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The Indian EXPRESS

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2020, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 20 PAGES

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A day after incident of firing, heavy police presence in Shaheen Bagh, Sunday. *Gajendra Yadav*

Police probe as Jamia reports another firing Sunday night

SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

POLICE FORCES in the area were asked to reach Jamia late Sunday night, after reports of a shooting near the site of the anti-CAA protests. While the Jamia Coordination Committee (JCC) claimed a shot had been fired, Additional DCP Kumar Gyanesh said police are filing an FIR based on the complaint. "Investigation is on," Gyanesh said.

The message asking Station House Officers (SHOs) and their staff in the South East district to reach Jamia was flashed from the control room on behalf of the DCP at 12.20 am.

The alleged shooting comes a day after two shots were fired at the anti-CAA protest site at Shaheen Bagh, and three days after firing outside Jamia. While no injuries were reported in Shaheen Bagh, a Jamia student was injured Thursday.

According to the JCC, the latest incident involving two unidentified persons was reported from outside gate number 5 of Jamia Millia Islamia. A statement by the committee claimed that one of them was wearing a red jacket, and they were on a red scooter. No one was injured, the statement said.

According to Mohd Prafull (25), who claimed to be an eyewitness, the two men were riding a scooter and wearing helmets. "The pillion rider got off the scooter and fired. They didn't raise any slogans," said Prafull, who is studying TV journalism at Jamia.

Faizan, who is pursuing his graduation from IGNOU and claimed to be an eyewitness, said: "Around midnight, two people came and fired. I was 20 metres away when this happened."

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EC moves out police officer in charge of Jamia, Shaheen Bagh

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL & RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

THE ELECTION Commission (EC) Sunday "relieved" DCP, South East Delhi, Chinmoy Biswal from his post, apparently for poor handling of incidents of violence near Jamia Millia Islamia and Shaheen Bagh in recent days. Additional DCP, South East, Kumar Gyanesh, will take charge, the EC said.

The action followed a meeting of police officials with the EC

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UNION BUDGET

Behind new tax regime: 92% used exemption under Rs 2 lakh

New entrants to job market among those expected to shift: Revenue Secy

PRANAV MUKUL, SUNNY VERMA & AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

JUSTIFYING THE introduction of new personal income tax slabs and rates, Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey told *The Indian Express* Sunday that it was a move away from an "inequitable direct tax regime" — and cited an analysis by his department that almost 92 per cent of those filing I-T returns availed exemptions of less than Rs 2 lakh.

In absolute terms, out of 5.78 crore tax filers, about 5.3 crore (91.7 per cent) claimed deductions of less than Rs 2 lakh, including those under section 80C, Section 80D, section 80CCD(1B) (additional deduction of NPS), deduction for housing loan interest and standard deduction in 2018-19.

Only 3.77 lakh taxpayers, less than 1 per cent of all tax filers, claimed deductions of over Rs 4 lakh, according to the department's analysis.

Pandey said the new structure addressed issues of equity, and that he expected new entrants to the job market, smallscale business owners and those who have retired to move to the new regime.

"If you have a flat tax rate, it becomes inequitable in the way that you are taxing the rich and poor... Having a few tax slabs also becomes inequitable because there is a sudden jump...and there will be a tendency to understate income to get to a lower slab. Therefore, a progressive taxation system in income tax is internationally considered to be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

'Some taxpayers will be much better off'

INTERVIEWS: FINANCE, REVENUE SECRETARIES PAGE 14

Govt soothes fears: NRIs will be taxed only on income earned from India

SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

AMID CONCERNS that Non-Resident Indians may be brought in the tax net through changes introduced in Budget 2020-21, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Sunday clarified that NRIs will have to pay taxes only on income generated in India and not on earnings abroad.

The government has also proposed to reduce the number of days for individuals to be considered as Indian residents for tax purposes to 120 or more, from 182 or more at present.

In a media interaction, Sitharaman said: "What we are doing now is that the income of an NRI generated in India will be taxed here. If he's earning something in a jurisdiction where

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Kerala CM wrote to Centre expressing concern

Despite govt's talk of helping wealth creators, creeping socialism

HARISH DAMODARAN & SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

IN 1973-74, the maximum marginal rate of income tax, including surcharge, reached 97.75 per cent. That was, of course, at the height of Indira Gandhi's "socialism", when taxation policy explicitly targeted bringing about "an appreciable scaling down of the concentration of economic power and reduction in the inequalities in income and wealth".

That same socialism, according to a view expressed by many company promoters, is making a comeback, albeit in a creeping fashion. And it is ironically happening under a Prime Minister who, in his most recent Independence Day address, spoke of the need to "recognise and encourage the wealth creators of our nation". This sentiment was also echoed in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CAA debate moves to House, Trinamool for amendments in President's address

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

NEARLY TWO months after it was cleared by both Houses of Parliament, the amended citizenship law is set to emerge as a new battleground during the ongoing Budget session — at least in the Rajya Sabha.

In a first for the party, the Trinamool Congress has moved amendments to the President's address delivered Friday, when the session kicked off, raising questions on its "silence" on a range of issues from the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the Kashmir clampdown to the economic slowdown.

Party sources said its leaders in the Upper House — Parliamentary party leader Derek O'Brien and Chief Whip Sukhendu Sekhar Ray — have moved amendments to include the ongoing anti-CAA protests, the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens, and the National Population Register in the speech.

Similar amendments would also be moved by the party in the Lok Sabha, sources said. The Trinamool has 22 MPs in the Lok Sabha and 13 in the Rajya Sabha. On Friday, the main Opposition

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED

Symbolic value

THE AMENDMENTS do not make any difference to the government's functioning. But if passed, they signal embarrassment for the government, which drafts the President's speech.

'NO QUESTION OF ALLOWING NPR...'
BHUPESH BAGHEL
CHHATTISGARH CHIEF MINISTER

NIA CALLS ASSAM HISTORIAN PAGE 7

Passengers evacuated by Air India from Wuhan, China, being screened at Delhi airport. 323 were airlifted Sunday. *PTI*

Second coronavirus case in Kerala, was on the same flight as first

SHAJU PHILIP & ABANTIKA GHOSH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

ONE MORE student belonging to Kerala who recently returned from Wuhan University in China tested positive for Novel Coronavirus Sunday, taking the confirmed cases of the virus in the country to two. Officials said the 22-year-old, belonging to Alappuzha, had travelled along with the first positive case, now under isolation in Thrissur.

"They have common travel history from Wuhan to Kochi via Kolkata. After reaching Alappuzha, the 22-year-old was under home quarantine and was later shifted to the medical college after he developed minor symptoms, such as sore throat and fever. The symptoms are not serious although he has tested positive," an official said.

Kerala Health Minister

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WORLD

1ST DEATH OUTSIDE CHINA REPORTED IN PHILIPPINES

HOW CHINA KEPT IT A SECRET AT FIRST
PAGE 13

Scientists to digitally recreate TN port city swallowed by sea 1,000 yrs ago

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SOWMIYA ASHOK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

THE CHOLA Dynasty port city in Tamil Nadu that vanished from maritime history around 1,000 years ago will be digitally reconstructed by a consortium led by the Department of Science and Technology, officials told *The Indian Express*.

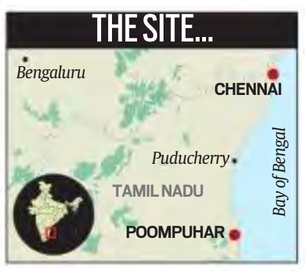
DST officials said there are exhaustive narrations in works of Sangam Tamil literature to infer that the city, located 30 km from the existing Poompuhar town in southern TN, was submerged due to "*kadalkol*" or rising sea levels.

"However, despite several studies on Tamil literature, archaeology, history, epigraphy, underwater exploration and geosciences, the mystery of the exact location of initial establishment of Poompuhar, its age, later shifts, along with periods, time-series spatial evolution in the present location at the mouth of river Cauvery, and the reasons and periods of its extinction, remain unresolved," a DST official said.

"The study involves underwater surveys and photography by remotely operated vehicles and sea bed drilling, remote sensing based geodynamic studies to bring out comprehensive

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE SITE...



THE CITY

- Ancient Chola capital on Cauvery Delta in southern TN
- Submerged in sea 1,000 years ago
- Featured in Tamil Sangam epics like *Silapathikaram*

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

APPLE BLOG: IPHONE 11 SUCCESS IS ABOUT SELLING CHEAPER NOT REDUCING VALUE
In countries like India, older, cheaper, iPhones have traditionally sold more than newer models. It has over the past couple of years tied up with banks to make the purchase easier with cheaper loans and the like.

VIDEO OF THE DAY

DECODING BUDGET 2020
We bring to you all the reactions from ministers and masses

EXPRESS EXPLAINED

WHAT IS ARCHIMEDES PRINCIPLE?
The technique was used in Jharkhand to rescue an elephant

EXPRESS AUDIO
Will the Budget 2020 spur the economy?
NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY
Detailing the highlights of the Budget, the options the government had to boost growth and whether the announcements match expectations.

FROM PAGE ONE

Wealth creators

Narendra Modi government's Economic Survey tabled on Friday, which invoked the Arthashastra and *Thirukkural* to extol the virtues of "wealth creation through the invisible hand of markets".

The apprehension regarding "creeping socialism" is based mainly on the tax proposals in recent Union Budgets, starting with that of Arun Jaitley in 2015-16 down to the latest one, for 2020-21, by Nirmala Sitharaman. The 2015-16 budget imposed a 2 per cent additional surcharge (12 per cent from 10 per cent earlier) on the "super-rich" having an annual taxable income of over Rs 1 crore. The super-rich surcharge was further increased to 15 per cent in the 2016-17 budget, which also levied a 10 per cent tax on dividend incomes received in excess of Rs 10 lakh per annum. The latter was over and above the 15 per cent tax already paid by companies on the dividends distributed to shareholders.

The real "socialist" turn, however, came in Sitharaman's maiden budget for 2019-20. It created two new classes of super-rich: Those with annual taxable income of between Rs 2 crore and Rs 5 crore were subjected to a surcharge of 25 per cent, while it went even higher at 37 per cent in respect of individuals with incomes exceeding Rs 5 crore. The new surcharges took the effective maximum tax slabs to 39 per cent and 42.74 per cent, respectively.

But given that most company promoters earn primarily from the dividends on their shareholdings — as opposed to salary — the above rates wouldn't really have hit them hard. The actual tax paid by companies on the dividend distributed by them, after factoring in a 12 per cent surcharge and 4 per cent health-cum-education cess, was only about 20.56 per cent. Even after adding the 14.25 per cent effective tax on dividend received (10 per cent plus 37 per cent surcharge and 4 per cent cess), a super-rich promoter with an annual income above Rs 5 crore wouldn't have shelled out more than 34.8 per cent.

That will change with the latest budget, which has done away with the dividend distribution tax (DDT) altogether. Henceforth, dividends will be taxed entirely in the hands of the recipients at their applicable rates. Simply put, the same super-rich promoter will have to pay tax on his dividend income at the highest marginal rate of 42.74 per cent. That includes the 30 per cent top basic slab rate, a 37 per cent surcharge on it (11.1 per cent) and 4 per cent surcharge on the sum of the first two (1.64 per cent).

"A 42.74 per cent tax is nothing but going back in time. In the 1970s, they could at least cite socialism. What justification can any government give now, when the rates were brought down to a maximum of 30 per cent in the 1997-98 budget itself? There will be no incentive any longer to declare dividends," said the chairman of a South-based company, whose dividend income last year was more than 40 times his gross salary of around Rs 1 crore. Dispensing with DDT would have been fine if the 37 per cent "socialist" surcharge had also gone, he added.

Analysts believe many companies may now prefer coming out with bonus issues, rather than declaring dividends, in order to reward shareholders. That would be even more so when the promoters themselves are main shareholders.

"Increasing the surcharge on the super-rich and simultaneously shifting the dividend tax burden to the investor would make it look like creeping socialism. But I think that has got to do more with bureaucratic overreach. The Prime Minister and Finance Minister have both clearly conveyed that the government respects wealth creators and is working to tackle issues of tax harassment," an official with a leading financial services firm noted, while rubbishing any parallels drawn with the Indira Gandhi regime.

He also pointed to the Modi government's bold move in September to slash the basic corporate tax rate from 30 per cent to 22 per cent, apart from the decision to privatise companies such as Air India, Bharat Petroleum and Shipping Corporation of India.

TMC

Congress party had staged a protest against the CAA in Parliament before the President's speech.

Sources said Trinamool's amendments seek additions at the end of the Motion of Thanks to the speech that express regret on the failure to "acknowledge the hardships and anxieties of people caused due to the passing of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019" and "allay the people's fear of a nationwide NRC and NPR".

They also seek to express regret that the speech did not take into account the "hardships of peaceful protesters, including students who were illegally detained, denied medical care, lathicharged, fired at and subjected to other forms of torture".

One amendment refers to the economic slowdown, the falling GDP, rising inflation and unemployment. Another amendment regrets the silence in the speech on the drop in India's ranking on the Global Press Freedom Index and the EIU's Global Democracy Index, and a low rank on the Global Hunger Index.

They also seek to express regret at the failure to "condemn the hate speech and divisive statements made by Ministers and Members of Parliament" and the silence on the "six-month long detention of political leaders including sitting Members of Parliament from Jammu and Kashmir and former Chief Ministers of the state".

This will not be the first time during the BJP-led government's term that amendments are being moved by the Opposition on the President's address.

In 2016, Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad had pressed for an amendment that sought to express regret that the address did not express concern over making educational qualifications a mandatory eligibility to contest Panchayat elections which, it said, goes against the interests of the poor, Dalits, and backward classes. The amendment was passed, with the Opposition rallying together. In 2015, the Opposition in Rajya Sabha managed to push through CPM leader Sitaram Yechury's amendment against the lack of any mention of the return of "black money" in the President's address.

This time, however, a string of retirements and resignations, and new entries to the BJP, have changed the equation in favour of the government.

The Opposition is still pressing ahead, given the sustained countrywide protests against the CAA and NRC. It hopes to gain the support of some NDA allies like JD(U), LJP and SAD, or fence-sitters such as AIADMK and BJD, particularly on the NRC.

The Opposition efforts face a stiff challenge from within, though, with a rift emerging between the Trinamool and Congress. Last month, TMC chief Mamata Banerjee had skipped an Opposition meeting on the CAA citing "dirty politics" by the Left and Congress in West Bengal.

The Trinamool, meanwhile, has also given notice for a discussion in the Rajya Sabha on the "Raging anti CAA-NRC-NRP people's movement in India".

Coronavirus

K K Shailaja said the student had been under observation since January 24, and a sample sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV)-Pune had tested positive. The 22-year-old is admitted to the isolation unit at Alappuzha Medical College. His parents have also been put under observation.

"Surveillance and control measures have been strengthened across Kerala in the wake of the confirmation of the second case of coronavirus in the state," Shailaja said, reiterating the state's experience of successfully containing Nipah in 2018. At least two hospitals with isolation facilities have been identified per district.

Officials said the Alappuzha student and the first patient who tested positive had been in contact in Wuhan and later travelled to India together. "She went home from Kochi by a taxi and later visited a primary health centre in Alappuzha. All her primary contacts, now put at 49, are under close observation. Besides, the other students who had travelled on the same flights as the two confirmed cases are being closely monitored," an official said.

Officials added that the first person who tested positive, also a student, is recovering fast.

Air India brought in a second plane-load of Indian citizens from Wuhan on Sunday, with the 323 flying into Delhi and subjected to screening and quarantine, along with the crew. Ambassador of India in China Vikram Misri tweeted that the flight also had seven Maldivians.

There are many Indian professionals in China who did not opt to be evacuated, while some were not allowed on the flights by authorities because they had fever. Official sources at the Embassy of India in Beijing said, "Ten Indians who were supposed to be on our two evacuation flights were not allowed to board because of temperature."

An earlier flight, on Saturday, had brought 324 passengers. After screening at the airport by the Armed Forces Medical Services and Airport Health Authority, 220 were sent for quarantine to an Army facility at Manesar near Delhi and 104 to an ITBP facility at Chhawla Camp in West Delhi. The passengers have been divided into sectors at the facilities, each with a maximum 50 people, who are not allowed to intermingle.

Nearly 2,000 people back from China, mainly from worst-hit Wuhan region, are under observation in Kerala now — a sharp rise from January 25, when the number stood at 172. Of the 1,999, 1,924 are under home quarantine and 75 in isolation.

Health Department sources said they were surprised at the quantum jump in the number of people under observation. "Ninety-five per cent of them are students who have been in Wuhan. Others are business travellers and there are a few who have returned from the UAE, Malaysia and Singapore," an official said.

India on Sunday temporarily suspended e-visa facility for travellers from China. "This applies to holders of Chinese passports and applicants of other nationalities residing in the People's Republic of China. Holders of already issued e-visas may note that these are no longer valid," an announcement by the Indian Embassy said.

Thermal screening of passengers coming in from China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand is currently on at 21 airports in the country. So far, 58,658 passengers from 445 flights have been screened and 142 symptomatic travellers referred to isolation facilities.

TN port city

information on the time series evolution and extinction. It also involves the visualisation of geodynamic processes of the last 20,000 years like land subsidence, sea-level rise, Cauvery's migration, floods, tsunami, cyclones and erosion. The information extracted from the studies will help digitally reconstruct the life history of Poompuhar," the official said.

Dr K R Murali Mohan, head of the ICPS division at DST, said a similar project is being rolled out at Dwarka city in Gujarat, too. "A lot of good work has already been done to map Dwarka. If we look at both these sites, they are diagonally opposite in direction. What are the geo-dynamics that happen in the Bay of Bengal? Did similar things happen on the other side also, geologically these two sites might be connected, we don't know," he said.

The reconstruction of Poompuhar is part of DST's Indian Digital Heritage project — an exhibition of its first project 'Digital Hampi' is currently on display at the National Musuem here.

"DST looked into heritage documentation and works with technologies that can be applied to digitally convert our monuments into virtual spaces," Mohan said.

The Hampi project brings to life tangible and intangible heritage in the area offering visitors a peak into how marketplaces looked and the musical pillars were constructed.

"In our second phase, we are looking at heritage that is currently underwater in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. The focus is now to find evidence on how these were built, whether photographs of the structures are available and the reasons behind the submergence of the city," Mohan said.

For the Poompuhar project, the DST has set up a network of 13 academicians and research institutions to trace the history of the ancient city. Some of these include School of Marine Sciences, Alagappa University, Academy of Marine Education and Training University in Chennai, National Institute of Ocean Technology and others.

Professor S M Ramasamy from Alagappa University, who is the national coordinator 'Project Digital Poompuhar', said the port city flourished in inter-continental trade but vanished. "Our first step is to study when and where it was established, where it shifted to and its present location. What were the phases and periods through which it shifted," he said.

Researchers say that initial studies carried out by the Indian Remote Sensing Satellites show that the city was established initially in the Cauvery Delta-A about 30km away from the present town around 15,000 years ago.

"It shifted further 10 km to the west to Delta-B around 11,000 years ago and again further 10 km west to Delta-C around 8000 years ago. Finally, it was re-established at the present location at the mouth of the river Cauvery around 3,000 years ago. The shifts took place due to the continuous rise of sea levels and the submergence of the deltas," said an official.

Further studies discovered a harbour-like structure as well as sea walls and probably a bridge. "These have given new insights about the life history of Poompuhar and the social, cultural, and technological evolution of this part of the country as well as the age of Poompuhar from 3000 years to 15,000 to 20,000 years. The study is also expected to provide packages of scientific information not only on the life history of Poompuhar and the socio-cultural evolution but also the science and technological evolution and the disaster history of this region," the official said.

EC action

on January 31, where the police officials are learnt to have been pulled up over handling of the law and order situation, especially in Shaheen Bagh, said sources.

Asked about the removal of Biswal, a senior EC officer admitted, "The Commission felt that the recent situations (near Jamia Millia and Shaheen Bagh) were not handled well."

At the January 31 meeting, police sources said, "The Election Commission sternly asked the Delhi Police about the first firing incident (near Jamia) and told them that it is was very shocking that someone had fired in front of several policemen."

The EC also frowned upon police not taking proactive action against Anurag Thakur, Minister of State (Finance), and MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma for inflammatory poll speeches, putting the onus on the EC instead. "EC officials reminded the Delhi Police that they have the power to take legal action against anyone as per the Indian Penal Code, and they don't have to wait for the Commission's directions," an officer said.

Last week, Thakur, addressing a rally for the February 8 Delhi Assembly elections, had repeatedly raised the slogan of "*Desh ke gaddaron ko*" as the crowd responded with "*goli maaro saalon ko*". The next day, Verma said protesters at Shaheen Bagh could "enter homes and rape our sisters and daughters". Thakur was banned from campaigning for 72 hours, and Verma for 96 hours.

At the meeting, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora is learnt to have also asked Biswal about the agitation at Shaheen Bagh, how it was affecting polling stations, and his plans to tackle the situation. "Biswal explained their strategy and alternative plans," the officer said.

It was under Biswal that police had barged into the Jamia campus on December 15 following violence during an anti-CAA protest, and assaulted students. Police had claimed they were chasing "rioters" who, after pelting stones and setting vehicles on fire, had rushed into the campus.

The past week saw incidents of firing at both Jamia and Shaheen Bagh. While a protester was injured when a 17-year-old shot at an anti-CAA protest at Jamia, a 25-year-old was held for firing shots at the Shaheen Bagh agitation site.

The EC statement Sunday said, "As decided by the Election Commission, this is to convey that Sh Chinmoy Biswal IPS (2008), DCP (South-East), stands relieved from his present post with immediate effect and shall report to MHA. In view of the ongoing situation, Commission directs that Sh Kumar Gyanesh, DANIPS (1997), Senior most Addl. DCP (South-East), shall take charge of DCP (South-East) immediately."

The poll panel asked the Ministry of Home Affairs and Delhi Police Commissioner to send a panel of three names to it for posting as regular DCP (South-East).

Jamia firing

As a crowd gathered outside Jamia police station demanding an FIR be filed, a senior police officer said, "As soon as the matter was reported, the SHO rushed there. He hasn't found anything from the spot so far, but we are considering eyewitness accounts and investigating the matter."

Ayesha, a student of Jamia, who also claimed to be an eyewitness, said: "We were protesting peacefully. As soon as we came near gate number 8, a shot was fired. Everyone started running after the person but he got away. After some time, the police arrived."

Jamia Nagar SHO Upender Singh assured students who had gathered outside the station that he "will stay here all night and won't let anything happen". "There are two pickets, checking has been done continuously for eight hours... You have told us the vehicle number and we are investigating it," he told students.

FULL REPORTS ON www.indianexpress.com

92% used exemption under Rs 2 lakh

one of the best practices...if the level of income inequality is high in a society, it is much more simple and desirable to have multiple and graded income tax-structure," he said.

In her post-Budget media interaction Sunday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the new regime will definitely ease the tax burden on many taxpayers. The intention of the government was to lower taxes over time along with elimination of exemptions and deductions, she said.

The new structure offered "deep cuts" in rates for middle class and lower middle class, she argued. This scheme will co-exist with the existing structure and will be optional. While the existing tax system has four tax slabs, the new one has seven tax slabs and offers lower rates.

"It will be obvious for anyone to see that because the rate cuts are deeper in the new scheme, we believe a taxpayer from a particular income bracket will be much better off coming into the new system. And the new system, however much I repeatedly say has no exemptions, there are a few exemptions also that we have allowed in the new system also," she said.

While calculating whether taxpayers will be better off in the new regime after forgoing exemptions, one also needs to take into account exemptions that have been continued. Once an individual opts for the new tax plan, there's no returning to the existing plan that offers deductions and exemptions.

Pandey said it was tough to put a number to how many would opt for the new regime. "It is providing relief to those who, because of family circumstances or life situations, are not availing those exemptions or are not in a position to avail those exemptions. If the earlier system was inequitable to that section of taxpayers, why should they suffer? Therefore, we have provided relief," he said.

"If there is someone above the age of 60, why would he need to put money in provident fund; why would he take life insurance; what he will take is some amount of health insurance. Why will he take a housing loan? He's getting a pension, he has a certain number of years in his life and he would like to use that money. But because, for him, there was no scope or incentive to invest in such instruments, he was at a disadvantage," Pandey said.

"Another class of people could be small businessmen. Today, he doesn't get LTC, doesn't get food coupons and various other benefits. He is also not getting standard deduction, so what should he do? At most, he can take benefits of around Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 2 lakh. He will file his return and if he finds, the new regime is advantageous, he will choose it. Otherwise, he will choose the old system," he said.

The Revenue Secretary also said that not all those claiming exemptions will opt for the new regime since the decisions would be dependent on income level.

Asked if the government had a roadmap for doing away with exemptions, Pandey said 70 of the exemptions have been removed in the new, simplified regime and the government will review or rationalise the remaining exemptions and deductions in the coming years "with a view to further simplify the tax system and lowering the tax rate".

"The other system will continue. As of today, if we had to remove exemptions, we could have removed it from the older regime... but there is no plan, as of today. We have provided this new option and if, say, 90 per cent of people shift to the new system, then what is to be done with the remaining 10 per cent, we will see at that time. Why should we indulge in speculation today?" he said.

The system to offer a lower income tax rate without exemptions is similar to the government's decision to offer a lower corporate tax rate without exemptions taken in September last year. Pandey, when asked about the net gain from the earlier decision, said that 90 per cent of the companies have opted for the new corporate tax regime.

Further, Pandey said the online functionalities would be made available by the tax department for taxpayers to see their liabilities under both regimes. In her Budget speech, Sitharaman had said, "We have also initiated measures to prefill the income tax return so that an individual who opts for the new regime would need no assistance from an expert to file his return and pay income tax."

NRIs will be taxed only on income in India

there is no tax, why will I include that into mine that has been generated there?"

Earnings of NRIs, such as rental income from property in India, is intended to be taxed by Budget provisions, she said. "If you have a property here and you have rent out of it, but because you are living there (abroad), you carry this rent into your income there and pay no tax there, pay no tax here...since the property is in India, I have got a sovereign right to tax," she said.

Meanwhile, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi voicing apprehensions that income of NRIs working in many tax-free jurisdictions such as Dubai and other locations in the Gulf region could be taxed in India.

In his letter, he said that reducing the number of days to be considered as Indian residents will cause hardship to many people from Kerala working in Gulf countries.

"The proposed reduction of the period from '182 days or more' to '120 days or more' is likely to adversely affect professionals leaving for employment in areas like oil rigs, who will be in India off duty after a period of arduous work schedule," Vijayan wrote, demanding necessary changes in the Finance Bill 2020 to restore status quo.

The Finance Bill 2020 has proposed that an Indian citizen shall be deemed to be a resident in India, if he is not liable to be taxed in any other country or jurisdiction. In a subsequent clarification, the Finance Ministry said: "This is an anti-abuse provision since it is noticed that some Indian citizens shift their stay in low or no tax jurisdiction to avoid payment of tax in India."

It said: "In order to avoid any misinterpretation, it is clarified that in case of an Indian citizen who becomes deemed resident of India under this proposed provision, income earned outside India by him shall not be taxed in India unless it is derived from an Indian business or profession."

Kerala's economy, which is substantially supported by remittances comprising around 15 percent of our Gross State Domestic Product, especially from those in the Gulf countries, will be adversely affected by this amendment, Vijayan wrote.

"The Government of Kerala places on record its strong disagreement with the move in the Finance Bill, 2020, which is brought in under the guise of checking tax abuse, but will, in reality hurt those who toil and bring foreign exchange to the country," the letter said.

It is requested that the Central Government may desist from going ahead with the amendment to section 6 of the Income Tax Act 1961, proposing to reduce the stay period of 182 days or more for Indian citizens or persons of Indian origin, to 120 days or more, for being treated as residents for tax purposes, the Chief Minister wrote.

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257 AQI PM: 2.5	268 AQI PM: 2.5	144 AQI PM: 2.5	286 AQI PM: 2.5

0-50 Good | 51-100 Satisfactory | 101-200 Moderate | 201-300 Poor | 301-400 Very poor | 401-500 Severe

JUDGE RESERVES ORDER ON PLEA SEEKING EXECUTION

Dec 16 rape convicts playing with system, Centre tells HC

PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

The convicts were to be hanged on February 1

THE CENTRE Sunday sought hanging of the convicts in the December 16 gangrape-murder case citing last year's alleged police "encounter" in Hyderabad, and said the public celebration of the killing of all four accused in the rape-murder case was indicative of "depreciation in the country's judicial system".

"There is a deliberate, calculated, well-thought of design to frustrate the process of law," Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre in the Delhi High Court said, adding that "seven years have gone by and they are still playing with the machinery of the judicial system".

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait reserved his order on a petition by the MHA against a trial court order postponing execution of death warrants issued against the four convicts in the case.

The four accused in the rape and murder of a Hyderabad veterinarian were shot dead by the Telangana Police in December last year, when they were taken to the spot to recreate the crime scene and allegedly attacked police and tried to escape.

SG Mehta said the "execution of its executive power is at stake". "People are not sending their daughters outside till such monsters are on road," the SG said, adding that the "convicts are testing the patience of the nation. The conscience of the nation was shaken. What happened in Telangana (Hyderabad) is being looked into but people celebrated. It gave a wrong indication on judicial system. People are losing faith in the system".

He submitted that "in the interest of the society and... of the victim, death sentence cannot be delayed. It is also in the interest of the convict, any delay in execution of the death sentence will have a de-humanising effect".

On Friday, a day ahead of the scheduled hanging of the four convicts — Mukesh Singh, Pawan Gupta, Vinay Sharma and Akshay Kumar Singh — a Delhi court deferred their execution, saying the country cannot afford to discriminate against a death row convict in pursuit of legal remedies.

Senior advocate Rebecca M John, appearing for convict Mukesh Singh, urged the High Court not to set aside the trial court's order. She argued that the Centre should have approached the Supreme Court against the trial court order, as the authority to approach for execution is Delhi government and not the Centre.

John also opposed the Centre's contention that the convict delayed the execution, saying "neither his curative nor mercy (plea) was dismissed on account of delay, but was rejected on merit".

"You may hang me. But no one has the right to condemn me for working within legal framework," she said, adding that "if sentence is common for four convicts, then execution has to be common".

Appearing for the other three convicts, counsel AP Singh argued that they belong to poor, rural and Dalit families and can't be made to bear the brunt of ambiguity in the law.

The hearing, which went on for over three hours, also saw the SG arguing that the Delhi Prison Rules provide for execution of death sentence: "It is the judicial adjudication of a conduct. It was so abhorrent that all three courts concluded that the convicts deserve death penalty."

"The only mandate under Rule is that death sentence after confirmation would not be executed till application for special leave is decided by the Supreme Court (SC).There is no other embargo on stay of execution," the SG said.

He argued that the mercy plea is an individual jurisdiction. "President will not sit in appeal. Simultaneous hanging is there till SC finally concludes the issue judicially. Mercy (plea) can be filed after the SC concludes..."

However, John, argued that there is ambiguity with respect to piecemeal execution, which is why the Centre has approached the Supreme Court to settle guidelines on singling out one or two convicts.

"Even as a death row prisoner, I have to be treated fairly in terms of Article 21, till I die. All procedure, not matter what the stage, have to be fair and reasonable.

"No prejudice will be caused to anyone. If everything is rejected, the date is not far away when execution will happen. We cannot circumvent the procedure when life is at stake. My rights are protected and that's why I am pressing for a common execution," argued John.

"They have the right to be dealt fairly, but so was the right of the victim to be treated fairly," SG Mehta said, adding that the Delhi government and Tihar do not have a problem if the convicts are hanged one after the other.

On Saturday, President Ram Nath Kovind rejected Vinay's mercy plea. The SC also dismissed Pawan's plea seeking a review of its order dismissing his juvenility claim.

Mukesh has exhausted all legal remedies, including the clemency plea which was dismissed by the President and the appeal against the rejection was thrown out by the SC on January 29. Curative petitions of Vinay and Akshay have been rejected by the SC. Subsequently, Akshay filed his mercy plea before the President, who is yet to pass his decision. Pawan is yet to file his curative and mercy petition.

Sanitation worker dies cleaning sewer in Shahdara, another critical

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

Ravi (left) died after he allegedly inhaled toxic fumes from the sewer, said police, while Sanjay is in a critical condition

A 24-YEAR-OLD sanitation worker died and another sustained injuries after allegedly inhaling toxic fumes while cleaning a manhole without safety gear in North East Delhi's Shahdara Sunday. Police said the work was given to a private contractor by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

The incident took place at the CBD ground in Karkardooma, near the BSES office. Over five workers under a private contractor were pressed into service to clean a 15-feet-deep sewer.

Police said the victim, Ravi, a resident of Sanjay Amar Colony, was the first worker to descend into the sewer. When he didn't come out after some time, another worker called Sanjay (35) went into the sewer as well. When both didn't come out, the other workers called police.

DCP (Shahdara) Amit Sharma said, "We received a call around 1 pm about the incident. A police team rushed to the spot and pulled out both the men, who were unconscious, using ropes and rushed them to Lok Nayak Hospital. Ravi was declared dead on arrival, while Sanjay is in critical condition and undergoing treatment."

Police said a case has been registered at Anand Vihar police station against the private contractor based on a worker's complaint. The contractor is absconding and police are investigating the matter.

In his complaint, the worker alleged they were called to work on the sewer on Saturday. Their contractor told them they would be paid Rs 350 per day for the job. As they couldn't do the work that day, they were called the next day.

The contractor allegedly refused to give them safety equipment when he was asked to do so. After the two men fell into the well, he allegedly fled from the spot before police arrived.

Police said the men were forced to clean the sewer in order to earn their wages. Ravi had earlier worked with the private contractor on DDA and other private projects for years.

Despite several calls, DDA officials refused to comment on the incident.

Inspired by TV shows, 2 kidnap toddler, nabbed

New Delhi: Police arrested two 19-year-old DU students after they allegedly kidnapped a two-year-old boy from Outer Delhi's Ranhola on January 30. Inspired by TV shows, the two kidnapped the child from their neighbourhood and demanded Rs 5 lakh from his parents. The accused were identified as Rahul Kumar and Kuldeep Singh. Kumar and Singh study in School of Open Learning – Kumar is a BCom student while Singh is a BA student.

DCP (Outer) Dr A Koan said, "We received a complaint from the boy's father and deployed teams to arrest the two. The men were called at Hastal, a nearby area to collect the ransom. When they came there, police rescued the child and arrested the accused." During questioning, the accused said they were inspired by crime shows on TV and wanted money. Hence, they allegedly conspired to kidnap the child. They picked the child from his house and took him to a nearby sports ground, said police. **ENS**

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BRIEFLY

Coronavirus: 5 more patients admitted to RML Hospital

New Delhi: Five more suspected novel coronavirus (nCoV) cases have been reported at RML Hospital, with five people being admitted to the isolation ward — taking the total number of people admitted to the isolation ward to 13. Two patients were admitted on Saturday night.

Traffic cop dragged on car bonnet, case filed

New Delhi: A purported video of a traffic policeman being dragged on a car's bonnet went viral on Sunday, following which a case has been registered, with police saying they are investigating the matter. In the video, the traffic police officer is seen trying to stop the car, when the driver tries to escape by speeding. The officer jumps on the bonnet and tries to stop the car but the driver turns the vehicle and drags the cop. The cop can be seen struggling to stay on the bonnet and not fall off. An initial probe into the case reveals that the incident took place in Nangloi in November last year.

29-year-old constable kills self

New Delhi: A 29-year-old head constable allegedly committed suicide after he jumped in front of a moving train. Police said they received information on Sunday morning about an accident at Mundka Railway station. The man was later identified as Yogender Mathur. He worked in the Traffic Control Room. Police said they didn't find a suicide note. **ENS**

Residents protest Shaheen Bagh blockade, 50 detained

ANANYA TIWARI & JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

At the protest against the blockade, Sunday. *Gajendra Yadav*

ON THE 50th day of the Shaheen Bagh protest, hundreds of residents from colonies in and around the area staged a protest at G D Birla Marg Sunday, saying the road blockade has increased their travel expenses.

Shouting slogans like *'Desh ke gaddaron ko goli maaro saalon ko'*, *'Modi Modi'*, *'Jai Shree Ram'* and *'Vande Mataram'*, protesters marched towards barricades put up near the Shaheen Bagh protest site, before being removed by police. Around 50 were detained and taken to Badarpur in buses.

Jaiprakash Choubey (45), a coaching centre teacher in the area, said, "What kind of freedom is this wherein you can hijack public property? These people are supported by the *tukde-tukde* gang attached to Pakistan, Dubai, Jamia and JNU."

Police said a few right-wing organisations requested to organise a protest demanding clearance of the blocked road. A senior police officer said they were denied permission and the anti-Shaheen Bagh protest was called off Saturday.

Chinmoy Biswal, who was DCP (South East) till Sunday evening, said the residents were stopped before they could reach the barricades and weren't allowed to proceed further: "We requested them to disperse peacefully. They protested for some time and later left. Some were detained, but later released."

Meanwhile, a day after a man opened fire near the Shaheen Bagh protest site, security was beefed up by locals and police. While police heavily barricaded all entry points, locals frisked everyone before letting them sit inside the tent.

A senior police officer said, "We had earlier put barricades at three spots near the site. After the incident, we deployed more police teams to check these spots and look out for anything suspicious."

Biswal added, "We are taking care of the security and have sealed two major entry points on Road 13 A in the area. Police teams are also keeping a check on security from Kalindi Kunj."

Ruckus at India Art Fair over painting

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

AN ART performance to celebrate womanhood and show solidarity with women across the country at the India Art Fair, on its last day Sunday, was cut short over complaints that it was "political in nature".

Yaman Navlakha (35), who was involved in creating the artwork titled 'The Wall', said it was a collection of paintings made by women. "Someone complained it was a protest-inspired work... It was not, " he claimed.

He alleged that police barged in towards the end of the performance, when the artwork was being held up and as *Hum Dekhenge* — a poem by Faiz Ahmed Faiz — was being sung.

A statement from the India Art Fair said the incident took place at the booth of the Italian Embassy Cultural Centre. Their contract with the embassy required it to share details of all activities slated to take place at the booth. "We were not informed about activities at the booth. In fact, post the incident, the fair director spoke with the Italian Ambassador who confirmed they too had not been informed of the activities taking place in their booth. The organisers only became aware when police arrived. They told us they had received a complaint," the statement said.

A senior police officer said, "We got a call from the fair about a controversial CAA-related painting being displayed. A team went there and found no such painting. We didn't remove or confiscate any artwork."

At the start of the fair, organisers had put up a notice saying they were aware of events across Delhi-NCR and the country, but said they have a "zero-tolerance policy against banners or sloganeering" as their "permissions are restricted to exhibition of art".

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SANJAY GOYAL (51)
BJP, Shahdara

TOTAL ASSETS (2020)
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MOVEABLE ASSETS
₹22.72 CRORE
CASH: ₹1.05 L
JEWELLERY: ₹81.04 L
IMMOVABLE ASSETS
₹21.49 CRORE

Assets	
Agricultural land	Nil
Houses	₹12.90 cr
Commercial buildings	₹7.49 cr

TOTAL ASSETS (2017)
₹34.46 CRORE
MOVEABLE ASSETS
₹16.25 CRORE
IMMOVABLE ASSETS
₹18.21 CRORE
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION
B.Com (Honours), DU

RAMNIWAS GOEL (72)
AAP, Shahdara

TOTAL ASSETS (2020)*
₹4.96 CRORE
MOVEABLE ASSETS
₹60.97 LAKH
CASH: ₹4.20 L
JEWELLERY: ₹12.79 L
IMMOVABLE ASSETS
₹4.35 CRORE

Assets	
Agricultural land	Nil
Houses	₹2.87 cr
Commercial buildings	₹1.48 cr

TOTAL ASSETS (2015)
₹4.39 CRORE
MOVEABLE ASSETS
₹22.16 LAKH
IMMOVABLE ASSETS
₹4.17 CRORE
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:
BA, Hansraj College, DU

BALLOTIN

AAP widens poll outreach

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party has been trying to reach out to the loyal voter base of the Bharatiya Janata Party through a number of interventions in the run up to the Delhi Assembly polls. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal recently released a dedicated video clip for BJP supporters, seeking their support. As part of the campaign, he has also been giving interviews to news channels, including those which the AAP functionaries refused to engage with over the last few years and refused entry in news conferences. **ENS**

IN MANIFESTO: FOCUS ON POLLUTION, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Cong borrows AAP's power subsidy scheme, promises 300 units free

ANANYA TIWARI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

TAKING A leaf out of the Aam Aadmi Party's power subsidy scheme, the Congress has promised to provide subsidised electricity up to 600 units, with free electricity for those consuming up to 300 units.

Launching the Delhi Assembly poll manifesto at the party's headquarters on Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg on Sunday, DPCC president Subhash Chopra said, "We will make electricity free till 300 units. From 300-400 units, we will give a discount of 50%, for 400-500 units it will be 30%, and for 500-600 units, there will be a 25% discount."

Under the AAP-led Delhi's government power subsidy scheme, those consuming less than 200 units a month get a zero electricity bill. Those using between 201 and 400 units per month get a 50% subsidy.

The Congress also released a green manifesto, dedicated entirely to environmental issues, which promised to allocate 25% of the budget towards combating pollution and make Delhi India's first electric vehicle city.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which the Congress has been actively opposing, also featured in the manifesto, with the party saying it will move the Supreme Court and challenge its constitutional validity.

Congress leader and manifesto committee chairman Ajay Maken said, "The BJP is trying to communalise and polarise the elections. By February 21, we will approach the SC and challenge the constitutional validity of the CAA under Article 131. In Delhi, we will not implement the proposed NRC nor the NPR in this form. The elections should be on issues of Delhi, not anything else."

Gowda, Maken, Chopra and Sharma at the manifesto launch Sunday. *Abhinav Saha*

Other promises that featured in the 'green manifesto' include procuring 15,000 e-buses and building necessary infrastructure for depots; increasing green cover to 30%; giving Metro fares subsidies to students; targeted dust management; and creating a 'rice stubble to energy fund' to establish stubble crushing power plants.

"In the last five years, thousands of people died due to respiratory diseases caused by pollution, and I blame the Kejriwal government for this. We will allocate 25% of the budget to control pollution," said Chopra.

MP Rajeev Gowda, convenor of the manifesto committee, highlighted three initiatives that the Congress will undertake for development of the youth and job creation: the 'Rajiv Gandhi Internship Program' to offer opportunities to young graduates; a Rs 5,000-crore fund for start-ups called Yaari Startup Incubation Fund; and a Rs 1,000 crore corpus for Homi Bhabha Research Fund to encourage research.

"These three initiatives tell you the kind of transformative impact that the Delhi Congress envisions on the potential of our youth. We will transform our youth into world-class professionals, researchers and start-up entrepreneurs," he said.

Other initiatives they promise to undertake are the 'Sheila Pension Yojana', under which Rs 5,000 per month will be given to senior citizens, persons with disabilities and transgender people without any income; building 10 super-speciality hospitals in Delhi in the next five years; a Yuva Swabhiman Yojana or unemployment allowance for graduates at Rs 5,000 per month and Rs 7,500 per month for postgraduates.

THE PROMISES

- 30 paise cashback per litre of water saved from 20,000 free litres provided to each household
- Cash rebate for households conserving electricity, at a rate of Rs 3 per unit up to a maximum of Rs 500 per consumer
- Free education from nursery to PhD levels for women
- Subsidised Metro fares for students
- Discounted coaching for EWS students in higher education
- 350 sq ft flat for those living in unauthorised colonies — rental or owners — at the same place

Hitting out at AAP's policies, Chopra said, "The AAP has not used 40% of its budget allocated to education and health."

On the electricity subsidy, Maken said: "Punjab gives Rs 7,500 crore in electricity subsidy — three times that of Delhi. The way we did it successfully in Punjab, we will do it in Delhi too." He added that electricity will be given at subsidised rates for non-polluting industries to draw them into Delhi.

He also said that instead of the subsidies going to private companies (discoms) like the AAP government initiated, the Congress will give it to the people through direct benefit transfer method.

3,000 voters opted for postal ballot this time

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

FOR THE first time in the polls in the capital, voters aged 80 years and above and those from the PWD category were given the option of postal ballot. As per figures available with the CEO office, around 3,000 voters from both categories opted for this provision.

"We had got 3,383 applications from all districts, of which 2,919 have been accepted... The idea was that maximum number of people should vote... This option was only for those who are not able to physically come. So we didn't expect too large a number," said CEO Ranbir Singh.

In the New Delhi district, Form 12D — which was to be filled by those opting for postal ballot — was given to 8,049 elderly voters and 2,217 PWD voters. Of these, they got applications from 469 elderly voters and 245 PWD voters, officials said.

In North East district, a total of 9,421 forms were distributed. "Of these, we didn't get back 562, 75 of them had died and 2,679 people refused postal ballot," said an official.

District Election Officer (DEO) West Neha Bansal said in her district, applications of 195 senior citizens and 22 PWD voters had been accepted. In the South district, a total of 116 voters aged 80+ and 28 from PWD voters were accepted. Maximum 80+ voters who availed this facility are from Malviya Nagar (46) constituency, whereas maximum PWD voters (18) are in Deoli.

DEO South West Rahul Singh said they accepted 651 of 681 applications received for postal ballot. In the North District, 158 out of 160 forms of voters had been accepted.

The lowest demand seems to be from South Delhi district, where only 50 voters including both categories, opted for postal ballot. District-wise figures from other districts could not be obtained.

ELECTRIC CAMPAIGN

AAP party workers take out a neighbourhood rally on electric bikes in Sheikh Sarai 1, Sunday. *Avishek Dastidar*

In complaint to EC, AAP cites 'hate speech', demands campaign ban on Adityanath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

IN A complaint to the Election Commission, the Aam Aadmi Party Sunday demanded a "complete ban" on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from campaigning in Delhi and his arrest for delivering "hate speech".

"It is very strange that the EC doesn't act against Yogi Adityanath. He should be banned from campaigning in Delhi and the EC should lodge an FIR against him for his divisive speeches. If the commission doesn't give time to meet the AAP delegates by 12 pm on Monday, we will launch a dharna at the EC office," said AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh

In his campaign speeches, Adityanath has alleged that the Kejriwal government is "sponsoring" the anti-CAA protest at Shaheen Bagh and also "feeding them biryani". The UP CM also incorrectly claimed that Kejriwal opposed the scrapping of Article 370.

"BJP can't talk about water, electricity, health, education and unemployment. In order to polarise the electorate, BJP leaders are resorting to divisive tactics and speeches," said Singh, who is AAP's Delhi election in-charge.

"We are writing to the EC, attaching the CD of Yogi Adityanath's speeches. It contains what all he spoke during the rallies. The EC can't remain indifferent to this grave issue. It is blatant misuse of democratic and constitutional institutions," Singh added.

Late to 2 rallies, Yogi says Shaheen Bagh to blame

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

LATE BY over two hours for a rally in Badarpur, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Sunday attributed the delay to traffic jams caused by the anti-CAA stir at Shaheen Bagh, accusing the AAP government of encouraging "anarchy".

Adityanath's Badarpur rally was scheduled to start at 4.30 pm and another one at Tughlaqabad at 6.15 pm. The UP CM reached the first venue at 6.30 pm and the next one at 7.30 pm, and at both places blamed the Shaheen Bagh stir for the delay.

"I had planned to reach here at 5 pm and had accordingly planned my events for the day. But there is so much traffic across the city and the sole reason is Shaheen Bagh. Attempts are being made to ruin the city's system. Thousands of Delhi youth work in Noida and Greater Noida. Their salaries are being cut by MNCs as they are not being able to reach work on time. Encouraging the dharna at Shaheen Bagh amounts to encouraging anarchy," said Adityanath.

He was addressing the rally in support of BJP's candidate from Badarpur, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri. In his address, Bidhuri said "Videos are being made of those sitting at Shaheen Bagh and after February, they will be treated the way Yogi's government did in UP".

The references to "Yogi's treatment to anti-CAA protesters" drew loud cheers at the well-attended rally in a congested lane of the South East Delhi district, bordering Faridabad.

On his second day of electioneering, Yogi largely stuck to the "anarchists at Shaheen Bagh" narrative, invoking the "biryani and bullet" jibe while also accusing Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of "opposing the abrogation of Article 370". Kejriwal had, in fact, welcomed the decision of the Narendra Modi government.

"When Article 370 was scrapped in Kashmir, the only two people inside the country who protested the decision were Kejriwal and Rahul Gandhi," Yogi claimed.

Yogi said the Shaheen Bagh dharna against CAA is merely an "excuse" for the protesters to "oppose the abrogation of Article 370, the clearing of the path for the construction of Ram Mandir and the triple talaq bill".

Adityanath at a rally in Karawal Nagar on Saturday. At Sunday's rallies, he accused the AAP government of encouraging "anarchy". *Praveen Khanna*

The protests at Shaheen Bagh against the new citizenship law, which has for the first time made religion as one of the criteria for obtaining Indian citizenship, entered its 50th day Sunday.

"Kejriwal and company believe in sponsoring Shaheen Bagh. They are busy feeding them biryani," Adityanath said. He once again asserted that those disturbing the Kanwar Yatras in UP would have to face "police bullets".

"Kanwars had to face lathi charge. They were not allowed to get DJs along or blow conch shells. After I took office, I categorically issued orders to allow DJs, blowing of conch shells as well as showering of petals from helicopters. People cautioned that there will be riots. I said people who believe in the power of faith do not indulge in riots or arson. We are guaranteeing safety to every individual. When people belonging to every religion can perform their rituals and practices then what is the point of attacking kanwars? *Jo hamla karega, toh phir boli se nahi, usko police ki goli samjhane ki karya karegi,*" he said.

Law and order in Delhi comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

FROM NEW DELHI CONSTITUENCY

Lawyer, MTech grad, PhD scholar among 12 independents taking on CM

SHIVNARAYAN RAJPUROHIT
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

IN THE 2015 Delhi Assembly polls, Sandeep Srivastava (53) contested as an Independent against AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal from the New Delhi Assembly seat, but managed to get only 34 votes. "I felt proud that these 34 people, who were completely unknown to me, had voted for me," he said.

With less than a week left for the polls, he is ready for a second innings from the same constituency. What has kept his morale high, he said, is American political scientist Francis Fukuyama's book, *The End of History and the Last Man*.

"In his book, Fukuyama, drawing from (Friedrich) Nietzsche's line of thought, talks about the 'men without chests'. I don't want to be 'The Last Man' who is without compassion and concerned only about his comfort," declares the educationist as he went on a door-to-door campaign in Central Delhi's Bharti Nagar, with his daughter and two others in tow. Shorn of electioneering razzmatazz, he is at times mistaken for a surveyor.

Srivastava completed MTech in computer science from IIT-Delhi — "at a time when the subject was not in vogue" — and MBA from INSEAD in France. He has written four books on e-governance and over 400 school books. One of the books is co-authored with Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi.

Srivastava is among a total of 28 candidates, including 12 Independents, from the New Delhi Assembly seat — the most in the national capital. The Independents are from various fields: lawyers, an academic, social workers, a PhD scholar and farmers.

On the AAP government's much-touted education policy, Srivastava said: "Kejriwal has created only teaching spaces without improving learning."

His vision for Delhi is "to break free from freebies and communal polarisation". This strikes a chord with many other Independents.

Sandeep Srivastava (53) had contested in the 2015 polls as well

"Freebies have earned Delhi a bad name. We are called *muftkhors* (freeloaders). In the name of nationalism, the BJP is dividing people. It's tragic that nobody is talking about jobs," said Rahul Beniwal (31), another independent candidate. He has chosen 'pail' as his election symbol to highlight the issue of water scarcity and pollution.

Another contender eyes recognition. "I have to visit police stations and government offices to help the needy. Often, they cold-shoulder me. If I can get a few thousand votes, police and government officials will know that I can't be overlooked," said Rahul Kumar (33), a social worker and insurance agent.

The task is uphill for Independents as the high-profile constituency has always voted for a party since 1993. Unperturbed, they said their participation will strengthen electoral democracy.

Srivastava, on his part, is not concerned about winning or losing. "This time, I expect at least 300 votes. (Canadian author) Malcolm Gladwell writes that it takes 10,000 hours to master a skill. I say it may take even longer... I am still in the learning phase," he said.

CM Kejriwal is contesting from the constituency and is the sitting MLA. While the BJP has fielded Sunil Yadav, the Congress candidate is Romesh Sabharwal.

epaper.indianexpress.com

I HEREBY DECLARE

RAVINDER SINGH NEGI (43)
BJP, Patparganj

TOTAL ASSETS (2020)
₹2.02 CR

MOVEABLE ASSETS
₹37.56 L

CASH: ₹80,000
JEWELLERY: ₹6 L

IMMOVABLE ASSETS
₹1.65 CR

Assets

Agricultural land	Nil
Houses	₹1.35 Cr
Commercial buildings	₹30 L

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:

BA (Correspondence), Delhi University

LAXMAN RAWAT (52)
Congress, Patparganj

TOTAL ASSETS (2020)
₹1.63 CR

MOVEABLE ASSETS
₹62.27 L

CASH: ₹1.46 L
JEWELLERY: ₹1.35 L

IMMOVABLE ASSETS
₹1.01 CR

Assets

Houses	₹1.01 Cr

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:

BA, Delhi University

BALLOTIN

Delhi CEO exhorts youth to vote

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh Sunday exhorted the youth of the capital to exercise their franchise in the Delhi assembly elections. Speaking at a voter awareness event in Connaught Place's Central Park, Singh asked the city's youth to be a part of the festival of democracy that will take place on February 8. "It is our right to vote and it is useless if we don't exercise when the time comes. We live in a democracy and it will have no meaning if we don't cast our vote in elections — whether it is parliamentary or assembly," the Delhi CEO said. "A democracy means that the key to power is in hands of the people. Your vote represents that key. So you must use this key to elect the most suitable person as your leader," he added. **PTI**

BJP MLA DENIES CLAIMS

At seat BJP won, CM accuses MLA of blocking development work

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

WHEN DELHI went to polls in 2015, the Aam Aadmi Party won 67 out of 70 seats. On Sunday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the Vishwas Nagar constituency, which voted for BJP, had suffered because the BJP MLA did not let the AAP government carry out development work.

Speaking during a public meeting in the constituency, Kejriwal said: "Last time, the whole of Delhi had voted for AAP but Vishwas Nagar voted for Mr O P Sharma. Other parts of Delhi have got many mohalla clinics, but Vishwas Nagar has only one because the BJP MLA did not want development of this area. He thought that people will vote for AAP if mohalla clinics are built here."

The other two seats that BJP won in 2015 were Mustafabad and Rohini.

Promising that Vishwas Nagar will get all the facilities it had not got so far, Kejriwal said: "I promise you that this time, if you make AAP win from here, then Vishwas Nagar will get minimum 20 mohalla clinics. The whole Delhi has received lakhs of CCTV cameras but the BJP did not allow us to install a single CCTV at Vishwas Nagar. I promise that if this time, you make AAP win, we will install at least 5,000 CCTV cameras in this area. We have come out with a scheme known as Mukhyamantri Sadak Yojna for building new roads. But the BJP did not allow us to build us roads here. Do not repeat the mistake of voting for the BJP this time."

Kejriwal at the public meeting in Vishwas Nagar Sunday. *Gajendra Yadav*

Sharma, meanwhile, said the Chief Minister was lying.

"Is it possible for me to stall projects such as the mohalla clinic and CCTV cameras? The truth is that Kejriwal ji has not done any work in the area and also in Delhi. He says I did not allow him to work but under the BJP government at the Centre, we started work on the new IP University campus. (Home Minister) Amit Shah ji inaugurated the Rs 5,000 crore transit-oriented development project here. Road- laying work was started by me as a DDA board member and I ensured upgradation of facilities in government hospitals," Sharma said.

Kejriwal also spoke about the scheme for tenants to get benefit of the 200 units of free power. "I know tenants in Delhi were not able to avail the free electricity scheme of the Delhi government because if they wanted to install a meter, they would have to take an NOC from the landlord. We introduced the Mukhyamantri Kirayedaar Bijli Meter Yojana two-three months ago. Under the scheme, tenants won't be required to take the NOC from the landlords. They can directly contact the power companies, and an officer will be sent to their homes to install a new meter," he said.

PM to address two rallies in the capital

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address two rallies in the capital on Monday and Tuesday, ahead of assembly polls on February 8. The first rally will be held in Shahdara and the second in Dwarka.

While senior BJP leaders, including Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and party president J P Nadda, have addressed several rallies in the city so far, this will be the first time that the PM will campaign in the city since polls were announced.

On the last Sunday before Delhi goes to polls, over 1 lakh BJP leaders participated in door-to-door campaigns across 70 constituencies.

Shah also visited homes in Delhi Cantonment constituency to canvass for the candidate Manish Singh.

According to EC rules, parties will be allowed to campaign till Thursday 5 pm, after which all campaign activities must be halted.

Over the past month, scores of BJP leaders and MPs have been campaigning in Delhi.

Besides, top Union ministers, including Rajnath Singh, Prakash Javadekar and Smriti Irani, Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled states, senior party office bearers, and parliamentarians are holding small meetings across the city.

"We have planned to hold at least one meeting in each of the over 12,000 polling booths in Delhi before voting. Presently, over 2,000 such big and small meetings have been held," said another party leader. **ENS**

Nitish compares Delhi to Bihar in 2005, claims CM 'insulted Purvanchalis'

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and Union Home Minister Amit Shah at the joint public meeting in Burari Sunday. *Prem Nath Pandey*

ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

IN A joint public meeting at Burari Sunday, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Home Minister Amit Shah hit out at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying he had "insulted" Purvanchalis with his statements.

Kumar further claimed that the Kejriwal government "had done no work", and compared the condition of Delhi to that of Bihar in 2005.

Kumar and Shah were in Burari, which has a sizeable Purvanchali population, to campaign for JD(U) candidate Shailendra Kumar, who is contesting against AAP's Sanjeev Jha and RJD's Pramod Tyagi.

In September last year, Kejriwal had said that people from Bihar take a bus ticket worth Rs 500 to Delhi to get free treatment worth Rs 5 lakh in the capital. Adding that while it makes him "happy", the Delhi CM had then pointed out that the capital has it's own capacity.

Hitting out at Kejriwal on Sunday, Kumar said, "I was very surprised to hear that. What is your expense? Ayushman Bharat is a central government scheme, you don't implement that... We have made so many hospitals in Bihar."

"Whether it's people of Bihar, or Purvanchalis or people of the state, they work here and live here. Their families live here. Is it not your duty to provide treatment for them?" he said.

Kumar said the AAP government had done no work. "What have they done in so much time? Roads are not being repaired. They are in bad shape. Electricity, water are also a problem," he said. Kumar also referred to the Anaj Mandi fire, in which several of the victims were from Bihar.

"Congress got a chance for 15 years, AAP got a chance for five years, now for the next five years, give a chance to the BJP-led NDA and see what happens to Delhi... Don't waste even a vote (on AAP)," he said.

Kumar, however, steered clear of speaking on CAA or Shaheen Bagh.

Shah, who has often attacked the protests in Shaheen Bagh, did not speak much of it Sunday, except saying that Kejriwal had "misled" people on CAA, "especially Muslims", and that "he says with pride that he stands with Shaheen Bagh".

However, he also hit out at Kejriwal for his statement on medical treatment and said he had "not spared any chance to insult Purvanchalis and people from Uttarakhand".

"Why are you disrespecting them (Purvanchalis)? You (Purvanchalis) have as much a right here as you have in Bihar and UP. No one can insult you," he said.

Shah also hit out at Kejriwal for not implementing Ayushman Bharat Yojana. "If you elect the BJP government, we will pass it within one hour of the first session of assembly," he said.

For Outer Delhi residents, a choice between local and national issues

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

BIJLI-PAANI VERSUS the nation: For the past week, residents of Outer Delhi — areas that fall on the border between Delhi and Haryana — have been told to choose between the two.

In the four rallies that Home Minister Amit Shah has addressed in Bawana, Badli, Rithala and Najafgarh, protests at Shaheen Bagh and the nation's security featured prominently in his speeches. It was at the rally in Rithala that MoS Anurag Thakur raised part of the slogan '*Desh ke gaddaron ko*' , which the audience completed by shouting '*Goli maaro saalon ko*'. He was later removed from the BJP's list of star campaigners and banned from campaigning for 72 hours. BJP leaders campaigning in the city, such as UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Minister Smriti Irani, have brought up Shaheen Bagh.

The ban notwithstanding, the party's push to make Shaheen Bagh protests an election issue has changed conversations in these areas.

"*Kaam toh hua hai, par baat desh ki hai. Hame free bijli nahi milegi, theek hai par hame ye Shaheen Bagh nahi pasand.* (Yes, work has been done in the area but now it is about the nation. It's fine if we don't get free power, we don't like what is happening at Shaheen Bagh)," said Dalbir Singh (62), a retired DTC employee who lives in Sanoth Village in Narela constituency. Several residents of Sanoth, which falls in the Narela constituency, said they had voted for AAP in 2015 but will vote for BJP this time.

"There is no park, dispensary or pond in our village. Along with this, there are power cuts every day. Yes, power is free for several villagers now but we don't want that," said Jai Chand (86), a retired DTC inspector.

"We were BJP voters traditionally but voted differently last time. But not this time. What is happening in Shaheen Bagh is wrong. A vote for BJP is a vote for the nation," he added.

When AAP launched its campaign in January, it said Delhi would vote based on work done by the Delhi government over the past five years. Despite a high-octane campaign by BJP, AAP's power subsidy, where 200 units of power are free, is the first thing that voters in unauthorised colonies and JJ clusters talk about in these areas.

AAP has repeatedly tried to stay away from commenting on the ongoing anti-CAA protests in Shaheen Bagh, sensing that they are out of their depth on the issue.

At Metro Vihar -I, lack of sanitation and open drains are a major problem

FROM THE GROUND

In Metro Vihar I, which also falls in Narela, women pulled out plastic chairs to the middle of a freshly-cemented street to get some sun. Several residents were shifted here from Minto Road by the government.

"The drains overflow all the time. But we have a decent road and regular water supply. Also, our power bills are zero. *Jhadu* (broom — AAP's poll symbol) is coming back," said Billo Devi (45), a resident. But there is an apprehension that these subsidies will continue only till March.

"Everyone has been saying we will stop getting free power and water in April," said Rekha Devi (44).

Previously, residents of the area voted for Congress, said Ramesh Kumar (60), who owns a house in the area but lives in Old Delhi. "Congress still has silent support here," he said.

In nearby Pooth Khurd, which falls in Bawana constituency, residents said the fight between AAP and BJP candidates — Jai Bhagwan Upkar and Ravindra Kumar Indraj — is neck and neck. "The sitting MLA from AAP did good and a lot of people have benefited from the free water and power schemes. However, several BJP leaders have been visiting these areas, which is not very common. Anything can happen," said Nanhe Srivastava, a barber in Pooth Khurd.

Twenty five kilometres away in Najafgarh constituency's Kakrola, a clear divide between traders and shop owners and those that employ them is apparent.

"There is no doubt that AAP will win here. Go and see how they have improved government schools," said Shyam Sundar (50), a resident of Patel Garden Extension in Kakrola.

Across the road, Praveen Singh, who owns a daily needs store, said things have changed a lot in the past 10 days. "Had someone asked 10 days ago about who people support here, the clear answer was AAP. The candidate (AAP minister Kailash Gahlot) was not a factor. He doesn't even live here. It was about Kejriwal. But Amit Shah held a rally here. Several other BJP leaders have come here too and now people are talking about Shaheen Bagh... Hindus are hurt," Singh said.

According to BJP leader Rahul Trivedi, drawing room meetings are an important part of the campaign in parts of Outer Delhi and leaders from other states — mostly Haryana and Purvanchal — meet people and tell them about the party's plans. "The leaders also tell them how Delhi's peace has been disturbed by the Opposition (AAP and Congress) by supporting Shaheen Bagh protests and violence in Jamia through its MLA," he said.

Another BJP leader added, "We tell them that people are not just sitting in Shaheen Bagh but in several other areas of Delhi, encroaching the road movement..."

Another leader said that the party is also discussing the "weak transport infrastructure model of AAP", especially in procuring the buses, which affects outer areas the most.

(INPUTS FROM ABHINAV RAJPUT)

'VIOLATED RULES ON LITTERING, COOKING ON PREMISES'

Voter event at Qutab Minar leaves compound dirty, draws ASI ire

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

A VOTER awareness programme conducted by the South Delhi district administration at Qutab Minar premises on Saturday evening has raised the hackles of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) staff on ground, who claimed organisers violated the rules regarding littering and cooking on the compound.

The District Election Office (South) conducted a cultural evening between 4 pm and 9 pm on Saturday inside the premises, with an aim to generate interest in voters about the election on Saturday.

South Delhi DM BM Mishra says, "It was on open invitation event, which saw a participation of almost a thousand people from the area, while visitors at the monument also joined in."

The ASI staff claimed when organisers left the premises on Sunday morning, it was badly littered and some cooking was also done in the compound, which goes against the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act governing ASI-protected monuments. "We will assess the extent of violations and scale the grievance to higher authorities, including the L-G," said an ASI official, who did not want to be named.

NK Pathak, Director of Northern region, ASI, told *The Indian Express*: "I have asked the superintending archaeologist for a detailed report after which further action will be taken."

Mishra said, "We want voter turnout in South Delhi to increase, for which we are trying to attract voters through various events. From the point of seeking permission, the ASI has been non-cooperative; they even delayed the permission for this cause."

Almost a thousand people attended the event held Saturday, officials said

"There was no deliberate violation of rules, but in case, owing to the crowd, some littering happened, we got everything cleaned Sunday afternoon when we vacated the premises," said Mishra, who insisted that no cooking was done on the premises.

Mishra admitted "there was a verbal altercation between their staff and ASI staff, but at no point there was any intention to flout the rules".

"In case they find any violations, they can write to us officially and we will respond to any points they may raise," added Mishra.

In the letter of permission granted to the South Delhi district on January 31, the ASI had stated that "banners or refreshments are not allowed inside the premises", and "to ensure there is no littering".

But despite that, the ASI official alleged, "meals and beverages were served to the crowds", and "the administration staff captured the entire monument from Saturday till Sunday noon, and didn't let the ASI staff or monument security staff in at any point".

The ASI said a report will be prepared on Monday to assess the extent of violations and consequently, further course of action will be decided, which includes writing to the L-G's office as well as to the Chief Secretary.

'Allowing NPR out of the question... will have to stop it at every step'

CHHATTISGARH CHIEF Minister **BHUPESH BHAGEL** speaks to **MANOJ C G** on updation of NPR, the Shaheen Bagh protests and his government's move to stop pension to MISA detainees

THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW WITH BHUPESH BAGHEL CM, CHHATTISGARH

Your government is set to bring a resolution in Assembly against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)...Your party also talks about the economic crisis and unemployment. Which is a bigger issue?

See, this NRC and all are not being done for the first time. Britishers had made a law in 1906. In 1907, Mahatma Gandhi spoke about civil disobedience... He said he will not sign in the register...This is a British idea which they are following. They were with the British during the Independence movement... Secondly, BJP does not have an economic vision...There is Gandhi's economic policy, Nehruvian economic policy, P V Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh's economic policy. These people don't have a vision. They fight on the basis of religion — Ganga, cow, temple, mosque, Hindu, Muslim — they don't know anything else.

So, shouldn't the Congress be raising these issues which affect the common man directly? But you are raising CAA? How will the Congress benefit from it politically?

The last term belonged to Narendra Modi. He did demonetisation, GST, surgical strikes and all. He travelled across the world and tried to establish himself as a global leader. The second term is of Amit Shah. Immediately after coming to power, he has done away with Article 370, 35A and has now brought CAA, NPR and then NRC. This is a big jolt to Modi's image...

Secondly, the biggest damage is to the people of India. NPR and NRC, he (Shah) has talked about the chronology and it was part of their manifesto. They cannot go back and have gone ahead. Like what Duryodhan had told Lord Krishna when he asked for at least five villages for Pandavas; Duryodhan said he will not even give land as much as the head of a needle.Shah is speaking the same language. He is not willing to back down even an inch. What will happen because of this? Every person will have to prove he is Indian.

Will you implement NPR updation?

Sawaal hi nahi uthta (It is out of the question)... How can it be done in a state where 40 per cent of people are below poverty line. This means the majority do not have land and are illiterate, or their ancestors were illiterate. How will they prove their parents' date of birth and place?

How will you stop it?

We will have to stop it at every step. Where will those who are not able to furnish proof go?... In Chhattisgarh, the 2011 Census could not be done properly in Naxal-affected areas. Some 600 villages have become empty... How will they prove they used to live in that village? Who will authenticate?

It is learnt that the Home Minister said at an NDA meeting that the government will include a disclaimer in NPR forms, saying questions related to date and place of birth of parents are optional.

Why keep it optional? Remove it... I don't remember my mother's date of birth. And if I don't fill it, what will you do? And who will we believe? The Prime Minister or the Home Minister? Who is telling the truth and who is lying?

You are in Delhi where campaigning for Assembly elections will end on February 6. Till now, neither Sonia Gandhi nor Rahul Gandhi or any central party leader has campaigned. It took you three months to organise a rally at Ramlila Maidan. How will people take you seriously?

Who formed the government in Maharashtra?... Shah took NRC issue to Jharkhand. They were badly defeated. We formed the government. How can you say there is no Congress? How are we winning states?... You (BJP) are in the government. You have captured media houses. You are shown everywhere...that does not mean others are not there.

Why didn't Rahul or Priyanka go to Shaheen Bagh?

...Everybody is doing what they can...There was a CWC meeting. Rallies were taken out... *Shaheen Bagh jayenge tabhi wo protest kehlayega, nahin jayenge toh nahin hoga aisa toh nahin hai na*. (It's not that if one goes to Shaheen Bagh, only then it will be called a protest and if one doesn't, it won't). That is not a formula or criteria.

Your government has challenged the legality of NIA Act in Supreme Court. But it was brought by the Congress government.

The way they are tweaking the Constitution. They are doing the same to laws. The Act was made with a pure intent but they are misusing it.

So there were provisions that could be misused?

There were some grey areas. When a law is made, some grey areas always remain...You cannot transfer cases to NIA at whim. And what are the results? NIA probed Jeeram Ghati incident. Who has been arrested?... Clearly, it was a political-criminal conspiracy...What happened in the NIA probe into Pulwama attack?

It has been a year. How 350 kg of RDX reached there, in a high-security area, and rammed into the van which was bulletproofed... It means you are hiding something.

What?

That is the question. I will not talk like Shankersinh Vaghela. He said it was a BJP conspiracy. I am not levelling that allegation. But I will certainly say *kuch toh raaz-daari hai...iske peeche kuch na kuch hua hai*. Why hasn't a single person been caught till date....

The Central government has given Elgar Parishad case to NIA. Will you advise your Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray to implead in the case that your government had filed.

I will talk to him.

What was the reason behind your government's decision to stop pension for MISA detainees? You accuse the BJP of taking politically motivated decisions. In this case, the charge can be hurled at you.

How can MISA detainees be in the category of freedom fighters? By that logic, Congressmen who were in jail along with Indira Gandhi... they too should be given pension...

You all want Rahul Gandhi to take over as Congress president and he is running away. In a 135-year-old party, you are unable to find a leader?

We have a leader.

I mean, after Sonia Gandhi?

Yes, even after that, *banenge woh* (He will become). We all want him (to be president).

Will a non-Gandhi become Congress president?

Don't speak the BJP's language... Since 1885, when Congress was formed, look at the history, how many times a person from the Gandhi family and how many times a non-Gandhi has become the President. It will become clear.

If there is one leader in the country who is acceptable to Congressmen, it is Rahul Gandhi.

Is he willing?

Let the time come... you will get the answer.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

BIG QUESTION

OPPOSITION AS well as ruling BJP MPs want Railway Minister Piyush Goyal to explain to the Lok Sabha the whys and hows of the recent cadre-merger and restructuring moves announced by the government for the railways. Posing Parliament questions to Goyal are BJP MPs from Bengal Jayanta Roy and Sukanta Majumdar and party MPs from Uttar Pradesh Vinod Kumar Sonkar and Bhola Singh. AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and his party MP Imtiaz Jaleel have also asked questions on how the moves would benefit the railways. A question also mentions that "senior officers of Indian Railways are not happy with this decision". TRS MPs Venkatesh Netha Borlakunta and Kotha Prabhakar Reddy are also on the list. All their questions on the subject have been clubbed together for a comprehensive reply.

THE EDGE

WITH THE Parliament session getting underway, competitive politics being played out between the Congress and the Left in Kerala over CAA-NPR-NRC has shifted to Delhi. But the Left is at a disadvantage since it has no prominent faces in Parliament now. Its numbers too have come down sharply. On the opening day, the Congress managed to hit the headlines when its MPs protested in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Parliament complex and wore black bands inside when the President delivered his address. But CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury, who is not an MP, reached Parliament and joined Congress's Ghulam Nabi Azad and other leaders when they addressed a press conference in Parliament. And while Congress MP from Kerala T N Prathapan wrote to the Lok Sabha Speaker, seeking the disqualification of Anurag Thakur, Left MPs from Kerala K K Ragesh and K Somaprasad visited Shaheen Bagh on Sunday.

THE REPLACEMENT

GOPAL BAGLAY, who is joint secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, is headed to Colombo as India's envoy. An IFS officer, he has been deputy high commissioner to Pakistan and was also joint secretary (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran) in the Ministry of External Affairs, apart from holding the ministry's spokesperson's job for a brief period of time. He will replace India's envoy to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu, who is going to be India's envoy to the US.

Uddhav Thackeray

Uddhav defends CAA but says won't allow NRC in state

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 2

CHIEF MINISTER Uddhav Thackeray has said he will not allow the National Register of Citizens (NRC) to be implemented in the state but has defended the Citizenship Amendment Act saying it is not about removing anybody from the country.

"CAA is not a law to remove anybody from the country," said Thackeray in response to a question posed in an interview by Sena leader and *Saamana* executive editor Sanjay Raut. The interview, his first after taking oath as CM, will be released in three parts starting from Monday in *Saamana*.

Thackeray, however, opposed the implementation of the NRC in the state. "Proving citizenship will be difficult for both Hindus and Muslims. I will not let that happen," he added.

Thackeray's backing of the CAA may create issues in the tripartite coalition government of Sena, NCP and Congress, which have opposed the law.

Thackeray also said that he has not abandoned Hindutva. To a question on forming an "immoral government", he said, "If it is okay to accept people from other parties, then what is the problem in joining hands with them."

Meanwhile, Raut on Sunday criticised the BJP for its focus and emphasis on dividing the country into "Hindu versus Muslims".

"If our country is going to accept Hindutva as our culture, then there is no need to oppose it. But, if steps are being taken in the direction to make the country as Hindu's Shaheen Bagh, then the country's integrity and Tiranga are in danger," wrote Raut in his weekly column *Rokthok*.

BJP accuses Gehlot govt of repackaging Raje govt scheme

DEEP MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 2

Rajasthan BJP chief Satish Poonia

THE CONGRESS government in Rajasthan has been accused by the opposition BJP of repackaging the previous government's flagship scheme, the Bhamashah Yojana, under the garb of the Jan-Aadhaar Yojana.

In December last year, the Rajasthan government brought The Jan-Aadhaar Authority Ordinance, 2019. The Jan-Aadhaar Yojana, which was first announced by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in his first budget speech after coming to power, has a large array of objectives including "creating a demographic and socio-economic database of the resident families of the state and providing them one number, one card and one identity" which can serve as a proof of identity and address for them.

The scheme also aims to transfer benefits of various state government-run schemes directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, along with non-cash benefits with the help of Jan-Aadhaar or Aadhaar authentication.

The previous Bhamashah Yojana — launched during the tenure of Vasundhara Raje — too was used for direct benefit transfer to beneficiaries.

"This is only because of the ego of the government and the chief minister that several schemes of this government are similar to the one from the previous government, just their names have been changed. The features of the Jan-Aadhaar card are the same as the Bhamashah card and they changed the name of this scheme to satisfy their ego. They are unnecessarily spending money from the state exchequer on the Jan-Aadhaar scheme," said Rajasthan BJP president Satish Poonia.

He also accused the Congress of removing the name of Bhamashah, a historical figure in the state, from the scheme.

The Congress has refuted the allegations, saying that the Bhamashah card "didn't serve any purpose for the people."

Rajasthan Health minister Raghu Sharma told *The Indian Express*, "The BJP spent Rs 400 crore over the Bhamashah card and it didn't serve any purpose or benefit the public. It was they who had politicised the issue first by putting BJP's election symbol on the card along with photo of the former chief minister. The Jan-Aadhar card is not costing the government any money and will serve the people."

An official from the Department of Information Technology and Communication (DOITC) who did not wish to be named, told *The Indian Express* that so far, a budget of over Rs 35 crore has been allocated for the Jan-Aadhaar Yojana.

According to DOITC officials, the new scheme intends to bring a large array of facilities under its umbrella.

"There are major differences between the schemes. The Jan Aadhaar Act allows us to use the Aadhaar authentication engine for verification for funds which are being spent. Bhamashah did not allow that," said a senior official from the Planning Department on condition of anonymity. Under the new scheme, each family is being assigned a unique number.

MUGHAL GARDENS READY TO OPEN

A view of the Mughal Gardens in the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday. President Ram Nath Kovind will inaugurate the annual 'Udyanotsav' on Tuesday. The gardens will be open to public from Wednesday till March 8 — from 10 am to 4pm. *Prem Nath Pandey*

Sonia admitted to Ganga Ram hospital

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

CONGRESS PRESIDENT Sonia Gandhi was admitted to Sir Ganga Ram hospital on Sunday evening for a routine check-up after she complained of a stomach ache. Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also reached the hospital.

According to sources, Gandhi will undergo a few tests after which the course of her treatment will be decided.

"She complained of a stomach ache and was brought to the hospital. Some routine investigations will be performed," said a senior official from the hospital.

The Congress chief did not attend the Union Budget presentation in Parliament on Saturday. Senior leaders said she is scheduled to address an election rally in the capital on February 5.

Puducherry House to move anti-CAA resolution on Feb 12

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUDUCHERRY, FEBRUARY 2

A RESOLUTION opposing the Citizenship Amendment Act would be moved in the Assembly on February 12, Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy said on Sunday while dubbing the legislation as "ill-conceived".

The Congress-ruled Puducherry would be the fifth dispensation to take such a measure after the West Bengal, Kerala, Punjab and Rajasthan assemblies passed resolutions against the amended citizenship law.

Launching a signature campaign against the CAA, the National Register of Citizens and the National Population Register in the Union territory, Narayanasamy said, "We will never give room for the CAA as it is ill-conceived and injurious."

The resolution condemning the Centre's initiative and also protesting against the CAA would be adopted on the floor of the territorial Assembly when it meets on February 12, Narayanasamy said.

REPUBLIC DAY COVERAGE

Rajkot Collector denies claim that staff bribed to get media coverage

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 2

HOURS AFTER a local daily published a news story claiming an officer in the Rajkot District Collector's office tried to bribe its reporter for 'positive publicity' of the state-level Republic Day function, Collector Remya Mohan on Sunday held a press conference and said eight cheques, including the one contested by the daily, were issued towards payment for 'advertisements' of the function.

"For the purpose of celebrating Republic Day, funds had been raised through public contribution. We accepted contribution from donors through cheques. This fund was not a government grant... When media publishes advertisements, it charges for that. We paid eight entities for advertisements. Since the payment has been made through crossed cheques, there is no question of corruption," Mohan said.

When asked why the set procedure of routing government advertisements through the state information department was not followed, the Collector said that since it was a locally created fund, her office had the liberty to utilise it in the manner it deemed fit for publicising the event. "...Our intention was to publicise these events. No mala fide intention was there," she said.

In its report, the daily — *Divya Bhaskar* — claimed that Hiren Joshi, a deputy mamlatdar in the Rajkot district collector office, handed a cheque of Rs 50,000 to reporter Jignesh Vaid on Saturday. When the reporter enquired what the money was for, the report quoted Joshi saying, "Most journalists take away some cash from here during festivals and elections. But if it is an issue for you... we shall issue a new one in the name of... (the organisation)... 'Saheb' (sir) could have done this to get news published in a way that would not look paid news."

MP Governor blocks Cong bid to get Anglo-Indian nominee in

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, FEBRUARY 2

DAYS BEFORE the representation of Anglo-Indian community in Lok Sabha and 14 state Assemblies was to expire on January 25, the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh quickly moved files to enable nomination of an Anglo-Indian member to the Assembly, but Governor Lalji Tandon refused his assent.

The 126th Constitution (Amendment) Bill, passed by Parliament in December, extended the reservation for people from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Lok Sabha and Assemblies, but discontinued representation of Anglo Indians.

The Kamal Nath government had recommended Jabalpur-based Denzil Paul for the reserved seat, but the Governor did not clear the file. Paul, president of Christian Education Society that runs educational institutions in Jabalpur, moved a petition in high court on January 7. The petition accused the state government and the Governor's office of inaction. Arguing that all formalities had been completed, Paul sought the court's direction to expedite the appointment process. The state government told the court that if the petitioner filed a fresh representation, it shall be decided expeditiously. Judge Subodh Abhyankar disposed of the petition on January 9, directing the petitioner to file a fresh representation and asking the state government and Governor's office to take a final decision on or before January 20. On January 11, Paul made another representation and the government issued another recommendation letter.

Governor Tandon, however, gave a negative reply, saying the nomination has no justification. Quoting the 2011 Census, the governor said there are no Anglo-indians in the state. The representation to the community is expiring on January 25 and the Centre has not extended the date, he replied.

"The power of nomination rests with the governor. The state government was helpless after getting a negative reply," a lawyer familiar with the case said. Paul has now moved another petition challenging the Governor's opinion and arguing that contrary to the last Census figures, there are many Anglo-Indians in the state. The Cabinet yet again recommended Paul's name on January 20.

Paul told The Indian Express that government authorities had helped him file the petition. "I was confident to earn the nomination but the Governor's office gave a negative reply," he said.

The state legal department has said an Anglo-Indian member had been nominated to the last Assembly irrespective of the Census figures.

On January 17, the Assembly, while ratifying the Constitutional amendment, decided to request the Centre to extend representation of the Anglo-Indian member by another decade. The BJP members opposed the treasury benches' decision.

Ironically, the state government showed similar urgency when the Assembly polls threw up a fractured mandate. On December 25, 2018, the government recommended Jennifer Messias nee Vyse for the Anglo-Indian seat. The MP chapter of Anglo-Indian Association opposed her nomination, stating that Vyse was not a member of the association and accusing her of other improprieties.

EXPLAINED

Bid to make govt more stable

THE MP government pushing Denzil Paul's nomination seemed an attempt to secure more stability in the House. After the recent death of one of its MLAs, the Congress currently has 114 MLAs in the 230-member Assembly — one less than the halfway mark — and is supported by seven other legislators. The BJP has 107 MLAs after one its legislators too died recently.

No glitches, 65-86 per cent success rate in first trial of facial tech in polls in Telangana

KARISHMA MEHROTRA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

A PILOT to test the use of facial recognition software in elections for the first time in India has met with roughly 65 to 86 per cent success rate. The Telangana government had tested the software during municipal elections held on January 22.

A top official of the State-owned Telangana State Technology Services (TSTS) that helmed the project said that of the total 7,200 eligible voters in the 10 polling booths in Kompally Municipality of the Medchal-Malkajgiri district where the project was implemented on January 22, roughly 4,200 voters were photographed for matching with their voter I-cards. The negative matches occurred because of dim lighting in the booths as well as old or poor quality of voter ID photographs, the official said.

Facial recognition was used as an additional check, and negative results did not deny anyone a vote.

As part of the experiment, voter ID card data was fed into the system, the 10 selected booths received a new smartphone each, and a Telangana State Election Commission (SEC) official took a photo of every voter that walked into these booths. The algorithm checked the photo with the voter ID photo and gave a green or red checkmark. An SEC circular, dated January 18, announcing the experiment had said all photos would be deleted after the election and all transmissions were encrypted.

"The SEC's idea was that checking impersonation, proxy voting and duplicate voters should be done through a system. We believe that as a technology, we have established that it works. It needs to be fine-tuned, but there were no glitches in the technology," the TSTS official said.

The SEC gave a go-ahead to the pilot after seeing the success rate of the digital identity authentication system used in the state to establish that pensioners receiving government benefits are still alive, without any in-person visit. That system has an accuracy rate of roughly 94 per cent, an official said.

Out of the 2.6 lakh pensioners in Telangana, roughly 29,000 (or 11 per cent) have used the application, the official said. Other states such as Haryana as well as the Central government have shown interest in adopting the system.

In its January 18 circular, the SEC said, "Impersonations are still noticed during polls, in spite of the use of photo-electoral rolls, insistence of photo ID card for each voter and, above all, having polling agents of different candidates present at polling stations. An analysis of the cases of tendered votes recorded during the previous elections to local bodies in the state revealed that in each of those cases, there was a violation of voting procedure leading to conduct of re-polls in all those cases... The gravity of the situation can be better appreciated if one considers the ASD (Absentee, Shifted, or Dead) voters; these lists are known to local persons and there are ample opportunities to resort to impersonation in those cases."

EXPLAINED

Regulation on use awaited

THERE IS no regulation governing the use of facial data by the government currently. A data protection Bill that would give the State broad exemptions to process citizens' data is being analysed by a Joint Select Committee in Parliament.

Assam: NIA questions historian over violence at anti-CAA protest

Over 40 academics urge agency to treat him with 'dignity'

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 2

Arupjyoti Saikia

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) summoned Dr Arupjyoti Saikia, Assamese historian and faculty member at Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati (IIT-G), for questioning at the agency's Sonapur office on the outskirts of Guwahati on Saturday. While there is no official confirmation from the NIA regarding the reason for the summons, it is believed to be in connection with the violence that rocked Assam during the Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests on December 11.

Saikia, a professor of history in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, is a scholar of international repute and is known for his research on the region's agrarian and ecological history.

"Dr Saikia was called as a witness under Section 160 of the CrPC in connection to the case Akhil Gogoi was arrested earlier in December 2019," confirmed his advocate Santanu Borthakur. Gogoi, founder of peasants' rights organisation Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), was arrested by the agency on charges of sedition and under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act on December 12 for his alleged role in the violence during the anti-CAA protests in Guwahati.

"Professor Saikia has been called as a witness by the NIA in relation to the violence during the agitation on December 11 in Guwahati," confirmed Assam DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, without commenting further.

In December, days after the CAA violence in Assam, BJP minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had alleged that "an unnamed academic working in a Central institution in Assam was behind the massive street violence which unfolded in front of the state Secretariat in Guwahati." Five people were killed in the clashes that followed.

According to Borthakur, Saikia was questioned for two hours. "His statements are being recorded under Section 161 of the CrPC. At present, there is no allegation against him as he has been called as a witness," he said.

Saikia has been summoned for questioning on Monday again.

A group of scholars from across the country have published a statement in support of Saikia, referring to him as "one of the country's most distinguished and respected historians". The scholars have urged the NIA to treat Saikia with "the dignity and respect he deserves, and allow him to continue his professional work unimpeded".

"That a scholar of such standing, and a human being of such decency, has been called for intensive grilling by the National Investigative Agency is deeply distressing," said the statement, signed by over 40 academics, including Ramachandra Guha, Mahesh Rangarajan, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Sukanta Chaudhuri, Nivedita Menon and Partha Chatterjee, among others. The statement adds that Saikia is "is hugely admired, indeed venerated, in his native Assam" and is nationally and internationally reputed.

Saikia holds the Suryya Kumar Bhuyan Endowment Chair on Assam History in IIT Guwahati. He has been teaching for almost two decades, first as a lecturer in Dibrugarh University and then at Cotton College before joining the IIT-G in 2006. In 2011-12, he received the Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Agrarian Studies Programme, Yale University. His research covers areas of social and environmental history of 18th to 20th century Assam, with a special focus on the agrarian and ecological history.

N.E. W.S.

NORTH

10 people killed in separate road accidents in Haryana

Chandigarh: Ten people were killed in separate road accidents in Haryana's Kaithal and Bhiwani districts on Sunday.

Six youths were returning after a three-day visit to Haridwar when their car fell into a ditch on Pundri-Dhand Road, allegedly after being hit by another vehicle. They were all between 19 and 25 years of age.

Pundri police station SHO Virender Singh said that as of now, the cause of the accident is not clear. Police have registered an FIR against an unknown person and are investigating the accident.

In another mishap, four people were killed after their car collided with a vehicle on Bhiwani-Loharu road. **ENS**

An injured CRPF personnel after the grenade attack in Srinagar on Sunday. *Shuiab Masoodi*

2 CRPF men among 9 injured in Srinagar grenade explosion

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 2

NINE PEOPLE, including two CRPF personnel, were injured after suspected militants lobbed a grenade in Srinagar's Lal Chowk area on Sunday. Authorities said those injured were in a stable condition.

A CRPF spokesperson said the attack occurred at Pratap Park around 12.45 pm. "A grenade was lobbed upon the deployed troops of C/171 Bn CRPF @021245 hours, wherein 2 civilians and 2 personnel of CRPF sustained minor splinter injuries," said the spokesperson.

Nazir Hussain Chowdhary, Medical Superintendent of Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital, said seven injured civilians were brought to the hospital. "They had minor injuries. We have discharged three of them," he said.

A CRPF official said both of their injured men are stable and sustained minor splinter injuries. "One of the injured has been discharged, while another is under observation," said the official.

IGP CRPF (Srinagar) Ravideep Singh Sahi said the CRPF personnel, who were present in the area, were part of regular deployment.

Last month, just two days before the Republic day celebrations, three people, including two security personnel, were injured in a grenade explosion in Srinagar's old city area.

Pak shelling in Poonch district

Jammu: The Pakistan Army on Sunday shelled forward posts and villages along the Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, a defence spokesperson said. There was no immediate report of any casualty in the firing and shelling in Balakot and Mendhar sectors, he said.

"Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along LoC in Balakot and Mendhar sectors around 7 pm, prompting befitting retaliation by the Indian Army," the spokesman said. **PTI**

UP: Hindu outfit leader out on morning walk shot dead

AVANEESH MISHRA
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 2

Ranjeet Bachchan (40), leader of a lesser-known Hindu outfit, was shot dead by an unidentified assailant while he was on a morning walk in Lucknow's Hazratganj area on Sunday. His cousin Aditya Srivastava, who was accompanying him, suffered a bullet injury too. He is reportedly out of danger.

Police later released photos of two suspects and announced a reward of Rs 50,000 for any information on them. Four policemen have been suspended for laxity.

"Today morning, one Aditya Srivastava informed police that while he was on a morning walk with his cousin (Bachchan), a person stopped them and pointed a pistol on them. He tried to snatch their mobile phones and, in the scuffle, fired a shot that hit Bachchan on the face, killing him. Srivastava suffered a bullet injury in his left arm," said Joint CP (Law & Order) Naveen Arora.

Bachchan, hailing from Gorakhpur, was president of Vishwa Hindu Mahasabha and lived his wife, Kalindi Sharma Bachchan, at Lucknow, said police.

While investigators suspect a snatching attempt led to the murder and cite the attempt to snatch phones and chains from the two, they are also looking at the angles of personal and political enmity.

"We have come to know that Bachchan's relationship with his wife was not cordial. Reportedly, an FIR was lodged in Gorakhpur. We are confirming it," Arora said.

DCP (Lucknow Central) Dinesh Singh said Bachchan's wife has accused "Muslims" of killing him as he was a "Hindu-waadi leader". According to the DCP, Kalindi had also gone for the walk but she was ahead of Bachchan and Srivastava when the murder took place.

Police also said Bachchan had married twice. "During investigation, we found that he recently celebrated the birthday of his three-year-old daughter he has with his second wife. He and Kalindi had a son, who died three years ago."

Police said Bachchan had been associated with the Samajwadi Party in the past and took part in cycle rallies between 2002-09. "Kalindi said he was even awarded for his good work. We have been informed that he founded Vishwa Hindu Mahasabha and was its national president. He lived in an apartment allotted to him by the previous SP government," said Arora.

Samajwadi Party leader Ravidas Mehrotra said that Bachchan was not officially a member of the party, but was associated with them. He said Bachchan was close to SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav who had gifted him an SUV and allotted the apartment.

A forensic team has inspected the crime spot and collected samples. "Eight teams of Crime Branch are working on the case," said the Joint CP, adding that police are also checking the background of people associated with Bachchan.

A forensic team examines the spot where Vishwa Hindu Mahasabha leader Ranjeet Bachchan (right) was shot dead while out on his morning walk, at Hazratganj area of Lucknow on Sunday. *Vishal Srivastav*

People slip on a road at Lakkar Bazaar after fresh snowfall in Shimla on Sunday. *Pradeep Kumar*

EAST

Woman at anti-CAA protest in Kolkata dies of heart attack

Kolkata: One of the women participating in the anti-CAA protest at Park Circus in Kolkata died of a heart attack on Saturday night. Sameeda Khatun (57) is survived by her husband and eight children.

Researcher Nousheen Baba Khan, who is among those spearheading the protest, said, "Sameeda Khatun was regular to the protest. She was not well and was suffering from asthma. Last evening, she complained that she was having trouble breathing. We rushed her to hospital where doctors said she had suffered a cardiac arrest and declared her brought dead. Asmat Jamil, convenor of the protest, said the protesters would wear black badges as a mark of respect for Sameeda. **ENS**

4 J&K politicians from preventive detention

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 2

THE JAMMU and Kashmir administration on Sunday released four politicians from preventive custody in the MLA hostel, which has been temporarily converted into a subsidiary jail, officials said here. Three of the released politicians belong to the National Conference and one is from the PDP, they said.

The four have been sent to their homes and asked to remain confined within their residence for the time-being, they said.

The leaders released are Abdul Majeed Bhat Larni, Ghulam Nabi Bhat and Dr Mohammed Shafi (all National Conference) and Mohammed Yusuf Bhat of the PDP. They were detained along with several other politicians, leaders, activists and traders after the abrogation of the Article 370 of the Constitution on August 5 last year.

Among other prominent politicians who have been detained since the Article 370 move are NC leaders Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and JK People's Conference leader Sajjad Gani Lone. They have still not been released.

While senior Abdullah has been kept at his Gupkar house, his son and NC vice-president Omar Abdullah has been detained at Hari Niwas. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, who was lodged at Chesmashahi Huts, has been shifted to a government building in the heart of Srinagar.

Intruder sneaks into Bhopal airport, damages helicopter: CISF

Bhopal: A 25-year-old man on Sunday evening sneaked into the Madhya Pradesh government's hangar inter-connected to the Raja Bhoj airport and "damaged" a parked helicopter before running towards the apron area where a flight was taxiing for take-off, a senior CISF officer said. He was overpowered by CISF personnel.

Due to the incident, a Udaipur-bound flight got delayed by one hour, CISF Deputy Commandant Virendra Singh said. The intruder was identified as Yogesh Tripathi. He was handed over to police.

Singh said Tripathi appeared to be mentally unwell and raised slogans like "I want to serve the nation" and "I am a commando trying my skill". **PTI**

WEST

2 children among 5 injured as ceiling of flat collapses

Mumbai: Five people, including a woman and her two minor children, were injured when the ceiling of a flat collapsed on them in suburban Andheri on Sunday morning, police said. The incident occurred around 11 am in Vishal Housing Society in Cama Park locality of the western suburb, an official said.

"Naziya Feeroz Sheikh and her two children Rehan (2) and Azan (4) were sitting in her brother's 7th floor flat when the ceiling came off, injuring all of them. Naziya's brother Rashid and another person Sadik received minor injuries," he said.

All the five were taken to a hospital have been discharged, said Naziya's uncle Habib Ahmed Sayyed. **PTI**

SOUTH

Woman's body found, police suspect human sacrifice

Hyderabad: In a suspected case of human sacrifice, the decomposed body of a woman was recovered from a forest in Nagarkurnool district of Telangana on Sunday, police said.

After seeing the corpse, some forest personnel informed police.

Based on preliminary investigation, it is suspected that the woman, who was in her 50s, was killed as part of a human sacrifice, they said.

Aadhaar and PAN cards found near the body indicate that the woman hailed from Maharashtra, police said. They added that further investigation into the matter is underway. **PTI**

CONFERENCE ON PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK AND ITS RELEVANCE TODAY

CJI on dais, former Canada minister talks of detention camps

SOFI AHSAN
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 2

WITH CHIEF Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde seated on the dais, former Attorney General of British Columbia and former Canada Federal Minister Ujjal Dosanjh on Saturday spoke of the Auschwitz concentration camp and about the "silence" surrounding detention centres in Assam.

He was speaking at an international conference organised by the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana to mark the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

Beginning his speech with a reference to the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz camp, Dosanjh said "hold the thought" and went on to describe the relevance of Nanak's teachings in today's world.

Saying that Nanak was not only a scholar and thinker but also an activist and a critic, Dosanjh said the Guru cannot be reduced to scriptures. "I cannot imagine Nanak sitting day in and day out reading poetry...My Nanak would ask me...you have read it, understood it... what will you do to change the world? Nanak's verse is *pavan guru pani pita mata dharat mahat* (Air is our teacher, water our father, and Earth, the great mother)'. He did not say Punjab was *mahat*. He did not say India was *mahat*. He said *dharat mahat*. He would have never...said Punjab is for Punjabis and Assam is for Assamese... Nanak would have never stood silent in face of all that is happening in this world."

Dosanjh at the conference on Saturday. *Kamleshwar Singh*

Saying there are detention camps in China, Assam and the US, he said, "You think Nanak would be silent in face of all that ...Nanak would have spoken out... Nanak would have been on frontlines. He was a preacher, debater, challenger, he was irreverent".

Coming back to the Holocaust, Dosanjh said he has been to the Auschwitz camp, where over a million Jews were exterminated. "They were in detention camps. If you have detention camps today, be there in China, be there in Assam, be there in Trump's United States of America... imprisoning children who are trying to run from poverty and injustice to freedom...He (Guru Nanak) would have said *raaje seeh mukadham kute* (The kings have become lions, and their subordinates are no better than dogs)... Nanak would ask me are you speaking up?... did you just read... did you just make a speech or did you go fight on the frontlines and find change...?"

Dosanjh also made mention of the German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller's confession speech and spoke about crimes committed by Hitler against Jews, Romas and Gypsies.

"He said first they came for communists; and I did not speak out because I was not a communist. Then they came for the socialists; and I did not speak because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists; and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews; and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out for me..."

HOUSEFED PUNJAB ANNOUNCES E AUCTION OF FLATS, BOOTHS AND COMMERCIAL PLOTS AT BANUR, MOHALI, LUDHIANA, BATHINDA, KAPURTHALA

Auction begins on 3.2.2020 at 10.00 AM
Auction Eligibility payment to be done before 15.02.2020
Auction concludes on 18.2.2020 at 3.00 P.M.
Through e-Auction Portal-https://puda.e-auctions.in
E.mail-mdhousefed@yahoo.in
support.punjab@nextenders.com.

Cooperative Housing Complex Banur

Sr. No.	Property Detail			
	Plot No.	Size (super area)	Reserve Price	Participation Money
1.	1901/1st Floor	1297 Sq. ft	33.10 lacs	2.00 lacs
2.	2321/6th floor	1297 Sq. ft	32.50 lacs	2.00 lacs
3.	2404/1st floor	1297 Sq. ft	33.10 lacs	2.00 lacs
4.	2111/3rd floor	1297 Sq. ft	32.90 lacs	2.00 lacs
5.	1417/5th floor	1297 Sq. ft	32.60 lacs	2.00 lacs
6.	2118/5th floor	1297 Sq. ft	32.60 lacs	2.00 lacs
7	123/6th floor	1297 Sq. ft	32.50 lacs	2.00 lacs
8.	2501/1st floor	959 Sq. ft	24.60 lacs	2.00 lacs
9.	3324/6th floor	959 Sq. ft	24.00 lacs	2.00 lacs
10	4016/3rd floor	403.47	9.55 lacs	1.00 lacs
11	1101,1102,1103,1104 (Ist Floor)	1297 Sq.ft.	33.10 lacs	2.00 lacs
12	1105, 1106, 1107,1108 (2nd floor)	1297 Sq.ft.	33.00 lacs	2.00 lacs
13	1109,1110,1111,1112 (3rd floor)	1297 Sq.ft.	32.90 lacs	2.00 lacs
14	1113, 1114,1115,1116 (4th floor)	1297 Sq.ft.	32.70 lacs	2.00 lacs
15	1117, 1118, 1119, 1120 (5th floor)	1297 Sq.ft.	32.60 lacs	2.00 lacs
16	1121, 1122, 1123, 1124 (6th floor)	1297 Sq.ft.	32.50 lacs	2.00 lacs

Cooperative Housing Complex at Circular Road, Kapurthala

Sr. No.	Property Detail	Category	Size (Super Area)	Reserve Price	Participation Money
	Plot No.				
1.	101/1st floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	36.00 lacs	2.00 lacs
2.	105/2nd floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	35.90 lacs	2.00 lacs
3.	109/3rd floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	35.80 lacs	2.00 lacs
4.	113/4th floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	35.60 lacs	2.00 lacs
5.	114/4th floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	35.60 lacs	2.00 lacs
6.	117/5th floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	35.50 lacs	2.00 lacs
7	118/5th floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	35.50 lacs	2.00 lacs
8.	121/6th floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	35.40 lacs	2.00 lacs
9.	122//6th floor	I	1847.28 sq.ft.	35.40 lacs	2.00 lacs

Cooperative Housing Complex- At Sector-64, Phase-10 Mohali

Sr. No.	Property Detail	Category	Size (Super Area)	Reserve Price	Participation Money
	Plot No.				
1.	1867/2nd floor	MIG	760 sq. ft	34.00 lacs	2.00 lacs
2.	1848/3rd floor	MIG	760 sq. ft	32.00 lacs	2.00 lacs
3.	1804/2nd floor	LIG	510 sq. ft	22.00 lacs	1.00 lacs
4.	1801/3rd floor	LIG	510 sq. ft	21.00 lacs	1.00 lacs

Cooperative Housing Complex, Pakhowal Road, Ludhiana and S.B.S. Nagar, Ludhiana

Plot No.	Area in Sq.ft	Reserve Price	Participation Money
501/Ground Floor	1612	Rs. 55,00,000/-	2.00 lacs
323/6th floor	1707	Rs. 35,00,000/-	2.00 lacs

Cooperative Housing Complex, Dabwali Road, Bathinda

Property & area	Total	Reserve Price (in Rs.)	Participation Money
Booth No. 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12, 13,14,19,20,21,&26 (7'.6"x17'.7")	15	6.50 lac per booth	50,000/-
0.54 acres (Nursing home site)	1	3600/- per sq yard	1.50 lacs
1.64 acres. (Primary School site)	1	3600/- per sq yard	4.00 lacs

Detailed terms and conditions for the auction and mode of payment are available on Portal https://puda.e-auctions.in. and website www.punjabcooperation.gov.in. For help desk support assistance will be available on Email id-helpdesk@puda.gov.in and support.punjab@nextenders.com

Sd/-
Managing Director Housefed, Punjab
SCO No. 150-151-152, Sector 34-A, Chandigarh

IN THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, NEW DELHI
Company Petition No. 04/230-232/ND/2020
Connected With
CAA No. 157/230/232 of 2019
In the matter of Section 230 & 232 of the Companies Act, 2013
AND
In the matter of Amalgamation of the **SUPER MANAGEMENT & PORTFOLIO PRIVATE LIMITED** (First Petitioner/Transferor Company) having its registered office at G-25, Ground Floor, Vardhman Mayur Market, CSC Mayur Vihar, Phase-3, Delhi-110096
AND
QUICK FIN SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED (Second Petitioner/Transferee Company), having Registered Office at G-25, Ground Floor, Vardhman Mayur Market, CSC Mayur Vihar, Phase-3, Delhi-110096.
Petition regarding sanction of Scheme of Amalgamation under Section 230 to 232 of the Companies Act, 2013
Notice of Petition:

Company Petition under Sections 230 to 232 of the Companies Act, 2013 for approving the Scheme of Amalgamation of Super Management & Portfolio Private Limited (Transferor Company) with Quick Fin Solutions Private Limited (Transferee Company) was presented by Mr. Rajesh Agrawal (Advocate for the Petitioners) on 19th December 2019 which was listed on 7th January 2020, when notice was issued and the said Petition is fixed for hearing before the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi Bench (court No.V) on 16.03.2020. Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said Petition should send a notice of his/her intention to the Petitioner's Advocate, with his name and address so as to reach the Petitioner's Advocates not later than 7 days before the date fixed for the hearing of the said Petition. In case any person wishes to oppose the said Petition, the grounds of the opposition or a copy of your affidavit should be furnished along with the notice. A copy of the Company Petition will be furnished by the under mentioned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.

Petitioners Through
sd/-
Rajesh Agrawal
Advocate for the Petitioners
B-35, (LGF), South Extn.-II, New Delhi 110049

Place: New Delhi
Dated: 01.02.2020

SBI

STATE BANK OF INDIA, STRESSED ASSETS MANAGEMENT BRANCH-I
12th Floor, Jawahar Vyapar Bhawan (STC Building), 1, Tolstoy Marg, Janpath, New Delhi-110001, E-mail : sbi.04109@sbi.co.in

[Rule-8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned, being the Authorized Officers of IDBI led Consortium Member Banks Including authorised officer of State Bank of India under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand Notices on different dates as per undernoted details by member banks

Sr. No	Name of the Lender	Date of 13(2) Notice	Amount of the Notice	Future Intt from
1	State Bank of India	26.09.2019	28,60,47,277.60	26.09.2019
2	IDBI	27.06.2018	23,28,84,608.51	02.06.2018
3	Canara Bank	29.11.2018	33,44,60,835.03	01.11.2018
4	HDFC	29.08.2019	6,21,35,504.51	01.08.2019
5	ICICI	25.10.2019	23,81,44,399.59	01.10.2019
6	SIDBI	22.01.2019	7,42,51,188.00	22.01.2019
	Total		1,22,79,23,813.24	

Calling upon the borrower / guarantors:-
(1) M/s SMS Paryavaran Limited at SMS House E-1/4 Sector – 7, Rohini New Delhi – 110085 Also at SH-2 Vardhman Grand Plaza, Plot no. 7, Manglam palace Sector – 3, Rohini New Delhi – 110085. **(2) Sh Sudhir Narayanrao Modak** R/o SMS House E-1/4 Sector – 7, Rohini New Delhi – 110085. **(3) Smt Sucheta Sudhir Modak W/o Sh Sudhir Narayanrao Modak** R/o SMS House E-1/4 Sector – 7, Rohini New Delhi – 110085. **(4) Sh Munendra Kumar Singh** R/o B 104 Anant Apartments Plot No 25 A, Sector – 4, Dwarka, New Delhi – 110075. **(5) Smt Uma Singh** R/o B 104 Anant Apartments Plot No 25 A, Sector – 4, Dwarka, New Delhi – 110075. **(6) Sh Manimay Sen Gupta** R/o SMS House E-1/4 Sector – 7, Rohini New Delhi – 110085. **(7) Smt Prabati Sen Gupta** R/o SMS House E-1/4 Sector – 7, Rohini New Delhi – 110085. **(8) Sh Phool Kumar Garg** R/o 273 Deepali Enclave Pitampura Delhi also at G-8 & G-9, Ground Floor, Central Mall, Plot No 1B3,Twin District Centre, Sector – 10, Rohini Delhi – 110085. **(9) Smt Raj Kumari Garg** R/o 273 Deepali Enclave Pitampura Delhi also at G-8 & G-9, Ground Floor, Central Mall, Plot No 1B3,Twin District Centre, Sector – 10, Rohini Delhi – 110085. to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs 1,22,79,23,813.24 (Rupees One Hundred Twenty Two Crore Seventy Nine Lacs Twenty Three Thousand Eight Hundred Thirteen & Paisa Twenty Four only) as per detail above along with future interest at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount together with incidental cost, charges etc.** within 60 days from the date of the said notice.

The borrower/guarantors and having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of State Bank of India on behalf of IDBI led Consortium Banks including State Bank of India has taken POSSESSION of the property (s) described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this **30th January 2020.**

The borrower/guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property (s) and any dealings with the property (s) will be subject to the charge of the **State Bank of India Rs 1,22,79,23,813.24 (Rupees One Hundred Twenty Two Crore Seventy Nine Lacs Twenty Three Thousand Eight Hundred Thirteen & Paisa Twenty Four only) as on above dates along with future interest at the contractual rate with effect on the aforesaid amount together with incidental cost, charges etc.**

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

Description of the Immovable/mortgaged Properties:

1. House No. 578, Sector – 39 Urban Estate, Gurgaon, Measuring 244.20 Sq mtr.. In the name of Mrs. Sucheta Sudhir Modak W/o Sh. S.N. Modak Coveyence Deed No. 7367 Dated 19.06.2013 Registered on 20.06.2013 With Sub Registrar Gurgaon
2. Flat No. B-104, Sector – 4, Anant Apartments, Anant CGHS, Dwarka, New Delhi in the name of Smt. Uma Singh & Sh. Munendra Kumar Singh Conveyence Deed No. 11101 Dated 17.05.2006 Registered With Sub Registrar VII New Delhi on 20.05.2006

Date : 30-01-2020, Place : New Delhi **Authorized Officer, State Bank of India**

Short of funds for modernisation, Defence Ministry looks for options

SUSHANT SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

THE MEAGRE jump in defence Budget, which continued the trend of the past few years, has driven home a point for the Defence Ministry — it will have to resort to alternative means to generate funds for military modernisation.

"Let us note two facts. First, 57 per cent of the allocation for the ministry (of defence) goes towards salaries and pensions — defence pensions alone are 4.4 per cent of total CGE (central government expenditure). And second, one-third of the central government's capital expenditure goes towards ministry's capital expenditure. This is the double-bind to which there is no easy answer," a top ministry official told *The Indian Express*.

Senior military officials say modernisation of the forces has taken a backseat because of shortage of funds. This issue has been repeatedly highlighted by the parliamentary standing committee on defence in its reports but an economic slowdown has meant that enough funds are not available for existing contracts and no major new contracts for military equipment have been inked.

"The ideal military equipment profile is 40:30:40, i.e., 40 per cent vintage equipment, 30 per cent current and 40 per cent state-of-the-art equipment. That profile is worsening by the year, with massive bias in all three services towards vintage equipment. Its effect is bound to be felt. Can we fight and win tomorrow's wars with yesterday's capabilities?," asked a senior military official.

Ministry officials argue that with the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff and Department of Military Affairs, more accurate inter-service priority for procurement and better utilisation of funds is likely to happen and this will take care of the challenges to modernisation to some extent. But even they concede the answer lies in greater allocation of funds.

"Whenever the issue of funds has been flagged at the highest levels, we have been assured that over and above the funds needed for salaries and pensions, we will get a 5 per cent increase in modernisation budget. This year, it is less than 3 per cent. There is price escalation due to inflation, and rupee is weaker too, which means the allocation is flat. It is tough to execute any new schemes...in many cases, we are struggling with committed liabilities which have to be delayed as no funds are available. We have to find alternatives," the top ministry official explained.

The Centre had last July amended terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission "to address serious concerns regarding the allocation of adequate, secure and non-lapsable funds for defence and internal security of India". Under the amended terms, it was proposed to ensure an assured allocation of resources towards defence and internal security imperatives.

Most significantly, the commission was asked to "examine whether a separate mechanism for funding of defence and internal security ought to be set up and if so how such a mechanism could be operationalized".

In its interim report for 2020-21 presented to Parliament, the Finance Commission has stated that it has received communication from Defence Ministry about continuous inadequacy of funds. The ministry also told the commission that "current provisions are inadequate to fund these and hence the need for alternate sources of additional funding".

The commission is contemplating setting up an expert group with representatives of Home, Finance and Defence ministries to come up with detailed modalities for either "setting up a non-lapsable fund, levy of cess, monetisation of surplus land and other assets, tax-free defence bonds and utilising proceeds of disinvestment of defence public sector undertakings".

The proposal for a non-lapsable fund has been made over the past two decades by the defence ministry but has been rejected by the finance ministry, as mentioned in numerous reports of the parliamentary standing committee. Levying of a defence modernisation cess on the lines of the education cess or issuing tax-free defence bonds have not been proposed earlier and will come with their own political challenges.

Andhra pensioners get cash delivered at their doorstep now

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 2

Pension raised after Jagan formed govt in state

AT LEAST 50 lakh people in Andhra Pradesh received their pensions at their homes on Saturday and Sunday as part of the Andhra Pradesh government's initiative to deliver the money to beneficiaries at their doorstep.

Earlier, pensioners had to go to the village panchayat or nearest distribution centre and wait in queues to collect pension.

Under the new initiative, 'Intivadhakey Pension', village volunteers, armed with mobile phones connected to bio-metric devices and beneficiary data to verify fingerprints, deliver the cash at the house of each beneficiary. "The old, sick and physically challenged are saved from the ordeal of going to the pension disbursement offices every month. The village volunteers appointed by the government will visit each beneficiary's house from now on the 1st of every month and hand over the pension after bio-metric verification," said Panchayati Raj Minister Peddireddi Ramchandra Reddy.

After assuming power, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy had increased old pension to Rs 2,250 from Rs 1,000. The state government has allocated Rs 15,675.20 crore for this year towards the pension programme.

Gopala Krishna Dwivedi, Principal Secretary of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, who went along with village volunteers to disburse pensions in Jupudi village in Krishna district, said, "Almost four lakh volunteers were on this initiative today and as many as 54.6 lakh beneficiaries get get their pensions. This is the first time that any state in the country has taken up such initiative."

Karnataka Cabinet expansion on Feb 6, 13 MLAs to take oath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 2

10 rebel MLAs who joined BJP to take oath: Yediyurappa

KARNATAKA CHIEF Minister B S Yediyurappa on Sunday said the expansion of his ministry will take place on February 6 and 13 MLAs will take the oath of office.

Ten legislators who had joined the BJP from other parties, including the Congress and the JD(S), will be among those who will be inducted into the cabinet, he said.

Yediyurappa had on January 31 received nod from his party's central leadership for expanding his six-month-old Cabinet.

The exercise has been on the cards ever since the BJP won 12 of the 15 seats in the December 5, 2019, assembly bypolls, helping the Yediyurappa government retain majority in the House.

"The Cabinet expansion will take place on February 6 with the oath-taking ceremony at the Raj Bhavan at 10.30 am," the chief minister told reporters here.

Thirteen MLAs, including 10 who had joined the BJP from other parties, including Congress and JD(S), will take the oath of office, he said.

Earlier, Yediyurappa had said that most of the disqualified JD(S)-Congress MLAs who got re-elected in the bypolls on BJP tickets would be made ministers, but there would not be additional deputy chief ministers.

He had given an assurance to all 11 re-elected legislators that they would be made ministers.

On Sunday, Yediyurappa acknowledged that he could not have come to power if the 17 Congress-JD(S) MLAs had not been disqualified, but cited limitations in inducting all of them into the Cabinet. He, however, reiterated that whatever promises he had made to the disqualified MLAs will be fulfilled.

NOTICE BOARD

CORPORATE ASSOCIATE DIARY — APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, HONOURS

AWARD-WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

SB Shashank was presented with National Award for Election Management by the President of India, in presence of Ravishankar Prasad, Law Minister& Sunil Arora, Chief Election Commissioner.

INAUGURATION-NBCC

HE Nigerian President, Mahamadou Issoufou &EA Minister, GoI, Dr S Jaishankar jointly inaugurated MGICC in Niamey, Niger recently. The landmarkproject has been completed in a short span of 14 months by NBCC.

TOURNAMENT-CWC

CWC, RO Delhi, recently organised a badminton tournament onthe occasion of Republic Day. Employees from RO & Warehouses activelyparticipated in the presence of RK Bansal, RM, & Rajeev Vinaik, Dy. GM & other officials.

PROGRAMME-SCOPE

SCOPE organized aprogramme on 'Ethical Governance: The Gandhian Way' coinciding with 72nd Martyrs'Day. On this occasion,floral tribute was paid to Mahatma Gandhi by Atul Sobti, DG, SCOPE, and other eminentguests.

REVENUE-INDIANOIL

IndianOil reported revenue from operations of?4,27,331 crore for the first 9 months of FY19-20. IndianOil Chairman, Sanjiv Singh, said, "IndianOil sold 67.490 million-tonnes of products, including exports, during this period".

CSR-NHPC

NK Jain, Dir. (Personnel) NHPC & DR Sarin, CMD, ALIMC Oalong with other senior officials during exchange of MOU between NHPC & ALIMCO at NHPC Corporate Office for providing Assistive Aids & Devices to PwDs.

CHAMPIONSHIP-ITBP

TheITBP team had a superb win over the LadakhScouts Regimental Centre Red (India Army)team in the final of the 'Fire and Fury' Ice Hockey Championship organized byIndian Army in Leh recently.

LAUNCH-NR

Northern Railway recently launched the firstever High Capacity Parcel Van on LHB at Delhi Safdarjung Railway station. RavinderGupta, GM, RCF, Kapurthala & other senior railway officers were alsopresent on the occasion.

EVENT-TATA POWER-DDL

In its bid to sensitiseschool children on the importance of environment conservation, Tata Power-DDLorganized its annual event - Urja Mela. The Mela witnessed participation from1100 students from 110 Delhi Schools.

INAUGURATION-NR

GMNR, TP Singh unveiled the Platinum Rating Plaque at NRCH in a simple ceremonyheld at New Delhi recently. This is the first hospital of IR where Platinum Rating has been awarded to an existing building.

RECOGNITION-CISF

CISF contingent led by PSSingh, Dy. Commandant, participated in RD Parade-2020 held at Rajpath, New Delhi, & has been adjudged as the "Best Marching Contingent" amongst Para-MilitaryForce & other Auxiliary Marching Contingents.

PROGRAME-IOB

An MSME OUTREACH PROGRAME was conducted by IOB-Delhi region recently at Delhi. ED AK Srivastava presided over the function &distributed the sanction letter to 39 MSME beneficiaries totaling of Rs. 51.00 Crore.

BHEL has declared 2020 as 'The Year of Transformation' with the objective of puttingthe company on the path to becoming a Future-Ready Global Engineering Organisation. Towards this end, it haskicked off a multi-dimensional transformational strategy to address the multiplebusiness challenges it currently faces,including decline in its traditional market for thermal power equipment, disruptive technology developmentsand increasingly stringent customerrequirements. With this, the company aims to turn the current challenges into opportunities for the future. As part of the transformation strategy, the company has taken up the taskof reviewing & revamping processes,redesigning business models, expandinginto new markets/businesses & developing a committed workforce with a strong leadership pipeline at all levels. Specific strategic initiatives focus on Quality, Project Execution, Cost Reduction, Diversification, Digital Enablement & Technology upgradation.

INDIANOIL has entered the coveted list of the Global 500 list of the world'smost valuable &strongest brands across sectors for the year 2020. The list was released at the World Economic Forum in Davos by Brand Finance, the world's leading independentbrand valuation consultancy. There are only 11 Indian brands in this covetedlist and Indian Oil is the only Indian brand in the oil & gas sectorto feature there. In the overall Global 500 list, IndianOil has been ranked atthe 415th position. In the Oil & Gas sector globally, IndianOil jumped 11 places to be ranked 23rd in the World's Top 50 mostvaluable oil & gas brands.

BRPL Promotingconsumer safety and sustainable growth is mission critical for BSES. In a bid to further these, BSES Yamuna Power Limited & Schneider Electric, a globalleader in digital transformation of energy management and automation, havesigned a far-reaching MoU. The partnership seeks to make electricity usagesafer, smarter & sustainable using cutting-edge technology and creating awareness. This will be accomplished through two programs & working closely with the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), Industrial Welfare Associations andnominated local electricians in East & Central Delhi.

DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICE ND Delhi Assembly Election 2020 has already been announced by Election Commission of India (ECI) & the date of voting has been notified as 8th February, 2020. District Election Office of New Delhi District is all geared up to conduct the Election in free, fair & mosttransparent manner.

EVENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, LAUNCHES, CSR INITIATIVES, APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS

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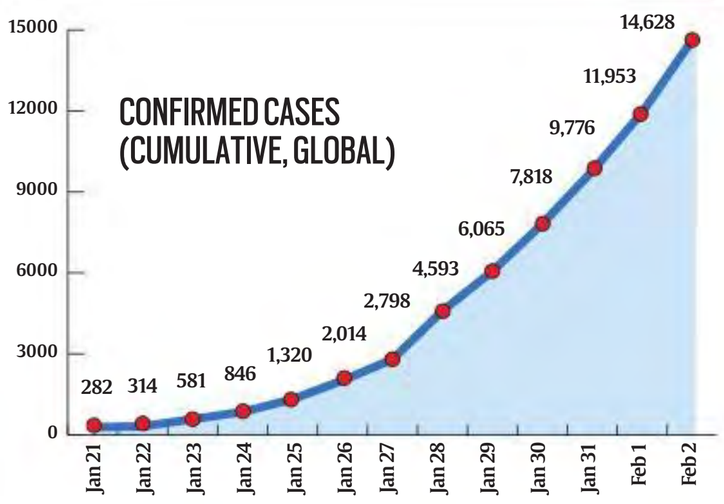
If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to **explained@indianexpress.com**

TELLING NUMBERS

Nearly 15k cases worldwide, still mostly in one China province

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FEBRUARY 2



WHO & Johns Hopkins University

THE NUMBER of cases of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) infection had approached 15,000 by February 2. Daily figures from the World Health Organization and a real-time dashboard of Johns Hopkins University also show that the count trebled from 2,000 to 6,000 in three days (January 26-29) and more than doubled in the next four days (January 29-February 2).

There have been 305 deaths while 348 of the patients have recovered. The WHO update for February 1 mentions the first death reported outside of China, in the Philippines. The patient was a close contact of the first patient confirmed in the Philippines.

Of the latest count of 14,628 cases, China accounts for 14,480 (14,451 in mainland China and the rest in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau). The outbreak is still largely centred around Hubei Province, of which Wuhan city is the capital. In China, about 60% of all cases have been reported from Hubei.

Until February 1, there were 132 cases identified outside China. Of these, 14 were due to secondary transmission outside China, the WHO said. Of the remaining cases, at least 101 patients had travelled to China in the 14 days before illness onset. Of the 81 for whom the exact destination in China was known, all had travelled to Hubei province.

COUNTRY COUNT

China	14,480
Japan	20
Thailand	19
Singapore	18
South Korea	15
Australia	12
Germany	8
US	8
Malaysia	8
France	6
Vietnam	6
UAE	5
Canada	4
Italy	2
Russia	2
Philippines	2
India	2
UK	2
Nepal	1
Cambodia	1
Spain	1
Finland	1
Sweden	1
Sri Lanka	1

Source: Johns Hopkins University

SIMPLY PUT

To import cheetahs, or not to

Decades after the cheetah went extinct in India, SC has cleared a proposal for importing a few from Africa. It throws the spotlight on the cheetahs' future, impact on indigenous species, and translocation of lions

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

THE SUPREME Court's recent green light to introduction of African cheetahs in a suitable area in India has revived a decade-long debate over the controversial plan first floated in 2009 and shot down by the court in 2013.

To appreciate the cheetah question, one needs to look at the lion parallel. One of the reasons the Supreme Court scrapped the cheetah plan in 2013 was the lopsided focus on flying in an exotic species, as a replacement for what was long gone, at the cost of undermining the future of an indigenous species that is still around.

The last cheetahs in the Indian wild were gunned down in 1947. The few surviving in captivity perished soon after, making it the only large carnivore to have gone extinct in India. The last wild population of the Asiatic lion, on the other hand, survives in Gujarat's Gir where the cat is only a natural calamity or an epidemic away from meeting same fate as the cheetah. The plan to secure the lions in a second home has been hanging fire since 1993.

The dream

The popular appeal of having cheetahs back in the Indian wild was not lost on then Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh who, in 2009, cleared a proposal from Dr M K Ranjitsinh, India's first director of wildlife during the 1970s, and Dr Y V Jhala, scientist with Wildlife Institute of India, to import a few.

After Iran refused to part with any of its few surviving Asiatic cheetahs, the focus turned to the African variety. At a meeting attended by international experts in September 2009, wildlife geneticist Stephen O'Brien maintained that the Asian and African cheetahs were genetically very similar, and Dr Laurie Marker, head of Namibia-based Cheetah Conservation Fund, offered to help bring in African cheetahs "in stages over the next decade, possibly starting in early 2012".

By September 2010, India's cheetah plan was ready and the Centre approved Rs 50 crore for the programme in August 2011.

The brakes

The matter came up before the Supreme Court during a hearing on shifting a few lions from Gujarat to Kuno-Palpur wildlife sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh, which was also one of the sites identified for releasing cheetahs. In May 2012, the court stayed the cheetah plan, and in April 2013, it ordered translocation of lions from Gujarat while quashing the plan for introducing African cheetahs to Kuno-Palpur.

Jairam Ramesh, then Minister of State for Environment and Forests (Independent Charge), at the Cheetah Outreach Centre near Cape Town in April 2010, during a visit to discuss cheetah translocation from South Africa to India. *PIB/File Photo*

The cheetah plan was revived in 2017 when the government sought permission from the Supreme Court to explore possibilities "in conformity with the applicable law to reintroduce cheetahs from Africa to suitable sites" other than Kuno-Palpur. By then, the lion translocation project was put on the back-burner again.

The design

In April 2013, the Supreme Court had set a six-month deadline for translocating lions from Gujarat to Madhya Pradesh. Between July 2013 and December 2016, the government convened six meetings of the expert committee set up for the lion project. Nothing has moved since.

Instead, the third National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031) released in 2017 said that the identification of an alternative home and drawing up a conservation plan for the Asiatic lion will be completed during 2018-2021. Then, Kuno resurfaced as a potential cheetah site in the court.

It is unlikely though that Kuno will get cheetahs. Much of its grasslands that were created by relocating villages have naturally progressed to woodlands not suitable for the African import. While the sanctuary has spotted deer and feral cattle in good numbers, there is barely any presence of the four-horned antelope, chinkara or blackbuck - all potential prey for the cheetah.

With Rajasthan not too keen on cheetahs for Shahgarh in Jaisalmer, and Gujarat's pitch for Kutch's Banni grasslands not finding favour, Nauradehi in Madhya Pradesh leads the race to play host to the first batch of imported animals.

The argument

In saving the cheetah, claimed the proponents of the reintroduction plan, one would also save other endangered species of the grassland, such as the endangered Indian wolf and the near-extinct great Indian bustard (GIB). In the umbrella-approach of conservation, multiple species in a forest (tiger reserve, for instance) is protected in the name of a flagship species (i.e. tiger). It is inexplicable, though, as to why one must introduce an exotic replacement for an extinct species to save indigenous species.

Wolves, for example, are the keystone species in Nauradehi and would have to compete with cheetahs. The majestic GIB is a potential prey for the cheetah. In fact, the project excluded Jaisalmer's Desert National Park because "putting the cheetah in with the bustard cannot be contemplated at all, because of the threat to this most gravely endangered bird". And yet, it recommended erstwhile GIB habitats for the cheetah, in effect denying the bird any chance of habitat recovery.

The priority

The GIB is not the only species staring down the barrel. The government has identified 20 others - such as the Asian wild buffalo, Jerdon's courser, red panda and Asiatic lion - that need immediate help to survive. Barring 50 reserves under Project Tiger, all wildlife habitats of the country and the 21 beleaguered species merited a total allocation of Rs 497 crore between 2017-18 and 2019-20. That is Rs 166 crore a year.

A decade ago, the cost of the cheetah project was pegged at Rs 300 crore in the first year alone. In Nauradehi, merely constructing a 150-sq km cheetah enclosure will cost Rs 25-30 crore. To this, compare the recent sanctions of Rs 5 lakh for the Greater adjutant in Gangetic riverine tract in Bhagalpur, Bihar; Rs 1.22 crore for establishing a conservation breeding centre for wild buffaloes in Chhattisgarh; or Rs 3.87 crore for a snow leopard recovery programme in Ladakh.

This raises several questions. Can India's meagre conservation resources afford to splurge on hosting a few imported animals? Even if the cheetah programme finds an international sponsor, should India's understaffed and inadequate wildlife management cadre be stretched for a vanity project? Even if a few African cheetahs survive, as they well might inside an enclosure and supplied with prey, what conservation purpose will they serve? And what future will they have once out in the open in a country teeming with people, livestock and feral dogs?

The three-member expert panel will examine these issues in the next four months for the government to reach a considered decision. Meanwhile, as the policy dash for the fastest land animal is being cheered, the lions are running out of time.

TIP FOR READING LIST

HOW THE MODERN WORLD EATS

IN THE last couple of generations, eating habits have changed across the world. Traditional diets have given way to snacking, binge eating and globalised food — from chips to avocado toast and smoothies. The same period has been marked by declining hunger, but also by growing obesity. Indeed, modern food can kill — diabetes and heart disease are on the rise everywhere. Award-winning food writer Bee Wilson explores the good and the bad in *The Way We East Now: Strategies for Eating in a World of Change*.

In essence, the book explains how modern food has transformed our lives. Wilson explores various new trends — meal replacements, the disappearing fixed-time meal, the lack of time to cook, the increase in food delivery services. Wilson looks at how better eating can re-establish eating as something that gives us both joy and health. "... Wilson offers valuable suggestions for ways in which individuals can change how they eat (smaller plates, more variety, make time to cook and enjoy food), as well as how governments can help," *The Guardian* writes in its review.

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Why wetlands matter to world and India

OM MARATHE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, was World Wetlands Day. It was on this date in 1971 that the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was adopted in Ramsar, Iran. Only last week, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change had announced that the Ramsar Convention had declared 10 wetlands from India as sites of "international importance", taking the total number of Ramsar Sites in the country to 37.

Why the focus on wetlands?

The Ramsar Convention definition for wetlands includes marshes, floodplains, rivers and lakes, mangroves, coral reefs and other marine areas no deeper than 6 metres at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.

The IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) the global assessment identified wetlands as the most threatened ecosystem. This impacts 40% of the world's plant and animal species that live or breed in wetlands, according to UNESCO. Thirty per cent of land-based carbon is stored in peatland; one billion people depend on wetlands for their livelihoods; and wetlands provide $47 trillion in essential services annually, according to the Wetlands Day official website.

This year's Wetlands Day theme is Wetlands and Biodiversity.

What is the status of wetlands in India?

India has over 7 lakh wetlands and rules for their protection; yet not one of the wetlands has been notified under domestic laws, according to environmentalist Anand Arya, a petitioner in a Supreme Court case on wetlands.

Wetlands are regulated under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017. The 2010 version of the Rules provided for a Central Wetland Regulatory Authority; the 2017 Rules replace it with state-level bodies and created a National Wetland Committee, which functions in an advisory role. The newer regulations removed some items from the definition of "wetlands" including backwaters, lagoon, creeks, and estuaries.

"The 2010 Rules required States to identify and prepare Brief Documents, submit them to the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, which was to notify them. Under the 2017 regulations, the whole process has been delegated to States," Arya told *The Indian Express*.

"We have a total of 7,57,060 wetlands, covering 1.6 crore hectares or 4.5% of India's area. In February 2017, the Court extended protection to 2,01,503 of these under Rule 4 of the 2010 Rules, and ordered authorities to notify sites. The wetlands were supposed to have been notified by March 25, 2019, 180 days after the 2017 Rules went into force (September 26, 2017). Yet so far, not a single wetland has been notified," Arya said. The 2,01,503 wetlands, measuring over 2.25 hectares, were identified using ISRO's satellite imagery.

In October 2017, the Supreme Court expressed concern over the disappearance of wetlands, and observed, "If there are no wetlands left, it will affect agriculture and several other things. It is a very, very important issue."

What does being a Ramsar Site mean?

The designation is for "Wetlands of International Importance". "They are recognised as being of significant value not only for the country or the countries in which they are located, but for humanity as a whole... The inclusion of a wetland in the list embodies the government's commitment to take the steps necessary to ensure that its ecological character is maintained. The Convention includes various measures to respond to threats to the ecological character of Sites," the Ramsar Convention website said.

The selection is made on the basis of various criteria defined under the convention. Article 2.2 says: "Wetlands should be selected for the List on account of their international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology."

There are currently over 2,300 Ramsar Sites around the world, covering over 2.1 million square km.

In India, the 10 new wetlands declared Ramsar Sites are Nandur Madhameshwar in Maharashtra; Keshopur-Miani, Beas Conservation Reserve and Nangal in Punjab; and Nawabganj, Parvati Agra, Saman, Samaspur, Sandi and Sarsai Nawar in UP.

On the newly identified Ramsar Sites, Arya said, "Until days ago, out of the 7,57,060 wetlands in the country, only 27 sites were protected. Now there are 10 more. Where are we as far as protection efforts are concerned?"

Reading Bodo: one language, three scripts, and a focus area in Accord

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 2

IN A SERIES of tweets on January 30, Prime Minister Narendra Modi acknowledged the signing of the Bodo Peace Accord among the Centre, Assam government and Bodo groups. The PM, who often tweets in regional languages, wrote a number of these tweets in the Bodo language. The language is one of the key thrust areas in the Bodo Accord.

A history of various scripts

Estimated to have 1.5 million speakers (Census 2011), Bodo is the only tribal language that is listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. It is spoken in Assam, where the Bodo tribe constitutes about 5-6% of the population, and in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and West Bengal.

The PM's tweets in Bodo were written in both the Devanagari script and the Roman script. While Bodo is officially written in the Devanagri script, the language has a history of having been written in at least three different scripts — until in 1974, the Government recognised Devanagari as its official script.

The language is believed to have had its own script in the pre-13th century era, when it was called Deodhai. However, scholars say there are contrasting claims and no concrete proof. "When the Danish missionaries came to the Bodo-dominated area in the latter part of the 19th century, they started using the Roman script to teach Bodo in missionary schools," said Pranab Jyoti Narzary, Assistant Professor, Department of Bodo, Pandu College.

J D Anderson, a member of Indian Civil service (1873-1900), is known to have translated a number of Bodo folk songs into English. "In the first decade of the 20th century, Bodos started writing in the Assamese/Bangla script," said Narzary.

The decades that followed saw use of both Assamese/Bangla and Roman scripts, until in 1962, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, the apex Bodo literary body established in 1952, decided to use the Assamese script for Bodo textbooks to systemise the language. Taren Boro, president of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, said four universities have Bodo departments: Gauhati University, Cotton University, Bodoland University, and Dibrugarh University.

"In 1972, many academics and scholars decided that it was better to return to the Roman script since the Assamese script wasn't conducive to certain Bodo pronunciations," said Narzary.

In the 1970s, there was a sustained mass movement to that end, resulting in 18 deaths. This led to the then Indira Gandhi government asking the Bodos to use Devanagari as the official script, with a promise that it would be accorded an official Indian language status in the Eighth Schedule. "After that, books, medium of instruction in schools, offices have always been written in the Devanagari script," Narzary said. "The problem is that many old-timers, who started with the Assamese script, find Devanagari tough; those who use Devanagri find Assamese tough — and many people stick to the Roman script because it is much easier."

Promises in the Accord

It was only in 2003, under the then Bodo Accord, that the language was listed in the Eighth Schedule. "The 2003 Accord was very significant for language because it was the first tribal language to be included in the Eight Schedule," said Raju Narzary, Executive Director, North Eastern Research and Social Work Network. In Assam, it has enjoyed the status of official associate language in undivided Goalpara district since 1986.

"Now the 2020 Accord makes Bodo the associate official language throughout Assam," he said. The new Accord also promises to establish a separate directorate for Bodo medium schools, provincialise schools and colleges in the BTAD (Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District) and establish a Cultural Complex-cum-Centre of Excellence named after the late social activist Bodofa Upendranath Brahma in Kokrajhar for protection and promotion of the language.

"The Bodos, who are one of the oldest inhabitants of the region, have been pushed from one capital to another ever since the 12th century. As a result, they have lost their language and script," said Raju Narzary.

W as a vowel

In the PM's tweets written in the Roman script, the words include "*afadphwrjwng*", "*gwrwbtha*" and "*thabwinw*". The letter *w* is used as a vowel in a number of languages, including Welsh, and denotes different sounds from language to language.

In Bodo, "the letter *w* is used to denote the high back unrounded vowel /*w*/ because the appropriate symbol is not readily available on computer keyboards and handsets. Though it might not be phonetically correct, it is used for the convenience of writing as well as orthographical need," said Dr Phukan Ch Basumatary of Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, who researches linguistics, "Actually in English /*w*/ represents a semi-vowel. That is why this [letter] makes a contradiction for non-Bodo users."

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

THEY HAVE THE GUNS, WE HAVE THE POETS. THEREFORE, WE WILL WIN.

— HOWARD ZINN

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

OPTICS AND ILLUSIONS

The Budget's numbers are ambitious. The government may face difficulties in meeting the targets

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN'S PREVIOUS Budget was criticised for being overly optimistic in its revenue projections. Those concerns have now been validated with the Centre's gross tax collections falling short of the budgeted target by Rs 3 lakh crore in 2019-20. This time around, the Centre has scaled down its revenue projections for 2020-21. However, given the sharp drop in tax buoyancy this fiscal year, and continuing uncertainty over the state of the economy, the revenue projections for the upcoming year do seem aggressive. The risks stem from the possibility of direct taxes and GST collections falling short and the ambitious disinvestment and non-tax revenue targets.

The Union Budget for 2020-21 has assumed gross tax revenue growth at 12 per cent. To achieve this, it has pegged direct taxes to grow at 12.7 per cent. This is far too optimistic. Direct taxes are likely to grow by only 2.9 per cent this fiscal as corporate tax collections have fallen by almost Rs 1.5 lakh crore due to cuts in the tax rate, and sluggish economic activity. The Budget expects income tax collections to grow at 14 per cent next fiscal. But given the rejig in income tax rates — the FM has pegged revenue forgone at Rs 40,000 crore even though there is uncertainty over how many filers will opt for the new regime — it implies a huge buoyancy. Moreover, if income tax collections this year end up being even lower than what the revised estimates suggest, collections for next year will need to be adjusted downwards. On the indirect tax side, the revenue boost from GST has not materialised — indirect tax collections have actually dipped from 5 per cent of GDP in 2018-19 to 4.9 per cent in 2019-20 and are expected to remain at this level. The Centre now expects monthly GST collections to grow by 17 per cent. Considering the slowdown in consumption, it is debatable whether this is achievable. With the uncertainty surrounding tax revenues, the Centre has taken recourse to relying heavily on non-tax revenues and disinvestment proceeds. It has pegged collections from the telecom sector at Rs 1.33 lakh crore, suggesting that it does not expect to give telcos any leeway on the adjusted gross revenue issue. And even though the disinvestment target for this year is unlikely to be met, it has raised the target for next year to Rs 2.1 lakh crore. While the Centre is likely to be banking on divesting its stakes in the LIC, Air India and BPCL, this pipeline makes for a challenging disinvestment calendar.

The underlying assumption in the Budget's numbers appears to be based on the government's view that the economy has bottomed out and is now likely to pick up, although gradually. Yet this is the third consecutive year when fiscal deficit has breached its target, indicating deteriorating fiscal marksmanship.

US VS US

Centre's offer to talk to protesters is welcome, but for it to carry weight, BJP must stop seeing Pakistan where it doesn't exist

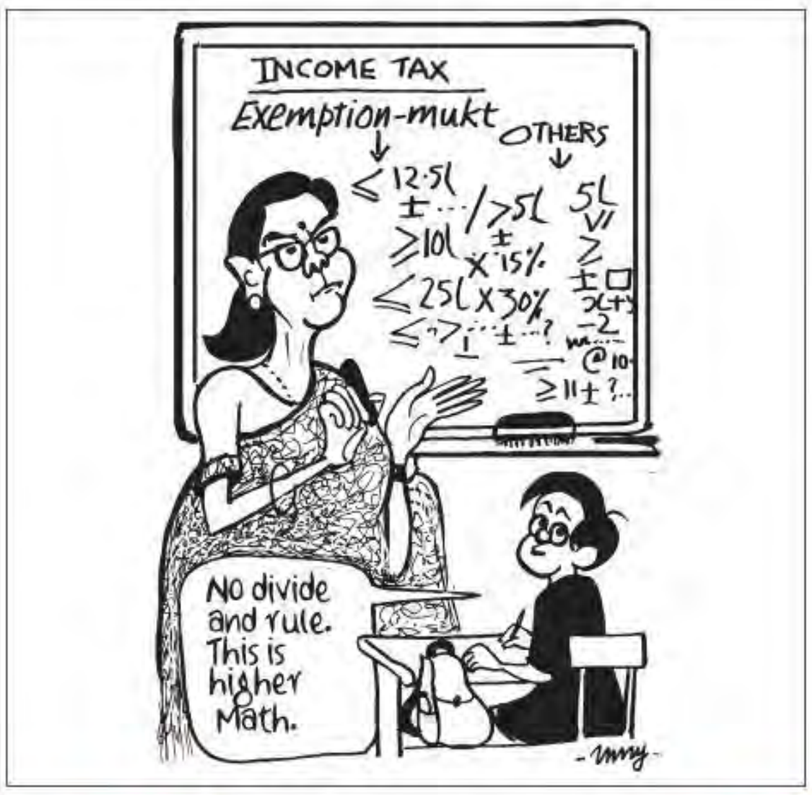
UNION LAW MINISTER Ravi Shankar Prasad's statement that the Centre is ready to talk to protesters in Shaheen Bagh is welcome. It is a mere tweet and it is not known what its implications are but in these *goli-maaro* times, it brings some assurance. The onus is on the government to impress the protesters that it is serious about holding a dialogue to assuage their fears over the new citizenship law that excludes Muslims from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

That's not easy. Party leaders, including people holding high public office, have been extremely hostile to the Shaheen Bagh protesters — they have been consistently trying to frame the agitation using the binary of "us" and "them", us being nationalists and them being anti-nationals. It's time the party leadership starts viewing the protesters as part of us, the nation and its people, and recognise the peaceful protest as a legitimate expression of democratic dissent. The demonisation of the protesters as anti-nationals by the BJP leadership, presumably with the intent to polarise Delhi voters ahead of the February 8 assembly elections, has triggered extreme reaction from the party's own cadres. Last week, soon after Union minister Anurag Thakur whipped up frenzy at an election rally where a mob chanted "desh ke gaddaron ko goli maaro", a 17-year-old, who claimed to be a BJP supporter, fired at students in Jamia Millia Islamia, injuring one person. Later, on Saturday, a Delhi resident, identified as Kapil Gujjar, raised communal slogans and fired in the air at Shaheen Bagh. Delhi Police, which reports to the Union Home Ministry, was a mute spectator when both these incidents took place, raising questions about its conduct. The BJP leaders seem unfazed at the dangerous turn of events and have continued to engage in polarising talk. Over the weekend, at poll rallies in Delhi, UP Chief Minister Adityanath accused Shaheen Bagh protesters of raising pro-Pakistan slogans and alleged that the Congress and Arvind Kejriwal were feeding biriyani to terrorists from Pakistan.

The first step to calm tempers and prepare the ground for a dialogue in Shaheen Bagh is to get the BJP leaders to tone down their rhetoric and stop the vilification of protesters. The BJP has the right to criticise the anti-CAA protests, of course, and even make it an election issue. But the party should show the political maturity to desist from using it as an instrument to polarise society and instigate violence for votes, as its leaders such as Thakur, MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, Adityanath and others have done. The genuineness of Prasad's outreach to Shaheen Bagh will be tested by the BJP election campaign in the coming days.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



An admission of defeat

The Budget reads like a five-year plan with lots of objectives and targets but no road map

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

BUDGET 2020 WAS presented in a context where, for perhaps the first time in two decades, it had become clear that the Indian economy is stuck in a quicksand, where apparent solutions seem to also risk becoming problems. The issue is not one or two areas of weakness: Accumulated infirmities have tied us in knots. So there is a call for an expansionary fiscal policy. Given the dire straits we are in, an expansionary policy is attractive. But how do you do it in a context where the de facto fiscal policy, if you combine the deficits of the states, is already expansionary, as Subhash Garg and many others have pointed out? There is rightly a call to address the slump in rural demand? But how do you do that when you have spent half a decade trashing mechanisms like the MGNREGA and the administrative machinery associated with it?

There is a call to increase capital investment and more build more infrastructure. Fair enough. But how do you do that beyond a point, in a context where part of the problem is that financing massive infrastructure expansion over the last 15 years, without a sustainable financial plan or robust financing institutions, led to this crisis in the first place? And in any case, the effects of this spending will kick in over the long run only. You might have been able to address this if financing in critical sectors, electricity and real estate, had been fixed. But wait: Who is accountable for the fact that the promising power sector reforms over the last six years barely lit up the sector as far as finances go? The banking crisis continues unabated, as if the UPA's perfidy can excuse the last six years of slow action. Can we have a coherent exchange rate policy when the interests of some sections of big capital collide with the needs of exporters? The tension between swadeshi thinking and globalisation is manifest in so many things. For instance in this budget, there will be tax remittances under LRS. Can you have coherent taxation policy, when you are in the midst of missing all targets? But worse, the government cannot decide whether it wants to simplify or control. India's declining savings rate is also a cause for concern.

> The finance minister's caution on both more consumption spending and capital investment in the Budget is a reflection of one stark truth: There is now less confidence, even in government, in the government's execution capabilities. Could they even design these stimuli efficiently? Education and defence continue in their low-level but eternal stasis, while health is stumbling towards an architecture whose financial implications are not clear. So you have to feel for the finance minister. In such a quagmire, how is it possible to have any convictions at all?

Look at the institutional side. What will happen to cooperative federalism, since it seems that the Finance Commission will upset the delicately-built consensus on Centre-state financial relations by possibly changing the formula for fund allocations? The IBC was a promising initiative, but, like so many government initiatives, runs the risk of floundering because of the government's own legal nonchalance. The integrity of India's data is, for the first time, under a serious cloud. To meet short term-targets, you continue to mess with public institutions like the LIC. Very frankly, the finance minister's caution on both more consumption spending and capital investment in the Budget is a reflection of one stark truth: There is now less confidence, even in government, in the government's execution capabilities. Can they even design these stimuli efficiently? Education and defence continue in their low-level but eternal stasis, while health is stumbling towards an architecture whose financial implications are not clear. So you have to feel for the finance minister. In such a quagmire, how is it possible to have any convictions at all? How does one be certain that the economy will take up any action you intend in the way you intend it? After all, no matter what the Bhagwad Gita might say about ethics, when it comes to the economy, it is not the intent or action but the consequences that matter.

How do you think in such circumstances? You resort to doing the two things we know how to do. First, have faith in the civilisational DNA of the Saraswati-Sindhu civilisation. It was, doubtless, a great civilisation, still vibrant in many ways. But it can now be charged with rescuing a 21st century economy. Second, appeal to a mindset that encourages constant concession bargaining with the state.

Many of the details announced in the Budget are potentially promising. The emphasis on clean water could be far reaching. In part, the Budget reads like a five-year plan with lots of objectives and targets but no road map. Some "reforms," like land titling, will depend on execution. But the fundamental premise of the Budget is this: You still gain legitimacy by acting as a Mai-Baap state, where every section of the society looks to some hard-won concession. The logic of these concessions is not economic or based in justice. It is based on placating different sections. The corporate tax cut, announced off Budget, had no bearing on reviving the economy — nor was it based on justice. It was more about placating a pressure group. Corporates don't want dividends taxed, so you please them. But you then shift compliance costs to individuals in the very Budget that you are arguing for tax simplification. To counter-placate, you do a supposed tax cut or simplification for the middle class. But creating so many tiny slabs hardly counts as simplification. As the fine print of the Budget is sifted over, these contradictions will become clearer. The Budget speech, promisingly, devoted a lot of time to agriculture. But in the end, farmers got very little. But these are not just a hangover of inherited bureaucratic mind games. The nature and ineffectiveness of these concessions are a consequence of the fact that you are still trying to placate too many constituencies, with too little to go around, all with the primary aim of perception management rather than fixing real problems.

So is the Budget disappointing? Depends on what you expected. You can perhaps feel a sense of relief that the government did not take another big wrecking ball and hit the economy. You can sympathise with the Finance Minister. The things that it will take to fix the economy cannot be done in the Budget. They will require to use Max Weber's much-quoted but always relevant phrase, "the slow boring of hardboards," in routine governance. The problem is that most of the government buys its own rhetoric of success and so year after year, a finance minister comes to the country with the same problems that remain unfixed. The Budget can be criticised for its lack of boldness. But in a way, that is the most honest thing about it. It is an admission of defeat; the Saraswati-Sindu civilisation is not transforming into a great of the 21st century in a hurry.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

AN UNEQUAL FUTURE

Alarming schism between haves and have nots doesn't bode well for India's future

VINEET JOHN SAMUEL

THE POLICY WORLD has witnessed the ripples caused by Oxfam releasing its Annual Inequality Report ahead of the World Economic Forum in Davos in January. Every year, this report captures staggering increases in global wealth inequality over the years. This year, the report established that the richest 1 per cent in the world have more than double the wealth of 6.9 billion people combined. Within this 1 per cent, the world's billionaires, just 2,135 people, have more wealth than that of the bottom 4.6 billion combined.

Suffice to say, these figures point to a problem serious enough for the fiscally conservative International Monetary Fund to come out and call for resolving inequality, to protect long-term economic growth.

In many ways, India has earned notoriety for its rampant inequality that seems to grow exponentially each year. We now know that nine of India's billionaires own as much wealth as the bottom 50 per cent of the country's populace and that it would take the average female domestic worker 22,277 years to earn the annual pay-out to India's top tech CEO.

Yet, while we have seen a lot of discussion around what this means for growth, there is a critical need to understand what this inequality means for the future of today's youth. If the Oxfam report is any indicator, an unequal present implies an exponentially more unequal future, that entrenches within it some of Indian society's greatest failings.

The burden of inequality continues to be borne by India's women: They continue to be tasked with bearing the burden of care work, and spend — on average, 352 minutes a day for this purpose. In contrast, men put in only 51.8. As the report argues, increasing spending on social welfare could drastically reduce this burden. But there again, India continues to allocate a little over 5 per cent of its GDP to health and education.

ONE OF 800 MILLION

A VOICE, UNDER 35

> We now know that nine of India's billionaires own as much wealth as the bottom 50 per cent of the country's populace and that it would take the average female domestic worker 22,277 years to earn the annual pay-out to India's top tech CEO. Yet, while we have seen a lot of discussion around what this means for growth, there is a critical need to understand what this inequality means for the future of today's youth.

By tasking women with unpaid care work, we simultaneously withhold their entry into the labour force. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 showed a dramatic drop in women's work participation rates, to only 16.5 per cent, while unemployment rates for the economy as a whole continued to climb. This is a reason for concern primarily because it means that fewer and fewer women are participating in India's labour force, and that even those who do now find themselves without work.

At a time when resolving the gender wealth gap is predicated on increasing women's incomes, this economic outlook only points to the deepening of this divide as millennial women remain both underpaid and underemployed.

Growing wealth inequality is also symptomatic of the rise of an entrenched rentier class which looks to leverage their fixed assets in the form of land and property to extract the greatest possible rents from tenants and leases. For our millennial professionals, this means that cities continue to grow unaffordable, and prospects of actually purchasing a home early in their career turns from optimistic to bleak.

With a 2019 study by the Reserve Bank confirming that housing affordability has significantly deteriorated over the last four years, it is unsurprising how millennials now choose to rent rather than bear the increasingly unaffordable burden of high EMIs.

The net effect of this damage is felt most in the country's economic growth. Over the last 15 years, the Indian economy has successfully braved growing income-wealth disparities to chug on. However, the current drying up of demand may be symptomatic of income (if not wealth) inequality being pushed to its very limits. When the PLFS notes that 75 per cent of regular workers earn less than Rs 20,000 per month and 60 per cent of casual workers earn less than Rs 5,000, it should come as no surprise that even the employed don't earn enough to keep the national consumption cycle going.

Current social unrest and student protests should be viewed as symptoms of this growing economic inequity. Lack of upward mobility and drastic economic slowdown has only exacerbated existing societal tensions. It is precisely for this reason that we must ensure that the campaign transcends just economics, and enters the public conscience.

By increasing social spending, changing gendered attitudes towards care work, and ensuring the wealthy pay their share, we could take concrete action towards this goal. Doing so would be critical to resolving, not only the glaring inequities of the present, but also the threat of a more unequal future.

The writer, 23, is the Asia Democracy Network fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi

FEBRUARY 3, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

ASSAM FOREIGNERS

THE PRIME MINISTER told an eight-member delegation of the All Assam Students' Union that while the question of foreign nationals would be looked into carefully, it was important to see that genuine Indian nationals were not harassed. She had an 80-minute meeting with the students who gave her a memorandum. Mrs Gandhi told the students that nobody was in favour of permitting foreigners to pose as Indians. But, it was also unfair to harass genuine Indian citizens on this score.

REIN IN SANJAY GANDHI

THE UTTAR PRADESH chief minister, Banarasi Das, said in Delhi that "the Centre and Sanjay Gandhi were interfering and making inroads into state autonomy." Addressing a news conference, Das said, "Ever since Mrs Gandhi has taken over as prime minister, Sanjay Gandhi has become the extra-constitutional authority creating law and order situation in the states". The chief minister released a copy of his letter to the prime minister protesting against Sanjay Gandhi's remarks at his news conference in Lucknow on Friday regarding Narainpur (Deoria) incidents. He urged Mrs Gandhi "to counsel Sanjay Gandhi about the need for restraint in affairs of public importance and not cast aspersions which may disturb the fabric of our judicial system".

NO STERILISATION

THE MADHYA PRADESH government has denied launching a massive programme of demolition of houses and forced sterilisation. "Not a single demolition has taken place in the state," the chief minister, Sunderlal Patwa, said. The state government was carrying out the normal family welfare programme and there was no unusual spurt in sterilisation, he added. Patwa also denied that the state government or the Janata Party had launched misleading propaganda regarding a non-existent central directive to undertake sterilisation programmes. There was neither any directive from the Centre nor was there any propaganda to this effect, he told newsmen.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Brexit has happened. It is a defeat to be mourned. But the country (the UK) will face big choices about its place in the world."— **THE GUARDIAN**

A workmanlike account

The narrative of reform woven around the statement of accounts in the Budget shows a path towards a $5-trillion economy

SAUGATA BHATTACHARYA

C R Sasikumar

TARGETING POLICY INSTRUMENTS and actions for achieving specific economic objectives has long been an accepted tenet of macro-economic and financial policy interventions. One lens for evaluating the Union Budget for 2020-21 is to use this framework. The present economic slowdown is the result of multiple, complex, interlocking reasons, and it will not be easy to crack this mesh open. How best to use monetary, fiscal, trade, labour and regulatory measures, in coordination, will determine the speed at which the economy turns around.

The Budget did the best it could do to stimulate the economy given the extreme paucity of resources. It was a workmanlike exercise, more a statement of account, around which was woven many strands of intent and vision, which, read in its entirety and by connecting interlocking dots, framed a strategy of moving towards a $5 trillion economy over the next five years.

First, a look at the fiscal arithmetic of the Budget. One request from analysts across the board was to present a realistic assessment of the present economic conditions and projections for future growth prospects. To a large extent, the Budget has done this, giving a much clearer picture of the off-balance sheet borrowings, which add to the government's debt and its obligations to pay. This will enhance credibility among the investor community while taking decisions on committing capital for India's future.

The nominal growth projected for 2020-21 at 10 per cent is feasible, with a stretch, given the expected rise in inflation, which will add around 4 per cent to a projected 6 per cent real growth. The revenue projections are more aggressive, assuming a buoyancy which can be attributed in large measure to checking evasion using data analytics. The worry is that the growth projections for the two remaining months of this fiscal year, 2019-20, are quite aggressive, and undershooting these will, in turn, make the targets for FY21 even more difficult.

The major boost to revenues is expected from disinvestment and privatisation of central public sector enterprises, together with asset monetisation (selling of various road, rail, land, logistics and other projects which the government has undertaken over the years). The target is up sharply to Rs 2.25 lakh crore. This initiative has been one of the core focus areas of the government, and even though politically difficult, has to be lauded — even more for the effects of increasing efficiency in operations and restricting the losses to the public balance sheet. Disinvestment revenues are likely to be augmented with higher dividend receipts, including, from higher profits of the Reserve Bank of India.

Spending, which depends on revenue collection, has also been optimally allocated, with capital expenditure budgeted to increase faster than revenue. However, capital expenditure is still a much smaller fraction of total expenditure compared to the committed revenue spending on interest payments, salaries and pensions and subsidies. The speech emphasises the need to spend wisely.

Given this, step back to the economic environment in which the Budget was presented. Growth has slowed to 5 per cent in FY20, and is likely to print even lower (forget about expectations of growth coming in at 5.7 per cent given the downward revision of growth in FY19 from the earlier 6.8 per cent to now 6.1 per cent; that's a different story).

That India's slowdown was largely unexpected is evident from the IMF's markdown of India's growth from 7 per cent in June 2019 to 4.8 per cent recently. No other country's prospects, certainly not China's, have been lowered to this extent. This brings us back to the instrument — objective targeting mentioned earlier.

Three aspects of the current slowdown make it different from previous episodes. First, multiple engines of growth have synchronously decelerated — consumption, investment, exports and sporadically, government spending — compared to earlier ones when one or some of these drivers were still functioning. Second, this is more a demand-led slowdown, versus the earlier ones, which tended to originate with a supply shock, whether from oil or foreign capital. Third, the trigger for this episode was a financial shock — NBFC lending — which tipped the weaknesses building in the system into deep deceleration.

The proximate cause of the surprise on the extent of the slowdown was a squeeze in the flow of credit from all sources, domestic and offshore, banks, corporate bonds, and external borrowings to companies. A telling statistic released by the RBI shows that compared to Rs 8 lakh crore of loans provided to borrowers during April-September 2018, credit flow fell to Rs 90,000 crore in the six months of 2019. Bank credit has continued to remain very weak. In the context of the broader slowdown, credit to micro, small and medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has been one of the worst affected.

One significant question for policymakers in devising stimulus measures is whether this deceleration in growth is more cyclical than structural in nature. If it is the former, an aggressive use of monetary and fiscal countercyclical policy could yield the desired result. If not, then the wait is likely to be longer and will involve more sector specific de-bottlenecking initiatives. While there is certainly a cyclical component in the manufacturing segment — the proximate source of the slowdown — there are signs of deeper structural constraints.

> The signature theme of the Economic Survey this year was 'the invisible hand of the market supported by the hand of trust'. Fostering trust was also repeatedly emphasised in the Budget speech, and is increasingly evident in the ongoing initiatives of the government for increasing transparency and simplification of processes. A significant step forward is the proposed amendments in the Companies Act for removing criminal liability for acts which are civil in nature.

We have heard of the twin balance sheet problems of the excessive debt build up in corporates and banks, but this brake has now expanded into almost quintuple problems, encompassing the government, households and NBFCs. While this indebtedness is indeed being reduced across the segments, the bad loan problem and lack of access to fresh capital is hindering quick resolution.

Overlaid on these structural impediments is a sharp weakening of consumer, investor and corporate confidence, the result of multiple causes, the prominent among them being the uncertainty on employment as well as the disproportionate enforcement actions. The signature theme of the Economic Survey this year was "the invisible hand of the market supported by the hand of trust". Fostering trust was also repeatedly emphasised in the Budget speech, and is increasingly evident in the ongoing initiatives of the government for increasing transparency and simplification of processes. A significant step forward is the proposed amendments in the Companies Act for removing criminal liability for acts which are civil in nature.

Implementation, as always, will be key to achieving the $5-trillion goal. The arena for the next set of reforms and actions for sustained growth is at the state level: Agriculture, land, electricity, and even labour. The Budget acknowledges this. A federal approach to tackling the slowdown, in a coordinated fashion, will probably be the most effective.

The writer is senior vice president, Business and Economic Research, Axis Bank. Views are personal

For farmers, an empty plate

In terms of both vision and allocation, Economic Survey and Budget 2020 have misdiagnosed and ignored the myriad issues facing rural India

A R VASAVI

THE KEY ORIENTATION of the Economic Survey 2020 is towards denying the overall slowdown and distortions in the economy, making India into an exporting hub by adding an "Assemble in India" component to the earlier "Make in India" focus, and in promoting privatisation and wealth creation. The finance minister's deliberations second the Survey's focus on an industry, manufacture and infrastructure-oriented economy and reduce the common person's concerns to declining food costs, or what the Survey presents as a "Thalinomics".

What significance do declining food costs have for the agriculturist and the rural and agrarian economy are questions that are not addressed. In fact, the Budget entails the failure to see the linkages between ecological conditions, land holding size, livelihoods and the larger economy. By neglecting to understand the complex rural and agrarian economy, the Budget continues to foster sharp rural vs urban and agriculture vs industry divides. Worse still, there appears an unstated assumption that farmers are citizens who are dispensable to both the nation and to society.

Is it any surprise that a government that came to power largely by disseminating a populist Budget in 2018, which made PM-KISAN a flagship programme, should now place farmers and agricultural issues as only a footnote to the economics of food? Agricultural and rural issues seem to be placed under the "aspirational India" rubric, with an assurance for crop insurance so that farming can be "competitive and liberalised". In reinforcing the integration of the agricultural sector into the financial and market system, this government is strengthening the adverse integration of even small and marginal farmers. That such forms of integration only exploit the resources and labour of disadvantaged farmers while subordinating them to the capital, chemical inputs, and technology markets is forgotten.

Agriculture is a state subject and, therefore, a key part of the federal system (and the rights and autonomy of states). The FM's call for all states to adopt and implement the three key Model Agricultural Acts that the BJP has formulated has significance in this regard. Although farmers are referred to as "annadata", no real allocations were announced to improve the overall living and livelihood opportunities of a majority of farmers. Despite studies indicating the positive impact of MNREG schemes, the allocation seems to have decreased this year and the past arrears to various states have been put into limbo. The Economic Survey critiques the periodic agricultural loan moratorium (which only benefits large farmers and creates a range of problems) but makes no recommendations as to how the problems of agricultural profitability can be addressed.

If the Budget meant to address this, and to focus on resolving the problem of the extant conditions of soil and water depletion, the onset of climate change and the devastation that periodic droughts and floods have wrought on the rural landscape, it might have considered making support payments to farmers for conserving their soil, water and seeds.

There is an absurdity with which agricultural productivity and marketing are to be supported. Recommendations are made to convert dry lands into solar energy generating parks, a scheme called Krishi Udaan is to provide civil aviation facilities to make air transportation of agricultural produce possible, overlooking how monocultivation has been devastating and is fraught with ecological problems, the FM recommends a "One District, One Product" or cluster-based type of cultivation. The BJP's most populist programme, the PM-KISAN scheme (from which only 26.6 percent of eligible farmers have received the full benefit so far) is reiterated as being one of the "five jewels" that will make farmers and the nation prosperous. Not much has been done to promote farmer-producer organisations. That many of the schemes suggested for rural India are either misplaced or are contradictory to the dominant trends is to be assessed in the domain of seeds. Citing the need to conserve seeds and recognise the role of rural women, the FM suggested a scheme called Dhanyalakshmi in which women's self-help groups will be able to get loans and support to set up seed storage centres. Such a suggestion is perhaps meant to hide the fact that the government has been active about subordinating the nation's farmers to international seed regimes, including the corporate control of seeds via GMOs.

Although the FM claims to promote a "caring society" there was no mention of special support to families where the heads of the households have committed agriculture-related suicides. Despite the fact that several civil society organisations and victim families have petitioned the government for support to widows and children of agricultural suicide victims, they have largely been ignored. Attempts to address the severe water crisis in the nation is linked to promoting new water conservation schemes in 100 water-stressed districts of the nation but no substantial allocations or plans have been made to have an integrated water use and conservation policy.

This Budget lacks the vision to craft a policy and allocate suitable funds to address the myriad problems of rural India. Rural India's challenges have become sharply manifest in the high proportion of land that is uncultivated, the decline in food crops, and the devastation wrought by droughts and floods. Our current crop of elected representatives have largely become mouthpieces of the ruling party and most seem far removed from any concern with rural issues. So, the onus for these trends and conditions must now be placed squarely on the electorate that has elected such representatives who seek to provide only poisoned thalis for the "annadatas".

The writer, a social anthropologist, is based in Bengaluru

VIEW FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Aakash Joshi

VITIATED TIES

A LITTLE OVER a fortnight ago, when New Delhi indicated that it would extend to Pakistan an invitation to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit to be held in the city later this year, the editorial in *Dawn* expressed cautious optimism. On January 31, that optimism has disappeared, and not without reason.

The newspaper asserts that "India's top civil and military leaders have been making irresponsible statements where Pakistan is concerned, publicly rattling sabres mainly for domestic consumption — and vitiating the atmosphere in South Asia as a result". The latest example of this bellicosity comes from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that India could defeat Pakistan in a war "in 7-10 days".

Dawn, usually not pro-government or jingoistic, praises the powers-that-be in Pakistan for constantly reiterating the country's "commitment to peace". It asserts: "The harsh rhetoric against this country from Mr Modi and company appears to be designed to reassure his fan base that he remains 'tough' on Pakistan. However, such warmongering can have dangerous implications for regional peace, and Pakistan's restraint and measured behaviour should not be taken as a weakness."

The editorial — while stronger than its counterparts in the Bangladesh media over the political rhetoric in India about "ghuspaithe" — marks a trend: An exclusivist, majoritarian domestic political rhetoric in India is clearly affecting bilateral and multilateral ties and could well damage the "neighbourhood first" policy beyond repair.

UNIVERSITY WOES

INDIA IS NOT the only country where higher education, and its relationship to the larger political forces, is going through a crisis. Repeated incidence of violence and killing in Bangladesh, often attributed to member of the Chhatra League (the ruling Awami League's student wing) have been a cause for growing concern in that country.

Nepal, too, it appears is going through a similar crisis. According to the January 30 editorial in the *Kathmandu Post*, Kathmandu University, one of the last bastions of academic freedom and excellence in the country, is now under a cloud: "Reports of Kathmandu University in turmoil due to politicisation are worrying; it is especially alarming because this institution was afforded much more credibility than any other Nepali university. If Kathmandu University fails to regain its reputation, it will be destroyed from inside — leaving a hollow shell behind."

The editorial recalls how Tribhuvan University, once renown globally, has faced a crisis of credibility and falling standards due to its politicisation. Kathmandu University escaped this fate, according to the editorial, because of the autonomy enjoyed by the Academic Council and University Senate. "However, news of the unilateral decision-making of Vice-Chancellor Ram Kantha Makaju, along with the allegation of financial impropriety, is extremely troubling. Equally vexing is the protesting employee's resorting to the obstruction of classes and exams to have their demands met. It is clear from the numerous sources from within Kathmandu University that Makaju's monopolising of authority is not working."

The high-handedness of VCs can have severe consequences, as many in India are learning. And as the editorial points out, academic freedom is one of the keys to academic excellence.

IMRAN UNPOPULAR?

SINCE HIS ELEVATION to prime minister of Pakistan after the 2018 general election, Imran Khan has not exactly had a smooth ride. Inam Ul Haque, a retired Pak army major general and now commentator on strategic and political affairs, writes of a waning confidence in the PM and the government.

Tabdeeli or change is why "many of us" voted for Khan, according to Haque. This change was meant to be "from corruption to honesty, from loot and plunder to a system that is transparent and corruption-free, from the law-at-discretion to a rule-based system, from under the sway of elite — the *ashhrafiyya* to a greater sensitivity for the have-nots and from privilege to the lack of privilege". Unfortunately, Khan has delivered "more of the same".

Governance has been ignored at the cost of wanting to "hang the corrupt", the economy is in the doldrums — the once-burgeoning real estate sector is singled out in the article. But an even more significant factor emerges, reading between the lines of Haque's article.

PM Khan, since long before his election, was seen as being backed by the all-powerful Pakistan army. So much so, recalls the article, that he has often been described as a "selected PM". But, Nawaz Sharif too once enjoyed the confidence of the military, which can glean public opinion "when it becomes a crescendo" but "has no clue of the economy".

"One earnestly hopes the dying pangs (of Khan's popularity)," says the article, "don't become the death of a dream that once upon a time, not long ago, was PTI and its Kaptaan".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POLARISING TACTICS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Delhi difficulties' (IE, February 2). The nervousness of the BJP is clearly visible in its election rallies — as none of them is complete without a mention of Hindu-Muslim, and Pakistan. Party leaders have even used a harmless dish — biryani — to polarise voters but they don't talk about jobs, infrastructure, or the economy. Whether or not the party wins the Delhi election, such a campaign will help them keep their voters pan India who love such rhetoric.

S Z A Husain, *New Delhi*

FOLLOW GANDHI

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Ideology versus tradition' (IE, February 1). The author rightly emphasises the problems of ideological conflicts our academic institutions. Unfortunately, we have failed to understand the limitations of ideologies. We must have a catholic approach towards others' ideology rather than projecting ourselves as omniscient beings. In this context the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi can act as a guide.

Satyendra Srivastava, *Delhi*

FOCUS ON RETURNS

THIS REFERS To the editorial, 'Path to prosperity (IE, February 1). In the wake of the Economic Survey , the focus should be on "Made in India" and not "Assemble in India", on "Return on Investment" and not on "Return on Assets". And on empowering 264 CPSEs and not on one-time divestment.

Varin Dhir, *Ahmedabad*

CAA AND EU

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'EU distances itself from its lawmakers' anti-CAA move' (IE, January 27). India's invitation to the MEPs to Kashmir has backfired after the anti-CAA resolution by some of them. The perception of India in the EU has been negative in recent years and the media had a sinister role to play here. So we must continue to strengthen our mutual relations.

Sauro Dasgupta, *Kolkata*

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.

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COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

How a community came together to find purpose, jobs while saving marine life

Kalinje Ecotourism is a part of a community-based conservation initiative by Maharashtra's Forest deptt

SANJANA BHALERAO
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 2

BORED OF her household chores and with an urge to learn something new, it was in March last year that Shruti Todankar, 33, from Kalinje, a village in Raigad district of Maharashtra, decided to join a "Mangrove" training programme with 25-30 other villagers. Until then, Todankar had joined the programme for two reasons — to enjoy the two hours of break from household work and find out if the training was really her cup of tea.

But six months later, Todankar, is part of a four women team leading the "Kalinje Ecotourism group", taking tourists to see the mangroves and explain to them their and their importance. Todankar, who never studied English, boasts, "I know the botanical names of 11 types of mangroves in English, how to spot them, and explain their features and importance". She and her team members still dedicate two hours daily to revise what they know and learn more about Mangroves in the area.

Kalinje Ecotourism is a part of a community-based conservation initiative taken up by the Mangrove and Marine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation of Maharashtra Forest Department for the upliftment of local communities and promotion of mangrove and marine biodiversity conservation. After training daily for six months at village mangrove sites — Harihareshwar and Shrivardhan beaches — on December 6, the team led 130 tourists from Mumbai on a Mangrove trail.

While around 30 villagers showed interest and took the initial training, 10 have become part of the tourism circuit. The first four women lead the mangrove trail, bird watching, traditional fishing. Two men received training from the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa for Mangrove kayaking and the remaining four take tourists on a boat safari.

Sandesh Ambhore, one of the trainers from the Foundation, said, "The idea from the beginning was to make the locals aware of the biodiversity in the village and its importance. We now have a strong team of 10 which is getting other villagers involved in the cause". In a bid to understand the village, villagers and the lifestyle, Ambhore now lives as a paying guest in the village.

A woman associated with the Kalinje Ecotourism group conducting a walk

With a population of 800-900, like in the rest of the Konkan belt, Kalinje too is struggling with the problem of younger generation migrating to cities (especially Mumbai) in search of employment. After realising this, the Mangrove Foundation is also promoting the ecotourism project as an employment generation scheme. For every trail like bird watching, a traditional fishing tour cost ranges between Rs 100 and Rs 250, depending on the group size and activities included, which is directly earned by the team. In a bid to tap into more tourists and involve villagers as well, the Mangrove cell started a village home-stay for Rs 500 per night per person. It also started serving local food delicacies with unlimited serving of veg and non-veg food for Rs 125 and Rs 175, respectively.

THE BIG STORY

Ambhore said "Many villagers have bigger houses and spare rooms, which they are willing to provide for home-stay. Many villagers have shown interest in opening up their houses for home-stay. At present, they are waiting to see the initial response". The Foundation has planned and trained villagers for 12 activities which include a visit to a turtle hatchery and roosting sites of the white-rumped vulture, the white-bellied sea eagle.

However, the women involved in the venture said that money was never an attraction. "I have only studied till 4th standard. I didn't have any prior knowledge of mangroves or the historical places in our village. I wanted to learn something new, be active and continue to work. After retirement, I had no active work, which was depressing. This mangrove tour is not only helping me but also contributing to the local economy," said 70-year old Shanta Jadhav, who was an Anganwadi worker before working as a guide for the Foundation.

The Mangrove Foundation has plans to extend the initiative to other coastal cities in the state. The next site to be developed under the project is Anjarle in Dapoli, which will have turtle nesting tours, Songaon in Ratnagiri, boat safari in Sindhudurg district and Divegar.

Neenu Somraj, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Mangrove Cell, said, "These places were selected according to its habitat, sizes of the mangrove patches. The creeks should be wide and clean for a boat safari and other activities. Another important factor is the proximity to a tourist location".

In addition, the state is in the process of developing an eco-tourism circuit connecting nearly 350 locations to a common grid for providing better facilities and development of popular destinations in the state. "We will start with the boat safari in Kalinje next. We will introduce all the activities slowly based on the success (of the existing initiative)," said Ambhore.

EXPLAINED

How the move created jobs

Kalinje was like any other village in Maharashtra's Konkan belt: a population of less than a thousand, with most of the young having migrated for work. What started as a move to raise awareness among predominantly elderly women of the village about marine ecology has now turned into a great employment opportunity, thanks to ecotourism (home-stays, walks, meals etc.) taking off.

'A world leader, India knows how to regulate technology, everyday life with sophistication'

INDIA'S UPCOMING intermediary guidelines have become a key topic for global stakeholders, like Wikipedia and WhatsApp. Daphne Keller, the Director of Intermediary Liability at Stanford's Center for Internet and Society and a former Associate General Counsel for Google, speaks to KARISHMA MEHROTRA about how the trends in India's technology legislation fit into a global picture.

THE POLICY INTERVIEW
DAPHNE KELLER
Stanford's Center for Internet and Society

How does India fare in your research and teaching on technology regulation?

India and a couple of other countries like Brazil and Argentina were world leaders in their sophistication while thinking about how the laws that regulate technology are in effect laws that regulate ordinary individuals in our everyday lives.

I teach my students about the *Shreya Singhal vs. Union of India* ruling. It is one of the four most important globally-leading cases about the question, 'If the Constitution puts obligations on governments to protect citizen's rights, how does that constraint the laws that the government can pass to regulate speech platforms?' If governments are asking, how much can we just tell private companies to regulate speech, *Shreya Singhal* says the answer is not that much. It's really important that government authorities regulate speech, and when they fail in their authority, they can't pass the buck to private companies.

How does *Shreya Singhal* compare to the other cases?

On the one hand, the European cases come up against a backdrop of a relatively detailed legislative system. On the other, the Argentina case has no legislative backdrop. The court was forced to start from zero and build what it thought the rules for platform liability should be by reasoning from first principles. India is kind of in-between.

With the upcoming introduction of new liability rules in India, how are you seeing these questions change around the world at this moment?

I think it's part of a global shift towards much more pessimism about internet technology. The result was that they took things that sound like solutions and they've written down very cursory ideas for public review. For example, making the platforms proactively monitor for bad things, and effectively breach encryption.

In India, the conversation is not just around takedown requests, but more about the government requests for information — which is also an aspect of the draft intermediary guidelines. How do these topics relate?

At a higher level, there is always a profound connection between privacy and free expression. When a government wants something to disappear, that's usually also a moment when they want to know who is the person who said this. Takedown requests and data access requests or surveillance requests very much go together.

What are the technical ramifications of breaking encryption?

If you break encryption in order to let the government in, you are also creating a security vulnerability that lets the bad guys in. I don't know of any technologists that think you can do one without the other.

What are your insights into how American MNC's operate in India?

There is a question here of the ultimate motivations of market-driven companies. I think the key question is who has leverage over Facebook or Google or Twitter or Apple. If they want access to a particular market a very lucrative market, and that government says you can't come into this market until you do x, y, or z, then we have to be realistic about the motivations that the companies have in that circumstance.

The most extreme example of that is if they want access to the market in China, what accommodations are they willing to make? You get examples like Apple's Apple store taking out news apps or removing the Taiwanese flag from the emoji keyboard.

FROM STATES
REFORMS TRACKER

ODISHA

Schools as centres of excellence

CHIEF MINISTER Naveen Patnaik has announced last week that the state will develop 101 government schools in 30 districts as centres of excellence. Towards achieving this end, these schools will be equipped with better infrastructure. Additionally, these schools will provide soft skills training infrastructure as well -- each such school will get Rs 2 lakh of financial assistance for this purpose. Another key announcement is that non-government schools which have less than 20 students will be merged with the nearby government schools.

MADHYA PRADESH

Overhauling infrastructure for cities

CHIEF MINISTER Kamal Nath is set to bring about massive changes in the way cities in Madhya Pradesh look. A central area where changes will be made is the urban infrastructure. The changes will upgrade cities to increase the number of inclusive spaces, which are expected to meet global standards and will be future proof. The plan is to go beyond merely focussing on roads and modern urban transport, and bring about a radical change in terms of sanitation, efficiency and concern for the environment.

KARNATAKA

Knowledge and health corridor

IT HAS been reported that the Karnataka government plans to capitalise on the proposed "knowledge and health corridor" between Manipal in Udupi district and Konaje in Mangaluru taluk. The Manipal-Konaje region enjoys an advantage when it comes to the knowledge and healthcare sectors.

Police in Uttarakhand runs a statewide search to identify unclaimed bodies, provide closure

LALMANI VERMA
DEHRADUN, FEBRUARY 2

ON MARCH 7, 2017, Pauri Police found a 32-year old woman in an injured condition. She was taken to Doon hospital in Dehradun where she died. The police disposed of her body after finding no clues about her identity and relatives. But the police kept her photographs and other belongings including clothes and a piece of bone from the body for DNA testing for identification purposes in the future.

After more than three years, on January 16 this year, teams of Pauri and Tehri police identified that woman as Rakhi Devi of Chamba area in Tehri district. It turns out that on December 9, 2016, Chamba police had lodged an FIR that Rekha was missing. The identification was done under a special drive called "Operation Shinakht".

Uttarakhand Police has been running Operation Shinakht to identify those who in the police records are lying unclaimed for the past 19 years. For this operation, lists of missing people and unclaimed bodies have been prepared at every police station. One list includes the name of the identified people who are still missing in the police records and the second list has details of unclaimed bodies found between years 2000 and 2019.

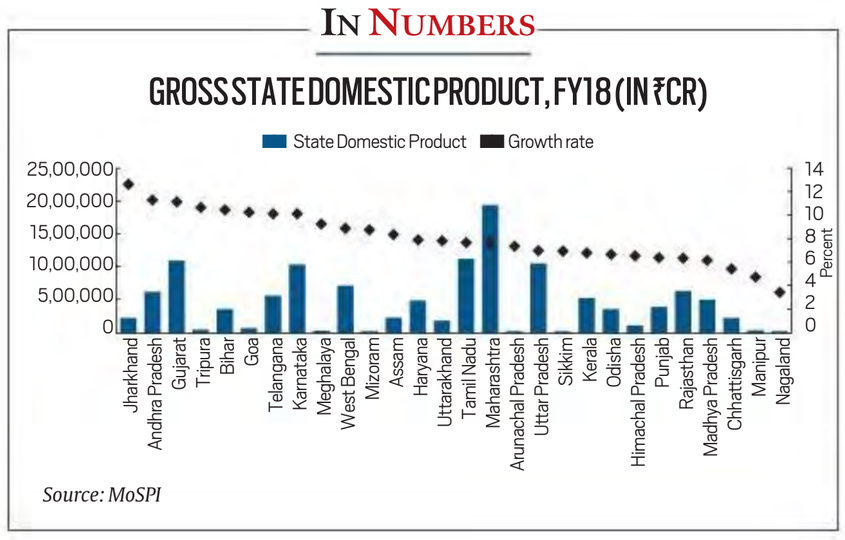
Uttarakhan Police has started Operation Shinakht *Express*

Started on December 1, the two-month "Operation Shinakht" was run in four stages.

In the first stage (from December 1 to 15), the list of missing people was cross-checked with unclaimed bodies in between different police stations within a district. In the second stage (from December 16 to 31), similar lists of remaining missing people and unclaimed bodies were cross-checked across districts. In the third stage (from January 1 to January 15), lists were cross-checked between two ranges of Garhwal and Kumaon. In the fourth and ongoing final phase that concludes on January 31, the lists of unclaimed bodies and missing people are being checked with the neighbouring states including Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh.

Uttarakhand police are contacting their counterparts in these states to get information if features and details mentioned in the reports of missing people in Uttarakhand match with any unclaimed body found in these states or details of any unclaimed body found in Uttarakhand matches with details of people who are missing from these states.

IN NUMBERS



REFORMING PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Punjab reforms its PDS, checks pilferage, boosts savings

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 2

TILL OCTOBER 2018, the Public Distribution System (PDS) of wheat through 17,000 ration depots was being done manually requiring the beneficiary to show the ration card. But in October 2017, the electronic point of sale (ePOS) was initiated on a pilot basis in four districts of Punjab — Patiala, Fatehgarh Sahib, Mansa and Mohali — in an effort to bring about automation in the PDS system. Under ePOS, beneficiaries can get their ration under the PDS just by getting their finger prints matched at the ePOS machines, instead of having to show their ration card.

Eventually, in April 2018, ePOS was rolled out in the entire state. Beneficiaries have also been issued smart ration cards by government. The government has spent Rs 26 crore on the entire automation plan. The results:

The ePOS machines have made life easier for beneficiaries *Express*

Punjab has saved a total of Rs 207 crore worth of ration according to Anandita Mitra, Director (Food and Civil Supplies), Punjab.

Meanwhile information from Punjab Food and Civil Supplies Minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu reveals that while the state government was being told to undergo automation of PDS system since 2012, the project never took off. "But our government worked on it soon after coming to power in 2017. When we took over, nearly 2.5 lakh fake beneficiaries' names were struck off the list after anomalies were found in their records. However ever since we started distribution through ePOS, 12% beneficiaries, which is approximately 16.4 lakhs, are not coming to claim ration as ration will be given only after pressing finger prints on the ePOS machines. This indicates that they were ghost or bogus beneficiaries," said Ashu.

Andhra Pradesh was the first state in country to adopt the automation of PDS following which directives were issued nationwide to all states to carry out automation.

There are a total of 17,000 depots in Punjab and the department has 1,700 ePOS machines issued in the name of food inspectors. One food inspector covers 10 villages and hence a machine is taken to the ration depot by an inspector for the 4-5 days when the ration distribution is to be done. "This further checks that machine is not being misused," said Mitra.

She added, "Rs 2 are the charges for wheat, which is given to beneficiaries and our records have reflected that earlier, in many places, even this amount had also not been deposited by many. Earlier 20 paise per kg was the commission of depot holder which we have increased to 50 paise per kg and he/she has been authorised to keep his 50 paise commission with himself/herself and deposit the rest Rs 1.5 per kg of the wheat amount in the bank account opened by the state government," clarified Mitra.

THE WORLD

WILDFIRES IN AUSTRALIA

CANBERRA LIFTS STATE OF EMERGENCY

Wildfires that threatened Australia's capital, Canberra, over the weekend have been brought under control as containment lines held and hot and windy conditions eased, prompting authorities to lift a state of emergency. While fire in the Australian Capital Territory has spread to more than 55,000 hectares, the heat fuelling the danger is subsiding.

TOP OF THE WORLD

Khan is set to go on a 2-day visit to Malaysia

ASIA

Imran to visit Malaysia after missing Muslim nations summit

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan will embark on a two-day visit to Kuala Lumpur from Monday to placate the Malaysian leadership after he skipped a major summit of Muslim nations reportedly under pressure from Saudi Arabia. According to Pakistan's Foreign Office, Khan will visit Malaysia on February 3-4 on the invitation of Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad. Khan's visit is viewed as a "damage control" exercise by local media. He had confirmed his participation in the December summit hosted by Malaysia, but then skipped it due to pressure exerted by Saudi Arabia — a key financial backer of cash-strapped Pakistan.

BRITAIN

Shaadi.com under fire over 'discrimination'

London: India's leading matrimonial website, Shaadi.com, has come under fire in the UK for allegedly reinforcing caste-based discrimination with an option for Scheduled Castes to be left out of algorithms. The website is the UK's largest marriage site catering to the Indian community. According to a report in *The Sunday Times*, a profile set up for a higher caste person was not offered lower caste matches unless they adjusted their preferences to include all castes. While Shaadi.com denied caste-based bias, a barrister has warned that there might be a potential breach of the UK's Equality Act.

USA

Two dead in shooting after Florida funeral

Riviera Beach: Gunfire erupted after a funeral Saturday in Florida, killing a teenager and a man and leaving one other person wounded, police said. Riviera Beach police said in a statement that the shooting happened near the Victory City Church shortly after 2.30 pm They said a 15-year-old boy and 47-year-old Royce Freeman died at the scene. The teen's name wasn't immediately released. Police said listening devices in the area that detect the sound of gunshots counted 13 rounds fired.

DEATH TOLL CROSSES 300

First coronavirus death outside China reported in Philippines

RYAN WOO & ENRICO DELA CRUZ
BEIJING, MANILA, FEBRUARY 2

THE PHILIPPINES on Sunday reported the growing epidemic of a coronavirus has claimed its first fatality outside of China, where new confirmed infections jumped by a daily record to top 14,000 cases.

The Philippines Department of Health said a 44-year-old man from Wuhan city in central Hubei province, the epicentre of the outbreak, had died in a Manila hospital after developing severe pneumonia.

It was the first death out of more than 130 cases reported in around two dozen countries and regions outside of mainland China.

The man who died was a companion of a 38-year-old Chinese woman, also from Wuhan, who was the first and only other person to test positive for the virus in the Philippines. Both patients arrived in the Philippines via Hong Kong on Jan. 21.

China's death toll from the outbreak reached 304 as of the end of Saturday, state broadcaster CCTV said on Sunday, citing the country's National Health Commission.

China is facing mounting isolation as other countries introduce travel curbs, airlines suspend flights and governments evacuate their citizens, risking worsening a slowdown in the world's second-largest economy.

On Sunday, state media reported that construction of one of two hospitals in Wuhan dedicated to treating coronavirus patients has been completed. Huoshenshan, a hospital with 1,000 beds, was built in eight days and can receive patients from Monday, state media said.

The World Health Organization has declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. **REUTERS**

'PLEASE TAKE MY DAUGHTER': Lu Yuejin, a 50-year-old farmer, pleads with police to allow her daughter to pass a checkpoint for cancer treatment after she arrived from Hubei province at the Jiujiang Yangtze River Bridge in Jiangxi province, China. Her daughter, 26-year-old Hu Ping, has leukaemia and was unable to receive a second round of chemotherapy treatment in the overwhelmed hospitals of provincial capital Wuhan. *Reuters*

VIRUS WON'T TURN YOU INTO A ZOMBIE, MALAYSIA SAYS

Kuala Lumpur: The coronavirus will not cause victims to act like zombies, Malaysia's government said, as officials act to correct the spread of misinformation regarding the outbreak. Some social media users in Malaysia had made a connection between the virus and the walking dead. The country's health ministry dismissed the rumour in a tweet, saying: "The claim that individuals infected with this virus will behave like zombies is not true... Patients can recover."

Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders at a rally in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Saturday. Polls show Sanders holding a narrow lead in the state. *Reuters*

US Democrats make final pitches ahead of Iowa showdown

1st vote in nomination process today

AGENCIES
IOWA CITY, FEBRUARY 2

DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES bolted across Iowa Sunday, where no handshake or pit stop is too insignificant one day ahead of the state's presidential nominating process, which is the first in the nation.

Iowa has traditionally served as a vital launching point — or burial ground — for presidential campaigns.

However, Monday's crunch vote has created an air of suspense, with no clear frontrunner.

Leftist senator Bernie Sanders holds only a narrow lead over former vice president Joe Biden, among the field of several candidates feverishly criss-crossing the rural state.

Three of the leading candidates seized on a brief break from their duties as jurors in the Senate impeachment trial of President Donald Trump in Washington to rush to Iowa for a flurry of last-minute events.

The senators — the self-styled democratic socialist Sanders, progressive Elizabeth Warren and moderate Amy Klobuchar — each held a handful of events Saturday.

The impeachment trial — only the third in US history — created an unprecedented situation by limiting the senators' ability to campaign in Iowa in the closing days before the state's presidential caucuses.

Sanders, Warren and Klobuchar have to return to Washington on Monday, along with Senator Michael Bennet who trails badly in the polls, for the trial's resumption.

EXPLAINED

Iowa caucus kicks off long road to party nomination

THE IOWA caucus is the beginning of the voting process to choose the Democratic party's nominee to take on Trump in the presidential election. It will see registered Democrats gathering in neighbourhood precincts, and other select locations, where they will discuss and debate their choice before publicly declaring their vote.

CAUCUS vs PRIMARY

Only four US states, including Iowa, hold caucuses. The rest hold primaries. Primaries involve voters going to polling booths and casting secret ballots for their choice of nominee. Unlike caucuses, primaries don't involve party meetings or discussions.

DELEGATES

In both caucuses and primaries, candidates compete for delegates. The number of delegates each candidate gets from a state depends on the percentage of votes they receive. After all caucuses and primaries are held, the delegates gather to finally choose who the party's presidential nominee will be.

Anti-China sentiment spreads around world

HYUNG-JIN KIM
SEOUL, FEBRUARY 2

A SCARY new virus from China has spread around the world. So has rising anti-Chinese sentiment, calls for a full travel ban on Chinese visitors and indignities for Chinese and other Asians.

Restaurants in South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Vietnam have refused to accept Chinese customers. Indonesians marched near a hotel and called on Chinese guests there to leave. French and Australian newspapers face criticism for racist headlines. Chinese and other Asians in Europe and the US complain of racism.

Two dozen countries outside of China have reported cases of the new coronavirus, which has killed more than 300 people and sickened thousands of others in China.

South Korean protesters call for ban on Chinese visitors. *AP*

Many countries have sent planes to the Chinese city of Wuhan to evacuate their nationals.

The anti-China sentiments come as a powerful Beijing bolsters its global influence, and China's rise has caused trade, political and diplomatic disputes with many countries.

But with rising fear of the mysterious disease has come a more acute anti-Chinese and, in some cases, anti-Asian backlash. **AP**

China silenced doctors, focused on secrecy as virus first spread

CHRIS BUCKLEY & STEVEN LEE MYERS
WUHAN, FEBRUARY 2

A MYSTERIOUS illness had stricken seven patients at a hospital, and a doctor tried to warn his medical school classmates. "Quarantined in the emergency department," the doctor, Li Wenliang, wrote in a chat group on Dec. 30, referring to patients.

"So frightening," one recipient replied, before asking about the epidemic that began in China in 2002 and ultimately killed nearly 800 people. "Is SARS coming again?"

In the middle of the night, officials from the health authority in the central city of Wuhan summoned Li, demanding to know why he had shared the information. Three days later, police compelled him to sign a statement that his warning constituted "illegal behaviour".

The illness was not SARS, but something similar: a coronavirus that is now on a relentless march outward from Wuhan.

The government's initial handling of the epidemic allowed the virus to gain a tenacious hold. At critical moments, officials chose to put secrecy and order ahead of openly confronting the growing crisis to avoid public alarm and political embarrassment.

A reconstruction of the crucial seven weeks between the appearance of the first symptoms in early December and the government's decision to lock down the city, based on two dozen interviews with Wuhan residents, doctors and officials, on government statements and on Chinese media reports, points to decisions that delayed a concerted public health offensive.

In those weeks, authorities silenced doctors and others for raising red flags. They played down the dangers to the public, leaving the city's 11 million residents unaware they should protect themselves. They closed a food market where the virus was believed to have started, but told the public it was for renovations.

Their reluctance to go public, in part, played to political motivations as local officials prepared for their annual congresses in January. Even as cases climbed, officials declared repeatedly that there had likely been no more infections.

By not moving aggressively to warn the public and medical professionals, experts say, the Chinese government lost one of its best chances to keep the disease from becoming an epidemic. **NYT**

Tanzania church stampede kills 20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DAR ES SALAAM, FEBRUARY 2

AT LEAST 20 people in Tanzania were trampled to death at an open-air evangelical Christian church service in the north of the country, officials said on Sunday.

Government official Kippi Warioba, District Commissioner in the town of Moshi, said he death toll could go up.

The tragedy happened when a crowd of worshippers was attending a prayer ceremony on Saturday led by popular preacher Boniface Mwamposa, who heads the Arise and Shine Ministry Tanzania. The stampede occurred when Mwamposa poured what he said was holy oil on the ground and the crowd surged toward to touch it in the hope of being cured of sickness, witnesses said.

Man stabs 2, shot dead in London 'terror' incident

ELIZABETH PIPER
LONDON, FEBRUARY 2

POLICE SHOT dead a man in south London on Sunday after two people were stabbed in what police described as a terrorism-related incident.

Armed officers shot the man in Streatham, a busy residential district south of the River Thames.

"The circumstances are being assessed; the incident has been declared as terrorist-related," the police said on Twitter.

The site where police shot the attacker, in London. *Reuters*

Police said later the man they had shot had been pronounced dead, and two people had been wounded.

"We await updates on their condition," police said, adding the scene of the incident was now fully contained.

Karker Tahir, a man who was working nearby, told Sky News that the man was shot three times. Police had told people in the area to leave because the man had a bomb in his bag, Tahir said.

A Western security source said the incident was related to Islamist militancy.

Several videos of the scene were posted on Twitter, but not verified by Reuters. In one, filmed from inside a shop across the road, a man can be seen lying on the street while at least two armed police officers point their guns from behind an unmarked car with its blue lights flashing.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Twitter: "Thank you to all emergency services responding to the incident in Streatham, which the police have now declared as terrorism-related". **REUTERS**

Britain lays out tough stance for trade talks with EU

ELIZABETH PIPER
LONDON, FEBRUARY 2

BRITAIN LAID out a tough opening stance for future talks with the European Union on Sunday, saying it would set its own agenda rather than meeting the bloc's rules to ensure frictionless trade.

After officially leaving the EU on Friday, Britain now must negotiate future trade relations with the bloc, to take effect when a standstill transition period expires at the end of the year.

PM Boris Johnson's government has been quick to send Brussels a message before trade talks begin in March: Brexit means sovereignty trumps the economy.

Despite appeals by many businesses for the government to ensure goods can trade across borders freely, ministers briefed companies that they should adjust to a new future when Britain will not adhere to EU rules. **REUTERS**

NEW PM APPOINTED

Powerful Iraqi cleric tells followers to clear sit-ins

REUTERS
BAGHDAD, FEBRUARY 2

POPULIST IRAQI cleric Moqtada al-Sadr urged his followers on Sunday to help security forces clear roads blocked during months of sit-in protests, calling for "day-to-day life" to resume following the appointment of a new Prime Minister.

Sadr, who has alternately sided with the anti-government protesters and the Iran-backed political groups they reject, urged his unarmed supporters known as "blue hats" to work with authorities to ensure schools and businesses can operate normally again.

"I advise the security forces to stop anyone from cutting off roads and the ministry of education should punish those who obstruct regular working hours, be they students, teachers or others," Sadr said in a statement published on Twitter.

Some of his followers appeared to have helped already to clear out protest areas in Baghdad's Tahrir Square overnight, a *Reuters* reporter said.

Anti-government protests continued nearby, with demonstrators directing their ire towards new Prime Minister Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi, who was named on Saturday as part of a deal between Sadr and rival Iran-backed political groups.

PLANES SPRAYING PESTICIDE IS THE ONLY EFFECTIVE CONTROL, EXPERTS SAY

Billions of locusts descend on East Africa in worst outbreak in decades

JOE MWIHIA, JOSPHAT KASIRE & BEN CURTIS
NASUULU CONSERVANCY (KENYA), FEBRUARY 2

AS LOCUSTS by the billions — yes, billions — descend on parts of Kenya in the worst outbreak in 70 years, small planes are flying low over affected areas to spray pesticides in what experts call the only effective control.

It is challenging work, especially in remote areas where mobile phone signals are absent and ground crews cannot quickly communicate coordinates to flight teams.

The ground crews are in "the most woeful terrains," Marcus Dunn, a pilot and the director at Farmland Aviation, said Saturday. "If there is no network, then the fellow on a boda boda (motorcycle), he has to rush off now and go and get a network."

Just five planes are currently spraying as Kenyan and other authorities try to stop the locusts from spreading to neighboring Uganda and South Sudan. The UN has said $76 million is needed immediately to widen such efforts across East Africa.

A fast response is crucial. Experts warn that if left unchecked, the number of locusts could grow by 500 times by June, when drier weather will help bring the outbreak under control.

The finger-length locusts swept into Kenya from Somalia and Ethiopia after unusually heavy rains in recent months, decimating crops in some areas and threatening millions of vulnerable people with a hunger crisis.

Somalia's agriculture ministry on Sunday called the outbreak a national emergency and major threat to the country's fragile food security, saying the "uncommonly large" locust swarms are consuming huge amounts of crops.

A swarm of locusts in Nasuulu Conservancy, northern Kenya. If left unchecked, the number of locusts could grow by 500 times by June, experts say. *AP*

In swarms the size of major cities, the locusts also have affected parts of Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea, whose agriculture ministry says both the military and general public have been deployed to combat them.

Kenya's agriculture minister has acknowledged that authorities weren't prepared for the scope of the infestation this year. That's not surprising, considering it's been decades since the country's last comparable outbreak, UN officials say.

The locusts also are heading toward the breadbasket of Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous country, in that nation's worst outbreak in 25 years. On Thursday, startled residents of Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, started reported sightings of the insects. "I was surprised to find the locusts inside my living room," said one resident, Mathewos Girma, showing a photo on his mobile phone. "It appears it is knocking on each and every one of our doors."

Zebdewos Selato, an agriculture ministry official, told The Associated Press the relatively few locusts reaching Ethiopia's capital are "leftovers" from the "massive invasion" in the eastern and southern parts of the country. Spraying is being conducted around the city to stop the outbreak from spreading elsewhere, he said.

Until the drier weather in June, more rain across the region will bring fresh vegetation to fuel further waves of locust breeding. One field in Kenya on Saturday appeared to be full of mating bright yellow locusts. "They are trying to mate and reproduce, so we need more help and because we are racing against time," said Salat Tutana, the chief agriculture officer in Isiolo county. **AP**

FINANCE SECRETARY SAYS GOVT TRYING TO MAKE FINANCIAL SYSTEM STRONG

'LIC IPO timing, size to be decided ... will be completed over next one year'

SUNNY VERMA & SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

STATING THAT while the listing of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) would be a long process involving legislative changes, Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar said the government would be able to complete it over the next one year.

"The timing and size of issue will be decided later and to come out with its issue, changes in regulation and Act would be required and even Sebi approval will be required. We should be able to complete it over the next one year," said Kumar. He added it won't be part of the Finance Bill as it is not a money bill and will come later. The government will have to first amend the LIC Act of 1956 before taking the Corporation public.

The Budget has taken measures to boost liquidity in the economy and raise funding for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), Kumar said. These steps including galvanising investment in the infrastructure sector, invoice financing and facility of subordinate debt for MSMEs, clear direction on selling government stake in IDBI Bank and legislation on credit default Swaps.

"We are moving strategically and are are creating institutions where we are putting money upfront and others can also come in"

RAJIV KUMAR, FINANCE SECRETARY

Justifying the government's decision to go for an only 0.5 per cent breach in fiscal deficit in a bid to push growth, Kumar said while the Centre made available Rs 1 lakh crore through the breach in deficit, its decision to escrow Rs 22,000 crore into NIIF and IIFCL will see a significant benefit. "We can leverage it by 10 times and can raise around Rs 2 lakh crore ... We are moving strategically and are are creating institutions where we are putting money upfront and others can also come in," he said.

Kumar said if the government had breached the fiscal deficit by another 0.5 per cent, it would have got an additional Rs 1 lakh crore, but by leveraging its investment in the two institutions it will create Rs 2 lakh crore. "We are trying to make the financial system strong, opening it up, making the legislative changes and removing fears from wherever there was and linking it to performance and giving this money upfront from the fiscal deficit itself in these two institutions to leverage it," he said.

Talking about another key reform introduced in the Budget, Kumar said the Centre has introduced a pension reform in the form of a bill for the welfare of the youth and to build a pension society. He said the idea is to ensure that even if a young employee shifts a job quickly, his account should get transferred to the new place and thus it should not be interruptible. "There are many private pension funds which are run by trusts and will be regulated by PFRDA," he stated.

While the government proposed to increase deposit insurance cover from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, Kumar said the decision was a tough one. "If you remove the current account and big corporates, then around 80-85 per cent are under Rs 5 lakh and therefore, we got this increased from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh in one go."

He said by doing so, it has now been assured that the systems in the financial sector are robust as far as commercial banks are concerned. After the collapse of PMC Bank, there has been a demand from several quarters that the DICGC — the RBI subsidiary that gives insurance cover to bank deposits up to Rs 1 lakh — should hike the coverage cap.

The Finance Secretary said even as it has been done for banks, now co-operatives are left and that requires little more robustness. "While they play an important role in credit outreach at lower level, ... when you are doing banking and you deal with depositors' money, then you have to follow similar rigour in terms of capital, corporate governance and other compliances as banks do. That is the amendment in the Banking Regulations Act," he said.

INTERVIEW WITH REVENUE SECRETARY

'Progressive, graded income tax system considered to be one of the best practices'

THE NEW income tax regime, announced in the Union Budget for 2020-21 on Saturday, would offer to a certain strata of society, which are not in a condition to invest enough to claim deductions and exemptions, a more equitable system of direct taxation, Revenue Secretary AJAY BHUSHAN PANDEY said in an interview. Speaking to AANCHAL MAGAZINE and PRANAV MUKUL, Pandey said a progressive and graded income-tax system is internationally considered to be one of the best practices, and differs from the indirect tax system, where the aim is to lower the number of tax slabs to reduce complexities. Edited excerpts:

Ajay Bhushan Pandey

The new income tax regime is being seen as a nudge by the government to spend. Are you disincentivising savings?

Not necessarily. Say, if I want to save, I will opt for the other option. So actually it is providing relief to those who — because of family circumstances or life situations — are not availing those exemptions, or they are not in a position to avail those exemptions. If the earlier system was inequitable to that section of taxpayers, then why should they suffer?

Therefore, we have provided relief. I'll give you an example: if you look around, for someone who has just joined the workforce, he is living as a paying guest, he's just started a job, he doesn't know where he will live, whether he will buy a house, so he has no housing loan. He's not taking any other benefits He's contributing a certain amount in the EPF. So, to that extent, he will take the benefit, he will take some nominal health insurance. Such a person will find this new scheme attractive. So, we are not saying that all those who are claiming exemptions will opt for the new regime, because there is a catch depending on one's income level.

But you have a road map of doing away with the exemptions.

The Finance Minister has said that we have removed around 70 of the exemptions in the new simplified regime. We will review or rationalise the remaining exemptions and deductions in the coming years with a view to further simplify the tax system and lowering the tax rate.

So she's talking about the simplified system. The other system will continue. As of today, if we had to remove exemptions, we could have removed it from the older regime.

But there will be a gradual removal ...

Yes, in this system.

But there's no plan to remove exemptions in the old regime?

As of today, there is no plan. We have provided this new option and if, say, 90 per cent of people shift to the new system, then what is to be done with the 10 per cent? We will see at that time. Why should we indulge in speculation today?

Since March 31 is the deadline for the first window under the Vivad Se Vishwas scheme, is there any estimate for this fiscal and in the Budget?

There are two purposes for this scheme. One purpose is to reduce litigation and provide relief to as many people as possible. In the process, you will obviously get revenue but we are more driven by how many people are given relief than actually getting into how much money we will get.

What will be the penalty under the scheme after March 31?

There is a penalty of 10 per cent. So if earlier the tax was Rs 1 crore, (someone coming after March 31) will pay Rs 1.10 crore. Similarly, if it was only interest and penalty, we have said that you should pay 5 per cent on that. So if it was 25 per cent, he will pay 30 per cent.

The Budget mentions transfer of GST balances to compensation fund. Where was the balance till now?

In 2017-18, certain money for compensation was collected but our compensation requirement was less. So that money, at that time, went to Consolidated Fund of India. So, now the money has to be taken out of the Consolidated Fund of India and put into the Compensation Fund. The balance in 2017-18 and 2018-19 was approximately Rs 35,000 crore.

There is concern that income from dividends being taxed could lead to a section of companies not giving dividends at all ...

There used to be a demand from the industry for removal of dividend distribution tax and a switch to the classical system. Now that we have switched to the classical system, they are saying these things. The dividends are distributed on the basis of a company's needs for investment. If the company feels that the money needs to be reinvested, dividends will not be given. Dividends are not given on the basis of the taxation principle. Once the company has decided the dividend amount, it will have to be distributed and whoever receives it will pay at the applicable rate.

In GST, focus is on simplifying by moving towards lesser number of slabs. But in income tax, on the contrary, the number of slabs have been increased ...

In GST, having multiple slabs is different from having multiple slabs in income tax. I have a list of countries, which have six to seven slabs. The slabs are dependent on income distribution. If you have a flat tax rate, it becomes inequitable in the way that you are taxing the rich and poor ... Having a few tax slabs also becomes inequitable because there is a sudden jump ... and there will be a tendency to understate income to get to a lower slab. Therefore, a progressive taxation system in income tax is internationally considered to be one of the best practices. In the US, there are six slabs of income, and in China, there are seven slabs of income. We have studied practices of Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and several countries.

If you have more income range, you need as many slabs as possible to prevent people from getting a shock when they move from one slab to another. In GST, multiple slabs create a problem because the same input is going into manufacture of five different goods, which are being taxed at different rates. However, if the level of income inequality is high in a society, it is much more simple and desirable to have multiple and graded income tax-structure.

DIVIDEND TAX

Equity mutual fund investors may switch to growth plans

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 2

BUDGET PROPOSALS to abolish dividend distribution tax (DDT) and make dividend income taxable in the hands of individuals will benefit debt fund investors who are in the lower tax bracket, analysts said. The move could also lead to a churn in the mutual fund industry with investors likely moving from dividend plans to growth plans of equity mutual funds.

While the Budget also proposed a 10 per cent tax would be deducted at source for 'income' above Rs 5,000 in a year, there is a lack of clarity on whether the levy would be only on dividend income or overall equity returns.

According to SR Patnaik, partner & head—taxation at Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, for the amount investors get as dividend, they will be required to pay tax depending on the tax bracket. "If the amount of dividend is less than Rs 5,000, mutual fund will not withhold anything but if it's more than Rs 5,000 they will withhold 10 per cent ," he said.

While the Budget also proposed a 10 per cent tax would be deducted at source for 'income' above ₹5,000 in a year, there is a lack of clarity on whether the levy would be only on dividend income or overall equity returns

For example, if an investor gets a dividend of Rs 10,000 in a year, Rs 9,000 (10 per cent of Rs 10,000) will be credited to their bank account and they will be able to claim credit of Rs 1,000 for the tax withheld by the MF while filing their tax returns. MF players feel this could also increase their compliance cost going forward. "With this announcement, dividend plans of MFs will get less attractive than growth plans. For example, if we look at equity funds, investors will get more benefits staying in growth plan rather than opting for dividend plans," a leading fund house's CEO said. **FE**

Scrapping of anti-dumping duties on PTA will boost exports: Industry

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to abolish anti-dumping duties on a raw material for synthetic fibre-based clothing and certain plastic-based products will bring down their manufacturing cost and potentially boost exports, say manufacturers. The move, announced "in public interest" in the Budget Saturday, does away with a previous NDA government decision to block countries like China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Korea and Thailand from substantially exporting the material — purified terephthalic acid (PTA) — to India.

It also follows "persistent" demand "for quite some time" from several industries to allow them to source the product at a more affordable rate.

"That particular product (PTA) is a raw material for many industries. There has been persistent demand that they should be allowed to source that particular product at an affordable rate, even if it means importing it," said Sitharaman.

"We had a look at it, many had been waiting for it (to be removed). We thought at this time that when many industries are dependent on imported raw materials that we are allowing so many others to come in, why not allow this," she said. The minister had said in her Budget speech that easy availability of this "critical input" at "competitive" prices was desirable to unlock "immense" potential in the textile sector, seen as a "significant" employment generator.

EXPLAINED

Focus on exports, competitiveness

THE REMOVAL of the anti-dumpting duty would greatly help the country to enhance the global competitiveness, boost exports and also enable the domestic manufacturers to compete with the cheaper imports.

The move may cut prices of PTA by as much as $30 per metric tonne of the product, according to RK Vij, general secretary of the PTA Users Association.

"We have been fighting for the last four-and-a-half years (to abolish the anti-dumping duty)," he told *The Indian Express*. The duties had led to downstream manufacturers of synthetic fabrics operating at only 70 per cent of their actual capacity, he said.

While India has a few domestic PTA producers like Reliance Industries and the Indian Oil Corporation, synthetic fabric makers have faced shortages of PTA on several occasions, Vij argued.

"Exports of these downstream products have dropped and, in some cases, their imports have risen as it is cheaper to procure them from outside India," he said.

The anti-dumping duties, first imposed around July 2014, levied additional charges between $27 to $160 per metric tonne for those wishing to import PTA, according to the Southern India Mills' Association. Data from the Commerce Ministry shows exports of some products made with PTA like polyester staple fibres (used to make synthetic yarn) dropped over 35 per cent to $197 million in 2015-16 from $309 million in 2013-14. In 2018-19, India exported $320 million worth of this product. Exports of textured yarn of polyesters dropped 19 per cent to around $680 million in 2015-16 from around $842 million 2013-14, before growing to around $832 million last financial year.

"This (removal of the anti-dumpting duty) would greatly help the country to enhance global competitiveness, boost exports and enable domestic manufacturers to compete with cheaper imports," said Ashwin Chandran, chairman of SIMA, Coimbatore.

BRIEFLY

ONGC, IOC, others to invest ₹98,521 cr

New Delhi: ONGC, IOC and other oil PSUs will invest over Rs 98,521 crore in the coming fiscal in exploring for oil and gas, refineries, petrochemicals and laying pipelines to meet needs of the world's fastest growing energy consuming nation.

Budget exempts income of ISPRL from tax

New Delhi: After exempting foreign companies, Budget 2020-21 exempted income of Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves from taxes on transaction of crude oil stored in the underground caverns it built as country's strategic stockpile. **PTI**

China to inject $174 bn into markets

Shanghai: China's central bank said it will inject 1.2 trillion yuan ($174 billion) worth of liquidity into the markets on Monday as its stock markets prepare to reopen amid an outbreak of a new coronavirus. **REUTERS**

'3.8% fiscal deficit target looks ambitious'

The revised 3.8 per cent fiscal deficit for FY20 looks ambitious as it is based on projected 18 per cent rise in tax collections against a paltry 5.1 per cent higher realisation so far, SBI Research said in a report

₹65,000 cr: Expected amount to be raised via divestment through the next two months, on which the revised deficit target hinges

₹17,800 cr: Divestment proceeds so far, as against the Rs 1.05-lakh crore budgeted target — one of the lowest in recent years

₹32,335 cr: Jump in non-tax revenue, equivalent to around 20 basis points of fiscal deficit, possibly reflecting AGR payments/interim dividend from RBI in lieu of telecom

50 BPS: Permissible deviation used in the Budget for 2020-21, under Section 4(3) of the FRBM Act to widen the fiscal deficit at 3.8 per cent of GDP

₹2.60 LAKH CRORE: Shortfall in revenue, of which states are losing ₹1.09 lakh crore

>₹1.1 LAKH CRORE: GST mop-up in January, which crossed the ₹1 lakh crore-mark only the second time in the fiscal after April

10%: Projected nominal GDP growth for FY21

Source: SBI Research/PTI

DPIIT working on guidelines for National Seed Fund: Mohapatra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

THE DEPARTMENT for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is working on guidelines for a National Seed Fund that was announced in the Budget for 2020-21 to help start-ups and budding entrepreneurs, a top government official said.

DPIIT Secretary Guruprasad Mohapatra said that most of the start-ups actually face problem in raising finance or funds in the ideation to the proof of concept stage. He said that now the finance minister has announced a proposal in the Budget on Saturday for providing seed fund to start-ups, the department will work on this. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed to provide early life funding, including a seed fund to support ideation and development of early stage startups.

"So now we will move a Cabinet note and create a fund and guidelines in this regard," Mohapatra told *PTI*.

He said that the department will work on a National Seed Fund policy and creation of the fund.

In their interactions with the department, start-ups have time and again demanded formulation of a national seed fund scheme.

FPIs stay net buyers for 5th straight month in January

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

FOREIGN INVESTORS pumped in over Rs 12,000 crore in stock markets in January, remaining net buyers of Indian equities for the fifth month running, helped by easing concerns pertaining to tension between the US and Iran coupled with US-China trade war.

In the equities segment, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) invested Rs 7,547.8 crore in September, Rs 12,367.9 crore in October, Rs 25,230.6 crore in November and Rs 7,338.4 crore in December.

WeWork appoints real estate industry veteran Mathrani CEO

REUTERS
BENGALURU/NEW YORK, FEB 2

SOFTBANK-BACKED OFFICE sharing firm WeWork named real estate industry veteran Sandeep Mathrani as its new chief executive officer on Saturday.

Mathrani will join the company as the CEO from Feb. 18, 2020 and will report to Marcelo Claure, who will remain as executive chairman, the company said in a statement.

Mathrani succeeds co-CEOs Sebastian Gunningham and Artie Minson, WeWork said.

Both Gunningham and Minson will remain with the company at least through a transition period to ensure a smooth onboarding process, the company said. The CEO search was handled by the WeWork board without an external executive search firm, the sources said, adding that a couple of search firms were initially considered. WeWork did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Mathrani will bring much-needed real estate experience to WeWork. He is the former chief executive of Brookfield Properties' retail group, and prior to that he was an executive at real estate firms including Vornado Realty Trust. Brookfield declined to comment.

India Inc reports flat revenues, muted profits in Q3

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 2

INDIA INC'S performance for the three months to December 2019 has been abysmal with companies struggling to grow revenues.

Maruti Suzuki's net revenues, for instance, rose by just 5 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) with the carmaker reporting only a 2 per cent rise in volumes during a festive period. At Asian Paints the growth in domestic decoratives was a dull 3 per cent y-o-y since volumes grew in low double digits that implied realisations must have weakened. At the other end of the spectrum, L&T reported a 3 per cent y-o-y fall in core E&C revenues. Even where volumes grew reasonably well, like at Godrej Consumer's local operations, the sharp fall in realisations resulted in revenues growing by just 1 per cent y-o-y.

Sales for a group of 431 companies contracted 1 per cent year-on-year

Profits are up but that's more thanks to falling costs and lower tax outflows. At Bajaj Auto, the Ebitda margin expanded 230 basis points y-o-y on better gross margins led by lower raw material prices. But managements remain cautious as prices of some key commodities are rising whereas demand, especially in rural India, remains weak and key sectors like construction and real estate show no signs of recovery.

Given the slowdown in markets overseas, managements of IT firms like TCS are conservative while speaking on the outlook, noting that it would not be easy to replicate the growth rates of the past. That State Bank of India's corporate loan book contracted during the quarter is evidence of the sluggishness in industry. Sales for a group of 431 companies contracted 1 per cent year-on-year; operating profit margins rose 132 basis points y-o-y as costs contracted by over 2 per cent y-o-y. Some large commodity players like JSW Steel posted a sharp drop in profits of 88 per cent y-o-y.

Manufacturers of consumer goods say rural demand is yet to show a resurgence, and in some pockets, has slowed more. Hindustan Unilever managed to grow volumes by 5 per cent y-o-y in Q3FY20 on a high base. **FE**

CORONAVIRUS

How bad will it get?

Will the Wuhan virus become a pandemic?

Medical staff at the Jinyintan hospital, where the patients with pneumonia caused by the new strain of coronavirus are being treated, in Wuhan, Hubei province, on January 10. *Reuters*

TWO THINGS explain why a new infectious disease is so alarming. One is that, at first, it spreads exponentially. As tens of cases become hundreds and hundreds become thousands, the mathematics run away with you, conjuring speculation about a health-care collapse, social and economic upheaval and a deadly pandemic. The other is profound uncertainty. Sparse data and conflicting reports mean that scientists cannot rule out the worst case—and that lets bad information thrive.

So it is with a new coronavirus, known as 2019-ncov, which has struck in China. The number of reported cases grew from 282 on January 20th to almost 7,800 just nine days later. In that time four reported cases outside mainland China have multiplied to 105 in 19 territories. Doubt clouds fundamental properties of the disease, including how it is passed on and what share of infected people die. Amid the uncertainty, a simulation of a coronavirus outbreak by Johns Hopkins University in October, in which 65m people lost their lives, was put about as a prediction. It is not.

Those are the right questions, though: will the new virus become a global disease? And how deadly will it be? A definite answer is weeks or months away, but public-health authorities have to plan today. The best guess is that the disease has taken hold in China and there is a high risk that it spreads around the world—it may even become a recurrent seasonal infection. It may turn out to be no more lethal than seasonal influenza, but that would still count as serious. In the short term that would hit the world economy and, depending on how the outbreak is handled, it could also have political effects in China.

The outbreak began in December. The repeated mingling of people and animals in China means that viral mutations that infect humans are likely to arise there; and mass migration to cities means that they are likely to spread between people. This virus probably originated in bats and passed through mammals, such as palm civets or ferret badgers, ending up in Wuhan's wet market, where wild animals were on sale. Symptoms resemble flu, but can include pneumonia, which may be fatal. About 20% of reported cases are severe, and need hospital care; about 2% of them have been fatal. As yet, there is no vaccine or antiviral treatment.

The greatest uncertainty is how many cases have gone unrecorded. Primary health care is rudimentary in China and some of the ill either avoided or were turned away from busy hospitals. Many more may have such mild symptoms that they do not realise they have the disease. Modelling by academics in Hong Kong suggests that, as of January 25th, tens of thousands of people have already been infected and that the epidemic will peak in a few months' time. If so, the virus is more widespread than thought, and hence will be harder to contain within China. But it will also prove less lethal, because the number of deaths should be measured against a much larger base of infections. As with flu, a lot of people could die nonetheless. In 2017-18 a bad flu season saw symptoms in 45m Americans, and 61,000 deaths.

Scientists have started work on vaccines and on treatments to make infections less severe. These are six to 12 months away, so the world must fall back on public-health measures. In China that has led to the biggest quarantine in history, as Wuhan and the rest of Hubei province have been sealed off. The impact of such draconian measures has rippled throughout China. The spring holiday has been extended, keeping schools and businesses closed. The economy is running on the home-delivery of food and goods.

Many experts praise China's efforts. Certainly, its scientists have coped better with the Wuhan virus than they did with SARS in 2003, rapidly detecting it, sequencing its genome, licensing diagnostic kits and informing international bodies. China's politicians come off less well. They left alone the cramped markets filled with wild animals that spawned SARS. With the new virus, local officials in Wuhan first played down the science and then, when the disease had taken hold, enacted the draconian quarantine fully eight hours after announcing it, allowing perhaps 1m potentially infectious people to leave the city first.

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That may have undermined a measure which is taking a substantial toll. China's growth in the first quarter could fall to as little as 2%, from 6% before the outbreak. As China accounts for almost a fifth of world output, there will probably be a noticeable dent on global growth. Though the economy will bounce back when the virus fades, the reputation of the Communist Party and even of Xi Jinping may be more lastingly affected. The party claims that, armed with science, it is more efficient at governing than democracies. The heavy-handed failure to contain the virus suggests otherwise.

Outside China such quarantines are unthinkable. The medical and economic cost will depend on governments slowing the disease's spread. The way to do this is by isolating cases as soon as they crop up and tracing and quarantining people that victims have been in contact with—indeed, if the disease burns out in China, that might yet stop the pandemic altogether. If, by contrast, that proves inadequate, they could shut schools, discourage travel and urge the cancellation of public events. Buying time in this way has advantages even if it does not completely stop the disease. Health-care systems would have a greater chance to prepare for the onslaught, and to empty beds that are now full of people with seasonal flu.

Despite all those efforts the epidemic could still be severe. Some health systems, in Africa and the slums of Asia's vast cities, will not be able to isolate patients and trace contacts. Much depends on whether people are infectious when their symptoms are mild (or before they show any at all, as some reports suggest), because such people are hard to spot. And also on whether the virus mutates to become more transmissible or lethal.

The world has never responded as rapidly to a disease as it has to 2019-ncov. Even so, the virus may still do great harm. As humans encroach on new habitats, farm more animals, gather in cities, travel and warm the planet, new diseases will become more common. One estimate puts their cost at $60bn a year. SARS, MERS, Nipah, Zika, Mexican swine flu: the fever from Wuhan is the latest of a bad bunch. It will not be the last.

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KOBE BRYANT

Love story

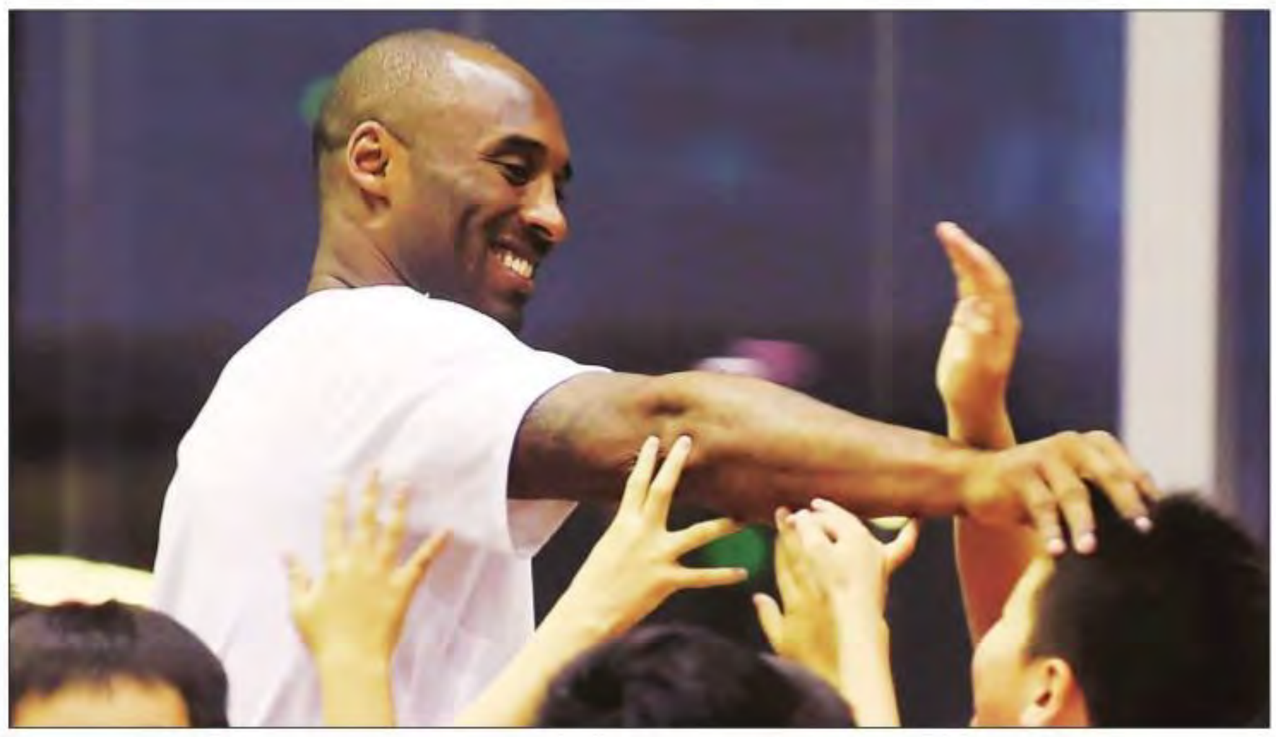
Kobe Bryant died on January 26th

WHENEVER HE was asked why his whole life had been spent playing basketball, Kobe Bryant's narrow eyes searched upwards, and his mouth trembled. The answer was simple, yet so complicated. It began with the orange ball, the smell of it, the feel of the pebbled leather grains and the perfect grooves under his hands; and its bounce, and the way it sounded different on concrete or polished hardwood. Then came the net, the shot slithering right through it with that triumphant springing *whoosh*, while he howled with joy. Then every movement of the game, the strategies, the dodging and feints, the squeal of sneakers on the court. Whatever had thrilled him as a child (watching his father, also a pro player, on TV, wearing his own little 76ers outfit, running and jumping along with him) still thrilled him when in 2016 he retired from the game. "Dear Basketball", he wrote,

From the moment
I started rolling my Dad's tube socks
And shooting imaginary
Game-winning shots...
I knew one thing was real:
A love so deep I gave you my all.

"My all" meant training obsessively, like a maniac. He would go to the gym and shoot for hours, all day, all night. Hundreds of times, not just taking shots, but making them, running steps and patterns, practising shots off the rebound. *I ran up and down every court/After every loose ball for you.* He would ponder what would make his game unstoppable and then work backwards from there, building it piece by piece, move by move, repeatedly. Then, when the actual game arrived, it was all just muscle-memory. He perfected his own works of art: the jab-step-and-pause, using unexpected footwork to pass the defender, and the fadeaway, shooting while he jumped high and backwards from the basket.

For 20 seasons, a very long time to stay with one team, he played as a shooting guard for the Los Angeles Lakers. With them he won five NBA championship rings and was most valuable player in two finals. His 81 points at home against Toronto, in 2006, was the second-highest individual score recorded in league history. By the time he retired he had the third-highest points total, 33,643, overtaken only days ago by the game's present leading star, LeBron James. His own stardom brought him in a salary of around $30m a year, allowing him to dress in Gucci and to keep house in a gated community in Newport Beach, California. It also brought sponsorship deals, such as the one with Nike, whom he asked to design shoes with heels and midsoles that could shave precious hundredths of seconds off his reaction time. For he didn't care so much about money, points, or the fans' applause; they could turn against him anyway, as they did after he was accused in 2003 of sexually assaulting a woman in Colorado, a case dropped but never cleared up. He cared about being the best, winning games. Simple and plain.



A 2015 file photo of Kobe Bryant being greeted by young Chinese players during his visit to Shanghai. *Reuters*

His obsession could make him by turns hustling, mean and dejected. When he joined the Lakers, his dream team, in 1996, traded from the Charlotte Hornets, he was only 17, the youngest player in the NBA. He had been picked for the pro leagues straight from his suburban high school and had lived as a boy in Italy, two things that made him odd. But he came in burning with self-belief. No babying for him; he was hard, focused, a lone artist, and much of that stayed. He called himself the Black Mamba later, an assassin-snake, ruthless in the strike. Unjust foul calls and lost play-off games—especially the finals against the Detroit Pistons and the Boston Celtics—threw him into misery and vows of revenge.

On the court, lithe and nimble, he wanted every game for himself. Team-mates thought him selfish, not passing enough and shooting far too much, missing more shots in his career than anyone in NBA history. He hit back at that, since at least he stayed with one team and didn't go off somewhere else; he wanted the glory of winning the play-offs for the purple-and-golds, not just himself. Yet he so loved the ball that it just seemed drawn towards his hands. And he went on shooting, and shooting, not least because he sometimes saved a game with a fabulous floater in the final seconds. Besides, airballs too could look and feel good, good from trajectory to follow-through, on-line, on target. Some people thought Mozart had too many notes.

As in most love affairs, he had competition. One was Michael Jordan, the greatest basketball player of the era, the Buddha on top of the mountain and winner of six rings, whom he once asked for advice while he was guarding him. Another was Shaquille O'Neal, a charming giant who also played for the Lakers, but infuriated him because he little-brothered him and did not train like he did. (No one trained like he did.) To prove he was the best of basketball'slovers, he would go on playing when he was hurt, shooting left-handed when his right hand was injured, staggering on when ankles, knees and back were all sore. If he decided he was playing, no manager or coach could do anything about it. *I played through the sweat and hurt/…because YOU called me.*

He claimed to have no memory of the last game he played, though he scored 60 points in it from 50 shots. For a while his interests had been branching into multimedia, writing, film-making and setting up a Mamba Sports Academy in Thousand Oaks. But most of these still had basketball at the core. His longest film, "Muse", was about his career, and an animated short based on "Dear Basketball" won an Academy Award. He gave motivating talks in America and Asia in which all his life-lessons were carried over from the court. At Thousand Oaks he coached his second daughter Gianna, among many others, in how to play his way.

With a lover's impatience, he increasingly took helicopters to get to and from games, events, his office and the academy, in which case he might take Gianna with him. *Carpe diem*, seize the day, was his motto, learned at school in Italy; *tempus neminem manet*, time waits for no man. Bad weather would hardly deter him.

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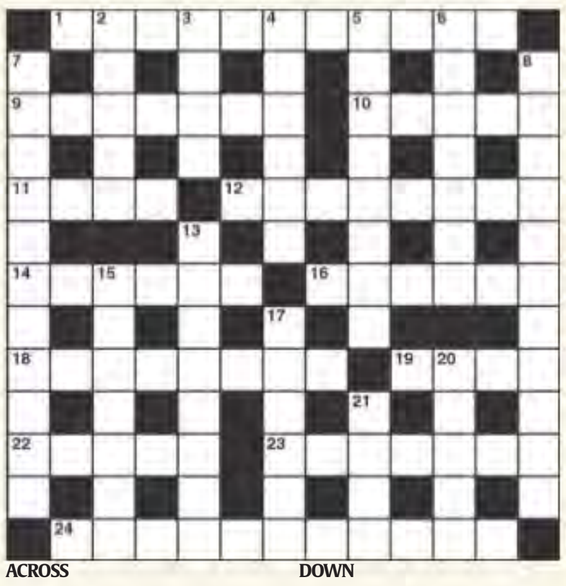
CROSSWORD 4031



ACROSS

1 A light transporter (11)
9 Composer due by ship, perhaps (7)
10 Vehicle to move the load (5)
11 Doesn't just drink blended teas (4)
12 Meet ruin as a rebel (8)
14 Economic growth? (6)
16 He has start of a cold; twitching and feverish (6)
18 Out-of-this world advertising agent (8)
19 Short of ammunition (4)
22 Valued trade, perhaps (5)
23 Dad holding a high card can solve all problems (7)
24 Is an orator lost and speechless without it? (7,4)

DOWN

2 Go round in high circles (5)
3 Play group (4)
4 Something the barber may rub around? (3,3)
5 Four in new search for records (8)
6 Serious listener sent astray (7)
7 Publicity seekers in the driver's seat perhaps (11)
8 Needy pupil who finds the going hard? (4,7)
13 He might make end of ref, or ref might make an end of him! (8)
15 A Dorset dish prepared in the oven (7)
17 Pitch a tent on American college grounds (6)
20 Former Chinese leader holds a bill for port (5)
21 No point to rebuke (4)

Solutions Crossword 4030: Across: 1 Depots, 4 Florence, 9 Educed, 10 Aggrieve, 12 Side, 13 Caste, 14 Ebbs, 17 Gift of the gab, 20 Rubber dinghy, 23 Used, 24 Paces, 25 Iota, 28 Province, 29 Safari, 30 Receiver, 31 Settle. **Down:** 1 Dressage, 2 Plum duff, 3 Tier, 5 Light-hearted, 6 Rare, 7 Need be, 8 Even so, 11 Carte blanche, 15 Bonus, 16 Ratio, 18 Ignorant, 19 Dynamite, 21 Bumper, 22 Heroic, 26 Mimi, 27 Pave.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson

MARVIN by Tom Armstrong

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
A decided dearth of interesting lunar alignments today means that you can take time off, so that if you do have a lot on your plate then it's because you failed to say 'no' when you had the chance. It also indicates that the choice lies with you, and this is one of those times when you may make your own future.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
It's a week for radical and romantic decisions, a time to be open about your ideas, and not to allow anyone to put you down. You may not be right in other people's eyes, but you know the truth when you see it. You'll only run into trouble when partners are equally convinced that they are correct.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
There still seems to be a great deal to be said for keeping yourself to yourself. However, as the Moon reaches a dramatic relationship to your sign, you will be encouraged to spill the beans. If you have a weakness, then it's probably over-confidence.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Venus, planet of love, inclines you to out-and-out romance, but Mercury, ruler of communication, means that what you'll really want out of friendships are shared interests and good conversation. Sheer passion may not be enough. But I think you knew that already.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Some of your planets are careful, hard-working and cautious, while others are desperate to be dynamic, reckless, adventurous, optimistic and a touch excessive in all areas of life. As from now, you are to be plunged into a whirlwind of excitement — but slowly.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Much has been said about your willingness to be walked over and exploited. The fact is that over the next few weeks, perhaps more than ever before, you will be called upon to put yourself out for others. If the stars offer you any advice then it is to help the people who deserve it, and steer clear of those who are ready to take advantage.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Whether at work or at home, it's not only a question of who you know, but how well you get on with them. Above all, you should see to it that a pleasant compromise is reached. You'll get your reward next week. In the meantime, take delight in any good fortune which alights on people close to you.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
You'll have to deal with the week's domestic arrangements today, but on the deeper level, it's time to enhance and express your reputation as a healer of the spirit as well as of the body. And, as it happens, your financial stars are also looking fairly shrewd.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
If you don't know what's going on today, and everything seems to be irrational and deeply suspicious, that's only to be expected. Spend a little time getting to the bottom of one particular mystery. You might even find that someone is being terribly reasonable, just for a change.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Other people are naturally sweet-tempered. If they're not, it may be because of something you've said or done, which means that the solution lies in your hands, even if it is now too late to get back to where you started. And if you can't turn the clock back then at least make sure that you don't make the same mistake again.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
You may devote more attention than normal to developing a co-operative family-like atmosphere at work, and if you're not gainfully employed, press ahead with ambitions to enhance your status in the community. And, at home, take control and try to set higher standards.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
You have a reputation for not liking hard work. That is a pity, because over the near future you may be busier than you've been for a very long time, but it will all be extremely worthwhile in the end. You can cut down on wasted effort by organising your time better.

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 quip.

Good ___ and good ___ are two of life's greatest blessings. - Publilius Syrus (6,.,5)

CMEEE

FIYLNT

GYASS

OOSWHH

SOLUTION: EMCEE, CASSY, FLINTY, WHOOSH
Answer: Good **health** and good **sense** are two of life's greatest blessings.
- Publilius Syrus

SUDOKU 4109

Difficulty Level 1s
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

6			2		8	9	7	3
9					7			
3		5		4		8		
2	8			1				7
		4	6		9	2		
5				8			3	9
		3		9		6		2
			7					5
8	1	2	5		3			4

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4108

8	9	2	1	6	4	3	5	7
4	5	7	8	3	9	1	2	6
1	3	6	2	7	5	8	4	9
7	6	1	9	5	8	4	3	2
5	8	3	4	2	7	6	9	1
2	4	9	6	1	3	7	8	5
9	1	5	3	8	6	2	7	4
3	2	4	7	9	1	5	6	8
6	7	8	5	4	2	9	1	3

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Rajeev Kumar Verma S/o Omparkash Verma R/o-Plot No-3&4, Khasra No-202,U-G.F, Burari Delhi-110084 have changed my name to Rajeev Verma. 0040529944-9

I, Pankaj Soni S/o Ramesh Chand Soni resident of Plot No - 15, Sai Enclave, Nandgram, Ghaziabad have change my name from Pankaj Kumar to Pankaj Soni for all purposes. 0040529905-1

I, Niranjan Mittal S/O Shree Kant Mittal R/O-1010, Near Mahavir-Chowk, Sector-9, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201012, Changed my minor Son name from Lakshya Mittal to Shivam Mittal. 0040529944-8

I, Isha Arora W/O Shri Girish Arora R/O-99,Chardham Apartment,Sector-9,Rohini, Delhi-110085,have changed my name to Boski Arora W/O Girish Arora. 0040529983-1

I Ram Prasad S/O, Harihar Prasad R/o Rc 944, Gali No.4, Prakash Nagar, Khora Colony. Ghaziabad, UP have changed my name to Sriram Prasad for all purposes. 0040529900-1

LOST & FOUND

It is notified for the information that my Original qualification Examination Certificate of Main Secondary School Examination of the Year 2007 and Roll no 5225069 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name Of the Candidate ; Deepshikha Singh Address; 109,Sameer Vihar, Modinagar 201204 Contact; 9015132935

0040529902-1

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC at large with the fact that Ms. VINITA KESARWANI is the owner in possession of the Society built up Freehold Flat No. A-102, First Floor, in the layout plan of Kesarwani C.G.H.S. Ltd. situated at Plot No.4, Sector-5, Dwarka, New Delhi (Property). That the original (1) Original Share Certificate dated 14/12/1991 and (2) Allotment cum Possession Letter dated 24/05/2013 both issued by The Kesarwani Co-Opreative Group Housing Society of the said property in favour of Sh. Ashok Kumar Patwa, are lost somewhere. An FIR/NCR to the effect has been already lodged to Crime Branch, Delhi Police vide L.R. No:66241/2020 on 18/01/2020.

Any person(s) dealing in any way with the said property on the basis of said lost document shall do so at his/her own peril as the same shall be considered legally null and void. Anybody aware of any such persons claiming any right, interest, title based on the aforesaid (1) Share Certificate (2) Allotment cum Possession Letter or being found in possession of the same, may please write objections to/contact Rohit Kumar, Advocate at his office-Chamber No. F-712, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110032, and on his Mobile no.+919718703803, 8368-713222, (email-rohitjha399@gmail.com) within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Chayangtajo Division, PWD, Arunachal Pradesh, Chayangtajo invites on behalf of Governor of Arunachal Pradesh online item rate bids in single bid system for following work: -

1. **NIT No.** CD/DRG-2/RIDF/2018-19/01, **Name of work:** C/o Inter village road connectivity of a stretch of 18 Km from Jayang Bagang to Paje Solung villages Via Tasar Solung village and Tourist Spot at Ryopo Water Fall under RIDF - XXIII during 2017-18. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 1790.49 lakhs, **Earnest Money:** Rs. 1790490.00 for APST & Rs. 2790490.00 for Non-APST Contractors, **Period of completion:** 36 months & **Last date and time of submission of bid:** 17/02/2020,1600hrs.

The bid forms and other details can be downloaded from the website **https://arunachaltenders.gov.in** from1030 hrs of 03/02/2020

ARUNACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Chayangtajo Division, PWD, Arunachal Pradesh, Chayangtajo invites on behalf of Governor of Arunachal Pradesh online item rate bids in a single bid system for following work: -

1. **NIT No.** CD/DRG-2/RIDF/2018-19/02, **Name of work:** Construction of Road & Bridges from Domdila Village to Tajo Village via Killo, Chayangtajo Circle, East Kameng District under RIDF 2016-17. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 2383.37 Lakhs, **Earnest Money:** Rs. 2383370.00 for APST & Rs. 3383370.00 for Non-APST Contractors, **Period of completion:** 36 months & **Last date and time of submission of bid:** 17/02/2020, 1600 hrs.

The bid forms and other details can be downloaded from the website **https://arunachaltenders.gov.in** from1030 hrs of 03/02/2020.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लो.नि.वि., अलीगढ़
(कार्यालय ई-मेल आईडी-Email ID-aligarhcirclepwd@gmail.com)
(कार्यालय दूरभाष नं.-0571-2702365)

पत्रांकः 389/कैशियर (नि.ख.-1अ)-अ.वृ./2019-20 दिनांकः 22.01.2020

शुद्धि पत्र

इस कार्यालय के ई-निविदा सूचना सं.-65/कैशियर (नि.खं.-1 अ.)-अ.वृ./19-20 दिनांक 04.01.2020 द्वारा विशेष मरम्मत, नवनिर्माण/पुनःनिर्माण एवं जिला योजना के 10 कार्यों की आमंत्रित ई-निविदायें जो दिनांक 18.01.2020 से वेबसाइट http://etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध होकर दिनांक 25.01.2020 को दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक ऑन लाईन विक्रय कर एवं प्राप्त कर दिनांक 27.01.2020 को अपरान्ह 12.30 बजे ऑन लाईन खोली जानी प्रस्तावित है। अपरिहार्य कारणोंवश अब उक्त निविदायें दिनांक 15.02.2020 के दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक ऑन लाईन प्राप्त की जायेंगी एवं दिनांक 17.02.2020 के अपरान्ह 12.30 बजे ऑन लाईन खोली जायेंगी।
शेष शर्तें मूल निविदा के अनुसार यथावत रहेंगी।

www.upgov.nic.in
Date 31/02/2020
UPID No. 148302

हस्ता./-
(जे.जी. पाण्डेय)
अधिशासी अभियन्ता
निर्माण खण्ड-1, लो.नि.वि.,
अलीगढ़

हस्ता./-
(आर.के. मिश्रा)
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लो.नि.वि.
अलीगढ़

Office of the Chief Engineer, Minor Irrigation Department U.P., 3rd Floor, Jawahar Bhawan, Lucknow.

e-Tender Notice No. e-07/M.I./B.A./FB-DB-BP-H.D.P.E./2019-20 Lucknow : Dated: January 24, 2020

INVITATION FOR VERY SHORT TERM NATIONAL e-BIDS

Online national e-bids on prescribed bid forms in two parts namely (i) Technical bid with earnest money (in PDF format) (ii) Financial bid (in XLS format), are invited simultaneously by the undersigned on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh, only from the manufacturers of ISI marked 90 mm Quick Coupled Polyethylene Pipe with necessary fittings for Free Boring and Deep Boring under District Plan and for Bundelkhand package as per IS Code 14151 (Part-2)/2008 (as amended from time to time), for the supply of items whose details are available on e-tender portal **http//etender.up.nic.in.** Bidders are advised to read notice inviting tender file and bid document with instructions therein on the said portal carefully before submission of bid.
The e-bids submission starts from **03-02-2020** 11.00 Hrs to **09-02-2020 17.00** Hrs. On line opening date of technical bid will be **10-02-2020** at 11.30 Hrs onwards. On line opening date of financial bid will be intimated later on to only technically qualified bidders.
Venue of opening of bid
Office of the Executive Engineer, Bhandar Apurti Khand,
Minor Irrigation Deptt., A-2/12-D, Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar,
Lucknow-226010 (U.P.). Ph. No. 0522-2395661

UPID No. 148372 Date - 01.02.2020
www.upgov.nic.in

Sd/-
(Rajeev Kumar Jain)
Chief Engineer Minor Irrigation Department
U.P., Lucknow

सीएसआईआर - केन्द्रीय चर्म अनुसंधान संस्थान
CSIR - CENTRAL LEATHER RESEARCH INSTITUTE
वैज्ञानिक तथा औद्योगिक अनुसंधान परिषद् Council of Scientific & Industrial Research
अडयार, चेन्नै, तमिलनाडु Adyar, Chennai – 600 020, Tamil Nadu
दूरभाष Telephone : 91 – 44 – 24437420, 24337193, 24437257, 24437162. ई-मेल Email :spo@clri.res.in

No. 28(23)/2018/Pur **Global Tender Notice** 3rd February, 2020

Director, Central Leather Research Institute, Adyar, Chennai - 600 020, INDIA, (CLRI) invites sealed bids from Original Equipment Manufacturers, foreign Principals and Indian Agents of foreign principals for procurement, installation and commissioning of item listed below in **two bid format (Cover 1 - Techno-commercial Bid, Cover 2- Financial Bid).**

Sl. No.	Tender No	Description of items	Qty	Single/ Double Bid	Bid Security (EMD) INR	EURO	GBP	USD
1	28(23)/2019/Pur/ T-89	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope	1 No.	Double bid	Rs. 675000	8579.04	7208.33	9459.74

Tender Closing Date : 3rd March, 2020 upto 12.00 P.M. (IST)
Tender Opening Date : 3rd March, 2020 3.00 P.M. (IST)

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at 11.00 a.m. on 10th February,2020 at Heritage Hall, CLRI Chennai.

All interested bidders are requested to attend. Modification if any in the Tender Document after the Pre-Bid Conference would be hosted on www.clri.org only.

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ARUNACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Chayangtajo Division, PWD, Arunachal Pradesh, Chayangtajo invites on behalf of Governor of Arunachal Pradesh online item rate bids in two bid system for the following works: -

NIT No. CD/DRG-2/2018-19/01, **Name of work:** - C/o Road with Bridge from Chayangtajo-Yangfo Road, from (Sangri-Sangda Point) under Chayangtajo Circle to Wacha Holling (Veo) via Sanglowa Bagang, Tarawa Yangfo & Dadara under Sawa Circle on Indo-China Border, Length = 35 Km (Ph-1 0.00 Km to 4.00 Km), Estimated cost - Rs. 3551.16 Lakhs, **Earnest money** - Rs. 35,51,200.00 For APST and Rs. 45, 51, 200.00 for Non- APST Contractors, **periods of completion** – 36 months & Last date and time of submission of bid – 1600 Hours 17/ 02/2020

The bid forms and other details can be downloaded from the website **https://www.arunachaltenders.gov.in** from 1030 Hours of 03/02/2020. The Press Notice is also available on **www.aruanchalpwd.org**

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT

Notice Inviting Tenders for supply of Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) 43 Grade for the year 2019-20

1. For full details, visit **www.tntender.gov.in**
2. e-Bids are invited by the Project Director, DRDA of concerned Districts of Tamil Nadu state under two cover system, for supply of (OPC) 43 grade Cement for the year 2019-20.
3. The bid documents can be downloaded free of cost **from www.tntenders.gov.in from 06.02.2020 to 21.02.2020.**
4. Common date and time for downloading of Bid document, submission and opening:
(i) Last Date and Time for downloading and Online Submission of Bid Documents : **21.02.2020 Upto 3.00 PM**
(ii) Date and Time of online opening of Bid Documents : **21.02.2020 - 4.00 PM onwards**

DIRECTOR,
DIPR/669/TENDER/2020 RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

ITEM RATE Offer(s) in two part system are invited from reputed, resourceful and experienced parties meeting prescribed qualifying criteria for the following work:

Sl. No.	Description of work an NIT No. B&R / MPS / 61009 / VRMP / HOT TAPS / NIT / 03 Dtd. 01.02.2020	Tender Document available on B&R's Website	Due date of submission of Bid
1.	Execution of Hot Tapping works for Zone D,F & G at HPCL, Refinery Modernization Project, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.	01.02.2020	14.02.2020

Interested resourceful Contractors may downlode the tender documents from Co's Website http://www.bridgeroof.co.in. Corrigendum / Addendum, if any, shall be hosted in Co's Website http://www.bridgeroof.co.in only.

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS
Tender Id: 2019_ AAI _41287_1

Airports Authority of India invites item rate e-tenders for the work of **"Special Repairs to balance area of concrete pavement of Apron at VSI Airport, Port Blair."** at an estimated cost of ₹ **3,23,58,600/-** with period of completion 2 (Two) Months.
Last date and time of submission of e-bid is **11.02.2020 up to 1500 hrs.** For detailed information please log on to Government E-Tender Portal website **https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app** or **www.aai.aero**

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

TENDER NOTICE
Tender ID: 2020_AAI_41073_1

Airports Authority of India invites online item rate tenders through the e-tendering portal by AGM (E-E) on behalf of Chairman AAI from Eligible contractors of appropriate class of CPWD/MES/P&T/Railways/State/PWD/PSUs/Municipal Corporation and Development Authorities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata / Specialized agencies for the following works:
"R&M Electrical Installations at NSCBI Airport dg. 2019-20, Kolkata, SH: Supply of Spares of Kirloskar make Diesel Operated auto priming dewatering Centrifugal pump for Lagoon Installations". For an estimated cost of Rs. **34,82,570.00** (Excluding GST) with a period of completion **05 (Five) Months.** Last date and time of submission of bid documents is **17.02.2020** up to **18:00 hrs.** For detailed information log onto CPP e-Procurement Portal reference https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app. Further clarification / corrigendum if any will be notified through e-procurement portal at https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT
SALEM DISTRICT
SWM - Purchase and Supply of 540 Nos. Battery Operated E- Carts

Roc.No.402/2019/A6 **SHORT TERM ELECTRONIC RETENDER NOTICE** DL 31.01.2020

1. For details, visit **www.tntenders.gov.in**
e-Bids are invited by Project Director, DRDA, Salem District of Tamil Nadu state under Two Cover System for **Purchase and Supply of 540 Nos** Battery Operated E- Carts Retender for the year 2018-2019.
2. The e-Bid documents can be downloaded from **www.tntenders.gov.in** on free of cost and it can be downloaded from the date **03.02.2020** to **18.02.2020.**

3	The Last Date and Time for downloading and submission of e-bid Documents	**upto 18.02.2020 03.00 P.M.**
4	Date and Time of online opening of e-bid documents will be held on	**18.02.2020 04.00 P.M. @ DRDA Office, Salem**

DIPR/668/TENDER/2020 Project Director, District Rural Development Agency, Salem.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL DIVISION RTIC KATHUA
Telefax: 01922-238973, Email ID:- mdivrtic@gmail.com

GIST of e-Tender

e-NIT No. 39 of 2019-20 Dated: 29.01.2020 due on 10.02.2020

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT, Executive Engineer Mechanical Division RTIC, Kathua invites e-tenders from well reputed Contractors/Workshop holders/ in two covers for Strengthening/Up gradation of 900 mm dia Rising Main along with allied works at LIS Lakhanpur. The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q.), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website: **www.jktenders.gov.in from 29.01.2020 (16.00 hrs.).**

1. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from **30.01.2020 (10.00 hrs.) to 10.02.2020 (16.00 hrs.)** in two covers.
2. The bid uploaded on the Website upto due date and time will be opened on **11.02.2020 (12.00 hrs.)** or any other convenient date in the Office of **Executive Engineer Mech. Divn. RTIC Kathua.**
3. The intending bidders should keep a check on bid website for any change in the technical specifications/terms and conditions if any.

Sd/- **Executive Engineer**
Mechanical Division Ravi Tawi Irrigation, Complex Kathua
No.MDK/RTIC/1764-67 **Dt: 29.01.2020**
DIIP/J-13114/19

FINDING A NEW VOICE

British child actor Amelie Bea Smith (*pictured*) has been roped in as the new voice of popular cartoon character, Peppa Pig. The nine-year-old, who is the fourth voice artiste to play the character, has previously starred in the soap opera *EastEnders*.

WEEK AHEAD

Culture Stop

PARTICIPATE IN Intach Utsav that celebrates culture and heritage through exhibitions on craft and architecture, talks and heritage walks, from February 4 to 7, at Intach building, 71, Lodhi Estate. On February 4, listen to vocalist Vidya Shah at 6.30 pm, as she presents songs from north and south Indian music traditions. On February 5, at 4.30 pm, historian and convener of the Delhi chapter of Intach, Swapna Liddle, will give a talk on Delhi's architectural heritage. On February 6, at 4.30 pm, Dehradun-based heritage revivalist Lokesh Ohri will talk about his book, *Till Kingdom Come*. On February 7, at 4.30 pm, architect-educator Tapan Chakravarty offers glimpses in the vernacular architecture of Uttarakhand, where he will present examples from rural Kumaon and Garhwal, talking about climate, terrain, materials and crafts. Take a look at the crafts stalls, or nibble at some snacks at the food stalls. For details, call: 24692774/24645482.

Coming Together

JANG JEE MUN and Devendra Shukla are two artists working in India for the past two decades. Inspired by her South Korean roots, Hee Mun uses harmonious colours and creates strong tonal variations with a touch of traditional oriental art, whereas Shukla takes influences from traditional Indian art. Their works make the exhibition "Confluence", which is a combination of paintings, drawings, Korean ink and rice works. Till February 18, at Korean Cultural Center, Lajpat Nagar IV.

Unified in Laughter

Stand-up comedian Vir Das on his latest show, political comedy and why we need not be divisive with our laughter

EKTAA MALIK

IT'S THREE for you, one for me," clarifies Vir Das (*pictured*) right at the beginning of his act to a packed, well-lit audience at Filmistaan Studios in Mumbai, as he opens his stand-up special, *Vir Das For India*, which is currently streaming on Netflix. There are three things that he and the audience agree on, and one where they fundamentally disagree. We have chyawanprash, Parle G, Old Monk, Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, General Dyer, and an orange orangutan — plenty for the audience and Das to agree and disagree on. "This was a tough show to write. It took me more than a year," says Das, 40.

Das's stand-up breaks the pattern of the usual template, wherein there are about nine-10 sets, each about 10-minute long. "For India, I have got about 50-60 jokes together for three-four minutes. Usually, for a stand-up, lets say I have a set about walking my dog, and if it doesn't work, you cut it out. But here, with the format — of three for you and one for me – you cannot cut out a chyawanprash, or an Antila. This is all about the little things that make the country what it is," he says.

Dressed in slick dhoti pants and sipping we don't know what from a kulhad, Das is seated on the steps of a door, and he is holding a chaupal of sorts. He laughs at the comparison. "I wanted the vibe, and to present it in a way that was remarkably different from the earlier two shows. The audience is seated in a well-lit space, and they are constantly interacting with me. I am not the star of the show. India is," shares Das. "And when you want to talk about your country, you come from a place of humility, hence minus the swag. And this is the first special that I have directed," he adds.

> **I like doing political material, but that material is based on human beliefs... Why divide and polarise, when you can bring them together with a few jokes?**
>
> **VIR DAS**

India, and anything Indian, is what we keep coming back to. We assume Das has spent the last year poring over history books and periodicals, because he doesn't spare many important events that have shaped the course of the country. The Ram Mandir issue finds a mention, so does rigging of elections. There is also the discovery of India by Vasco Da Gama. But what about the backlash? "I think I have been quiet gentle. In my philosophy, it has always been joke first, the message later. As for the backlash, we can put up a picture of a puppy and people would still take offense. India is like a crazy joint family having dinner together. If we keep getting scared that they won't like what you serve, then you won't be able to cook anything," adds Das, who has been on a steady diet of material by comedians like Ali Wong, Tig Notaro, Richard Pryor and Dave Chappelle.

Das uses a set about a spoon and a kitchen to illustrate the abrogation of article 370 in Kashmir; whereas Mohan Meakin is roped in to talk about Jallianwala Bagh. But one wonders if there will be a time that political satire and commentary will be part of the mainstream Indian media and entertainment, as opposed to over the top and alternate space that it's relegated to today. Will there be a Stephen Colbert or a Seth Meyers? "I like doing political material, but that material is based on human beliefs. Sure we crack jokes about Modi and Trump. But we also want the right wingers to laugh at the jokes, so for that you cushion the joke in humanity. Why divide and polarise, when you can bring them together with a few jokes? We don't need to look down at an audience that has a different point of view," says Das. He adds how even the Colberts are moving away from the Trump joke, as at some level it is not funny anymore, and "it's hard to do a new Donald Trump joke as everyone has been there done that". "The only recent one that I can remember is one by John Mulaney, where he compared Trump to a horse in a hospital, and it was brilliant as it was on such a random tangent. I aspire to be that good," says Das.

While Das is an old hand in the Indian stand-up scene, he believes that India is still at a very nascent stage when it comes to humour. And that it's very much a boys club. "We need more women in comedy, reality shows like *Comicstaan* are a big step in that direction. But I am not aware of what's happening at the club level, because that is where change will actually manifest itself. As for women, we have a thousand Aditi Mittals and Sumukhis. We, at my company (Weirdass Comedy), try and work with more women creators and comedians. But we need more regional and Hindi comic writing, English still has a very limited reach in India," says Das, as he affirms to not repeat himself in 2020. "If I have done it before, it's a red flag for me," he says.

Unknown Memories of India

A group exhibition explores a slew of ignored and unheard stories from India's past

A work by Annu Palakunnathu Matthew (top); from Cathy Lane's *Re-soundings Prelude- The Ayahs Home*

PALLAVI CHATTOPADHYAY

AS PHOTOGRAPHER Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, professor of art at the University of Rhode Island, showed photographs of Indian soldiers who served for the British during World War II, a sepia-tinted photograph of Lieutenant General DS Kalha stood out. Kalha is seen dressed in his khaki uniform, standing beside his newly wed wife in Dehradun. Barely weeks into his marriage, he was asked to serve for the British, only to be captured at the Siege of Tobruk in 1941, and sent as a prisoner of war to Italy. He managed to escape, only to be helped by local Italian farmers, who hid and protected him. Matthew was showing these photographs during her talk at Delhi's India International Centre on Friday evening.

The exhibition 'The Sundry Effect: The stories we are...', comprising works of 15 artists including Veer Munshi and Gigi Scaria, is on display at Bikaner House. The exhibition chronicles many similar stories emerging from Matthew's body of work titled *The Unremembered: Indian Soldiers of the Second World War (work in progress)*. It documents some of the lives from 25 lakh Indians, who by 1945 had taken up arms for the British rulers during World War II, and fought in Burma, Italy and North Africa. Nearly 87,000 of them had died while serving. Curator of the exhibition, Meena Vari, says, "The show is about stories, especially those that have been unheard and unknown. These stories were considered irrelevant. It's about bringing these out."

Speaking about her vast body of work, Matthew says, "My attempt has been to make people realise that there is another history within India that needs to be acknowledged. It's like a hidden history. The question is that why is this history not remembered. There are so many people who participated, and one would think that it would be a part of the collective memory here, but it's not. The tale of the prisoner of war, who had to cut his hair to fit in as an Italian, and had this Italian family looking after him and hiding him, has happened in case of more than one prisoner of war. What was touching for me was the kindness of people even though these Indians were considered enemies. They looked at them as people and not as the other side, and hid and looked after them," says Vari.

Sound artist Cathy Lane has created her single video installation *Re-soundings Prelude- The Ayahs Home*, which has a photograph showing 15 Indian women sewing and reading in a 20th century Victorian drawing room. It is a peek into the life of house helps, many of whom served British families in the country and were taken to Britain between 1900 to 1947, only to be left on the streets once their job was over. It led her to discover the Ayahs' Home in Hackney, East London, which was created later especially for these women. "Run by missionaries, the home was a sort of refuge and safety," says the London-based artist.

Munshi's 'Memoirs of a Desiccated Land' has 100 frames comprising portraits of people the artist knew in his hometown, Kashmir, before being forced to migrate out of the state in 1990. One can spot the teacher who taught him, the shopkeeper he'd meet, among others. *City – Fifth Investigation* is a work by Vivek Vilasini, who makes a powerful commentary on the environment by chronicling the atmospheric pollution of New Delhi on Tibetan rice paper.

The exhibition is on at Bikaner House till February 5

Plenty of Phishing in the Sea

A 10-part Netflix series, *Jamtara*, explores the lives of cybercriminals from small-town India, and the big dreams they chase

ANUSHREE MAJUMDAR

IT IS a truth acknowledged in India that most men of a certain age cannot resist the sweet voice of a young woman on the phone — it doesn't matter that they don't know her, surely they can spare a few minutes should she want them to. And she does, for she comes with good news: they are the lucky ones, the chosen ones, whom their bank has selected for a new car, or an all-expenses paid trip to Goa, or a brand-new HD TV. All they have to do is share their ATM card number, the expiry date and the three-digit number at the back of their card. Sitting in Jamtara, a town located not more than 75 km away from Dhanbad, Sunny (Sparsh Shrivastav) has successfully impersonated a woman over the phone and hangs up. He now focuses his attention on his second smartphone, into which he has entered his victim's bank details. Soon, the transfer will take place. Another day, another fool is willingly parted from his money.

A still from *Jamtara* (top); Soumendra Padhi

It's been a few weeks since *Jamtara: Sabka Number Aayega*, a 10-part series premiered on Netflix, and positive reviews are steadily streaming in, praising its tight script by Trishant Srivastava and Nishank Verma, natural performances by its talented ensemble cast, (especially Shrivastav, Anshuman Pushkar, Monika Panwar and Amit Sial), and for steering a little east of the Hindi heartland, a region that is now synonymous with gun-toting casteist thugs, profanity-laced conversations and spurts of violent crimes. Five years since he first read about Jamtara, the show's director, Soumendra Padhi, is pleased to have the opportunity to introduce the world to the phishing capital of India.

"In 2015, there was an article in *The Indian Express* about the phishing scam in the town; the writers travelled there and began their research," he says. The next year, Padhi would release his debut feature film, *Budhia Singh: Born to Run*, about the child prodigy and long-distance track athlete, which won the National Award for best children's film. In the meantime, the number of phishing crimes coming out of Jamtara grew in leaps and bounds. "What drew me to this particular crime, as a concept, is that I feel it is a great equaliser. Most people there have not studied after class six. All they do is procure mobile phones and it's like a family business, they're all into conning. The whole village is such a beautiful and dreamy place, with such greenery, clean air and ponds. I felt as though I had entered a mysterious world, because I could never have written or imagined those characters," he says.

Based on real criminals and real police officers (the show's Dolly Sahu is based on SP Jaya Roy), *Jamtara* also explores class and caste politics through the prism of phishing, a reasonably low-tech cybercrime, which offers high risk and high rewards in equal measure. "I cannot judge them. I read an interview between the police and one of the scammers in which he was asked, 'Aren't you ashamed?' and he said, 'At least I'm not murdering anybody.' The people there live in villages, but they are complex, enigmatic, they have dreams and ambitions, and they will keep you guessing till the very end," says Panwar, who plays Gudiya, a young woman who marries the wily money-maker Sunny, even though he is from a lower caste, to fuel her plan to leave Jamtara and immigrate to Canada. Her co-star Srivastav personally knows such a cybercriminal. "My friend was one; he'd opened a BPO and he was conning Americans. I don't know his script, but he made Rs 900 in a minute," he says, with grudging admiration.

Barring Sial, the cast members auditioned for the show several times. "Somehow the producers knew that I come cheap," jokes Sial, who plays Brajesh Bhan, a local politician who offers the scammers protection from the police for a hefty cut of their spoils. "What I liked most about the story is that phishing is essentially a psychological game; these criminals don't discriminate, they will target anybody they can. And think about it, instead of high-net criminals who steal money and send it to foreign bank accounts, all the money these people make stays in the country. Everybody knows Las Vegas, and nobody asks how did that city come up. We're presenting Jamtara, and putting it on the global map. Maybe this will lead to development, who knows," he says, and laughs.

ON THE LOOSE

Life Wear

Fashion moves further from just what's trendy

LEHER KALA

DESIGNER AND all round aesthete Wendell Rodricks was trolled aggressively for commenting on Priyanka Chopra's Grammy Awards 2020 outfit: a risqué, ivory-coloured gown with a neckline that plunged way below her navel. Rodricks wondered, a tad sneeringly on Instagram, whether the décolletage on display represented the distance between LA and Cuba, to be ticked off by Suchitra Krishnamoorthi who said, "Women have been so enslaved by mens' opinions on how they should look. This photograph of Priyanka (*pictured*) at one of the world's most publicised events is the height of liberation." One could argue this equating of flashy exhibitionism with 'liberation' is deeply problematic in itself, more so than what Rodricks meant, explained in his next post: "There is an age to wear some clothes. Men with huge bellies should not wear tight T-shirts. Same with women who wear minis past a certain age." It ended with the crushing, "If you don't have it, don't flaunt it."

No one can deny the simple logic of Rodricks' words which has been the basis of all fashion guides and dressing do's and don'ts since time immemorial: highlight your best features and downplay your worst. Or, to paraphrase Coco Chanel, 'The best colour in the world is the one that looks good on you'. Perhaps Rodricks could have framed his opinion more carefully. Something like men with huge bellies look better in loose garments (since the scourge of political correctness is upon us). Undoubtedly though, Chopra's gown was an ill fitting disaster without even getting into that inexplicable neckline. No one is denying it is a free world. If a dress that looked exactly like an embroidered bedcover complete with tassels is her thing, Chopra is well within her rights to don it. And Rodricks' well within his, to diss it.

These days one must live in perpetual terror of being accused of body shaming and sexism — or not being sensitive enough to the myriad injustices women have yet to overcome — while expressing an opinion, even about a dress. It's not fashionable to say this but thin people are soon going to be an oppressed minority. There's so much subversive pressure to glorify obesity, especially online. You're not 'woke' if you're not vehemently holding out a flag for every body type's right to fashion relevance. Should an outfit be celebrated just because unlike most of her Indian counterparts, Chopra was daring enough to bare an unattractive amount of flesh? It seems society in India has gone overnight from an unhealthy obsession with tearing women down for sartorial choices that shock, to celebrating an alleged 'brave' show of skin — irrespective of whether it was flattering or not.

Who are we kidding? Fat people want to be thin. Thin people want to not be fat. This is never going to change. Having said that people should wear what they want (and like Chopra, not care about Rodricks' opinion). In the Instagram era, experienced stylists know that actors who want to leave a lingering red-carpet impression need clothes to be buzzworthy rather than pretty. It takes a real star like Chopra to reject the princess gown, risk the E! Worst Dressed List, in favour of creating a look that guarantees a steady stream of attention.

hutkayfilms@gmail.com

GILL SMASHES DOUBLE TON

Shubman Gill is expected to retain his place in India's Test squad after scoring an unbeaten 204 for the A team in the drawn four-day game against New Zealand A in Christchurch on Sunday. Resuming the final day at 127/2, India A went on to make 448/3 in the second innings.

Withering heights

For third time on the bounce, New Zealand lose a contest they should've won; India clinch series 5-0

VISHAL MENON
FEBRUARY 2

FOR THE third consecutive game, it seemed that New Zealand will get across the line. And for the third consecutive game, they self-destructed to hand a 5-0 series triumph to the Indians.

The home team botched up another chase when it seemed they would coast home. When Ross Taylor and Tim Seifert were putting on their 99-run stand, it looked that the 164-run target would be inadequate. But in the end, the Indians even survived a 34-run over bowled by Shivam Dube to register a seven-run win. New Zealand needed 66 runs in the second half of their chase with seven wickets in hand, a task considered straightforward in contemporary T20 cricket.

Taylor was playing his 100th T20I – the first from his country to reach that landmark – and his family was in attendance on the Bay Oval grass banks to mark the occasion. Though the veteran managed a half-century, he and his family would have been happier if it had come in a winning cause.

After two matches that went against them in the Super Over, Taylor and Seifert engineered a rescue act from 17/3 but wickets fell at crucial junctures and there was no back-up behind them. Rarely does a team find a way to throw away such positions of strength in three matches in a row. This series has shown New Zealand's propensity to freeze with victory in sight.

It was Seifert's dismissal for a 30-ball 50 in the 12th over that gave India the opening. Even at that stage, the home team had their noses in front, requiring 48 runs from 44 deliveries with six wickets in the shed. But India's stand-in captain KL Rahul, who was leading with Virat Kohli taking the game off and Rohit Sharma injuring his calf during his half-century, marshalled his bowling resources with a great deal of maturity. In turn, they responded by giving nothing away and exerting pressure on an inexperienced Kiwi middle order.

Navdeep Saini picked up the crucial scalps of Tim Seifert and Ross Taylor. *AP*

Bumrah on the mark

Jasprit Bumrah was again on the mark. He cleaned up Daryl Mitchell with a pinpoint yorker in the subsequent over, while Shardul Thakur got rid of Mitchell Santner and Scott Kuggeleijn in the space of three deliveries. The following over when Navdeep Saini had Taylor caught behind off a wide delivery, New Zealand had slipped from a comfortable 116/3 to a slippery 133/8 in just 4.3 overs. They will look back with regret at another implosion when they just had to do the basics right.

Seifert's dismissal was the opening, and they seized that initiative, which eventually resulted in a cluster of wickets. This, in essence, was the difference between the two teams. Once India got a sniff, they made a concerted push and never took the foot off the pedal. This attitude underscored the reason why they have now won 8 T20Is overseas on the bounce.

"Great to be standing here with a 5-0. We have been playing exceptional T20 cricket, to come here and execute our skills every game, to have squeezed out wins, is a confidence-booster. I think it's a winning habit we have cultivated. The onus is on finding different ways to win," Rahul said after the win.

Sunday's meltdown will be a bitter pill for New Zealand to swallow. More than the talent, it's the temperament to finish off close matches that seems to be missing. But in three consecutive matches, they have finished second best despite being in the contest for a large portion of the match. They failed to get two runs off the last four deliveries of the 3rd T20I in Hamilton, despite having five wickets at their disposal. In the next duel in Wellington, they lost four wickets in the final over of the chase as they failed to score seven runs.

Consequently, both those matches went down to the Super Over, and New Zealand faltered on both occasions. This prompted New Zealand captain Kane Williamson to lament: "Super Overs aren't really New Zealand's friend." But in reality, neither game should have gone to a Super Over.

The Kiwis didn't even get that far on Sunday. They had the chase under control, requiring 48 runs off 45 deliveries with seven wickets remaining at one stage — an open-and-shut scenario for most teams in T20Is these days.

Even from this position of ascendancy, New Zealand found a way to falter. Former England spinner Graeme Swann put it quite aptly at the post-match show on *Star Sports* when he quipped: "New Zealand have simply forgotten how to win." The twin Super Over losses seem to have demoralised them to such an extent that it has sapped them off their vigour and insouciance. India's bowlers and fielders may have performed admirably, but it will not be a stretch to state that New Zealand have played a bigger part in plotting their own downfall.

'Playing so many matches is hard on body'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MOUNT MAUNGANUI, FEBRUARY 2

K L RAHUL ON Sunday said turning up so frequently for international matches "is hard on the body", adding to India captain Virat Kohli's recent observation on scheduling.

Fresh from his Man of the Series-winning effort in India's 5-0 whitewash of New Zealand in the T20 Internationals, Rahul spoke about the team's ability to consistently produce eye-catching performances despite getting little time to recover, thanks to a cramped calendar. "Every month we have been playing so many games. It is hard on the body so we have been working hard, to stay mentally and physically fit to keep putting up performances like this," Rahul said after India's seven-run win in the final match here.

Ever since the Australia series at home, Rahul has taken on the additional responsibility of wicket-keeping. This was also India's last T20I of the 2019-20 season, which has seen them take on West Indies (twice), South Africa, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka previously at home. India have played 11 matches in the last one month.

Asked about the key takeaways ahead of the T20 World Cup, Rahul said the team managed to win high-pressure games.

> **Great to be standing here with a 5-0. We have been playing exceptional T20 cricket, to come here and execute our skills every game, to have squeezed out wins, is a confidence-booster. I think it's a winning habit we have cultivated. The onus is on finding different ways to win."**
>
> **KL RAHUL,**
> PLAYER OF THE SERIES

"Every time we have been challenged and pushed, and played some really competitive teams. We have always stayed calm, that's been the biggest takeaway. Previously we had series where we would win the series and not be challenged. But the last few series have been really challenging for us."

"It's phenomenal, it is a coach's and captain's dream, playing and working like this. We have a common goal as I said and we are working towards it."

Prior to the start of the tour, Kohli said cricketers are "getting closer and closer to landing at the stadium and playing straight".

"Well it's definitely getting closer and closer to landing at the stadium and playing straight. That's how compressed the game has become... "But I think this kind of travel and coming to a place, which is seven hours ahead of India time, is always difficult to adjust to immediately," Kohli had said on the eve of the first T20I, which was less than a week after beating Australia at home.

Rohit should recover soon

Stand-in India skipper Rohit Sharma did not take the field after injuring his calf while batting in the fifth T20 against New Zealand but teammate K Rahul Sunday said that "he should be fine in a couple of days".

Rahul captained the side in Rohit's absence. Virat Kohli was rested the final game of the series. "Rohit Sharma is being assessed at the moment," read an official update form the BCCI. At the post-match presentation, Rahul said: "Rohit's alright, unfortunate injury, hopefully he should be fine in a couple of days". Rohit, batting at number three, was retired hurt after injuring his left calf whilst hitting a six. He walked off the field in discomfort. He faced 41 balls for his 60, hitting three fours as well as three sixes. India play the first game of the three-match ODI series in Auckland on Wednesday.

SCORECARD » New Zealand vs India

5th T20I | Mount Maunganui | Toss: Ind

INDIA 163/3

KL Rahul c Santner b Bennett	**45** (33b, 4x4, 2x6)
S Samson c Santner b Kuggeleijn	**2** (5b)
R Sharma retired hurt	**60** (41b, 3x4, 3x6)
S Iyer not out	**33** (31b, 1x4, 2x6)
S Dube c Bruce b Kuggeleijn	**5** (6b, 1x4)
M Pandey not out	**11** (4b, 1x4, 1x6)
Extras: (lb 1, w 6)	**7**

Fall of wickets: 1-8 (Samson, 1.3 ov), 2-96 (Rahul, 11.3 ov), 2-138* (Sharma, retired not out), 3-148 (Dube, 18.5 ov)

Bowling:

T Southee	4-0-**52-0**
S Kuggeleijn	4-0-**25-2**
H Bennett	4-0-**21-1**
I Sodhi	4-0-**28-0**
M Santner	4-0-**36-0**

NEW ZEALAND 156/9

M Guptill lbw b Thakur	**2** (6b)
C Munro b Sundar	**15** (6b, 2x4, 1x6)
T Seifert c Samson b Saini	**50** (30b, 5x4, 3x6)
T Bruce run out	**0** (3b)
R Taylor c Rahul b Saini	**53** (47b, 5x4, 2x6)
D Mitchell b Bumrah	**2** (4b)
M Santner c Pandey b Thakur	**6** (7b)
S Kuggeleijn c Sundar b Thakur	**0** (1b)
T Southee b Bumrah	**6** (5b, 1x4)
I Sodhi not out	**16** (10b, 2x6)
H Bennett not out	**1** (2b)
Extras: (lb 1, nb 1, w 3)	**5**

Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Guptill, 1.3 ov), 2-17 (Munro, 2.3 ov), 3-17 (Bruce, 3.2 ov), 4-116 (Seifert, 12.4 ov), 5-119 (Mitchell, 13.6 ov), 6-131 (Santner, 16.3 ov), 7-132 (Kuggeleijn, 16.5 ov), 8-133 (Taylor, 17.1 ov), 9-141 (Southee, 18.2 ov)

Bowling:

W Sundar	3-0-**20-1**
J Bumrah	4-1-**12-3**
N Saini	4-0-**23-2**
S Thakur	4-0-**38-2**
Y Chahal	4-0-**28-0**
S Dube	1-0-**34-0**

India won by seven runs

CLEAN SWEEP

3 This is only the third instance when India have clean-swept the opponents in an away T20 series and the first time in a five-match rubber. India had blanked the West Indies 3-0 in 2019 and beaten Australia 3-0 in 2016.

BACK WITH A BANG

With a yorker from hell, Bumrah announces emphatic return

SANDIP G
FEBRUARY 2

SOMEWHERE IN the stands at the Bay Oval, a fan kept waving a banner that read: "Jasprit Bumrah is back." He was back a fortnight ago, playing an influential but less spectacular role in defining the T20I series, but it was the yorker that blasted Daryll Mitchell's stumps that entrenched his comeback in the mind of spectators. Just like Sachin Tendulkar was never quite back until he unfurled the magical straight drive, or Viv Richards until he flicked, or Virat Kohli until he cover-drove.

There is always a worry when a bowler returns from injury, especially with someone like Bumrah, who has quirky delivery strides and a quirkier release. Has he lost pace? Has he lost the zip? Has he lost the rhythm? Will he go full pelt? All those fears swirl. Bumrah allayed the fears with the perfect yorker. Or a yorker that was bowling perfection. Laser-guided, nuclear-tipped perfection. Mitchell could do nothing. Perfect release, perfect seam position, perfect curl, perfect landing, and perfect result. Not a millimetre either way.

Staggeringly, the seam hardly wobbled until it dropped right under Mitchell's feet. Throughout its travel, it was straight and upright — too textbook-ish to be real. How silly when bowlers complain of the breeze making the ball wobble too much in New Zealand. All along, Mitchell knew what was coming his way. Burmah was setting him up for the yorker. Still, he couldn't prevent it. The batsman shortened his back-swing, pressed forward a bit. Still, he couldn't bring his bat down in time. He wouldn't have looked so silly had he attempted a wild heave and got himself out.

While this was Bumrah's most spectacular delivery of the series — and his most telling performance of the series — he has been influencing matches in less eye-catchy ways. In the first game, his last two overs leaked only 16 runs, four off those from an edged boundary.

In a total of 203 on a small ground, Bumrah maintained an economy rate of less than eight. In the next, he conceded only 21 off his four. Even in the third, where he suffered at the hands of Kane Williamson, he didn't lose his smile or composure. Hit three times by the New Zealand skipper for boundaries in one over, he didn't wither away. He sprung with a couple of yorkers, a dot ball and a two. Precious when you look back at the match that went to the Super Over.

It was a rare off day — like all great players, those days come few and far between. His figures in the next two games read thus: 4-0-20-0 and 4-1-13-3. In eight T20 overs,

> **In T20Is, Jasprit Bumrah hardly exhibits his full range. He chooses weapons on mood and need. The yorker was his favourite on Sunday.**

he has conceded only 33 runs while taking three wickets, phenomenal figures in most part of the world and miraculous on the small grounds of New Zealand. To do that repeatedly in the Powerplay and at the death, where bowlers, no matter how good they are, are most prone to get hit, is a phenomenal feat in itself.

Behind the figures lies Bumrah's deception. While it's the yorker that's his most defining variety in the shorter version, Bumrah can't be defined by that one weapon. Take for instance the Martin Guptill wicket on Sunday.

There seemed nothing extraordinary in the delivery, a classic case of a batsman missing the line. An angled-in delivery missed altogether. Dissect further and one realises how the ball had fractionally held its line after pitching. So late and indiscernible the movement was that Guptill was surprised, like he was in the previous game as well, where he tried to whip what seemed like an incoming delivery before it held marginally held the line.

Then the minor alterations of lines. For instance, Bumrah prefers a wider line for his slower balls (usually scrambled-seam off-cutters). Batsmen expect slower balls at the death from straighter lines. Bowlers prefer that line because of the probability of a wicket if the batsman misses it. But the wider the slower ball goes, the more difficult it becomes to hit. It also prevents batsmen from backing away and opening up the off-side. Admitted Tim Seifert the other day: "Normally, death bowlers get into straighter lines, plus yorkers and mix it with chest-height bouncers. He kind of changes things a lot and is tougher to play."

It's precisely the reason Bumrah is often un-negotiable — because he has not only the variations but also variations of variations. There's the side-of-the-hand slower ball plus the scrambled-seam off-cutter. There's the ball that skids off back of a length, and there's also the ball that explodes into the rib-cage from the same length.

In T20Is, he hardly exhibits his full range. He chooses weapons on mood and need. The yorker was his favourite on Sunday— another piercing one blasted Tim Southee's stumps. And then he jogged back to the boundary rope, his ardent supporter kept waving that banner which read: "Bumrah is back!"

New Zealand batsmen just couldn't get on top of Jasprit Bumrah. *AP*

No walk in the Melbourne Park

With his fortress under seige, Djokovic comes back from two-sets-to-one to derail Thiem and clinch eighth Australian Open title

HOWARD FENDRICH
MELBOURNE, FEBRUARY 2

NOVAK DJOKOVIC was looking weary and worn down. He felt dizzy and trailed Dominic Thiem in the Australian Open final — miscues mounting, deficit growing.

Djokovic did what he does, though. He refused to lose, waited for a chance to pounce and found his best tennis when absolutely necessary. Even threw in a wrinkle, serve-and-volleying twice when facing break point.

Regaining his stamina and strokes, and showing some gutsy creativity, Djokovic came back to edge Thiem 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 Sunday night for an eighth Australian Open title, second in a row, and 17th Grand Slam trophy overall.

"I was on the brink of losing that match. ... I didn't feel that great," said Djokovic, who was seen multiple times by a doctor. "My energy," he explained, "completely collapsed."

Nonetheless, Djokovic improved his combined record in semifinals and finals at Melbourne Park to 16-0 and assured himself of returning to No. 1 in the rankings, replacing Rafael Nadal. No other man in the history of tennis has won this hard-court tournament more than six times. Only Roger Federer, with 20, and Nadal, with 19, have won more men's Grand Slam singles trophies than Djokovic.

"Amazing achievement. Unreal what you're doing throughout all these years," said the fifth-seeded Thiem, who is 0-3 in major finals. "You and also two other guys, I think you brought men's tennis to a complete new level."

Both finalists spoke about the devastating wildfires that have killed dozens of people and millions of animals around Australia. Djokovic also mentioned the recent deaths of NBA star Kobe Bryant and one of his daughters in a helicopter crash. Addressing Thiem, Djokovic said: "It wasn't meant to be tonight. Tough luck. .. You were very close to win it and you definitely have a lot more time in your career. I am sure you will definitely get one of the Grand Slam trophies. More than one."

A little more than six months after saving a pair of championship points against Federer en route to winning a five-set Wimbledon final, Djokovic again showed that he can't ever be counted out. It did not come easily this time for Djokovic, a 32-year-old from Serbia. He lost six games in a row in one stretch to Thiem, who plays a similar baseline game and eliminated Nadal in the quarterfinals.

Against the grain

Djokovic was down two sets to one. He was visited by a doctor and trainer in the third set and, desperate to hydrate, guzzled bottles of water and energy drink. He lectured the chair umpire about time violations.

This was not the dominant Djokovic who made a hard-to-believe total of nine unforced errors during his straight-set triumph over Nadal in the final a year ago. Djokovic eclipsed that total in the first set alone Sunday and finished with 57. It was a physical test offering plenty of entertaining exchanges, with 61 points lasting at least nine shots apiece.

"Very demanding," Thiem said. "Of course," he said, "I just feel a lot of emptiness right now."

At two key moments, Djokovic abandoned his usual grind-points-out script and went on the attack, rushing to the net after a serve when facing a break point _ first, at 2-1 in the fourth set, then again at 2-1 in the fifth. Paid off both times. "Not characteristic of me," Djokovic said. "Kind of all-or-nothing."

Suddenly making a charge as his less-experienced foe faltered, Djokovic broke to lead 5-3 in the fourth set, helped by a sloppy volley into the net tape, a double-fault and a bad forehand by Thiem. Eventually, Djokovic would get to clutch the silver Australian Open trophy he also won in 2008, 2011-13, 2015-16 and 2019.

He adds that haul to his five titles from Wimbledon, three from the U.S. Open and one from the French Open.

Thiem, an Austrian who is 26, was the runner-up to Nadal at Roland Garros each of the past two years and was again trying to become the first man born in the 1990s to win a major singles title. Instead, the Big Three have won 13 consecutive Slams and 56 of the last 67.

"It's unique in sports history that the three best players — by far — are playing in the same era," Thiem said. "That's what makes it very, very difficult for other players to break through."

The status quo appeared in peril in the third set, when Djokovic merely watched and shook his head as a lob by Thiem curled over him and in. Djokovic didn't chase it. Wasn't entirely clear right then what the problem was, but perhaps he knew he needed to save some strength.

Heat, so often a factor in Melbourne, was not an issue. The crisp, cool conditions were pretty much ideal at the start, with a light breeze and the temperature around 70 degrees (20 Celsius). That dropped as the natural light faded, first leaving a violet ceiling of sky before nightfall arrived, accompanied by alarmingly loud squawks from a flock of seagulls perched on steel railings atop the arena.

Not surprisingly, given his experience and expertise, Djokovic came out loose, limber and locked in. Of the initial half-dozen points lasting at least nine strokes, he won all six. Within 13 minutes, he was ahead 3-0, as a chorus of his nickname — "No-le! No-le! No-le!" — rang out. Undaunted, Thiem displayed praiseworthy patience, and when Djokovic's aim and focus betrayed him, this became an intriguing contest.

At 4-all in the second set, Djokovic was warned by chair umpire Damien Dumusois for taking too much time before a serve. A poor drop shot found the net to set up break point, and Dumusois again cited Djokovic for letting the 25-second clock expire; the penalty was a fault. A tepid 85 mph second serve followed, and Djokovic flubbed a forehand to give Thiem a 5-4 lead. As Djokovic walked to the changeover, he tapped Dumusois on the left shoe, gave him a thumbs-up, then sat down and told him, "You made yourself famous."

That was part of a six-game run that gave Thiem the second set — Djokovic had taken 16 in a row since the opening round — and control of the third.

Just as it seemed Thiem might be on his way, Djokovic made a stand. **AP**

Regaining his stamina and strokes, and showing some gutsy creativity, Novak Djokovic edged Thiem 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 for his 17th Grand Slam title. *AP*

REIGN SUPREME

17 The number of Grand Slam singles titles Novak Djokovic has won, the third-most among men in the Open Era, behind Roger Federer (20) and Rafael Nadal (19). Pete Sampras (14) and Roy Emerson (12) follow the Serbian's hauls.

4 Djokovic is now the fourth player to win at least eight titles at any one Grand Slam in the Open Era. Federer has 8 Wimbledon titles while Martina Navratilova has 9. Nadal leads the pack with 12 French Open titles.

1 Djokovic is the first man in the Open Era to win Grand Slam titles in three different decades, and third overall after Navratilova and Serena Williams. Sunday's win was also the first instance of Djokovic coming from two sets to one down to win a Major final, after failing to do so on seven occasions.

Definitely my favourite court, my favourite stadium in the world and I'm blessed to hold this trophy once again... I was on the brink of losing the match. Dominic disrupted my rhythm in my game at one point. He was a better player. Probably one point — and one shot — separated us tonight."

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Carpe Thiem? Not quite: Austrian empty after loss

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MELBOURNE, FEBRUARY 2

EMPTINESS. EXHAUSTION. All-too-familiar feelings for Dominic Thiem after a Grand Slam final.

He has lost three on the biggest stage at the majors, adding a five-set loss to Novak Djokovic on the hard courts at Melbourne Park on Sunday to his two against Rafael Nadal on the red clay at Roland Garros.

Each time he's come up against the greatest-of-all-time at that particular venue.

He had to beat top-seeded Nadal in the quarterfinals at the Australian Open, then a fellow up-and-comer, Alexander Zverev, in the semifinals.

Just to get a shot at Djokovic, who had won all seven previous times he'd reached the Australian final, Thiem had spent almost 18 1/2 hours on court and beaten four seeded players through six rounds. Djokovic had spent almost six fewer hours in action, and had only dropped one set in the tournament.

"I've rarely felt physically (so) tired, especially now after all the tension's gone," Thiem said after losing 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 on Rod Laver Arena.

After recovering a break in the first set, Thiem surrendered it with a double-fault — his first. He rebounded and, from 4-4 in the second, won six straight games and took the next two sets, with his hard, flat ground strokes troubling Djokovic.

And then, after being one set from a breakthrough major title, the 26-year-old Austrian had to accept being runner-up again after a four-hour final. Even Djokovic admitted just one or two shots made the difference.

"I just feel a lot of emptiness right now. But, yeah, that's it. I know the feeling," Thiem said. "I did after the last two in Paris. But, yeah, also already now I feel little bit of motivation to come back for the next Grand Slam."

That'll be in Paris, in May.

He reckons it's just the fine details he needs to work on, and a bit of reshaping after honing his game specifically for the hard surface.

What made him most proud of his run in Australia, he said, was "the way I kept my level, the way I kept my tension over all the two weeks.

"I didn't have easy matches, especially from the quarters on. Beating Rafa in over four hours, then two days later going back out again against Sascha. Unbelievably intense, close match. Then two days later going out again against Novak, who won the most titles here and again played on a very high level."

That gives him a brighter picture for the future.

"I'm very aware and sure now that I can play on a very high level for a full Grand Slam," Thiem said. "Didn't have any drops — it makes me very confident for the next big tournaments which are coming up."

Djokovic is among the experts who predict big things for Thiem.

"Congratulations to Dominic for an amazing tournament. It wasn't meant to be tonight," Djokovic said as he accepted the trophy. "It was a tough match. You were very close to winning it. You definitely have a lot more time in your career and I'm sure you'll get one of the Grand Slam trophies ... More than one."

Thiem would like that to be sooner than later, obviously, and certainly while Roger Federer, Nadal and Djokovic are still contenders.

"I really hope also that I win my maiden Slam when they're still around," he said, "because it just counts more, yeah."

"I've rarely felt physically (so) tired, especially now after all the tension's gone," said Dominic Thiem after his third Grand Slam final defeat. *Reuters*

Silver linings

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE
Thiem's run in Melbourne should help him shed his image as a pure clay-courter. Since a first-round defeat at last year's US Open, he has won 23 from 29 matches on the hard courts. The Austrian's only Masters title too was at Indian Wells last year.

SHOT SELECTION
Against Djokovic, the number of backhand winners by Thiem was 5. The unforced errors: 25. On crucial points, Thiem went for a no-holds-barred-Stan-Wawrinka ploy to blast the backhand down the line.

RUNNING INTO GOATS
While he failed to win his first Major title for the third time, Thiem's final losses have also come against the best a Slam has to offer. Nadal has staved him off twice at Roland Garros, and 'King of Melbourne' Djokovic beat him on Sunday. Knowing his luck, the 26-year-old might run into Federer in the Wimbledon final this year.

Novak gets support... from India

SHAHID JUDGE
PUNE, FEBRUARY 2

VIKTOR TROICKI rushed off court faster than the player he had beaten 6-1, 6-4 to qualify for the main draw of the Tata Open Maharashtra. Time was off the essence for the veteran Serbian, for there was another match he wanted to catch – the Australian Open men's singles final.

"I gotta hurry up, it's the fifth set," he says, moments after compatriot Novak Djokovic forced Dominic Thiem into a deciding set in their summit clash in Melbourne. "I hope he wins. We've been spending a lot of time in Australia before I got injured. I wish him all the best and hope he wins. He's just a couple of games away."

In the few minutes that followed, the world no. 2 Djokovic managed to win the match 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, earning a 17th Grand Slam title and regaining top spot in the world rankings. And this came just a few weeks after he helped secure the inaugural ATP Cup title for Serbia – just like he did for his country's only Davis Cup title back in 2010.

"We have the number 1 in the world, that's helpful to have. (Djokovic) pretty much wins all of his matches, then (the rest of the team has) to win one more point somehow, even if it is ATP Cup, Davis Cup," Troicki says. "We have to come up with that point somehow, and that's how we manage to do it. We don't manage to do it always, but we try to and when we are successful at it, we're winning."

The 33-year-old, older by a year to his legendary compatriot, remembers meeting Djokovic for the first time at a youth tournament they were playing in. "He was eight, I was nine. We played a tournament in U-10s. I beat him 9-1, or 9-0, we're not sure about it. But that was our first meeting," he says.

That friendship has blossomed over the years and Djokovic has remained one of Troicki's greatest supports on tour, particularly during the trying time for the latter when he faced a one-year ban in 2013 for drug abuse.

"When I had my toughest situation in my life, he was publicly supporting me and giving me great help. Always, with everything. He's helped me a lot through my career, he's a great person. I'm grateful to him and he's been a true friend," he says.

But it isn't just Troicki whom Djokovic has made a difference for. The former world no. 12, whose current ranking of 159 forced him to start his campaign in Pune in the qualifying rounds, remembers growing up in a country that was then warn-torn Yugoslavia, where funds for daily needs were scare and tennis facilities even harder to find. But those times have changed, and Djokovic has been central to it.

"Tennis became very popular in Serbia over the years, probably the most popular sport. Novak is the number 1 and most famous person in the whole country and region. He's put our nation on the map with his results and all the things he does for our country," Troicki says. "People recognise it, kids want to be like him, and there's a lot of kids playing tennis now. It's different now. The federation is also supporting players more, we have more clubs and more courts to play."

Djokovic's 17 Grand Slam titles now has him trailing Rafael Nadal by two and Roger Federer by three. He's the player most likely to get the record by the time the Big Three of tennis decide to leave the game. But in his home country, he's long been the true face of the sport.

Novak Djokovic and Viktor Troicki have helped Serbia win their only Davis Cup title in 2010, and the inaugural ATP Cup last month. *Reuters*

Back after physical, personal trauma, Prajnesh hopes to bounce back at home

SHAHID JUDGE
PUNE, FEBRUARY 2

After turning pro in 2010, the 30-year-old has lost five years to injuries, contemplated quitting, built some momentum, got up to a career-high 75, but couldn't stay in the top 100 for too long.

THE LAST time Prajnesh Gunneswaran competed at a tournament in India, he was at a different level as a player. He carried with him the tag of being a top 100 player – ranked 95 – when he featured at the Pune Challenger in November. But that was a trying time for him as well, both on and off the court. Days earlier, he had lost his father, who had been his rock, and he'd been struggling with a wrist injury. In hindsight, he says, he "probably shouldn't have come."

Prajnesh turned pro in 2010, but the 30-year-old has lost five years to knee injuries, contemplated quitting, chugged on, built some momentum, got up to a career-high 75, but didn't manage to stay in the top 100 for too long. In all this time however, the now world no. 123 still remains the country's highest-ranked player, and along with Sumit Nagal, one of two Indians to enter the main draw of India's only ATP event, the Tata Open Maharashtra, on merit.

"Hurdles have always sort of been in my path, and I'm just used to it. I'm trying to figure things out. Had personal issues, tennis issues. So that's just the way it goes sometimes," he says. "And I think I've come out of it pretty well. Obviously, I was a little bit injured. So I couldn't play my best tennis, but things are getting better. And I think my tennis is there. I'm constantly improving. Once things fall in place, I will start getting results again."

At this time last year, Prajnesh entered the Chennai Challenger, reached the semifinals and broke into the top 100 for the first time in his career. It was a feat expected from the hard-hitting left-hander who had been making rapid progress up the rankings ladder. And the run continued. After qualifying for the main draw of the Indian Wells Masters 1000, he beat former world no. 18 Benoit Paire in the first round and followed it up by beating then world no. 18 Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia. Injuries though, soon caught up with him.

"I think up until the summer I had a very, very good run. By the time I came to the clay season in Europe, that was when my I started having shoulder issues, which is when my season kind of went downhill," Prajnesh says. "I was still playing though, playing bigger tournaments, I wasn't getting the results I wanted, which is not unexpected, because when you move up to a better standard, if you don't sort of play well enough, you're going to lose matches. I was trying to figure things out, understand how much better I needed to play or whether it was just a matter of belief, or if I needed to be fitter. The only way to really understand what you need is to be there. I was starting to understand it but then I got injured."

He played through the second half of the season with constant shoulder and wrist issues. The ranking dropped, and the personal tragedy came at a time when he was preparing for marriage. But he has moved on from that rough phase. At the Australian Open this year, he arguably had the best chance of becoming the first Indian since Somdev Devvarman at the US Open 2013 to win a singles main draw match at a major. He made the cut for the Round of 128 in Melbourne as a lucky loser, but against world no. 146 Tatsuma Ito, an elbow issue hampered him.

"That is really just because I hadn't played much tennis. Since I was resting my wrist, I just hadn't been serving so much. And then when I started to sort of go after the serve in the match, I just tweaked something," Prajnesh explains. Now back in Pune, the body is still not 100 per cent, but the belief is still intact. It's his mental capacity that has taken him through the injury struggles – the five years of knee issues when doctors struggled to diagnose the problem, the shoulder, wrist and elbow. The mental strength has helped him push through the lower echelons, getting past the Futures, making it through Challengers and now competing on the tour. It's that same attitude that, in a depleted foreign field at the Tata Open Maharashtra, ignites hopes for an Indian success. Paire, the maverick Frenchman is ranked 21 in the world and is the top seed. But Prajnesh has beaten him in the past. This year again, he's hoping to turn things around.

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BRIEFLY

Joshna in semifinals of Cleveland Classic

Cleveland: Indian ace Joshna Chinappa stormed into the semi-final of the Cleveland Classic squash tournament after beating Annie Au of Hong Kong here. Chinappa won 3-6, 11-6, 6-11, 11-8, 11-6 in the match played on Saturday night. The tournament is a Professional Squash Association World Tour bronze event. The fifth seeded Indian had to dig deep into her reserves to stop the fighting Hong Kong player, seeded fourth, in a close match that lasted nearly an hour.

Harmeet, Sutirtha win national TT titles

Hyderabad: Sixth-seed Harmeet Desai defeated fourth-seed Manav Thakkar 4-3 in the men's singles final to claim his maiden title at the 81st National Table Tennis Championships here on Sunday. Haryana's Sutirtha Mukherjee claimed her second National crown, beating PSPB's Krittwika Sinha Roy, a three-time finalist, 4-0 in the women's singles final. In the process, she bagged three gold, including in the team event and women's doubles apart from getting a silver in the mixed event.

Adarsh dominates shooting trials

Thiruvananthapuram: Haryana's Adarsh Singh extended his winning run to emerge victorious in both the men's and junior 25m rapid fire pistol trials at the National Shooting Trials for rifle and pistol disciplines here on Sunday. Adarsh shot 35 in the six-man men's final to outgun state-mate Anish Bhanwala who finished with 33. In the junior final, Adarsh shot 33 to get the better of Vijayveer Sidhu of Chandigarh, who shot 32 to finish second.

Hockey: Services crowned champions

Jhansi: Services Sports Control Board were crowned champions of the Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2020 (A Division) after defeating Air India Sports Promotion Board 3-1 at the Major Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium in Jhansi on Sunday. Petroleum Sports Promotion Board beat Punjab & Sind Bank 3-1 to clinch the Bronze Medal. Services scored all three goals in the third quarter with Rahul Kumar Rajbhar (33'), Jobanpreet Singh (43') and Ajinkya Jadhav (45') finding the back of the net. Vishnu Singh (47') netted the only goal for Air India.

PBL: Sindhu leads Hyderabad to win

Hyderabad: PV Sindhu put up a masterclass to beat Shriyanshi Pardeshi in an all-Indian clash as Hyderabad Hunters notched up a thrilling 4-3 win over Mumbai Rockets in the fifth Premier Badminton League on Sunday. Sindhu had come to this match on a two-match losing streak, having suffered a reversal of fortunes at the hands of Michelle Li and Tai Tzu Ying. However, this time the Hunters Trump made no mistake as she beat Shriyanshi 15-5, 15-10 in a clinical display.

ATK ride on Krishna's brace vs Jamshedpur

Jamshedpur: Roy Krishna struck twice as ATK blanked Jamshedpur FC 3-0 in a Hero Indian Super League clash at the JRD Tata Sports Complex here on Sunday. Krishna (2nd, 75th) and Edu Garcia (59th) were the goal-scorer for ATK as the visitors secured their ninth win of the season. In I-League, TRAU FC earned a point against Gokulam Kerala after playing out a 1-1 draw.

PTI/ENS

Chelsea's experiment with youth

Blues have bet on a former player & young talent this season, but patience will inevitably depend on results

RORY SMITH
LEICESTER, FEBRUARY 2

MORE THAN a decade ago, one of the world's foremost cardiovascular health experts tracked the heart rate and blood pressure of two Premier League managers during a game.

His findings were, by most measures, alarming: pulse rates that, at times, spiked to four times their ordinary level; blood pressures that soared to dangerous levels. The doctor who carried out the experiment, Dorian Dugmore, was in no doubt as to the warning contained within his findings. Every week, he said, "these guys are putting their hearts on the line."

It is hardly a surprise, then, that there are physical consequences to that strain. Some resist for a little longer than others. José Mourinho arrived in English soccer with a head of raven-black hair; it was a few years before it turned salt-and-pepper. Jürgen Klopp's beard is flecked with gray these days, too, four years after he joined Liverpool. The color, by contrast, seemed to drain from Ole Gunnar Solskjaer within months of taking over at Manchester United.

For now, though, Frank Lampard seems almost immune. He is seven months into his career as a Premier League manager, and he has spent most of it smiling. The long hours might have added a little to the shadows under his eyes, but his mood is unfailingly cheery. He skips up the stairs onto his dais at news conferences. He has a disarming knack of chuckling and charming at even the most challenging, impertinent questions, a well-worn recipe of wry grin, one-liner, and then, "No, but seriously."

For a man who spent much of his career learning at the knee of Mourinho, Lampard's style is unexpectedly chipper. He is not, unlike his mentor — and, indeed, like essentially all of his peers in the Premier League these days — much of a brooder and a bristler.

In his first few months, it was easy to explain why. Lampard, uniquely in this phase of Chelsea's history, appeared to be under no immediate pressure whatsoever. The club accepted, it seemed, that he would have to learn on the job to some extent: his only previous managerial experience, after all, had been a season with Derby County in the championship.

The club was operating under a FIFA-imposed transfer embargo; it had lost its lone superstar, Eden Hazard, to Real Madrid; it was determined to promote some of the brightest talents from its youth program — the best in England for almost a decade — now that its hand had been forced. It knew there would be bumps in the road: that opening day defeat to Manchester United; the early troubles in winning games at home.

Youth has always bought managers time. Fans are, broadly, willing to suffer a little — and only a little — today if they feel that the promise of tomorrow is genuine. For once, and in a complete volte-face from its usual modus operandi under Roman Abramovich, Chelsea seemed to agree. This would, the line came again and again, be a transitional year. Not quite a freebie, but not far off, either.

On the face of it, the gamble has worked. Chelsea sits fourth in the Premier League, possessed of a comfortable cushion over the gaggle of teams — Manchester United, Tottenham, Wolves and Sheffield United — in pursuit.

A 2-2 tie with Leicester City on Saturday meant the gap to third place remained at eight points, most likely too much to be overhauled, but no matter: a return to the Champions League would represent a more than acceptable start for Lampard. His squad already has reached the last 16 of this year's competition, another box ticked. Getting past Bayern Munich later this month would, if anything, be exceeding expectations.

His young players, too, are flourishing. Tammy Abraham, for so long the avatar of all that was wrong with Chelsea's approach to youth, has scored 15 goals in his long-awaited first season as the club's first-choice striker. The midfielder Mason Mount and the winger Callum Hudson-Odoi have played their way into contention for England's national team. Reece James has adapted so well to the Premier League that he is currently forcing Cesar Azpilicueta, the club captain, to play out of position.

That is how it seems. It is not, necessarily, how it is. Lampard was pleased Saturday with what he described as a "fair" point against Leicester — a team, after all, one place higher in the league — but it meant that Chelsea has now won only 4 of its last 13 Premier League games. That it remains secure in fourth place is not, increasingly, through its own merit, but through the failings of Manchester United and Tottenham, in particular.

He remains adored by Chelsea's fans, of course — they sang his name here, lovingly, as he trotted over to thank them for their support, his fist clenched in appreciation — but that early-season aura of happy-go-lucky insouciance is starting, for the first time, to dissipate.

No new arrivals

When the transfer window closed Friday without any new arrivals to his squad, Lampard suggested that Chelsea had made itself "underdogs" in the race for a Champions League spot. Twenty-four hours later, he decided to drop Kepa Arrizabalaga, the most expensive goalkeeper in the world, for the first time in the Premier League season, in favor of his veteran understudy, Willy Caballero.

This was always the challenge Lampard was likely to face. Chelsea is prepared to wait for a while, of course, for the future to arrive, to give Lampard chance to grow. It is willing to do what Leicester, for example, has been doing for a couple of years: to accept that youth buys time, but also needs it.

But Chelsea is not Leicester. The profiles of the clubs are completely different, even if their league positions are reasonably similar. It is easy to believe that Chelsea wants to wait, wants to be patient, wants to trust in its young players. It is much harder — bordering on impossible — to know if it will be able to stick with that approach, or whether there will come a point where today, all of a sudden, matters more than tomorrow.

For now, Lampard is still smiling. A few minutes after his news conference had finished here in Leicester, as the home team's manager, Brendan Rodgers, was speaking, he burst through the door again. He was about to leave, and he wanted to say goodbye to Rodgers. "I didn't want to be rude," he said, with a laugh. He left the room at a jog, a smile on his face. That is not bad, seven months in. The question now is how long it will last.

NYT

Frank Lampard has blooded several young players in the Chelsea squad since taking charge seven months ago. *Reuters*

REVOLUTION OR RISK?

REVOLVING DOOR POLICY

For years, Chelsea have been criticised for not giving a chance to young players in their roster. That was partially due to owner Roman Abramovich's intolerant policy towards failure, replacing coaches and letting go players for under-performance. So much so that world-class players such as Kevin De Bruyne, who moved to Manchester City, and Liverpool's Mohamed Salah tried and failed to cement a place in strong Chelsea sides as young players.

TRANSFER BAN

Then, at the start of this season, Chelsea got Lampard as their manager. Lampard was eager to give young players a chance — a decision stemming from compulsion rather than choice. The club had a transfer ban for breaking FIFA's rules on signing young players, meaning they could not turn to the market to reinforce the squad. The loss of Eden Hazard put Lampard in a spot.

YONGEST SQUAD

Lampard turned the adversity into an advantage, giving young players a chance. In fact, in early part of the season, he named a starting 11 that had an average age of 24 years and 88 days, making them the youngest side in the Premier League this season.

UNDER PRESSURE

The draw against Leicester means they have now won only 4 of their last 13 Premier League games. That leaves them fourth on the table, and keeps the race for that spot open. On Friday, when the transfer window closed with Chelsea not making any addition to their squad, Lampard suggested his team was now an "underdog" in the race for a Champions League spot.

YOUNG BRIGADE

- **Tammy Abraham, 22, sits third in goals scored in the Premier League with 13 goals; a respectable tally for a striker playing in his debut EPL season.**
- **Mason Mount has played like a seasoned midfielder alongside a resurgent Mateo Kovacic and Jorginho, and has scored important goals.**
- **Fikayo Tomori and Reece James, perhaps the most promising of Chelsea's academy products, have bolstered a previously porous defence.**
- **Callum Hudson-Odoi re-signed with the club and remains the brightest attacking prospect.**
- **Christian Pulisic, although not an academy player, has proved invaluable following his $73 million transfer from Borussia Dortmund last January.**

Flat United need a break: Solskjaer

Manchester: Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer hopes a two-week winter break can rejuvenate his side's season after a 0-0 draw with Wolves did little for their hopes a top-four finish in the Premier League.

United handed a debut to £47 million signing Bruno Fernandes in midfield, but the reason for the Portuguese's purchase remained obvious as Solskjaer's men again lacked guile and goals without the injured Marcus Rashford up front. "We've played so many games in the last two months. The players are down to the bare bones, their energy levels are down and they need a break now," said Solskjaer. United are not in action again until they travel to Chelsea on February 17.

That clash appears a must-win for Solskjaer's men as they remain six points behind Chelsea in fourth, despite a run of four wins in 13 games for the Blues, and fall a point behind Sheffield United.

Rashford is not expected to return for at least another couple of months, which is why United made a surprise last-minute move for Odion Ighalo on loan from Shanghai Shenhua ahead of Friday's transfer deadline. "We do lack that little spark in the last third," added Solskjaer. "Give us this break and we'll start scoring goals."

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Real Madrid stay ahead in Spain with win over Atletico

LA LIGA STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
R Madrid	22	14	7	1	27	49
Barcelona	21	13	4	4	25	43
Sevilla	21	11	5	5	7	38
Valencia	22	10	7	5	4	37
Getafe	21	10	6	5	10	36

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MADRID, FEBRUARY 2

WITH ZINEDINE Zidane making all the right moves, Real Madrid added to its dominant run by defeating city rival Atletico Madrid and increasing its Spanish league lead on Saturday. Zidane's changes at halftime proved crucial for Madrid as it defeated Atletico 1-0 in the capital derby for its eighth straight victory and a six-point lead over second-placed Barcelona, which hosts Levante on Sunday.

The loss virtually ended Atletico's title hopes, as it stayed 13 points off the lead and was in danger of dropping to seventh place by the end of the weekend. It was a mostly even match in the first half and Atletico had some of the most significant chances, including a close-range shot by Angel Correa that hit the post.

But Zidane changed the team's formation in the second half and the game quickly turned in Madrid's favor, with substitute Vinicius Junior starting the play that led to Benzema's winner from close range in the 56th minute. Benzema hit a one-timer from just outside the six-yard box after a low cross from Ferland Mendy, whose run inside the area met a well-placed through ball by Vinicius Junior.

Zidane started the match with five midfielders, with Benzema as the lone striker. The formation was first used in the Spanish Super Cup. But after the lackluster first half, he successfully changed it back to a 4-3-3 scheme with Lucas Vazquez and Vinicius Junior coming off the bench to flank Benzema up front.

They replaced midfielders Francisco ₹Isco" Alarcon and Toni Kroos, giving the team greater offensive depth and opening up the Atletico defense. "I wasn't happy with what I was seeing," Zidane said. "We had to make a change. We entered the second half playing differently and we showed better attitude. We were better in all areas and deserved the victory."

Madrid was unbeaten against Atletico in the league in seven consecutive matches, but it hadn't defeated its rival at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in six straight games. The win extended Madrid's unbeaten streak in all competitions to 21 matches. One of its victories came against Atletico in a penalty shootout in the Spanish Super Cup final this month in Saudi Arabia.

Atletico's winless streak has reached five matches in all competitions, one of its worst stints since coach Diego Simeone arrived nearly a decade ago. The latest defeat has limited its main challenge to trying to make it back to the Champions League. "There is reason to be concerned, of course," Simeone said. "All we can do is keep working to try to get out of this uncomfortable situation."

Atletico loudly complained of a penalty not awarded for the team after a challenge by Madrid midfielder Casemiro on forward Alvaro Morata in the first half. There was a moment of silence to honor Kobe Bryant before the match.

Valencia followed its win over Barcelona by beating Celta Vigo 1-0. Carlos Soler scored in the 77th to move the hosts to fourth place, 12 points off the lead. Celta, sitting inside the relegation zone, hasn't won in eight consecutive league games. It was the fourth straight win for Valencia in all competitions.

Juventus six-points clear

Milan: Cristiano Ronaldo stretched his scoring streak to nine consecutive league games with a penalty double on Sunday as Juventus bounced back from last weekend's defeat to Napoli with a 3-0 win over Fiorentina. The Portuguese striker slotted in both his goals from the spot in either half in Turin with Dutch defender Matthijs de Ligt heading in a third in injury time.

TRIBUTE

Bryant's stolen jersey returned for ceremony at his high school

Kobe Bryant's stolen jersey was displayed at his school. *AP*

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PENNSYLVANIA, FEBRUARY 2

KOBE BRYANT'S high school jersey spent more time in China of late than it did hanging on the wall of the gym named in honor of the school's career leading scorer. Bryant's retired No. 33 jersey was stolen in 2017 from Lower Merion High School's campus and eventually bought by a collector in China. Suspicious the jersey was stolen, the Kobe collector contacted the school and helped return the keepsake to suburban Philadelphia, a process already underway before Bryant was killed Sunday in a helicopter crash.

The uniform was at last back Saturday where it belonged - unveiled under a spotlight by Bryant's cousin, his old high school coach, and a former teammate at Bryant Gymnasium. "Good timing," Lower Merion coach Gregg Downer said. "That was kind of an iconic moment when the spotlight went on that jersey. It was just tremendous. It was major irony, almost, how we've been waiting for that jersey for a long time. For a long time we didn't know where it was. To have it back, it's a fitting ending to a tough week."

Outside of Los Angeles, no place was as connected with Bryant as Lower Merion. At a tribute Friday night in LA, the entire Lakers lineup was introduced the same way: "From Lower Merion High School, No. 8, Kobe Bryant." Golfer Justin Thomas wore a Bryant No. 33 LM jersey at a tournament. The Sixers had the 33 logo on the court this week at their first home since Bryant was killed.

While NBA teams spent the ensuing days holding observances for Bryant, Lower Merion finally played its first home game and celebrated the biggest star to ever play for the Aces. Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna and seven others killed were all remembered in the pregame ceremony.

Bryant's retired No. 33 jersey was stolen in 2017 from Lower Merion High School's campus and eventually bought by a collector in China. Suspicious the jersey was stolen, the Kobe collector contacted the school and helped return the keepsake

"Because of Kobe, Lower Merion High School is known all over the globe," principal Sean Hughes told the crowd. "Despite his international fame, Kobe kept very close to our hearts. He returned here to meet with beloved (English teachers), and of course, coach Downer. He helped make this gym the wonderful facility it is. He was a strong supporter, not only of our basketball teams, but all of Aces Nation."

The gym was packed to at least the 1,600 capacity, and students - some asking this week at school for $40 for the $3 ticket - wore black T-shirts that read "The Heartbeat of Aces Nation" with a 33 inside an ace. Sixers coach Brett Brown's son plays on the team, connections far removed from the A-listers that packed Staples Center a night earlier in a stirring ceremony. At Lower Merion, a former student sang the national anthem. A teacher unveiled a portrait she had painted of Bryant. School administrators gave speeches.

Once the ball tipped, it was business as usual, without the 24-second shot clock and eight-second backcourt violations NBA teams have been performing to salute Bryant's two pro uniform numbers. Lower Merion did hold 33 seconds of silence, and former teammates (and Bryant's cousin, John Cox) gathered in a mournful circle at midcourt.

Vol LXXXVIII No.73 Regd.No. DL-21046/03-05

R.N.I. No.506/58. Printed and Published by R.C. Malhotra on behalf of The Indian Express (P) Limited and Printed at The Indian Express (P) Limited Press, A-8, Sector-7, Noida - 201301 and Published at The Indian Express (P) Limited, Mezzanine Floor, Express Building, 9 & 10, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editorial office: The Indian Express (P) Limited, Mezzanine Floor, Express Building, 9 & 10, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: 0120-6651500. Advertising office: The Indian Express (P) Limited, B1/B, Sector - 10, Noida - 201301. Phone: 0120-6651291. Chairman of the Board: Viveck Goenka, Chief Editor: Raj Kamal Jha, Editor: Unni Rajen Shanker, Editor (Delhi): Rakesh Sinha ** **Responsible for selection of News under the PRB Act. Copyright: The Indian Express (P) Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited. The Indian Express®

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