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NEW DELHI, MONDAY MARCH 27, 2017; PAGES 16 ₹3 the pioneer

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WEATHER



CAPSULE

GOONS WILL LEAVE UP OR LAND IN JAIL: YOGI Gorakhpur: Uttar Pradesh Chie Minister Yogi Aditya Nath on Sunday urged the people help him break the negative image of the State and hinted at strong measures to ensure law and order

"There is no place for those who give patronage to the goonda elements, mafia, criminal and other roque elements. They have the option of leaving UP or else they would land in places designated for them (jails)," he said. P7

BAG FILLED WITH ELECTRIC DETONATORS FOUND IN AP Rajamahendravaram (AP): Police have recovered 500 electric detonators kept in a gunny bag near a village in East Godavari district.

WORLD'S LARGEST CAPSTONE IN TELANGANA Hvderabad: The Archaeology department of Telangana has discovered the world's larges capstone after excavating an ancient human burial site in

Siddipet district, officials said. P4

INSPECTOR RAJ IN MCDS WILL END, SAYS SISODIA New Delhi: Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Sunday that the "inspector rai" prevailing in the BJP-ruled civic bodies will end with the abolition

of house tax.

NAVY'S ICONIC TUPOLEV TO BE DECOMMISSIONED New Delhi: The Indian Navy's iconic Tupoley-142M antisubmarine warfare aircraft will be decommissioned on Wednesday.

SHOOTING AT CINCINNATI Cincinnati (US): Gunfire erupted early on Sunday inside a crowded nightclub in Cincinnati with a history of violence, killing one person and wounding over a

dozen others, authorities said.P12

PAK APPREHENDS OVER 100 INDIAN FISHERMEN Ahmedahad: Over 100 Indian fishermen were allegedly apprehended and around 18 of their hoats seized by PMSA off Jakhau

coast in Gujarat's Kutch district.P4

Prez next goal for triumphant BJP Abortive BRT to be Modi to discuss 'suitable' man for top job over

dinner with NDA

constituents

Now that the Assembly polls are behind it, the Government is preparing for the Presidential poll. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to call a meeting of NDA constituents next week to discuss the strategy to elect the 14th President of India when the incumbent Pranab Mukherjee retires in July this year.

After its stupendous show in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the BJP bridged the vote deficit it had until before the elections to have its own candidate for the top constitutional post. The Government, though, is keen to have a consensus presidential candidate who also has the back-

ing of all Opposition parties.
According to sources, Shiv

Thackeray has been invited to the Prime Minister's party being hosted next week for the NDA allies to firm up the strategy for the upcoming presidential polls. The meeting may be held by March 29, according to sources. The NDA allies would first discuss their candidate before the Opposition could be approached, they said.

"It is Modi ji's dinner diplomacy in which he will try and get consent over a name for the presidential election slated in July this year," a Sena leader said. The next President has to be elected before July 25.

The last presidential election had witnessed a contest. Outgoing President Mukherjee had won the elections in July 2012 by getting 713,763 votes, about 70 per cent of the total votes polled, beating former Lok Sabha Speaker PA Sangma, who was supported by the NDA. West Bengal Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee has reportedly said that she would be happy if BJP veteran LK Advani or External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj become the



PM Modi at an event organised at the residence of Union I&B Minister M Venkaiah Naidu on the occasion of Telugu New Year 'Ugadi', in New Delhi on Sunday

President of India.

"I respect Advani ji, Sushma ji. I will be happy if they become President. I will also be happy if Pranab Mukherjee stays as President, said Mamata who was speaking at a programme hosted by a private channel at Kolkata.

UP, where the BIP scored a convincing victory, has currently 83,824 votes in the Presidential elections. The BIP is expected to win around 64,896 votes.

There are 776 MPs (Lok Sabha 543, Rajya Sabha 233) and 4,120 MLAs across the

After its stupendous show in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the BJP bridged the vote deficit it had until before the elections to have its own candidate for the top constitutional post

The Government, though, is keen to have a consensus presidential candidate who also has the backing of all Opposition

According to sources, Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray has been invited to the Prime Minister's party being hosted next week for the NDA allies to firm up the strategy for the upcoming presidential polls

country. The total number of votes in the Electoral College stands at 10.98 lakh and the majority mark would be around 5.49 lakh votes. (The total value of MLA votes is 5,49,474 and that of MPs is 5,49,408.)

The BJP has 282 Lok Sabha and 56 Rajya Sabha members, and 1,126 MLAs across the country (before the current Assembly elections).

reborn as panacea



STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will identify new road stretches for setting up BRT corridors, months after the only such carriageway built by the Sheila Dikshit Government was dismantled due to its "poor design". The Transport Department of the city Government has proposed to conduct a thorough study to find out stretches where Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors are feasible.

The Arvind Kejriwal Government had dismantled the Moolchand-Ambedkar Nagar BRT corridor, ₹180crore project built in 2008, saying it was built without a proper planning, but had accepted the concept of such corridors was not bad.

During Assembly elections in 2015, the Aam Aadmi Party had promised to dismantle the BRT corridor as "it was causing traffic snarls" on the stretch.

"As per the plan, the Transport department will identify such road stretches where new BRT corridors can come up. New BRT corridors will be built based only on a proper planning so that such structures do not cause traffic

AAP Govt to take feasibility study for new corridors to solve traffic snarls in Capital

the case of the previous BRT corridor," a senior Government official said. The official said that after the proposal is cleared by the Transport Commissioner, it

snarls later as we had to see in

will be sent for the approval of higher Government authorities. In January last year, Dy CM Manish Sisodia had start-

ed the process of dismantling the BRT corridor by striking a hammer and taken a swipe at previous Dikshit Government for its "copy-paste" work.

"Congress leaders might have gone abroad and copied the BRT and pasted it in Delhi without proper planning which was a dangerous work. Even cheating requires application of mind... The concept of BRT is not bad. In several countries, BRT corridors are there and there is also a dedicated lane for buses. But, there is a proper system before introducing such project," Sisodia had said.

'Obscene' talk claims Kerala **Minister's scalp**

VR JAYARAJ KOCHI

In a huge embarrassment to Kerala's ten-month-old CPI(M)-led LDF Government, State Transport Minister AK Saseendran of the NCP resigned from his position on Sunday after allegations of misconduct with an unidentified woman surfaced against him.

Saseendran's resignation came after a newly launched Malayalam TV news channel on Monday morning telecast an audio clip, which it claimed was the recording of a conversation between him and a woman, in which he was heard making sexually explicit comments. The NCP leader is the Minister to quit the LDF Government since it assumed charge in May last.

The woman, with whom Saseendran was having the lewd conversation as per the channel's claim, had reportedly approached him for some favours. However, no woman has made any complaint against Saseendran, who has got trapped in the scandal just when the State has been witnessing a spurt in incidents Continued on Page 4

Crackdown on illegal | You can't use your mobile abattoirs raises UP meat sellers' hackles

PTI ■ LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

Meat sellers across Uttar Pradesh would go on an indefinite strike from Monday against the crackdown on illegal slaughterhouses. Fish vendors were also claimed to have resolved to join the stir which has led to non-vegetarian delicacies going off the menu in several parts of the State.

"We have decided to intensify our strike from tomorrow. All shops will remain closed. Fish sellers too have joined us and are extending support to us," Lucknow Bakra Gosht Vypar Mandal office-bearer Mubeen Qureshi said.

Qureshi said, in the wake of the crackdown, there was no question of the strike being called off anytime soon. "It will go on indefinitely," he said.

Due to the strike, non-vegetarian food outlets, including the famous Tunday and Rahim's, have shifted to mutton and chicken dishes after buffalo meat became scarce. "The meat sellers are piqued over the crackdown on slaughter houses which has adversely hit the livelihood of lakhs of people," Qureshi said.

After coming to power, the Aditya Nath Yogi Government has ordered closure of illegal slaughterhouses and strict enforcement of the ban on cow smuggling to fulfil a key BJP's electoral promise. As the mouth-watering kebabs

We have decided to intensify our strike from tomorrow. All shops will remain closed. Fish sellers too have joined us and are extending support to us

- MUBEEN QURESHI OF **LUCKNOW BAKRA GOSHT** VYPAR MANDAL

went off the platter, the owner of another famous eatery said the situation might force the Delhi. "But there will be no compromise on the quality of the food," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

At the same time, he supported the closure of illegal slaughterhouses in the State, saying it was difficult for a common man to pass through a locality where the slaughterhouses were operating almost openly.

He also alleged that the ille-

gal abattoirs even indulged in slaughtering dogs. Replying to a question, he said, "This is not a religious issue. In fact, it is directly linked to the health of people, who have the right to good quality of meat and fish." Meanwhile, BJP national

spokesman Sambit Patra said in Delhi that the Government Continued on Page 4

without eKYC via Aadhaar New Delhi: All existing subscribers (pre-paid and post-

scribers of mobile services will have to go for Aadhaar-based re-verification soon, with the Government instructing telecom operators to initiate the

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said its members may meet this week to discuss the modalities of rolling out the verification process for the existing one billion-plus mobile phone users. .All licencees shall re-ver-

ify all existing mobile sub-

paid) through Aadhaar-based eKYC process...," a notification issued by the telecom department said. It further added that all

licencees will have to inform existing subscribers — through advertisements in print and electronic media as well as SMS — about the order of the Supreme Court for re-verification activity. They have also been asked to upload the details of the exercise on their website.

Continued on Page 4

2 terrorists killed; cop's AK-47 snatched

KHURSHEED WANI/MOHIT **KANDHARI** ■ SRINAGAR/JAMMU

Hours after police shot dead two local terrorists of the banned militant outfit Hizbul Mujahideen in an encounter at Padgampora village in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, suspected terrorists on Sunday night attacked ancestral home of State MoS for Haj Farooq Ahmad Andrabi in South Kashmir's Anantnag district,

leaving one policeman injured. A self-loading rifle, which was snatched by the terrorists a few months ago from a policeman at a picket, was recovered from the possession of the slain terrorists in Padgampora village.

Earlier on Saturday night, in the first incident of weaponsnatching in Jammu, two



Security forces personnel rush to the spot where terrorists ambushed police officers at Padgampora in Pulwama district of south Kashmir on Sunday

vouths from Kashmir valley managed to run away with AK-47 of a policeman. Following this, a high alert was sounded in and around Jammu ahead of the PM's visit on April 2 to inaugurate the country's longest

road tunnel between Chenani and Nashri.

Meanwhile, in south Kashmir, soon after the encounter of the Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists took place, shops were closed in

Awantipora and Pulwama as police and paramilitaries were deployed in strength to prevent a flare-up in the area.

Inspector-General of Police (Kashmir Range) Javed Gillani told reporters that a police party was on the way from Pulwama to Awantipora when a group of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists in a Maruti car fired at them near Padgampora. The police returned the fire and two militants were killed in the gun battle. Sources said a third terrorist involved in the attack managed to escape.

The two slain terrorists have been identified as Shahbaz Shafi Wani alias Rayees Kachroo, a resident of Beloo Rajpora Pulwama and Farooq Ahmad Hurrah, resident of Naizneenpora Shopian.

Continued on Page 4

Hi-tech bid to restore Rashtrapati Bhawan's pristine glory

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to restore Rashtrapati Bhawan and send a strong message about the importance of preserving and protecting the country's glorious heritage, an ambitious conservation plan is in the offing. The Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, has conducted a 3D laser scan for conservation of this 88year-old building and is expected to submit it to the Rashtrapati Bhawan secretariat by April 30.

Based on the 3D laser scan survey report, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) will prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for its restoration. A team of over 40 experts in the field of conservation, urban design, landscape, disaster management, infrastructure, and services sectors, among others has been engaged

for preparing the report.

Top sources told *The Pioneer* that the DPR on the data points in a three-dimensional coordinate system. These conservation plan will strictpoints are usually defined by X, ly follow architect Edwin Y, and Z coordinates, and often

IIT-Roorkee has conducted a 3D laser scan for conservation of the 88-year-old **President House and is expected** to submit the report by April 30

Lutyens' original plan.
"The DPR will highlight
damages and cracks in
Rashtrapati Bhawan in the past 88 years. It will also explain the

cost of conservation. It will further stress the importance and need for continuous maintenance to conserve the heritage characteristics of Rashtrapati Bhawan precincts," said officials. For the uninitiated, 3D

laser scanning is a way to capture a physical object's exact size and shape into a computer as a digital 3-dimensional representation. 3D laser scanners measure fine details and capture free-form shapes to quickly generate highly accurate point clouds. A point cloud is a set of

are intended to represent the external surface of an object.

Sources said that the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) would execute the plan under supervision of INTACH. The CPWD looks after the Rashtrapati Bhawan development projects. However, the function and other programmes hosted by Rashtrapati Bhawan would not be affected during conservation.

The Comprehensive Master Plan for Conservation of Rashtrapati Bhawan was finalised in 2014. It is divided in two parts. The first part will focus on the President's Estate and Phase II will address the issues related to the main Rashtrapati Bhawan building. Officials of INTACH said

the vagaries of time for the past 88 years, but not without a fair bit of wear and tear. To help the palace retain its glory in years on the condition of anonymito come, it needs a proper ty, "The red and ochre sandconservation plan? stone, and the spacious rooms

and halls of Rashtrapati Bhawan

Bhawan as a Grade 1 heritage building defines the limits of on Raisina Hill have withstood The status of Rashtrapati ing heritage' building which

intervention to conserve the building and the site. It also accommodates the highest office of the Government, including the residence of the President. This makes it a 'liv-

creates genuine needs to cater to its efficient functioning. Built in 1929, the four-storey Rashtrapati Bhawan has 340

rooms spread over a floor area of 2,00,000 square feet or 350 acres of land and the building itself covers an area of five acres Continued on Page 4

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Multi-pronged approach to end traffic woes needed: Cops

In order to handle the complex traffic management system of the national Capital where traffic snarls are reported every now and then during the day, the Delhi Traffic Police have undertaken a multipronged approach to deal with the choc-a-block situation. In comparison to the fixed road length, the vehicular movement has exponentially grown over the past five decades.

Over the past many years, Delhi roads have seen not only experienced an increase in the number of vehicles but also in the types of vehicles.

At present, there are 17 types of vehicles which occupy the space on Delhi roads. Ranging from DTC buses to private buses, the list includes motorcycles, bicycles, bikes, cars, High Goods Vehicle, Low Goods Vehicle, cycle rickshaws,

(three seater auto rickshaw), trucks, mini tempos also known as Vikram, the new entrant commonly in use is e-rickshaws. With these many vehicles blocking the city roads, the problem of traffic management indeed becomes a complex issue to deal with.

Mostly under attack by the common man who feels stranded in the traffic jams for hours, the Delhi Traffic Police said that their sole responsibility is fulfilling the twin principle of handling the movement of traffic as well as issuing challans to vehicle owners who break traffic rules.

Talking to The Pioneer, Ajay Kashyap, Special Commissioner of Police (Traffic) said, "To deal with the traffic situation in Delhi, the onus to handle the traffic lies solely on the Delhi Traffic Police. However, the depart-

objectives: prosecution and managing the movement of traffic. Issues like frequent breakdowns of buses and other vehicles result from multiple factors like lack of engineering and planning on the part of land-owning agencies such as DDA, MCD, PWD, CPWD and in cases of maintaining highways like NH8 and NH24, the duty lies with the NHAI. Therefore, to deal with the traffic mess of the city, we have to come together and work towards strengthening the road

fic norms. Talking about the long term solutions to deal with the frequent traffic jams in the city, another senior traffic police officer said, "We have identified nearly 77 stretches which face traffic congestion in the city. Out of these total 77 stretches, 28

infrastructure along with the

proper implementation of traf-

corridors witnessing bottleneck situation have been identified and the Delhi Traffic Police department has prepared proposals on how to ease off traffic in these congested roads."

"We have prepared a number of proposals about building under pass bridges or roads near the arterial roads of the Ring Road and the Outer Ring Road to ease out congestion. The traffic police is undermined in terms of staff shortage yet we are working round the clock and updating about traffic jam updates on social media sites such as facebook and twitter," said a senior traffic officer.

Majority of the traffic starts building up at the national highways which witnesses massive entry of heavy loaded trucks. This in turn has a cascading effect on the traffic across various parts of the city. It is the traffic jams on Ring Road and



Outer Ring Road which affects the movement of traffic on circular parts of the city.

The volume of vehicles in the city touched approximately 1 crore last year. With the rapid rise in the volume of vehicles moving in the city, the road length is four times less than the volume of traffic on the Delhi roads. According to the Ministry of Road Transport

scope of lateral growth in roads. In light of the rapid increase in the volume of cars and 16 other types of vehicles in the city, the number of motor vehi-

up to 50 times in the past five decades (from 1971-2011), while the road length is more

Fake cop nabbed for cheating commuters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

 T^{o} make quick money, disguised as a traffic policeman, a 21-year-old man was found to be prosecuting general public in the area of Old Delhi on Saturday.

"Standing at the traffic red light near the Old Delhi Railway station for nearly a week, an alert ASI spotted Vicky dressed as a policeman and talking to a man. Suspicious about his body language, the ASI Rajeev Chaudhary checked him and found out that Vicky, a native of Gonda district in Uttar Pradesh had been making money by cheating the common man. This, the accused, a Class XII dropout and unemployed confessed that he used this method to earn money since the common man generally lives in fear of the police in Delhi," said a senior police officer.

Delhi Police arrested a man

🗖 The accused Vicky, a 21-year-old, class XII dropout, is a native of Gonda district in UP

He had been standing at the traffic red light near the Old Delhi Railway Station for nearly a week. An alert ASI spotted Vicky and suspicious about his body language, the ASI Rajeev Chaudhary checked him and found him to be a fraudster

who impersonated as a Traffic police personnel and issued challans to the commuters. Police said that the incident came to light on Saturday when an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) posted at the Old Delhi Railway station exit gate saw a man dressed as a traffic policemen asking for challan from a commuter in North Delhi's Kotwali area.

"The ASI went up to the man and asked him to show his Identity card. The man took out the ID card as well as a PIS (Police Identity Series) number.

On inspection, both these documents were found to be fabricated. The man, identified as Vicky Bharat was apprehended and handed over to the local police," said Jatin Narwal, Deputy Commissioner of Police (North).

During questioning, Vicky confessed that he bought the uniform of the police from a shop in Kingsway Camp.
Police said that the man

has been arrested under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code at the Kotwali police station.

World's smallest NH on Sohna Road

STAFF REPORTER

The Haryana Public Works (Buildings and Roads) Minister, Rao Narbir Singh, has said that Haryana would soon have the widest and smallest National Highway in the world.

It would be 16-lane-wide

and the total length of the national highway to be built on Sohna road would be just three

Disclosing this while redressing the grievances of people at Gurugram on Saturday, Rao Narbir Singh said the Detailed Project Report of the proposed elevated highway costing about ₹700 crore, had already been prepared. The Union Road Transport and Highways Minister, Nitin Gadkari, would lay the foundation stone of this road next month, the minister said.

Both Northern Peripheral and Southern Peripheral would be the widest 16-lane roads in the world. Metro service has also been proposed on these

It would be 16-lane-wide and the total length of the elevated highway to be **built on Sohna** Road would be just 3 kms

roads and every metro station to be constructed on these roads would have parking facility for 500 cars.

Concerted efforts were being made to connect the Huda City Centre metro line to Subhash Chowk, the Minister

The move will especially benefit sectors 33, 66 and 67, Islampur, Badshahpur, Bhondsi, Jharsa, Sohna and Sohna road is a part of

Sohna-Alwar Highway and more than 45,000 vehicles travel every day on the stretch. The elevated road project is expected to start by August this year.

Unclogging MG Road: 500 challans issued on Day 1

STAFF REPORTER

In its bid to decongest MG road from illegal parking and encroachments, Gurugram traffic police have launched a drive to prosecute the erring vehicles. Over 500 challans were issued on the very first day. Besides challans, around 40 wrongly-parked vehicles were towed away by the traffic police. The drive was carried out between 10 am to 5 pm. Senior police officers said that such intensive drive would continue for next 15 to 20 days.

The traffic decongestion plan of MG Road, is part of the joint action plan of Gurugram Police, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) and Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA).

MCG officials said that smart road means an encroachment-free road which has 'zero tolerance for illegal parking'. Both sides of the 3.5 km long stretch of the road from Sikenderpur to Iffco MC officials off to Beijing



Chowk will be made smart. For long, shoppers and

residents on MG road have been complaining about the lack of space to walk on the stretch that is usually occupied by roadside eateries and illegally parked vehicles.
"This anti-encroachment

drive will continue for the next few more weeks. We are also planning to launch similar campaigns on another busy road in the city," DCP traffic, Balbir Singh said.
"The drive will be contin-

uing from Monday as Saturday and Sunday were counted as a holiday. So our drive will continue five days in a week," he During the drive the whole

operation was covered on video so that the footage can be used as evidence against repeat offenders, a traffic cop said.

Last week the MG Road was selected as the pilot road for anti-encroachment drives. In the meeting, several areas where encroachments are rampant were discussed.

Cong MP congratulates RD public school students for their success

Congress leader and MP, Deependra Hooda, who Senior Secondary School, Krishan Vihar, congratulated students for their success. District Consumer Court Judge SC Jain and singer Ashok Masti were also present as 'Special Guests'. The school chairman and former MLA Jai Kishen and a great number of guardians were present on the occasion. In his brief address, Hooda congratulated all the successful students and thanked the school management for the invitation to the function. Hooda also hailed RD Public School chairman and former MLA Jai Kishen for his contri-

bution in the school. On this occasion, Beti Bachao play was performed by the student.

The founder and chair-Congress MLA Jai Kishen praised the parents for their cooperation as the prime input for quality education and disci-pline. Jai Kishen said that his main focus is to provide quality education to the children. He added that this school places both the parents and students in high esteem. "The school is providing education with the true spirit of non profit approach with cent per cent motivation oriented results," he said. The famous singer Ashok Masti's songs won the appreciation of the audience on the occasion.

Delhi sees warm Sunday with max temp at 35.2°C

New Delhi: It was a warm Sunday in the national Capital rose to 35.2 degrees Celsius, three notches above normal. The weatherman predicted that the mercury would rise further.

The minimum temperature was recorded at 20.8 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal, a MeT department official said.

Day temperature settled at 35.2 degrees Celsius, three notches above the season's average. By March 28-29, the temperature is likely to cross the 38 degrees Celsius mark," the official said. Humidity level oscillated between 72 and 22 per

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An 18-member delegation of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) officials on Sunday left for Beijing for a -long training stint public space management and development, planting and pruning of trees, city planning

The team comprising persons from horticulture, civil and health departments will also be acquainted with latest technology, mechanisation of horticulture and smart city facilities in the Chinese capital.

NDMC chairperson Naresh Kumar said that the delegation would interact with the officials of 29 Lian Hua chi XI LI, Feugtia district on the topics of city public roads, **STAFF REPORTER** | transportation network and

The team comprising persons from horticulture, civil and health departments will also be acquainted with latest technology, mechanization of norticulture and smart city facilities in the Chinese capital

automation of city transport including integration of traffic controls, automated ticketing and security maintenance.

He said that the other topics for interacting with 12th Xuanwumen West Street, Xicheng district of Beijing would be on supply of clean water, management of water flow, distribution, metering, segmentation of water supply, purification and monitoring.

Kumar added that the team will also visit the smart manufacturing and equipment industry division of Beijing Municipal at 6 Huixin Éast

Beijing.
The NDMC chairman who wished safe journey to the team at IGI Airport said that the delegation will also visit the site of Beijing Tourism Development Commission to

to continue with their efforts

Road, Chaoyang district of

understand ICT tools applica-tion automation including management of tourist flows, multimodal payment and gateways of ticketing and interact with the Emergency Medical mega cities, and provision of basic facilities for city dwellers. The team will also study

the clean city facilities being provided by Beijing Municipal Commission city administration, and discussions will be held on sanitation of urban streets and public areas, urban cleaning mechanisation, sanitation and waste management.

Kumar said that NDMC is planning to depute a team of officials to Dubai and Israel consisting of 12 members of horticulture and civil engineering for acquiring latest technology in these fields.

extending these scholarships is

a very humble effort to help

the grieving family in the hope that music will help fill

the void left behind.' Ankita is

the daughter of former Delhi

Police Commissioner Neeraj

piano academy that was found-

Colors of Music are the

Kumar.

7-year-old abused by neighbour in Govindpuri

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

seven-year-old girl has Aalleged that she was sexually assaulted by her neighbour at his house in Southeast Delhi's Govindpuri area more than a fortnight ago, police said on Sunday. DCP Romil Baaniya (Southeast) said that the accused, a 27-year-old e-rickshaw driver was arrested on Saturday. He has been sent to judicial custody.

According to a senior police officer, the incident came to light on Saturday when the victim, a seven-year-old girl, along with her mother came to the police station and complained that she was allegedly sexually assaulted by a neighbour 20 days ago

According to a senior police officer, the incident came to light on Saturday when the victim, a seven-year-old girl, along with her mother came to the police station and complained that she was allegedly sexually assaulted by her neighbor 20 days back.

In her complaint to the police, the victim claimed that her younger brother was witness to the sexual assault. Based on the victim's

statement, she was medically examined and a case was registered under section 376, 342

the victim, the accused, 27year-old Romi Rana was arrested on Saturday itself.

A musical tribute to Delhi Police martyrs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Students of the Colours of Music, a piano academy regaled connoisseurs by paying musical tributes to the martyrs of Delhi Police who fell in the line of duty. Students from the age of 7 to 60 years of age played lilting tunes for the family members of the martyrs. The concert was a refreshing change especially for the families of officers and heroes of the Delhi Police.

Music was created on the piano by students like 7 year old Hrishik Malhotra who played "I Had a Dream" and "Oh When the Saints" and in equal measure by the 55 year old Nirmala Goyal who paid her tribute to the martyrs with "Ek pyaar Ka Naghma and Jeena Jeena". Saisha Khanna and Sarah Jain did a sister act as Saisha played "Dheeme Dheeme Gaon (Zubeida)" and Sarah did a Kathak performance in remembrance of the



Entrepreneur Priyaanka Berry and home-maker Meenu Malhotra paid their tributes with lilting num-

tening for the audiences.

Ankita Kumar the brain behind the academy rounded ping Darling (Saat Khoon Maaf), Jaago Mohan Pyaare (Jaagte Raho) and the Nagin

Anurradha Prasad, a leading personality in the media world encouraged the students

and lauded the academy's initiatives. Suchana Patnaik, the of Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik) and Shubhra Yadav the wife of DG Prisons Sudhir Yadav represented the Delhi Police and spoke of the importance of remembering heroes of the force who are seldom remembered by a public that rarely recognizes their sacrifices. They encouraged the students and congratulated Ankita on her efforts.

With this concert, Ankita Kumar opened scholarships to children of the martyrs of the Delhi Police who can learn the piano free of cost at the academy. 'Being from a police family, I believe it is my duty to extend any assistance I can to the heroes of this great force that is only criticized and targeted no matter what good it does. More police personnel are dying in the line of duty today than ever before and

ed by Ankita Kumar in 2011. She is an international pianist and is the recipient of the Sanatan Sangeet Sanskriti Award. Since its inception it has trained scored of students in the piano from all ages and all walks of life. The academy

conducts an annual concert dedicated to the martyrs of the Delhi Police and has honoured heroes like Subhash Chand who lost his life after the Nirbhaya Protests in the capital. With its latest concert, the academy has opened its doors to the families of the Delhi Police martyrs who are entitled

to free music learning at the

and 506 of the Indian Penal Code and 6 of the POCSO Act. Following the complaint of

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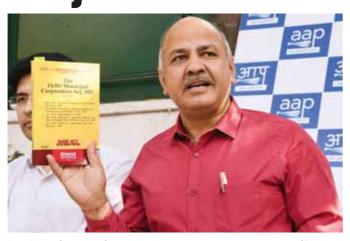
'Inspector raj to end with house tax abolition'

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Sunday that the "inspector raj" prevailing in the BJP-ruled civic bodies will end with the abolition of house tax, a promise made by his AAP ahead of the municipal polls.

Hailing the announcement made by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Sisodia said that BJP and the Congress should not worry as common man is happy with the promise of abolition of house tax which, he alleged, has become a source of widespread corruption for councillors and officers.

"We have seen reactions of the BJP and the Congress. Both parties should not worry about the promise made by the AAP (Aam Aadmi Party). Common man is happy with the announcement. Like we halved electricity bills and gave free water to 12.5 lakh people, we will also abolish house tax," he said in a press conference.

Terming the BJP as "Bhartiya Jumla Party", Sisodia said it has turned into a party which turns away from its promises and alleged that the saffron party which ruled



Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia addresses a Press conference on upcoming MCD elections in New Delhi on Sunday

the MCDs for 10 years is worried because a racket of property tax and "inspector raj" will be finished.

"They are worried because abolishing of house taxes will mean finishing of middlemen and corruption in the civic bodies. The house tax has given rise to inspector raj system in corporations which will be finished if AAP comes to power," he said.

Giving an example, Sisodia said at present if a property tax

dues is ₹10,000 of a person then a

broker in a racket will take ₹2,000

and tries to settle the dues. "Both the BJP and the Congress gave similar reactions when we said that electricity bills will be halved and free water will be given. We successfully did it when we came to power and now

we come to power in MCDs," he said. He reacted sharply to the comment by Opposition leaders that for abolishing house tax, the Delhi Municipal Act has to be amended by the Parliament.

"For abolishing house tax in Delhi we do not need to go to Parliament. It was before 1993 that amendments were made to the Act by Parliament but after that the amendments in the act and even the last one in 2011 were made without going to the parliament," he said, adding that rumours are being spread to mislead people.

The Deputy Chief Minister

said that his party had studied and analysed the impact before the announcement was made on Saturday by the Chief Minister and that the party would ensure that electricity tariffs are not hiked and water and medicines are provided free of cost at government hospitals.

Sisodia said lots of good things have happened during the two-year rule of the AAP in Delhi and common man is now happy that they are getting free medicines in Government hospitals and parents of children are applauding us for

On Saturday, in a major poll promise, Kejriwal had announced that house tax will be abolished and pending dues will be waived if the Aam Aadmi Party emerges victorious in the municipal elections.

Kejriwal called the current house fax structure as "draconian", and alleged that it has become a source of widespread corruption for municipal councillors and officers in all three civic bodies where BJP is in power for the last 10 years.

There are an estimated nine lakh property tax payers in the city and about ₹600 crore in revenue is earned annually by the three civic bodies, according to official

Civic polls are to be held on April 23 and are seen as a crucial test of AAP's popularity in the city after its "disappointing" performance in Punjab and Goa Assembly polls.

With zero house tax poll promise, it is clear that the Âam Aadmi Party, which had a stunning victory in Delhi in 2015, is again banking on populist measures to

Four masked robbers take away ₹28L from Patparganj company

robbers barged into a private goods delivery company office in East Delhi's Patparganj industrial area and robbed the company of ₹28 lakh cash on Saturday evening.

R Sathiyasaisunduram, Additional DCP 1 (East) told The Pioneer, "The robbers held the employees on gunpoint, ransacked the entire office and decamped with ₹28 lakh in cash. When the security guard tried to resist them from fleeing, one of the robbers attacked him with his pistol's butt."

Police have registered a case under Section 394 and 392 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at the Madhu Vihar police station against unknown persons.

They suspect the involvement of an insider' behind the crime, as the robbers knew where the cash was kept and first targeted the cash box only. Also, the entire crime was committed within two minutes.

"In the preliminary investigation, we assume that the robbery has been committed with the help of an insider.

accused took away the DVR so that their identity is not established. Moreover, they all were wearing helmets," said a senior investigator.

A senior police officer said that the company has tie-up with several e-commerce companies and delivers online booked goods to the clients' homes on behalf of the e-commerce companies. The day's collection amount is counted in the evening and is deposited in the bank account the next morning, the officer said.

On Saturday evening, four masked men armed with firearms and batons entered the company office. When the guard tried to stop them on the reception area, he was assaulted by one of the men. They went inside and held all employees hostage on gunpoint.

"One of them reached the cash counter, took out the entire cash and put them in a bag. They left the premises within 2 minutes," said the officer adding they have prepared a list of working and former employees of the company.

'Officers' extort cash from people under 'CBI' probe

ts straight from the Bollwood Its straight from the Land and of flick "Special 26" as a gang of ingenious cheats created an email and impersonated as top ranked CBI officers and threatened their targets to deposit money in a special account. The people behind this gang were familiar with the functioning of the CBI as they knew the details of people being investigated by the agency in some big cases.

Alarmed after getting the information about the modus operandi of this gang, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered an FIR against unknown persons for allegedly cheating people by impersonating as top ranked CBI officers and using computers as their resources for

running their nefarious activities. The unidentified accused persons had created fake email account in name of CBI, opened a bank account, and issued summons to various people, who are being investigated by the agency, in a bid to extort money from them.

The FIR was registered at Economic Offences Unit after two months internal probe by the agency's top investigators. Sources said that the matter came to light on January 10 of this year. Seasoned investigators were put on job to identify the people and also their modus operandi.

The FIR has been lodged the statement of a Superintendent of Police (SP) level officer States and it states that they received information in Delhi and other places about some unknown persons

pretending to be the CBI officers who were sending summons to people by a fictitious email account.

"In order to cheat the public by personating CBI, the suspects by means of the aforesaid email ID were allegedly sending mails to various people and threatening them to pay purported statutory fees for clearances (in the cases against them)," the FIR stated. The accused also threat-

ened the victims stating that their bank accounts of the victims will be confiscated. "The defrauded amount were allegedly received into the account opened in State Bank of India," the FIR stated.

'They impersonated as top officials of CBI, including the Director and they were involved in illegal activities," sources said. They even sent

also threatened them to deposit money in the bank accounts to escape being punished.
"Interestingly, the accused

were well versed with the cases in which the victims were involved," said the sources adding that the few victims involved in high profile cases were duped in the name of Director CBI. During two months internal probe, the investigators could find that the said domain of the email ID was registered with M/s Ascio Technologies by Mike Brown with address of Chattarpur

Marg in Delhi.
"Sleuths are probing the gamut of this fraud as the people involved in this well organised gang appeared to be well versed with the functioning of the agency", the sources further

Police nab man for stealing 100 mobiles

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aperfect "chor-police" scene was played out in real life when a team of Delhi Police on patrolling duty nabbed a man who had stolen more than a hundred mobile phones from a shop in Prem Nagar area and was trying to flee in a stolen car on the intervening night of March 24

The incident was reported in Central Delhi's Patel Nagar where the alert PCR staff consisting of Sub-Inspector Manmeet and Constable Jawahar caught a member of a five member gang of thieves red-handed in a dramatic way.

A senior police officer said, The gang of five men struck at an electronics shop in Prem Nagar on late night of March 24. They came in a grey Santro car and had broken the shutters of the shop and decamped with 3 LED TVs and 110 mobile phones.

While the men were leaving the shop in their grey car, a PCR van on patrolling duty saw them. In the meantime, a passerby, who was trying to take out his car managed to block the way of the thieves in

With the help of the locals, the PCR staff managed to overpower one accused, Rahul while the four other managed to escape.
It was a difficult situation

since all the accused were carrying pistols. The two policemen somehow managed to overpower Rahul and apprehended him.

Police sources said that they suspect the involvement of the Mewati gang behind the

On inspection, a countrymade pistol along with the stolen booty was recovered from the possession of the accused. Police said that they have registered a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at the Patel Nagar police station. Further Investigation is underway.

3-yr-old girl dies after falling into water tank

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Athree-year-old girl drowned in an underground water tank in Southeast Delhi's Sangam Vihar area on Sunday afternoon. According to the police, the deceased, Alfia was playing near her house in the C-Block area of JJ Colony in Tigri when she allegedly went around in her neighbour's place and fell into the tank. DCP Romil Baaniya

(Southeast) said that a case under Section 304A (causing death due to negligence) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at the Sangam Vihar police station against the neighbour and owner of the underground tank. Police said that the incident

came to light at around 3.15 pm on Sunday when they received a PCR call from Batra hospital about a minor girl dying due to

A couple of minutes ago, we have received a PCR call at around 2.55 pm about a threeyear-old girl missing from her house since 1 pm. Massive the family of the minor girl and her neighbours, said police.

"It was the neighbour who found the body of Alfia floating in the underground water tank. We have sent the body for post-mortem. Further probe is

Civic polls: Cong comes with roadmap to make Delhi beautiful solid waste management, is dumped in overflowing land-

CHANDAN PRAKASH

head of municipal polls, Aneau of manner I came out with a detailed roadmap to make Delhi the "cleanest and most beautiful" city in the world. It releases a draft "Clean Delhi, Breathe Delhi" to revive sanitation situation.

plan unveiled within a month. The draft was released by former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh, and Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) president Ajay Maken as the party is eyeing on a comeback in the civic elections after



severe drubbing in the last Delhi Assembly elections.

Senior party leader and former environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said, "The roadmap will remain a mere dream if the three municipal corporations do not become finan-

cially self-sufficient in two years." "When he raised the slogan "Pehle Shauchalaya Phir Devalaya" he was "mocked", but now the Modi Government is also aiming to make the coun-

try open defecation free," he said. The four landfill sites in the

city, where 40 per cent of 9,000 metric ton solid waste is dumped every day, are the "most dangerous" places in the national Capital in terms of health, particularly for children,

Ramesh said. "If the party wins the civic

polls, it will make the municipal corporations self-reliant in two vears and develop Delhi as the cleanest and most beautiful city in the world," Delhi Congress chief Ajay Maken said.

Maken further said that the Congress party's roadmap for Solid Waste Management is intended to address the problem of the three MCDs across Delhi.

Control Committee (DPCC) report, the North MCD produces 4,200 tonnes, South MCD produces 2,850 tonnes and the East MCD produces 2,200 tonnes of garbage daily. Of this, more than 40% of garbage remains untreated and

fills at Narela-Bawana, Bhalaswa, Okhla and Ghazipur. He said these landfills pose both long-term and poses immediate safety risks to local residents, particularly children. The poor waste management has also led to significant disease outbreak in Delhi in the last few years," he said.

the AAP, he said over 60,000 sanitation workers in Delhi were not paid salaries on time even as the ruling BJP at the Centre is promoting 'Swachhch Bharat'.

The blue print to make Delhi a "fully sanitised city" is based on decentralisation of enhanced public awareness and to incentivise sanitation initiatives through property tax rebates and additional FAR (floor area ratio), Maken said. The Delhi Congress chief

blamed the Centre and the Delhi Government for poor condition of sanitation in the national Capital.

Bharat Mission is being mocked the most in the city where he lives. Also, sanitation workers in Delhi were forced to go on strikes five times in last two years over non-payment of salaries even though the ruling AAP's poll symbol is a broom," he said.

Reality check before civic polls: Most wards lack amenities

CHANDAN PRAKASH

Municipal elections are to be held on April 23. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress will be contesting to take reins of the three municipal corporations. The Pioneer visited wards represented by the senior leaders of BJP and Congress to see whether people are getting civic amenities alongwith developmental works or not. Reality is that these wards woefully lack amenities and their representatives have done precious little to ameliorate the problems faced by the citizens.

What is even more surprising is the fact that in most of these wards, projects were sanctioned just two weeks before the "model code of conduct" was promulgated across the national Capital.

Ward number 21, 49, 11, 57, 109, 105, 13, 11 are being represented by well known names in political arena of Delhi. These wards lack proper sewerage and water disposal system. Besides, poor sanitation and pathetic condition of parks, roads in the wards tell the story of systematic neglect. Residents also complained of erratic water supply in the wards.

Poor maintenance of parks and pathetic conditions of the service roads, lack of de-silting work in storm water drains and improper disposal of waste, choked drains are some of the problems faced by the residents. As the thoroughfares are

narrow, the municipality vehicles are unable to enter the streets for door-to-door collection of garbage.

These all the wards that is ruled by leaders like Pravesh Wahi, Standing Committee Chairman, North MCD, Vijay Prakash Pandey, Leader of House, North MCD, Shyam Sharma, South Mayor, Subhash Arya, Leader of house, South Corporation and Mukesh Goel, Leader of Opposition to North.

The development in ward number 109 (Mayor Shyam Sharma's ward) Janakpuri has started picking the pace just before code of conduct was announced by State Election Commission. The sewer pipeline is being laid in Nangli Jalib village in Janakpuri and inner roads that have not been repaired for years are being reconstructed.

Jaideep Rana, a resident, said, "It is disappointing that development is being carried out in our ward just before the election to woo the voters.

The drains have not been de-silted for years. In the evening, mosquitoes buzz about in large numbers. The Municipality has failed to desilt the drains and control the pest population," he added. Similarly in ward number

21 of Pravesh Wahi in Rohini, is choked with sewerage and poor sanitation. "Many people in this mohalla were admitted last year because of dengue and chikungunia, said Sunita Chaudhari. "The mosquito menace has reached unprece-



dented levels and we are tired as nothing happen after several request, she added

Pawan Kumar, a resident, said, "The park situated in the ward is crying for attention. Benches installed in the park are lying in a state of neglect. People now have started throwing garbage in parks.

Parks in ward number 49 (Vijay Prakash Pandey) are used mainly to dry up the clothes, causing inconvenience to residents. Some of the main parks were maintained beautifully but the inner parks were even not in condition to sit or walk. The residents dump the trash on the road as garbage pickup van comes after every fifteen days. The garbage on the road is not picked resulting in the choked sewer drains, making it a permanent breeding ground for mosquitoes. "The roads become a swimming pool when it rains. The road has not been laid for

years," the residents said. Ward number 13 (Dhirpur) is represent by Mukesh Goel,

the Leader of Opposition in North MCD is an exception. The inner roads are well maintained and all the problems of people addressed by the Councilor. Although there are not any good parks due to unplanned settlement but on sanitation measures a lot has been done. Surjeet Sahni, a resident of Dhirpur said that the councilor is a frequent visitor

and he listens to everyone care-

fully and addresses the issues. Political pundits say the municipal elections in Delhi are litmus test for the BJP that has been ruling corporations for the last 10 years. BJP has tried to beat the anti-incumbency factor by fielding fresh faces in all the 272 wards. AAP is not leaving any stone unturned to wrest control from the BJP while Congress is yet to gather steam. All eyes are no fixed for the results that will be declared on April 27. What remains to be seen whether Arvind Kejriwal led AAP can repeat its magic of 2015 or BJP

will come up trumps, they added.







Indian cabbie 'racially' abused, assaulted in Oz

n Indian man was alleged-Aly assaulted by a group of teenagers, including a girl, who hurled racial abuses at him at a restaurant in Australia's Tasmania State, a week after a Catholic priest of Indian heritage was stabbed in the neck at a church in Melbourne.

Li Max Joy, who is pursuing a nursing course and working as a part time taxi driver in Australia, alleged that five persons including a girl hurled racial abuses like "you bloody black Indians" at him and assaulted him up at the McDonald's restaurant at North Hobart.

Thirty three-year-old Joy, who hails from Puthuppally in Kerala's Kottayam district, told PTI that the incident took place when he went to the restaurant for a coffee after returning from a trip.

He alleged that the five accused were arguing with a worker inside the store but

Pak detains

for violating

PTI ■ KARACHI/AHMEDABAD

More than 100 Indian fishermen were arrested and

19 of their boats seized on

Sunday by Pakistan for allegedly fishing in their ter-

ritorial waters off Gujarat

coast, Pakistani officials

and a fishermen association in

Security Agency (PMSA)

arrested the fishermen and

seized the boats off Jakhau

coast in Kutch district. A

PMSA spokesman confirmed

the fishermen and the boats

had been handed over to the

local police for further action.

The fishermen would be pre-

sented in a court on Monday

and from there the judicial

magistrate would send them

to jail as per the procedure, according to a police official.

this routine now as these

Indian fishermen get arrested

illegally fishing in our waters

every month or so," the offi-

"We have become used to

Maritime

territory

India said.

Pakistan

100 fishermen

Joy alleged that the five accused were arguing with a worker inside the store but soon turned their attention to him the moment they noticed him

soon turned their attention to him the moment they noticed him. When others in the restaurant telephoned police, the attackers left, but they returned later and assaulted

Joy was admitted to Royal Hobart Hospital with bleeding wounds. He was later discharged from hospital and he reported the incident to police.

"They were angry at the McDonald's staff but turned their anger on me in the car parking and then inside the

Joy, who has been living in Hobart for the last eight years, was quoted as saying bythe Australian media that "The racial mood is changing. It is continuous now. Many drivers have been abused but not everyone reports it to the police."

Joy has sought intervention of External Affairs Ministry to ensure punishment to the accused. He alleged that there was no serious efforts from the authorities to bring the guilty to justice.

Meanwhile, Kottayam Lok Sabha MP Jose K Mani condemned the incident and said he will raise the issue with the External Affairs Ministry On March 20, an Indian-

origin Catholic priest was stabbed in the neck at a church in Melbourne by a man who called him unqualified to say mass as he was an Indian, prompting the Indian consulate to take up the matter

give collegium reasons

The Supreme Court collegium refused to accept the proposal of the executive's right to reject its recommendation for appointment of a judge on the ground of national security as the Government refused to give the reasons for rejection in writing.

Though the Government is learnt to have held several rounds of discussion with the Chief Justice of India to convince him to accept the national security clause in the proposed Memorandum of Procedure, it was rejected as the government is learnt to have insisted that it would not give anything in writing if a candidate's name is rejected over national security.

Sources said Government was only willing to share the intelligence report on the concerned candidate with the CJI and not the collegium of five top judges of the Apex Court.

India's new envoy

The collegium, on the other hand, was of the view that if the Government gave the reasons in writing, the charges could be verified through independent sources.

Seeking to convince the collegium to accept the national security and public interest clauses, the Government had said so far it had not rejected any recommendation on national security issue. It had told the collegium that in the future too, the clause will be invoked sparingly. But since the Government was not ready to give the reasons for rejecting a recommendation on national security consideration, the collegium rejected it.

The body of five seniormost judges of the SC headed by the Chief Justice of India has made it clear that if the Government has objections on the ground of national security and public interest, it will convey the same to the collegium. The collegium will then take a final call, sources said.

Preparations underway for the "Namami

Judges' rejection: SC | No out-of-court settlement rejects Govt's refusal to with Modi: Babri committee

The Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC) on Sunday said an out-of-court settlement of the Ayodhya dispute was not possible with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Aditya Nath Yogi at the helm of affairs.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Aditya

Nath Yogi at the helm of affairs, there is no hope that justice will prevail with the Muslims. The BMAC meeting was

held against the backdrop of the Apex Court recently asking Both of them have been BJP workers and supporters of Ram temple movement," BMAC convenor Zafaryab Iilani said after a meeting of its

office bearers here. Earlier the PM used to be "neutral" on the contentious issue, he said. Jilani said the solution to the Babri Masjid title suit can be arrived only

parties involved to sit together and arrive at a consensus on the issue, which has been drag-ging on for decades. The BMAC office bearers were also of the view that if the Chief Justice of India or any other judge took an initiative to find a solution to the issue, the Muslims would certainly support the move.

Nepal President to visit India

Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari will visit India from April 17, her first official foreign trip after assuming office in 2015. The President's Office has confirmed her India visit, though the detail itinerary of the visit is yet to be made public.

Bhandari, Nepal's first woman President, is visiting India at the invitation of her Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee. During the visit, she

will meet President Mukherjee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, Home Minister Rajnath Singh and other leaders, said Madan Kumar Bhattarai, Foreign Relations Adviser to Bhandari. Bhandari will also visit Varanasi, where she will attend a function at the Banaras Hindu University.

"Some agreements as a gesture of friendly relations between the two countries is likely to be sealed during her visit," he said.

INBRIEF

'CAN EXCHANGE ₹4,500 IN OLD NOTES IN NEPAL' Kathmandu: The RBI will allow exchange of up to ₹4,500 in banned Indian currency notes to each Nepali national, a visiting team of the Indian central bank here hinted on Sunday. The Indian proposal has sent waves of nervousness among the Nepali public as India had earlier allowed Nepali citizens to possess up to Indian

BKU LEADER PISHORA SINGH DIES AT 75 Fatehgarh Sahib: The national

₹25,000 each.

president of Bhartiya Kisan Union (Sidhupur Ekta) Pishora Singh Sidhupur on Sunday died of cardiac arrest here. He was 75. According to his family, the farmer leader had gone to attend a function at Rajpura and after returning, he went to his room. But when the family members went to his room. they found him dead. They suspected that he died of heart attack. He will be cremated at his native village Sidhupur near Sirhind on March 27



run at Sundaraiah Park in Hyderabad

Objective is to rid of casteism, graft, Cong: Amit Shah

 $B^{\text{JP} \text{ president Amit Shah on}}_{\text{Sunday said the key objec-}}$ tive of his party is to build a strong India, which is "free from casteism, corruption, regionalism and the Congress".

The objective is to build a strong India which is free from casteism, corruption, regionalism as well as the Congress. The party workers will dedicatedly contribute towards achieving this target," he said. Shah was addressing BJP

workers on the concluding day of the three-day State-level 'Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Shatabdi Karyakarta Vistar' workshop here.

He said the BJP plans to expand its footprint in the birth centenary year of Jana Sangh ideologue Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay and is observing the birth centenary year of Upadhyay as the year of the party's national work the grassroots-level.



"Therefore, the workers will have to shoulder the responsibility of expanding the party's base at the grassroots level," he was quoted as saying in a BJP release.

The event was not open to the media. Shah said it was of paramount importance to the BIP and the scheme would succeed only with the utmost dedication of the party workers. He also called upon party workers to take the policies and programmes of the BJP as well as the Haryana government to

to Nepal submits credentials to President

Kathmandu: India's new envoy to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri on Sunday presented his cre-dentials to President Bidya Devi Bhandari at a ceremony here. Puri met with President Bhandari at her official residence Sheetal Niwas and submitting his letters of credence, Indian Embassy here said. Puri, a 1982 batch IFS offi-

cer, was on March 10 appointed as India's 24th ambassador to Nepal. His predecessor Ranjit Rae completed his three and a half year-tenure on February 28. Before being assigned to Kathmandu mission, Puri, born in 1959, was India's Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Prior to Brussels, he was

India's Ambassador and Permanent Deputy Representative to the UN in New York from 2009 to 2013. He was also a senior member of India's Security Council team during the years 2011 and 2012, when India served on the Security Council.

World's largest capstone found in Telangana **PTI** ■ HYDERABAD A large crane lifted this ¬he Archaeology Depart-

ment of Telangana has discovered the world's largest capstone after excavating an ancient human burial site in Siddipet district, officials said. "The ancient human bur-

ial site excavated by Telangana Archaeology in Narmeta village in Nangunuru mandal has led to a stunning discovery of the world's largest capstone," said D Ramulu Naik, assistant director, Archaeology Department.



sive capstone was coordinated by SS Rangacharyulu, archaeology consultant and K Padmanabha, assistant director (museums), as this mission required great precision and caution,

huge capstone at the excavation site in Narmeta village on March 21, they said adding, 'the capstone of the menhir burial reportedly weighs about

40 tonnes". The department is all set to undertake DNA test of various artefacts that have been discovered at this site which will help in tracing the lineage of pre-historic humans, their food habits, lifestyle and how their population later became extinct, officials said.

Police detain Save 'Dharna Chowk Protection Committee members after they participated in their 2K protest

You can't use your mobile...

From Page 1
The Supreme Court, in an

order in February this year, had observed that, "an effective process has been evolved to ensure the identity verification, as well as, the addresses of all mobile phone subscribers

for the new subscribers. In the near future, and more particularly within one year from today, a similar verification will be completed, in case of existing subscribers".

The telecom department

has said the operators will use and share common device ecosystem through mutual agreements, and will work out mechanisms to avoid public inconvenience and long queues.

When contacted, cellular operators association COAI said that the industry supported the move, but pointed out that the entire exercise will cost Rs 1,000 crore for infrastructure and training, which will have to be borne by the oper-

ators.
"The issue of fake subscribers will go away. We will try our best to cover the entire base within the stipulated time frame of one year but in case

an extension," COAI Director General Rajan Mathews said.

For re-verification through Aadhaar-based eKYC process, the operator will send a verification code to the mobile number of the subscriber. Prior to starting the eKYC, the operator will verify this code from

the subscriber so as to confirm the SIM card of the mobile connection is physically available with the subscriber.

"After the completion of the eKYC process, before updating or overwriting the old subscriber detail in database with the data received through eKYC process, the licencee will seek confirmation from the subscriber about the re-verification of his/her mobile number after 24 hours through SMS," the notification said.

The operator can re-verify more than one mobile connection in one service area through a single eKYC but not bulk connections. For issuing additional mobile connections to re-verified subscriber, the operator would have to follow a separate eKYC process.

Verification of a subscriber would not be required in case of conversions - that is pre-paid to postpaid connections or vice versa, it clarified.

Crackdown on illegal abattoirs raises UP meat...

From Page 1 was only following a court order as illegal abattoirs were contributing to UP's ill health by getting ground water polluted.

He claimed those running meat outlets legally and in accordance with norms were not being victimised. "There has been a court order about illegal abattoirs which was not implemented by the previous government. The State's Chief Secretary has constituted committees in each district headed by the Collector and comprising ten people each. The committee is visiting every slaughterhouse to see

if they are being run legally and submitting a report every day," Patra said.

About loss of livelihood and lack of meat in the market, Patra said," If there is large-scale disruption, the State Government will look at

it and resolve the issue.

Senior UP Congress leader Akhilesh
Pratap Singh said only small meat vendors
were being targeted during the drive. "How is it that the small shops are getting closed and meat exports are going up. The government should have made people aware of the laws and rules before launching the drive," he said.

Chief Minister Aditya Nath Yogi had on Saturday said abattoirs operating legally will not be touched but action will be taken against those run illegally. "The Government will not touch those (abattoirs) which are operating as per the provisions of law and have a valid licence. But those that are violating the orders of the NGT and playing with the health of the public would not be spared...," he had said.

Hi-tech bid to restore Rashtrapati Bhawan's...

From Page 1

Hardly any steel has gone into its construction, while 700 million bricks and three million cubic feet of stone were used. It took eight years, from 1921 to 1929, to build the 340 room red

sandstone palace.

The Chief Engineer, Hugh
Keeling and many Indian contractors were also part of its
design and construction. The total cost of building this marvelous piece of architecture was of 877,136 Pounds (Rs. 14

million). The facade of Rashtrapati Bhawan with a massive colonnade at the top of a flight of long and broad alabaster stairs, overlooking the forecourt, where parades are drawn up on important occasions, makes an impressive sight. The building contains 11/2 miles of corridors, 340 rooms of which 63 are living rooms, 227 columns, 35 loggias and 37 fountains, including the roof fountains.

Farrukhabad (UP): Prisoners lodged in the Fatehgarh jail on Sunday created ruckus in which

the acting District Magistrate, Jail Superintendent and an inmate were injured.

The inmates got agitated in the morning reportedly due to the poor quality of the food served to them and bad health care facilities in the jail and came out of their barracks and started protesting, police said. Acting DM NP Pandey and Jail Superintendent Rakesh Kumar suffered head injuries as the agitators started throwing utensils. A prisoner was also injured in the violence, they said.

Officials have swung into action to pacify the agitated inmates and are trying to bring the situation under control.



'India will be world's youngest country by 2020'

India will become the world's youngest country by 2020 with an average age of 29, India's envoy in Sri Lanka said on Sunday. Sixty-four per cent of India's population will be in the working age group by 2020, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Taranjith Singh Sandhu said while delivering a foreign policy lecture. "With western Europe, the US,

South Korea, Japan and even China aging, this demographic potential offers India an unprecedented edge



GDP growth rate," he said.
"The core aim of India's foreign

policy is to meet the developmental aspirations of its 1.25 billion people. Our diplomacy is for our develop-

ment," the envoy said.

The Indian foreign policy has become more proactive and the world appreciated India's leadership, he said. There was a huge window of opportunity for India-Sri Lanka ties, Sandhu said. "We will soon be launching a SAARC comsoon be launching a SAARC communications and meteorology satellite which also has Sri Lankan partnership. There is a lot that we can do together. We are keen to integrate,"

Public Notice

This is to inform to all concern that M/S Paluram & Sons through its Prop. Paluram S/o Sh. S.L. Sharma who is the original allottee of property No. Flat No. 399, Block F-64, C-17. Sector-40, Noida (U.P.) had sold the said property on General Power of Attorney basis to the following person(s). Attorney basis to the following person(s). GPA was executed on in favour of Badri Dutt S/o, B. Dutt R/o H.no. 174, Block-1, Khichdipur, Delhi which is registered and the Agreement to sell was not registered or not executed, so it is informed to all concern that the said Property No. Flat No. 399, Block F-64,, C-17, Sector 40, Noida(U.P.) is going to be transferred in favour of Smt. Hemlata Yadav D/o Mahender Singh Yadav R/o Flat no-399, F-64, C-17, Sec-40, Noda. If any one has/ have any objection he/she may file C-17, Sec-40, Noda. If any one has/ have any objection he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Housing Department of the Noida Authority within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Transferee-Badri Dutt S/o B. Dutt R/o H.no.-174, Block-1, Khichdipur, Delhi

2 terrorists...

From Page 1

A top Army officer said that around 107 terrorists are active in south Kashmir region including the fresh recruits who took up arms after the killing of Burhan Wani and subsequent uprising in Kashmir in 2016. One AK rifle, one SLR, one

AK magazine, two SLR Magazines, two pouches and a grenade were recovered from the spot. Police said the recovered

SLR was the same which was looted on October 8, 2016 from Tumhal minority picket in

While weapon snatching by

militant cadre and unruly mobs in Kashmir Valley is a fad and last year Kashmir Valley witnessed 16 incidents of weapon snatching and looting between January 1 and December 31, 2016, it is for the first time, that youths hailing from the South Kashmir district of Shopian, snatched a weapon.

Police officers investigating the case claimed that the youths who snatched a AK-47 rifle from a Constable near Tawi bridge in Jammu, had a history

of participating in stone-pelting.
"We are verifying the records to ascertain whether they had any association with any militant outfit or over ground workers" senior police officer told

Obscene talks claim Kerala Minister's scalp Saseendran, five-time MLA and lone From Page 1 Minister from the NCP in the LDF of sexual assault against women and children. Announcing his decision to

resign from the Cabinet in Kozhikode on Sunday afternoon, 71-year-old Saseendran, a member of the NCP national working committee, insisted that he had done nothing wrong. However, he did not offer a clear reply when newsmen repeatedly asked him whether the voice on the controversial audio clip was his. "I am convinced that it would be inappropriate for me to continue as Minister in this context," he said. "But my resignation is in no way an admission of guilt. I am resigning because I have to uphold the integrity of my party and the LDF coalition,"

Government, said. NCP has two MLAs in the Kerala Assembly. "I welcome any kind of investigation.

I am not entering into the merits of the matter now. What is important to me at this point is the political content. I have to uphold the political morality of my party and the LDF. There has to be a probe. As far as I am concerned, it is inappropriate for me to continue as Minister when a probe is on," he said.

The Congress, the Opposition UDF it leads and the BJP raised the demand for the resignation of Saseendran and a probe into the allegation immediately after the channel telecast the audio recording. "The situation in the Left-ruled State is such that women and children can't approach even Ministers with confidence," said Opposition Leader Ramesh Chennithala.

Saseendran announced his resignation after Marxist Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan termed the issue involving him as "serious". However, the NCP leader claimed that he was resigning on his own and not under pressure from the Chief Minister. thThe allegation against me is over something about which I have no knowledge, he reiterated.

The NCP leadership made it clear that the party was in no hurry to fill the vacancy in the Cabinet created by

action (against Saseendran) if the allegation is proven true. He can return (to the Cabinet) if it is found false," said a top NCP leader. Saseendran is the third LDF minister to resign over sex-related charges in Kerala's history.

Saseendran's resignation. "There will be

The LDF has always taken a strong stand on issues related to sex scandals. PJ Joseph of the then Kerala Congress(J) had resigned in 2006 over the charge that he had tried to molest a woman on board an aircraft and BSP leader Neelalohithadasan Nadar, then in the Janata Dal (S), was forced to resign in 2000 over an alleged attempt to outrage the modest of a woman IAS

Pay digitally and fight graft: PM

Modi urges citizens to take the fight against black money to the next level by using less cash

PNS NEW DELHI

 $P_{\text{Modi on Sunday urged the}}^{\text{rime Minister Narendra}}$ people to take the fight against black money and graft to the 'next level' and appealed for the use of less cash in their daily lives by opting for digital payments. In his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' programme, he also spoke of building a 'New India', which he said can be achieved when 125 crore Indians take a pledge and unitedly work towards it.

"My dear countrymen, we must take our fight against black money and corruption to the next level. We should contribute towards ensuring reducing the use of cash, of currency notes," the Prime Minister said.

Asking the people to pay school fees, buy medicines or items from fair price shops or purchase air and train tickets digitally, he said "We can do this in our day to day lives. You can't imagine how you can serve the country in this way and become a brave soldier in the fight against black money and corruption."

Observing that the budget had announced that there would be 2,500 crore digital transactions this year, he said if 125 crore countrymen can resolve, they need not wait for a year; they can do it in six

Expressing gratitude to the people, Modi said over the last few months the country has witnessed an atmosphere in

which people in large numbers have participated in the digital payment, 'Digidhan' movement. "There has also been an increase in curiosity about cashless transactions. The poorest of the poor are making attempts to learn, and people are gradually moving towards doing business without cash. There has been a surge in various modes of digital payment after demonetisation," he said, adding that the BHIM App, launched about two and a half months ago, has already been downloaded by one and half

crore people. In his address, the PM also touched upon subjects ranging from building a 'New India' to 'Swaccha Bharat', besides greeting the people of

Bangladesh on their Independence Day saying India will always stand with them in the struggle for peace, security and development in the region.

"I hope that Bangladesh marches ahead on the path of progress. I also assure the citizens of Bangladesh that India is a strong partner, and a good friend, and we will continue to work together shoulder to shoulder to contribute towards the peace, security and development of this entire region," the Prime Minister said.

He said it was a matter of pride that Rabindra Nath Tagore, who has authored the National Aanthem of Bangladesh and India, had given up his Knighthood in protest against the 1919 massacre of This had also provided an

'inspiration and a mission in life' to a young teenager, who until then had spent his days playing merrily in the fields. This youngster was none other than Bhagat Singh, then 12years old, to evolve as a martyr. Modi also referred to the

Champaran Satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1917, saying "Through his demeanour and deeds, he could inspire the poorest of the poor, the most illiterate, to unite and come together out into the open for the struggle against the British Rule. This was a manifestation of an incredible inner strength, through which we can experience the vastness of Gandhi's great persona."

Judge-population ratio woefully

short, says study **ABRAHAM THOMAS** ■

study conducted by the Aresearch wing of the Supreme Court has shown that the judge-population ratio in the country is far less than the similar ratio involving police officers and bureaucrats.

The report prepared last year titled "Subordinate Courts of India: A Report on Access to Justice" makes out a case for bettering the Judge population ratio. Although much has been said about it in the past by the Law Commission of India and even by the Supreme Court in 2002, the study has analysed the issue by making a comparison with the other arms of the administration involved in rendering justice — mainly the police and civic administration.

It said that as per the data available with the Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, the States and Union Territories employed the services of 51,523 police officers above the rank of Inspector as on January 1, 2015. "In contrast, the sanctioned strength of judicial officers across the country was 20,174...which shows that for every million of the population there were close to 41.58 police officers (inspector and above) while the judicial officers for the same pop-

The situation becomes grim when one compares this figure with the total working strength of civil servants. According to the report of the Seventh Central Pay Commission, Ministry of Finance, the

services alone were 91,501 as on January 1, 2014. On this date, the corresponding num-ber of sanctioned judicial officers was 19,526.

While the figures display the treatment meted out to the Judiciary based on the quantitative approach, the report of the Supreme Court Centre for Research and Planning said, "Access to justice is meaningful when each citizen has literally, access to courts. In other words, every citizen has to be afforded reasonably close proximity to courts."

The available figures suggest that in the total area of the country extending to 31,66,414 square kilometers, there is at least one police officer every 100 square kilometer but there is negligible probability of finding a court in that same distance. This becomes a barrier to justice, claims the report.

The report further reveals that for 20,558 judicial officers there are only 15,540 court halls, a shortfall of 5,018 courtrooms. Similarly, there is a shortfall of 8,538 residential quarters for subordinate judges, which suggests there is no official residence for almost 40 per cent of judicial officers working in the country. Under such pressing conditions, the present working strength of judicial officers deals with 1.80 crore cases on an average every year cases. To curb the mounting pendency, the report recommends that in the next three years, the country requires an additional workforce of 14,597 judicial officers, subject to the condition that filing of cases

GRAPEVINE

Jovial Naidu

Information and Broadcasting Minister Venkaiah Naidu is known

for his humor and hospi tality. At a lunch hosted for journalist at his residence on Sunday, the Minister was at his jovial best. His way to introduce his guest to the luncheon spread follows: was as

"Appeasement to none and favour to all; so we have laid out both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food for you." At another time when the BJP leader Shahnawaz Hussain was chatting to media persons, Naidu advised them, "Stop eating Shahnazwaz and focus on chickens." Lunch and laughter marked the genial feast.

Shocked Journalists



there in two hours and the towing away of vehicles was part of the security drill. One would have expected the traffic police to at least make an announcement asking the journalists to remove their vehicles. After all journalists were guests and not gate-

Dressing Down

Avideo Conferencing facility for lawyers to communicate with jail inmates was inaugurated last week at the Supreme Court. While jail officials from several States attended the function, Superintendent of Gwalior Jail stood out as he came to the event dressed in casuals. Taking objection to the officer not wear-

ing his formal uniform, Justice Dipak Misra, the Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority, singled him out. Grapevine has it that the judge told the officer, "This is not the way you must treat the Supreme Court." The officer beat a hasty retreat.

Eviction Decision

It was otherwise an ordinary case in Supreme Court where a landlord succeeded to evict a tenant in order to use the proper-

ty for setting up a business. But there was a twist in the tale when the judge asked the landlord to wait for two years for taking physical occupation of the property. Justice Kurian Joseph spoke why the following year 2018 was inauspicious. "It is not a good year as many judges here (seven in all including Justice Joseph) are retiring," he said. The judge set Diwali of 2019 as the date of eviction to bring good fortune for the landlord as he believed, starting a new business on Diwali brings good fortune!

Power Packed Ideology

When in power, celebrate them, when not in power let others celebrate. Similar was the gist of celebration of birth anniversary of Socialist leader Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Finance and Defence Minister Arun Jaitley, Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman PJ Kurien and former Deputy Prime Minister L

K Advani led the nation in paying floral tributes at the portrait of Dr Lohia in the Central Hall of Parliament House on Tuesday. Nobody from Samajwadi Party (SP) was, however, seen on the occasion to the surprise of many since Mulayam Singh Yadav-led SP and several other Janata Pariwar leaders always claimed to be true followers of Ram Manohar Lohia.



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat lights a lamp at the seventh Nanaji memorial lecture in New Delhi on Sunday

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has responded to an SOS call from SSKM Hospital, Kolkata, that has a 79-year-old German patient who is fit to be discharged but there is no one to pick him up.
Responding to the message

about German Holzer Dieter Siegeried, Swaraj said the Indian Government has taken up the matter with the German Embassy in New Delhi. Dieter was admitted in the

cannot speak English or understand the language. Hospital claimed that they have informed the German Embassy about him that he is cured and fit for discharge but no one has come to receive him. The hospital has asked Government to

After its proposal to bar those who have failed to

clear utility dues from contest-

ing the polls, the Election

Commission has written to

political parties seeking their

view on the issue and how to

implement the Delhi High

Court directive that not only

candidates but also political

parties should furnish no dues

certificate before fielding their

the HC order, it was pointed

out that it not only pertains to candidates but also to political

parties. We have sought polit-

ical parties' views on how to go

about with it," CEC Nasim

In August 2015, the Court

"When we were examining

pick him up or contact some NGO that can send him back to his country

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented his portrait during a function organised at the residence of Union I&B Minister

Sushma responds to SOS, takes

up German's case with Embassy

M Venkaiah Naidu (2nd R) on the occasion of Telugu New Year 'Ugadi' in New Delhi on Sunday

sed happiness over the acquittal of Iranian-British aid worker Narges Kalbasi Ashtari by an Odisha Court. Ashtari was convicted in 2014 for alleged negligence resulting in the death of a tribal child. "I am happy Ms Narges Ashtari is acquitted by Court. My friend @JZarif Foreign Minister and people of Iran should be happy and relieved," Swaraj tweeted.

Foundation runs an orphanage at Mukundapur village of Rayagada district in Orissa. In 2014, during a picnic outing by the orphanage, six children got swept away in a river while bathing. Five children were rescued but five-year-old Asim

candidates contesting polls fur-

nish a 'no dues certificate' from

the agencies providing elec-

tricity, water and telephone

connections to them. The order

said the same rule should apply

ntation of the People Act which

deals with electoral offences. A

new clause will have to be inser-

ted therein for disqualification

"on the ground of being a

defaulter of dues". The issue is

pending with Government.

The EC has already written

to political parties also.

UTILITY DUES ALL CLEAR CERTIFICATE

EC seeks parties' views

on HC order execution

either urge German Embassy to Jilakara's body was not recovered and he was believed to have been drowned in the river. The parents of the child Meanwhile, Swaraj exprestoo were present at the site when the incident took place.

According to reports, Ashtari was accused by the police of throwing the boy into the river. She, however, alleged that the police made her an accused since she refused to pay bribes to a local official. She was later convicted by a lower court and had to spend nearly a year in jail before the appeals court acquitted her. Ashtari was barred her appeal was pending.

The Iranian Government was constantly pursuing her case with the Indian Government and Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had raised the matter with Swaraj during their meeting.

Swamy urges PM to prosecute PC under new Black Money Act

 $B_{\text{Swamy on Sunday urged}}^{\text{JP leader Subramanian}}$ Prime Minister Narendra Modi to prosecute former Finance Minister P Chidambaram and his family members under new Black Money Act and new Benami Act, citing amassing of assets abroad by them.

to the Law Ministry urging it to In his letter, Swamy said amend election laws so that canthe findings of the Income didates who have defaulted in Tax on Chidambaram family's clearing dues can be barred foreign bank accounts and from contesting polls. Accordassets abroad is enough to ing to the EC, barring candidates prosecute them under the new will require amendment to the chapter-III of the Represe-

Swamy asked Prime Minister to give directions to Revenue Secretary Hasmukha Adhia for prosecuting Chidambaram, son Karti and wife Nalini for holding secret foreign bank accounts and assets in 14 countries.



Subramanian Swamy

"The IT report found that these huge assets were acquired by means of corruption and bribes taken when Chidambaram was the Finance and Home Minister during 2004 to 2014. The vineyards, hotels and farm houses in 14 countries, including London, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Spain, France and Greece, were

acquired through black money and abuse of power. Hence apart from charging Chidambaram family under the Prevention of Corruption Act, DA case and PMLA it is necessary to prosecute them under the new Black Money Act and the Benami Act," said

The BJP leader recently brought out a 200-page analysis report by the Income Tax's Chennai Investigation Unit detailing the 21 foreign bank accounts of Karti Chidambaram and his companies. The probe report also reportedly claimed that Chidambaram held property in Cambridge. Swamy claimed that 'certain people' in the Finance Ministry were protecting Chidambaram and family by not acting on the sensitive Income Tax probe

NDMC, Navi Mumbai, Pune corporations top credit rating list

New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Navi Mumbai, and Pune Municipal Corporation have AA+(3) rating, something even top companies struggle to get for raising funds from the market. Ahmedabad, Visakhapatnam and Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation are placed next with AA(3) rating. Better ratings show the financial health of municipal authorities to repay the fund that it raises from market or funding agencies.

Kolkata was graded A+, Bhopal and Jaipur-A-, Thiruvananthapuram and Panaji-BBB, Ranchi-BBB were all rated as investment grade.

Ninety-four cities that have so far been assigned credit ratings

are spread across 14 States. During a review meeting with Union Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu, it was revealed that 55 of these cities have got 'Investment Grade' ratings. Naidu noted that 59 per cent of assessed cities getting Investment Grade rating was better than what was thought about the financial situation of Urban Local Bodies in the

The 94 cities that have so far been assigned credit ratings are spread across 14 States. Credit rating is an analysis of the credit risks associated with a financial instrument or a financial entity.

coming years.

India is all set to harvest a record 22 million tonnes of

Laws must focus on turning divyangs into entrepreneurs

creating economic opportuni-

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

s the Government works As the Government works on framing rules for the Rights to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which has brought 21 disabilities from the existing seven under its umbrella, activists have asserted that focus should not merely be on providing job opportunities or accessibility to the differentially-abled or divyangs,

transform their disability into ability, boost income and social inclusion besides providing jobs to the needy, they point-

Department of Empowerment of the Persons with Disabilities under the Union Ministry of Social and Justice Empowerment was given a go ahead by

but also help making them entrepreneurs. This will help "As a special educator and

The rules prepared by the neurs with disability.

working in the area of rehabilitation I have seen the disability sector grow in leaps in the recent years though we are still short of hands," says Thilakam Rajendran, Director of ATPAR (Alliance to Promote Abilities & Rehabilitation), set up with an aim to help the entrepre-

"We are aiming towards

ties for persons with disabilities with a special focus on developmental disabilities," says Rajendran, winner of NCPEDP Shell - Helen Keller Award for promoting employment of persons with disabilities.

In this regard, the ATPAR is organising a four-day training on entrepreneurship development from Monday. "We are conducting this

The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development as their training partner," she added. The participants include

vendors, hawkers, kirana shop owners and a few running services like coaching centres joined by parents of intellectually challenged entrepreneurs.

Agreeing that it was important to help people with dis-

training in collaboration with abilities find careers as entrepreneurs, Preeti Johar from Family of Disabled (FoD), an NGO said that throughAapna Rojgar Scheme (self-employment), we have tried to find a solution to the pecuniary needs of such individuals. The FoD assists them in socio-economic rehabilitation as well as provide financial aid at the micro-

islation has added disabilities that include mental illness, autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, chronic neurological conditions, specific learning disabilities, multiple sclerosis, speech and language disability, thalassemia, hemophilia, sickle cell disease, multiple disabilities including deaf, blind, acid attack victims and level. Individuals are initiated into a trade of their choice, she parkinsons disease.

added. The newly enacted leg-

slap import duty on gram PNS ■ NEW DELHI n a move to protect farmers

Proposal to

Interest, the Ministry of Agriculture has moved a proposal, slapping import duty of not less than 25 per cent on gram (chana) to curb shipments and protect local farmers from possible price crash in the wake of record output. The Ministry is of the view that imports need to be controlled for at least chana to protect farmers' interest. After retail prices skyrock-

eted to ₹200 per kg last year, the Government took several steps to boost domestic production and reduce import dependence. Now, that the output has increased sharply by 6 million tonnes, the Government wants to ensure that farmers get right price for their produce and continue sowing pulses in the

pulses including 9 million tonnes of chana.

Top sources told *The Pioneer* that the Ministry of Agriculture has moved a proposal to impose import duty on chana as it fears that the prices of the rabi crop could fall sharply to the disadvantage of farmers. The Government does not want to impose import duty on other varieties of pulses as the country will still have to depend on other Countries in spite of record output this year, sources said.

RK Nagar bypoll contest becomes cynosure of all eyes

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

 $B_{\text{do not generate much}}^{\text{y-elections in Tamil Nadu}}$ enthusiasm among the electorate as it is a foregone conclusion that the ruling party wins the bout without much hassle. But the April 12 by-elec-tion from RK Nagar Assembly constituency, necessitated by the demise of former Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, has become the cynosure of all eyes as the multi-cornered contest is generating a lot of sound and fury between the contestants.

The Election Commission of India shunting out the Chennai City Police Commissioner and the Returning Officer of RK Nagar speaks lot about the kind of heat and dust caused by the high-pitch electioneering.

The split in the ruling AIADMK has been formalised by the ECI which froze the name and symbol (Two Leaves) of the party. The two factions headed by the jailed VK Sasikla and former Chief Minister O Panneerselvam have been given the names AIADMK (Amma) and the AIADMK (Puratchi Thalaivi Amma) respectively.



While Dinakaran (nephew of Sasikala) has been allotted the of Hat, the Panneerselvam faction's candidate E Madhusoodanan has been allocated the symbol Electric Post.

AIADMK (Puratchi Thalaivi Amma) RK Nagar bypoll candidate

This the first election in Tamil Nadu after the exit of Jayalalithaa and Karunanidhi from the political centre-stage.

The RK Nagar was seen as a fortress of the AIADMK. Jayalalithaa, when she contested the by-poll in September 2015, won by a huge margin of more than 1,50,000 votes.

But in the by-poll scheduled for April 12, there are two contestants from the AIADMK fighting for the legacy of Jayalalithaa while the DMK has

fielded a local guy who is quite popular with the electorate.

Though Jayalalithaa's niece Deepa Patrick Madhavan is contesting as the representative of MAD Party, she is not expected to make any impact in the final outcome. The fight is between the three candidates representing the AIADMK and

The BJP has fielded Gangai Amaran, younger brother of music maestro Ilayaraja. But the BJP has not made any impact in the past elections from the constituency and it will definitely end up as an also ran. The Congress is piggy riding on the shoulders of the DMK, with which it has a strong electoral alliance. The Congress is yet to

it faced in the 1967 Assembly election. Since then the Congress survived in Tamil Nadu only because of the life support system offered either by the AIADMK or the DMK.

The BJP was never a force to reckon with in Tamil Nadu. It continues to be like that even after the exit of Jayalalithaa

State's political landscape. 'There are no leaders of national stature in Tamil Nadu BJP except Subramanian Swamy. What the central leadership should do is to find out the possibility of having an electoral alliance with the AIADMK and make the party take strong roots in the State," said a senior

dition of anonymity pointed out that there was a firm belief among the electorate that the AIADMK and the BJP were natural allies. "Both Panneerselvam and Palaniswamy, though belonging to the opposite factions of the AIADMK, have not said anything inimical to the BJP till date," he pointed out.



Gaikwad: Not hiding, will take legal action against Air India

PTI OSMANABAD (MAHARASHTRA)

Shiv Sena MP Ravindra Gaikwad, who allegedly assaulted a senior Air India official, on Sunday claimed that he was asked by a top party leader not to speak with the media over the issue. Threatening legal action against the national carrier, the Parliamentarian said he has not gone into hiding and will be present in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.



against Al "A senior Sena leader media till Wednesday (March 29) and so I am not coming before the media. I will come to Omerga on Tuesday and celebrate Marathi new year 'Gudi Padwa' with my family and Shiv Sainiks. I will then attend Lok

The 57-year-old MP, who represents Osmanabad, however did not disclose his present location. "I am not hiding and will speak to all after Wednesday, he added.

Sabha session (in New Delhi) on

Wednesday," Gaikwad said over

Gaikwad had on Thursday abused and assaulted a 60-yearold duty manager of the national carrier with slippers over not being able to fly business class despite having boarded an all-economy Pune-New Delhi flight. Following the incident, he

was barred from flying by major domestic airlines. "Āir India employees abused me. I will take legal action against Air India," Gaikwad said.

He demanded that an inquiry should be initiated into the video (about the incident), which has gone viral.

Meanwhile, local Sena work ers on Sunday burnt an effigy of Air India employees at Turori village in Gaikwad's support.

'India has best electoral but less a liberal democracy'

India has done much better as Lan electoral democracy but substantially less as a liberal democracy; freedom of expression and religious practice though not absent in the country, they're not actually robustly anchored, said Ashutosh Varshney, a professor at Brown University, Providence (USA), here on Sunday while delivering lecture at the international conference organised by Asian Development Research Institute

He said 16 national and 362 State elections have been held since 1952 apart from three million members for local bodies have been elected since 1992, power has changed in Delhi several times and for many more times in the States, the poor and less educated people have voted as much as, if not more, than their more affluent co-citizens defying democratic theory.

Election finance, Varshney said, is the single biggest weakness of India's election process

Election finance is the single biggest weakness of India's election process but it is clear that while business houses finance elections, often illegally, they are unable to determine results. For example: AAP in Delhi in 2013 and 2015, SP in UP in 2012 and the BSP in 2007, where poor political parties won **elections**

but it is clear that while business houses finance elections, often illegally, they are unable to determine results. Citing the example of AAP in Delhi in 2013 and 2015, the Samajwadi Party in UP in 2012 and the Bahujan Samaj Party in 2007, he said poor political parties could and had won elections.

The so-called retrenchment of liberal values which is being attributed to the rise of Narendra Modi, Varshney said it was not something unprecedented and that checked on liberal values occurred under other governments also. He, however, added that the Uttar Pradesh

results could prove to be very significant in this context. He said for the first time the head of a religious order has also become the head of the State.

"The fact that the BJP could win despite not having the support of the single largest minority group was also of immense significance. If the BJP remains in power both at the Centre and UP for the next 10 years, it could have repercussions for liberal values. He said it was for the courts to ensure that the Constitution does not get a Hindu orientation under the present dispensation," said



Officials and civilians take oath for a clean Ganga on the banks of the river in Allahabad on Sunday. A court in northern India had on Monday given the status of living entities to the Ganga and the Yamuna river to save them from further harm caused by widespread pollution

A view of 15,000 sq ft Rangoli created by 28 artists using 750 kg colours for upcoming Gudi Padwa festival at Shivaji Chowk Mill Road at Kurla in Mumbai on Sunday

Pub city Bengaluru brings native organic Ragi Beer

spices and veggies

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

osmopolitan IT city Bengaluru, also called the Pub City, is bringing a new organic beer called Ragi Beer which is a new fad that is taking the binge to a new height. Bengaluru which has many microbreweries to boost brimming beer culture are now brewing native beer variety to attract new crop of tipplers or beer guzzlers to taste these new ale.

These microbreweries, the pitshop for young and old in Bengaluru have variety of fresh beer using many grains and fruits which include Basmati rice, wheat, mango jack fruit beer. Fresh, smooth and not too bitter.

This range of native beer is creating a new crop of tipplers who relish it on their way to a high. Bengaluru being one of the highest beer guzzlers in the country, microbreweries in the city are experimenting variety of local and native fruits and grains to brew beer as their favourite drink.

The new fad in the growing pub culture is the organic Ragi Beer which is taking tipplers to a new height but with-out adding to their tummy which beer guzzler fear of. 'Cheers to Ragi Beer' is the new

ly grown as a cereal crop in

mantra the tipplers are saying. Many curious takers are opting for the freshly brewed drink from Ragi as breweries are experimenting with severmercially. al locally grown fruits, spices

and veggies. The local twist in brewing Ragi beer is a new taste to the beer connoisseurs. Ragi or finger millet is an annual herbaceous plant wide-

According to Rohit

time it has been brewed for consumption commercially

Jairam Parwani of The Biere

Club many beer connoisseurs

are taking to this new brew and

A group of guzzlers from

software company identify

this brew as local and their

own. Another professional

who is a beerolic finds this a

way too good to other beer and

becoming popular.

familiar to him.

it has been there in many African countries as also in parts of Nepal and Bhutan The central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) in Mysuru experimented Ragi Beer few decades ago. However this is for the first

DESI TADKA!

Many curious takers are opting for the freshly brewed drink from Ragi

When JD(S) leader HD Devegowda was the Prime Minister the Ragi

As Bengaluru breweries are experimenting with Ragi and other millets

as breweries are experimenting with several locally grown fruits,

ball was introduced in some of the hotels in Delhi

Ragi is known for its low

glycemic index with high micronutrient contents. Mixing with jiggery, Ragi Beer is a new favorite flavor for the Ragi a popular millet in South Karnataka, now taken a metamorphosis as Ragi Beer to

cheer up the beer connoisseurs. In fact when JDS leader HD Devegowda was the Prime Minister the Ragi ball was introduced in some of the hotels in Delhi. As Bengaluru breweries are experimenting with Ragi

and other millets it has been there in many African countries as also in parts of Nepal and Bhutan. The central Food

Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) in Mysuru experimented Ragi beer few decades ago. However this is for the first time it has been brewed for consumption com-

Karnataka started licencing microbreweries in 2010, and today beer is one of the fastest-growing consumer categories in the city, earning

major share of revenue.

Mehbooba: People should allow the Govt to work

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Tammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday said peace was prerequisite for holistic and equitable development of the State and people should allow the Government to work and find solutions to the problems

"The Government needs time to execute its agenda of development and empow-

erment. People have to give peace a chance and allow the Government to function efficiently so that it can find solution to every problems J&K faces," she said during election meetings in Budgam district of Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, which is going to by-

polls on April 9. The Chief Minister said the only impediment towards ensuring growth and empow-

erment was "lack of peace". "It is heartening to see that the people were asking for our report card as they believe that PDP is their own party and it will fulfil their expectations. This feeling makes us work harder on the ground. We are not shying away from the answers and we assure everyone that we stand by our political, economic and developmental agenda," she

Mehbooba said the PDP forged an alliance with the BJP for the benefit of people of all the regions of the State unlike the NC-Congress coalition, which is characterised by just lust for power.

12 Indian fishermen held by Lankan Navy **PTI** RAMESWARAM in the territorial waters of the and they returned to the shores

Twelve fishermen from Tamil Nadu have been arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on the charge of fishing island nation.

The fishermen, who were out on sea from Jegadapattinam in Pudukottai district were arrested near Neduntheevu late last night, a Fisheries official said on Sunday. The fishermen along with their two mechanised boats been taken to Kankesanthurai Port in northern Sri Lanka, Assistant Director of Fisheries Alexander said.

Besides, around 2,000 fishermen from Rameswaram who were fishing near Neduntheevu in 500 boats were chased away by the Lankan Naval personnel here last night, officials here said.

The latest incident of arrest is the fifth such detention of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy this month. While Sri Lanka released 77 fishermen on March 14, as many as 38 fishermen, including those arrested on Sunday, are in the custody of the neighbouring nation.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami had on March 23 written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention to ensure the release of the fishermen and 131 boats

Voicing concern over the recurring detentions of fishermen, he had appealed to the Prime Minister to direct the External Affairs Ministry to take up matter with Sri Lankan authorities in a "concrete and decisive manner".

Fishermen in the State have also staged protests over the recent killing of a colleague allegedly by Sri Lankan Naval personnel and demanded steps to resolve the issue of fishing rights in the Palk Straits and ensure that their livelihood was protected.

OUTCRY AGAINST CM YOGI FOR CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL SLAUGHTERHOUSES

Real culprit is previous Govt

The NGT in 2015, 2016 had asked Akhilesh Yadav to close down illegal abattoirs and enforce environmental norms for the sake of public health, hygiene and protecting the groundwater and surface water from pollution. Despite repeated orders, he ignored them

PNS LUCKNOW

Though there is nationwide outcry against the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the crackdown against the illegal slaughterhouses that it is aimed at targeting the minority community, the real culprit is the previous Akhilesh Yadav which ignored repeated orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 2015, 2016 to close down the illegal abattoirs and enforce the environmental norms for the sake of public health, hygiene and protecting the groundwater and surface water from pollution. UP has over 1,000 illegal slaugh-

ter houses. The misplaced over zeal of the previous Samajwadi Party Government to protect its minority vote bank by not complying with the NGT directives has not only threatened the livelihood of those engaged in meat business and non vegetarian food eateries but also the leather industry in the State. The size of the leather indus-in UP is ₹20,000 crore of

which ₹10,000 is exported. The leather industry employs over 5 lakh people and the share of UP in India's leather trade is close to 35 per cent. The NGT, on Wednesday March 22, issued notices to Aligarh District Magistrate and UP Pollution control board and five other agencies for turning a blind eye to a slaughterhouse discharging filth in a drain situated beside a Government school in Aligarh.

A Delhi based environment activist had filed a complaint before the NGT in October last year that that a slaughterhouse has been running next to a Government school in Udala-Hyaspur in Aligarh. It was brought to the NGTs notice that entire area surrounding the slaughterhouse is in very bad

Most students who study in the nearby school are below the



age of 10 and are forced to drink from a hand pump installed inside the campus. The drain is filthy due to discharge of blood and animal waste and a foul smell emanates from the factory and the slaughterhouse produces around 170 metric tonne meat per day. The tribunal has fixed April 20 as the next date of

hearing.
In it's UP election manifesto Sankalp Patr' the BJP had promised it would shut down illegal and mechanised abattoirs in the State if it came to power. With Yogi Adityanath as the Chief Minister with the support of a three-fourths majority iety in the leather industry. There are a large number of illegal slaughter houses and

those operated manually in the state, especially in the western UP districts. Although there are UP districts. Although there are no comprehensive figures on this, they provide employment to almost 50,000 people. During the last 14 years of uninterrupted rule of the SP and BSP, cattle and meat mafa flourished in the State as both the political parties were involved in a no cal parties were involved in a no holds barred competition for the enblock support of the Muslim community.

been closed down in Allahabad,

Varanasi, Saharanpur, Amroha,

and Moradabad and in east UP

districts. But this has fuelled anx-

The Governments headed by both the parties not only ignored the illegal trade they infect aided and abetted it as the illegal slaughter houses as provided huge financial support to both the political parties.

During the SP regime dozens of incidents occurred across the State where the cattle mafia involved in illegal transport of cattle's crushed the policemen under the wheels of the truck and several constables and a sub-inspector was also crushed to death by truck on Bareilly-Badaun road in 2015.

CM: Don't opt for contractual work instead work for UP's development

sking party workers not to A sking party workers here. Object for contractual work in Government sector Chief Minister Adityanath Yogi said that UP's face will change in next two months as people have reposed faith on us and it is workers' responsibility to ensure BJP fulfills all poll promises.

"I appeal to the party workers and family members of law makers not to seek contract of Government department. Contractual work has always brought bad name to the party. Instead, monitor the developwork. Government schemes are implemented effectively," Yogi said while addressing BJP work ers in Gorakhpur on Sunday.

It was the second day of his visit when Chief Minister had a series of interaction with the party workers, social activists and citizens of Gorakhpur. This was Yogi's maiden visit to Gorakhpur, from where he is also Member of Parliament, after taking over as CM.

Chief Minister asked work ers to inform him about any problem people are facing not only in Gorakhpur but also in other parts of the State. "I will take prompt action if any misdeed is brought to my notice,"

He talked at length about the historic mandate BJP has got in this election. He time and again said that this mandate means responsibility. "I am the Chief Minister and someone is the Minister. It does not mean that we should bask in glory. The posts have given us responsibility. I have already made it clear that those people who are willing to work for 18-20 hours can come and work with us. If they do not have that capacity they are free to part," he said.

"Our every action is accountable. Therefore, in next

two years we will have to work tirelessly, irrespective of the fact that there is sunshine, rain or biting cold. Efforts should be made to ensure that the welfare schemes of the Centre percolate to the last strata of the society, and needy people are able to avail its benefits," he said reminding people that Lok Sabha elections

CM said that the priority of his Government is to bring law and order back to rails. The criminals should either mend their ways or leave UP. I have given strict warning to police officials that I will not tolerate non-sense," he said.

will be held in 2019.

Farmer's suicide bid at Gorakhpur temple foxes cops

by a Balia native farmer on the premises of Gorakhnath temple when Mahant (head priest) of temple and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister was inside the temple threw the Gorakhpur police in tizzy. The news soon went viral on social media exposing chinks in security cordon of

As per reports, thousands of people from Gorakhpur and neighbouring districts thronged to the temple when they heard the news of arrival of CM Adityanath Yogi to plea their

Among the crowd of petitioners, one Raj Kumar Bharti of Rajput Mewari ward number 14 of Balia was also present as he had to seek help from the CM for

Sources said that during the Janta Darbar programme in temple premises, Raj Kumar Bharati doused self with Kerosene after he failed to get audience from CM. But before he could light fire, alert cops overpowered him and foiled his immolation bid.

"The police recovered a letter from Bharati's pocket in which he had stated his hardship and loan on him. He also had stated that he was under huge debt due to his prolonged illness and failed to get help from the district administration," the sources said. SSP Gorakhpur Ram Lal

Verma said Ram Lal Bharti took the extreme step due to person-

Yogi: Those who patronise goons will either leave UP or land in jail

in the Assembly, things are like-

ly to get tough for meat indus-

try as the new CM means busi-

ness. Yogi Adityanath categori-

cally stated in Gorakhpur that

the licence mechanised slaugh-

ter houses have nothing to worry

and the drive against the illegal

slaughter houses and unlicensed

mechanised slaughter houses in

UP operating in the private sec-

tor, with most units having the

beef export licence. The UP

Pollution Control Board has

started drawing up a list of abat-

toirs that are flouting the norms

or operating without the licence.

There are about 45 licensed,

meat shops will continue.

on Sunday urged the people help him break the negative image of the State and hinted at strong measures to ensure law and order.

as a State from whose boundaries begins darkness, from where the pot-holed roads begin and the place from where the women start to feel insecure. I was to break this mindset," he said, and added that he wants to make UP a place, where women



who give patronage to the goonda elements, mafia, criminal and other rogue elements. They have the option of leaving UP or else they would land in places designated for them (jails)," he said, while hinting at massive revamping of law and

People who are prepared to work for 18-20 hours a day are most welcome to join me and the rest are free to leave, he said

be accessible to the public. "The doors of your house and office must remain open to the public. This would ensure that the Government is able to reach to the last person of the society. No one would go to bed empty stomach and money would not be a constraint in marriage of any girl," he said. Referring to the acid attack

on a woman from Rae Bareli, the UP CM said, "The officials are working on 'puraanaa dharraa' (old style). I went to KGMU to inquire about the well-being of the woman and gave them ultimatum that everything must be done in the next couple of hours." CM Adityanath also talked

about people committing electricity theft facing the music. "The situation has already improved in Gorakhpur and it would soon improve in the State as well," he said.

"If you find any discrepancy or anomaly, just message

Akhilesh's Lion safari project under scanner no return so far. "Let's see

Akhilesh Yadav's pet Lion Asafari project in Etawah come under scanner as Forest, environment and zoo Minister Dara Singh Chauhan said that he is getting feedback from the officials regarding this "I have come to know about

splurge of Government money in setting up lion safari in Etawah. I have asked a report from officials. If something is found amiss this Government will order a probe into this project," Chauhan told The Pioneer. Lion Safari in Etawah was a

dream project of former Chief Minister Ákhilesh Yadav. government where lions from Gir forest were brought for rehabilitation. But after the death of a couple of lions and their cubs questions were raised about efficacy of the project. The then Chief Minister had also summoned Vet experts from London to cure ailing lions but even that did not save the big cat.

The Minister said that he ment in that project but there is the gullies (lanes)," he said.

whether this project is feasible or not. If officials say it is not feasible we will take a decision accordingly," he said.

When asked about lions facing starvation in zoological parks across the State and even in Etawah lion safari following crackdown on illegal slaughter houses the Minister said that no animal will be allowed to die in absence of meat. "Initially we fed these animals chicken and goat meat. The arrangements are being made to get buffalo meat from legal abattoirs in Unnao,"

Animals are fed buffalo meat in zoos and Lion Safari. In Lucknow zoo consumption of buffalo meat is around 150 kg while in in Etawah zoo consumption of 34 kg. Justifying crackdown on the illegal slaughter houses he said that party's manifesto is clear about closing down all illegal slaughter houses and meat shops. "Those people who want to run their business should get their licenses renewed. This Government will

Youth held, another on run for snatching weapon in Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Weapon snatching by militant cadre and unruly mobs in Kashmir valley is a fad. Only last year Kashmir valley had witnessed 16 incidents of weapon snatching/looting between January 1 and December 31, 2016.

But on late Saturday night the winter capital of the State, Jammu, too witnessed a similar weapon snatching incident involving two youth from Kashmir valley.

This is for the first Following time, youth hailing this weapon from South snatching incident a high alert **Kashmir district of** was sounded in Shopian, snatched and around an AK-47 rifle from Jammu and all a police constable security check points and exit near Tawi bridge in **Jammu** alerted to track

down the youth who managed to ran away with the service weapon of J&K police cop.

The entire security grid was alerted as the incident has come to light ahead of the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Jammu on April 2 to inaugurate country's longest road tunnel between Chenani and Nashri.

This is for the first time, youth hailing from South Kashmir district of Shopian, snatched an AK-47 rifle from a police constable near Tawi bridge in Jammu.

Police officers investigating the case claimed the youth had past history of participating in incidents of stone pelt-"We are verifying the records to ascertain whether they had any association with any militant outfit or over ground workers" a senior police officer told The Pioneer.

Reportedly, the youth were roaming in the area for last few days and were probably tasked with the job of weapon snatch-

Swift response by the police teams, however, led to the arrest of one youth along with a motorbike.

According to preliminary reports the youth, riding a motorbike, first intercepted the cop and threw chilly powder in his eyes before hitting

him with a baseball bat. The police constable has been identified as 50-yearold Mohammad

He was serving as Personal Security Officer (PSO) Anjuman Minhaj-

e-Rasool chairman Maulana Dehlavi. He was returning to District police lines after dropping Deĥlavi at the state guest

The arrested youth has been identified as Masrool Ahmad son of Abdul Rashid R/o Ratnipora, Shopian.

Masrool has disclosed identity of his associate as Asif son of Mohammad Ali Shah R/o Banpora, Shopian. He was absconding with AK-47 rifle of the police constable.

Day long investigations by the police has revealed that the youth had fixed fake number plate on their motorbike. They are believed to have travelled from Shopian on the same motorbike. Police is working out the details to track down their sympathisers in Jammu, and who had organised their

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

"For the past few years Uttar Pradesh has been defined

feel safe and secure. Adityanath said, "I would

like to assure that in the next two months, people would come to know how a State Government should work. I have got an opportunity to clean-up the mess (kachdaa saaf karne kaa maukaa milaa hai), and I will do it." The UP the anti-social elements and

The powers that have gone

I into a tizzy after the

Calcutta High Court's order to

relevant parties to file affi-

davits on a public interest liti-

gation claiming multi-fold

increase in the assets of a bevy

cates Anindyasundar Das and

Ministers have grown dispro-

portionately as per the returns

filed by these leaders with the

Election Commission, the peti-

The PIL was filed by advo-

Assets of at least 23 State

of Bengal Ministers.

Biplab Chowdhury.

criminals in the State "There is no place for those

For instance, the combined

asset of Kolkata Mayor Sovan

Chatterjee and his wife has

gone up by about 293 percent:

from ₹62.37 lakh in 2011 to ₹1.

83 crore - between 2011 and

2016. Incidentally the Mayor

who also doubles up as the State

Fire Minister was shown in the

Narada video tapes accepting

cash from a journalist posing as

able property) of Firhad (alias)

Bobby Hakim the State Urban

Development Minister and a key

member in Mamata Banerjee's

Similarly the assets (immov-

a prospective investor.

improved work culture, the UP CM also said people who are prepared to work for 18-20 hours a day are "most welcome" to join him, the rest are free to leave. "Time has come that we should work 18-20 hours a day. There no time for any entertainment (mauj masti)," he said.

Underscoring the need for his Ministers that they should ensure action," he said.

in 2011 to ₹2.52 crore in 2016.

The net worth of her wife's

immovable property has jumped

more than three times. Hakim

is also seen the Narada video

tapes apparently telling the sting

journalist that ₹5 lakh is a small

Paschimanchal Development

followers (Bacchhas).

about ₹69.50 lakh.

how assets of TMC leaders grew man Cabinet has up from \$1.48 crore Minister responsible with the and Salt Lake-Rajarhat Mayor ice berg. Cabinet has up from \$1.48 crore Minister responsible with the Cabinet had \$23,000 as property. development of Maoist-infested Jangalmahal area has increased more than 4,000

in 2011.

To come back to senior Trinamool leader and State

times: from ₹62.79 thousand to ₹26.89 lakh since 2011 when he contested from the first time.

amount just enough only for his Education Minister Partho The resources (read assets) Chatterjee whose property has gone up from ₹15.50 lakh in of State Water Resources 2011 to ₹57.56 lakh in 2016. Minister Soumen Mahapatra His wife's immovable property have increased to ₹1.97 crore whereas in 2011 it was just was valued at ₹8.58 lakh in 2011 which went up to ₹38 Similarly the assets of lakh five years later.

Trinamool Congress MLA

Sabyasachi Dutta had ₹3,000 as "cash in hand," which leapt up to ₹1.33 lakh in 2016. He had net immovable property valued at ₹36.64 lakh which has gone up to ₹1.16 crore. His wife had assets worth ₹6.91 lakh in 2011 which went up to ₹89.78 lakh

gone on record telling a national television channel how "it is not possible to do away with the syndicate raj as they are intricately entwined with the

Incidentally Dutta had

"This is only the tip of the

property of many Trinamool eaders is estimated in terms of tens of crores," said one of the petitioners adding "let them first file the affidavit and source of income and then further

Trinamool Congress said the chartered accountants have been asked to provide records with minutest details.

Meanwhile, sources in the

steps will be taken."

"It is very difficult to record things in details so the Government officials are also assisting the politicians," they



A man holds tridents and shouts slogans as he attends a Hindu convention organised by the Vishva Hindu Parishad in

Swamy: Rajiv Gandhi only good human being in Nehru-Gandhi family

PTI PATNA

Senior BJP leader Subramanian Swamy on Sunday praised former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as the only good human being in the (Nehru-Gandhi) family and said he had contributed to awakening of the Hindus.

"Rajiv Gandhi was the only good human being in the (Nehru-Gandhi) family and had contributed to awakening of the Hindus," he told reporters here.

Swamy, a Rajya Sabha MP, recalled that the former Prime Minister had allowed telecast of popular mythological serial Ramayana on Doordarshan and later got the locks of Ram temple at Ayodhya opened for

"Rajiv (Gandhi) allowed telecast of the mythological Ramayana Doordarshan, the national tele-

vision network, despite fierce opposition from Congress leaders," he said.

Swamy exuded optimism about resolution of the vexed Ayodhya dispute in the wake of the Supreme Court's prodding to the contending parties to work out an off-the-court set-

The senior BJP leader took a dig at the Congress over its electoral reverses, saying, "The Congress appears to be in a mood to commit suicide... we are there to carry out its funeral." Swamy was here to deliver a lecture on the Ayodhya issue.



BJP MP Subramanian Swamy with former Sangh ideologue KN Govindacharya during inauguration of a lecture on 'Ram Mandir and Hindu Punarjagran' at Nritya Kala Mandir in Patna on Sunday

opinion 08 NEW DELHI | MONDAY | MARCH 27, 2017

paper with passion-

Allow Trump to function

Rivals placing hurdles to weaken the President

he Trump Administration's failure to push through a healthcare law that sought to replace Obamacare is a major embarrassment for President Donald Trump who had made the repeal of his predecessor's legislation one of his main electoral planks. The setback is especially acute given that he could not get the draft American Healthcare Bill passed despite having a majority in the House. The Bill had to be withdrawn because of division in the ranks of the ruling Republicans, with certain sections worried that the proposed legislation would be as bad, or worse, than Obamacare. It could not get the support of a minimum of 215 Republicans to get it through. It is unfortunate that sections within the Republican camp do not realise that their primary duty is to ensure that the assurances given by their party leader, and on the basis of which Trump made it to the White House, are honoured. Their obstruction is akin to betraying the public mandate. Of course, it may also be true that President Trump's team did not manage to convince the Republican rank and file about the need to repeal the previous regime's law on healthcare, despite so much evidence of Obamacare having failed to deliver; the President now says Obamacare would "explode". The conservative House Freedom Caucus refused to back the proposed law



because it wanted more aggressive measures to lower insurance costs. Besides, it wanted a revamp of Federal regulations on various insurances products. That the ruling party has thrown in the towel, at least for now, is evident in House Speaker Paul D Ryan's remark, "We're going to be living with Obamacare for the foreseeable future." The Democrats must be chuckling with delight. It does appear that President Trump, despite the emphatic victory in the presidential election, is either not being allowed to function or is functioning without a though-out plan in mind. The latter is the reason that his critics will offer, who believe — as they did during the election campaigning — that Trump

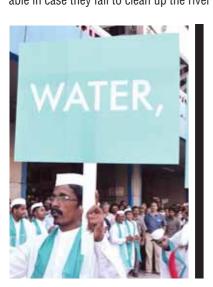
flings grand but unworkable ideas. But the first is a real possibility. Trump has been facing deliberate hurdles from not just within his party and the Opposition, but also from beyond the political spectrum.

Few US Presidents in recent memory had to go through the challenges of the kind that Trump has had to endure. Coincidentally, nearly every major one of these has to do with his stated position to the electorate. For instance, he had talked tough on illegal immigration and on the dangers the US faced from immigration from nations that were hotbeds of terror. When his administration brought in an order to ban travel to the US, of citizens from a list of such countries, the courts blocked the move. A second example relates to US-Russia ties. Trump had made it clear during the presidential fight that he would work to improve relations with Russia and that he shared a rapport with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Soon after he began to announce his team after being elected President, Trump was assaulted with allegations that some of his choices had inappropriate links with the Russians. His National Security Advisor Michael T Flynn was forced to guit and demands for probe into further 'questionable' ties still resonate. One sincerely hopes that President Trump is allowed to function.

Overcoming water woes

Action must complement policies on paper

wo developments that are apparently unconnected but really related have to be taken with seriousness. The first is a recent Uttarakhand High Court order declaring the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers as living entities. And the second is information available with the Union Ministry of Water Resources that India is getting to be severely water-stressed, with the capacity perhaps to endure just one serious drought. The linkage between the two is apparent; water bodies are shrinking, drying up or getting polluted. Take the country's two major rivers mentioned above. They remain a major source of potable water in many regions of north India. But decades of pollution have all but reduced them to a critical stage. They are still large and flowing but choking with pollutants as well. Now that the Uttarakhand High Court has bestowed living status on them (it means they are akin to individuals with the rights a citizen of the country has) — it is expected that the 'guardians', who are the authorities concerned, will work overtime to clean them up. It also means that these guardians will be held accountable in case they fail to clean up the river or at the very least take tangible steps



to do the needful. The Modi Government has been giving a great deal of attention to cleaning up of our rivers, and Namami Gange plan, which is part of the larger National Mission for Clean Ganga, is proceeding at a fairly satisfactory pace. However, there is a great deal that is to be done before the authorities can claim to have reached a satisfactory level of success. It is heartening that the Union Minister concerned, Uma Bharti, is focused almost obsessively on the issue. Besides, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a personal stake in the matter; he is a Member of Parliament from Varanasi, which is inseparable from Ganga. Closer to the seat of power, in Delhi, the Union Government is a first-hand witness to

the deterioration of the river Yamuna. It's an irony that a country such as India, which is fed by multiple major rivers — and that too rivers that have been revered since ancient times and have formed cradles of civilisation — should be facing water-stressed conditions.

Given the prevailing situation, the Water Resources Ministry figures, while alarming, are not surprising. The per capita availability of water in the country could be less than 1,500 cubic metres; since the danger mark is less than 1,700 cubic metres, India is already deeply water-stressed. The growing population is certainly one contributory factor but as important is falling water bodies and rising pollution in those that exist. Together, they have been playing havoc. The saving grace is that India is in the water-stressed category and not plunged to the 'water scarcity' level. But the scarcity mark is just one notch away, if Indian policymakers and citizens don't wake up. Grand plans on paper are not going to resolve the crisis; action and accountability will.

he pioneer London horror: West must stop self-kicking



When mosques of one faction in Pakistan, where Islam is a religion, are attacked everyday by another, jihadi brain-washing comes home to roost against Islam itself. This is what must be learnt from the London attack

he Islamist terror strike on Parliament build-ing in London was the way this global menace that calls itself the Islamic State (IS), kicked the USled West-Gulf states combine's fight to eradicate the self-styled Caliphate. How limited the West's understanding of the threat posed by radical Islam is evident in the reaction of General John Allen, a President Obama appointee from the American Army to build a coalition of Western and Gulf states against the self-appointed Caliphate based in Iraq-Syria.

Allen told at a Qatar conference, "It is a regional problem tending towards global implications". Is this just a regional menace threatening to spread across the world?

As several analysts, with insight into the working of aggressive Islam have pointed out, there is inadequate appreciation of the brain washing this so-called IS is doing across the world. This enables the IS to use the appeal of Islam globally to resonate itself in the imagination of the Muslim population and also its recent converts from other religions.

More often than not, the recruits for terror in the West come from these very converts as well as from migrant Islamic groups to Europe and America. The attack that IS recruits in the UK have mounted on the Mother of Parliament no doubt will remind us in this country the similar attack on our Parliament by Pakistan's so called non-state actors like Lashkare-Tayyeba and Jaish-e-Mohammad.

So, when the anti-terror coalition, led by US, deals with this attack as a IS perpetration and confines the coalition's action only against the IS, it is most likely to bound to fail to provide an effective strategy to come to the roots of the problem. For the last 12 months, the security apparatus in every European country, including the UK, has been on high alert but it could not foresee the planning and execution of this attack.

The reason seems to be the new techniques of the Islamist movement to use radicalised individual Muslims, especially the recent local converts to deliver telling damage on the rest of the world.

Though the national security apparatus in each country, including India, has been able to prevent are in conflict in perpetuity. the fact is that just one successful attack by individual zealots is enough to mock at claims that antiterror forces are succeeding in curbing terror strikes.



As Newsweek wrote last September after the drone strike eliminated one of the top second rung leader of the ÎS, Abu Mohammed al-Abani, the journal wondered whether this type of attacks on the terrorist organisation was effective in ending the menace.

"When leaders of terrorist organisations are killed, the group tends to become more radical" with more civilian groups of its target country. The call to indulge in indiscriminate and brutal killings gets intensified. Some observers of the Syria-

Iraq based IS also believe that the global action against IS is hampered by the internal conflict in Syria against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad whose Shia regime is being target by the Sunni regimes around the Shias. That the IS is a Sunni organisation imports a disturbing element in the area where Sunni and Shia followers and their kings

Sunni powers like Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries like Qatar, Bahrain, are more interested in setting up a Salafistan within the Iran-Iraq part of the IS occupied terri-

THOUGH NATIONAL SECURITY APPARATUS IN EACH COUNTRY, INCLUDING INDIA, HAS PREVENTED SOME OF THESE PROSPECTIVE ATTACKS, THE FACT IS THAT JUST ONE ATTACK IS ENOUGH TO MOCK AT CLAIMS THAT

ARE SUCCEEDING IN **CURBING TERROR**

ANTI-TERROR FORCES

fighting the IS. This faction is wanting to get the Assad regime ousted from Syria and continues to support the Syrian rebels against the Assad regime than in securing the terri-

tory which is largely Shia, than in

tory occupied by the IS. It was when the rebellion was going on, with the US on one side and the Russians on the other, that IS emerged as a force with its own army. The then US President Barack Obama had to work with Russia's Vladimir Putin, who was supporting Assad with arms and Russian power to enable a unified approach to contain and eliminate the IS threat. That effort to work out with Russia has received greater result after Trump became the US President as he is reported to have closer relationship with President Putin of Russia.

However, the ceasefire between various rebel forces against Assad and the Gulf states like Saudi and off enabling the IS to get a breather to resist the West led attack against it. That is why IS was able to recapture the key town of

were able to get it vacated.
Iraq backed by Iran does not want what is described as a Sunni led 'Salafistan' to be established in the Shia area of Syria-Iraq — the IS is Sunni force and the two Islamic factions are at each other's throat with IS that claims to lead Islamism not hesitating to brutally kill Shias caught in the battleground. The international fighters for Islamist regime get to the IS-held territory through Turkey-Syria border.

It is this reality of the inner working of the Islamist jihad in the context of rival Islamic states that the international effort to drive out the extremist threat is failing in

Islamic states themselves are promoting jihadi terror on the one hand while working to contain the IS jihad on the other. The consequences of the US success in tracing out and eliminating Osama bin Laden, the Al Qaeda boss whom Pakistan had given sanctuary and who was operating from Jalalabad, has exposed the myth of the Islamic states being opposed to terrorist *jihadi* at official level. Saudi Arabia, for instance, may be opposed to IS. But we must also remember it was opposed to Laden and his Al Qaeda who was a Saudi citizen.

At the same time, it is the Saudi funds and encouragement in opening across many non-Islamic countries the religious schools called madrassas that encourage an exclusivist world conquering version of Islam to be taught to Muslim children in India and elsewhere.

While jihadi terrorism at one level is publicly opposed by Islamic Governments and institutions, the same state-level forces fund and promote Islam as a world conquering religion in private. Whether in the UK or Germany or France or India, it is this brainwashing of Islamic students that prepare them to resonate the calls of such forces as IS; some go beyond mere idea and take up militancy.

In Kashmir or London it is this dominating vision that every Muslim has an obligation to be a jihadi warrior that feeds a mental empathy with terror; in some it goes beyond the mind and become a call to arms.

When mosques of one faction in Pakistan, where Islam is the state religion, are attacked on a day-today basis by another, jihadi brain against Islam itself. That is what London event is warning all of us.

(The writer is a former Rajya Sabha MP from BJP and a Delhi-Ramadi from where the Iraqi forces based political and social analyst)



Prime Minister Modi has given new status to India. India is on par with superpowers like United States, France, Russia and China.

BJP leader

SOUNDBITE



We fully support the ongoing peace talks to resolve the Naga issue. Solution should be honourable and inclusive.

Nagaland CM



Why don't we have data on amount of old currency notes deposited even now? Is the Government that incompetent? Or is it complicit?

CPM leader



Abusing powers

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Unpardonable conduct" (March 25). The incident where Shiv Sena MP, Ravindra Gaikwad assaulted an Air India official over seating issues not merely evokes moral outrage but invites the most stringent action against him. An FIR has already been launched but prosecution must be carried to the logical conclusion without any interference from political parties.

I admire the reaction of other airlines in banning this MP from their flight list. However, it is a sad reality of today that representatives of people, MPs, often misuse and abuse their position and behave in the most uncivilised manner. If the political party he represents has an iota of probity, he should have been suspended. But this is not the case.

S Vasudeva Kodaikanal

Tainted leaders

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Unpardonable conduct" (March 25). Though it is a well known fact that most of our MPs have criminal records and are

Strict action should be taken against Sena MP

his refers to the editorial, "Unpardonable conduct" (March 25). The conduct of Shiv Sena MP Ravindra Gaikwad is unacceptable. He had I not only beaten the duty manager on the Air India flight with his sandal repeatedly but had also tried to throw him down the plane for making him sit in the economy class instead of business class, while the flight he had insistently boarded was an all-economy class. Being an MP doesn't entitle anybody to take law in one's own hand

The Federation of India Airlines and Air India have rightly barred Gaikwad from their flying network. Undesirable activity by anybody during a flight risks the lives of other passengers. Such people must be barred forever from boarding any flight, irrespective of who and what they are. Besides being unlawful, Gaikwad's conduct must be a matter of concern for the Lok Sabha, whose member he is, as well for the Shiv Sena. Lok Sabha Speaker and Shiv Sena chief need to take note of it and do the needful.



facing many charges, including that of murder, the goondaism exhibited by Ravindra Gaikwad, the Shiv Sena MP, is atrocious

and unpardonable. Worse, the MP, instead of apologising, has sent a letter to the Lok Sabha Speaker, seeking an inquiry into the episode and has sought an apology from the chairman of Air India. It is a matter of shame that people have elected such a person who has behaved worse than an animal to represent them in Parliament.

Tharcius S Fernando

Swift action

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Unpardonable conduct" (March 25). No parliamentarian can or should be given the privileged right of being such unruly not only with public servants but even with a commoner. Speaker of the Lok Sabha must take ultimate step by snatching away his membership of Parliament without lingering on the serious matter, instead of going through the formality of referring it to some parliamentary panel, which will take its own time to decide.

Soon forgotten

Sir — This refers to the editorial, Two Leaves out of bounds" (March 25). At a time when the RK Nagar by election is being seen as a litmus test for the future of the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), the Election Commission has not covered itself with glory by the manner in which it has given its interim order to block the AIADMK's 'Two Leaves' party symbol. The symbol has been synonymous with the AIADMK since it was founded by actor-turnedpolitician MG Ramachandran but now stands replaced for the two factions of the party.

It is unfortunate that a hat (AIADMK Amma) or an electric pole (AIADMK Puratchi Thalaivi Amma) bears no resemblance to the Two Leaves. J Jayalalithaa had a virtual cult following among the people but mere lip service is being paid to her memory by party leaders who swore by her at every step. The factional squabble over her legacy is indeed shameful and unseemly.

P Arihanth Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

This (a Shiv Sena MP's conduct on a flight) is in bad taste. If an elected perosn behaves like this, it is a setback to people's trust. **—Union Minister**

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI





I have been defamed. I will file a case against the airline. They will have to come to court and apologise. I will not sit quiet. -Shiv Sena MP **RAVINDRA GAIKWAD**

Defence is not a part-time job

In his 27-month stint, Parrikar set the reforms ball rolling on many fronts. While Arun Jaitley, holding additional charge of the Defence Ministry, can be expected to proceed along the course set by his predecessor, he will be hard-pressed for time to manage it well

FIRST



Holistic approach to tackle nutrition

Because India faces a double-burden of malnutrition. (over-nutrition and under-nutrition), there is need to adopt a multi-sectoral nutritional approach

ndia has witnessed noteworthy improvement in health and nutrition in the last decade, especially among children. The recently released fourth round of National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2015-16 data compared to the third round of NFHS (2004-05) data shows that stunting (low height-for-age) levels have reduced by seven per cent (from 45 to 38); underweight (low weight-for-age) by five per cent (from 40 to 35) and wasting (low weight-for-height) by two per cent (from 23 to 21). These declines are encouraging but not substantial. More than a quarter of the children in the country continue to suffer from one or the other type of malnutrition.

Further, anaemia continues to affect 50 per cent of women, including pregnant women, and 60 per cent of children in the country. While anaemia prevalence has decreased in children by 20 per cent points, from 79 per cent to 59 per cent, the change is not so significant in women (three per cent decline) or in pregnant women (eight per cent decline). Anaemia is also on rise among men, currently at 22 per cent.

The problem of malnutrition and undernutrition on one hand, is compounded by the rising trend of obesity among Indians. Latest NHFS data show an upward increase in the levels of obesity among both men (seven per cent) increase from 12 to 19) and women (six per cent increase from 15 to 21). Furthermore, around six per cent of women and eight per cent of men suffer from diabetes; seven per cent and 10 per cent of women and men suffer from hypertension respectively. This double burden of undernutrition and growing percentage of obesity hypertension and diabetes puts a dent on the country's growing asset (healthy human resource).

Another indicator highlighting malnutrition in India, is its ranking in the Global Hunger Index (GHI). India ranks lower than other devel oping countries from the region on global indexes measuring hunger and malnutrition. It ranked 97 out of 118 countries (scoring 28.5 falling under serious category) in the GHI 2016. Though this score has improved from the earlier score of 36 in 2008, the nation is still one of the worst performers in the region. Out of a total of four components for calculating GHI, three are nutrition parameters (underweight population, wasting and stunting in children) indicating the highly unsatisfactory state of nutrition in the country. Ás per the Global Nutrition Report (2016) India ranks 114th out of 132 countries on under-five stunting and 120th out of 130 countries on under-five wasting and 170th out of 185 countries on prevalence of anaemia.

To address the problem of malnutrition and under-nutrition, the Indian Government has taken important steps, such as the release of fortification standards for five staples by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to fight micronutrient malnutrition, release of food composition tables by the National Institute of Nutrition to increase focus on dietary diversity, and now, the release of nutrition data to address the issue of malnutrition more holistically.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-2 goal, which aims to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", is a priority area for India, which can for hunger and le the issue of malnutrition and undernourishment in the country. To achieve the SDG target, a number of steps are being taken globally and in the country by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). One of FAO's strategic objective is to help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition globally. The FAO looks at nutrition from the perspective of food and agriculture-based approaches as the sustainable long-term solution to hunger and malnutrition. A pilot harnessing the power of modern day technology for improving the health and nutrition behaviours among tribal populations in the state of Odisha

Because India is facing a double-burden of malnutrition: Over-nutrition and under-nutrition existing simultaneously, there is a pressing need for a multi-sectoral approach along with nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions to address the problems holistically. For this, there is a need to reiterate the priorities which may include, spreading of knowledge and awareness regarding safe food, diversifying food baskets, putting women and children at the centre of any nutritional intervention and leverage on modern technologies to impart nutritionlinked messages and sustainable agricultural practices.

(The writer is FAO representative in India)



PK VASUDEVA

The bureaucracy

may try to claw

back to regain the

ground lost under

Manohar Parrikar.

He had rubbed

many officials the

wrong way by

creating a

procurement

policy that was

both transparent

and pragmatic. He

realised that since

middlemen were

indispensable to

deal-making, their

commissions

should be

above board

he sudden departure of Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar to as Chief Minister, has surprised many. Now, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) needs a fulltime Minister to fill in the void left by Parrikar in the modernisation of our defence services. In his 27-month stint at the

MoD, Parrikar set the reforms ball rolling on many fronts. While Arun Jaitley, holding additional charge of the Defence Ministry, can be expected to proceed along the course set by his predecessor, he may find it hard to address the needs of a Ministry as crucial as defence while holding the other equally important portfolio of finance.

To get an idea of the mag-nitude of the tasks at hand, defence deals worth ₹50,000 crore are stuck for want of documentation on strategic partnerships. This entails spelling out the specialisations of Indian corporate players so that foreign partners can forge tie-ups without running from pillar to post for the requisite information. Negotiations on the \$12-billion single-engine jet fighter deal could lose momentum (100 of these aircraft are expected) as Jaitley may take some time to familiarise himself with the issues involved.

A major procurement initiative is called for, in view of the squadrons being phased out. The Indian Air Force has 34 squadrons out of the 42 authorised. Each squadron consists of 18 aircraft. Apart from this, 11 squadrons of MiG-21s are required to be phased out as these have already completed more than 20 years of service and have become obsolete. These are in common parlance known as flying coffins due to large accidents and pilots bailing out/casualties.

However, at the heart of the new agenda is the Make in India dispensation for defence, bolstered by significant foreign shift away from large-scale imports. In this regard, the Procurement Procedure (DPP) policy, released in March 2016, must be

taken to its rightful conclusion. Parrikar had set an ambitious target of \$two billion defence exports by 2019, against a mere \$330 million at present. He also worked out a formula, although not to the satisfaction of all concerned, to the vexed one-rank-one-pension (OROP) issue, which had been hanging fire for a decade.

The Justice Reddy Committee report on OROP, which was submitted in November last year, has not important proposal to create the post of chief of defence staff mendation of a Group of Ministers in 2001 after Kargil battle, under NDA Government and high powered Naresh Chandra Committee's recommendations in 2012 under the UPA Government, needs to be taken forward at the earliest for better higher defence management and appointment of a single advisor to the Government on defence and national

The bureaucracy may try to claw back to regain the ground lost under Parrikar. He had rubbed many officials the wrong way by creating a procurement policy that was both transparent and pragmatic. He

security matters.

were indispensable to dealmaking, their commissions functions seen as an extension of the ministry's operations. He relaxed the blacklisting rule (barring companies that had been indicted earlier for paying bribes) by excluding subsidiaries of tainted companies from their ambit. In doing so, he overcame the deal-freeze regime of former Defence Minister AK Antony, without, however, compromising on transparency in the process.

Parrikar's successor should not disturb the institutional balance of power between the Armed Forces and the Government, which has been one of the strengths of our democracy. Concerns in this besides being informed, clean overlook this aspect. Moreover, Jaitley gets addi-

tional charge of the Ministry of Defence at a time when his hands are only too full with the Budget Session of Parliament still on. Jaitley has been busy with two key Bills, Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill, in the Houses, while he also has to make focused efforts to ensure that whatever negative impact demonetisation has had on economy, is negated fast. He has to build political consensus to get supporting legislation on Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill passed in Parliament and have the new tax regime rolled out

within the July 2017 deadline. Besides this, Jaitley also has institutional work in the BJP as he remains one of the key political strategists in his party and his opinion, both political and legal, are crucial for the BJP in situa-

tions like in Goa, Manipur and

the forthcoming elections in Gujarat, Karnataka and so on. And, as far as the Ministry of Defence is concerned, terror attacks such as the ones in Uri and Pathankot are a reminder that the ministry needs the full-time attention of a Defence Minister. Moreover, the Modi Government has laid special emphasis on better defence preparedness. As such, the three services have to make large-scale acquisitions, which again require meticulous evaluation of global bids.

While for the better part of around three years that the Modi Government has been in power, Jaitley has held the charge of two to three ministries, the arguments only go to show that the Prime Minister must quickly find someone full-time for the key job.

Jaitley himself has held the ministry for a brief while before the appointment of Manohar Parrikar as Defence Minister in November 2014. He has also held other additional portfolios as and when the need has arisen: Jaitley was given charges of Information and Broadcasting Ministry, along with the Corporate Affairs Ministry, but now the I&B Ministry has a fulltime Minister with M Venkaiah Naidu at the helm.

Before this, during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's regime, Jaswant Singh was briefly given additional charge of the Defence Ministry while he was the External Affairs Minister. In the wake of a Tehelka report and subsequent political outrage, George Fernandes had to resign in March 2001, and Singh was given additional charge. But by November, Fernandes returned.

A full-time Defence implement wide-ranging reforms including modernisation, besides being alert to geopolitical threats and changing realities. Hence, Modi must find a worthwhile replacement to Parrikar and relinquish Jaitley of the additional charge.

The problem, however, lies in finding a good candidate for filling the vacancy. It is clear that there is a talent crunch in the existing bench strength of the BJP. That was precisely the reason why Parrikar was handpicked by Modi, shifted out of Goa, and asked to take charge as the Defence Minister.

lyst and commentator)

(The writer is a defence ana-



One GST, but many taxes still

The GST was aimed at having a uniform rate. Even now NCR has rates different from that in Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. This will continue. The consumer may not get any relief. He may have to actually pay a higher price

he indirect taxes are likely to come down as preparation for Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime roll-out begins. The GST in reality will not be one tax but a combination of many

taxes and cess. The rates also will not be one. The GST Council has decided on a four-slab structure - five, 12, 18 and 28 per cent. Further, there will be an additional cess of 12 to 15 per cent on luxury and sin goods, including luxury cars! "The cap on cess on demerit goods on top of peak rate of GST has been kept at 15 per cent, but effectively it will be only 12 per cent", says Union Minister for Finance Arun Jaitley, who is also the

Chairman of the GST Council. The GST is said to bring uniformity in taxes across States. But the definition of demerit goods leaves a wide chasm. Sin tax is to be levied on

The current taxes like

goods like tobacco and alcohol. excise duties, service tax, custom duty etc will be merged under Central GST (CGST). Taxes like sales tax, entertainment tax, VAT and other State taxes will be included in State GST (SGST) and inter-State deals under the Integrated GST. A compensation draft law to enable the Centre to compensate the losses for the first five years is also on the anvil.

But it would not include the very basic of the lifeline petroleum products. It is likelv to leave a wide window for the States and the Centre.

In short the indirect taxes would be around 40 per cent and on petroleum type products, not covered by GST, taxes are likely to go up. For instance, Uttar Pradesh is planning to hike it by five per cent more as it plans to waive farms loans worth about ₹27,000 crore. It

may happen in other States as well, since the window for levying taxes come down.

Petroleum products may have higher levies in some States. It is likely to add to inflation when the crude prices are coming down.

The Union Government has decided to abolish 16 cesses that bring ₹65,000 crore revenue in its preparation for GST roll out. This includes Krishi Vikas and Swachch Bharat cesses.

It seems this would reduce the tax burden. In reality, it may not be so, as the new laws have enough provision to maintain the rates near the high current level to 'neutralise the losses to the States and the Centre".

The GST is collected on value-added goods and services at each stage of sale or purchase in the supply chain. The GST paid on the procurement of goods and services can be set

off against that payable on the supply of goods or services. The manufacturer or wholesaler or retailer will pay the applicable GST rate but will claim back through tax credit mechanism. It is a consumption-based

tax targeting the 'destination' the final consumer. So whatever the levies at whatever the stage, it would finally burden the common man. It is not easy to presently estimate the total impact on the citizen.

The multiplicity of taxes may add to the problem of traders and industry. Finally, the rates on individual goods may not be one. If goods are traded from one State to another, the provision of inter-State tax under IGST can end up having different prices at different places.

Cigarettes, currently taxed at 53 per cent, would attract a cess rate of 15 per cent. But if cess rate of 15 per cent each is levied by the Centre and the State and, say there is also one per cent IGST, the total taxes would be around 28 plus 60 plus one per cent — that is 89

The basic principle is to have taxes at the current level. So, if the current rate of taxation on a product is higher than the GST rate, the cess will make up the difference.

At the moment, the Government levies a different rate of tax on items such as luxury cars, high-end watches apart from tobacco. The highest proposed tax slab is likely to be equal to the difference between the current tax incidence and the highest tax slab along with a cess.

This means that there will be a separate cess on each of these items. It is likely to com-plicate the GST tax structure. Even gold is likely to attract a tax of four per cent

If there are six different levels of cess, it means 10 differ-



ent rates of GST. The cess are supposed to be removed after five years - the period States are supposed to be compensated for their losses. But this country does not have a good record on removing cess. The lure of having more revenue also impacts decision-making.

One good aspect is that it allows the business to take credit on taxes, a new concept. It is aimed at reducing the burden. But all the same, it complicates book-keeping.

Then the taxation on cars and automobiles is likely to be more complicated at the State level. The GST was aimed at having a uniform rate. Even now NCR has rates different from that in Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. This will continue. The consumer may not have any relief. He may have to pay a high-

er price for almost every good. (The writer is a senior

think NOW-

he rise of the buffered identity has been accompanied by an interiorisation; that is, not only the Inner/Outer distinction, that between Mind and World as separate loci, which is central to the buffer itself; and not only the development of this Inner/Outer distinction in a whole range of epistemological theories of a mediational type from Descartes to Rorty, but also the growth of a rich vocabulary of interiority, an inner realm of thought and feeling to be explored. This frontier of self-exploration has grown to the point where we now conceive of ourselves as having inner depths.

—Charles Taylor



JSW is in a position to consolidate this industry. And in case, anywhere in the world, if steel industry has to remain consolidated, there cannot be too many players

JSW STEEL CHAIRMAN SAJJAN JINDAL



I think we just need to make sure that we are focused on growing the economy, getting the private sector's animal spirits back and that will create jobs

BANKER UDAY KOTAK



GIC may be 1st PSU general insurer to launch IPO next fiscal

DELHI: General Insurance Corporation (GIC Re) is likely to be the first PSU insurer to tap the capital market as the Finance Ministry has started scouting for merchant bankers to manage its IPO.

Two months after the Union Cabinet gave a go ahead to the listing of five general insurance companies, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) has set the ball rolling for listing of GIC Re.

The Government holds 100 per cent stake in GIC Re, which provides reinsurance support to 54 general and life insurance companies, both public and private, in the Indian market.

The authorised and paidup share capital of the reinsurance company was ₹1,000 crore and ₹430 crore, respectively, as on March 31, 2016.

"GIC Re will be going for an initial public offer (IPO) of equity shares with face value of ₹5 each to the public in the domestic market," the DIPAM said while inviting merchant bankers to bid for managing the share sale.

The state-owned reinsur-



er would appoint up to eight merchant bankers for managing the IPO. Merchant bankers have to submit bids

GIC Re

by April 18. The share sale could hit the market only in the next

of general insurance companies -- New India Assurance Company, United India Insurance, Oriental Insurance Company, National Insurance Company and General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re). It had approved dilution of up to 25 per cent equity stake in the five companies.

DIPAM in its request for proposal (RFP) said the size of the IPO and its structure shall be decided by the Government or the company in consultation with selected bankers and legal advisors.

Besides underwriting the IPO, the merchant bankers would advise GIC Re and the government on the timing and the modalities of the

They would also undertake dué-diligence activities and prepare the draft prospectus, among other

The bankers would also organise both domestic and international road shows and ensure best return from the IPO to the government and the company.

The Government has set

In mid-January, the a steep disinvestment target Cabinet had approved listing of ₹72,500 crore for the next fiscal, of which ₹11,000 crore is expected to come from listing of PSU general insurance companies.

DIPAM has come out

with guidelines for mechanism and procedure for timebound listing of CPSEs on stock exchanges under which the Government has mandated launch of initial public offer (IPO) within five-anda-half months of a nod from the ministry concerned. PTI

Kotak wants Govt to bring 'animal spirits' out of India Inc

MUMBAI: Banker Uday Kotak has said the BJP's win in the recent state polls is positive for economic reforms and the government should now focus on re-activating "animal spirits" of the private sector to

"I think we just need to make sure that we are focused on growing the economy, getting the private sector's animal spirits back and that will create jobs," Kotak told the news agency over the weekend.

Terming BJP's landslide victory in the crucial state of Uttar Pradesh as a posi-tive development, Kotak said it is a "big signal" for stability and continuity in economic policies.

A two-thirds majority in the country's most populous state, that sends the maximum number of Parliamentarians (80 to the Lower House and 30 to the Upper House, where Opposition Congress is in majority), will help BJP gain upper hand after the 2018 elections to the Rajya

NEW DELHI: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) plans to audit the impact of note ban and the effect it has had on the Government's tax revenues, said CAG Shashi Kant

Sharma. In an interview to the news agency, he said the auditor is gearing up to audit tax revenues under the new Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime and has started capacity building and reorienting its audit methodology and procedures.

Among the special audits, CAG has already completed audit of agricultural crop insurance scheme and flood control and flood forecasting and is now engaged in several important audits like Right to Education, National Rural Health Mission, defence pensions and Ganga Rejuvenation, he said. "These reports should be ready by the end of the current year."

Sharma asserted that CAG has audit jurisdiction over any body or authority which has any relation to Government revenues and expenditure and resistance by some like city development bodies, DISCOMs and metro corporations will wither

"We plan to audit certain issues related to fiscal impact of demonetisation, largely its impact on tax revenues," he said.

CAG has audit jurisdiction over any body or authority which has any relation to **Government revenues and** expenditure and resistance by some like city development bodies, DISCOMs and metro corporations will wither away We plan to audit certain issues related to fiscal impact of demonetisation, largely its impact on tax revenues

CAG to audit fallout of demonetisation

Comptroller and Auditor General of India Shashi Kant Sharma

The Government had withdrawn old 500 and 1,000 rupee notes from circulation on November 8 last year, and announced a new tax amnesty scheme for those holding unaccounted iunked currency.

CAG audit may look into expenditure on printing of notes, RBI dividend payout and bank-ing transaction data.

The auditor has also conveyed to the Government its stand on the recent move of the GST Council to delete section 65 of the preliminary draft that authorised CAG to audit GST.

Our mandate covers GST just like the earlier taxation regimes were covered. We have already started work on restructuring of our revenue audit arrangements to meet this likely challenge when GST is intro-

"This exercise would include issues of capacity building, data access and analysis, reorientation of audit methodology and procedures and developing end-toend IT solutions," he said.

Sharma said executive, legislature, judiciary and audit have clearly demarcated roles and

responsibilities. 'The framers of our Constitution were fully aware of the concept of checks and balances and hence you find the mention of Judiciary and CAG departments, he said. in the fifth part of the Constitution along with legislature and executive," he said. "The CAG's DPC Act of 1971

provides the details of the mandate and scope of audit available to us.

Stating that there are no lacunae in CAG's empowerment, he said that with advent of time, the governance models

have undergone changes. The September 2014 judgement of the Supreme Court in the telecom case "reinforced an important principle that wherever public resources are being used by private companies for revenue generation, CAG will have a duty to examine as to whether the Government is getting due share of such rev-

enue," he said. "So, I can say that the bodies and authorities which have any relation to government revenues and expenditure are under the audit jurisdiction of CAG," he said.

City development bodies, electricity distribution companies and metro corporations "resist" CAG audit on the ground of being autonomous or on the ground of getting no support of the Government although they perform the functions which were earlier being performed by the government

"I believe the situation will settle down with passage of time and such resistance will wither away," he added.

Niti readies draft note on methanol blended fuel



tank Niti Aayog has prepared a draft cabinet note to enable 3 per cent blending of methanol with petrol with a view to reduce dependence on import-

"A Niti Aayog expert committee has prepared a draft cabinet note on methanol blending of petrol and is going to send it to the Transport Ministry for their comments. The Aayog has suggested 3 per cent methanol blending in petrol," a senior Government official told the news agency.

"Countries like China are using methanol blended fuel successfully," the official added. He said methanol can be a

good replacement for petrol. Last year, V K Saraswat, member, Niti Aayog, and also chairman of Methanol Committee had said the methanol economy promises to help India mitigate its petroleum import costs and at the same time, counters problems associated with global warming. "India is in the cusp of a

gigantic transformation towards a developed nation. The country can use its abundant coal reserves to produce methanol non-edible biomass can also be gasified to produce methanol," Saraswat had said.

According to latest estimate, methanol production could cut India's huge crude oil imports bill, which is pegged at ₹6 lakh crore per annum.

Methanol is a clear and colourless liquid produced from natural gas, coal and wide range of renewable feedstocks. Also known as 'wood alcohol', methanol is naturally occurring and biodegradable.

India has already introduced blending of petrol with

According to the Methanol Institute, USA -- an industry consortium, China is using 15-20 per cent of its fuel mixed with methanol.

Sajjan Jindal keen to snap up troubled steel cos for expansion

PTI ■ JAIGAD (MAHA)

SW Steel is keen to capitalise on the stress in the sector by acquiring distressed alloy companies so that it can expand its capacity faster, a top official has said.

"We are looking at distressed companies for acquisition," JSW Steel Chairman Sajjan Jindal told a select group of mediapersons at an group's port project over the

He was replying to a question on whether his company would be looking at acquiring distressed steel companies like Monnet or Bhushan Steel.

"JSW is in a position to consolidate this industry. And in case, anywhere in the world, if steel industry has to remain consolidated, there cannot be too many players," Jindal said.

He said the steel sector is 'passing through a difficult phase" with companies facing problems due to a collapse in prices following the 2008 financial crisis from which the global economy is yet to come out.

The billionaire industri-



alist, however, hinted that the worst is behind the steel makers with a recent surge in demand and prices, which is reflected in the numbers showing a jump in exports.

"I wouldn't say the problems are behind us fully, but as of today the industry is doing well," he said.

Jindal also thanked the Finance and Commerce ministries for measures, like antidumping duties and minimum support price, taken over the past year which have all helped the sector.

It can be noted that the sector is one of the most stressed leaving banks with a pile of dud assets.

In some cases, banks have replaced the management and converting their debt into equity, and then finding

Stating that it is up to the Finance Ministry and the banks to decide on the future course of action on bad loans, Jindal underlined the need for adopting a "transparent" process to deal with bad assets.

"There has to be a transparent process, through which a new bidder should be found and allowed to take over and run the plant efficiently so that banks would not be forced to take more haircuts," he said. Jindal said such a step can ensure that this crucialindustry can move forward and start building

JSW Steel is on course to achieve its 40 million tonne capacity expansion by 2025 from the present 18 mtpa, he

"All the plans are on track to achieving the goal of having 40 mtpa capacity," he

This will call for both brownfield expansion and at least one greenfield project, Asked if the group is

keen on working in Iran's Chabahar Port, Jindal replied in the negative. 'Well, those are geopolitical ports and difficult areas,"

he said, talking about Chabahar where India has committed to build a port as part of its foreign policy initiatives. 'We're not so big as of now in port infrastructure.

We do not have the management bandwidth to take up too many projects," Jindal said. He said his company will

work only in the UAE's Fujairah port, where it has already announced a greenfield project, for the time being.

HAL finalises major plan to speed up aircraft production **NEW DELHI:** State-run aerospace

behemoth Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has finalised a major plan to manufacture nearly 1,000 military helicopters and over a hundred planes, in tune with government's focus on speeding up

defence indigenisation.

HAL Chairman and
Managing Director T Suvarna
Raju said the company has also ramped up its infrastructure to deliver 123 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft to the India Air Force with an annual delivery of 16 jets

In the next five years, the HAL will also carry out major upgrade of almost the entire fighter fleet of IAF including Su-30MKI, Jaguars and Mirage jets, making them more lethal, he

"Next five years will be really vibrant time for HAL. We are upgrading almost every major platform including Sukhois, Jaguars, Mirage and Hawks.

"We are going to build around 1,000 helicopters including Kamov 226, LCH (Light Combat Helicopter) ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter) in the next 10 years," Raju told the news agency in an interview.

The HAL and Russian defence firms have finalised a Joint Venture agreement for production of light weight multi-role

NPA resolution policy gathers

'Kamov 226T' helicopters in India which will replace the aging fleet of Cheetah and Chetak choppers.

The inter-government agreement for the deal was signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia in

December, 2015.
On manufacture of Light
Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, the HAL chief said its production will be doubled from current eight aircraft per year to 16 from 2018-19. Tejas, the smallest and lightest of its class, was inducted

The HAL has an order from IAF to supply 40 Tejas. The Government has also approved the procurement of 83 Tejas Mk-1A taking the total number of the aircraft to be manufactured by HAL to 123.

Raju said besides enhancing infrastructure for redouble manufacturing of Tejas, HAL has also outsourced manufacture of some major components including wings and fuselage of the jet to private industry which will further speed up rate of production.

Calling Sukhoi upgrade a major programme, he said the fleet will be equipped with missiles, avionics and sensors. Both India and Russia have been in negotiation for upgrade of the Su-30MKI to a near fifth-generation

According to sources, the

Instead of being a resolu-

joint lenders' forum (JLF) is

expected to be overhauled to

facilitate quick decision mak-

tion mechanism, the JLF has

become a delaying tool for big

defaulters because as per the

guidelines, restructuring needs

approval of 60 per cent of con-

sortium lenders which more

Arbitration on compensation demand in RIL-ONGC row

arbitration panel has started hearing validity of the Government's demand of \$1.55 billion as compensation from Reliance Industries for "unfairly" producing ONGC's gas. The panel, headed by Singapore-based arbitrator Prof Lawrence Boo, had its first hearing on March 3 where the timetable was drawn, sources

privy to the development said. RIL will first file its statement of claim, followed by a statement of defence by the Government. This will be followed by rejoinders, counterrejoinders and oral hearing, sources said, adding that the panel plans to wind up the hearing in a year.

The Central Government has named former Supreme Court judge G S Singhvi as its nominee on the three-member arbitration panel while RIL and its partners BP Plc of the UK and Canada's Niko Resources have named former UK High Court Judge Bernard Eder to the panel.
RIL-BP-Niko had slapped

an arbitration notice on November 11 last year.

This was against the oil ministry's November 3, 2016 notice to RIL, Niko and UK's BP seeking \$1.47 billion for producing about 338.332 million British thermal units of gas in the seven years ended March 31, 2016 that had seeped or migrated from the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's (ONGC) blocks into their adjoining KG-D6 in the Bay of

Bengal. After deducting \$71.71 million royalty paid on the gas produced and adding an interest at the rate of Libor plus 2 per cent, totalling \$149.86 million, a total demand of \$1.55 billion was made on RIL, BP and Niko.

RIL is the operator of the KG-D6 block with 60 per cent interest while BP holds 30 per cent. The remaining 10 per cent is with Niko Resources. The Government's comensation claim flowed from

the report of the Justice (retd) A P Shah Committee. The Shah panel, in its August 28, 2016, report, concluded that there has been "unjust enrichment" to the

contractor of the block KG-DWN-98/3 (KG-D6) due to production of the migrated gas from ONGC's blocks KG-DWN-98/2 and Godavari PML. The Government, sources said, accepted the recommendations of the committee and consequently, decided to claim

restitution from RIL-BP-Niko

for "the unjust benefit received

and unfairly retained". So, a notice was sent, they said, adding that the government is also pressing RIL to pay \$174.9 million of additional profit petroleum after certain costs were disallowed because of KG-D6 output being lower

Inclusive growth to feature in G-20 meet in Varanasi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-profile Lok Sabha constituency Varanasi will this week hold a two-day G-20 working group meeting where participants will weigh in on evolving global economic scenarios, with inclusive growth on top of the

The Framework Working Group (FWG) is one of the core groups of the G-20, which is a group of 19 nations and the European Union that deliberates on global economic issues and other key developmental challenges.

"In the forthcoming meeting in Varanasi, the G-20 FWG will discuss the current global economic situation as well as deliberate on the policy options that countries can pursue to counter the important development challenges," the finance ministry said in a statement. One important focus, it

said, will be the inclusive

growth agenda and formulat-

ing a framework that will

enable countries to frame country-specific policies.

The third meeting under the G-20 German presidency is being co-hosted by the Department of Economic Affairs, Finance Ministry, and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in Varanasi on March 28-

The first two under the German presidency were held in Berlin in December 2016 and Riyadh in February 2017. The mandate is to deliber-

ate on the challenges facing the global economy and the policy options that countries can use to address the same. India. along with Canada, has been co-chairing this group. Since the inception of the

FWG in 2009, this is the fourth occasion India is hosting this meeting. Previously, India had hosted the G-20 FWG meetings in Neemrana, Rajasthan (2012 with Mexico at the helm). Goa (in 2014 under Australian presidency) and Kerala (2015 under Turkish leadership). PTI

pace, likely announcement soon NEW DELHI: To deal with

mounting bad loans afflicting banks, the Government is like ly to come out with a set of measures for faster resolution of non-performing assets within a fortnight.

"Policy is being given final touches. It should be announced by the month-end or early next month," a senior finance ministry official said.

Broadly, the policy should contain the processes relating to haircut and one-time settlement to be carried out by banks for faster resolution of high-value cases, the official said, adding that the big loan defaults constitute about 70 per cent of the total NPAs.

This will provide a clear direction on the NPA front and the Government will be able to cial said.

take the bull by horns, the offi-Finance Minister Arun Jaitley last week had said NPA resolution mechanism was

being worked out with the

RBI which will put enough

pressure on borrowers to settle

"You see, the amounts are large, but the amounts are restricted. It's not that hundreds and thousands of businesses have created this problem. The problem of big NPA is confined essentially to 30-40, at best 50 companies, and therefore, those

resolved," he had said. During resolution of NPAs, several issues like finding buyers and strategic partners come up, the minister had said.

40-50 accounts need to be

"...I think you wait for a few days... There is some policy decision between the RBI and the government which we will implement, which will put adequate pressure on people to set-tle...," he had said. Jaitley had gone on to say

that "if you look at the whole

structure, there are enough

system is concerned. There

action can be taken".

often than not eludes, sources added. As per the existing JLF guidelines, if a restructuring package is approved by 75 per cent of creditors by value and 60 per cent of creditors by number, other banks have to go along with it. Besides, the sources said

there could be provision which will make wilful default a criminal offence. As far as haircut issues are

instruments available for setconcerned, bankers have a fear tlements as far as the banking of 3Cs -- CAG, CBI and CVC - when they want to sell bad are different legislations where assets at substantially low value, the sources added.

Government working on options for duty sops sought by Apple

Government is working on certain options to accommodate demands related to tax and duty concessions sought by iPhone maker Apple for setting up a manufacturing unit in India.

Although the Finance

Ministry has prima facie rejected the demands of the US-based technology major, senior executives of the company met an inter-ministerial group recently to deliberate upon the issue.

The group discussed at length the demands of the company, sources said, adding that the government is trying to find ways through which certain support measures could be extended to the American firm.

Sources also said the company is asking for concessions as it wants to bring in its supply chain or component makers to



the country as Apple cannot source inputs locally. The company also wants duty exemptions

on the products to be

bought from special economic zones (SEZs). present, goods

not attract any duty but import duties are levied if items produced in special economic zones are sold in the domestic market.

There is a possibility that this demand could be met by the government as several domestic companies are also demanding for the same.

On the other hand, certain duty concessions being sought by Apple are very difficult to meet as India is gradually becoming a manufacturing hub of smartphones.

A strong supply chain is being established in the country despite any sop or concession offered to any player. Also, no domestic or foreign manufacturer has sought any concession from the Government so far.

There is dilemma that if the government extends support to Apple, it may weaken this strong supply

"So the Government has to make a balance," sources added.

Apple has also sought relaxations for consum-ables for smartphone manufacturing and service or repair for 15

In January, Apple had indicated to the Government that it is ready with a blueprint to begin manufacturing iPhones in India, but wants fiscal concessions, including customs duty waiver on import of com-The company sells its

products through Appleowned retail stores in countries like China, Germany, the US, the UK and France, among others. It has no whollyowned store in India and sells its products through distributors such as Redington and Ingram

Can suspend auto exchange if confidentiality breached: Swiss

PTI ■ BERNE/NEW DELHI

s India and other countries As iliula and outer to exchange of information from next year about suspected black money hoarders in Swiss banks, Switzerland has said it can suspend such sharing of details any time if confidentiality is not maintained.

As part of an international commitment to fight the black money menace, Switzerland has effected the automatic exchange of information standard since January 1, 2017, and the sharing of details under this framework will begin from next year with the first batch of countries, including India.

"Domestic financial institutions are collecting this data for the first time this year, and the Swiss tax authorities will exchange it with their counterparts in partner states in 2018," said the State Secretariat for International Financial Matters (SIF).

The Swiss agency, which is mandated to defend the interests of Switzerland on international financial and tax matters and participates in interna-tional negotiations, said further

in its latest quarterly newsletter that necessary steps will be in place to ensure the exchanged data do not fall into the wrong hands or get misused.

"Switzerland is prepared in principle to introduce the automatic exchange of information with all states and territories which meet the relevant requirements. In this sense, the confidentiality and security of the data are important elements of this international standard.

"Switzerland implements the automatic reciprocal exchange of information only with countries which can guarantee confidentiality and data protection. Before any exchanges occur, the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes carries out a thorough examination as to whether or not the partner states which have undertaken to introduce the automatic exchange of information comply with the requirements.

"In some important cases, Switzerland additionally gets an on-the-spot impression of the situation in the partner states. Given that Switzerland does

not belong to the group of countries which implemented the standard early on (socalled early adopters), it is also benefiting from the experience of other countries.

"Before the first exchange occurs, it will be able to examine if all significant elements of the standard have been met. Should it subsequently transpire that a country has not ful-filled its obligations, Switzerland can at any time suspend the automatic exchange of information with the country concerned," the SIF

The Swiss agency further said the system in place so far has been "relatively simple", wherein whenever a foreign tax authority was interested in obtaining information located in Switzerland, it had to make a request for administrative

"However, the rapid international developments in recent years have provided Switzerĺand with two new forms of exchange of information in the area of taxes: spontaneous and automatic exchange of information (AEOI)," it added.

Par Panel for amending laws to disclose loan defaulters' names

NEW DELHI: A parliamen- and tary panel has asked the Finance Ministry to amend banking laws, including SBI Act, to provide for disclosure of names of loan defaulters by banks to tackle the menace of mounting NPAs.

Section 44 of the State Bank of India Act, 1955 as well as some other clauses of confidentiality in the relevant laws invariably prohibit disclosing the names of individuals, who owe money to banks or are responsible for bad loans on account of their failure to repay.

According to the report of the Committee, the names of defaulters are, however, shared with the Reserve Bank of India

Credit Information Bureau Limited (CIBIL).

The report submitted in Parliament recently also take note of the averments made by the Finance Ministry (Department of Financial Services) that there is no proposal to amend the relevant provisions of law to disclose the names of defaulters and publish the same in public The Committee on

Petitions said that in view of serious magnitude of the problem of bad loans, wilful defaulters should be dealt with sternly and the amount due from them should be recovered within a specified time frame. .. There is now an



urgent need to make a clear distinction between wilful defaulters' and 'other defaulters' in the procedure prescribed under the relevant Acts so

that the wilful defaulters should be dealt with sternly and the loan amount is recovered from them within a specified time frame," it said.

The Committee on list of defaulters above Petitions asked the Finance Ministry to apprise it of the final outcome within three months of presentation of its report.

With a view to containing the burgeoning NPAs in banks, the Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the government should make appropriate amendments in the archaic provisions of the SBI Act and other relevant laws to disclose the names of individuals - who owe money to the banks or are responsible for bad loans on account of their default to repay," it said.

It may be noted that the RBI had last year submitted to the Supreme Court a December-end.

₹500 crore in a sealed cover claiming that the said information is confidential, as it is exempt from disclosure under Section 45E of the RBI

Gross NPAs of public sector banks increased to ₹6,06,911 crore while total stressed assets (gross nonperforming assets and restructured standard advances) of scheduled commercial banks were ₹9.64 lakh crore as on December 31, 2016.

As of September-end, the banks' total stressed loans were ₹8,97,000 crore. This is a 7.5 per cent growth in stressed loans from September

Stock markets may see volatility this week: Experts expiry of March series deriv-

NEW DELHI: Stock markets may see volatile trading sessions this week amid derivatives expiry and will be guided by global cues for further direction in the short-term,

"Överall, market appears to be going through a long phase of consolidation before a decisive move is confirmed on either side as almost all positive triggers factored in," said Vijay Singhania, Founder-Director, Trade Smart Online. On the political front,

developments in the budget session of the Parliament will also be keenly watched, he

The Gudget session of the Parliament will conclude on April 12. "Volatility to remain high as we go into the

ative this week which is also the fiscal year closing," said Abnish Kumar Sudhanshu, Director and Research Head, Amrapali

Aadya Trading & Investments. Meanwhile, in a major setback to US President Donald Trump, House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan on Friday withdrew a healthcare bill aimed at repealing and replacing the ObamaČare policy from vote as the Republican party failed to muster the requisite votes to get the legislation passed.

"Global stock market movement will guide the direction for domestic markets in the short-term," said Jimeet Modi, CEO, SAMCO

India becomes 3rd largest aviation mkt in domestic traffic

ket in terms of domestic passenger traffic, beating Japan, an industry report has said.

India's domestic air passenger traffic stood at 100 million in 2016 and was behind only the US (719 million) and China (436 million), Sydney-based aviation thinktank Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) said in its latest report.

India acquired the third spot globally by unseating Japan, which flew 97 million domestic passengers in 2016, CAPA said.

Domestic air traffic has shown a consistent growth of January this year at 25.13 per However, the domestic

travel demand rose 16 per cent in February this year, ending the long streak of over 20 per cent. According to CAPA, India which enjoyed the fourth posi-

tion in terms of overall air passenger traffic (both domestic and international) along with the UK, has also inched closer to becoming the third largest one by March next year.

"India will become the third largest market 2-3 years ahead of what was projected. This is because the growth has

NEW DELHI: India has become 20 -25 per cent throughout been much higher," Kapil Kaul,

Japan, which flew 141 million passengers in 2016, was ahead of India whose total air passenger traffic was 131 million in the previous year, as per

United States with 815 million passengers in 2016 enjoyed the top position, followed by China with 490 million, according to the report.

"While we will reach the third spot for both domestic and international air travel ahead of the projected period, we will remain at that position for a very long time because it will not be easy to surpass China and the US," Kaul said.

Ford India plans to hike prices by up to 2% from April

NEW DELHI: Automaker Ford India plans to increase prices of up to 2 per cent from April in order to partially offset rise in input costs.

The company sells a range of vehicles in the country, from Figo hatchback to iconic Mustang sedan, which are priced between ₹4.65 lakh to Ford India plans to hike prices by up to 2% from April 66.3 lakh (ex-showroom

"Owing to input costs, Ford cars will see an increase of 1-2 per cent from April," a Ford India spokesperson told PTI.

Last week, Volvo Auto India announced to increase prices of vehicles across its model range by up to 2 per cent from April. **PTI** **MUMBAI:** SBI Research has grew by a massive 146 per attributed the lower outcent to USD 2,476 million in ward remittances and mas- Q3, when the demonetisasive jump in travel receipts, tion was announced, it said. that was showing a steep which bumped up the December quarter CAD, to

"There are two distinct trends in the current account deficit (CAD) data print -- lower outward remittances and higher travel receipts -- and this could be attributed to note ban," SBI Research said in a week-

dominated the review peri-

end note. The upward revision in services exports is one of the main reasons in containing CAD, says the report.

The rise in services export is mainly due to a rise in net travel balances, which

can be largely attributed to 73 per cent the note ban impact that quarter-on-quarter growth in personal travel, it further "Net travel has regis-

tered the incremental increase of \$1,469 million in the quarter, which is an alltime high (at least since 2000-01)," the report said. "We believe, people trav-

elling to the country during this time may have bought in more dollars/old currencies, thereby getting reflected in travel receipts during this period," it said.

On demonetisation causing lower outward remit-

tances, the report said outflows through the liberalised remittance scheme (LRS) The increase in net trav- jump in the beginning of billion (1.4 per cent of GDP)

decline in domestic

deposits, is now tapering

Note ban may have affected CAD: SBI Research

off sharply. Interestingly, in the note ban quarter, the growth rate of inward remittance slipped to 56 per cent from a high of 342 per cent in the preced-

ing quarter.
"Now, whether this is due to increased apprehension on the part of public regarding tighter norms for unaccounted money or something else is entirely a matter of debate and con-

jecture," the report said. "But the fact is, this may have resulted in lower remittances abroad and possibly an increase in domestic deposits," it said. The CAD stood at \$7.9

up than \$3.4 billion (0.6 per cent of GDP) in the preceding quarter.

But in percentage terms, it was stagnant at 1.4 per cent in the year ago period, and was up by \$800 million

in absolute terms. The less-than expected widening of CAD has burnished the rupee's strength after an increase in the US interest rates, the report said adding that "the strong CAD data can support the rupee

in the short-term." The CAD is likely to be within limits of 1-1.5 per cent in FY19 too, it said. **PTI**

General insurance premium set to go up from April 1

NEW DELHI: Car, motorcycle and health insurance will cost more from April 1 with regulator Irdai giving go-ahead to insurers for revision in commission for agents.

The change in premium after modification will be limited to +/- 5 per cent of the existing rates. The increase will be in

addition to the enhanced third party motor insurance rates, which too will come into affect from April. The Irdai (Payment of

or Reward to Insurance Agents and Insurance Intermediaries) Regulations, 2016 comes into effect from April 1, 2017. The regulations, the regu

Commission or Remuneration

lator said, bring about certain revisions in commission/ remuneration rates and also introduce the reward system.

These may trigger insurers to revisit the pricing of their products in so far as the costing input relating to commis-



Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai).

However, the change in premium due to the new regulations should be "limited to +/- 5 per cent of the existing premium rates products/add-ons", it said.

Further, insurers will have to give a certificate that there is "no detrimental change" in premium rates or any other provision of policies already

FPI inflows at \$6b in March on hopes of more reforms

NEW DELHI: Foreign investors have pumped in about \$6 billion in capital markets so far this month, buoyed by expectations that BJP's victory in assembly polls is a precursor to more "bold, reformist policies" in India.

The inflows follow a net investment of Rs 15,862 crore in equity and debt last month. Prior to that, FPIs had pulled out a total of over ₹80,000 crore from October to January According to depository

data, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) infused a net sum of ₹22,268 crore in equities during March 1-24 and another ₹16,177 crore in the debt segment, translating into a combined inflow of ₹38,445 crore (\$5.84 billion).

Investors believe that the Government will continue with its bold reformist policies following a huge BJP win in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Bajaj Capital Senior V P and Head Investment Analytics Alok Agarwala said.

Digital content industry confident of finding place in mkt MUMBAI: The digital content industry is confident of finding

its place in the market soon, with the advertisers' rising interest in it and the Broadcast Audience Research Council planning a measuring tool for The largely advertising dri-

ven and free subscription based over-the-top (OTT) platform is in a nascent stage in the domestic market with a dozen or so Being digital, it offers high-

er addressability and measurability of both the ads as well as the content. "Digital (market) is taking

baby steps now to create content for the discerning people who want original content. Give this industry a year or two and you will see a big change, Viacom18 Digital Ventures Chief Operating Officer Gaurav Gandhi said over the weekend The YouTube, which is an

ad-funded and user-generated OTT platform, offers video on demand, while Viacom18's Voot, Jio Play (from Reliance Jio), TVF Play, OZee TV

on-demand space.

etc operate in the ad-led video

Others like Hotstar, Sony Liv, Ditto TV, Viu, ErosNow operate on a 'freemium' model where some content is ad-led (free) while some is subscription-led. Netflix and Amazon Prime are subscription-led Zulfiqar Khan, business head at ErosNow, the OTT

platform of film producer and distributor Eros İnternational, said, "As a medium, as content creators and as a platforms if we want to accelerate growth, we need to inspire the audience and wean them away from He said ErosNow is toying

with the idea of creating a mainstream film for the digital audience before a theatrical release. Meanwhile, the Broadcast Audience Research Council is

planning to launch a digital measurement tool this year, measuring the ads and content viewed on the new medium. According to a the latest Ficci-KPMG report, leading

subscription income.

OTT video platforms like Hotstar, Voot are dependent on ad revenues, while the likes of Hotstar have a small portion as



₹186 crore in fiscal 2016, Hotstar's ad revenue contributed ₹139 crore, while the subscription contributed only ₹24 crore.

"The Broadcast Audience Research Council has moved into the video space. Covering digital video is not just covering pure-play digital video but it is covering TV on digital devices," the council's business head for digital, Jamie Kenney,

"We need to see the holistic picture whether it is a YouTube pure-play, catch-up (TV) on digital," he said. Notably, the digital medium is fast growing globally, and India is among the fastest growing

The advertisers see that it has better addressability and better connect with the audience, Kenney said. "From a research perspec-

tive, you have as much more addressability and more ability on the digital side to know which works and which doesn't," he said.
"Additional research is

available on digital because it is a one-to-one with the consumer, and thus, a system where you have the ability to get better than on TV," Kenney

Archana Anand, business head at Z5, which is Zee Group's OTT offer, said the new medium is currently driven by urgency and genres like news and sports are doing well.

The industry is awaiting the roll out of digital measurement, she said.

"The moment you bring in the digital measurement, the real divide between the traditional broadcast and digital space becomes visible," she "Because today every chan-

nel is worried that they are losing it to digital, and when this measurement happens, it becomes a part of them and they feel there is an ownership," Anand said. Digital advertising is expected to grow at a CAGR of

crore by 2021, contributing to 27.3 per cent of the total ad pie, as per the latest Ficci- KPMG report. It currently stands at ₹7,690

31 per cent to reach ₹29,450

"As digital infrastructure

continues to develop and data costs are driven down, digital consumption is likely to become more frequent and more mainstream," the report

"The resultant growth in advertising is likely to drive growth over the next five years, it added.

THREE INJURED BY

HIGH-SPEED CAR IN UK

London: At least three people,

after a high-speed car mowed them down in north London.

teenagers armed with knives

have been arrested in connection

SUDAN, SAUDI TO HOLD 1ST JOINT AIR FORCE DRILL

with the incident, which is not

being treated as "terrorist

Khartoum: Sudan said on

Arabia, the first such

Sunday it will begin this week

a joint Air force drill with Saudi

manoeuvres since Khartoum

ties with Tehran in 2015.

Houston: A 24-year-old

hometown Kansas.

allied with Riyadh after breaking

\$1,00,000 RAISED FOR KANSAS SURVIVOR'

American, who took a bullet for

'A True American Hero' by the

Indian-American community in

to help him buy a house in his

56 GET JAIL FOR EGYPT

MIGRANT SHIPWRECK

sentenced 56 people to prison

terms of between seven and 10

years over the deaths at sea of at

least 202 migrants in September,

FENCE ALONG AF BORDER

Islamabad: Pakistan's military

has begun fencing parts of its

disputed northwestern border

with Afghanistan to curb the

fighters it says are based on

Afghan soil, according to a

movement of Pakistani Taliban

MERKEL'S PARTY EASILY **BEATS CENTRE-LEFT** Saarbrucken: German

Chancellor Angela Merkel's party won a regional election by a wide margin, dealing an early

blow to Centre-Left hopes of

ending her more than decade-

long reign. In the Saarland state

Christian Democrats (CDU) won

40 per cent against 30 per cent

for the Social Democrats (SPD).

CHINA, RUSSIA TIES WON'T AFFECT US RELATIONS: PAK

"historic" ties with China and

efforts for closer relations with

Russia will not have an adverse

partnership with the US, said the

new ambassador to the US Aizaz

vote held six months before a

General Election, Merkel's

Washington: Pakistan's

effect on its traditional

PAK STARTS BUILDING

Cairo: An Egyptian court

judicial officials said.

Houston which raised \$1,00,000

an Indian, has been honoured as

Scotland Yard said four

including a woman, were injured

Top al-Qaeda leader killed in **US** drone strike

top al-Qaeda commander Alinked to the bombing of a luxury hotel and attack on Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan has been killed in a US drone strike in Afghanistan, the Pentagon has said.

Qari Yasin, who was responsible for plotting the September 20, 2008 bombing on the luxury Marriott Hotel in Islamabad

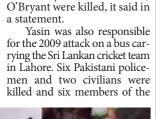
and the attack on a bus carrying the Sri Lankan cricket team in 2009 in Lahore, was killed on March 19 in a US counter-terrorism airstrike Paktika Province

Afghanistan. Pentagon said Yasin was responsible for the deaths of dozens of innocent people, including two American service members. "The death of Oari Yasin is evidence that terrorists who defame Islam and deliberately target innocent people will not escape justice," US Defence

Sunday The terrorist from Balochistan had ties with Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and had plotted multiple al-Qaeda terror attacks, including the Marriott Hotel

Secretary James Mattis said on

bombing in Islamabad in which US Air Force Maj Rodolfo I Rodriguez and Navy Cryptologic Technician Third Class Petty Officer Matthew J O'Bryant were killed, it said in a statement.





team injured, the Pentagon said. The Pentagon's confirma-

tion comes a few days after the Pakistan Taliban confirmed that Yasin had been killed in a US drone strike. Describing Yasin as a "close assistant" of the Pakistani Taliban, spokesman of the outfit Mohammad Khurasani said the senior al-Qaeda leader was a "trainer of Mujahideen".

Three of Yasin's "companions" were also killed in the US drone strike, he said.

The US had been hunting Yasin for at least four years, according to Long War Journal.

Anti-ISIS woman fighter's family 'under investigation'

London: The first British woman to join an all-female military unit to fight the ISIS terrorist group in Syria has claimed that her parents and family have been the subject of an investigation by the ÚK's counter-terrorism officers. Kimberley Taylor, who joined Kurdish forces in the battle to reclaim Raqqa from ISIS forces in March 2016, told the BBC that her parents' laptops and phones have been taken away and not returned for a month and that her family are "afraid for their own safety'

The 27-year-old, known as Kimmie, joined the Kurdish Women's Protection Units (YPJ) military academy and has been fighting against ISIS since October last year.

Hamas shut the crossing between the Gaza Strip

and Israel on Sunday after

blaming the Jewish state for the

assassination of one of its offi-

cials in the Palestinian enclave.

Gaza, run by Islamist movement

Hamas, said it was shutting the

Erez crossing for an indefinite

period as it investigates Friday's

murder. It did not give details on

the reason behind the closure,

though there was speculation

authorities may be seeking to

prevent those responsible for the

killing from leaving.

The Interior Ministry in

AFP ■ GAZA CITY

Cincinnati nightclub shooting kills 1

unfire erupted early on Sunday inside a crowded nightclub with a history of violence, killing one person and wounding more than a dozen others, authorities said. No suspect is in custody,

but there is no indication the shooting at the Cameo club was terrorism related, officials said. Assistant Police Chief Paul

Neudigate said in a tweet that there was only one reported shooter but that police were investigating whether others were involved. Police had earlier said "at least a couple of shooters" were involved.

Authorities believe a conflict began earlier in the day that led to the shooting, city manager Harry Black said in a news release. Authorities were

deployed along the Gazan borders and exits by sea were also

blamed the Israeli Intelligence

agency Mossad and its "col-

laborators" for the killing of

Mazen Faqha, 38, who was shot

dead by unknown gunmen.

He was killed by four bul-

lets from a pistol equipped with

Faqha was responsible for cells

of Hamas's military wing, the

Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades,

in the Israeli-occupied West

Bank. Faqha's wife, Nahed

Assida, called on "Palestinians

According to Israeli media,

a silencer. Israel has not com-

mented on the shooting.

Hamas officials have

banned, officials said.

blames Israel for assassination

planned a news conference later in the morning.

Fifteen people were shot, police said. Some drove themselves to hospitals, and others were taken by ambulance.

Cameo has a history of gun violence, including a shooting inside the club on New Year's Day in 2015 and one in the parking lot that September, Black said. A phone call to the club Said. A phone can to the club Sunday morning by *The* Associated Press went unan-swered. Capt Kim Williams said there was "just a lot of chaos, obviously, when shots were fired." "Saturday night, it is a very young crowd. We have had incidents here in the past, but this is by far the worst," she said.

Several officers were working security at the club; some performed first aid and tried to

in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

to respond to this assassination?

blood is in your hands," she

said during a women's confer-

ence in Gaza. Faqha's funeral

on Saturday drew thousands of

Hamas supporters into the

streets with chants of "revenge"

and "death to Israel."

'The price of my husband's

fatal shooting on Sunday in



revive the person who died, police said

A single body was removed by the coroner shortly after 6 am The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives was also at the scene. Among the injured,

Ismail Haniva, until recent-

head of Hamas in Gaza, and

Yahya Sinwar, who replaced

him as leader, headed the pro-

cession. According to Hamas,

Fagha formed cells for the

Islamist group's military wing

in the West Bank cities of

Tubas, also where he was born,

eight were being treated at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, hospital spokeswoman Kelly Martin said. One person there was in critical condition. She had no details on the types of injuries or the ages of the victims.

Erez Cros evacuates residents

> Beirut: The ISIS group ordered reported.

The terrorists said coalition airstrikes had weakened the Tabga Dam and that the water level behind the dam was rising. The extremists captured the city from Syrian rebels in 2014 and it now serves as the capital of the group's self-styled

Civilians began fleeing midday, according to the activist-run Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently.

ISIS warns Syrian

residents to evacuate the Syrian city of Raqqa on Sunday following reports that a dam contested by US-backed forces upstream on the Euphrates River could collapse, activists

dam at risk,

Islamic caliphate.

Pro-China Carrie Lam becomes Hong Kong's 1st woman leader

PTI ■ HONG KONG

hina-backed bureaucrat Carrie Lam was on Sunday elected as Hong Kong's first woman Chief Executive who quickly pledged to heal the "divisions" in the gleaming territory which has seen unprecedented demands for democracy and protests at the Communist giant's growing influence. Lam, 59, won 777 votes

from the 1,194-member Election Committee, made up of mostly Beijing-loyalists. She is the first woman to be elected to the post.

John Tsang Chun-wah and retired judge Woo Kwok-hing, who took 365 and 21 votes

Hollande seeks to boost

Singapore: French President Francois Hollande on Sunday

called for efforts to intensify the relationship between Europe

and Asia in the face of resur-

He was speaking in Singapore, the first stage of the

last international tour of his

five-year term which will also

take him to Malaysia and

Indonesia. "I appeal for us to

intensify our exchanges, our trade, political and cultural

agreements," he said. "This is all

the more necessary because

there is a resurgence of protec-

tionism, isolationism and the

questioning of... International institutions," he said in a clear

allusion to the US under

President Donald Trump. AFP

ties with Asia in face

of isolationism

gent "isolationism".



Opp leader, 130 detained as

Russians defy protest bans

The former chief secretive is not chosen by public vote, Britain and China. The principle dominated by pro-Beijing electors. Hong Kong merged with Chinese mainland in 1997 under the 'one country two systems'

Protesters gather at Marsivo Field in St Petersburg, Russia,

In Hong Kong, chief execu- principle worked out between omy from Beijing to Hong Kong which is officially called the Hong Kong Special

IRAQ AIRSTRIKES PROBE

AGENICES ■ IRBIL (IRAQ)

The Iraqi military says 61 bodies have been pulled from the rubble of a home in Mosul after allegations surfaced that around 200 civilians had been killed in airstrikes in the city

But the military said an initial examination of the home shows no indication of an airstrike, and that it was more likely that ISIS terrosists blew

up the building.

The details are among the first to emerge since the defense departments from both Iraq and the United States launched formal investigations Saturday into airstrikes that hit western Mosul between March 17 and 23.

been making an all-out push to regain Mosul from ISIS since October. Iraq's second-largest city has been under the terror-

61 bodies pulled from rubble on social media say the March



The Iraqi military said in a statement on Sunday that the home it examined had been reduced to rubble, but there was no sign of it being hit from the air. The team found a vehicle bomb and detonator in the debris and, along with witness accounts, it believed that ISIS fighters had blown up the home. The military said 25 women and children were also rescued from the home alive

and is its last major stronghold

The US-led coalition confirmed Saturday that it had car"at the location corresponding to allegations of civilian casualties." Civil defence groups who

15-year-old girl whose gan-

After the video of the

Agrape was streamed live on

Facebook, and her family have

been relocated to a "safe space",

attack was published, the

authorities offered relocation

services to the victim and her

family as they started receiving

threats and were being

harassed, the Chicago Sun-

men allegedly gangraped a

teenager and streamed the

assault live on Facebook. What

was more horrifying was that

the 40 people who watched the

On Monday, five to six

Times reported on Saturday.

a media report said.

Teen gangraped on Facebook

call the police.

bourhood.

Live relocated to safe place

However, the Iraqi military, on its Facebook page, has claims that an air strike was behind the deaths. The statement names al-Resala neigh-

17 strike was one of the deadliest. It is that strike that is the focus of the US probe.

The investigations are aimed at clearing up the confusion swirling over the number of civilian casualties and what caused their deaths. Bashar al Kiki, chairman of the Nineveh Provincial Council, told CNN on Saturday that up to 200 people were killed in several "indiscriminate airstrikes" over a number of days that he blamed on Iraqi and coalition air forces.

Of the 61 bodies recovered so far, it is unclear how many belong to civilians and how many might be ISIS fighters.

bourhood rather than Jadideh.

The incident came to the

attention of the police on Monday night, when the girl's

mother approached the head of Chicago Police and registered

a "missing" report. She said the girl disappeared on Sunday

from the Lawndale neigh-

the Chicago Police head the screen shots of the video of the

found and reunited with her

mother. Chicago Police

spokesman Anthony Guglielmi

said the girl was found by

Ogden District police officers.

The woman also showed to

On Tuesday, the girl was

5 terrorists killed, 16 held in Army raids in Egypt

Cairo: At least five terrorists were killed and 16 others arrested during army raids in Egypt's restive North Sinai, the

military said on Sunday. The takfiri terrorists included one of the leaders of the Sinai-based terrorist group Ansar Biet el-Maqdes, Egypt's military spokesperson Colonel Tamer el-Refae said in a state-

ment. Sixteen suspected terrorists were also arrested during the raids, he said. Egypt's North Sinai has witnessed many terror attacks since the January 2011 revolu-tion that toppled the former

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The attacks, mainly targeting police and military, increased after the ouster of Islamist ex-president Mohamed Morsi in 2013 by military following massive protests against his rule. The military has launched

security campaigns in the North Sinai area, in which some terrorists are based.

Using 'you' helps cope with negative experiences: Study

 $P^{\text{eople use the word "you"}}_{\text{more often than "I" to cope}}$ with negative experiences or while sharing an insight, a new study has found. It may seem contradictory

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

that a means of generalising to people at large is used when reflecting on one's most personal and idiosyncratic experiences, researchers said. from Researchers

University of Michigan in the US said it may seem contradictory that a means of generalising to people at large is used when reflecting on one's most personal and idiosyncratic experiences. They conducted



2,489 people to understand why people curiously use "you" not only to refer to specific others, but also to reflect on their own experiences.

In one experiment, researchers asked participants to write about a personal experience: 201 were asked to make meaning from a negative event, 198 were asked to relive a negative event, and 203 were simply asked to write about a neutral experience.

Those in the meaningmaking group used genericyou more in their essays (46 per cent used the word at least once) than those in the relive group (10 per cent used the word at least once) and the neutral group (three per cent used the word at least once).

The researchers also found that using generic-you led people to view the event as more distant. "It is something we all do as a way to explain how things work and to find meaning in our lives," said Ariana Orvell, a doctoral student in the University of Michigan.

Cutting salt intake may lower night-time toilet trips: Study

Tokyo: Lowering salt intake can significantly reduce excessive night time toilet trips, a condition which is also known as nocturia, a new study has found. For the study, 223 volunteers were asked to cut their salt by 25 per cent, from 10.7 grammes to 8 grammes per day, their average night time toilet expeditions fell from an average of 2.3 trips to 1.4 times In contrast, when 98 subjects increased their intake from 9.9 to 11g they found that their need to urinate increased from 2.3 times to 2.7 times every night, "This is the first study to measure how salt intake affects the frequency of

going to the bathroom," said

University in Japan.

Matsuo Tomohiro, of Nagasaki

2 terrorists killed in B'desh military raid the five-storey building. We can Dhaka: Bangladesh Army comconfirm the two were killed,"

mandos on Sunday shot dead two Islamist terrorists in an ongoing raid at a building where terrorists were holed up, a day after six people were killed and 50 injured in blasts claimed by the Íslamic State outside the hideout in Bangladesh's northeastern Sylhet city. The commandos located

the two terrorists wearing suicide vests on the ground floor of the five-storey building and shot them dead, Army spokesman Brigadier General Fakhrul Ahsan said. "Our commandos fired

gunshots seeing the two terrorists on the ground floor of

Ahsan said. The suicide vest of one of them also exploded, he said. Ahsan said the military oper-

ation is still underway as more terrorists equipped with arms, explosives and grenades could be holed up in the building. 'The entire area has become risky. Considering the overall sit-

uation, it will take more time for the operation to complete," he said in the briefing. The spokesman said commandos entered from the top of the building to avoid booby traps laid out on the ground floor and then used tear gas.

NASA's 'sensory skin' can detect damages outside spacecraft Washington: NASA scientists Under development at NASA's Kennedy Space Centre

have developed a 'sensory skin' for spacecraft that can pick up signs of damage in real time, an innovation that could help protect future satellites, aircraft and even habitats on other worlds. The new invention uses a

series of several technologies to create circuits printed on thin layers and that can be embedded in a spacecraft's structure, scientists behind the invention said. Micrometeoroids and orbital debris pose threats to spacecraft as they travel at very high speeds for trips to the Moon and deep space. Something as small as a

paint chip moving at that velocity can punch through several layers of glass.

Moscow: More than 130 people were detained in Moscow as thousands attended a rally against Government, according to a rights group tracking

Thousands of Russians

in the US, the Flexible Damage

Detection System technology

has been pursued as a possible

solution to NASA's problem of

figuring out in real-time where

a spacecraft is damaged and

spacecraft's hull — or the first

layer or two — there are very

limited ways for astronauts

aboard a spacecraft to know

way through and causes a leak

would set off alarms, but oth-

erwise the current methods to

detect damage require either a

camera inspection or a space-

walking astronaut.

An impact that goes all the

there might be damage.

If something pierces a

how seriously.

demonstrated to protest at corruption, defying bans on rallies which were called by prominent Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny — who was arrested along with dozens of others.

One dead as 1,000 migrants rescued off Libya

Rome: One woman was found dead while aid groups said on Sunday around 1,000 migrants were rescued overnight off the Libyan coast, the latest victim among growing numbers seeking to reach Europe.

the dead woman was found on one of several rudimentary ves-

sels carrying would-be refugees, helped during a six-hour operation. Two rescue ships as they sought to make the perilous journey to Italy, three days after more than 250 Africans were feared drowned



ing rubber dinghies. Despite rough winter seas, migrant departures from Libya

Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) and SOS Mediterranee said

picked up the migrants 🎧

on boats chartered by people traffickers have accelerated in recent

months from already-record levels, with patrol boats rescuing more than 6,000 people in the past week alone.



'I'm part of changing cinema'

TAAPSEE PANNU, who will next be seen in the forthcoming movie Naam Shabana, says she is proud to be part of the changing phase of Indian cinema where women-centric films are becoming a reality. "When I entered the film industry, it was going through the change and I knew that people are ready to receive experimental content, but never thought I will become part of that change with a film like Pink. I feel proud to witness and be a part of new age Indian cinema. I think I am very fortunate," Taapsee said.



'Anil Kapoor is a delight to work with. The one thing that I admire most about him is his warmth... He makes it a

point to greet everyone on set, brings this amazing energy and you enjoy the work.



BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH has become a father for a second time. Cumberbatch is yet to formally announce the news. The actor's wife, Sophie Hunter, gave birth to their second son at Portland Hospital in London on March 3. The baby's full name is Hal Auden Cumberbatch and is a brother to Christopher, who was born in June 2015. Cumberbatch has named his son after a Shakespearean hero. Hal was the nickname Henry V had before he became the hero of Agincourt.

Pamela offended by her old image

PAMELA ANDERSON reportedly stormed off the set of TV show Celebrity Juice after host Keith Lemon embarrassed her by showing an old school photograph of her. According to Lemon, Anderson grabbed her faux fur stole and left the set without saying goodbye, reports a source. "(Anderson) just suddenly picked up her fur stole and stormed off home. At first I thought it might be because she didn't want to play a game that involved putting chips up her nose, but it wasn't, it was because we showed an old school picture of

her and she didn't

source.

like it," Lemon told a

Love verified?

Aadhaar documentation boosts customers' confidence in the authenticity of profiles on matrimonial sites, reveals a survey

A ccording to the survey conducted by matrimonial website Lovevivah.com, maturity and compatibility of life partner lies high on agenda rather than their social status. The survey was conducted on 2000 active users of the matrimonial website, read a state-

The survey highlights the importance of Aadhar based verification. As many as 74 per cent users believe that adding the Aadhaar verification as a check has increased the authenticity. Another finding is that 80 per cent of users feel that online matrimonial sites are unsafe, insecure and full of fake profiles.

"One of my friends in Mumbai registered herself on a matrimonial website and provided with her personal contacts details. She found few matches and she started checking their profiles. On checking she realised that there was no real information about the profiles and soon after which, she started recieveing lewd emails and messages from the matches she found. All this stopped only after she lodged an FIR. It is quite unsafe if these websites allow anyone and everyone to register without verification," said Praveen Gupta, a bank manager. Gorav Aggarwal, founder of

LoveVivah.com, said that their initial analysis showed that despite the matrimonial sites being a convenient option for many, has loopholes like such which are dangerous if not looked upon.

"A major challenge faced by the online matrimony sites is the inflow of fake profiles, i.e. people creating profiles with false info and details, or on behalf of others without their consent. We have tried to put a check on this by incorporating online Aadhaar verification process as part of the registration procedure," he said.

"Our tie-up with UIDAI has enabled us to verify and cross-check in real time if the Aadhaar card

Art flourishes under the right patronage. Just ask

vative projects that are

inspired by the local rural, yet

world — including Swain

Sitaram from India, chosen

via a collaboration with

Indian online art gallery

Bestcollegeart.com - have

been handpicked for this

year's residency programme.

newcomers participating in

Residence Programme Swain

untitled work which is a

painted and carved brick of

city of beautiful landscapes,

Odisha, looks at the beauty

external influences of politics,

economics and social con-

duct. All these in turn influ-

Amidst a pantheon of

Ten artists from across the

industrial setting.







details mentioned by the user are correct or not. We can guarantee the existence and authenticity of the user who has created a profile," he

One more important number that came out of this survey was the fact that the popularity on online matrimonial websites is also increasing with every passing day.
According to the number compiled, 14 per cent of the users, who took part in the survey, found their life partner through online matrimonial sites.

"Many of us are so consumed in the work lives that thinking about finding a life-partner through old ways, can be very difficult. The matrimonial sites have made the task easy. I found my partner through one of these matrimonial sites and given they are now having pre-verification, it will be trusted more," said Akansha Sangwan, an IT-pro-

For 32 per cent, maturity and compatibility are the most important factors when searching for a life partner, followed by educational qualification (20 per cent), financial independence (18 per cent), looks and appearance (17 per cent) and finally family or social status (13 per

cent).

"Remarkably, the new generation, which is tech savvy, independent and open-minded, is more inclined towards the online mediums for choosing their life partner. This has clearly come out as the result of the survey," said Gorav.

"Moreover, another thoughtprovoking fact that was revealed through the survey is that the younger generation gives higher weightage to maturity, compatibility and education level of their life partner than the mere looks or social status. This transition in the thought process of new generation is going to prove really beneficial in long run and will help create happy and successful marriages," he con-

> a world-class centre of excellence for creativity, given the diversity and talent it houses.

Through this programme, we

are trying to recognise and

encourage the emerging talent

of India. We annually host a

small group of visual artists

work in a diverse array of media from print and photog-

raphy to animation, perfor-



Phone-in

Here are a few launches that hit the tech world this week



APPLE INTRODUCES NEW IPADS, RED IPHONE 7 AND UPDATES IPHONE SE

Apple has launched its most affordable iPad range with the introduction of the latest 9.7inch iPad starting at ₹28900 for the Wi-Fi version and ₹39900 for the 32GB Wi-Fi + Cellular version. The device is powered by the Apple A9 processor and come with a fingerprint sensor. The iPad mini 4 is now available at ₹34900 for the 128GB Wi-Fi version

> Apple has announced iPhone 7 d iPhone 7 Plus (PRODUCT)RED Special Edition in aluminium finish, to mark a 10 years of partnership between Apple and (RED). between Ĉustomers purchase this device will be contributing to a global fund to fight AIDS.

and ₹45900 for the 128GB Wi-Fi + Cellular

The new special edition iPhone will be available in India in April. The company has also updated the iPhone SE by doubling the capacity and is now available in 32GB and 128GB versions. The updated iPhone SE will be

SELFIE FOCUSED PHONES

Oppo has launched a selfie focussed

available from March 24 at a price of ₹27200.

smartphone the F3 Plus which features brand's first dual front camera including a firstever 120-degree wide-angle Group Camera. The Oppo F3 Plus is priced at ₹30990 and will be available from 1st April 2017 both online and offline. Pre-order are open till 31st March 2017 and will come with a gift pack.

Gionee has also launched A1selfie phone priced at ₹19999

and as expected there is a bigger 16MP camera on the front and a 13MP camera on the rear.



XIAOMI REDMI 4A I AIINCHED **CREATES A RECORD**

Xiaomi has launched its most affordable 4G smartphone in India the Redmi 4A at ₹5999. The phone functionality



and is powered by a Qualcomm Snapdragon 425 processor. İt packs 13MP/5MP

cameras and has $3120 \, m \, A \, h$ battery. The phone is available on Amazon and mi.com and they sold more than 250,000 units within four minutes of launch. Amazon.in witnessed

site and orders spiked to a record 1500 per second during the period of the sale.

Brick as a canvas

any of the emerging artists who've participated in the Glenfiddich Artist in Residence Programme. Every year since 2002 (and 2012 in India), budding artists are invited to participate in this SWAIN SITARAM £10,000 residency programme.What it includes, confined space though, is a three-month stay at the Glenfiddich distillery through his installation. By estate in quaint Dufftown, Ankita Jain Scotland, and the chance to



paintings. "Architecture visually challenging and recites the social and political background. I present my own home town Odisha and

Sitaram stands out with his I'm closely associated with the architectural materials like stones, bricks, cement et al. The visual abstractions in the arrange-Swain, who hails from the ment and overlapping layers of imageries are the interprefrom a realistic point of view. tations of human beliefs and For him landscapes are not myths into the particular just a natural set-up, but space. We find the conceived acquire importance and meaning only due to the or unperceived influences that make an impact on people and my paintings represent this juxtaposition," explained Swain. He further added, "This will be an opporence the architecture of the place. So architecture becomes the focal point in his tunity for me to widen and explore my creative bound-



aries outside of my traditional work space. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to interact with some great artists from around the world in the heart of the Glenfiddich distillery in Scotland."

Émerging Artist Awardee Swain was picked by a 13strong jury, which included familiar names like Swapan Seth (art collector), Sunil Sethi (president, FDCI), Veer Munshi (artist), Kapil Chopra (mentor, Bestcollegeart.com and president, The Oberoi Group) and Peter Nagy (director, Nature Morte), who had the tough job of sifting through 2,600 artworks uploaded on the website by

810 emerging artists.
They've picked well, though. Swain's got the right art credits. "Our globally recognised forum Artists in Residence (AiR) provides a unique and inspired platform for artists from around the world to showcase their talent and to gain international recognition. India has become

bers said, "We are delighted to host the sixth edition of the Emerging Artist of the Year award. This is India's most consistent art award and the most important initiative for the growth of Indian contemporary art for the last six years.

the AiR programme.

The award not only seeks out the next generation of artists but also nurtures and supports emerging talent. At the BestCollegeart.com gallery we believe in showcasing the best of Indian art, culture, design to the world and this initiative reiterates our commitments towards the goal."



huge interest with more than five million hits per minute on the



A French affair

Drawing inspiration from the rich, refined and cultivated genre of Parisian art and architecture Diva'ni, India's first cinema inspired fashion label, unveiled its Spring Summer 2017 couture collection. Amidst all the glamour and sheen. this new collection salutes the free spirit of dressing in effortlessly stylish ensembles that suit the palate of a carefree yet elegant summer bride.

The Ivory Kiss is Diva'ni's interpretation of the great Parisian legacy. It essays the richness of Parisian architecture, heritage, art and culture. It has harnessed its



recreating the flavour of a region through these ensembles. Through this showing, it also forays into bespoke men's wear and unveils Diva'ni Man. This exquisitely designed line will aim at catering to the fashion needs of the Indian metropolitan man. With the spring sum-

mer couture launch, the fashion label aims at taking the audiences through a never before destination wedding ensemble trail. The silhouettes range from short dresses to drape sarees to gowns to contemporary bridal lehengas. Intricate handwork using zardozi and aari, along with usage of elements like metal blades, mother of pearls,

kundan, sequin, elaborates the grandeur of Parisian architecture and heritage at its best. Carefully embroidered floral appliqué, rather the signature vintage rose lends that perfect zing to the collection.





NEW DELHI | MONDAY | MARCH 27, 2017

Of hardship, valour and resilience

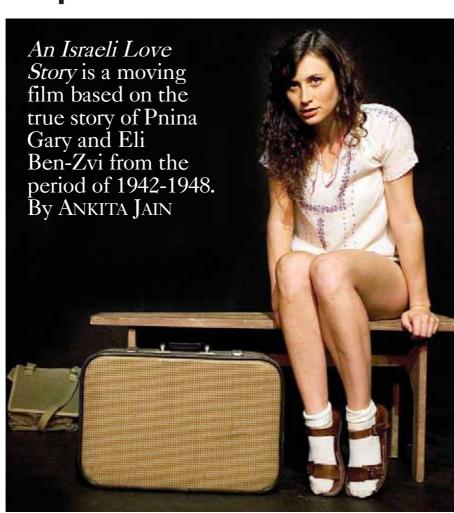
actors Adi Bielski and Aviv Alush, is set in 1947. It tells the story of 18-year-old aspiring actress Margalit, who lives in northern Israel. She falls in love with Eli Ben Zvi from Kibbutz Beit Keshet. On the day they were supposed to get married, tragedy strikes. The film is adapted from a play written by Pnina Gary. The storyline is based on the reallife incident of Gary (now 89), who was supposed to marry Eli, the son of Rachel Yanait and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (later to be the second president of Israel). In 1948, during Israel's war for independence, her would-be husband was killed in an Arab ambush.

"Gary was looking for a producer to make this film. She approached me because she thought I am a specialist in making low-budget films. I read the story and was touched by it. The film talks about the period of 1947 when Arabs and Jews were fighting over the land of Palestine. I tried to make a balanced film. It is told from the point of view of an Israeli woman, who had a tragic story to tell," says Dan Wolman, director of the film.

He is a veteran Israeli filmmaker whose films has been presented at Cannes, Venice, Berlin and many other film festivals winning awards and prizes the world over. His films cover a big range from the very commercial youth comedy Lemon Popsicle to the very personal The Distance and Foreign Sister both of which won the Volgin Award for "Best film" at the Jerusalem International Film Festival.

When asked how challenging was it to adapt a screenplay from a play and make a feature film out of it, Dan says, "The real challenge was to bring this period film alive and also to match up with the real story. Eighty-four-year-old Israeli actress and playwright Pnina Gary waited 60 years to write An Israeli Love Story, a 70-minute monodrama about coming of age in pre-state Israel. Her personal story of unrequited adolescent love gained and then lost again. After spending decades in the theatre as an actress and artistic director, adapting others' work to the stage, this was Gary's first foray into creating her own work for the stage.

He further adds about what inspired Garry to write her own story after 60 years. "Inspired by her grandson's sixth grade Roots project, An Israeli Love Story evokes the nostalgia and values of pre-state Israel. She told him about her adolescent years in Nahalal, the moshav in the Jezreel Valley where she was born and raised. Afterwards, her grandson's



essay was read out in class and his classmates didn't believe that was how life had really been. The disparity between the values on which Gary was raised on the moshav and those of her grandson's city friends was so vast that she decided it was important to tell them more about what happened here in the beginning. For them, even the War of Independence is distant Jewish

Dan says that until the end, which is heartbreaking, it



is a very joyful story. It has a lot of humour and a lot of funny characters.

It focuses on first love, and for older audience members, it brings back memories of the '40s, while for younger theatre goers, it's the love story that catches them." An Israeli love story tells the story of how Margalit met and fell in love with a young fighter of the Palmach (the unofficial army of the Jewish settlement in pre-state Israel), and how he died a day before they were to be mar-

While the film is an adolescent love story that anyone can relate to, the backdrop of the play is the battle of Israeli immigrants idealistically fighting to establish the state of Israel in 1948. And how the thousand people who were invited for the wedding came to a funeral, and the food that was prepared for the wedding was served at the funeral."

He adds, "The struggle of the pre-state period from 1942-1948 is truly depicted

throughout the play. Because Margalit's family lived on a moshav (an Israeli town or settlement) in the Nahalal Village, they were granted private property and belongings. On the other hand, Ami, from Kibbutz Beit Keshet was granted no private property or possessions. During this time almost everything had to be shared. Couples had to share their money, beds, and clothing with others. It was a time where blankets and shirts were scarce, and a radio was considered a rare trea-

The desire to expose youngsters to the atmosphere and values of pre-state Israel was the attraction for the director, to bring the play to the first Habitat Film Festival. "Since the film focuses on Israeli history, society, culture, and politics, I thought it would be interesting for youngsters to learn about the early days and values of the state."

The director, who made films such as *The* Dreamer and Floch, said that in the last 15 years there's been a tremendous progress in Israeli cinema. He also says that Israel has nearly 18 film schools, thus increasing the competition among filmmakers.

"Imagine a country, with eight million population, has approximately 18 film schools? Every year 100-150 women and men come out of these schools. They are writing screenplays and making films. So, there's a lot of competition too," explains Dan.

The moving story truly shows the struggles during the early stages of the state of Israel, and the suffering that many had to undergo so that Israel and its people could enjoy its independence today.

Performed with feeling, passion, and magic, Bielski was able to bring Pnina and Eli's story to life, making the audience feel as if they were actually re-living the formative years of Israel, and bearing witness to its



Master of your own fortune

Whether our days are good or bad, we should always concentrate on our actions and state of mind, says Rajyogi Brahmakumar Nikunj ji

Te all have good days and bad days. What amounts to a good day for one person may equate to someone else's bad day. Just like some days are hot whereas some are cold, depending on whether it is summer or winter, one has to bear with all these changes. We must understand, changes do take place often, else life would be dull and boring. Days can thus be of many kinds if we consider them from different points of view. We have all heard some people saying that "I have fallen on bad days". However, in actual sense, the days are neither bad nor good because a day is just a name given to a period of 24 hours, so it is just a unit of time but still we have a meaning when we say: "I am on bad days" or "That fellow is on good days".

When a person says that he is on bad days, what he generally means is either some people are criticising him bitterly or are accusing him without any basis. It also might be whatever role he plays and the job he does, turns into a complete failure and he flops. He does his best and yet success eludes or evades him. He loves some people and has good wishes for them and yet these people get estranged from him or turn into his enemies or rivals. Those very people whom he had helped in their dire need have now turned their back on him and show not even a little concern for his well-being. There is no one at least to utter a word of sympathy. On the other hand, they, unashamedly, point to his shortcomings and hit hard at his weakness and try to open or scratch his wounds. He feels that people do not misbehave with him and that he generally meets success whatever be the venture he embarks upon.

History is full of examples of even kings becoming beggars or of ordinary men ascending on thrones. But, what we need to remember is that the shift in our fortunes or the change in our days is brought about by the change that took place in the past in the quality of our own actions. The change in days, some say, is due to change in our stars, but even stars in the sky change due to action of souls which also are the stars now on earth. Remember! the whole nature is influenced by our own actions and, so, we are the makers of our own fortune. We determine our own destiny. So, basically, bad days are those days when a person has bad thoughts or does bad actions



and good days are, basically, those days, when a person thinks good and does good.

We should also keep in mind, during the days of stress

and strain or tests and tribulations, that these odd days also

will change because nothing, in this world stays for ever. Just as night is succeeded by day and, so, also good days will follow bad days sooner or later and we should, therefore have patience and faith in ourselves. Since our bad days are consequence of our actions, we cannot, therefore, run away from them but have only to bear with them happily or a heavy heart even as we choose. We have to tactic, a line of action, a plan or a strategy to remain as much unaffacted as we possibly can. There is no use cursing our stars or wailing over our misfortune. On the other hand, we should take lessons from these hard tests and consider these as exercises for selfdevelopment or causes for crisis management. Also, when anyone is on good days, he should not boast of his wisdom or adventures or knowledge and circle of friends. Because one never knows when one will be hauled up on live coals. So, let us, therefore, not be proud to the point of boasting, bragging or praising the self. Instead we must always keep in mind that whether our days are good or bad, we should always be good in our actions, our state of mind. Also with our dealings and relations with others, our attitudes and our response to various situations. If we follow this process, then we can turn even bad days into good ones. So, lets stop thinking about





Indian kids are mostly under a lot of academic pressure throughout their school days. Parents want their kids to be either a doctor or an engineer and that results into an Olympics of academics. Putting on the school uniform in the morning feels like wearing a track suit and going to a zone where they have to deal with the hurdles of expectations of parents and relatives.

In order to highlight this issue, Bengaluru-based band Swarathma has joined the Release The Pressure movement in collaboration with Mirinda for their No More Pressurepanti, Only Pagalpanti, campaign. "The song is rooted in our experiences, much like every other academics oriented middle-class Indian family's. There was always pressure to perform academically, but don't get us wrong on the song. We're not against parents, who almost always mean well. It's just that sometimes though they want the best for their kid, the way they end up making it happen doesn't always work well. It is this sense of isolation that kids go through that we've tried to talk about," said bass guitarist of the band, Jishnu Dasgupta. He believes that their song is another way to give

Take it easy

A music video titled, Beta Sweater Pehno by SWARATHMA urges parents to not put their kids under the pressure of academics, in a humorous way. By TEAM VIVA

vent to what students go through at this difficult time.

The band is known for their inclination to perform for social causes and their music speaks of a change which must be bought. "I have always believed that music and art are the two things which are capable of adding positive value in the society. So through our music we try and speak of the topics which need people's attention. And since we are lucky enough that our voice is heard by many, then why not make them hear something they really should listen to," said Vasu Dixit, vocalist and rhythm guitarist in Swarathma.

The music video features the band members of Swarathma in school uniforms going through the motions of school life with comic melancholy. It highlights the struggles every student has to face on a daily basis because of an over competitive environment at educational institutions. "The video idea came while we were jamming. The initial idea was to have five teenagers dressed like us and have them play/sing the song. But then the logistics of getting that done seemed farfetched. We decided the costume for the video as uniforms, though initially we all were to wear differ-

'MUSIC AND ART ARE THE TWO THINGS WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF **ADDING POSITIVE VALUE** IN THE SOCIETY. SO THROUGH OUR MUSIC WE TRY AND SPEAK OF THE TOPICS WHICH NEED PEOPLE'S ATTENTION'

ent costumes but then it wouldn't have looked like a 'uniform'. And also we didn't want to represent any one particular institution. So, white was the next best bet. At the same time we wanted them in a very tight fit, as if we've grown wearing them. Hence, we got a tailor who usually stitches for shoots, we gave him reference of the 80's styling, which is what most of us relate to," shared Vasu, who has also directed the

Swarathma makes music for their personal joy ultimately, unlike films, where the beats and tunes are attuned for particular reasons and to impress an audience. "This makes more sense when we call ourselves independent. We're expressing our

feelings more organically," said Vasu. The band has an undeniably unique sound, combining Indian folk music with western rock. Vasu believes that since all the members of the band come from different background of music, the mix of all that makes for unique 'Swarathma sound'. While the music video takes the viewers back to school days, Vasu hope that it will make parents and teens talk to each other more openly regarding this unwanted pressure.

Health is the condition of wisdom, and the sign is cheerfulness — an open and noble temper. - RALPH WALDO EMERSON



With nearly 10 per cent of infants considered 'high weight for length.' researchers want to help babies achieve a healthy weight starting with their first months of life. Preliminary findings have shown that

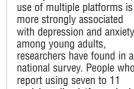
babies on a cow's milk formula have accelerated weight gain, compared to babies fed a hydrolysed protein formula, who have



While the benefits of breastfeeding are well

known — breastfed babies tend to be better

protected against rapid weight gain and obesity.



Compared with the total

time spent on social media.

with depression and anxiety researchers have found in a national survey. People who social media platforms had more than three times the risk of depression and anxiety than their peers who use

zero to two platforms, even after adjusting for the total time spent on social media overall. "This association is strong enough that clinicians could consider asking their patients with depression and anxiety about multiple platform use and counseling them that this use may be related to their symptoms," said lead author and physician Brian A.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES TIED TO DEPRESSION

BRAIN CELLS PREFER ONE PARENT'S GENE

In at least one region of the newborn mouse brain, the new research shows, inequality seems to be the norm. About 85 per cent of genes in the dorsal raphe nucleus, known for secreting the mood-controlling chemical serotonin

differentially activate their maternal and paternal gene copies. Ten days later in the juvenile brain, the landscape shifts, with both copies being activated equally for all but 10 per cent of genes. More than an oddity of the brain, the disparity also takes place at other sites in

the body, including liver and muscle. It also occurs in humans. The investigators screened thousands of genes in their study, quantifying the relative levels of activation for each maternal and paternal gene copy and discovered that expression of the two is different for many genes.

EFFECTS OF GUT FLORA REVISITED

An unhealthy diet changes the composition of the gut flora and it is generally assumed that this maladaptation called "dysbiosis" triggers disease. A study by Matteo Serino and his colleagues at the Université Paul Sabatier in Toulouse, France, now challenges this view. Using mice as a model organism, the researchers show that dysbiosis may have beneficial effects on liver

metabolism and may protect against metabolic disease. The researchers reasoned that axenic mice are illequipped to deal with dysbiotic microbiota. Their gut barrier is impaired, favoring an uncontrolled spread of bacteria throughout the body. In addition, their immune system is not well developed.

SUNBED USERS GET MELANOMA

Melanoma is the most dangerous type of skin cancer with the strongest increase in incidence in the last decade, and the incidence rates have never been as high. The World Health Organisation based International Agency for Research on Cancer has

emitting tanning devices as "carcinogenic to humans" in 2009, however, sunbed use is still popular in western



good or bad days, and be a

master of our own fortune.

especially among young women. The study followed 141,000 Norwegian women for the average of 14 years. Women who had 30 or more indoor tanning sessions were at 32 per cent increased risk of melanoma compared to never-users.

Lyon strikes at India's progress

Inspite of half-centuries by Pujara and Rahul, India ended day 2 at a precarious position of 248/6

Indian batsmen frittered away the initial advantage before reaching 248 for six against a disciplined Australia to leave the fourth and final cricket Test evenly poised, here on

India are still 52 runs short of Australia's first innings total of 300 as at least three batsmen failed to convert their starts into big knocks.

With the pitch offering significant turn along with good bounce, batting will only get difficult in the third and fourth innings in what promises to be a battle of attrition in the next three

Playing a batsmen short, opener Lokesh Rahul's indiscretion cost India dearly. India never got the required momentum after Rahul's illtimed pull-shot off a Patrick Cummins bouncer. He scored 60 off

Cheteshwar Pujara (57) and Ajinkya Rahane (46) also got starts before Nathan Lyon snuffed them out, extracting sharp bounce from the India were comfortable placed at

108 for one before Rahul's dismissal and could have pushed for lead but are struggling to level the scores at After probing spells by the new ball bowlers Josh Hazlewood (1/40 in

18 overs) and Pat Cummins (1/59 off 20 overs), it was off-spinner Lyon (4/67 from 28 overs), who tormented the middle-order was once again in the final session of the day which belonged to Australia.

The final session in which India scored 95 runs saw them lose as many as four wickets - all trying to be defensive against Lyon.

If India fought hard, credit to Ravichandran Ashwin (30 off 49 balls) and Ravindra Jadeja (16), who played their natural game knowing fully well that mere survival won't get them anywhere as the cracks on the pitch widened and the bounce remained true as ever.

It could have been worse had Wriddhiman Saha (10 batting) catch would have been taken by Matt Renshaw at first slip. But if the Indian innings had a turning point, it was Rahul, who again raised visions of a big score before throwing his

Rahul looked comfortable during his knock of 60 — his fifth half-century of the series — before a sudden rush of blood saw him play a pull shot off a Cummins short ball only to offer



Australian players celebrate the wicket of Karun Nair on day 2 of the fourth Test between India and Australia

Live from 1:30pm IST

START SPORTS

a simple skier to David Warner at seven boundaries.

Rahul hit nine fours and a slog-swept six off Steve O'Keefe. The Rahul-Pujara duo added 87 runs for the second wicket to lend solidity to the Indian innings after Murali Vijay's (11) early departure.

The dependable Pujara kept his focus intact en route his 15th halfcentury but was out after tea with Lyon producing a classical off-break, flight and turn

which he gloved to India vs New Zealand Peter Handscomb at forward short leg. Pujara played

some glorious ondrives using his feet against both O'keefe and Nathan Lyon. The halfcentury came up with a whip through the mid-wicket region as he reaf-firmed his status of being India's best batsman in the current series. His innings had six boundaries off 151

Skipper Rahane was shaky to begin with a mis-timed pull off Cummins that got him a six but grew in confidence during his 104-ball stay at the wicket which also fetched him

He added 49 runs each with Pujara and Ashwin. He was looking good for second half century of the series when Lyon got a straighter to bounce a shade more as Steve Smith took a sharp catch at first slip.

Earlier, Rahul was elegant as ever during his innings but his duel with Cummins during the first and second session was worth watching.

With Australia playing on the

bounciest of pitches, Cummins was used in short bursts as Rahul showed good technique while swaying away from

in the post lunch session was a hostile one but Rahul punched the fast bowler through point region to get a boundary. However, having left a barrage of

The spell that Cummins bowled

a result of lapse in concentration. With India playing a batsman short, the dressing room must not have been a very happy place for

short stuff, his patience finally gave away and the mistimed pull-shot was

in a season during his 57-run knock in Indian first innings on the second day of the fourth and final Test. The Saurashtra right-hander has scored 1316 runs at 65.80 in 22 innings of 13 Tests with four hundreds and eight fifties this season Nathan Lyon became the

joint second most Successful spinner against India by dismissing Ravichandran Ashwin. It was his 63rd wicket in 14 Test matches against India. West Indian off spinner Lance Gibbs also took the same number of wickets in 30 innings of 15 Test matches. Muttiah Muralitharan is the most successful spinner against India with 105 wickets Lokesh Rahul's 60 was the fifth

50 plus score in this series which is the joint most for an Indian opener in a series against Australia. Murali Vijay also made five 50+ scores

Rahul for the indiscretion that he

showed India began slowly during the first hour but courtesy Rahul picked up the tempo during the second hour as they ran well between the wickets and also punished the loose deliveries. The first boundary was an inside out cover drive off Lyon. He did survive a nasty Cummins delivery that flew past the slip cordon.

After initial period of caution, he did take some risks - uppishly sweeping Lyon for a boundary as run flow was stopped by the Australian

When Cummins bowled one into his ribs, he nicely tucked one off his hips to fine leg boundary. The shot off the day was an on-drive off Cummins that raced to the fence.

In the morning, Vijay hit a flowing cover drive off Hazlewood and got another off the bowler even though it wasn't a controlled shot. But Hazlewood had found his channel by then and was able to hit a few visible cracks from which the deliveries were deviating away. A faint nick was gobbled up by Matthew Wade with Hazlewood getting his first wicket.

'Stopping Rahane from sweeping worked for me'

PTI DHARAMSALA

 Γ erming it an "unbelievable feeling" to keep the deciding Test match open after two days, Australia off-spinner Nathan Lyon revealed how stopping Ajinkya Rahane from playing the sweep shot helped him dismiss the India It was variation in speed and coming over the wicket

to stop Rahane that did the trick, according to Lyon, who ended with four wickets in the final session of the second

"It was a bit of a tactic. If you looked at the way the Indians have been playing me, especially Ajinkya, he has been sweeping me a lot. My plan was to come over the wicket and try and get him not to sweep me so that I can bring my stock ball to be more effective. It worked well. I spoke to Steve Smith about that at tea and was happy with the way it came out in the end," Lyon said explaining his strategy.

For Lyon, it is a big credit that Indians are under pressure going into the final three days of the series.

"I reckon it is an unbelievable feeling to be pretty even-

ly poised after day two. I know we probably left a few run out there but to have India 240 for 6 odd after a pretty good day in the field, I am quite happy to be honest. Coming over here, everyone wrote us off and to be in this position in the last Test, one-all and pressure slightly on India is fantastic," he said.

The wicket has not changed much according to Lyon even though the bounce off the pitch has been of help. "As the day pro-

gressed, it started to show a little bit more variations bounce and spin, but I don't think it has changed too much. Australian bowlers, I was pretty proud of all of us out there. It's hard work playing cricket over here but I thought the way we went about it and bowled well in partnerships and tried to dot them up and tried to build pressure on India was fantastic.'

The bounce that

was on offer made him feel that he is closer home. After bowling a couple of overs before lunch, I sat down and thought about what it (pitch) is similar to and it was closer to a home wicket where I can try and generate the bounce. Bounce is my biggest weapon by virtue of which I am getting guys caught at bat-pad and slips.

I went back to knowing how I bowl, which is probalenge of playing the best side in the world in their home con-

Lyon rated Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood's effort on Sunday as world class.

"I think he really showed he is world-class. I think Josh Hazlewood has been the same. There hasn't been much life for the big quicks but the way Josh and Patty (Cummins) went about it has been exceptional. It shows the class of those two individuals. They work really well together and it's great signs for Australian cricket. It's exciting to see Patty Cummins back and bowling fast."

He feels that Indians will face a massive challenge chasing a target in the fourth innings.

Hopefully, it's going to be a massive challenge for them, but that really depends on how long we bat for and how many runs we can set them. But whatever we set India, that's going to have to be enough for us. We believe we're good enough. It's going to be good fun and a good challenge for us," he signed off

Iz pacers' morning spell was toughest: Rahul

PTI DHARAMSALA

alling his execution of the pull shot ∠against Pat Cummins "horrible", India opener Lokesh Rahul termed the morning spell bowled by the Australian pacers as the "toughest" he has faced in his nascent Test career.

"Josh (Hazlewood) and Cummins in the first session, I can say, is the toughest (spell of fast bowling) I have faced in Test cricket so far. They put the ball in the right areas and they swung the ball bowled with lot of pace and venom," Rahul was all praise for the rival speed merchants.

Rahul's pull shot off Cummins became a subject of criticism as he was

batting on 60 and set for a big score.

"It was horrible execution for sure. But having batted out there in the middle for a long time, I thought I could have taken him (Cummins) on, as there were no fielders at the back. Like I said horrible execution but the intent was

"I can always sit here and question intent and hundred other things. But then in the middle, I thought I could take him on but unfortunate it didn't go my way. Hopefully, in the second innings, I can get him away. So I will go out with a positive intent in second innings again," Rahul said in his

With five half-centuries in the



Test series, Rahul is among the two consistent batsmen from home team, other being Cheteshwar Pujara. The starts have not been converted but he is not losing his sleep over it.

"Quite honestly, I am not regretting anything. Obviously, a little disappointed that I have not been able to convert the starts and get big runs for the team. As an opener, my responsibility is to spend as much time in the middle to get big scores in the first innings so that we don't have to bat in the second innings. On a personal front, it hasn't been the worst series for me. I got starts, batted really well. Aussie bowlers haven't made it easy. They have challenged

us in all the games. Thoroughly enjoyed batting and hopefully one good knock in the second innings might be the time. Might be the knock, I have been waiting for the whole series.'

Rahul rated the wicket as "fantastic" and said score of 248 for 6 at stumps was good on such a track. "Yes it is. By far the best wicket we have played on. There's been something in it for the spinners and something in it for fast bowlers as well.

"The ball kept swinging the whole day. If you spend some time out there in the middle, it's really good to bat. Yeah, all of us got starts but we couldn't convert.'

Pandey powers India B to Deodhar Trophy final

PTI VISAKHAPATNAM

Manish Pandey struck a century as India B sealed a place in the final of the Deodhar Trophy after quelling a spirited challenge from Tamil Nadu by 32 runs, here on Sunday.

While Pandey's innings of 104 stood out, Shikhar Dhawan (50) and Axar Patel (51) too came up with handy knocks to help India B put on board a challenging 316 for eight in 50 overs.

Tamil Nadu came up with a strong response through opener Kaushik Gandhi (124) before their challenge fizzled out and they ended at 284 all out in 48.4 overs.

It was the second straight win for India B in the competition, having beaten India A yesterday. Their opponents in Wednesday's final will be either India A or Tamil Nadu, who face each other in a do-or-die match here tomorrow.

The Vijay Hazare Trophy holders were very much in the game as they were 244 for three in the 42nd over but a batting collapse meant they lost the next seven wickets for 40 runs.

Pacer Dhawal Kulkarani was effective for India B again, taking three wickets alongside left-arm spinner Axar Patel, who produced an all-around effort after scoring a half century earlier in the day.



It was another good day in the office for Dhawan, who had hit form with a

hundred against India A. It was also a timely knock from Pandey, who has not been able to establish himself in India's limited overs set-up. The stylish right-hander hit five fours and hammered four sixes in his 110-ball innings.

NZ hold advantage after day 2 Almost all of the middle session was lost to rain - in 4.2 overs, South Africa

AP HAMILTON

Quinton de Kock ignored shooting pain from an injured finger to make 90 and bolster South Africa's first innings Sunday on the rain-affected second day of the third cricket test against New Zealand.

After innings of 50 by Hashim Amla and 53 by captain Faf du Plessis, and before Kagiso Rabada made his highest test score of 34, de Kock's 118-ball innings gave substance to the South African innings, which ended at 314 just after tea.

New Zealand openers Tom Latham and Jeet Raval then negotiated a difficult period before stumps in an extended final session to reach 67-0 in their strongest partnership of the three-match series.

Latham showed signs of emerging from a prolonged slump by reaching 42 not out after his previous innings in the series of 10, 8 and 6 and his scores of 4, 7, 0, 0, 2 and 0 in his last six one-day internationals. Jeet Raval, who already has two half centuries and a highest score of 80 in the series, was 25 not out.

The match, in keeping with the series which South Africa leads 1-0, has been tight throughout. The Proteas were 123-4 at the end of a first day restricted to 41 overs due to rain. They advanced to 243-7 by lunch Sunday after the only uninterupted session in the match so far, scoring 120 while New Zealand took three advanced to 258-8.

After further delays, de Kock was the ninth man out 10 runs short of his fourth test century. He was trapped lbw by New Zealand's South Africa-born fast bowler Neil Wagner and his review failed to overturn the umpire's decision.

De Kock suffered ligament damage to his right index finger during the second test at Wellington, in which he scored 91 as South Africa won by eight wickets. He played Sunday in almost constant pain but said this was no impediment to his batting.

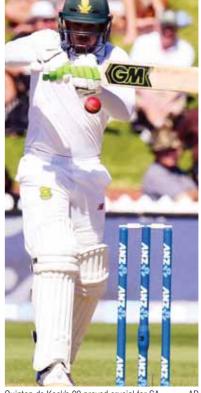
Rabada scored 34 from 31 balls and was the last man out, but his contribution swelled South Africa's total after it was 249-8. New Zealand reduced the lead to 247

Latham showed improved determination in batting through the last 25.3 overs of the day before the umpires called stumps due to bad light. He avoided the shots outside off stump which have been his downfall in the series, his greater confidence bringing eight boundaries.

Latham took three catches in the

South Africa innings and was involved in the most memorable incident of the day, a short-leg catch to dismiss du Plessis for 53 which was one of the most remarkable taken in a test in New Zealand.

Showing astonishing anticipation, he appeared to sense that du Plessis would



Quinton de Kock's 90 proved crucial for SA

play a lap sweep to the third ball bowled in the match by spinner Mitchell Santner.

Before the ball had even pitched, Latham set off on a dash behind square, and when du Plessis went through with the shot, meeting the ball with the full face of the bat, he was shocked to see Latham, still dashing to his right, extend his right arm and pluck the ball out of the air.

Latham had already taken a catch at second slip from the bowling of Matt Henry on the first day to remove Theunis de Bruyn. He combined with Henry again Sunday to catch Vernon Philander (11) at second slip, leaving South Africa 219-7. Philander became the sixth South African to acheive the 1,000 run, 100 wicket double in tests.

Henry, playing for the first time in the series in the absence of injured fast bowlers Tim Southee and Trent Boult, took 4-93. Wagner took 3-104 and Colin de Grandhomme 2-62 as the New Zealand seamers toiled hard on a slow

"Obviously it was a tough day today and we had to fight really hard," Wagner said. "We're pretty happy with where we're at and the two openers really put the seal on it by seeing the day through.

"I thought as we expected from the South African team they batted pretty well at the end but I wouldn't say it got away from us. Our bowlers stuck at their plans and grafted really hard."

Bulgaria stun Dutch in WC qualifier

Three-time runners-up Netherlands find themselves in a tough position after suffering 2-0 loss in Group A match

eenager Matthijs de Ligt's dream debut for the Netherlands quickly turned into a nightmare as he handed Bulgaria an early goal in a 2-0 defeat for the Dutch in World Cup qualifying on Saturday.

Unfortunately for the Dutch

side, France remained on top of Group A by beating Luxembourg 3-1 and Sweden thrashed Belarus 4-0 to go second. As a result, Netherlands have slid to the fourth position behind Bulgaria.

Coach Danny Blind conceded before kickoff he was taking a risk playing De Ligt who, at 17, became the youngest Netherlands debutant since Mauk Weber in 1931.

But Blind said injuries to other center backs forced him to select a player with only a handful of appearances for Ajax. After the match, Blind accept-

ed responsibility for the shock defeat, which was sure to lead to questions about his leadership. "I blame myself," he told

national broadcaster NOS. He further added that, "It can't go on like this. Things have to

De Ligt's first action did not bode well, as he gave away a free kick just outside the penalty area inside the first minute with a rash challenge on Ivelin Popov.

But worse was to come four minutes later as De Ligt let a speculative high ball fall over his shoulder and collided with goal-

UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE DUTCH SIDE, FRANCE REMAINED ON TOP OF GROUP A BY **BEATING** LUXEMBOURG 3-1 AND SWEDEN THRASHED BELARUS 4-0 TO GO SECOND. AS A RESULT, **NETHERLANDS** HAVE SLID TO THE FOURTH POSITION BEHIND BULGARIA

keeper Jeroen Zoet, allowing Spas Delev to tap in for the opening goal in just the fifth minute, his first international strike.

"Of course, it's easy now to judge that it was maybe too early" to give De Ligt his first international start, Blind said.

Once it had the early lead, Bulgaria could have sat back and looked to hit the Netherlands on the counterattack, but the Dutch passing was so disjointed that the hosts were able to continue pushing forward.



Delev made it 2-0 in the 20th when he curled a shot past De Ligt's attempted block and into the bottom corner of Zoet's goal.
The Netherlands, which failed

to qualify for the European Championship in France last year, looks likely to struggle to reach the World Cup in Russia, which comes four years after the Dutch team coached by Louis van Gaal reached the semifinal in Brazil.

Only the group winner secures an automatic World Cup spot.
Blind ended De Ligt's match at

halftime, replacing him with another debutant, Wesley Hoedt of

He also sent on veteran Wesley Sneijder in an attempt to spark more creativity in midfield.

After having virtually nothing to do in the first half, Bulgaria goalkeeper Nikolay Mihaylov became busy in the second, as his side sat back to defend its lead and the Dutch finally exerted some pressure.

Netherlands captain Arjen Robben stuck by his coach after the match, saying the players were also

responsible. "We're on the pitch and we have to perform," he said.

LUXEMBOURG 1-3 FRANCE

While the talk before France's trip to Luxembourg was about striker Karim Benzema's ongoing absence, two other big name forwards ensured the Real Madrid star was not missed as France won to go top of Group A.

Olivier Giroud's 22nd international goal gave Didier Deschamps' team the lead, but the host leveled six minutes later when Aurelien Joachim converted a penalty to become the first Luxembourg player to score against France in 39 years.

Antoine Griezmann restored

the lead, also from the penalty spot, before halftime.

Luxembourg managed to hold off France for much of the second half, before Giroud doubled his tally and extended the lead in the 77th minute, converting a cross from the left by Benjamin Mendy.

The French side is now firmly placed at the top of Group A and would look to continue it's good

SWEDEN 4-0 BELARUS

Sweden briefly went top of the group by thrashing Belarus 4-0 in Solna, a result that put pressure on the Dutch even before kickoff in

Emil Forsberg opened the scoring with a penalty and doubled the Swedes' lead shortly after the break thanks to a horrific blunder by Andrei Gorbunov, who let a routine shot through his arms

The Belarus keeper was at fault again when Marcus Berg beat him to the ball to head home an effort that Egor Filipenko cleared, but not before the ball was adjudged to have crossed the line.

Isaac Thelin completed the

Ronaldo's brace helps Portugal to victory over Hungary

ristiano Ronaldo teamed up with Crising talent Andre Silva to score twice and lead Portugal past Hungary 3-0 in World Cup qualifying on Saturday.

Silva scored the opening goal before setting up Ronaldo for his first strike four minutes later.

Ronaldo scored again from a free kick in the second half to seal the win for the European champions with his ninth goal in qualifying for the 2018 World Cup.

Ronaldo leads scoring in qualifica-tion, followed by Poland's Robert Lewandowski with seven.

"We started off slowly, but the first goal gave our confidence a boost and the other goals came naturally," Ronaldo told Portuguese television.

With 70 career goals in 137 appear-He trails only Miroslav Klose (71), Sandor Kocsis (75) and Ferenc Puskas

Portugal strengthened its hold on second place in Europe Group B with 12 points, opening a gap over Hungary, which stayed with seven points in Switzerland, meanwhile, earned a

fifth win in as many matches after beating Latvia 1-0 to remain on top of the group with 15 points. Still stuck at the foot of the table,

Andorra nevertheless savored the end to a losing streak that had lasted over decade after drawing with Faroe Islands 0-0.

SILVA SHINES

When Portugal last faced Hungary in June, Ronaldo netted twice in a 3-3 thriller that kept his team on course to win the European Championship.

Ronaldo made sure the rematch in fourth on Europe's all-time scorers list. help from his young partner in strike. Silva first tapped in a pass by



Raphael Guerreiro for his fifth goal for Portugal since making his international debut in September.

The striker then added a deft control of a long ball before passing for Ronaldo to fire a left-footed shot from outside the area into the corner of the

Silva is having a breakout season for FC Porto, scoring four times in the Champions League and 15 more in the Portuguese league.

"Silva is doing a phenomenal job," Ronaldo said.

Josip Drmic headed in a cross from Admir Mehmedi two minutes after going on as a substitute for the Swiss in the 64th.

It was the forward's first international goal since November 2015 and ended a scoring drought for both counyear but with this goal he hopes to put his dry run behinď him.

ANDORRA CELEBRATES

Rarely has a scoreless stalemate in front of the home fans tasted so sweet. But 11 years of nothing but losing will do that to a team.

Andorra's draw with fellow minnow Faroe Islands ended its run of 58 competitive defeats.

It was the first point in qualifying for the Pyrenees mountain principality, population 80,000, since a scoreless draw with Finland in 2005.

"We are happy because we know who we are and how hard this has been," said team captain Ildefons Lima.

Faroe Islands finished with 10 men after Joan Edmundsson was booked a second time with 15 minutes to play. Faroe Islands has five points, ahead of Latvia with three.

The winner of each of the nine groups in Europe qualifies for the World Cup tournament scheduled to be

The eight best second-place fin-

NGAL WINS SANTOSH TROPHY FOR 32ND TIME

SINGLES

BAMBOLIM: West Bengal on Sunday lifted the Santosh Trophy for the 32nd time after Manvir Singh struck in the 119th minute for a 1-0 win over Goa, extending their domination in the premier domestic football tournament. After playing out a goalless 90 minutes, Manvir finally came good in the dying moments of extra time to leave the home crowd shocked at the GMC Stadium. Entering the title clash on the back of some impressive outings, Manvir was kept quite for a major part of the match but, with barely seconds to go for the final whistle, he found the received a pass from Shaikhom Ronald on the crowd, five-time winners Goa tried their best and controlled the match, but ran out of steam in the extra time. The hosts had their chances to score but the rival keeper pulled off some great saves. West Bengal, thus, ended a six-year wait having last won the title in 2011.

Federer advances in Miami Open

R oger Federer kept waving in apology, twice after he dribbled winners off the net cord and once when he slammed a volley that nearly knocked his opponent down.

Afterward Federer praised 19-year-old American qualifier Frances Tiafoe, who acquitted himself well before a near-capacity stadium crowd at the Miami Open. But there are limits to Federer's politeness, and he beat Tiafoe 7-6 (2), 6-3 Saturday. Returning to the tournament after a two-year

absence, Federer took the lead with a flawless tiebreaker and gradually pulled away from Tiafoe. "I think he's going to be really good," Federer said. "He's got big shots, and I like his mindset.

That goes a long way.' The 35-year-old Federer wins raves these days for his recent resurgence, and he is hoping it extends to his first title at Key Biscayne in 11 years. Tiafoe, 19, is touted for his potential to improve the bleak American tennis landscape.

Facing a top-10 player for the first time, Tiafoe forced Federer to play well to win.

"He stayed with me for a very long time," Federer said. "That can make you nervous if I wouldn't have been so confident. So I thought it was an enjoyable match. I thought we both played very well, and both can maybe walk away from this match quite happy, which is not often the case

Tiafoe smiled when he told of Federer's assessment. "One is more happy than the other," he said with a smile. "Nah, I'm definitely happy. We both played pretty well. It was good tennis

Tiafoe, a Maryland native ranked 101st, did almost nothing wrong in the first set. He committed just one unforced error in the tiebreaker, netting a backhand to end the longest rally of the match, but Federer took advantage of the small

"He was rock solid," Tiafoe said. "He didn't

give me anything."
Federer is 14-1 in 2017, including his 18th Grand Slam championship at the Australian Open and a title at Indian Wells last week. His potential path at Key Biscayne is made easier by the absences of six-time champion Novak Djokovic and two-time champion Andy Murray, both side-

lined by elbow injuries.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle will be fellow Swiss Stan Wawrinka, seeded No. 1 in an ATP Masters 1000 tournament for the first time.



opening match against Horacio Zeballos, 6-3, 6-

Americans John Isner and Sam Querrey won in straight sets, as did 19-year-old German Alexander Zverev. In women's play, No. 6-seeded Garbine

Muguruza rallied past No. 30 Zhang Shuai 4-6, 6-2, 6-2. American Bethanie Mattek-Sands eliminated No. 17 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 4-6, 6-Federer's only wobble came when he was bro-

ken in the opening game of the second set. He lost just seven points in his 10 other ser-

vice games and whacked a service winner on match point, then met Tiafoe at the net for a warm 'It was an honor playing you," Tiafoe said.

"I hope we can play again, hopefully not so early in the tournament.

Federer smiled politely.

Vettel breaks Ferrari's drought at Aussie GP

AP MELBOURNE

Cebastian Vettel jumped onto Sthe podium at the Australian Grand Prix and held up his right index finger, celebrating the end of Ferrari's Formula One drought and a break in the Mercedes dominance.

It was back to No. 1 for Ferrari, at least after one race to open the season

Ferrari hadn't won an F1 GP since Vettel's victory in Singapore in September 2015, and so his unrestrained joy on Sunday signaled renewed confidence from

"For now, we're just over the moon," four-time world champion Vettel said after holding off Mercedes teammates Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas. "It's been a great day for us. The team has been working so hard at the track as much as back at the fac-

tory. It's a great feeling." "Grazie mille," he added, a nod to the Italian manufacturer, "you can't say much more."

With regulations designed to make the 2017 F1 cars faster wider tires, greater aerodynamics, bigger fuel loads and increased downforce - Vettel proved Ferrari's extra pace in pre-season testing was genuine. "It's good to know we have a

great car but it's just the beginning ... with new regulations, a new generation of cars," Vettel said. 'Mercedes have a great engine and a great car the last couple of years - we're the ones who've had to catch up. Whatever happens this year, the race today doesn't hurt." Vettel finished in 1 hour, 24

almost 10 seconds clear of

Hamilton, to give Ferrari its first win in Australia since Kimi Raikkonen took the title in 2007. Raikkonen, in the second Ferrari,

finished fourth this year. For the second year running, Hamilton started on pole position at the Albert Park circuit and

placed second. Last year, he lost to then Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg, who went on to edge him for the world championship before retiring. This time, Vettel took the lead when Hamilton pitted for new tires on lap 18 and then got stuck in traffic behind Red Bull driver Max Verstappen.

Vettel was able to pit much later and gradually build up his lead as Hamilton drove conservatively on older tires to ensure he finished the race.

'That's motor racing," Hamilton said of the hold-up, adding it was his decision to pit and change tires. "A big congratulations to Sebastian and Ferrari.

it's a challenge we will relish. It's

This shows we've got a real minutes and 11.672 seconds, race on our hands this season and



Sebastian Vettel (C) on the podium with L Hamilton (L) and V Bottas (R)

going to be great for the fans." Mercedes won 19 of the 21 GPs last season, and Red Bull won the other two. But Red Bull was well off the pace in Melbourne, with Verstappen placing fifth almost 29 seconds behind Vettel - and local hope Daniel Ricciardo failing to finish.

In fact, the Australian driver almost didn't start. Ricciardo's day started badly and kept getting worse as he got a grid penalty, missed the start after a mechanical failure in the warmup, and then retired after

He was among seven drivers who retired during the race. Former champion Fernando Alonso continued to struggle in his McLaren, retiring on the 50th of 57 laps, while 18-year-old Canadian rookie Lance Stroll was handed a grid penalty after needing an unscheduled gearbox change after a crash in practice and was wayward in his 40 laps on debut for Williams.

target with a stunning left-footer, having left. Playing in front of a vociferous home

MYANMAR ARE FAVOURITES: CONSTANTINE YANGON: Indian football team head coach

Stephen Constantine on Sunday said that Myanmar would start as favourites against his side in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers match on Tuesday. Constantine said the Myanmar side has been together for some time and the support from crowd will give them the advantage. Moreover, Myanmar had beaten India 1-0 when the two teams met last. "Myanmar are definitely the favourites. Playing at home is always an advantage for any team. They have been together for some time and the familiarity with each other is so much beneficial when you take the field. They certainly have the advantage," Constantine said two days ahead of the crucial match. Asked what Myanmar's biggest strength was, he said, "They work very hard and love to press. When you combine with the two with the ability they have and add the crowd and atmosphere to it, the combination is just deadly."

FIFA PRAISES INFRASTRUCTURE AT IG STADIUM

GUWAHATI: The FIFA inspection team on

Sunday left "highly impressed" after overseeing the preparations at the Indira Gandhi Stadium, one of the six venues selected to host matches in the U-17 World Cup later this year. Addressing the media after the inspection, FIFA Head of Events Jaime Yarza said, "The state government is wonderful and their eagerness to be a great venue for the first FIFA tournament in the country is worth lauding.

INDIA DRAW WITH CHILE 2-2

WEST VANCOUVER: The Indian women's team drew with Chile 2-2 in a closely-fought first match here on a cold evening ahead of the allimportant Women's Hockey World League Round 2. It was Chile who got off to a positive start with an 18th minute field goal by Agustina Venegas to take a 1-0 lead. It didn't help India's cause when Renuka Yadav was handed a green card only a minute before Chile converted the goal. But India held their nerves to score an equalizer in the 35th minute. Anupa Barla was responsible for the team's first goal through a successful penalty corner. Almost immediately, Vandana Katariya scored a stunning field goal in the 36th minute to take a 2-1 lead. Though the Indian team led by Rani put up a good defence to restrict Chile from the striking circle, a footfoul led to Chile being awarded a PC. Agustina Venegas made complete use of the opportunity to successfully convert the PC in the 53rd minute to draw the match 2-2.