-0 first-leg win

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
LONDON, FEBRUARY 26

FRANK LAMPARD faces the first major test of his nascent managerial career after Chelsea were given a chastening Champions League lesson by Bayern Munich. Lampard's side are on the verge of crashing out of Europe's elite club competition following Tuesday's 3-0 home defeat against the German champions in the last-16 first leg.

Serge Gnabry's second-half brace and Robert Lewandowski's late strike underlined the gulf in class between a Chelsea team experiencing growing pains in Lampard's first season and a Bayern side packed with Champions League experience. Four of the Bayern team that outplayed Chelsea at Stamford Bridge were members of the German club's 2013 Champions League final-winning team.

That wealth of knowledge was clear to see as Thomas Muller ran the show in midfield, while Lewandowski, who played in that final for Bayern's opponents Borussia Dortmund, was a constant menace. For Chelsea to reach the levels set by Bayern, Lampard knows he needs to oversee a lengthy rebuild that will require patience—a quality not usually shown by the club's notoriously fickle owner Roman Abramovich and his advisors in the boardroom.

"This is Champions League football. We as a club haven't been fighting to get to the latter stages for a number of years and that's the level we have to get to," Lampard said. "This was a clear show that there is a lot of work to be done. I felt that when I took the job, I will keep working."

Lampard is only just finding his feet as a manager and deserves time to put his stamp on a Chelsea team that has shown flashes of excellence this season. They have impressed in wins against Tottenham, Arsenal and Ajax, but have flopped in a succession of uninspired home defeats.

His hand forced by Chelsea's transfer ban last summer, Lampard's first major decision after arriving from Derby, where he started his managerial career last term, was to put his faith in the club's cadre of talented youngsters. Tammy Abraham, Mason Mount, Fikayo Tomori and Reece James have all shone at times.

But Chelsea's kids remain far too raw to



Chelsea's Willy Caballero fails to stop a shot by Bayern Munich's Serge Gnabry during their Champions League match on Tuesday. The 3-0 loss was Chelsea's heaviest defeat in a home game of a European competition. Reuters

be expected to thrive against teams of Bayern's calibre. Lampard acknowledged that fact by starting with Abraham on the bench on Tuesday and leaving Tomori out of the squad, instead using immobile veteran Olivier Giroud up front in a gamble that backfired.

'Show character'

Against Tottenham on Saturday, the average of Chelsea's starting line-up was 28 years and 171 days, the oldest team Lampard has selected in the Premier League. In their 1-0 win at Ajax in October, the average age of his team was 25 years and 71 days.

After turning to his old guard when it came to the crunch, Lampard will have been frustrated that two of his senior players, Jorginho and Marcos Alonso, lost their heads. Alonso was sent off for lashing out at Lewandowski and Jorginho earned a needless booking for arguing with the referee, which rules him out of the second leg.

Lampard was not helped by Chelsea's fail-

LAID BARE

4 Number of players from the Bayern team that defeated Chelsea, who were also the members of their 2013 Champions League-winning side. In contrast, almost half of Chelsea's team were competing at this stage for the first time.

This was a clear show that there is a lot of work to be done. I felt that when I took the job, I will keep working."

FRANK LAMPARD
MANAGER, CHELSEA

ure to make any signings in the January transfer window, although Hakim Ziyech agreed a deal that will bring him from Ajax in the close-season. Injuries to N'Golo Kante, Christian Pulisic and Callum Hudson-Odoi have put further strain on Lampard's squad.

Chelsea are desperately short of guile and pace in the final third, while their central midfielders are far too predictable. Lampard tried to plug the holes in a leaky defence by deploying Antonio Rudiger, Andreas Christensen and Cesar Azpilicueta as a back three.

The experiment had worked against toothless, injury-hit Tottenham, but Bayern posed a more formidable threat. With their Champions League campaign in tatters, Chelsea must regroup for a final push to qualify for next season's tournament. Sitting in fourth place in the Premier League, Chelsea's destiny is in their own hands. "It was a harsh lesson. I learned about my players. We have to show character. They need to use it to positive effect," Lampard said.

At Maradona's 'home', Messi & Co. held

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NAPLES, FEBRUARY 26

ON A night when Lionel Messi was expected to put on a show in the stadium that was once Diego Maradona's, the Barcelona forward did relatively little in a 1-1 draw at Napoli in the first leg of the Champions League round of 16 on Tuesday.

Dries Mertens tied Napoli's all-time scoring record by curling in a first-half shot and Antoine Griezmann equalized for Barcelona near the hour mark after being set up nicely by Nelson Semedo for the visitors' only shot on target. Mertens matched former Napoli captain Marek Hamsik with 121 goals in all competitions for the club—six more than Maradona. "This result leaves a bitter taste, because we played on level terms and showed sacrifice," Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne said. "It was emotional to face Barcelona and Messi for the first time. I just feel we could have had a better result in front of our fans, especially with the chances we created."

Napoli has reached the Champions League knockout stages for the third time in six appearances but has never progressed further than the round of 16. Key Barcelona midfielder Arturo Vidal—who deputized in attack amid a shortage of forwards for Barcelona—was sent off in the final minutes after picking up two quick yellow cards, first for a hard foul on Insigne then for physical contact with Mario Rui after play had stopped. Already depleted by injuries, Barcelona will also be without Sergio Busquets in the second leg on March 18 due to accumulated cards.

Also, veteran Barcelona defender Gerard Pique limped off with an apparent injury toward the end. "They have other strong players," Insigne said. "We have to focus on going there, playing a great game, running some more risks and qualifying for the next round."

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