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## Rahul regrets misquoting SC

But Cong president repeats 'Chowkidar chor' hai in Amethi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/AMETHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday expressed regret in the Supreme Court over his remarks attributing certain comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the basis of a recent order of the top court in the Rafale deal case, but wasted no time in repeating his "Chowkidar chor" jibe against the PM in Amethi.

Rahul expressed "regret" in the Supreme Court for claiming SC had justified his "Chowkidar chor hai" allegation in its order. He said the comment was made in the "heat of political campaigning".

The apex court on April 15 had given a categorical clarification that in its Rafale verdict there was no occasion for it to make a mention of the contemptuous observation that "chowkidar Narendra Modi chor hai" as has been attributed to it by Rahul. The court had directed Rahul to give his explanation on April 22 on a petition filed by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi seeking criminal contempt action against him for his remarks. It is scheduled to hear Lekhi's petition on



Congress president Rahul Gandhi addresses an election campaign meeting at Tilote in his parliamentary constituency Amethi on Monday

Tuesday. Rahul, who filed an affidavit in response to the apex court's order, said his statement was "purely political" and was made to counter the "mis-

formation campaign" being led by senior BJP functionaries as well as the Government that the December 14 last year judgment gave a "clean chit" to the Modi Government on the Rafale deal.

He also referred to a media interview by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which he had said the apex court had given a clean chit to the Government in the Rafale deal.

He maintained that there was no "slightest intention" to "insinuate" anything regarding the Supreme Court proceedings in any manner as he holds the top court in the highest esteem.

Clarifying further, Rahul said he had made the statement after filing his nomination paper on April 10 without "having seen or read the order" of the apex court passed on that day relating to the admissibility of certain documents related to the Rafale case in the review petition.

However, on the issue of slogan "Chowkidar chor hai", Rahul in his affidavit reaffirmed his stand and belief and that of his party that Rafale deal is a "tainted transaction" and a "gross and brazen abuse

of executive power and a leading example of the corruption of the BJP Government led by Prime Minister Modi, which deserves to be investigated thoroughly by a Joint Parliamentary Committee and proceeded against thereafter".

Away from the SC proceedings, Rahul once again raked up his often-repeated poll theme of alleged corruption in the Rafale deal and exhorted people to ask the Prime Minister what he got in return for benefiting Anil Ambani with ₹30,000 crore in the fighter jet deal.

Mocking at the PM's "Main bhi chowkidar" campaign, Rahul said, "When his (Modi's) theft was caught in the Rafale deal he says 'hum sab chowkidar hai'."

Addressing an election rally in his parliamentary constituency here, Rahul said, "When the PM comes and makes false claims, just ask him why he gave ₹30,000 crores to Ambani and what Ambani did for him in return... Soon after the Congress comes to power after the Lok Sabha elections, an enquiry would be instituted in the Rafale deal and the truth will be before everyone."



A Sri Lankan woman living near St. Anthony's shrine runs for safety with her infant after police found explosive devices in a parked vehicle in Colombo on Monday

## SL fears Thowheed got foreign terror aid

7 of its fideyeen carried out Easter blasts, 87 bomb detonators found at bus station

PTI/AGENCIES ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan Government on Monday accused a previously little-known Islamist outfit called the National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ) of having carried out the Easter Sunday attacks, and said an international terror group might have been behind the atrocities, the worst in the country's history.

However, neither the NTJ, nor any other group, has admitted carrying out the wave of bombings which tore through the island nation, killing 290 people and injuring nearly 500 others.

Seven suicide bombers of the NTJ carried out a series of devastating blasts, authorities said on Monday. As many as 87 bomb detonators were found on Monday at a bus station in Colombo, police said.

Police have so far arrested 24 people — mostly members of NTJ — in connection with

the blasts that also killed eight Indian nationals.

Police said that 9 out of the 24 arrested for involvement in the blasts were ordered to be remanded by the Colombo magistrate's court till May 6.

Government's spokesman Rajitha Senarathne said NTJ is suspected of plotting the blasts that struck three churches when the Easter Sunday mass were in progress and three five-star hotels.

"All suicide bombers involved in the blasts are believed to be Sri Lankan nationals," said Senarathne, who is also the Health Minister.

Speaking at a press conference here, Senarathne said the Government was investigating whether the group had "international support". "There may be international links to them," he added.

The "conditional state of emergency" in force since Monday midnight would target terrorism and would not limit freedom of expression, said a statement from the President's media unit. "These will be limited to counter terrorism regulations. This is being done to allow the police and the three forces to ensure public security."

The Government has also declared Tuesday as a national day of mourning.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said that 24 arrested suspects have been transferred into the custody of the Criminal Investigations Department for further investigations. President Sirisena has appointed a three-member committee to conduct investigations. The committee will submit its report to him within two weeks.

Health Minister Senarathne said the Chief of National Intelligence had warned the Inspector General of Police (IGP) regarding the probable attacks before April 11.

"On April 4, international intelligence agencies had warned of these attacks. The IGP was informed on April 9," he said.

He demanded resignation of police chief Pujith Jayasundera in view of the major security lapse.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said that an investigation must be launched as to why intelligence reports of the attack was not taken seriously. Rauff Hakeem, a Government minister and the leader of the main Muslim party — Sri Lanka Muslim Congress — said that it was lamentable that no preventive action had been taken despite the inputs.

Related reports on Page 12

## Ph-III test for Shah, Rahul, MSY clan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All 26 constituencies of Gujarat and 20 of Kerala will go to polls on Tuesday in the third phase of Lok Sabha polls for 116 seats spread over 14 States.

BJP president Amit Shah, Congress chief Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav as well as several Union Ministers and senior Opposition leaders are contesting the Tuesday poll.

The polling in Tripura East constituency, which was earlier scheduled for April 18, will be held in this phase, as also in a part of the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat in Jammu & Kashmir, where election is being held in three phases.

This phase is seen crucial for the NDA, which won 66 of the 116 seats in 2014 and BJP made a clean sweep of winning all the 26 seats of Gujarat. The Congress and its alliance partners won 27, and the rest went to other Opposition parties and Independents.

Besides all seats of Gujarat (26) and Kerala, four seats in Assam, five of Bihar, seven of Chhattisgarh, 14 each of Karnataka and Maharashtra, six of Odisha, 10 of Uttar Pradesh, five of West Bengal, both seats of Goa, and one each of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Tripura will go to polls on Tuesday.

While the Congress is hoping to make dent in the BJP tally in Gujarat after the grand old party put up an impressive show in the 2017 Assembly polls. The Congress hopes to

cash in on the resentment of the patidars and rural-urban divide to win at least five to six seats in the State.

On the other hand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah have made repeated pleas to the voters to make sure than the Congress didn't open its account from the State.

While Shah, who replaced LK Advani as the party nominee from Gandhinagar, Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Jaswantsinh Bhabhor, is the BJP nominee from Dahod seat.

About 18.56 crore voters are eligible for voting in this phase and the Election Commission has set up 2.10 lakh polling booths/stations and has made elaborate security arrangements.

In the first two phases, election was held to 91 and 96 seats on April 11 and April 18 respectively. Elections are being held in seven phases and with the completion of third phase, the election process will be completed in southern states.

The Congress also hopes to improve its tally in Kerala, where the cadre is galvanised by Rahul Gandhi's decision to contest from Wayanad besides his traditional Amethi. While the fight is between the traditional rivals UDF and LDF, the BJP has also aggressively campaigned in the hope of opening its account in the southern state by capitalising on the Sabarimala shrine women entry issue.

Continued on Page 7

## Sheila faces Manoj; Gambhir challenge for Atishi, Lovely



Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari with party leaders Vijay Goel, Vijendra Gupta, actor-dancer Sapna Chaudhary during a roadshow before filing his nomination papers from North East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency in New Delhi on Monday

**Udit Raj revolts, Lekhi retained; Maken picked for New Delhi**

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

With the Congress announcing its list of six candidates for the general elections on Monday, the North-East Delhi seat appears to be set for a humdinger of contest between Delhi Congress president and three-term Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit and Delhi BJP president and the sitting Member for Parliament (MP) Manoj Tiwari.

The Congress has fielded former Union Minister Ajay

Maken from New Delhi seat, Delhi Congress working president Rajesh Lilothia from North west seat, Mahabab Mishra from West Delhi, five-term Lok Sabha MP JP Agarwal from Chandni Chowk and former Delhi Minister Arvinder Singh Lovely from the East Delhi constituency.

Meanwhile, the BJP has decided to field sitting MP Meenakshi Lekhi from the New Delhi seat and former cricketer Gautam Gambhir from the East Delhi, where Atishi is fighting on AAP ticket.

The BJP did not declare the name of its candidate for the North West constituency. Sitting MP Udit Raj has raised the banner of revolt as he feels that the party has not been fair to him. Former Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer Udit Raj

posted a series of tweets on Monday to express his concern as the BJP has not declared his candidature.

Udit held a Press conference later in the evening to air his grievance and asked the party leadership to come clean on his nomination from the North West Lok Sabha seat. He took the names of senior party leaders, including BJP president Amit Shah and Home Minister Rajnath Singh, and claimed that he was promised re-nomination.

Sources said the BJP may field popular Punjabi singer Hans Raj Hans from the North west seat and announcement to this regard is likely to be made by Tuesday morning as both the party president and the Prime Minister were not in the national Capital.

Sheila, who took over from Maken as the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) president earlier this year, was last a Member of Parliament from 1984-89 from Kannaauj. Sheila had unsuccessfully contested from East Delhi constituency in 1998. Again in 2013 Assembly polls, she lost to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal from Gole Market Assembly seat. Since then she has not contested any election.

Sheila will take on BJP's sitting MP Manoj Tiwari and Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Dilip Pandey. "We will begin campaigning soon by highlighting achievements of Congress Governments in Delhi as well as at the Centre," Dikshit said after her name was declared as a candidate from North East Delhi. She also

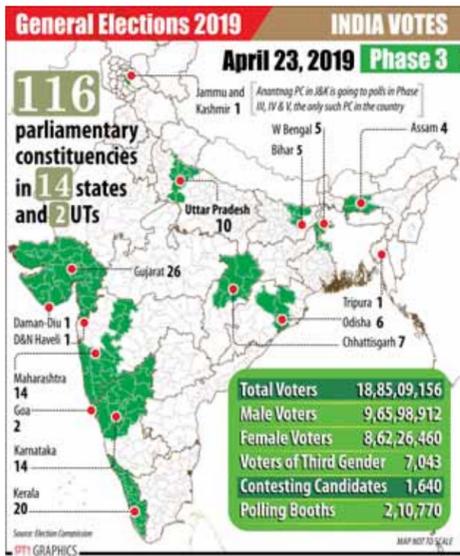
said her party was prepared to face the challenge of a triangular contest in Delhi.

Interestingly, senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal has not been named from the Chandni Chowk seat from which he has been fighting since 2004. After two terms, Sibal had lost to Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan in 2014. In fact he came third with journalist turned politician Ashutosh being second.

This time, Congress party has fielded Agarwal, who had also won from North East seat in 2009 and will take on Vardhan of the BJP and Pankaj Gupta of the AAP.

In a late night development, the Congress announced to field boxer Vijender Singh from South Delhi seat.

Continued on Page 7



## Dynasts slug it out to defend Maha forts

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

More than half a dozen prominent dynasts — including Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji's direct descendant Udayanraje Bhosale and NCP chief Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule — are slugging it out to retain their hold over their respective bastions, as Maharashtra witnesses fierce contests in a majority of the 14 constituencies that go to polls in the third phase of the Lok Sabha polls on Tuesday.

The BJP, the NCP and the Shiv Sena have a lot in stake in Tuesday's polling as they struggle to retain and if possible improve their respective 2014 tallies of six, four and three



seats respectively. Incidentally, the NCP had in 2014 picked up all its four seats in western Maharashtra — of which polls are scheduled in eight constituencies on Tuesday.

The 14 constituencies that are going to polls in the third phase of polling are: Jalgaon, Raigar, Jalna, Aurangabad, Raigar, Pune, Baramati, Ahmednagar, Madha, Sangli,



Satara, Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Kolhapur and Hathkanangale. The BJP may have been using Gandhi-Nehru dynasty as a stick to beat up the Congress with for years on end,

but dynasty is a watchword for all political parties — including the Amit Shah-led party — in Maharashtra. It may come as a surprise to many, but fact remains that there are at 35

dynasts in the Lok Sabha poll fray in the State. In Tuesday's polls, there are at least six prominent dynasts in the fray.

Being the third generation dynasts contesting the polls, Parth Pawar and Dr Sujay Vikhe-Patil lead the pack. While Parth Pawar is the grand nephew of NCP chief Sharad Pawar and son of Maharashtra's former deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Sujay is the son of the leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil of the Congress and grandson of late Balasaheb Vikhe-Patil, who was a Minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government.

Continued on Page 7

# Rahul again challenges PM for debate on corruption

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress president Rahul Gandhi once again challenged Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a one-to-one debate on corruption in Amethi as he raised the slogan 'Chowkidar...' and his supporters shouted 'chor hai' in unison.

Raking up his often-repeated poll theme of alleged corruption in the Rafale jet fighter deal, the Congress chief said, "The Prime Minister should not be afraid of a debate on corruption if he is so honest and has done nothing in the Rafale aircraft purchase."

Talking to media persons while campaigning in his parliamentary constituency, Amethi, on Monday afternoon, Rahul Gandhi said, "I just want a 15-minute one-to-one debate anywhere as suggested by the PM on corruption and then people of the country will come to know the real face of the 'chowkidar'."

"Dudh ka dudh, paani ka paani ho jayega. I am telling you, Narendra Modi won't be able to show his face before the nation," he added.

Alleging that there were irregularities in the Rafale aircraft deal, the Congress president said now every citizen of the country knew about the corruption of the Prime Minister.

Though refusing to comment on any other issue, Rahul said the media were also pressurised by the Prime Minister.

"If you all (media) say your mann ki baat, then the PM will beat you up. But you should not worry as in this election Modi will be out and we will be in and



Congress president Rahul Gandhi being garlanded during an election campaign rally at Tiloi in his parliamentary constituency Amethi, on Monday

## Rahul's nomination for Amethi LS seat found valid: Returning officer

**Amethi (PTI):** The returning officer of Amethi on Monday set aside objections on Congress president Rahul Gandhi's nomination papers filed for the seat and held the document valid, after scrutinising allegations of discrepancies over citizenship and other issues. After hearing KC Kaushik, the Congress leader's counsel, returning officer Ram Manohar Misra declared Gandhi's nomination papers for the Amethi Lok Sabha seat as valid. "There is no relevance for rejecting the nomination papers and therefore all the objections are being rejected," Misra said in his order issued on Monday. An Independent candidate, Dhruv Lal, and three others had on Saturday raised objections over the Congress president's nomination from the constituency, alleging discrepancies over citizenship and educational qualifications in his election affidavit. Dhruv Lal's lawyer Ravi Prakash had also submitted copies of a certificate of incorporation of a UK-registered company in which the Congress leader is stated to be a British national.

you can write whatever you want," he said.

Addressing a gathering, Rahul said, "In 2014, there was

a slogan of 'achhey din ayenge', but in this election, it is 'chowkidar', and the crowd shouted back 'chor hai'.

Addressing election meetings, first in Barabanki from where Tanuj Punia, son of senior party leader PL Punia is the Congress candidate, and later in Amethi, Rahul Gandhi hit out at Modi for his false promise of creating two crore jobs every year.

Dwelling on the Congress poll promise of NYAY (the Nyuntam Aay Yojna or the minimum income scheme which envisages a grant of Rs 6,000 a month to 20 per cent of the poorest people in the country, Rahul said it was a well thought out scheme that was viable and would be implemented by his party after forming government at the Centre.

"We will fill up 22 lakh government jobs and also give jobs to lakh of youths in panchayats," he said in Tiloi in Amethi.

Rahul Gandhi said if the Congress came to power, within three months a kisan-oriented budget would be presented besides a separate budget for the entire country.

"In the Congress regime, farmers will not have to go to jail for not repaying their loans," he said and promised that 150 new factories would be set up in Amethi and the food park taken away from Amethi would be returned.

Later in the day, Rahul Gandhi addressed two election meetings, one in Rae Bareilly, his mother's constituency, and another at Sultanpur, where senior party leader Sanjay Singh is the candidate. Rahul Gandhi's aunt Maneka Gandhi is the BJP candidate from Sultanpur.

# Has Modi visited any village of his constituency? asks PGMV

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Raring to take on Narendra Modi in Varanasi, Congress general secretary and east UP in-charge, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on Monday asked if the Prime Minister had visited any village of his parliamentary constituency in the last five years.

"In the last five years, Modi just snatched away all projects from Amethi, even those which were set up there only because my brother Rahul Gandhi is the MP from there," Priyanka said at a street corner meeting in her mother and United Progressive Alliance chairperson Sonia Gandhi's constituency Rae Bareilly.

"First Modiji stopped the Food Park, ITI and several other projects in Amethi. What is gar-

ing is that after seeing Rahul's picture in an advertisement about opening of Central school in Amethi, Modi immediately got the project shifted to some other place," she pointed out.

Priyanka asked, "If Modiji wants development, why was he stalling projects in Amethi just because the constituency is represented by Rahulji (in the Lok Sabha)?" She also reminded the youths of how they were cheated in the name of employment and over 50 lakh jobs were snatched from them.

Priyanka said, "My father Rajiv Gandhi visited every village of Amethi and even Rahul has done the same. But when I went to Varanasi recently and asked people, they informed me that Modi had not visited a single village in the last five



years."

The Congress leader alleged that Modiji was busy watching the business interests of a select few industrialists and ruined the lives of other people.

Priyanka also targeted Yogi Adityanath on his recent visit to Varanasi and his lunch with Dalits. "The Chief Minister went to a Dalit's house and later got his face and hands washed," charged Priyanka.

Dubbing Bharatiya Janata Party's Amethi candidate Smriti Irani as an 'outsider', the Congress general secretary accused her of distributing shoes in order to insult the locals and said the people in Congress chief's Lok Sabha constituency were not beggars.

"If anyone has to beg, it is them (BJP), who will beg for your votes," a visibly agitated Priyanka told the voters in the presence of reporters at the nukkad sabha (street corner meeting).

"The people of Amethi are very sensible. You all know who was going to open a food park in Amethi and the fact that it has not been opened till now. The food park would have benefited five lakh farmers in Amethi and Rae Bareilly," she said.

# Akhilesh flays BJP for delaying polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of delaying the poll schedule by a month, thereby creating problems for political parties and the voters. The SP chief said that the unusual long poll schedule spread over nearly three months would cause immense problems to the voters due to heat wave conditions as the temperature soars.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party forced the Election Commission to delay polls by a month so that they could inaugurate all their projects and schemes," the SP chief said while addressing a series of poll meetings in Lakhimpur Kheri and Sitapur in support of SP candidate Purvi Verma from Kheri and BSP candidate Arshad Siddiqui from Dhaurahra, on Monday. Hitting out at Modi and other BJP leaders for terming the SP-

BSP-RLD alliance in UP as 'mahamilavat', Akhilesh asked what should the BJP be called as it had allied with 38 parties. "The SP-BSP-RLD alliance is for a long term as it is an alliance of hearts," he said.

Dismissing the BJP's claim that "the boundaries of the country were safe due to it", Yadav charged the ruling party with playing politics with nation's security. He said, "The truth is that the boundaries are safe due to our brave (army) jawans."

Attacking the Prime Minister, the SP supremo said, "PM Narendra Modi came to power in 2014 pretending to be a 'chai-wala'. Now after 5 years, he has become chowkidar. The people of Kheri should take away the 'chowki' of the chowkidar."

Akhilesh Yadav attacked the Yogi Adityanath government for the problems caused to farmers by stray cattle and the financial hardship faced by cane farmers due to delay in payment of arrears by sugar mills.

"The BJP has failed to give the report card of its five-year rule at the Centre and two-year-rule in Uttar Pradesh. We don't want a 'chowkidar' who cannot safeguard our money in banks which have been looted by industrialists," Akhilesh said.

## SP CHANGES CANDIDATE IN MIRZAPUR

Meanwhile, the Samajwadi Party on Monday replaced its previous candidate and fielded Bharatiya Janata Party MP Ram Charitra Nishad from Mirzapur Lok Sabha seat. "Ram Charitra Nishad will be the party candidate from Mirzapur in place of Rajendra S Bind," a Samajwadi Party release issued in Lucknow on Monday said.

Nishad, the sitting BJP MP from Machhlishahr constituency, joined the SP in the presence of party chief Akhilesh Yadav last week. Mirzapur goes to polls in the last phase on May 19.

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5. Passbook Issued by Bank/PostOffice with photo
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7. Smart Card Issued under the scheme of Ministry of Labour
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# Silent voters keep parties guessing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

With voters so far remaining unresponsive and silent in Uttar Pradesh, political parties are groping in the dark about the fate of their candidates in the two phases of polling that have been completed. Though all parties claim of "clean sweep" in the first two phases in public, they appear sceptical in private conversation. A senior leader of the BJP vouched that if a few sitting MPs were replaced with fresh faces, the results could have been different. Elsewhere in Samajwadi Party, the common refrain of the leaders is that their alliance partner BSP fielded weak candidates on some seats which may harm the poll prospects of the alliance.

A senior BJP leader told this reporter that had the party changed 40 per cent of its sitting MPs as planned earlier, it would have been easy for the party to touch the halfway mark. "The scenario is now unpredictable," he told this

reporter in Lucknow on Monday. What makes the BJP apprehensive is report from booths which say that the party may win eight out of 16 seats which have gone to polls in the first two phases.

"The report from booth chiefs is not very encouraging. The alliance has worked well. Dalits and Muslims have voted together which is a worrying sign," the leader said on condition of anonymity.

The BJP campaign rested on booth management. It was the first among all the parties in UP to get off the block and start working at the booth level. The party appointed booth presidents and even panna incharge (in-charge of voter list page) to ensure that people came out to vote. The committee submitted its report to the party brass on Sunday.

"There is anger against the sitting MPs. People in majority, wanted to bring BJP back to power and see Modi as the next Prime Minister of the country. But anger against sitting MPs



has been a spoilsport. At public places, people discuss the non-performance of the MP and this negative publicity is hitting the party," the leader.

The BJP announced candidates for all 80 seats and changed just 17 sitting MPs which is close to 20 per. One of the candidates, Savitribai Phule was changed from Bahraich as she joined the Congress after reposing faith in Rahul

Gandhi's policies.

The only saving grace for the party is that around 60 per cent polling in both the phases witnessed high turnout.

There was fear that polling percentage would go down due to apathy of voters which did not happen. In the first phase, there was dip of around 2 per cent in polling, while in second phase, it peaked by less than 1 per cent. BJP leaders said that

it was the new voters who came out of their houses and voted in favour of the party. "Take the case of Jats. The older generation voted for the alliance but the younger generation voted for the BJP," he said.

A Samajwadi Party leader on the other hand said that poor selection of candidate by BSP affected the alliance. "In the first phase, there were reports that Jats voted for BJP and if this has happened then it is a worrying sign for the alliance," he said. "The most disturbing factor in this election is the silence of voters. Generally, voters in rural areas are vocal both before and after casting votes. This time they are silent. The thumb rule says that if voters are silent, they might have voted against ruling party. We are basing our prediction on this postulate only," he said.

But when in public, the same leaders have been bragging about bagging not less than 60 seats. What will be the outcome will only be known on May 23.

# Abuses, insults, melodrama galore in electoral battle

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party candidate from Rampur, Mohd Azam Khan's son and MLA Abdullah Azam Khan proved to be a chip off the old block when he took the 'Anarkali' jibe at BJP candidate Jaya Prada at a poll rally on Sunday.

Rampur district authorities have ordered registration of a case against the SP MLA for his derogatory outburst.

On Sunday evening, the last day of campaigning for the third phase, Azam's son fired the salvo at the BJP candidate saying, "Ali bhi hamare, Bajrangbali bhi hamare. Humein Ali bhi chahiye, Bajrangbali bhi chahiye lekin Anarkali nahi chahiye." (Ali is ours and so is Bajrangbali. We want Ali and Bajrangbali but we do not want Anarkali).

The reference of Anarkali was obviously to Jaya Prada, who is known for her dancing skills in films. Jaya Prada had urged the Election Commission to take note of the derogatory jibe without delay which comes close on the heels of a similarly devastating remark by Abdullah's father Azam Khan.

The Azam Khan (SP)-Jaya Prada (BJP) hostility has already assumed legendary proportions and both do not spare any opportunity to strike at each other. Jaya Prada, who won from Rampur Lok Sabha



Azam Khan

Jaya Prada

seat in 2004 and 2009 as member of Samajwadi Party, joined the BJP in March and has been fielded against Azam Khan, her former mentor. Rampur votes on Tuesday. "I cannot decide whether to laugh or cry. Like father like son. Hadn't expected this from Abdullah as he is educated. His father says I am Amrapali and he says I am Anarkali. Is that how they see women in society?" Jaya Prada asked. Earlier, the Election Commission had cracked down on Azam Khan and barred him from campaigning for 72 hours after his derogatory comments against Jaya Prada.

Meanwhile, Jaya Prada too landed herself in a mess by offering an advise to BSP chief Mayawati. A case was registered against Jaya Prada after she told a gathering in Rampur that the way Azam Khan was commenting on her, the BSP

chief could imagine what all he will be looking at with his X-Ray vision if she came along with him.

The contest between the one time buddies and now arch rivals was always expected to be fierce but the saga of acrimony took an ugly turn with the SP veterans' 'khaki underwear' jibe. With it the electoral contest in Rampur has become more about personal insults than anything else.

As Jaya Prada has turned this election into a fight for women's dignity, Khan has given it a religious colour with speeches seemingly intended to appeal to Muslims.

Melodrama and emotional appeals have also been aplenty with first Jaya Prada breaking down at a public meeting earlier this month and then Khan letting tears flow at a meeting on Friday after his 72-hour ban came to an end.

# Mayawati: Why is EC not cancelling Pragma's nomination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Monday targeted Pragma Singh Thakur, asking the Election Commission why her nomination was not cancelled so far even when the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate from Bhopal was issuing controversial statements. "The Malegaon blast case accused and BJP candidate from Bhopal Sadhvi Pragma is claiming that she is contesting a 'dharma yuddh'. This is the real face of BJP/RSS which is being exposed continuously. But why is the Commission only issuing notices and not cancelling the nomination of BJP ratna (gem) Pragma?" Mayawati tweeted.

"If the Election Commission is not able to work in an impartial manner to the satisfaction of people despite severe criticism in the media, it is an issue of grave concern for democracy and no one else but BJP and PM Modi, who are surrounded by serious electoral allegations."

Pragma Thakur is out on bail in the Malegaon blast case of 2008. She is under fire for saying that Hemant Karkare died during the 26/11 terror attacks because she had cursed



him for "torturing" her in custody when he probed the Malegaon blast case as Maharashtra Anti-Terrorists Squad chief.

The BJP candidate from Bhopal retracted the statement after it drew severe criticism.

Six people were killed and over 100 injured when an explosive device strapped on a motorcycle went off near a mosque in Malegaon in north Maharashtra on September 29, 2008. Thakur has also said she was "proud" of her participation in demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. The Election Commission has issued a show-cause notice to her. On Monday in Kolkata, BJP president Amit Shah defended his party's decision to field Thakur as its Lok Sabha candidate, saying allegations against her are false and the real culprits in the Malegaon blast case have evaded the law.

# 3rd phase poll: Azam has most criminal cases: ADR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) claimed that Samajwadi Party candidate from Rampur, Mohd Azam Khan, had the most criminal cases among candidates in the third phase polls and all these cases were not political in nature.

"Khan is on the top of the list of candidates with criminal records with 10 cases against him that include 15 IPC sections registered under heinous crime," ADR head in UP, Sanjay Singh, said in Lucknow on Monday. Khan is trailed by two independent candidates — Choudhury Bashir contesting from Firozabad with 10 cases against him and Javed Khan from Bareilly with four cases.

Singh, however, said that there was a decline in the number of criminal and crorepati candidates in phase three, polling for which will be held in 10 Lok Sabha seats on Tuesday. In this phase, 20 per cent candidates have criminal background and 38 per cent are crorepaties. Of the total 120 candidates in the fray for the third phase, 24 (20 per cent) have admitted in their affidavits about criminal cases against them with 19 (16 per cent) have heinous crime lodged against them.

SP patron Mulayam Singh



ADR head (UP) Sanjay Singh addressing mediapersons in Lucknow

Yadav, who is contesting from Mainpuri, has also declared one criminal case against him for criminal intimidation under Section 506 of the IPC.

BJP candidate from Budaun, Sanghmitra Maurya, also has two criminal cases against her. Similarly, 46 candidates are crorepaties.

"The average assets of candidates in this phase is Rs 6.71 crore which is less by around Rs 2 crore as compared to candidates' average assets in the first and second phases," Singh said. SP candidate from Etah, Devendra Singh Yadav, is the richest with assets of Rs 204 crore followed by Praveen Aron (Congress) from Bareilly with asset of Rs 147 crores. Another Congress candidate from

Budaun, Saleem Shervani has declared assets of Rs 76 crores. BJP candidate from Pilibhit, Varun Gandhi, has assets worth Rs 60 crore while SP candidate from Mainpuri, Mulayam Singh, has assets worth Rs 20 crore. BJP candidate from Rampur, Jaya Prada, has assets worth over Rs 27 crores. In the third phase all candidates, except three, disclosed their PAN details.

While 35 candidates have disclosed that they are 8th to 12th standard pass, 65 have claimed to be graduate or post-graduate. A total of 12 candidates are literate while three have declared themselves as illiterate. Two candidates have not declared their educational qualifications.

# Nominations begin for 7th phase polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Nominations for 13 constituencies going to polls in the seventh phase of Lok Sabha elections commenced from Monday with the Election Commission issuing a notification in this regard. This phase includes the VIP constituencies of Varanasi from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is contesting the election, Gorakhpur, Ghazipur, Chandauli and Mirzapur.

With the issuance of notification for the seventh phase, polling process in all 80 Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttar Pradesh has been carried out. Polling has been completed for the first two phases and for the third phase it will be held on Tuesday. The nomination process for the fourth phase has been completed and for the fifth phase ended on Monday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to file his nomination papers from Varanasi on April 26, while Union minister Manoj Sinha will file his papers on April 25. As per Election Commission poll schedule, nominations for the seventh phase will continue till April 29 and scrutiny of papers will be done the next day. Candidates can withdraw the candidature on May 2.

The constituencies going to polls in the final phase are Maharajanj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria, Bangsaon, Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur and Robertsganj.

Besides Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Varanasi), the fate of Union ministers Manoj Sinha (Ghazipur), Anupriya Patel of Apna Dal (Sonelal) (Mirzapur), BJP state chief Mahendra Nath Pandey (Chandauli), Bhojpur actor and BJP candidate Ravi Kishan (Gorakhpur) will be decided in this phase. In the seventh phase of polls, 2.32 crore voters, including 1.26 crore males, 1.06 crore females and 1,416 of the third gender, are eligible to cast their votes in 13,979 booths. The counting of votes for all 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP will be taken up on May 23.

# Residents of Old City to vote for development



Most of the Old City residents feel that the area has been neglected by political leaders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Most of the residents of Old City feel that this part of Lucknow has been neglected and they have decided to vote on the issue of development. The Pioneer interacted with the residents to know about the major issues on which people will be casting their voters in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections on May 6.

The voters said that the focus of political leaders elected from Lucknow had always been on trans-Gomti areas.

Organising secretary of Lucknow Sarraf Association Adheesh Jain said that as jewellers, their primary concern was security. "There have been incidents in the recent past, raising security concerns for us and this is a prime issue. It is unfortunate and ironical that police and people blame it on jewellers when we are targeted by criminals," he said.

He pointed out that the other issues included cleanliness of the city and traffic management. "Traffic management needs to be improved because it can add to bet-

ter economic situation for us. We want the facilities at the markets to be improved. There is no toilet for women in Chowk market," he said.

Ridhi Gaur, a resident of Chowk and a member of Shubh Sanskaar Samiti, said they had seen no development in the past years in the area. "The old parts of the state capital have always been neglected, be it in terms of cleanliness or traffic management. Scores of people have settled in trans-Gomti areas while the Old City remains a picture of neglect. The old bylanes of Lucknow are still the same," Gaur pointed out.

Masood Abdullah, a fashion designer and a resident of Chowk, said he would like people to vote on the issue of heritage development. "The heritage area needs to be developed and the issue of cleanliness needs to be taken up. These are the issues on which we are going to vote," he said.

Abu Bakr of Idris Biryani fame also said that there had been less development in old parts of the city and work needed to be done in terms of cleanliness.

# 50-year-old farmer bludgeoned to death over land dispute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A 50-year-old farmer was bludgeoned to death by five persons in a village in Madaion. Identified as Thakur Prasad, a resident of Bhuda Kheda under Madaion police station, he was attacked allegedly by Balbir and four aides. The accomplices were identified as Nanke, Arun, Raj Kishore, and a contractor who runs a country-made liquor shop in the area. The motive for murder was said to be land dispute.

Balbir, who is a resident of Imliapurva, a village next to Bhuda Kheda, was not on cordial terms with Thakur and would often pick up fights with him over a land dispute. Reports said he wanted to buy Thakur's land but his offer was turned down by the latter. On Sunday afternoon, Balbir, along with Nanke and Arun, barged into the house of Thakur when he was all alone and dragged him to the nearby country-made liquor shop. They forcibly made him consume liquor in huge quantity and later forced him to sign a blank sheet with a view to grabbing his land

# Woman strangulated by husband

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A woman was strangled to death allegedly by her husband over some domestic issue in Usrana village under Itaunja police station on Sunday evening. The victim was identified as Anisulnisa (40) while her husband was Punnu. Interestingly, after strangulating his wife, Punnu reached the district jail to surrender but the authorities refused to take him into custody on legal grounds. He is

started beating her up. She ran out of the house to save herself but he caught hold of her and strangled her with his *gamchha* (scarf) near the house. After strangulation he closed the toilet door and left for jail to surrender him.

Mehmood rushed to his sister's house immediately after getting the information and found her lying dead with the scarf tied around her neck. Hectic searches were made by the police to trace Punnu, but to no avail.

while he was sozzled. As Thakur refused to sign the paper, the accused started thrashing him with sticks and iron rods, leaving him unconscious with multiple injuries. Considering him dead, they left him in the basement of the liquor shop and fled the scene. As Thakur cried for help when he regained conscious around midnight, those in and around the shop rushed to his rescue. In the meantime, Thakur's elder brother Kanhai Lal also reached

there while searching for him. Kanhai Lal took him to the house where he narrated his ordeal. As his condition started deteriorating in the wee hours, he was rushed to the community health centre where he succumbed to injuries in the morning.

Kanhai Lal lodged a complaint at Madiion police station on Monday afternoon. He alleged that Balbir, Arun and Nanke beat Thakur to death. He said the accused wanted to

grab Thakur's land. He also named Ram Kishore, owner of the shopping complex where the liquor shop is located, and the unidentified contractor running the shop. He said Kishore was aware that Thakur was overdrunk and lying in an unconscious state with multiple injuries, but he did not inform the police or any family member. Investigating officer Santosh Singh said probe into the case was in progress and the culprits would be arrested soon.

# Jeweller bashed up, bag of ornaments snatched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Three unidentified miscreants held a jeweller at the gun-point and snatched his bag containing ornaments worth lakhs of rupees near Neelmata railway crossing under PGI police station on Monday night. The miscreants also hit the jeweller with the butt of their country-made pistol, inflicting injuries

on his head, face and chest. The jeweller was identified as Dileep Kanaujia, a resident of Vrindavan housing scheme on Rae Bareilly road.

Dileep shut his shop in Neelmata market at 8:45 pm and left for home by his car. The bike-borne miscreants who were trailing him fired at him thrice at a secluded place few metres away from the market. However, the police rub-

bished reports of firing. Dileep lost control of his vehicle which rammied into a tree. He was bashed up by the miscreants and his bag was snatched at the gun-point. Reports said that Dileep had ornaments to be delivered to different customers. A passerby informed the police after which the jeweller was rushed to hospital.

# Boycott politicians allowing companies to commodify water: Rajendra Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Rajendra Singh, popularly known as the 'Waterman of India', on Monday discussed issues for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Lucknow. He said currently, more than 362 districts in India were drought-hit and there was water crisis in more than 16 states.

"Privatisation of water in India is against its culture but private companies have entered India and made water a commodity even as 60% of the population cannot even afford drinking water. In our country, water is a natural resource shared by everyone and cannot be owned by any government or company. Therefore, we must stop these companies and boycott politicians who allow them to enter India's market to commodify water," he said. He pointed out that no political party had given attention to the issues of water, environment and climate change. "The political parties are making



He said that the political parties are making false promises. My appeal to fellow Indians is to vote for those who support and work for the cause of water," he added.

"The water crisis is increasing in 16 states. Almost 90 per cent of the rivers in the country are either dried-up or having flow of water only during monsoon. The condition of major rivers is also deteriorating by the day. Ganga, which symbolises the faith of crores of people of India, is more polluted today. This fact has

been revealed in the NEERI report," he pointed out. He said projects like Namami Gange had helped only in superficial beautification of the river. "The most important aspect of maintaining the continuity of the river is ignored. Today, in the name of development, rivers are being destroyed. In India, electricity production is more than that required. Still dams are being constructed on rivers for production of electricity while no effective measures are being taken for rainwater conservation. The culture of ponds is also dying," he added.

He pointed out that due to lack of water conservation efforts, rainwater went waste. "A state like Maharashtra, where the most number of dams have been constructed after independence, is facing acute water crisis today. Among the 36 districts of Maharashtra, 26 have been declared drought-affected while the situation in other districts is more or less the same," he added.



School students taking part in a voter awareness drive at 1090 crossing on Monday

Pioneer

# Social media cell of Congress working in a novel manner

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The social media cell of the Congress is using the social media networking in an innovative manner for the campaigning of its party. The media incharge of the social media cell, Sanjay Singh, while talking to *The Pioneer*, said that they were using WhatsApp to connect with the rural voters. He said that the thrust was on making the poll manifesto of the Congress reach every voter at the ground level and they were focusing on WhatsApp and Facebook.

He said that it was a two-pronged approach in which they were not only making the manifesto popular but also handling any trolls regarding the issues which it had highlighted. Singh said that they had a research team and a content design team which he had under his wings. "While the research team does the research for the campaigning which is required the content team builds on the content

which has to be shared with the voters," he said. He further pointed out that they had Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and block-level coordinators to connect to the absolute ground level of all the districts in the state.

"The Lok Sabha coordinators work in tandem with the Vidhan Sabha ones and these in turn work with the block-level coordinators. The manifesto is then made to reach every person at the block level for which we have WhatsApp groups," he said. He admitted that in this way they were reaching out to the people who would step out to vote.

Singh said that they were also able to defend issues when they were being trolled on any particular one.

"One of the major offerings in the manifesto is the NYAY yojana of the Congress where we propose to give Rs 72,000 for every poor family annually. This scheme came in for a lot of trolls and hence we made it a point to defend it. This is the power of the social

networking where we can take a stand and defend the main issues and do it repeatedly until they were understood and defended well," he added.

He said that the important point which should be noted was that with the social networking sites they were able to reach areas which even the candidates could not physically visit. "There are times when the candidates do not reach a village and there are times when the ambience is too hostile for them and they cannot go over there. It is through the social networking systems that one can reach the target audience. Whether the impact is good or bad is a different issue but the important point is that one can reach the voter," he said. On being asked whether a political person or a social media expert was better in handling the social networking cell, he said, "as a political person I know what should be highlighted and hence I am incharge and take the help of the team to carry this work further," he said.

**उपरोक्त पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा विधि विस्तार सूचना** इस कार्यालय की ई-निविदा संख्या 276 -वि.पा.मं.प्र.ल. /2018-19 जो कि पूर्व निर्धारित दिनांक में किन्हीं अपरिहार्य कारणों से परिवर्तन होने के कारण अब दिनांक 02.05.2019 को 16.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 03.05.2019 को 13.30 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी। **अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, उडाग पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. कक्षा सं-111 से 114, भू-तल, पारेषण भवन, विभूति खण्ड-II, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ। पत्रांक 760 दिनांक 22.4.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये"।**

**उपरोक्त पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा विधि विस्तार सूचना** इस कार्यालय की ई-निविदा संख्या 280 -वि.पा.मं.प्र.ल. /2018-19 जो कि पूर्व निर्धारित दिनांक में किन्हीं अपरिहार्य कारणों से परिवर्तन होने के कारण अब दिनांक 02.05.2019 को 16.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 03.05.2019 को 14.00 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी। **अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, उडाग पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. कक्षा सं-111 से 114, भू-तल, पारेषण भवन, विभूति खण्ड-II, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ। पत्रांक 761 दिनांक 22.4.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये"।**

**उडाग पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा विधि विस्तार सूचना** इस कार्यालय की ई-निविदा संख्या 02 व 03-वि.पा.मं.प्र.ल. /2019-20 जो कि पूर्व निर्धारित दिनांक में किन्हीं अपरिहार्य कारणों से परिवर्तन होने के कारण अब दिनांक 27.04.2019 को 16.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 29.04.2019 को क्रमः 13.30 व 14.00 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी। **अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, उडाग पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. कक्षा सं-111 से 114, भू-तल, पारेषण भवन, विभूति खण्ड-II, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ। पत्रांक 762 दिनांक 22.04.2019, "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये"।**

**उत्तर प्रदेश पावर कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड अति आवश्यक सूचना** सर्व साधारण के सुलभ संदर्भ हेतु सूचित किया जाता है कि 132 केवी0 उपकेंद्र लेखुर (साराना) के 33 केवी0 मैन बस पर अतिआवश्यक अनुसंधान कार्य के समापन हेतु उक्त उपकेंद्र से जुड़े निम्नलिखित 33 केवी0 पोचकों से पोषित उपकेंद्रों/सेक्टरों की विद्युत आपूर्ति दिनांक 23.04.2019 को 09:00 बजे से 10:00 बजे तक आंशिक रूप से बाधित रहेगी। दिनांक 23.04.2019 प्रस्तावित फीडर का नाम 33 केवी0 अचरारगढ़, चोलापुर, पाण्डेपुर एवं 10 एम0वी0। **बाधित अवधि सुबह 09:00 बजे से 10:00 बजे तक (हदरमान सिंह) अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत प्रेषण खण्ड-प्रथम 132 केवी0 विद्युत उपकेंद्र केंद्र, छात्रनी परिवार कार्यालय के निकट केंद्र, वाराणसी (उडाग) 221002 पत्रांक-1157 दिनांक- 22.4.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये"।**

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## CITYBRIEFS

### EARTH DAY

Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation (LMRC) on Monday celebrated Earth Day with a host of cultural events and activities for school students and kids of NGOs. A drawing competition was held for children on 'Earth and Environment'. Their drawings and paintings depicted the different environmental issues like global warming, Greenhouse effect, and ozone layer depletion. These kids also enjoyed a Metro ride from Hazratganj to Badshah Nagar. Several cultural activities were organised at the performing arena of Hazratganj station where the budding talents from different schools showcased their talents. A street play was held on 'Our Mother Earth' by the students of CMS to highlighting the need for conservation of forest and hydro energy. A special quiz competition was also held at the radio station in collaboration with LMRC.

### CAMPUS MEET

A campus meet was organised by Climate Agenda at an institute on the occasion of Earth Day (Monday). Students and the teaching & non-teaching staff of the school, along with campaigners of Climate Agenda, attended the event. The students wrote hundreds of postcards to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath requesting him to safeguard the earth. Saniya Anwar from Climate Agenda said: "The earth is already in danger due to climate change. Pollution is one of the most influencing factors of climate change. The government is trying to control pollution, but the speed is not satisfactory. Climate change has a



Children taking part in a painting contest on Earth Day

### ELECTED

The annual general meeting of Bengali Club and Youngmen's Association was held on Sunday. Current president Arun Kumar Banerjee was unanimously re-elected while Shankar Bhowmick was also elected as general secretary for 2019-2022.

### CLEAN-UP DRIVE

A 'clean-up and green-up drive' was organised by Prithvi Innovations in collaboration with Lucknow Municipal Corporation and Forest



Children taking part in a painting contest on Earth Day

## SCHOOLSCAN

### WORLD EARTH DAY

World Earth Day was celebrated at St Joseph Inter College in Thakurganj on Monday. The students participated in speech & elocution and poster-making contests. The students of primary section presented a skit giving the message 'Save the earth'. A dance drama was presented by students of the junior section. Managing directors of the school Rajesh

### TEACHERS' TEAM

A 15-member teachers' delegation of Germany visited City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus II, and got acquainted with the teaching methodology. Earlier, director of strategy (CMS) Roshan Gandhi, senior principal Manjit Batra and principal Sangeeta Banerjee accorded a warm welcome to these teachers. Gandhi said that this

# Overseas counselling for LU students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Counselling and Placement Cell of Lucknow University has organised an overseas counselling of United States of America for the students of Lucknow University in the campus.

The representatives of various universities from the United States Indian Educational Foundation, affiliated to the US Department of State, provided an opportunity for the students of different majors to interact with them and get first-hand information for getting higher education in the US.

The representatives of the following universities interacted with the students which included the Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, Texas, Tiffin University, Ohio, Full Sail University, University of South Florida, Florida, Troy



University, Troy, Alabama, University of Michigan, Flint, Governors State University, Kent State University, Wright State University, Pittsburgh University and University of San Francisco. Prof Madhurima Lall, Director, Counselling, Placement Cell, Lucknow University, said that there were a number of students who aspired for studies abroad but could not get the right direction to know about the different opportunities available overseas. It is seen that either it is very costly or the sources are unauthenticated. "So this was the first attempt of its kind initiated by the CPC in the campus where the students were given overseas counselling directly by the authenticated US representatives on the one hand and on the other it was made available free of cost to all the students." Sanjay Medhavi, a member of CPC, said that majority of students were usually not aware

about the overseas educational opportunities and to bridge this gap such interactive sessions with authorised university representatives were required. Today's counselling session was an important step in making the students of LU aware about the overseas opportunities and would help them in making informed career choices.

Dr Anoop Kumar Singh, a member of the CPC, said that we would keep organising such events during the next sessions for the benefit of a large number of students from the University. The CPC cell would try to promote the aspirants who were actually looking for higher education abroad, he added. Dr Vaishali Gupta, a member of the CPC, said that the students would get a direct opportunity to know how to proceed in getting admission in the US universities.

# Rita Joshi files nomination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

It was the day of the BJP at the Collectorate where nomination papers for the Lok Sabha elections in Phulpur and Allahabad seats are being filed. Exhibiting their strength the BJP official candidates Kesari Devi Patel (Phulpur) and Dr Rita Bahuguna Joshi (Allahabad) reached the Collectorate in a joint procession accompanied by a number of vehicles and motorbikes. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and ministers, Anupriya Patel, Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi', Siddharth Nath Singh besides Neelam Karvaria and many others addressed a public meeting near the Vigyan Parishad auditorium before the filing of nominations by Kesari Devi Patel and Dr Rita Bahuguna Joshi and mentioned the achievements of the Modi government to create a pro-BJP wave in the district.

Dr Rita Bahuguna Joshi, who is a minister in the Yogi cabinet, reached the ancient Kalyani Devi Temple in the old locality of Khushal Parvat and took out a road show from there after offering prayers at the shrine. Covering almost all the areas of the old city she reached Azad Park from where a joint procession of both the



candidates was to be taken out. Kesari Devi Patel, the candidate from Phulpur, reached Azad Park where a public meeting was organised by the party. After the leaders addressed the meeting, both the candidates boarded a chariot-shaped vehicle and reached the Collectorate to file nomination papers. Besides the BJP candidates, Pandhari Yadav of the Samajwadi Party also tried to show his strength and filed his nomination for the Phulpur seat. Priya Singh Paul, who claims herself to be the daughter of Sanjay Gandhi, filed her nomination for the Phulpur seat on Monday on the ticket of Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party of Shivpal Yadav. She said that when the other members of the Nehru family preferred not to contest from the constituency of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, she came here as a family member to win the seat after a gap of decades. Priya Singh Paul, Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) candidate from the Phulpur Lok Sabha seat during her interaction with the people said that she would make efforts to get heritage status for the Sangam city. She further said that Sangam city bore a testimony to the India's struggle for freedom and had the legacy of several Prime Ministers. But it was lagging behind in almost all the parameters of development, she said.

# Youth planning to commit theft nabbed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Police stumbled upon a youth, identified as Golu Gupta (22) of Unnao, who was planning to commit theft in Sanik Colony in Sarojinagar. The bike-borne youth was stopped by the police picket

near Scooter India crossing during a checking drive. The cops grew suspicious due to his contradictory statements and took him to the police station. During interrogation, he disclosed that he used to commit theft in houses and big showrooms without involving anyone for help. He said that pretending to be a wholesaler, he would collect goods and keep them in bags before going to big shops and showrooms. The police recovered stolen goods from his hideout in Naseemganj (Sarojinagar).

### GANG OF ROBBERS BUSTED; 4 HELD

Allahabad (PNS): The Khiri police busted an interstate gang of robbers and nabbed four of them with the looted cash and firearms. The gang used to commit loots and other crimes in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. SSP Atul Sharma said SHO Khiri Ved Prakash Pandey and his team conducted a raid at the Patharpur canal culvert close to the MP border and arrested four robbers who were identified as Aditya Pratap Singh, Vineet Namdev, Ram Vishal Singh and Brajesh Jaiswal, residents of Rewa district in MP. Cash worth Rs 1.30 lakh, two country-made firearms and two stolen motorcycles were recovered from their possession. Aditya and Brajesh had looted Rs 5 lakh from a finance company manager in Khiri area in the month of February. Earlier, the gang members had sneaked into a guesthouse in Khiri and looted Rs 36,000 cash, the SSP added.



educational tour would strengthen the relation between the teachers of India and Germany because both the countries had lots of things to learn from each other.

# Coast Guard on alert after Easter blasts in Lanka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of the serial blasts in Sri Lanka on Sunday, the Indian Coast Guard has intensified patrolling to prevent terrorists responsible for the dastardly act from escaping from there and sneaking into India through the sea route. The precautionary step was taken on Sunday itself after the enormity of the situation became clear and more fast patrol boats besides surveillance planes and helicopters were deployed.

Maintaining high alert, the Coast Guard has mounted round the clock vigil all along the Indian maritime boundary with Sri Lanka to thwart any attempt by the terrorists to avoid the security dragnet in Sri Lanka and infiltrate into India through sea, officials said here on Monday.

They also said all ships from Coast Guard stations at Tuticorin, Mandapam and Karaikal were pressed into service for heightened patrolling along the sensitive sea lanes. Medium range maritime surveillance aircraft were providing aerial support to the ships in an effort to detect any hostile movement and alert the patrol boats for interception.

Vigil was increased soon after Sri Lanka said a local extremist group National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ) may be responsible for the blasts

which claimed nearly 290 lives. Sri Lanka President Maithripala Srisena declared a nationwide emergency on Monday.

The preventive measure in India was also taken to avoid a repeat of 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks in 2008 when Pakistani terrorists managed to reach the metropolis through sea and launch a series of attacks in which 166 people were killed. There were concerns that terrorists escaping from Sri Lanka

may try to engineer terror attacks in India, sources said.

Keeping this in view, security was ramped up around all defence and other vital installations including naval bases in coastal region, they said. Moreover, all the stakeholders in coastal security including the local police increased patrolling at all landing points in the coastal region especially in Tamil Nadu and deployed security pickets to prevent infiltration.



## India alerted Colombo 2 weeks ago of terror attack

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Over two weeks before the deadly suicide bombings in Sri Lanka, India had alerted Colombo of possible terror hits at churches and preliminary findings suggest the slain suicide bomber and chief of the National Thowheed Jamath Hashim alias Zahran Hashim had attempted to carry out blast at the Indian embassy and at the US embassy earlier this month.

However, given the tight security at these two installations, the bomber decided to hit three luxury hotels and two major churches taking a toll of over 200 and injuring about 500 others.

The National Thowheed Jamath is a breakaway faction of Sri Lanka Thowheed Jamath, branch of Tamil Nadu Thowheed Jamath under the scanner of the Intelligence agencies at least since 2016.

Sources in the security agencies said the Indian embassy in Sri Lanka is heavily fortified and armed with anti-aircraft batteries of a Central paramilitary force and

Following the inputs of the impending terror strike, the Lankan police had also issued an alert to the effect but could not assess the magnitude of the problem that was in the making

has put in place a tight security cordon and sophisticated access control paraphernalia.

Following the inputs of the impending terror strike, the Sri Lankan police had also issued an alert to the effect but could not assess the magnitude of the problem that was in the making. Initial assessments here suggest the serial suicide bombings in and around Colombo were essentially an outcome of Islamist versus Buddhist conflict.

Hashim is said to have undergone treatment earlier for mental illness and wanted to become a social worker in 2011. However, Hashim joined religious groups like the Sri Lanka Thowheed Jamath and subsequently got in touch with the ISIS especially those based in the UAE and went on to become the chief of Khorasan

Sri Lanka of ISIS.

Estimates here suggest Hashim has a follower base of nearly 400 radicals and the attack on the churches could be a tactical ploy to deflect attention of the aggrieved Buddhists against the Muslims who are lesser in number in the island nation than the former, sources said.

Pakistan's covert agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in Colombo might have provided facilitation for logistics supplies to Hashim through its terror proxies like the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and its humanitarian assistance arm Jamat-ud-Dawah that has been present in Sri Lanka since the 2005 tsunami. The JuD had purchased a number of orphans for the purpose of radicalization from Sri Lanka and other countries hit by tsunami.

The terror targets which include three luxury hotels-Shangri La, Kingsbury and Cinnamon Grand-and St Anthony Church Zion Church and St Sebastian Church were identified after the failed bids at the Indian and American missions in Colombo.

## Blasts could have TN repercussions: Security experts

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The repercussions of Sunday's serial blasts in Colombo that claimed more than 200 lives could have a major effect in Tamil Nadu, according to intelligence and security experts in the State. Thowheed Jamath, an Islamic terrorist organisation, the name of which is linked to the serial blasts in Sri Lanka, has a strong presence in Tamil Nadu. The open sea between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka offers immense scope to the volunteers of this organisation to shift from one place to another. It is an open secret in Tamil Nadu that all anti-national and extremist organisations work in unison. The fact that Thowheed

Jamath is a name which causes fear and terror in the minds of the people was made known by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu J Jayalalitha herself while speaking to reporters in January 2013.

"There are more than 7.5 lakh active Thowheed Jamath activists in Tamil Nadu," Jayalalitha had told a Press meet specially convened by her to explain the reasons behind banning Viswaroopam, a Tamil movie produced by Kamal Haasan. About 24 Islamic organisations had expressed their opposition to the release of the movie because they alleged that the film contained anti-Islam references and they wanted such scenes to be deleted from the film.

Of the scenes were not deleted, the organisations, led by Thowheed Jama'ath had threatened to stage demonstrations in front of the 524 theatres where the movie was to be released. "We need 56, 440 policemen to ensure security and law and order in these theatres on a round-the-clock basis and hence we decided to effect the ban in the movie under Section 144 of the IPC," Jayalalitha had told during the press briefing.

She said she was very much worried about the law and order situation at that time as there were many instances of throwing of petrol bombs and vandalising film theatres. But the frequent shuffling and transfer of intelligence officials (both in State and Central

services) is coming in the way of tracking the real activities of Thowheed Jama'ath which are shrouded in mysteries, according to insiders in these departments.

Since then the strength of Thowheed Jama'ath has increased manifold in Tamil Nadu. Though the organisation is not visibly active in the State, it is very much present in areas of conflict between caste Hindus and Dalits. The Thowheed Jama'ath is actively propagating Islam among the Dalits by distributing the Holy books and religions literature.

A status report prepared by a Chennai based intelligence think tank for the union home ministry has this to tell about the state of affairs in Tamil Nadu.

### IN SHORT

#### LOKPAL TO WORK FROM 5-STAR LUXURY HOTEL

New Delhi: The country's first Lokpal, the anti-corruption ombudsman, will work from the five-star luxury hotel, The Ashok, in Delhi. The Lokpal chairperson PC Ghose, all of its eight members and support staff are being allocated space in the hotel premises

#### SC REFUSES TO ENTERTAIN PLEA ON BRIBING IN POLLS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea which alleged that people were being bribed on a massive scale for the Lok Sabha polls in Tamil Nadu. A Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said it was not inclined to hear the matter since the elections in the state were already over.

#### NGO AROH CELEBRATES WORLD EARTH DAY

New Delhi: NGO AROH Foundation celebrated World Earth Day by organising plantation drives, awareness rallies and competitions in schools and villages in different States. Neelam Gupta, president AROH Foundation said, "World Earth Day is a day on which millions of people across the globe participate to accelerate work towards conservation and sustainability."

#### PM'S COPTER ROW: OFFICER SENT BACK TO KARNATAKA

New Delhi: The Election Commission general observer, Mohammed Mohsin (1996-batch IAS officer), who was suspended for checking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's helicopter in Odisha's Sambalpur in violation of norms for dealing with SPG protectees, has been sent back to Karnataka.

#### SC SEEKS REPLIES OVER RESTRICTION ON TRAFFIC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre and Jammu & Kashmir on a plea seeking quashing of an order which restricts civilian traffic two days a week on the national highway (NH) stretch from Udhampur to Baramulla for movement of security forces.

#### Explain why infiltration, casualties highest under BJP Govt: PC to Jaitley

New Delhi: After Arun Jaitley criticised him for his recent remarks on Pakistan, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram Monday hit back saying that the Union minister must explain why infiltration, the number of infiltrators and casualties last year were highest under the BJP government.

Slamming former Union minister P Chidambaram's statement that

India must "change its behaviour" towards Pakistan, Jaitley said, "Why Mr P Chidambaram is siding with Pakistan by asking India to change its behaviour? Should we remain victim of terrorism & not do anything?" PTI

## BJP says Rahul 'liar of first order' after he expresses regret in SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the BJP demanded an Apology from Rahul Gandhi and called him "liar of the first order" in public opinion after the Congress president expressed regret in the Supreme Court on Monday over his remarks in connection with the Rafale judgment, the main opposition party described the saffron interpretation as "blasphemous" amounting to criminal contempt of court proceedings even as it insisted "ek hi chowkidar chor hain".

Addressing a press conference here, BJP spokesperson GVL Narsimha Rao said, "Today, by filing an affidavit in the honourable SC, Rahul Gandhi accepted that he had lied on his allegations against PM Modi on the Rafale deal." "This was an attempt by Rahul Gandhi to manufacture a lie and create a controversy in the Rafale deal... He should apologise to the people of this country," he said adding "In public opinion, Rahul Gandhi is a liar of the first order".

Stating that Rahul stands



guilty in the "court of public opinion", Rao added that all Congress cadres across the country hang their heads in shame that there leader has been blatantly lying on the Rafale jet deal.

While senior BJP leader and union defence minister Nirmala Sitaraman said the Congress leader's lie has given a big hit to his credibility in the public eye, BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi said Rahul expressing "regret" over his remarks on Rafale verdict was an "admission of his guilt" and "wrongdoing" by him. It was Lekhi who had filed the criminal contempt petition against him.

The Congress, however, said it did not agree with BJP's interpretation of Rahul's regret as submitted with the apex court.

"Issue is sub-judice, stop passing verdict today! We reiterate -- ek hi chowkidar chor hai (only one watchman is a thief)", said Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala.

Surjewala hit out at the BJP saying, "Fakery has no boundaries. Lies no limitations, disinformation no confines! BJP's blasphemous misrepresentation of Rahul ji's reply to the SC is itself a criminal contempt of court proceedings."

## PM's nuke-boast not in interest of national security, says Congress

New Delhi: The Congress on Monday attacked the Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remarks on nuclear arsenal, saying his "boastful claims" of being "ready for an atomic missile attack" on Pakistan are uncalled for and not in the interest of national security.

Slamming Modi for his remarks, the party said PM's election speeches and irresponsible statements point to the growing desperation in the BJP. Modi, at an election rally in Rajasthan's Barmer on Sunday said India is no more afraid of nuclear threats of Pakistan.

"Otherwise, Pakistan used to give nuclear threats. What do we have? Have we kept it for 'Diwali'?" the PM had said.

Anand Sharma said the Congress would like to remind Modi that these elections are about unemployment, farm distress and the betrayal of the voters on electoral promises. Every Indian is proud of the valour of our forces and our nuclear capabilities, but the government cannot hide behind this, he said.

Sharma targeting the PM for his "boastful remarks" was also in reference to Modi's comments in Gujarat's Patan in which he stated that after Indian Air Force pilot Abhinandan Varthaman was held by Pakistan, a senior American official on the second day said that "Modi has kept 12 missiles ready and might attack." PNS

## Apex court issues notice to Irani on Nirupam's plea

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to Union Minister Smriti Irani that pertains to two cross defamation complaints filed by Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam and the BJP leader against each other.

In one case, the Delhi High Court had quashed the summons issued to Irani in a defamation complaint filed against her by Nirupam.

The High Court had however dismissed a similar plea of Nirupam seeking to set aside the summons issued against him in a cross defamation complaint filed by Irani.

The High Court, on December 19 last year, had said the case against Nirupam will continue.

On Monday, a Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi issued the notice to Irani on two appeals filed by Nirupam.

The Congress leader had challenged a magisterial court's March 11, 2013 order summoning him in Irani's defamation complaint against him. He had also sought quashing of the January 1, 2013 complaint filed by Irani.

In her plea, Irani had sought quashing of the summons issued to her by a trial court on June 6, 2014. She had also sought quashing of the complaint filed by Nirupam.

## SC directs Madras HC to decide TikTok plea

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Madras High Court to decide on April 24 a plea of TikTok app seeking vacating of its ban order.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said if the Madras High Court fails to decide on the plea of TikTok app then its ban order will stand vacated.

The apex court had earlier refused to stay the Madras High Court order that directed the Centre to ban the "TikTok" app over concerns about access to pornographic content through it.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for the Chinese company ByteDance, had told the top court earlier that there were over billion downloads of the mobile app and ex-parte orders were passed by the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.

He had said the court did not even issue notice in the matter and an order was passed without hearing them.

The High Court had on April 3 directed the Centre to ban the mobile application "TikTok" as it voiced concern over "pornographic and inappropriate content" being made available through such apps.

## EC submits detailed report on Modi biopic to Supreme Court

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Monday submitted its detailed report to the Supreme Court on the biopic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi took the EC's report on Modi's biopic and asked the poll panel to supply a copy of the report to the producer of the movie.

The bench, which also comprised justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna, has now fixed the plea of producers challenging the EC's ban on the movie for hearing on Friday 26.

The apex court had on April 15 directed the Election Commission to re-examine its earlier order and take an informed decision on banning pan-India the release of the biopic on Prime Minister Narendra Modi after watching the full movie.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for film producers who have challenged the EC's ban on the biopic's release till the current general elections are over, had told the

top court that the poll panel has taken the decision after watching the promo, and not the entire movie.

EC's counsel Amit Sharma

had said that the entire movie was not available and a decision to ban the release was taken after watching the trailer.

## Notification for last phase of LS polls issued

New Delhi: The EC on Monday issued the notification for the seventh and last phase of the Lok Sabha elections in which 59 constituencies spread across eight states and union territories will go for polls. While the first phase of election was held on April 11, the last phase will be held on May 19. So far, two phases have taken place, while the third phase of polling is on Tuesday. All the 13 seats of Punjab, four in Himachal Pradesh and one in Chandigarh will go for polls in a single phase on May 19. PNS

## Ex-deputy EC appointed special observer for Tripura

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former deputy election commissioner Vinod Zutshi was on Monday appointed as special observer for Tripura where the Lok Sabha polls to one of the seats was postponed in view of the law and order situation. On Tuesday last, the Election Commission had postponed

polling in the Tripura (East) Lok Sabha seat to the third phase on April 23 (Tuesday) from April 18, saying the prevailing law and order situation there is not conducive for holding free and fair polls. EC sources said, the Commission has issued orders appointing Zutshi as special observer for Tripura.

## 2 lawyers' bodies of SC disapprove of CJ's handling of allegations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two lawyers' bodies of the Supreme Court on Monday disapproved of the manner in which Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi dealt with the sexual harassment allegations against him, calling it "procedural impropriety" and "violation" of procedures.

As the apex court reassembled after the weekend recess in the backdrop of the stunning allegations by a former court staffer, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and the Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association (SCAORA) urged the Full Court to take all such necessary steps as may be required in law to deal with the charges.

The allegations cropped up against Justice Gogoi on Saturday prompting him to convene an urgent extraordinary hearing by a three-member bench headed by him during which he asserted that the charges against him were "unbelievable".

The allegations by the woman, who had worked at Justice Gogoi's home office in Delhi, dates back to October last year, days after he was appointed the CJ.

After an emergent meeting of its executive committee, the SCBA said in a statement that without prejudice to any enquiry which may be initiated the full court should collate all the materials and facts with



regard to the allegations from electronic, print, social media and other available sources for consideration at its next meeting.

"The executive committee has resolved that procedure adopted for conducting the court proceedings on April 20 in the matter of allegations made by ex-employee of the Supreme Court against the Chief Justice of India is in violation of procedure established by law as well as principles of natural justice," SCBA Secretary Vikrant Yadav said.

In a resolution, the SCAORA, the top court lawyers'

body, said in a resolution that the allegations against the CJ have to be dealt with as per the established procedure of law and law must be applied in each and every case uniformly.

The Supreme Court Employees Welfare Association on its part came out in support of Justice Gogoi, claiming that the allegations were "false and fabricated".

The association, in a resolution, said it strongly condemned the "false, fabricated and baseless allegations" against the CJ which is aimed at maligning the institution of judiciary.

## But apex court Employees Welfare Association comes out in CJ's support

"The Supreme Court Employees Welfare Association on behalf of all the employees strongly condemns the false, fabricated and baseless allegations against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi," it said.

The SCAORA, which is a body of lawyers comprising advocates empowered by the apex court to file pleadings on behalf of parties in the top court, sought immediate appointment of a committee headed by full court of the apex court to impartially investigate and inquire into the allegations and give an independent finding.

"Supreme Court Advocates On Record Association expresses its deep reservation against procedural impropriety shown by Justice Ranjan Gogoi in the suo motu proceedings held on April 20 in the issue relating to allegations of sexual harassment against Justice Ranjan Gogoi, by an ex-Supreme Court employee," the SCAORA resolution said.

"It is therefore resolved that the SCAORA strongly disapproves the manner in which the complaint was dealt with and seeks enquiry and action in the above matter..." it added.

Justice Gogoi said during the Saturday hearing that the allegations were part of a conspiracy by some "bigger force" to "deactivate" the CJ's office. The CJ also said he would not stoop too low even to deny them.

TOP CANDIDATES

<p><b>ASSAM</b> DhUBRI Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, AIUDF vs Abu Taher Bepari, Congress</p>	<p><b>GOA</b> NORTH GOA Shripad Yesso Naik, BJP vs Girish Chodankar, Congress</p>	<p><b>KARNATAKA</b> KALARURUGI Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress vs Umesh Jadhav, BJP</p>	<p><b>KERALA</b> WAYANAD Rahul Gandhi, Congress vs Thushar Vellappally, BJP ally Bharath Dharma Jana Sena vs PP Suneer, LDF</p>	<p><b>MAHARASHTRA</b> BARAMATI Supriya Sule, NCP vs Kanchan Rahul Kul, BJP</p>	<p><b>UTTAR PRADESH</b> MAINPURI Mulayam Singh Yadav, SP vs Prem Singh Shakya, BJP</p>	<p><b>WEST BENGAL</b> JANGPUR Mafuja Khatun, BJP vs Abhijit Mukherjee, Congress vs Khailur Rehman, TMC</p>
<p><b>BIHAR</b> MADHEPURA Sharad Yadav, LJD (RJD alliance) vs Pappu Yadav, Jan Adhikar Party vs Dinesh Chandra Yadav, JD(U)</p>	<p><b>GUJARAT</b> GANDHINAGAR Amit Shah, BJP vs CJ Chavda, Congress</p>	<p><b>UTTARA KANNADA</b> ANANTH KUMAR Hegde, BJP vs Anand Annotikar, JD(S)</p>	<p><b>THIRUVANANTHAPURAM</b> SHASHI THAROOR, Congress vs Kummanan Rajasekharan, BJP vs C Divakaran, LDF</p>	<p><b>RAIGAD</b> Anant Geete, Shiv Sena vs Sunil Tatkare, NCP</p>	<p><b>RAMPUR</b> Jaya Prada, BJP vs Azam Khan, SP</p>	<p><b>MALDAHIA UTTAR</b> Khagen Murmu, BJP vs Isha Khan Chowdhury, Congress vs Mausam Noor, TMC</p>
<p><b>CHHATTISGARH</b> DURG Vijay Baghel, BJP vs Pratima Chandrakar, Congress</p>	<p><b>J&amp;K</b> ANANTNAG Mehbooba Mufti, PDP vs Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Congress vs Hasnain Masoodi, NC</p>	<p><b>SHIMOGA</b> BY Raghavendra, BJP vs Madhu Bangarappa, Congress</p>	<p><b>ODISHA</b> PURI Sambit Patra, BJP vs Satya Prakash Nayak, Congress vs Pinaki Misra, BJD</p>	<p><b>FIROZABAD</b> Shivpal Singh Yadav, Samajwadi Party Lohia vs Chandrasen Jadun, BJP vs Akshay Yadav, SP</p>	<p><b>MURSHIDABAD</b> Humayun Kabir, BJP vs Abu Hena, Congress vs Janab Abu Taher Khan, TMC</p>	

Buses to ferry 206 voters of Guj village bound by river, sea

Vadodara: A small hamlet bound by Narmada river and Arabian Sea in Gujarat's Bharuch, where villagers previously used boats to reach their polling booth to cast votes, will this time be provided buses, a senior poll official said. Aliabet, part of Bharuch Lok Sabha seat, has 206 voters whose polling booth is almost 65 kilometres away in Vagra tehsil in the district, around 80 kilometres from here. This year, the water level in the Narmada river is low and using a boat would not have been possible, the official said. **PTI**

<p><b>Anantnag</b> Lok Sabha Constituency Electorat Performance 2014 Winner: PDP Mehbooba Mufti Vote % PDP: 53.4, JKN: 36.0, Others: 10.6</p>	<p><b>Gandhinagar</b> Lok Sabha Constituency Electorat Performance 2014 Winner: BJP Lal Krishna Advani Vote % BJP: 68.0, Cong: 25.5, Others: 6.5</p>	<p><b>Gulbarga</b> Lok Sabha Constituency Electorat Performance 2014 Winner: Cong Mallikarjun Kharge Vote % Cong: 50.8, BJP: 43.3, Others: 5.9</p>	<p><b>Jangipur</b> Lok Sabha Constituency Electorat Performance 2014 Winner: Cong Abhijit Mukherjee Vote % Cong: CPM: 33.1, ATC: 18.5, BJP: 8.6, Others: 6.0</p>	<p><b>Madhepura</b> Lok Sabha Constituency Electorat Performance 2014 Winner: RJD Pappu Yadav Vote % RJD: 35.7, JD(U): 30.2, BJP: 24.4, Others: 9.7</p>	<p><b>Pilibhit</b> Lok Sabha Constituency Electorat Performance 2014 Winner: BJP Meneka Gandhi Vote % BJP: 52.1, SP: 22.8, BSP: 18.7, Others: 6.4</p>	<p><b>Shimoga</b> Lok Sabha Constituency By-Election Result 2018 Winner: BJP B. Y. Raghavendra Vote % BJP: 50.7, JD(S): 45.9, Others: 3.4</p>	<p><b>Thiruvananthapuram</b> Lok Sabha Constituency Electorat Performance 2014 Winner: Cong Shashi Tharoor Vote % Cong: 34.1, BJP: 32.3, CPI: 28.5, Others: 5.1</p>
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Saurashtra to be real test for BJP

Ahmedabad: With memories of the 2017 Assembly polls fresh in mind, the Saurashtra region, which has seven Lok Sabha seats, will be the real test for the ruling BJP when balloting is held in Gujarat tomorrow. The region, which used to be a BJP bastion since 1995, gave jitters to the ruling party in the Assembly polls held just over 17 months back, as it lost 14 of the 35 seats it had won from among the total 54 seats in the region in the 2012 Assembly elections. In those polls, the Congress had doubled its tally to 32 seats from 16 it had won in the previous elections. Because of the reverses in this region in the December 2017 Assembly polls, the ruling BJP had come close to losing power in the state for the first time in three decades. In the 182-member Assembly, the party won 99 seats, just 7 more than the simple majority and 16 less than the previous time. The key reasons for this reversal were farm distress, unemployment and adverse impacts of demonetisation and Goods and Services Tax (GST) on the small scale and medium scale industry as well as the trading class. The Congress kept harping on these issues which are still very much alive. Besides this, firebrand youth leader Hardik Patel's massive agitation for reservations to his Patidar (or Patel) community made a huge impact in Saurashtra which has sizeable population of the Patidar community. And now Hardik Patel is in the Congress. Clearly cognizant of this, the BJP pulled out all stops in Saurashtra this time, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself holding as many as seven rallies in this region only. Electoral performance of the BJP in Gujarat is a personal prestige issue for Modi who was the CM of the State for three consecutive terms before he became the PM. **IANS**



A woman gets her hair styled for voter awareness in Ahmedabad on Monday **PTI**

Priyanka accuses Smriti Irani of distributing shoes to insult Rahul

Amethi: Dubbing the BJP's Amethi candidate Smriti Irani as an "outsider", Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday accused her of distributing shoes in order to insult Rahul Gandhi and said the people in the Congress chief's Lok Sabha constituency are not beggars. Interacting with the voters in this key parliamentary constituency, the Congress general secretary in-charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh said the people of Amethi and Rae Bareilly have self-respect and they do not beg from anyone. "...If anyone has to beg, it is them (BJP), who will beg for your votes," a visibly agitated Priyanka told the voters in the presence of reporters at a "nukkad sabha". She also slammed "outsider" Irani for distributing shoes in Amethi. "She (Irani) thinks she can insult Rahul Gandhi by doing this," Priyanka said, adding that the Union minister was in fact insulting the people of Amethi. "The people of Amethi are very sensible. You all know who was going to open a food park in Amethi and the fact that it has not been opened till now. The food park would have benefited five lakh farmers in Amethi and Rae Bareilly," she said. Union Textiles Minister Irani had lost against Rahul Gandhi from Amethi in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Five years later, she is again hoping to breach the Gandhi family bastion. **PTI**

Why 2nd phase of elections is crucial for BJP

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU  
Narendra Modi being the mascot of the party has campaigned many times in the name of Rashtravadi. He also raked up the dynasty politics and politics of "gathbandhan" Amit Shah, SM Krishna, Deve Gowda, Kumara-swamy, Siddaramaiah DK Shivakumar and host of other leaders are camping there as last leg of elections which are crucial for both BJP and Congress. The back to back campaign by Modi and Rahul shows the importance of these constituencies. The parties also think that the add-up number will play a crucial role in national politics and government formation. While BJP hopes for "agali baar Modi sarkar" and Congress with "mahagathbandhan" pitching for "Make Rahul the next prime minister". With Deve Gowda's acumen in politics Karnataka became a platform for opposition unity. With political permutations and combinations Gowda hopes to play a major role in the next Government formation. The BJP is contesting all 14 seats, while the Congress in 11 and JD(S) in 3. In 2014 general elections, BJP had won 11 seats and Congress remaining 3, with none going to JD(S). Congress is contesting in Chikkodi, Belgaum, Bagalkot, Bijapur (SC), Gulbarga (SC), Raichur (ST), Bidar, Koppal, Bellary (ST), Haveri, Dharwad and Davanagere. The JD-S is contesting from Bijapur (SC), Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada. The 14 parliamentary constituencies which are going to polls are Chikkodi, Belgaum, Bagalkot, Bijapur (SC), Gulbarga (SC), Raichur (ST), Bidar, Koppal, Bellary (ST), Haveri, Dharwad and Davanagere. The JD-S is contesting from Bijapur (SC), Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada. The PM

UP to decide fate of four members of Mulayam's clan

Lucknow: The third phase of polling for ten Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh will decide the electoral fate of four members of the SP patron Mulayam Singh Yadav's clan besides those of senior party leader Azam Khan and film actor and BJP candidate Jaya Prada. The polling for the third phase is to be held on April 23 for ten Lok Sabha seats in the Rohilkhand region of the state along with 105 other seats across 13 other States. The BJP, which had won seven out of the ten seats in this region in 2014, has a huge stake in this phase in Uttar Pradesh as the area is considered a SP stronghold as three of the total five members of the Yadav family had won from this region despite a Modi wave in the last elections. The three Yadav family members who are seeking re-election respectively from Mainpuri, Badaun and Firozabad in this phase are Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and his two nephews, Dharmendra Yadav and Akshay Yadav. Pitted against Akshay Yadav, son of Mulayam Singh Yadav's cousin Ram Gopal Yadav, is another brother of the party patriarch, Shivpal Yadav, who has fallen out with SP president Akhilesh Yadav, and fighting from Firozabad after floating a new political outfit, Pragatesheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia). In 2014, Mulayam Singh had won both the Mainpuri and Azamgarh seats, but had vacated the first one, which was won by his another family member Tej Pratap Singh in the subsequent bye-election. The electoral fortunes of senior SP leader Azam Khan will also be decided in this phase from Rampur which witnessed a new low in campaigning this time. Known for his controversial statements, Azam Khan made an "indecent" remark, targeting his BJP opponent Jaya Prada in Rampur by allegedly speculating on the colour of her underwear and attracting the saffron party wrath, besides that of the National Commission for Women. The other political heavyweights, whose fate are in the poll balance in the third phase of elections here, include Union minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar, who is fighting from Bareilly and BJP's Varun Gandhi from Pilibhit. **PTI**



Election officials along with security personnel travel by tractors to reach a polling station, at Hajo in Kamrup district of Assam, on Monday **PTI**

Wayanad hogs limelight in poll season, courtesy Rahul CAPF in 92% booth in all 5 seats of Bengal

Wayanad: All eyes are on the Wayanad parliamentary constituency on the slopes of the Western Ghats in Kerala, chosen by Congress chief Rahul Gandhi to seek people's mandate, besides his family bastion Amethi in Uttar Pradesh. He is facing CPI's PP Suneer fielded by Kerala's ruling LDF in the April 23 election on the soil of legendary king Pazhassi Raja who fought a guerrilla war against British colonialists. The NDA has fielded Thushar Vellappally of Bharat Dharma Jana Sena (BDJS) from the constituency comprising seven assembly segments in Wayanad, Malappuram and Kozhikode districts. The Wayanad seat, which was created in 2009, shares its borders with the Nilgiris of Tamil Nadu and the Mysuru region of Karnataka. It is predominantly rural and of its seven assembly segments, three are in Wayanad district, three in Malappuram and one in Kozhikode district. Two Assembly segments in the constituency — Sulthan Bathery and Mananthavady — are reserved for tribals who constitute around 18 per cent of the Wayanad's population. Vandoor in Malappuram district is reserved for Scheduled Caste. Female voters are more in number compared to male voters in the Lok Sabha seat which has a total of 13,57,819 electors. There are 6,84,807 females, there are 6,73,011 male voters. While the difference is 11,796, there is only one third gender elector in the constituency. Out of the 13,57,819 voters, 2,951 are overseas electors. Senior Congress leader MI Shanavas, who died last year, had been winning the seat ever since the constituency was carved out in 2009. He had trounced CPI's M Rahmatullah by over 1.5 lakh votes in 2009 and defeated CPI leader Sathyan Mokeri by a margin of 20,000 votes in 2014. Political analysts say



Wayanad, a bastion of Congress-led UDF, is a safe seat for Gandhi. According to them, the one thing that matters is the winning margin. **PTI**

Wayanad, a bastion of Congress-led UDF, is a safe seat for Gandhi. According to them, the one thing that matters is the winning margin. Senior Congress leader and INTUC state president R Chandrasekharan, who campaigned for his party chief in Wayanad, said Gandhi's candidature has given a new dimension to the constituency. His vision is upliftment of people dependent on farm, labour and rural sectors. "People have faith in Gandhi. Many of them are small and marginal farmers, who grow mostly hill produce and coffee, in Wayanad. Gandhi understands their problems due to the fall in prices of agriculture produce and crop loss caused by natural disasters and extreme weather events," Chandrasekharan told PTI. CPI(M) leader P Krishna Prasad, who is campaigning for Left's candidate Suneer, said it is not going to be easy for

Wayanad Lok Sabha Constituency  
Electorat Performance 2014  
Winner: Cong  
M. I. Shanavas  
Vote %  
Cong: 41.2, CPI: 38.9, Others: 19.9

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

As an uneasy lull prevailed a day ahead of the third phase of polling for five Lok Sabha constituencies in Bengal the Election Commission made a massive bandobast covering more than 92 per cent of booths by Central Armed Police Forces leaving the remaining about 8 per cent to be manned by State armed police. The fate of 61 candidates would be decided on Monday as five constituencies of Bengal, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar, were to go for polls. Traditionally a Congress belt with the Left place in the second slot things tended to have changed in the past couple of years with both the TMC and the BJP having come up in a big way replacing the two traditional outfits. About 80,23,000 electorate will decide the fate of the 61 candidates. About 324 companies of CAPF will be deployed for the five constituencies, Additional CEO Sanjay Basu said. As of now Balurghat has the sitting TMC MP in Arpita Ghosh while former Congress MP and now a TMC candidate Mausam Benazir Noor is contesting from North Malda. Her uncle and outgoing MP AH Khan Chowdhury is contesting against TMC's Muazzam Hussein and BJP's Srirupa Chowdhury. Noor is pitted against her own cousin and Congress candidate Isha Khan Chowdhury and BJP's Khagen Murmu, a vocal former CPI(M) MLA.



# PM: Have taken strong action against terrorists

PTI ■ UDAIPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said his Government had taken strong action against terrorism and that the Congress does not understand the importance of the issue because of its "narrow mindset".

"Modi is taking action against terrorism. Modi is hitting them in their homes," the prime minister said, in an election rally here. He said national security is "very much" the issue of Lok Sabha elections, but the Congress, due to its "narrow mindset", does not understand this.

"Congress and its

'mahamilavati' (wordplay on mahagathbandhan) say Modi should not talk about national security and terrorism in elections. Someone else may get deceived but not Modi," he said. It is okay if issues like national security are not highlighted in local elections, but in Lok Sabha polls it is very much an important issue, Modi said.

"They (opposition) have narrow mindset. Even after 60 years, they do not understand what the issues of the country are. They are roaming around the country with five-six abusive words," Modi said.

Targeting Congress leaders for asking for evidences of surgical strikes, Modi said the 'sabot gang' has put the country down, but people have now given the Opposition 'sabot' (evidence) in the initial phases of polling in the country. "Will you be trusting 'sapoot' (soldiers) or those who

demand 'saboot'," he asked.

The Prime Minister targeted the previous UPA Government, saying that it pressured the banks to give loans to "its millionaire friends, but our Government gave loans to the poor, tribals and youths under the MUDRA scheme".

"Now, if someone has fled abroad, either he will have to return or he will be extradited just like Michel 'mama' of Naamdars. If any rich does not return money taken as loans from bank, then he will not be able to sleep comfortably," he said, referring to British-national Christian Michel, alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland VVIP chopper case who was arrested after his extradition from Dubai.

He said the NDA Government has showed that running an honest Government in the country is possible. Modi said the foundation which will be laid in the next five years will decide the future of the 21st century.

"The upcoming polls are very important for those who are going to vote for the first time. Those who are born in the 21st century will nurture dreams and realise them in this century. A strong foundation will be laid in the next five years," Modi said.

The PM said the Congress knows very well how to spread lies and do manipulations. In the rally, Modi highlighted the achievements of his government and sought vote for the BJP.

# Rahul: Ask PM what he got in return for helping Ambani

PTI ■ AMETHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday exhorted the people to ask Prime Minister Narendra Modi what he received in return for "giving" Anil Ambani Rs 30,000 crore under the Rafale deal.

Addressing a poll meeting in his parliamentary constituency here, Rahul said, "When the Prime Minister comes and makes false claims, ask him one question. Why has he given Rs 30,000 crore to Ambani and what has Ambani done in return for him?" Speaking in Tiloi area, he said, "Soon after the Congress comes to power after the Lok Sabha polls, a probe will be held in the Rafale deal

and the truth will be before everyone...What ex-French President Francois Hollande said and what is in the French defence files will come out...Only two persons' names will come out, first Anil Ambani and second Narendra Modi."

Asking if anyone has seen chowkidar in front of a farmer or labourer's house, he said for the past some time, every farmer has been forced to do 'chowkidar' of his agriculture field. "Modiji had stated that he does not want to be made a prime minister but a chowkidar... When his theft has been caught in the Rafale deal, he says 'hum sab chowkidar hain'," he claimed.

Rahul also hit out the PM over the Goods and Services Tax, saying when the 'Gabbar Singh Tax' was imposed, the money was taken from people and it went to thieves and overseas. "The moment money went out of your pockets, you stopped purchasing and the factories closed down, leading to unemployment... In every 24 hours, 27,000 youths lost their jobs... This is the work of chowkidar," he claimed.

The Congress president said after 2019, 33 per

cent women will be seen in legislature and Government jobs. He promised that recruitment will be initiated for 22 lakh vacant posts and 10 lakh youths will get jobs in Panchayats.

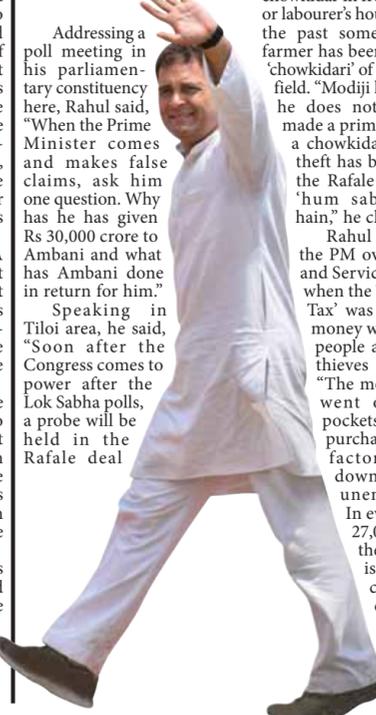
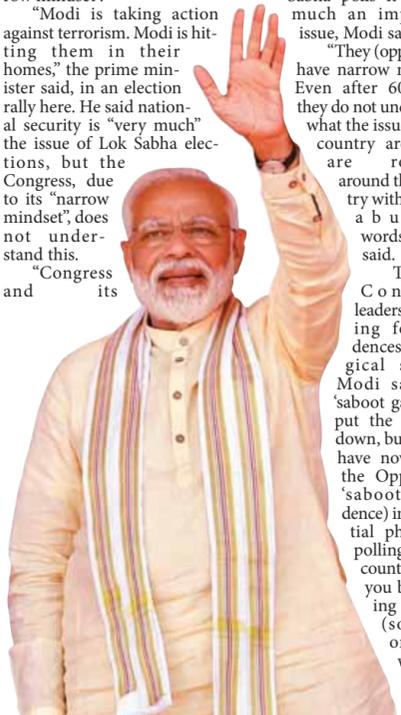
Rahul said after coming to power, the Congress will see to it that all the people who have been harassed in the past five years are compensated.

Addressing an election meeting in Barabanki earlier, he said the Congress will take historic decisions for farmers and bring a separate budget for them. Campaigning for party candidate Tanuj Punia, he alleged that Modi ran a Government which helped just 15 people in the last five years.

It also took a sudden decision on demonetisation and made the entire country stand in queues, the Congress president alleged.

"The BJP conducted surgical strikes on poor people of the country, while we will conduct surgical strikes on poverty. If the Congress is voted to power, it will give 22 lakh jobs to youngsters," he said addressing an election meeting in Prashedpur in Rae Bareilly. Rahul also claimed that 'chowkidar' has meted out injustice to the people of Amethi and Rae Bareilly.

Later, the Congress president told reporters, "If Prime Minister Narendra Modi sits for a face-to-face conversation for 15 minutes, everything will be clear."



## DYNASTS SLUG IT...

With Sr Pawar out of the fray, Parth is now contesting from Maval constituency in Pune district, while Sr Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule is re-contesting from Pawars' home constituency of Baramati in Pune. Maval is going to polls in the fourth and final elections on April 29.

Baramati, the home turf of the Maratha leader from where Sharad Pawar had won six times, his nephew Ajit Pawar once and Supriya Sule twice in the past, has a prestigious battle ground this time around, especially after Shah went town as early February this year, when he announced in Pune that his party wanted to win as many as 45 seats - including Baramati - in Maharashtra.

Speaking at a meeting of party workers and leaders from Pune, Shirur and Baramati Lok Sabha constituencies, Shah had said: "No one will accept our victory if our alliance wins less than 45 out of 48 seats in the state. The 45 seat winning tally is something that can be cherished only if the BJP wins the Baramati seat."

Picking up the gauntlet thrown by Shah, Sharad Pawar has dared the BJP to "uproot" the NCP from Baramati. "The BJP president has urged the voters to defeat the NCP in Baramati. Almost half of the Ministers in the Union Cabinet have already campaigned in Baramati. I dare the BJP president to uproot me and my party from Baramati. All I can tell the BJP leaders that they do not know much about Maharashtra. I can assure the BJP president that there will be no effect on the Baramati poll outcome even if scores of traders come here to campaign from Gujarat," the NCP chief said.

Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule is taking on Kanchan Kul in Baramati which is one of the two seats after Mumbai North-Central constituency where a direct woman-to-woman contest. Kanchan is the wife of Rahul Kul, sitting legislator of Mahadev Jankar's Rashtriya Samaj Party (RSP).

Notwithstanding Shah's claim about bagging the Baramati seat, Supriya has a distinct edge over Kanchan and her victory is a foregone conclusion. In the neighbouring Ahmednagar, there was a lot of drama before the nominations were finalised by the Congress and BJP. Sujay Vikhe-Patil, whose father Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil is the leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly, resigned from the Congress and joined the BJP in a development that embarrassed his father and proved to be a setback for the Congress.

Having been in touch with him through his senior Minister Girish Mahajan for more than two months before the announcement of Lok Sabha polls, the BJP succeeded in wooing the 37-year-old Sujay, a

practising neurosurgeon. After Sujay quit the Congress to join the BJP, his father and senior Congress leader Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil came under a lot of pressure to resign from his post as leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly. However, Sr Vikhe-Patil stood his ground.

In the neighbouring Satara constituency, Chhatrapati Udaynaraj Bhosale - who is the 13th descendent of Maratha warrior Shivaji Maharaj, is seeking re-election for his third term. (Satara was the capital of Shivaji. As a scion of Shivaji, Udaynaraj Bhosale is extremely popular in Satara, where he is locking horns with the Shiv Sena's Narendra Annasaheb Patil. Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg is the stronghold of Shiv Sena's Chief Minister Narayan Rane and his family Rane's son Nilesh Rane had bagged this seat in 2009, defeating Sena's Union Minister Suresh Prabhu. However, the Sena recaptured in 2014 when Vinayak Raut won, but in 2017 Rane floated the Maharashtra Swabhimani Party (MSP) and allied with the NDA.

Unable to get the BJP's nod to put up Nilesh as candidate, Sr Rane has fielded his son Nilesh Rane as MSP candidate against Congress' Navinchandra Bandivadekar, who was embroiled in a controversy for alleged links with the right-wing outfit Sanatan Sanstha.

In Raver, Raksha Khadse, daughter-in-law of senior BJP leader Eknath Khadse is slugging it out against Congress candidate Ulhas Patil.

It may be recalled that on June 4, 2016, Khadse had resigned from his post as the State Revenue Minister over irregularities in the purchase of a plot of land at Bhosari in Pune district. Though Maharashtra's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has given a clean chit to him in the alleged Pune land scam case, Khadse continues to be in political wilderness.

The NCP-controlled Madha, from where Sharad Pawar had been elected to Lok Sabha on 2009, is witnessing a bitter political battle.

After he backed out of the contest from Madha constituency, Sr Pawar wanted sitting NCP MP and his close aide Vijaysinh Patil to contest the Madha seat. However, an ambitious son Vijaysinh Mohite Patil staked claim for this seat. Realising the NCP would not nominate him from Madha, Ranjitsinh quit and joined the BJP in the hope of getting a Lok Sabha ticket to contest the Madha seat.

However, the BJP denied ticket to Ranjitsinh Mohite Patil and has nominated former Congress man Ranjitsinh Naik Nimbalkar, who joined the BJP last week, as its candidate from Madha constituency. Ranjitsinh Naik Nimbalkar is the son of former MP Hindurao Nimbalkar.

On its part, the NCP Sanjay

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Shinde - who is the brother of MLA Babanrao Shinde and also the president of Solapur Zilla Parishad - as its candidate against Ranjitsinh from Madha constituency.

The sugar rich Sangli is witnessing an electoral battle with the Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana (SSS) putting up late Chief Minister Vasantao Patil's grandson, Vishal Prakashbapu Patil (of the Congress-NCP alliance led 56-party Mahagathbandhan) against the BJP's sitting MP Sanjay 'Kaka' Patil. Vishal's nomination has led to a family feud with his elder brother and ex-union minister Pratik P. Patil quitting the Congress and politics. Sanjay Mandlik, son of Independent MP Sadashivrao Mandlik, is contesting from Kolhapur on a Shiv Sena ticket, while the Sena has fielded Narendra Patil, son of former MLA Anna Saheb Patil from Satara.

In the neighbouring Marthawada where the polling was over in the first two phases, former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan was another prominent dynast. Ashok Chavan, who has been re-nominated by the Congress from Nanded constituency, is the son of late Congress leader and former Union Home Minister S B Chavan. Pritam Munde, daughter-in-law of senior BJP leader Gopinath Munde, re-contested the polls on a BJP ticket from Munde's home constituency of Beed against the NCP's Bajrang Sonawane.

Pritam's cousin Poonam Mahajan - who is the daughter of late BJP Pramod Mahajan - is re-contesting from Mumbai north-central constituency. (Munde had married Pramod Mahajan's younger sister Pradnya). In the politically significant constituency of Osmanabad in Marathawada where the polling was over April 18, NCP's Ranajagitsinh P. Patil took on his cousin and Shiv Sena nominee Omraje Nimbalkar.

Ranajagitsinh is the son of Maharashtra's senior minister and Sharad Pawar's close confidant Padamsinh Patil. Padamsinh is one of the nine accused others in the much-discussed murder case of 2006 in which Congress leader Pawanraje Nimbalkar and his driver Samad Abdul Wahid Kazi at Kalamoli, near Panvel, were shot dead on February 3, 2006.

Incidentally, the Sena nominee Omraje Nimbalkar is the son of slain Congress leader Pawanraje Nimbalkar.

In another key contest being witnessed in Nashik in north Maharashtra, senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal's nephew Sameer Bhujbal is contesting against Shiv Sena nominee Hemant Godse, nephew of late MP Rajababu Godse. Shiv Sena minister Eknath Shinde's

Shrikant Shinde is re-contesting the polls from Kalyan in coastal Konkan region. Maharashtra's former Congress chief Prabha Rau's daughter Charulata Tokas from Wadha constituency in Vidarbha region. In Mumbai, Priya Dutt, daughter of late actor-turned-MP Sunil Dutt, and Milind Deora, son of late Mumbai Congress president Murlid Deora, are the prominent dynasts in the poll fray.

Anand Paranjpe (NCP, Thane, son of late Sena MP Prakash Paranjpe), Hina Gavit (BJP, Nandurbar daughter of former Medical Education Minister Dr Vijaykumar Gavit), Raksha Khadse (BJP, Raver, daughter-in-law of senior BJP leader Eknath Khadse), Kunal Rohidas Patil (Congress Dhule, son of former minister Rohidas Patil and Smita Wagh (BJP, Jalgaon, wife of district party president Udhay Wagh).

## PH-III TEST FOR...

Union Minister Alphons Kannamthanam is seeking to make his Lok Sabha debut from Ernakulam. Sitting Congress MP Shashi Tharoor is facing a triangular contest in Thiruvananthapuram, where the BJP has fielded former Governor Kummanam Rajasekharan and the CPI C Divakaran. It is a do-or-die battle for both the ruling CPI (M)-led LDF and the Opposition Congress-headed UDF in most of the 20 Lok Sabha seats.

The BJP-led NDA is posing a formidable challenge to the two traditional fronts in at least three constituencies - Thiruvananthapuram, Pathanamthitta and Thrissur. In Karnataka, the battle lines clearly delineated for a bipolar contest between the ruling Congress-JD(S) combine and the BJP.

The BJP that has considerable presence in these constituencies aims to improve its tally banking on what it calls the "Modi wave" and the support of dominant Lingayat community, considered as its vote base.

It is also a test for Congress-JD(S) coalition Government headed by H D Kumaraswamy in the State.

The third phase of polling for 10 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh will decide the electoral fate of four members of the SP patron Mulayam Singh Yadav's clan, besides those of senior party leader Azam Khan and film actor and BJP candidate Jaya Prada.

The BJP had won seven out of the 10 seats in 2014, while the SP bagged three. Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and his two nephews Dharmendra Yadav and Akshay Yadav are seeking re-election from Mainpuri, Badaun and Firozabad seats respectively. Mulayam has said this will be

his last contest.

Voting will be held in seven Lok Sabha seats in Chhattisgarh, of which the BJP had won six in 2014. The Congress, buoyed by its victory in the Assembly elections last year, is hoping to improve its tally in the State.

In Goa, there are 12 candidates in the fray for the two Lok Sabha constituencies, including Union AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik from North Goa where he is pitted against state Congress chief Girish Chodankar.

In Bihar, close to nine million voters will be deciding the fates of 82 candidates in five Lok Sabha seats of Bihar.

Four sitting MPs Ranjeet Ranjan (Supaul), her husband Pappu Yadav (Madhepura), Sarfaraz Alam (Araria) and Mehboob Ali Kaiser (Khagaria) would seek to retain their respective seats. In the six seats in Odisha, the main contest in between the State's ruling BJD and the BJP. The BJD had won all the six seats in 2014.

The ruling Trinamool

Congress in West Bengal, BJP and Congress are the main contenders in the five seats - Balurghat, Maldaha North, Maldaha South, Jangipur and Murshidabad.

Four seats will see four-cornered contests between the three parties and the Left Front. It will be a three-cornered contest in Maldaha South as no Left party is in the fray in the seat. In Assam, prominent candidates in the fray are two sitting MPs AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal in Dhubri and Beed against the Naba Sarania in Kokrajhar, State Social Welfare Minister Pramila Rani Brahma of BPP from Kokrajhar and Congress MLA Abdul Khaleque. In the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, the BJP had bagged both seats in the last election.

The Lok Sabha polls are being held in seven-phases for 543 seats and the counting of votes will be on May 23.

## SHEILA FACES...

Chandni Chowk battle is likely to generate a lot of heat as the three main candidates are from the Baniya (traders community). Agarwal has been an old war horse had won from this seat four times. He is expected to put up a stiff contest to Vardhan. However, the arithmetic appears to have tilted towards the BJP as Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) had recently announced to back the BJP candidates after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held an open session with the traders' community at Delhi's Talkatora stadium.

Another interesting pick by the Congress is former DPCC president Lovely from East Delhi where he will take on AAP's Atishi. Lovely had left Congress to join BJP but came back to the party fold after he

met the Congress president in 2018. This will be Lovely's first parliamentary polls contest.

Meanwhile, the Congress is yet to announce its candidate for the South Delhi seat. In the 2014 national election, the BJP won all seven seats in Delhi.

Talks for an alliance between the Congress and AAP broke down over AAP's insistence that the grand old party should agree to share seats in Haryana, Chandigarh and Punjab apart from Delhi. The AAP has already named its seven candidates in the national Capital and six of its candidates filed their nominations on Monday for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in Delhi.

The six candidates who filed their papers are Chandni Chowk candidate Pankaj Gupta, East Delhi candidate Atishi, North West Delhi candidate Gagan Singh, South Delhi candidate Raghav Chadha, North East Delhi candidate Dilip Pandey and New Delhi candidate Brijesh Goyal.

The BJP on Sunday fielded its four sitting MPs from Delhi - Harsh Vardhan from Chandni Chowk, Manoj Tiwari from North-east Delhi, Parvesh Verma from West Delhi and Ramesh Bidhuri from South Delhi. However, Congress has not announced its candidate from South Delhi constituency. Congress sources said Olympic boxer Vijender Singh is the front runner and can be fielded from South Delhi seat. Vijender met the Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday afternoon. The other claimants to this seat are the former MP Ramesh Kumar and former Delhi Speaker Dr Yoganand Shastri, both Jat leaders.

## DEORA RAKES UP SAWANT'S CRIMINAL CASES

The Congress' Mumbai South Lok Sabha candidate Milind Deora on Monday referred to criminal charges against his opponent and sitting Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant and asked voters if they wanted to be represented by a person with such a record. Pointing to Sawant's affidavit, Deora said there are 13 criminal charges against the Shiv Sena leader and demanded that the sitting MP explain if he tried to "abuse and misuse" his influence in the Maharashtra Government to get the cases withdrawn. According to Deora's affidavit, there is no criminal case pending against him.

## PM, ADVANI TO VOTE TODAY IN AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Minister Arun Jaitley and BJP patriarch LK Advani are among top leaders who will vote Tuesday in Gujarat, which will have a single phase polling for its 26 Lok Sabha seats. The BJP, in a release here said, all its key leaders, including Modi and Advani - who are registered voters in Gujarat - will exercise their franchise in morning hours. The PM, who is expected to land in Ahmedabad on Monday night, will cast his vote at a booth set up inside a school in the Ranip area of the city, which falls under the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency, it said.

## RAHUL'S NOMINATION FOR AMETHI FOUND VALID

The Amethi returning officer (RO) on Monday set aside objections on Congress president Rahul Gandhi's nomination papers for the seat and held the document valid, after scrutinising allegations of discrepancies over citizenship and other issues. After hearing Gandhi's counsel, Returning Officer Ram Manohar Misra declared his nomination papers for the Amethi Lok Sabha seat as valid.

## SECURITY BEEFED AHEAD OF POLLS IN MAHARASHTRA

Security has been beefed up in Maharashtra for the third phase of Lok Sabha elections for 14 constituencies, scheduled to be held on Tuesday. Besides local police, companies of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), personnel from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and those from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are also roped in to ensure that no untoward incident takes place, a police official said Monday.

## NC, PDP LEADERS PLAYING EMOTIONAL CARD: BJP

BJP leader Kavinder Gupta on Monday accused the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party of playing emotional card to seek votes instead of focussing on development and maintaining peace in Jammu & Kashmir. The former Deputy Chief Minister also alleged the two regional parties are "targeting" security forces to please Hurriyat and Pakistan.

## CLASH BETWEEN SUPPORTERS, VILLAGERS: FIRs LODGED

Cross FIRs were lodged on Monday in connection with an incident of clash between supporters of CPI candidate from Bihar's Begusarai seat Kanhaiya Kumar and a group of locals, police said. Two complaints have been lodged by both sides at Gadhpara police station about Sunday's clash, which erupted after the former JNU students' union president was shown black flags at Koray village here during a roadshow.

## FATMI WITHDRAWS NOMINATION FOR MADHUBANI

Former Union Minister Mohd Ali Ashraf Fatmi, who had quit BJD and had entered the fray from Madhubani Lok Sabha seat on a BSP ticket, on Monday withdrew his nomination citing the refusal of rebel Congress nominee Shakeel Ahmed to do so and apprehending a split in votes benefiting the BJP candidate. "I took the decision (to withdraw) based on the feedback by my close supporters on whose insistence I had filed nomination papers. It was observed that the reluctance of Ahmed to withdraw would have led to votes getting split between us. This would have helped the BJP," Fatmi told PTI-Bhasha over phone.

## LAND ACQUISITION WORRIES FARMERS IN GUJARAT

Standing in his sugarcane farm in Navsari's Sadlav village with his arms stretched wide apart, Pinakinbhai Patel explains that in 3.5 kilometers of his "fertile land", three major infrastructure projects have been planned. "Right through this land, the Bharatmala road project will pass. One kilometer to the left (the Vadodara-Mumbai) expressway will be constructed and 2.5 kilometers to the right, the bullet train will pass," he said. "Out of the 16 acres of my land, Government wants seven acres for the Bharatmala project, but it is offering only four times the 'jantri rate', which is way lower than the market rate," he added. "Jantri rate" is the minimum price of the land notified by the Gujarat Government for a particular area. Months ahead of the polls, the BJP-led Gujarat government suspended the land survey for the Bharatmala project - a centrally-sponsored scheme to construct 83,677 km of highways across India, in January.



Bharatiya Jan Kranti Dal candidate from Patna Sahib Basant Singh Rajput rides a horse on the way to file his nomination papers for the Lok Sabha elections, in Patna, on Monday

## NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD

ENQUIRY NOTICE FOR ACCIDENT OF TRAIN NO. 12303 POORVA EXPRESS AT ROOMA STATION YARD

Shri A.K. Jain, Commissioner of Railway Safety, North Eastern Circle, Lucknow, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, will hold a statutory enquiry at the office of the Dy. CTM, Kanpur Central Railway Station, Kanpur at 12.00 hrs. to 18.00 hrs. on 23.04.2019 in connection with the accident of Train No.: 12303 (Poorva Express) on 20.04.2019 at 00.50 am in station yard of Rooma Station in Allahabad-Kanpur Section of Allahabad Division Over North Central Railway.

Any member of the public having knowledge/information about this accident may submit the same during enquiry on above dates or may send Written Information, Photographs, Videos etc. to Commissioner of RAILWAY SAFETY, CAMP OFFICE, OFFICE OF DY. CTM, KANPUR CENTRAL, RAILWAY STATION, KANPUR

**A.K. Jain**  
Commissioner of Railway Safety, North Eastern Circle  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Computer Building, NR DRM's Campus,  
Hazratganj, Lucknow - 226001  
Camp Office- Office of the Dy. CTM,  
Kanpur Central Railway Station, Kanpur  
Mobile No.: 09794842050,  
Office: 0522-2234515 (DOT),  
Fax.: 0522-2234515, 2234538,  
032-23291 (Rly.)  
E-Mail: crsnecko111@gmail.com

## Terror returns

Sri Lanka has enjoyed a tremendous peace dividend. This momentum shouldn't be lost after the Easter attacks



First things first, any attack on a house of worship, no matter which religion's, by someone who claims to be a religious supremacist is not an attack by an individual who believes in God. It is an act by a cowardly individual who does not believe in any ideology of humanity. Whether those strikes happen in Varanasi, Christchurch or as it happened this past Sunday, in Colombo. These blasts shattered the peace of the last decade in the island nation, a peace achieved after a two-decade civil war that cost thousands of

lives, including those of 1,200 Indian soldiers between 1987-1990 who were part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), an unmitigated disaster of our foreign policy and military intelligence, likened by some as India's Vietnam. A hard-handed and brutal approach by the Sri Lankan military wiped out the Tamil separatists in the north of the country, who had through several high-profile terrorist targets, killed hundreds of civilians and completely devastated the nation's economy. But following their rout, the country has enjoyed a huge peace dividend with rapid economic progress as well as a revival of the tourism sector.

However, there is little doubt that Sri Lanka, like India and many other countries, has underlying religious tensions. These have only accelerated over the past few years with the rise of fundamentalist forces such as the Islamic State as well as religious fundamentalism in South and South-East Asia. While this attack is a symptom of this rising wave of fundamentalism, it is strange that the killers targeted the Christians in the nation, since neither the Tamil separatists nor the Sinhala majority ever zeroed in on them during the civil war. But Sri Lanka's really small Muslim population on its eastern seaboard was singled out by both Tamil and Sinhalese forces. There have been rising tensions between Sinhalese Buddhists and Muslims for some time now. Though Buddhism is seen as a religion that advises mindfulness and the Middle Path, fact is the Sinhalese have, like their counterparts in Thailand and Myanmar, linked it to issues of identity and they justify violence when they are under threat. With the Tamil issue gone, these people have latched on to Islamic fundamentalism as the new threat. This is something for the government of Ranil Wickremasinghe to address, although with polls scheduled later this year, the situation could easily degenerate. It is also important for India to help Sri Lanka with intelligence and information at this time. The scale and coordination of the attacks make it obvious that a small band of terrorists could not have pulled this off without support from forces abroad. It is likely that some of the executors could have an Indian connection, which means India itself should be on guard to ensure that violence does not spread to its mainland or that the island doesn't become a festering launchpad. Most importantly, it is important that Sri Lanka's bountiful years of peace are not brought to an end. These terrorists clearly wanted to send not just a message of religious fundamentalism but also one that punctured the nation's burgeoning tourism economy with scare-mongering. They wanted to make a splash. They must fail.

## A matter of honour

Whatever the allegations against the CJI, a due process needs to be followed to expose the truth. For every citizen's sake



Social activist Swami Agnivesh summed up the controversy over sexual misconduct allegations against the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi with a rounded statement embodying what the judiciary, facing a crisis of confidence, should do. "The maturity, authenticity and stature of the Supreme Court will be tested on how this crisis is weathered and how the majesty of law is upheld without fear or favour," he said. For there is a gathering cloud of judgements swirling around the case already, one that has

to be dispelled convincingly. Is this another attack on an institution, as has been suggested by the CJI himself, to deactivate a position that is tasked with fair dissemination of justice on the eve of crucial rulings that can have a cascading consequence on polity, not too favourably may be for certain political parties? Is this a motivated attack, using the old trope of blackmail by a victimised woman, on a man who has been largely known for his personal decency for the most part of his judicial career and is looking to bow out with the same grace? Or is it comeuppance for moments that are unrecorded in the legal chambers? Is some vested interest taking advantage of the fact that there is no legal framework within the top court's rulebook whereby a CJI could be investigated on allegations such as these, his removal being only possible through parliamentary impeachment? Finally, in the age of #MeToo, this charge by a junior staff against the topmost office-bearer at the workplace ought to be dealt with high standards of objectivity and due process so that working women demanding justifiable rights are not trivialised anymore or subjected to innuendos of "I told you so." For the sake of all women out there, if the accuser is guilty of fabrication, coercion and mala fide intent, she should be booked, too. And for the highest court, which has been guaranteeing women's rights, it becomes imperative its highest office-bearer be seen as acting justly in matters concerning women employees.

Gogoi has already been in the public eye for joining three of his colleagues in the collegium last year for questioning the process of case allocations by the office of the then CJI and the independence of the institution. He risked his elevation by taking a public stand on the internal workings of the court, something which many believe should not have played out in the public space. Which is why he cannot afford a similar public jury verdict on the propriety of handling another delicate matter. Already some experts are saying that the CJI might have just hastily launched his defence through a suo moto hearing. Assuming he is right, a knee-jerk reaction only raises more questions and doubts. In the absence of a credible mechanism, the woman had no option but to appeal to the Justices of the Supreme Court to create a Special Inquiry Committee comprising retired judges. Besides, the top court's "In-House Procedure" lays out the process to deal with allegations of sexual harassment, instructing an inquiry committee to take cognisance of complaints and initiate proceedings only after giving notices to the respondent (the CJI in this case) and the complainant (the woman). However, this is yet to happen. Neither did the CJI's special hearing in court include the complainant, though remarks were passed about her and her faulty legal record. So this imputation that the allegations were a proxy war against the judiciary would look one-sided without meaning to be so. In the end, the Supreme Court is the country's most honourable institution, upholder of Constitutional morality and a protector of the citizen's rights. And if it is indeed under attack, then its justices should set an example why one should never attempt to defile it. If not, then they need to restore faith in its infallibility in a manner that there is no room for doubt.

# Money rules the roost

Although muscle power has been brought under control, electoral spending has reached monstrous proportions. The Election Commission must come face-to-face with this reality



A SURYA PRAKASH

Although the use of muscle power to capture booths and intimidate voters belonging to vulnerable social groups has drastically come down in recent years, the percentage of candidates with criminal records still remains a matter of concern. But the bigger worry is money power. During a recent tour of some constituencies in Karnataka, this writer heard from political leaders and those in the know that in most constituencies, candidates have to spend upwards of ₹20 crore to be in the reckoning. There was also near unanimity that some candidates in the old Mysore area had spent over ₹100 crore! With top contenders in every Lok Sabha seat spending phenomenal sums of money, the democratic process is now out-of-bounds for an average citizen.

The National Election Watch (NEW) and the Association for Democratic Rights (ADR) have been providing detailed analysis of the information provided by candidates in their sworn affidavits while filing their nominations. Their analysis of the 521 members of the outgoing Lok Sabha, based on their affidavits, should be a matter of deep concern.

The NEW-ADR analysis found that 174 of the 521 MPs had declared that criminal cases were pending against them, constituting one-third of the Lok Sabha. Further, among them, 106 MPs (20 per cent) were facing serious criminal cases like murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping and communal disharmony among others. Thirty-five per cent of the MPs belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and 16 per cent of the Congress and AIADMK MPs in the outgoing Lok Sabha have criminal backgrounds. However, the Shiv Sena topped the list with 83 per cent of this party's MPs having criminal records.

As regards the financial muscle of candidates, the survey showed that of the 521 sitting MPs, 430 (83 per cent) were crorepatris in 2014 and they had average assets of ₹14.72 crore. Eighty-seven per cent of the BJP MPs are crorepatris, as against 82 per cent in the Congress and 78 per cent in the AIADMK. The average asset base of BJP MPs was ₹12 crore, while that of Congress MPs was ₹15.47 crore.

A recent report by NEW-ADR, after examining the affidavits of candidates in the fray in the first two phases of the current Lok Sabha election, is also revealing. Out of the 2,923 candidates, the NEW-ADR analysis of 2,856 affidavits shows that 464 have criminal records, constituting 16 per cent of the total. Of them, 313 candidates have serious criminal cases. As regards the net worth of candidates, 824 of them — 29 per cent — are crorepatris and they have, on an average, assets of over ₹5 crore. But this is the average of 2,856 candidates. The net worth of successful



candidates will be much, much higher when you look at the amount of money being spent in each constituency.

A comparison of criminal records of outgoing MPs and candidates in this election shows that the new House will have its share of such individuals. Although statistically speaking, criminal record of candidates in the present election is lower than that of successful candidates in 2014, one must remember that the winnability of candidates with criminal records is higher than those who come with a clean slate. Therefore, we must await the results and see what percentage of the members of the new Lok Sabha have criminal cases pending against them.

What do we do with the fact that one-third of our MPs have criminal records and 20 per cent of them are facing serious criminal cases like murder, attempt to murder and kidnapping? This needs to be reversed and the best way to do it is to bar all those, against whom serious criminal charges have been framed in a court of law, from contesting elections until they are acquitted. In order to prevent vindictive prosecution, the courts must dispose

“WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE FACT THAT ONE-THIRD OF OUR MPs HAVE CRIMINAL RECORDS AND 20 PER CENT OF THEM ARE FACING SERIOUS CRIMINAL CASES? THIS NEEDS TO BE REVERSED AND THE BEST WAY TO DO IT IS TO BAR ALL THOSE, AGAINST WHOM SERIOUS CRIMINAL CHARGES HAVE BEEN FRAMED, FROM CONTESTING ELECTIONS UNTIL THEY ARE ACQUITTED”

of these cases on a priority basis as recommended by the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, which was headed by former Chief Justice of India, MN Venkatachaliah.

Five decades ago, there would be large scale violence during elections in the country. States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were notorious for booth capturing. Prominent candidates in the fray would have their own armed gangs to disrupt polling in booths which were not favourable to them. The gangs would open fire, chase away election officials and electors, capture the booths and burn the paper ballots. This is now a thing of past

But the other big issue — money power — has reached monstrous proportions. Although muscle power has been brought under control, spending in elections has gone completely out of control and the Election Commission appears to be totally helpless despite huge deployment of observers and seizure of cash, gold, liquor and drugs meant for bribing voters. In the first two phases of this election, the Election Commission already seized close to ₹700 crore in cash, liquor worth ₹218 crore

and drugs and narcotics worth ₹1,152 crore. They have also seized gold and precious metals worth over ₹500 crore. Although this is unprecedented, it is still the tip of the iceberg.

Having travelled in some States and heard reports of voter bribing, one can safely say that although the Election Commission has raised the permissible expenditure in a Lok Sabha constituency in larger States to ₹70 lakh, the spending is upwards of ₹20 crore per candidate. Thus, if we have two main contenders for each of the 543 elected seats in the Lok Sabha, the candidates and their parties would have splurged over ₹20,000 crores, mostly to bribe voters in this election.

With feudal, caste-based political families loaded with such huge, ill-gotten resources playing the game, democracy is becoming a no-entry zone for an average citizen. The Election Commission must come face-to-face with this reality and find ways to stop the bribing of voters. Failing which, democracy will be reduced to an absolute farce.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal)

## SOUNDBITE

Whatever we do, we have to make Pakistan change its behaviour. That means we must also change our behaviour towards it.



Congress leader —P Chidambaram

Getting into an unknown and uncharted territory today. Doing something I have never done before. Excited and nervous both.



Actor —Akshay Kumar

Common interests far outweigh differences between China and India. Both sides should sustain the positive momentum of sound and steady relationship.



Chinese Foreign Minister —Wang Yi

I will be very happy if Muslim brothers vote for me. But even if you don't, no problem at all. You can still come to me for your work.



BJP MP —Varun Gandhi

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Congress revolt

Sir — Priyanka Chaturvedi's exit is definitely a loss to the Congress. However, she could have given those she had grievances against another chance to express their standpoint. The party leadership could have ensured this. Further, she should have waited to see further developments without quitting the party in a huff. The fact that she rushed to join the Shiv Sena soon after leaving the Congress is shocking. People have lost faith in her and will consider the entire episode a pre-planned farce.

Shalini Gerald  
Chennai

### Stand firm on terror

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "On Easter, violence resurrects in Lanka" (April 22). A series of explosions in churches and hotels in Sri Lanka during an Easter Sunday by suicide bombers linked to a Muslim organisation, Jamaat, has shaken the conscience of the world. Since it was a well-planned attack, it is disappointing that despite the intelligence having alerted the Government about the

### Regional parties must bury the hatchet

This refers to the editorial, "A Mulayam transition" (April 22). Initially, when the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) announced a poll pact to fight Lok Sabha elections, speculation was rife that Mulayam Singh Yadav might not have agreed to this formula due to the old animosity between him and Mayawati. But Mayawati and Mulayam Singh Yadav turned the tables by not only sharing the stage at a historic rally in Mainpuri but also heaping praises on each other. It seems both have come very far from the guest house episode days.

Indeed, the need of the hour is for the alliance to put forth a united face and wage a coordinated fight against the ruling party to stand a chance of reaping maximum seats from the largest State of the nation. After the Karnataka State elections — where an unprecedented alliance between the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) was forged — the way regional party leaders came together to join hands, it was assumed that



the mahagathbandhan would be a pan-Indian affair. But only SP-BSP have walked the talk. On the other hand, the Congress has not shown any pragmatic approach. If Mulayam and Mayawati can join hands, it's not impossible for other regional leaders to forget past differences. They should move on with changed ground realities.

Bal Govind  
Noida

impending disaster, no preventive measures were taken by the authorities to thwart the nefarious designs of religious fundamentalists. Further, it is distressing that more such attacks will be planned in the near future at different places across countries.

Along with the churches and the hotels, the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka, too, was on the attack list but thank-

fully the terrorists missed the target. The modus operandi of the perpetrators is very clear. The Islamist terrorists want to bleed not only India but the rest of the world. India must take the lead in fighting terrorism and urge world leaders to take decisive action to prevent catastrophes instead of just condemning incidents.

KR Srinivasan  
Secunderabad

### Versatile singer

Sir — Amar Pal, the renowned folk singer, passed away at the age of 98. He was the first folk musician, whose song was broadcast over the All India Radio in 1951.

I will always remember him for the songs he sang in one of Satyajit Ray's legendary films, Hiralal Rajar Deshe. All the 12

songs in this movie were written as well as composed by Satyajit Ray himself. Ray got many awards for the best music direction for this film. One of these songs, "Kotoi Rongo Dekhi Duniyay" (the world is full of wonders), was sung by Amar Pal. Amar means immortal in Bengali. Indeed, his voice has immortalised the powerful words of Ray in this song.

Sujit De  
Kolkata

### Restore the judiciary

Sir — It is regretful that the sanctity of the highest court of the land has been under threat since the last five years. Earlier, it was an unprecedented January 2018 revolt by four sitting judges of the Supreme Court and now, the CJI has been accused of sexual harassment by a former woman staffer. The incident highlights the fact that even the office of the CJI can easily be tarnished. A thorough investigation is the need of the hour.

Ravi  
Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

## 'Orwellian' state of an island nation

There are several harrowing facets to Brunei's administration that resemble a backslide into archaic intolerance. The new stoning law is one among them



PRASHANT SINGH MEGHNA SHARMA

In his book, *1984*, George Orwell narrated a claustrophobic tale of a dystopian and totalitarian society through the eyes of his protagonist Winston Smith. Though the book was written over 70 years ago, it seems more relevant today than ever. No wonder, the sales of this book has seen a significant surge around the world lately. Renewed interest in dystopian literature has emerged primarily because it serves to remind us to look out for signs around us that have the potential to bring out the fictional hell into life.

Early this month, Brunei, a small island state, became the centre of attention as it introduced a Sharia'h law at the national level that makes gay sex and adultery punishable by stoning to death. The Sultan of Brunei had announced these changes in 2014 but amendments came into effect only this year. Since these changes go against the decades of progress made under the international human rights law, this move has drawn fierce condemnation from the global community. The Human Rights Watch has characterised this law to be "barbaric to the core." Regardless of growing international pressure from all quarters, including the UN, the country has no plans to halt the implementation of these laws. In this context, the themes discussed by Orwell have regained relevance, courtesy the totalitarian regime of Sultan Hassanal Bolkhiah.

**The ministry of love in Brunei:** The Sultan's aim is to transform Brunei into the same 'Orwellian' state as described in *1984*. It isn't surprising, therefore, that he described these amendments as a "great achievement." Parallels do not, however, end here. The "big brother" in Brunei exercises complete authority over public and private life of the individual. Sexual autonomy is not the only sphere of private life that is controlled here. The same penal punishment is also provided for adultery, abortion and alcohol consumption. The harsh forms of punishment, apart from death of stoning, include amputation of limbs and flogging. While homosexuality is being decriminalised in several nations, Brunei has managed to enter the league of those states that consider it to be a capital offence. The state of Brunei or rather, the monarch of Brunei, has not just retained death penalty but ensured that it is provided in the most cruel and vicious way — death by stoning.

**Thought control:** Another major theme from *1984*, which has found a second wave in Brunei, is through control. While the recent amendments have generated outrage across the international level, the people of Brunei are strangely silent about the entire episode. The Sultan has maintained a firm grip over the media and its right to free speech. Thus, any medium through which such criticism can be manifested is curbed. Qaratal-Ain Baidul, in *Brunei Times*, said that although there is no censorship body in Brunei, the extent of self-censorship is such that everybody is afraid of overstepping their line. Journalists have become mere stenographers at the hands of the Government. While traditional media has ceded space for dissent, critics have turned to the Internet and social media. Anticipating these changes, the Government has planned to regulate online speech as well. The imposition of the current penal code was also preceded by a warning that online critics will be dealt with harshly once it is implemented.

Much like the 'Orwellian' state of Oceania, Brunei's Sultan insists on presenting his own reality. While the Sultan "does not expect other people to accept and agree with it, but it would suffice if they just respect the nation in the same way that it also respects them." The recent changes giving effect to harsh penalties are part of the Sultan's effort to impose conservative Islam in the country based on the restrictive interpretations of Sharia'h. Amnesty Journal reported that the proposed amendment seeks to impose further restrictions on women, like making it mandatory for them to stay at their guardian's house till marriage.

There are many other harrowing facets to Brunei's administration that resemble the 'Orwellian' state. The Government has also arrogated the power to ban any religious practice it considers "deviant" to Sharia'h principles. It does not allow workers to strike or participate in collective bargaining. Child marriage over 14 years of age is allowed. No civil society organisation in Brunei is allowed to raise concerns about human rights violations. As per the Human Rights Report 2018 released by the US Government, every humanitarian organisation here is required to work directly under the Government. Similar to the Orwellian dictator, the big brother, Hassanal Bolkhiah has sweeping powers and continues to rule Brunei since 1961. Unfortunately, there is no end in sight. He has been able to assuage discontent among people with free healthcare and education, zero taxes and free housing. For the sake of the people in Brunei, one can only hope that this backslide into archaic intolerance doesn't go unnoticed and the bleakness of the Sultan's dystopia gets exposed.

(Prashant Singh is research fellow and Meghna Sharma is research intern at the Centre for Human Rights Studies, OP Jindal Global University)

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

EVERY OTHER DAY PAKISTAN USED TO GIVE NUCLEAR THREATS. WHAT DO WE HAVE? HAVE WE KEPT IT FOR 'DIWALI'?

—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



PRIME MINISTER'S BOASTFUL CLAIMS OF BEING READY FOR A NUCLEAR ATTACK ON PAKISTAN IS UNCALLED FOR AND NOT IN NATION'S INTEREST.

—SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER ANAND SHARMA

# No outsiders in Kerala

The Congress and the CPI(M) pretend to be arch rivals in the State even as they work together at the Centre. They alternate power in the State to keep a third entity out



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Every election in Kerala, whether it is to the Lok Sabha or the State Legislature, brings to mind the famous play *Ezhu Rathrikal* (Seven Nights), directed by Kaladi Gopi in 1963. *Ezhu Rathrikal* must have been the first play in Malayalam that was based on the lives of the marginalised and oppressed sections of society. The play is set in a street-side bus shelter that is home to a group of beggars, roadside vendors and anti-social elements. The central character of the play is Pazhanam Varkey, a professional beggar. "Pazhanam" is the Malayalam word for "poison." One, therefore, need not elaborate about his character.

Varkey's style of begging is unique and that's the reason behind the success of the character. Even 50 years after its first show, the play and Varkey remain engraved in the minds of theatre buffs in the State. Varkey wears a scapular that has two pendants. One is a crucifix and the other is that of Lord Krishna. When Varkey goes to Christian houses, he wears the scapular in such a way that the crucifix is visible to the people. Whenever he goes to the house of Hindus, he displays the locket with Lord Krishna.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) is the new Varkey of Kerala because of the twin roles played by it in and outside the State. While in Kerala, the CPI (M) considers the Congress to be its main enemy, outside the State, it mingles freely with the latter. The CPI(M) is, perhaps, the best defender of the Congress, especially the Nehru-Gandhi clan, when reports of scams featuring the family members surface in the public domain.

But why is that both parties pretend as if they are at loggerheads and that, too, for the consumption of the public? Since the formation of Kerala in 1956, by merging the old princely States of Travancore, Kochi and parts of the Madras province, the political centrestage has been monopolised by two fronts led by the Congress and the communists. Supporting characters differ, depending on the political wind blowing across the State. But the two fronts, known in modern parlance by the names of the United Democratic Front (UDF), led by the Congress and the Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by the CPI(M), are the central characters.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or its previous avatar, the Jan Sangh, were never a force to reckon with in this State that has a split religious demography. The State consists of nearly 51 per cent Hindus, 26 per cent Muslims and 23 per cent Christians. Without active support from the minority communities, no front can win any election in Kerala.

Interestingly, the CPI(M)'s vote bank is the powerful Ezhava community, the society which gave birth to Sree Narayana Guru, the most revolutionary social reformer of the 20th Century. It was his teachings and uncompromising stance that led to the eradication of social evils like untouchability and marginalisation of the oppressed classes in the State. He could inspire the people to agitate for the right to walk along the roads leading to the temples which ultimately culminated in the Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936. At one stage, the communists had hijacked the agitation launched by the Guru and,

WHAT MAKES THE 2019 LOK SABHA ELECTION IN KERALA UNIQUE IS A SERIES OF REPORTS ABOUT THE BJP-LED NDA OPENING ITS ACCOUNT. THE SABARIMALA AGITATION AND THE CPI(M)'S ACTIONS, TARGETTING HINDU PLACES OF WORSHIP AND INSULTING THE ACHARYAS, HAVE HURT HINDUS AND HAS RESULTED IN THE POLARISATION OF THE COMMUNITY. ONE MUST NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE BJP WINS ONE OR TWO SEATS



thus, they could mobilise the Ezhava community under the communist flag.

Over the years, however, the CPI(M) has lost its proletarian image and become a party promoting crony capitalists. It also ensures that the State does not progress an inch, economically or socially. The much-hyped Kerala model of development has ended in a disaster. The last six months have seen more than 40 farmers committing suicide because of the debt trap they have fallen into following crop failure. And the Marxist Government has done nothing to revive the fortunes of either the farmers or the marginal entrepreneurs. Three small entrepreneurs based in Kollam, too, committed suicide because they could not withstand the harassment of their party bosses.

Though there is a change of guard in Thiruvananthapuram every five years, what generally happens is that the CPI(M) and Congress-led fronts alternate between themselves. The two parties do not provide space for a third alternative because they know it well that their relevance will be lost the moment a third party finds space here. Hence, all elections in the State have followed a match-fixing arrangement between the Congress and the Marxists. Though the two may act as if they are arch rivals, both have an unseen umbilical chord between them. Prime Minister Narendra Modi exposed the same while he addressed a public rally at the State capital recently. He said, "It is *kusti* in Kerala and *dosti* in New Delhi. The CPI(M) and the Congress are the two faces of the same coin."

Whenever there is a remote possibility of the BJP winning a seat in the State, the CPI(M) transfers its share of votes *en masse* to the Congress. This has been happening with active connivance of the local media. P Narayanan, octogenarian journalist, reminisces how *Mathrubhumi*, a leading Malayalam daily, violated all media ethics during the Assembly election held in 1960. "There was a big speculation that TN Bharathan, the Jana Sangh candidate from Guruvayur, would romp home because of the excellent work he had done to save the Manthala Temple from miscreants. But on the day of polling, *Mathrubhumi* came out with a banner headline proclaiming that Jan Sangh supporters would vote for the Congress. This upset the party workers. This has been the style of Kerala media since then," said Narayanan.

What makes the 2019 Lok Sabha election in Kerala unique is a series of reports about the BJP-led NDA opening its account in this State. The Sabarimala agitation and the CPI(M)'s actions, targetting Hindu places of worship and insulting the *acharyas*, have hurt Hindus and has resulted in the polarisation of the community. So it is advantage BJP in two or three constituencies of the State. Congress chief Rahul Gandhi will definitely win from Wayanad because the LDF has fielded a "decoy" candidate against him as part of a game of match-fixing between the CPI(M) and the Congress. The Marxists want the Congress to win the 2019 Lok Sabha election and that's about it. Card-holding members of the CPI(M) had the audacity to ask this writer to vote for Benny Behanan, the

Congress candidate from Chalakudy. The comrades want to ensure that the Congress' candidate is elected with a big majority though the CPI(M) has fielded cine actor, Innocent Vared Thekkethala, in the constituency.

TP Senkumar, former Chief of Kerala police, articulated the Hindu angst: "It is time the majority community, too, gets the same rights and freedom that is enjoyed by the minorities. Sabarimala is the beginning. The next in line is Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in the State's capital." Kerala is the only State that issues monthly pension to widows belonging to minority communities. Social benefits should be all inclusive.

More than 4,000 people, who took part in the Sabarimala agitation, are still in jail under various charges that are non-bailable offences. KP Sasikala, the frail looking leader of the Hindu United Forum, has 475 criminal cases slapped against her, including that of murder, attempt to murder, stone-pelting and other such criminal offences. These things have happened even as those, who chopped off the right hand of Prof Joseph, are out. This Friday saw the Marxists publicly silencing the chanting of God's name at a temple in the capital city because the Chief Minister does not like it. Varkey would beg in Kerala displaying one-half of the scapular featuring the crucifix. He can show the other half with Lord Krishna's pendant while in New Delhi and the rest of India.

Kerala goes to the polls today to elect 20 members to the Lok Sabha. (The writer is Special Correspondent, The Pioneer)

# The bottom line on free electricity

For a State where agriculture is largely based on ground water, provision for round-the-clock power supply may not be the best policy. Instead, the Telangana Government's scheme has led to increasing farm distress. Alternatives such as recharging wells, water harvesting and conservation must be explored



JIN KATHRINE FOSLI AMARENDR REDDY

Sattaiha, a farmer in Shivampet village of Medak district in Andhra Pradesh, dug another borewell to save his standing crop from drought as his existing borewell had dried up in January. Like his previous one, the new alternative, too, failed and he incurred huge losses. Studies conducted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the World Bank prove that groundwater-irrigated farms have twice the crop productivity as compared to rain-fed farms. However, groundwater must not be over-exploited as it is a natural resource with limited availability.

In this context, is the Telangana Government's scheme to provide round-the-clock power supply to 2.3 million farmers for free just another populist policy? Or is it a predominantly agricultural

State's desperate response to climate change? Or will it really help the farmers in the long run? Similar policies have been launched in many other States, including Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra since the late 1970s.

Never mind the answer, more power does not equal more water in the long run. Water being a limited resource, free electricity for agriculture can lead to over-extraction, failed investments and worse still, borewell failures rather than making this scarce resource cheaper. Depletion of groundwater levels to 1,000 feet and more has been reported in some drought-prone areas due to excessive digging of borewells. The Telangana Government's move to provide 24x7 free electricity to farmers is lopsided and neglects other water sources such as farm ponds and village tanks. Complementary water sources and recharging systems are left to dry up, rather than being maintained. In the current situation, every farmer must fend for himself, in contrast to the traditional systems which usually required cooperation, whether voluntary or forced through regulation.

Due to the geology of our States such as Telangana, which have underlying hard

rock formations, farmers are competing in a game they cannot win. According to figures from the Central Ground Water Board, farmers are not likely to hit major water-bearing fractures below 100-110 feet. Groundwater levels had already sunk beyond that level in many places due to extensive well drillings when the 24x7 free electricity policy was implemented.

Besides poor and erratic rains, over-exploitation of water without sustainable recharge options has led to a decline in groundwater levels in villages. The unfortunate outcome is the diminishing of the common resource base, losses on investments, crop failures and possibly, drinking water shortage. As of today, about 31 per cent of blocks in India are at a semi-critical, critical or over-exploited stage in terms of groundwater exploitation.

**Fiscal costs to the Government:** The central electricity authority, which announced the details of the progress of various States in the power sector for the year 2017-18, observed that Telangana secured the first place in the country in power consumption and per capita power consumption. The free electricity scheme was introduced with an aim to reduce farm distress but has in turn financially dis-

tressed the discoms. Distribution companies were already heavily in debt when the 24-hour free electricity scheme was introduced from December 31, 2017. With groundwater table declining, electricity use is bound to increase because of the extra power needed to pump water from deeper levels.

Discoms all around the country are adversely affected by subsidies such as free electricity. This is one of the factors that contributes to the widening gap between income and cost of supply, according to the Central Electricity Authority. One can even say that falling groundwater levels lead to higher levels of debt for electricity companies or levels of expenditure that are hard to recover.

Electricity consumption for agriculture in Telangana amounted to 29 per cent of the total consumption in 2016. The same sector contributed only three per cent to revenues for the electricity board. Still, there has been no policy shift to bridge the gap between electricity consumption and revenue generation. There are many other options that are more viable, environmentally and economically, such as construction of farm ponds, reviving village tanks and promoting micro-irrigation systems.

**Look for alternatives:** While the policy has been around too short to draw any definite conclusions, on their own account, farmers must shift their cropping patterns to sowing water-intensive crops such as paddy. This is not to say that it is a sustainable policy or that the farmers' response is viable. High informal debts due to investments in digging borewells was one of the causes for farm distress. Although free electricity contributes to reduced input costs, it does little to address the risks and losses faced by farmers. There is a need to strengthen institutions where farmers can acquire low-risk formal loans and facilitate viable payment conditions.

Farmers need information and education on which crops they should opt for in water-scarce conditions. They should be given incentives to grow suitable variants. Instead of blindly digging borewells on farmers' fields, they must be given assistance by hydrologists or technical experts. Many farmers also hold the opinion that instead of a 24-hour electricity, about five hours of uninterrupted electricity are enough to pump water for crops. Promoting groundwater recharging structures like farm ponds and village tanks,

which reduces risk of borewell failures, is another alternative that can be explored.

In an attempt to discourage over-exploitation of groundwater and ensure a more robust regulatory mechanism in the country, the Government has proposed to slap for the first time a Water Conservation Fee (WCF) on extraction by all users of groundwater in the country, barring the armed forces, farmers and individual households.

There are questions that are hard to address for State politicians but should be addressed at the national level. Faced with the consequences of climate change and disintegration of the rural resource base, how can farmers and the landless rural population make a living in a sector dependent on monsoon rains, frequent failures of rains, prolonged dry spells, lack of water and decreasing hopes of livelihood? Should these forces be left to live their own lives? Without any concerted effort, the common rural inhabitant will drift like a splint in the open seas tossed by the forces of climate change, market fluctuations and shifting policy regimes.

(A Amarendra Reddy is Principal Scientist, Agricultural Economics, ICAR and Jin Kathrine Fosli is with the University of Oslo)

### PatchIt

Researchers from Brown University, US; Fudan University, and Soochow University, China have developed a patch that could reduce the stretching of cardiac muscle following a heart attack. The patch is made from a water-based hydrogel material and can be placed directly on the heart to prevent left ventricular remodelling



### DOCYARD

DR ATUL PRASAD

Director & HOD, Neurology

BLK SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITAL,  
NEW DELHI



## A five-stage horror

Parkinson's is a progressive neurodegenerative condition most commonly seen among the ageing population. After Alzheimer's disease, it is the second most common age-related neurodegenerative disorder. An estimated seven to 10 million people worldwide are victims of Parkinson's. Globally, neurological disorders are now the leading source of disability and ageing is increasing the burden of neurodegenerative disorders. Parkinson's disease is one such example. In the year 2016, 6-1 million people had Parkinson's disease globally, compared with 2.5 million in 1990. Total number of deaths caused by this disease in the year 2016 is 211,296. The prevalence of the disease varies according to age. It ranges from 41 people per 1 lakh among people in their forties to more than 1,900 people per 1 lakh among those who are eighth decade of life and older. According to several surveys conducted on this disease, men are 1.5 times more prone to have Parkinson's than women.

Although Parkinson's disease (PD) is progressive in nature and worsens over time, it is highly individual and affects people differently. Not everyone who has Parkinson's disease will experience all the symptoms, and symptoms between patients may vary in their severity. The speed of the progression differs from people to people as well. However, physicians have distinguished definite stages that describe how the disease progresses. There are five distinctive stages that are usually seen in a person with Parkinson's disease.

**The first stage has mild symptoms like tremors along one side of the body. Slight changes in walking, posture, or facial expressions may be noticed by those around them**

These five stages are known as the Hoehn and Yahr Scale used by physicians throughout the world to classify patients in research studies.

■ **Stage 1:** The first stage usually has mild symptoms such as tremors along one side of the body. Slight changes in walking, posture, or facial expressions may be noticed by those around them otherwise often the symptoms are mild enough not to interfere with daily life.

■ **Stage 2:** In this stage, both sides of the body may be affected by slightly worsened tremors or rigidity. Everyday activities may get harder to achieve and issues with posture and walking may become quite noticeable but

the patients are still more or less independent in this stage to do things for themselves.

■ **Stage 3:** In the third stage of PD, with the motor symptoms becoming worse, patients may begin to experience loss of balance leading to falls and movement can become very slow. However, for many patients living independently it is still possible, but they may have difficulty in everyday activities such as eating or dressing.

■ **Stage 4:** In this later stage, patients experience extremely limiting. With greatly impaired movement, most will need help with everyday activities and will not be able to look after themselves. There are exceptions who can still stand without assistance.

■ **Stage 5:** At this advanced stage of the disease, most people will require a wheelchair as they experience difficulty in walking and standing. With seriously impaired motor skills, assistance will be needed in all areas of daily life. Hallucination is an additional nightmare at this stage of the disease.

Parkinson's disease is like a doom to the ones affected and their dear ones as well. It affects patients' quality of life in a horrible way, making social interaction more difficult and worsening their financial condition, due to the medical expenses associated with the disease.

### SUMMER COOLERS

**RAW MANGO:** *Kachchi kairi*, or raw mango, is etched in all of our summer memories, as strongly as are the scorching winds, the uncomfortable heat and the relentless sun. Drinking juice of raw mango during summers is more than a mere exercise in palate pleasing. The drink reduces the effects of intense heat and prevents dehydration, by stopping excessive loss of sodium chloride and iron from the body. These minerals often tend to leach out into your sweat, during summers, making you dehydrated.

Raw mango is also consumed for its action against gastrointestinal disorders, which tend to go up during the summers. It is often prescribed to people with morning sickness, constipation, diarrhoea, chronic dyspepsia and indigestion.

Raw mangoes are great for the liver, and are believed to treat liver ailments. Having a little bit of raw mango powder cures the afternoon drowsiness that often takes effect after your meals. This is because raw mango gives your body an energy boost that wakes you up and helps you perform well.



## TAKE ALTERNATE ROUTE

MUSBA HASHMI speaks with DR KUSHAL BANERJEE about the advancements in homeopathy and how it is effective in curing various diseases

Pollution, stress, hectic lifestyle and unhealthy food — all lead to various diseases in our lives. With various treatments for various diseases, one often gets confused with which way to opt for. This is when Homeopathy comes to the rescue.

With so much advancement in medicine and technology, homeopathy has also come a long way. With treatments for common cough and cold to severe diseases like cancer, homeopathy promise to provide a treatment for all.

Dr Kushal Banerjee of Dr Kalyan Banerjee Clinic says that though many people don't go for Homeopathy as the first treatment, it is the best on to take.

"Many people are sceptical to go for homeopathy as the first and foremost treatment for any disease. They think that the treatment is very long and the results are very slow. But, if one wants to cure their disease and is looking for a permanent treatment instead of just suppressing it for the time being, then homeopathy is the best treatment. For instance if someone has migraines and he wants to cure and control it instead of just managing it for that particular time that is when homeopathy is helpful," Banerjee explains and adds that a large number of patients suffering from some major diseases like cancer and brain haemorrhage have responded well to the homeopathic treatment.

"We have seen a large number of patients who were a failure of chemotherapy and they also responded to the treatment, which is very significant. But, not to forget that cancer is not a single disease, there are various types of cancers. So, the treatment can be effective in one and not another," he tells you.

In a recent study conducted at the Dr Kalyan Banerjee Clinic, it is found that Homeopathy can be beneficial in kidney failure and hypothyroidism too.

**AN IMPORTANT THING TO KEEP IN MIND IS TO GO TO BED AT THE RIGHT TIME AND AVOID AN IRREGULAR SLEEPING PATTERN. ANOTHER NO-NO IS TO SKIP MEALS. IF ONE FOLLOWS THESE TWO THINGS, THEY CAN KEEP MANY DISEASES AT BAY**

— DR KUSHAL BANERJEE

The early findings have shown positive impact on patients with kidney failure and hypothyroidism.

Banerjee says that although these two diseases are very common but conventional medicine have no cure for them. "Hypothyroidism and chronic kidney disease or kidney failure are very common diseases and have no resolution in conventional medicine. But, in our study we have found that these two diseases can be cured or at least prevented from further progression. In hypothyroidism study, the data indicates that specific homeopathic medicines given to patients were able to improve the functioning of the thyroid gland, thereby bringing down the Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) readings. This runs contrary to the fact that says the progression of the disease cannot be controlled. The study was done between 2011 to 2015 and a case records of 2083 patients were studied and analysed. That is when we came up with the results. A total of 35 per cent patients saw positive results in their treatment by the fourth visit to the clinic," he tells you.

The study for chronic renal failure was done for two months and the records of 61 patients were analysed.

"Through this study we found that serum urea and creatinine readings, two of the most important clinical readings while studying kidney failure, showed reduction in them. Even a slight reduction in these readings is a big thing. No currently available treatment is able to do this. These readings shows whether a patient should undergo dialysis or not and homeopathic treatment may help patients avoid going through dialysis," Banerjee tells you.

Banerjee says that there are various causes and symptoms of chronic renal failure.

"There are many causes of the disease. Some of them being — if you are an old patient of diabetes,

the possibility of kidney failure increases, if you have hypotension from a long time then also the chances of chronic kidney failure increases. Drug toxicity also leads to kidney failure. If someone is using painkillers for a long time then kidney damage is a known side-effect. And one of the emerging cause is auto-immune condition in which the immune system automatically decides to attack the kidney," he tells you and adds that when the causes of the disease differs, the management and the prevention of the disease also differs.

Banerjee opines that unhealthy lifestyle opens door to many diseases.

"The most common cause for majority of diseases is unhealthy lifestyle. Leading a healthy lifestyle will keep your sugar in place, your blood pressure in place and your immune system in place. Unnecessary and indiscriminate usage of over the counter allopathic medicines should be stopped. Popping painkillers for every small thing is a habit that many of us have, it is very bad for health and should be stopped immediately," he tells you.

Banerjee says that taking small significant steps can help to live a healthy lifestyle and eliminate many diseases.

"The basic thing which we advised to our patients is having all the meals at the right time is a must. Skipping meals is the worst thing one can do to their body. The other important thing is to go to bed at the right time and avoid an irregular sleeping pattern. If one follows these two things, they can keep many diseases at bay. Additionally, regular exercise is also important for a healthy lifestyle. Moderate amount of regular exercise also helps to eliminate various diseases from life. If one keeps in mind these basic pointers of a healthy lifestyle then, medicines will work better and diseases will stay away," he tells you.

## CONTROL THE SEIZURES

SATKAM DIVYA

tells you the symptoms to look out for in epilepsy and its cure



Epilepsy is a central nervous system (neurological) disorder which brings about abnormality, causing seizures or periods of unusual behavior, sensations and sometimes loss of awareness. It can happen to anybody at any age. Epilepsy affects both males and females.

■ **Symptoms:** Epilepsy symptoms can vary widely. These can include where an individual with epilepsy may simply stare blankly for a few seconds before having a seizure, while others repeatedly twitch their arms or legs. At least two unprovoked seizures are generally required for an epilepsy diagnosis. Some of the seizure signs and symptoms may include:

- Uncontrollable jerking movements of the arms and legs.
- Loss of consciousness or awareness
- Temporary confusion
- A staring spell
- Psychic symptoms such as fear, anxiety or déjà vu.

However, symptoms may vary depending on the type of seizure. At times, a person with epilepsy will tend to have the same type of seizure each time, so the symptoms will be similar from episode to episode. Doctors basically classify seizures either as focal or generalised based on how the abnormal brain activity begins.

■ **Focal seizures:** Seizures appearing in just one area of the brain they are called focal or partial seizures.

■ **Generalised seizures:** These appear to involve in all areas of the brain and listed below are six types of generalised seizures.

■ **Absence seizures:** They often occur in children are characterised by staring into space or subtle body movements such as eye blinking or lip smacking.

■ **Tonic seizures:** These affect muscles in your back, arms and legs and which may also cause you to fall to the ground.

■ **Atonic seizures:** They cause a loss of muscle control, which may cause you to suddenly collapse or fall down.

■ **Clonic seizures:** These seizures are repeated or rhythmic, jerking muscle movements. These usually affect the neck, face and arms.

■ **Myoclonic seizures:** They usually appear as sudden brief jerks or twitches of your arms and legs.

■ **Tonic-clonic seizures:** These are the most dramatic type of epileptic seizure and can cause an abrupt loss of consciousness, body stiffening and shaking and at times loss of bladder control or biting of the tongue.

A strict meal plan like opting for a Ketogenic diet can help children especially after working closely with a doctor and a dietician. The diet usually starts with a fast that lasts 24 to 48 hours. Foods that are high in fat and low in carbohydrates are introduced. If the diet is strictly followed, studies showed that two-thirds of kids who follow it are able to stop their seizures.

Recently new surgical techniques have improved the outcomes. Depending on the type of seizure or if the patient has tried several medications without success, doctors may recommend surgery.

**Do:** Keep a cool head under pressure and try to keep the person safe till the seizure stops

■ Gently try to put the person onto a flat surface so he does not fall

■ Put something soft and flat under the head.

**Don't:** Don't restrain the person or you could injure the person or yourself.

■ Don't offer even a sip of water as that could cause choking

■ Attempting to put an object in the individual's mouth could be dangerous for you and him

■ Don't attempt artificial respiration unless the person is not breathing when the seizure has stopped.

The writer is CEO, KlinikApp

### DadiKaKehna

*With sun comes tanned skin. More so if your work keeps you exposed to the sunlight for long hours. ROSHANI DEVI shares simple home remedies that one can use to get rid of the tan instantly*



Summer months are fun. Kids have vacations, you can take a break, go to the beach and relax or just have fun with friends. But the downside of staying out in the sun for too long is tanning. But fret not. There are simple things that one can do to get rid of it instantly.

First, slice the lemon and rub it on the tanned region. Leave it on for a few minutes before you go for your bath. Do this at least once a day.

You can also make a pack and use this once a day. Mix a tablespoon lemon juice, a tablespoon cucumber extract and a tablespoon rose water. Apply this to the tanned areas. Rinse after 10-12 minutes.

Second, mix a tablespoon

masoor daal powder, a tablespoon tomato juice and a teaspoon aloe vera extract. Apply it on the tanned area. Leave it on for half an hour. Wash it off with cold water.

If you are rushed for time, a pack made with half a cup ripe papaya and a tablespoon honey works wonders. Leave it on for half an hour. Wash off with cold or lukewarm water. Do this twice a week.

Four, one can make a pack using a tablespoon plain yogurt and a tablespoon tomato juice. apply the paste on the tanned area. Let it dry for 30 minutes. Cleanse with water.



### TIPTOP

India rolled out the National Viral Hepatitis Control Program (NVHCP) last week with the aim of eliminating viral hepatitis. The disease infects and kills more than HIV, malaria and tuberculosis combined. The National Action Plan - Viral Hepatitis was launched in Mumbai by the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare. Viral hepatitis is recognised as an important public health problem across the world.

According to the WHO, viral hepatitis caused 1.34 million deaths globally in 2015, a number comparable to deaths due to tuberculosis, worldwide. There are about 4 crore people suffering from Hepatitis B in India, and another 0.6 to 1.2 crore people suffering from Hepatitis C.

### SLIMLINE

A scientist at the National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health in Mumbai — an institute under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) — says a new type of stem cell identified by her team can help restore fertility in men and women who have undergone treatment for cancer.

Cancer treatment that involves use of radiation and chemicals, renders patients infertile as an unwanted side effect and, while cured of cancer, they cannot get

The programme will also focus on screening of pregnant women for hepatitis B, in places where institutional delivery is less than 80 per cent, to ensure provision of birth dose Hepatitis B vaccination and Hepatitis B immunoglobulin, if required.

Acute hepatitis due to any virus is usually self-limiting and requires a good diet, bed rest and only symptomatic treatment. Urgent hospitalisation may be required in cases of acute liver failure in acute viral hepatitis. One may also need intensive treatment and liver transplant. Chronic hepatitis B and C can be treated with antiviral drugs — oral and injectable. Hepatitis C virus is curable now and HBV can be controlled with medication. The vaccine is available for hepatitis A virus and HBV only.

children. Though women are born with a lifetime reserve of oocytes (immature eggs), these are wiped out by oncotherapy. In males, the testes responsible for the production of sperms, stop making them following cancer treatment.

Currently accepted approaches for fertility preservation require male patients to deposit their sperm in 'cryo-banks' before beginning cancer treatment for later use.

— IANS

### STUDYCENTRE

People who wish to live longer must reduce their sitting time and replace it with just 30 minutes of physical activity, according to findings of a recent study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology. The results highlight the importance of movement — regardless of its intensity or amount of time spent moving — for better health. Studies indicate that about one in four adults spends more than eight hours a day sitting.

Adults who sat for long stretches at a time — an hour or more without interruption — had a greater risk of early death than those who were sedentary for the same total amount of time but got up and moved around more often. Thus, even short bursts of activity — of just a minute or two — can provide health benefits.

Tips from Heart Care Foundation of India:

- Take the stairs as often as possible.
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Have "walk-meetings" instead of "sit-in" meetings.
- Walk to the nearby shops instead of driving.
- Stand up and walk while talking on the phone.
- Walk down to speak to your colleague instead of using the intercom/phone.
- Walk around your building for a break during the work day or during lunch.
- Buy a pedometer.



# Sensex crashes over 495 pts as crude woes resurface

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmark Sensex on Monday nosedived 495 points to end at 38,645 owing to intense sell-offs in energy and financial stocks as investors weighed soaring crude oil prices and a mixed start of the corporate earnings season. The broader NSE Nifty too shed over 158 points to close at 11,594.

Market sentiment was hit as macroeconomic worries resurfaced following reports that the US will end sanctions waiver on Iranian oil imports. Soaring crude prices at a six-month high level led to massive sell-offs on bourses.

Besides, the weakening rupee and a caution ahead of some key corporate results also played in the minds of investors. Rising crude prices are negative for oil importing countries like India as higher prices lead to widening of fiscal deficit and put the currency under pressure.

The 30-share BSE index settled 495.10 points, or 1.26 per cent, lower at 38,645.18; while the broader NSE Nifty tumbled 158.35 points, or 1.35 per cent, to close at 11,594.45. Sensex heavyweight Reliance Industries fell 2.76 per cent. In percentage terms, major laggards were Yes Bank, Indusind



Bank, RIL, ICICI Bank, HDFC and Axis Bank — plunging as much as 6.62 per cent.

While, bucking weak market trend, Bharti Airtel, TCS, Infosys, NTPC and PowerGrid ended in the green, rising up to 0.89 per cent. Sectorally, BSE energy slumped 2.72 per cent, tracking developments around US sanctions on Iranian oil imports. BSE finance slipped 2 per cent as Jet Airways crisis loomed large over health of banks and lenders.

Running into debt of more than Rs 8,500 crore, Jet Airways has shut down operations temporarily after lenders decided against extending emergency funds for its survival.

Meanwhile, shares of Jet Airways continued to fall for the third day in a row on Monday, tumbling over 23 per cent. Analysts said investors also turned cautious ahead of announcement of results from key index heavy weights including large corporate banks.

“Indian markets had a rough day on the back of sharp rise in crude oil price above USD 74 per barrel. As a significant importer of crude oil, the high oil price is not good for Indian macros,” said Jagannadham Thunuguntla, Sr VP and Head of Research (Wealth), Centrum Broking. According to a report, US

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is set to announce that as of May 2, the State Department will no longer grant sanctions waivers to any country that is currently importing Iranian crude or condensate.

China and India are currently the largest importers of Iranian oil. If they don't go along with Trump's demands, that could cause tensions in both bilateral relationships and spill over into other issues, like trade, the report said.

Reacting to reports on US terminating exemptions on Iranian oil imports, global benchmark Brent crude climbed to a multi-month high of USD 73.81 per barrel, a 2.56 per cent rise. As a result, the rupee Monday dropped 32 paise to 69.67 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased equity worth Rs 73.08 crore on Monday, and domestic institutional investors (DIIs) sold shares to the tune of Rs 68.16, provisional data available with stock exchanges showed.

Elsewhere in Asian markets, China dropped up to 1.70 per cent. South Korea and Japan also ended higher. European bourses remained closed on account of Easter on Monday.

# Trai warns cable TV, DTH cos violating new norms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator Trai on Monday warned it will come down heavily on cable TV and DTH players who are found to be violating its new tariff order and regulatory regime. The watchdog also promised to shortly begin “audit” of subscriber management and other IT systems of errant operators.



Trai Chairman RS Sharma said consumer choice and consumer interest are “non negotiable” and “cannot be compromised” and that companies not adhering to rules will have to face the consequences. “We have received complaints about inconvenience to customers. These complaints relate to software and systems put in place by distributors not enabling true choice for consumers, which is the aim of the whole framework,” Sharma told PTI.

# MTNL's sustainability important for customers, market: CMD

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

MTNL's sustainability as a “viable operator” is important both for customers and market, and the PSU has not lost its relevance even in the intensely-competitive telecom sector, the company's Chairman and Managing Director PK Purwar has said.

The comment assumes significance as loss-making telecom PSUs MTNL and BSNL are saddled with massive debt and have faced problems in clearing staff salaries in the recent past. A revival package is being worked out by the government to keep the two PSUs afloat, amid cut-throat competition in the telecom sector driven by Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea. “Even today, MTNL has over 50 per cent

market share in landline for Delhi and Mumbai (circles), we also have a substantial market share in broadband. When it comes to mobile services segment, we have a lesser market share but customer is still looking for services of MTNL,” Purwar told PTI. He asserted that both from customer and market point of view, MTNL's sustainability as a viable operator is required.

“So, still MTNL is very much relevant for the telecom sector and we expect that the steps that are being taken by the government, will lead to revival of MTNL,” he said. Purwar claimed that at a time when private sector players are “surviving on the strength of their promoters”, the government, as promoter of telecom PSUs, too needs to extend support to keep the state-

owned corporations viable and competitive.

“Private sector players are surviving on the strength of their promoters...so PSUs should not be discriminated... Government has two roles, government as a sovereign authority and government as owner of a company... As the owner, they have to infuse capital, if the private sector promoters are doing the same to keep their companies competitive,” he pointed out.

The telecom department has prepared a rescue plan for MTNL and BSNL in form of a revival package that entails components like Voluntary Retirement Scheme, asset monetisation, and allocation of 4G spectrum. The revival plan is expected to be taken up by the Cabinet soon, according to sources.

# Baleno with BS VI petrol engine launched

New Delhi (PTI): The country's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Monday said it has launched its premium hatchback Baleno with BS VI emission norms compliant petrol engine, priced between Rs 5.58 lakh and Rs 8.9 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi). The auto major has also introduced two variants of the car with smart hybrid technology. The trim with 1.2 litre DUALJET, DUAL VVT petrol engine is priced at Rs 7.25 lakh, while the Zeta variant is tagged at Rs 7.86 lakh.

As per the company, the models with smart hybrid technology would deliver a fuel efficiency of 23.87 km/litre. “At Maruti Suzuki,

we strive to bring newer, better and environment friendly technologies to our products. Baleno Smart Hybrid with BS VI stands testament to the same. We are confident that the premium hatchback Baleno will present a complete package in line with aspirations of evolving customers,” MSI Senior Executive Director Marketing & Sales RS Kalsi said in a statement. The company said in order to achieve the stringent emission regulation requirement, it has upgraded both engine hardware and software along with exhaust system. “Baleno is country's first premium hatchback to be offered with Smart Hybrid technology,” it added.

## NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11727.05	11727.05	11583.95	11594.45	-158.35
BHARTIARTL	344.00	358.55	336.60	352.00	5.05
WIPRO	285.50	289.00	285.10	288.25	3.45
TECHM	800.70	810.80	798.80	806.00	5.65
INFY	717.05	725.75	715.00	721.30	4.25
TCS	2148.00	2176.00	2145.60	2160.30	10.25
NTPC	135.10	136.40	134.35	136.00	0.65
COALINDIA	251.45	252.50	248.95	252.00	0.55
UPL	931.10	942.35	922.95	936.00	1.95
POWERGRID	194.20	196.70	193.40	194.55	0.25
BRITANNIA	2989.00	3014.00	2971.00	2998.00	0.25
DREDDY	281.00	281.95	277.50	279.95	-1.15
HINDUNILVR	1740.00	1745.00	1730.10	1738.80	-1.10
ADANIEXPORTS	388.40	391.80	384.25	390.05	-0.50
CIPLA	560.00	566.00	556.60	560.00	-1.55
SBIN	308.80	312.30	306.35	309.90	-0.90
TITAN	1125.00	1132.00	1119.10	1122.00	-3.40
LT	1163.00	1170.90	1152.50	1156.65	-4.05
HCLTECH	1102.50	1114.30	1095.00	1099.65	-6.40
TATAMOTORS	235.80	239.35	231.70	235.90	-0.95
ITC	303.85	305.50	301.05	302.75	-1.65
GRASIM	866.50	871.40	855.10	862.30	-4.95
BAJAJ-AUTO	3055.50	3079.00	3041.50	3050.00	-19.50
BAIFINANCE	3010.00	3010.00	2975.00	2986.00	-28.45
BAJAJFINSV	780.00	788.00	745.35	748.00	-86.15
HDFCBANK	2325.00	2325.00	2261.00	2266.90	-26.75
KOTAKBANK	1360.00	1365.80	1346.10	1350.55	-19.10
ULTRACEMCO	4235.00	4279.00	4180.00	4200.15	-59.80
ZEE	402.50	405.70	394.50	396.30	-6.00
TATASTEEL	540.05	545.75	533.10	534.80	-8.30
MARUTI	7422.00	7424.90	7300.00	7325.00	-122.45
ONGC	160.70	161.50	156.90	157.90	-2.70
M&M	681.00	685.75	670.90	673.00	-11.65
ASIANPAINT	1459.95	1459.95	1435.00	1444.35	-22.25
HEROMOTOCO	2741.55	2749.95	2685.00	2690.00	-51.55
VEDL	178.90	179.45	174.70	175.25	-3.35
SUNPHARMA	464.00	465.05	452.40	453.90	-9.70
AXISBANK	768.90	768.90	750.55	755.05	-16.15
GAIL	351.30	352.40	344.05	344.45	-7.50
HDFC	2005.00	2010.00	1948.00	1958.50	-45.25
ICICIBANK	404.25	404.60	393.70	394.75	-9.65
JSWSTEEL	298.70	302.45	299.25	291.50	-7.65
INFRAEEL	306.80	310.85	295.55	299.00	-8.20
EICHERMOT	2085.00	2099.80	2034.50	2040.00	-623.90
RELIANCE	1360.00	1367.00	1341.30	1344.00	-41.95
HINDALCO	207.30	207.80	199.60	199.70	-7.50
IOC	152.50	152.75	148.65	149.90	-6.20
INDUSINDBK	1759.00	1760.00	1682.95	1688.70	-75.60
BPNCL	353.80	354.40	339.00	339.95	-22.95
YESBANK	253.95	254.40	237.00	238.10	-17.70
IBULHSGHN	795.00	795.00	725.00	727.95	-72.60

## NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28317.15	28326.85	27842.45	27907.25	-512.30
HAVELLS	757.50	764.00	750.00	762.70	5.00
ICICIPRULI	363.95	376.30	362.70	368.00	2.00
ABB	1420.00	1455.00	1406.40	1442.00	5.20
IDEA	17.35	17.40	16.85	17.30	0.05
MARICO	366.00	366.45	362.10	366.25	0.15
UBL	1424.40	1433.50	1408.00	1420.00	-0.05
GODREJCP	667.70	671.50	663.00	667.20	-0.45
DABUR	405.70	405.85	401.50	404.65	-0.30
JAJALHLDNG	3290.00	3313.05	3258.90	3285.00	-4.40
BANDHANBANK	566.00	579.90	557.95	567.00	-0.95
ONFS	3528.00	3549.85	3493.55	3517.80	-10.75
SBILIFE	617.85	624.70	605.25	612.50	-2.40
SCSCLTD	18140.00	18170.80	17950.00	18100.00	-73.50
COLPAL	1215.95	1217.90	1205.00	1211.00	-5.95
MCDOWELL-N	552.00	552.40	546.05	550.00	-2.75
HDFCAMC	1585.00	1599.00	1555.00	1576.00	-9.75
NHPC	23.70	23.95	23.45	23.45	-0.20
PGHH	10745.00	10745.00	10529.90	10599.00	-96.90
LUPIN	831.60	837.90	826.85	828.00	-7.80
BIOCON	615.50	615.50	606.65	608.50	-7.00
DIVISLAB	1721.00	1737.80	1695.00	1704.00	-20.35
AUROPHARMA	785.00	788.55	773.80	779.20	-10.35
GICRE	261.95	263.25	254.15	256.50	-3.55
ICICIGI	1085.00	1089.95	1037.05	1080.10	-15.35
PETRONET	239.50	240.95	237.00	236.10	-3.80
SAIL	57.20	57.35	56.30	56.40	-0.95
SHREECEM	19570.00	19770.45	19320.00	19330.15	-363.70
NIACL	188.30	188.95	185.15	186.15	-6.40
CADILAH	332.00	335.80	329.35	330.10	-3.60
SIEMENS	1181.10	1183.95	1152.95	1161.50	-22.90
ACC	1693.00	1695.80	1660.00	1664.00	-35.45
PIDILITIND	1250.00	1251.95	1232.50	1227.55	-27.95
HDFCLIFE	405.00	406.90	396.10	397.25	-9.10
MRF	57650.00	57747.10	56384.40	56480.00	-1332.20
NMDC	104.60	104.70	102.00	102.20	-2.50
BANKBARODA	126.05	126.40	123.15	123.25	-3.30
MOTHERSUDI	157.25	157.25	150.95	152.90	-4.25
HINDZINC	284.35	284.35	276.05	276.50	-7.85
DMART	1360.00	1366.95	1320.00	1320.10	-38.40
PAGEIND	23600.00	23689.00	22770.00	22900.00	-685.90
CONCOR	517.90	522.75	502.10	505.00	-16.05
BHEL	75.85	75.85	73.00	73.40	-2.65
AMBUJACEM	231.50	232.10	225.10	225.25	-8.15
ASHOKLEY	95.80	95.85	91.80	92.40	-3.35
INDIGO	1530.00	1544.80	1475.90	1490.65	-63.75
SRTRANSFIN	1213.50	1215.40	1163.95	1165.05	-50.60
L&T	145.05	146.70	140.20	140.40	-6.15
PEL	2628.05	2650.00	2525.10	2530.00	-119.85
DF	181.00	181.40	173.00	172.70	-10.40
HINDPETRO	258.10	258.85	248.00	250.60	-16.00

## BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	ONGC
JPASSOCIAT	5.55	5.80	5.40	5.72	INDIACEM
RPOWER	8.20	8.39	7.92	7.97	LUPIN
SPICEJET	140.00	141.70	124.50	125.15	NTPC
SETIARUNYS	157.50	168.00	132.20	154.60	TATACOFFEE
SUZLON	7.04	7.04	6.72	6.79	SBIIFE
PCJEWELLER	143.30	146.80	127.00	129.20	JISJAJLEQS
RELCAPITAL	148.00	148.00	131.60	135.40	PEL
YESBANK	254.40	254.40	237.00	238.40	ESCORTS
DHFL	153.40	153.40	138.30	140.05	IDBI
IBREALTE	102.90	110.50	99.50	105.60	BELM
RELIANCE	1364.00	1365.15	1341.00	1344.80	PEL
IBULHSGFN	795.00	795.00	725.10	733.00	IGL
TATAMOTORS	235.90	239.10	231.75	234.65	ASIANPAINT
WELINFRA	120.50	120.95	114.00	116.35	SRTRANSFIN
RIPRO	285.90				

# 7 Lankan suicide bombers involved in Easter blasts

24 held as toll rises to 290

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Seven suicide bombers believed to be members of an Islamist extremist group carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, killing 290 people and wounding 500 others in the country's worst terror attack, authorities said on Monday. A state of emergency was declared from midnight Monday after a crucial meeting of the National Security Council chaired by President Maithripala Sirisena.

No group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attacks, but police have so far arrested 24 people - mostly members of a same group - in connection with the blasts that also killed six Indian nationals. Police said that 9 out of the 24 arrested for involvement in the blasts were ordered to be remanded by the Colombo magistrate's court till May 6. Government's spokesman Rajitha Senaratne said local Islamist extremist group called the National Tawheed Jamath (NTJ) is suspected of plotting the blasts that struck three churches when the Easter Sunday mass were in progress and three five-star hotels. "All suicide bombers involved in the blasts are believed to be Sri Lankan nationals," said Senaratne, who is also the Health Minister. Speaking at a press conference here, Senaratne said the government was investigating whether the group had "international support".

"There may be international links to them," he added. The Government Analyst's Department was quoted as saying by the Sunday Times that the blasts at the Shangri-La, Kingsbury and Cinnamon Grand hotels, and also at St Anthony's Church in Kotahena, St. Sebastian's Church in Katuwapitiya and the Zeon Church in Batticaloa have been identified as suicide bombings. "A total of seven suicide bombers had carried out these explosions," the department said. Around 290 people, includ-

## SL announces compensation for victims

Colombo (PTI) The Sri Lankan government on Monday announced that it will compensate the victims of the ghastly bomb blasts that hit churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka, killing over 290 people and injuring over 500 others during Easter celebrations, according to a media report. Eight coordinated explosions targeted Easter worshippers and high end hotels popular with international guests.

The blasts targeted St Anthony's Church in Colombo, St Sebastian's Church in the western coastal town of Negombo and another church in the eastern town

of Batticaloa around 8.45 am (local time) as the Easter Sunday mass were in progress.

Three explosions were reported from the five-star hotels - the Shangri-La, the Cinnamon Grand and the Kingsbury. Foreigners and locals who were injured in hotel blasts were admitted to the Colombo General Hospital. Government spokesman Rajitha Senaratne said that the each victim in the attacks will be paid 1 million Sri Lankan rupees (USD 5,722), while about 100,000 Sri Lankan rupees (USD 572) would be given for the costs of the funeral processions, The

Sunday Times reported.

He said that the injured in the attacks would be paid between 100,000 Sri Lankan rupees (USD 570)- 300,000 Sri Lankan rupees (USD 1717). The spokesperson also stressed that all the damaged churches will be completely repaired by the government. Police have till now arrested 24 people, reportedly members of a Muslim radical group, in connection with the country's bloodiest attacks in a decade. The government has said it will not disclose the details of the suspects involved in the attacks to prevent them from getting publicity.

six Indians, were killed in the blasts that left more than 500 others injured, police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said. He said that 24 arrested suspects have been transferred into the custody of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) for further investigations. The National Security Council (NSC) has announced plans to impose a "conditional state of emergency" from midnight, said a statement from the president's media unit.

It said the measures would target terrorism and would not limit freedom of expression. "These will be limited to counter terrorism regulations. This is being done to allow the police and the three forces to ensure public security," the statement said.

The government has also declared Tuesday as a national day of mourning. President Sirisena has appointed a three-member committee to conduct investigations. The committee will submit its report to the President within two weeks. Health Minister Senaratne said the Chief of National Intelligence had warned the Inspector General of Police (IGP) regarding the probable attacks before April 11. "On April 4, international intelligence agencies had warned of these attacks. The IGP was informed on April 9," he said. He demanded resignation of

police chief Pujith Jayasundera in view of the major security lapse. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said that an investigation must be launched as to why intelligence reports of the attack was not taken seriously.

Rauf Hakeem, a government minister and the leader of the main Muslim party - Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, said that it was lamentable that no preventive action had been taken despite the inputs. "They have known this..., the names have been given, identified, but (they) took no action," he added.

Two Sri Lankan Muslim groups - the All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama and the National Shooraa Council - have condemned the blasts and demanded that all culprits be brought to book. Meanwhile, as many as 87 bomb detonators were found on Monday at the Central Colombo bus station in Pettah area. The police initially found 12 bomb detonators scattered on the ground. A further search revealed 75 more, a police statement said.

A safe house where the bombers had lived for nearly three months leading to the attacks was found in the south of Colombo suburb of Panadura. Sri Lanka Air Force said it found an improvised explosives device along a road leading to the departure terminal at the Colombo interna-

tional airport Sunday night and safely defused it.

"It was a crude six-foot pipe bomb that was found by the roadside," an air force spokesman said. On Sunday, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj identified three Indians as Lakshmi, Narayan Chandrashekar and Ramesh who died in the blasts.

The Indian High Commission Monday confirmed the deaths of two more individuals in the blasts - K G Hanumantharayappa and M Rangappa. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Sunday identified a Keralite, P S Rasina (58), among those killed in the blasts. Four of them died in the Colombo National Hospital while the bodies of two Indians who succumbed to their injuries from the blast at the Shangri-La Hotel has been sent for autopsy, the National Hospital spokesman said.

Sri Lanka Monday ordered a new night-time curfew following the multiple attacks. The blasts shattered a decade of peace in the island nation since the end of the brutal civil war with the LTTE. The civil war ended with the defeat of the Tamil Tigers, who had fought for 26 years for an independent homeland for the minority ethnic Tamils. The war is thought to have killed between 70,000 and 80,000 people.



Relatives weep near the coffin with the remains of 12-year Sneh Savindi, who was a victim of Easter Sunday bombing at St. Sebastian Church, Monday in Negombo, Sri Lanka (2) A Sri Lankan woman living near St. Anthony's shrine runs for safety with her infant after police found explosive devices in a parked vehicle in Colombo. AP



## Buddhist monks visit attack sight ... say 'we don't have ill towards any religion'

Colombo (PTI): A small group of monks in saffron robes visited the bombed St Anthony's Church here on Monday and said they don't have any anger or ill will towards anyone of any other religion in the Buddhist-majority nation. The Buddhist monks visited the historic Catholic church located at Kochchikade, a day after a suicide bomber reportedly triggered a huge blast, killing many worshippers who had gathered for the Easter Sunday morning mass. Venerable Prof Pitigala Vijitha Thero was outside St Anthony's Shrine said he was "extremely saddened and grieved" by the incident.

"Since the (civil) war, people belonging to all religions and faiths had been co-existing and living together in unity and harmony. This is not something that anyone could have anticipated," he told the BBC. He said he condemned the attacks, but "we don't have any anger or ill will towards anyone of any other religion." "I pray that peace prevails - not only in this country, but in the whole world," he said.

Sri Lanka is a country of great religious diversity that crosses ethnic lines, and the monks' presence at the church was a sign of this, CNN commented. Sunday's attacks are the deadliest seen in Sri Lanka since the end of the country's civil war in 2009. The civil war ended with the defeat of the Tamil Tigers, who had fought for 26 years for an independent homeland for the minority ethnic Tamils. The war is thought to have killed between 70,000 and 80,000 people.

The nation has seen some sporadic violence since. In March 2018, a state of emergency was declared after hard-line members of the majority Buddhist Sinhala community attacked mosques and Muslim-owned properties. According to census data, 70.2 per cent of Sri Lankans identify as Buddhist, 12 per cent Hindu, 9.7 per cent Muslim, and 7.4 per cent Christian. It is estimated that 82 per cent of Sri Lankan Christians are Roman Catholic.

## Indians at Shangri-La Hotel saw fellow guests injured by huge glass shrapnel

Colombo (PTI): An Indian national, who escaped the worst terror attack in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, said it was a "horrific sight" to see huge chunks of glass on the bodies of fellow guests and white aprons of chefs drenched in blood after a suicide bomber struck a luxury hotel here. Sri Lankan authorities said 290 people were killed and over 500 others injured when suicide bombers attacked three churches and luxury hotels in the country.

Akshat Saraf, 30, was in Colombo's Shangri-La Hotel with his wife and infant daughter when the explosions struck. They could hear blasts from their room on the 25th floor. "First blast was very loud and our room started shaking. At first I thought it was a thunderstorm and I didn't pay too much attention. It had been raining in Sri Lanka for some time," he told CNN. "It was the second blast when I sensed that something was not right," he said. Saraf said he and his family grabbed their passports and took the emergency exit to head to the ground floor.

"When we reached the 4th floor we saw blood on the stairs," Saraf said. "When we evacuated that's when we saw a lot of ambulances and hotel staff help-

ing the injured guests outside." "It was a horrific sight. When I saw injured guests, they seemed very serious. Some of them [had] chunks of glass stuck in their body. I could see some of the chefs in white aprons covered in blood." Police, army and emergency services personnel began arriving within five minutes, Saraf said. Guests were evacuated offsite, and then to a nearby shelter with a few hours, he added.

At least six Indians died in the blasts. On Sunday, India identified K M Lakshminarayan, Narayan Chandrashekar and Lakshmana Gowda Ramesh as the three Indians who died in the blasts. The Indian High Commission on Monday confirmed the deaths of two more Indians in the blasts - K G Hanumantharayappa and M Rangappa.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Sunday identified a Keralite, P S Rasina, among those killed in the blasts. The Government Analyst's Department said the blasts at the Shangri-La, Kingsbury and Cinnamon Grand hotels, and also at St Anthony's Church in Kotahena, St. Sebastian's Church in Katuwapitiya and the Zeon Church in Batticaloa have been identified as suicide bombings.

# US to sanction nations for importing Iranian oil

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Trump administration is poised to tell five nations, including allies Japan, South Korea and Turkey, that they will no longer be exempt from US sanctions if they continue to import oil from Iran, officials said Sunday. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo plans to announce on Monday that the administration will not renew sanctions waivers for the five countries when they expire on May 2, three US officials said. The others are China and India.

It was not immediately clear if any of the five would be given additional time to wind down their purchases or if they would be subject to US sanctions on May 3 if they do not immediately halt imports of Iranian oil.

The officials were not authorised to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of Pompeo's announcement. The decision not to extend the waivers, which was first reported by The Washington Post, was finalised on Friday by President Donald Trump, according to the officials. They said it is intended to further ramp up pressure on Iran by strangling the revenue it gets from oil exports.

The administration granted eight oil sanctions waivers

when it re-imposed sanctions on Iran after Trump pulled the US out of the landmark 2015 nuclear deal. ZCZC

Trump decides not to grant waiver to India, 7 others importing Iranian oil

In a move that could have implications on India's energy security, US President Donald Trump on Monday decided not to grant sanctions exemptions to any oil customers of Iran, further squeezing Tehran's top export commodity. "President Donald J. Trump has decided not to reissue Significant Reduction Exceptions (SREs) when they expire in early May. This decision is intended to bring Iran's oil exports to zero, denying the regime its principal source of revenue," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said.

The US re-imposed sanctions on Iran last November, after President Trump pulled out of the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal. The US' move which is seen as an escalation of President Trump administration's "maximum pressure" on Iran comes after it last year gave temporary 180-days waiver to eight countries, including India, China, Turkey and Japan among others. As a result of this decision all countries including India would have to bring down its import of oil from Iran by May 2.

## WH: US President to end waivers on Iran oil imports

Washington (AFP): The White House announced on Monday it will no longer grant sanctions exemptions to Iran's oil customers, in a bid to squeeze the Islamic republic's top export.

"President Donald J Trump has decided not to reissue Significant Reduction Exceptions (SREs) when they expire in early May," the administration said in a statement. "This decision is intended to bring Iran's oil exports to zero, denying the regime its principal source of revenue."

'US WILL ACCELERATE ITS PRESSURE CAMPAIGN ON IRAN'

The US will dramatically accelerate its pressure campaign on the Iranian regime until its leaders change their destructive behaviour, respect the rights of their people, and return to the negotiating table, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday.

Pompeo remarks came soon after US President Donald Trump announced that his administration will



not issue any additional Significant Reduction Exceptions to existing importers of Iranian oil.

"The Trump Administration has taken Iran's oil exports to historic lows, and we are dramatically accelerating our pressure campaign in a calibrated way that meets our national security objectives while maintaining well supplied global oil markets," Pompeo told reporters at an early morning news conference.

The Secretary of State warned countries of importing oil from Iran. "We stand by our

## Mudslide kills 17 in Colombia

AP ■ BOGOTA

At least 17 people were killed and 13 others were missing after a mudslide that buried eight houses early Sunday in southwestern Colombia, authorities said.

The national risk management agency gave the updated toll after rescue efforts in Rosas, in the department of Cauca, were halted at nightfall.

Reducing by two an earlier toll of 19 killed that was given by firefighters, it added that five people had also been injured. Meanwhile, the estimated number of missing was confirmed by an agency official speaking on condition of anonymity.

A search had been underway for people who might be trapped under rubble.

The injured were treated at hospitals near the scene of the disaster, the agency said.

It attributed the mudslide to the heavy rains that have battered the country for several weeks. Mudslides are common during Colombia's rainy season.

## GLOBE TROTTER Barrymore: My daughters have theatrical family genes'

Los Angeles: Hollywood star Drew Barrymore says her daughters, Olive and Frankie, are "very theatrical" and enjoy coming on film sets. The 44-year-old actor said she can sense her children are interested in pursuing acting. "They're very theatrical. They definitely have a Barrymore gene strong within the two of them, but they're funny and they're cool and they're adventurous and they love coming to set," Barrymore told US Weekly. The "Santa Clarita Diet" actor, who shot to fame as a child star with Steven Spielberg's "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial," said she never wanted her kids to choose the profession. She, however, is okay with them joining the industry at an "appropriate age". "I always thought the second they were born like, 'Oh God, I don't want you to be an actress.' But what I really realised is that I just don't want them to not have a childhood. "If they were to go into acting in an appropriate age, I'd be, like, the most supportive, fiercest lion for it... Now I'm like, 'If you want to do that and go into theatre in high school and do that for a living, I'm behind you.' I just want them to have, like, a normal childhood," Barrymore said.



## Ed Sheeran responds to fate reveal of his 'GOT' character

London: Ed Sheeran has thanked "Game of Thrones" writers for not killing off his character in the HBO series. The singer appeared as Eddie, a Lannister soldier, in the seventh season premiere episode of the show on the request of his friend, series star Maisie Williams (who plays Arya Stark). In the episode, Sheeran's character is seen crooning a song as a part of the chance encounter with Williams' Arya. Eddie was, however, nowhere to be seen or talked about in the series till the eighth season premiere - where one of the prostitutes said she had heard the character's face was "burned right off" and had no eyelids after he was subjected to one of Daenerys' Targaryen's three dragons' fire. Sheeran took to social media over the weekend to thank the show's screenwriters. "Thanks @GameOfThrones, I knew I was a survivor," he wrote in his Instagram Story.



# Dog owners more likely to meet weekly exercise goals

PTI ■ LONDON

Dog owners are estimated to be four times more likely than their peers to meet recommended physical activity guidelines, according to a study that highlights the role that dogs may have in helping to keep humans healthy. It is recommended that adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week.

Dog ownership is expected to encourage physical activity, but it has been unclear

whether this effect occurs in all members of a dog-owning household, or whether dog walking replaces other forms of exercise. Dr Carri Westgarth from University of Liverpool in the UK assessed the self-reported physical activity of 385 households. Dog owners walk more frequently and for longer periods than non-dog owners, according to the study published in the journal Scientific Reports. Moreover, dog walking in this population is undertaken in addition to, and not instead of, other phys-

ical activities. The effects of dog ownership on physical activity levels in the UK reported in the present study are greater than those reported in previous studies of North American and Australian populations. For example, 64 per cent of dog owners in the new UK study reported that they walk with their dogs for at least 150 minutes per week, compared with only 27 per cent in a US study.

The study suggests that these discrepancies may be due to social and climatic differences, such as a high-

er proportion of outdoor dogs in the US and Australia than in the UK. "Our findings provide support for the role of pet dogs in promoting and maintaining positive health behaviours such as walking. Without dogs, it is likely that population physical activity levels would be much lower," Westgarth said. "The health benefits of dog ownership should be recognised and facilitated through the provision of dog-supportive walking environments and

pet-friendly housing; failure of planning and policy makers to provide these may significantly damage population levels of physical activity," she said.



# Gokhale hold talks with Chinese FM

## ... discuss post-Wuhan summit progress

PTI ■ BEIJING

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale on Monday held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and discussed the progress in bilateral ties since the Wuhan summit last year and said both sides were implementing the decisions in a manner in which "we are sensitive to each other's concerns".

His meeting with Wang, who is also the State Councillor, a high-level post in the hierarchy of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), took place as both the countries grappled with a host of issues, including Beijing's continued attempts block efforts list Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar as global terrorist by the UN. In his opening remarks, Gokhale said it has been year since Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at the Chinese city of Wuhan where the two leaders reached many understandings.

He said both sides were making efforts to implement the understandings reached at the Wuhan meeting. "As your excellency said we will work together with the Chinese side to deepen understanding to strengthen trust to implement the decisions that are taken by leaders and to do it in a manner in which we are sensitive to each other's concerns," he said. He also referred to the "brisk" political exchanges



Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale, left, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi pose for a photo during a meeting at Zhongnanhai leadership compound in Beijing Monday. AP

since the Wuhan summit, including Wang's visit to New Delhi to launch people to people mechanism and External Affairs Minister Sushma

Swaraj is "looking forward to come to China this year." Gokhale, who arrived here on Sunday is also scheduled to hold detailed talks

with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou on Monday.

In his opening remarks, Wang said China and India are two emerging market countries besides neighbours and "each other's strategic partners." "In that sense, it is important for the two countries to work together to increase strategic communication, deepen mutual political trust and strengthen strategic cooperation on international and regional issues. "Given that it is timely and important for you to have regular consultations with the Chinese side," he said.

One of the issues that was expected to figure during this round talk was China's continued attempts block efforts list JeM chief Azhar as global terrorist by the UN. China blocked Azhar's designation for the fourth-time recently stalling efforts by the US, the UK, France move at the 1267 UN counter terrorism committee following the February Pulwama terrorist attack. It was the first technical hold put up by China post Wuhan summit.

Also, India continues to have strong reservations to join China's mega Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) due to its objections over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Both the issues have become major irritants in the bilateral ties. In order to

counter China's technical hold in the 1267 committee, the US, the UK and France have taken the Azhar issue to the UN Security Council (UNSC), which Beijing firmly opposed, saying that it should be resolved by the UN's 1267 Sanctions Committee. China also said the issue moved towards settlement and accused the US of attempting to scuttling its resolution.

Gokhale's visit also coincides with China holding its biggest international event, the second Belt and Road Forum (BRF) next week to showcase its BRI projects. India, like the first BRF held in 2017, is reportedly not attending its second edition being held here from April 25-27.

Foreign Minister Wang said on Friday that differences over the BRI would not come in the way of the development of India-China relations and China is preparing for a Wuhan-style summit meeting this year. He also said the CPEC is an economic project and has nothing to do with the sovereignty issues.

"One of our differences is how to look at the BRI. The Indian side has their concerns. We understand that and that is why we have stated clearly on many occasions that the BRI including the CPEC is only an economic initiative and it does not target any third country and has nothing to do with the sovereignty and territorial disputes left from history between any two countries," he said.

# Kim Jong heads to Russia to revive old friendship

AFP ■ PYONGYANG

On the neighbouring mound to Mansu hill, where giant statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il look out over North Korea's capital, stands the Liberation Tower. The star-topped stone obelisk has a bronze Soviet Union flag at its base and a panel showing Soviet and Korean troops going into battle together against the Japanese.

The ties between Pyongyang and Moscow, once its most important ally, go back decades. And after years of abeyance, current leader Kim Jong Un — the son and grandson of the chiefs immortalised on Mansu hill — is looking to revive links with nuclear negotiations with Washington deadlocked and as he seeks a counterbalance to China.

Kim is expected to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Vladivostok this week, reportedly on Wednesday and Thursday. Few details have been released, but the summit — the first between the two neighbours' leaders since Kim Jong Il met Dmitry Medvedev eight years ago — comes less than two months after the Hanoi meeting between Kim and US President Donald Trump broke up without reaching agreement on the North's nuclear arsenal.

Pyongyang last week launched a blistering attack on US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, demanding he be removed from the negotiations. Kim has met Chinese President



Xi Jinping four times in the space of a year but is now looking for wider international support in the standoff, say analysts.

Moscow has already called for international sanctions on the North to be eased, while the US has accused it of trying to help Pyongyang evade some of the measures — accusations Russia denies. After the Hanoi summit, Russia's ambassador to the North Alexander Matsegora told AFP Pyongyang had been disappointed by the outcome.

In its state media, when Kim "departed from Pyongyang the purpose was the second summit and when he returned he returned from an official visit from Vietnam," he said. "It means that it was not the result they wanted to get."

Washington should offer concrete concessions rather than "only promises, which are nothing," he added.

"It is not acceptable." The inscription on the monument in Pyongyang proclaims that "the great Soviet Union military" had "liberated Koreans

from Japanese oppression" and their "heroic" deeds "will shine for 10,000 generations and more". In fact the Soviet Union only declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945 — after the US nuclear bombing of Hiroshima. The destruction of the city and the follow-up strike that reduced Nagasaki to a post-atomic hellscape forced Japan's surrender, ending World War II and Tokyo's colonial rule over the peninsula. But Pyongyang's official history gives the US barely any credit for its role in that conflict, and blames it for the division of the Korean peninsula, glossing over an agreement to do so between Moscow and Washington.

The Soviets later installed Kim Il Sung as the North's leader. An exile who fought as a guerrilla against Japanese forces in occupied China, he had fled to the Soviet Union, where records show his son Kim Jong Il was born — although Pyongyang insists his birthplace was a secret camp on the sacred Mount Paektu.

# Zelensky wins presidency in landslide

AFP ■ KIEV (UKRAINE)

A comedian with no political experience won a landslide victory in Ukraine's presidential election, drawing congratulations from global leaders while dealing a stunning rebuke to his country's political establishment. Volodymyr Zelensky, whose only previous political role was playing the president in a TV show, trounced incumbent Petro Poroshenko by taking 73.2 percent of the vote, according to nearly complete official results released early Monday. Poroshenko garnered just 24.4 percent, losing to the 41-year-old comedian and actor across the country, with 85 percent of ballots counted after Sunday's election.

It was an extraordinary outcome to a campaign that started as a joke but struck a chord with voters frustrated by social injustice, corruption and a war with Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine that has claimed some 13,000 lives. The star of the TV series "Servant of the People" will now take the helm of a country of 45 million people beset by challenges and having run on the vaguest of political platforms.

"I will never let you down," Zelensky told jubilant supporters at his campaign headquarters where he was showered with glittering confetti. "I can tell all post-Soviet countries: 'Look at us! Everything is possible!'" he declared. The remark appeared aimed at neighbouring Russia, where Vladimir Putin has been in power for 20 years and many followed the Ukrainian election with keen interest. Congratulations poured in from Europe and beyond, with French President Emmanuel Macron and Poland's Andrzej Duda congratulating the Ukrainian president-elect by phone. "You will now truly be the Servant of the People," said British foreign



In this photo taken on Sunday, Ukrainian comedian and presidential candidate Volodymyr Zelensky leaves a minivan as he arrives at a polling station, during the second round of presidential elections in Kiev, Ukraine. For his presidential campaign popular Ukrainian comedian Volodymyr Zelensky has literally taken the script from a TV show in which he plays the Ukrainian president. AP

minister Jeremy Hunt on Twitter, pledging London's support.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and President of the European Council Donald Tusk said they looked forward to continuing support and cooperation. "We congratulate President-elect Volodymyr Zelensky," the US embassy in Ukraine said on Twitter. On the streets of the capital Kiev, some Ukrainians expressed guarded optimism about their new leader.

"Ukraine has passed the democracy test," said Mykola, a 66-year-old pensioner. "I hope it will be the people and not the elite who will live better." Exit polls showed Zelensky took 87 percent of the vote in eastern Ukraine and defeated Poroshenko even in the west, where the incumbent traditionally enjoyed strong support. Poroshenko, 53, said the results were clear and enough reason to "call my opponent and congratulate him." "I will leave office but I want to firm-

ly stress — I will not quit politics," Poroshenko said in a speech at his campaign headquarters, where supporters clapped, cried and chanted "thank you" to the outgoing leader.

He also appealed to the international community to help safeguard Ukraine's pro-Western course. "We realise that the Kremlin might be enjoying the election result," he said. Observers say Ukraine's new leader may seek to use his outsider status to try to improve ties with Moscow.

Zelensky said he wanted to "reboot" Western-brokered peace talks that have so far failed to end the conflict. Moscow said the vote result showed Ukrainians wanted "change". From Ukrainian-speaking regions in the west of the country to Russian-speaking territories in the war-torn east, many voters said they feared uncertainty but yearned for change. "We're tired of all the lies," said Marta Semenyuk, 26, who cast her ballot for

Zelensky in Kiev.

"I think it just cannot get any worse and I hope he'll live up to his promises," said Larisa, an 18-year-old student from the government-held eastern port city of Mariupol.

Zelensky supporters say only a fresh face can clean up Ukraine's politics and end the separatist conflict.

But others doubt the showman will be able to take on the country's influential oligarchs, negotiate with the likes of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and stand up to Putin.

"People have gone mad," Viktoriya Olomutska, a 39-year-old Poroshenko supporter, said in Kiev. "Cinema and reality are two different things." Poroshenko had previously mocked his rival's lack of political experience, arguing he was unfit to be a wartime commander-in-chief, and the pair traded insults during the campaign. But on Sunday the two men were respectful, with Poroshenko offering to coach the political novice and Zelensky saying he might seek Poroshenko's advice.

The outgoing leader came to power after a 2014 pro-Western uprising ousted a Kremlin-backed regime, triggering Moscow's annexation of Crimea. His supporters credited him with rebuilding the army and securing an Orthodox Church independent of Russia. But many feel the country's ruling elite have forgotten the promises of the revolution. The comic shunned traditional campaign rallies and instead performed comedy gigs and used social media to appeal to voters. The Ukrainian president has strong powers over defence, security and foreign policy but needs backing from parliament to push through reforms. Poroshenko's faction has the most seats in the current legislature and new parliamentary polls are due in October.

# Ghosn hit with fresh charge in Japan

AFP ■ TOKYO

Japanese authorities on Monday hit Carlos Ghosn with a fresh charge of aggravated breach of trust, the fourth indictment against the former Nissan boss who promptly filed for bail. Experts say Monday's charge is the most serious yet levelled against the auto sector legend, whose rollercoaster case has gripped Japan and the business world since his dramatic arrest in November over alleged financial misconduct.

According to a statement from the Tokyo's prosecutors' office, Ghosn is accused of funneling millions of dollars in Nissan funds to a dealership in the Middle East and syphoning off around five million dollars for personal use. The transfers were made "with the purpose of benefiting himself by receiving part of the money", prosecutors charged.

Shin Kukimoto from the Tokyo prosecutors' office told reporters they had "enough evidence for guilty verdicts." However, the 65-year-old strenuously denies all allegations against him and insists they have been cooked up in a "plot" by Nissan executives wary of his plans to bring the Japanese car giant closer to its French partner Renault.

A Ghosn spokesperson said the former tycoon would "continue to vigorously defend himself against these baseless accusations and fully expects to be vindicated."

Ghosn's lead lawyer Junichiro Hironaka filed for bail just hours after the charge and said he was confident his client would be released as he prepares to fight the allegations. "In order to prove his innocence at a trial as soon as possible, we want (the court) to approve our bail request so that we can prepare a good defence," Hironaka told reporters. Ghosn has already won bail once before — but under strict conditions such



This March, 2019, photo shows former Nissan Chairman Carlos Ghosn, right, and his wife Carole in Tokyo. Japanese prosecutors said Monday, they have indicted Nissan's former chairman Ghosn with additional charges of breach of trust, with his alleged misconduct expanding outside Japan. AP

as agreeing not to leave the country and living under surveillance.

When he last won bail, Ghosn walked out of the detention centre in front of the world's media dressed like a Japanese labourer with a cap and a face mask in an apparent attempt to give reporters the slip. He also had to stump up one billion yen (USD 9 million) for bail but Hironaka said they were prepared to produce more cash if necessary to secure his release.

Monday was the end of the maximum period authorities

had to question Ghosn, who is now technically in pre-trial detention. The case of the executive, once revered in Japan for saving Nissan from the brink of bankruptcy, has also shone a spotlight on the Japanese legal system that has come in for some criticism, especially from abroad.

Japan's justice system allows authorities to keep suspects in custody for prolonged periods and trials almost always result in a conviction. And just one month after he was freed on bail, authorities re-arrested Ghosn on April 4 as they inves-

tigated fresh allegations against him. Hironaka lashed out, saying this was an unnecessary step and "equivalent to forcing confession by taking into custody."

Nissan itself said it had filed a criminal complaint against its former boss "after determining that payments made by Nissan to an overseas vehicle sales company via a subsidiary were in fact directed by Ghosn for his personal enrichment and were not necessary from a business standpoint."

The Ghosn case represents a precipitous downfall for an executive who has gone from a life of luxury and private jets as he ran three huge car companies to a small cell. He has already been stripped of his position on the board at Nissan and resigned from the head of Renault and the three-way alliance the two companies share with Mitsubishi Motors.

His wife Carole has also been questioned by prosecutors in Tokyo. She was allegedly president of a company registered in the British Virgin Islands which received some of the five million dollars moved from Nissan funds to go towards a luxury yacht. She has also denied any wrongdoing, and been active in the media in recent days — writing an opinion piece in the Washington Post calling on US President Donald Trump to lean on Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe to allow her husband to obtain bail.

Ghosn's lawyers have expression reservations that he will receive a fair trial as 99 percent of all cases that come to trial end in a conviction. Carole Ghosn has also said she is concerned about her husband's health in conditions in the Japanese jail that Ghosn himself said he would not wish on his "worst enemy." But prosecutor Kukimoto said Ghosn's treatment "is not different to what a normal Japanese national would receive."

# Strong quake sends Philippine workers fleeing buildings



Wearing protective helmets, employees evacuate their office building following an earthquake in Manila, Philippines Monday. AP

Manila (AFP): A powerful earthquake rocked the Philippines on Monday, sending thousands of people fleeing high-rises in Manila as buildings shook. Office workers piled out onto the streets as emergency alarms blared, AFP reporters saw, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

Feliza Villanueva, 21, a business process outsourcing employee told AFP she and four colleagues were at work when the quake struck.

"This was the second strongest quake I've felt in my entire life," she told AFP as she joined hundreds of others in the courtyard of an office building, waiting for the all clear. "We

were worried but we did not panic," she said. "We planned how to evacuate the building. There were too many people going down the stairs, so we waited for our turn. People looked in shock, but no one was shouting or anything like that," she said.

The quake was centred on the town of Castillejos, about 100 kilometres (62 miles) northwest of Manila, local geologists said. Scientists from the US Geological Survey logged its magnitude at 6.3, and said its epicentre was 40 kilometres (25 miles) below the Earth's surface. Dani Justo, a martial arts instructor, told AFP she was at her Manila home when the quake struck.



Local residents of the region wearing traditional costumes are on their way to get blessing for men and beasts at the St. George church in Traunstein, Germany on Monday. AP

Trend Slazer

Farhan will be guest at UEFA

Actor Farhan Akhtar has bagged a seat among one of the special guests at the UEFA Champions League Finals, this year.

As UEFA's official guest from India, he will watch the finals and get a taste of the UEFA Champions League experience at the Metropolitan Stadium in Madrid, Spain on June 1.

Farhan is a football enthusiast and has often spoken about his passion for sports, especially football. The actor will be seen across the Sony Pictures Sports Network, showcasing his love for the tournament in the *My Reasons to Watch UEFA Champions League* on-air campaign.



'I feel Arshad (Warsi), as an actor, is quite understated. He is one of the best actors I've worked with. When it comes to comedy, he is one of the best in the country, for he improvises with every take. His spontaneity makes the scene so exciting and keeps you constantly on your toes. I had thoroughly enjoyed working with him in Ishqiya.'

—Vidya Balan



Actress KATRINA KAIF has been roped in for filmmaker Rohit Shetty's next, titled *Sooryavanshi* starring actor Akshay Kumar.

Akshay welcomed the actress. "Welcome to our cop universe Katrina Kaif... Our *Sooryavanshi* girl," he wrote.



Filmmaker Karan Johar, who is bank rolling the film, shared a photograph of himself with Akshay, Katrina and Shetty, captioned the image, "Welcoming the *Sooryavanshi* girl on board. Releasing on Eid 2020!"

Akshay plays the role of Veer Suryavanshi, who was introduced as an Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) officer in a cameo in *Simmba*.

Nick, Priyanka celebrate Easter

Actor NICK JONAS and wife and actress PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS celebrated their first Easter after marriage.

The two celebrated Easter in Atlanta and shared photographs of their family time with mother, Denise Jonas on Instagram.

The couple can be seen with gift baskets in one photograph as Priyanka hugs her mother-in-law while Denise can be seen happily dancing in a video.

While Nick wrote: "Happy Easter to you and yours! From me and mine."

Priyanka captioned the image, "Happy Easter from ours to yours."

On the work front, Priyanka has wrapped up filming *The Sky is Pink*, directed by Shonali Bose.



It's important to look beyond men's personal accomplishments and see their fashion sense as well as the manner in which they are making informed choices and respecting the changing dynamics of women in the society. By TEAM VIVA

ARE YOU A MAN OF SUBSTANCE?

Whether it is style, fashion, fitness, travel, technology or personal space, men have more often than not taken a lead and in the bargain evolved manifold. Or so believes Karan Bhardwaj, co-founder of the India Men Show.

He pointed out that despite that there hasn't been a portal or space which talks about how men's lifestyle and personality has evolved over the years. The show was conceptualised keeping this aspect about technology, food, travel, way of living, fashion, luxury, fitness, entertainment and lifestyle in mind. Karan said, "It was to provide some direction to the lifestyle industry and give them a new subject to work on. The show not just looked at how their personal choices have changed with time, but also defined the 'man of substance', who has evolved by accepting the current scenario and change in the society."

With so many campaigns against the harassment and injustice towards



'WE SHORTLISTED MEN FROM EVERY FIELD LIKE FASHION, TECHNOLOGY, HOSPITALITY, FITNESS AND MORE, WHO AREN'T CONTROVERSIAL OR HAVEN'T BEEN CHARGED OF ANY ACCUSATIONS UNDER THE #METOO CAMPAIGN. THEY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE SOCIETY IN A GREAT WAY'



women coming to the fore, the show questioned who after all is a "man of substance?" He added, "Even if the man is successful in his endeavours, he needs to be much more accepting of the changing roles and desires of women too. They need to be 'clean' enough to talk about society as whole. Hence, we shortlisted men from every field like fashion, technology, hospitality, fitness and more, who aren't controversial or haven't been charged of any accusations under the #MeToo campaign and respect humanity and feminism. Of course, they have contributed to the society in a great way."

Present at a panel discussion, talking about the changing trends in men's lifestyle in India, FDCI president Sunil Sethi said that a man shouldn't try to be just successful, rather be of value, quoting Albert Einstein. "If you are a man of value and ethics, you're a man of substance," he said, adding that "Achievers are not necessarily defined by clothes."

Talking about how the fashion sense in men has evolved, Sethi said that men haven't been adventurous in the past. However, today, they don't just

wear "smart suits, blacks and whites, but change colours to look attractive. They have a style of their own. Look at how they go to the gym and exercise religiously, their accessories and clothes have matching colours, making them appear like they do have a fashion sense."

Giving the example of Bollywood's King, Sethi said, "I recently attended an event, where Gauri Khan, wife of Shah Rukh Khan, told me that her husband would take two to three hours to get ready for an event. He pays attention to details like matching right coloured-tie with his shoes and suits. This sensibility has come with time in today's men."

With changing roles of both men and women today, the former's fashion choices have transformed as well. Men's fashion has evolved manifold whether it is formal suits, ties and pants or informal clothing and tracksuits.

From the fitness industry, "there can be no one better than Sangram Singh to talk about who a man of substance is," said Karan.

"Nothing is more fashionable than being fit. No matter what you wear or buy, the most important thing should be to keep yourself fit and healthy. When you are fit, your confidence grows by leaps and bounds," said Sangram at the panel. He recalls that there have been days when he was short on resources. "I didn't have good clothes. Today, I have reached this level because I was mentally tough. Discipline and moral values are important to succeed in life," said he.

The panel also saw Rajiv Makhni, the tech guru, who talked about how personal looks mattered in today's social media world. "I do make-up. I tell my children that they have a father who does indulge in make-up to enhance looks. So that they can brag about it rather than hide it. I think it is a great thing. For me, a 'man of substance' means the one who is unique and solid, learns through his life and teaches back." He added that in an age of social media, good looks matter a lot. "Instagram is the proof. There, you would realise people who feature in top trends are actually the ones who take care of their looks. So in today's time, it gives you instant attention," said Rajiv.

Karan added that not just looks or personal achievements, "it's about today's men, who are aware of their actions and are making informed choices towards the society and their evolution. It's indeed a brilliant shift and the show celebrated just that. They are not just investing smartly but also creating opportunities through multiple start-ups."

Real talent

While ALIA BHATT received the Best Actress award for *Raazi* again, VINEET KUMAR was given the Best Actor for *Mukkabaaz* at the Critics' Choice Film Awards

After her victory at the Filmfare and Zee Cine Awards this year for her notable performance as a spy in Meghna Gulzar's directorial *Raazi*, Alia Bhatt walked away with the Best Actress Award at the Critics' Choice Film Awards ceremony here.

Alia, who opted for a denim jumpsuit for the gala, took to Instagram to share her look for the ceremony that took place on Sunday.

Surekha Sikri, 74, was felicitated with Best Supporting Actress Award for her portrayal of a nagging grandmother in *Badhaai Ho*. While receiving the award, she got a standing ovation from the audience. Due to health reasons, she attended the event in a wheel chair. The presenters got off the stage to hand over the trophy to Surekha, who adorned a green sari.

Bollywood's first stuntwoman Reshma Pathan was honoured with the Extraordinary Achievement Award. Reshma is popularly known as the *Sholay* girl as she had played Hema Malini's body-double in the cult film.

In the Best Actor (Male) category, Vineet Kumar bagged the golden trophy for his role in *Mukkabaaz*. Sriram Raghavan received the Best Director Award for his thriller *Andhadhun*, which featured actors A y u s h m a n n Khurrana, Tabu and Radhika Apte.

After the win, Vineet took to Instagram to thank fans and the entire team of *Mukkabaaz*.

"This award means so much to me and everyone who has worked hard for *Mukkabaaz*. Thank you so much Anurag Kashyap (sir), Aanand L Rai (sir), my co-actors, all the boxers, my coaches and the entire team of *Mukkabaaz*," he wrote.

"And last but not least, all my friends and fans who have been pouring their love on me... Let



Best Actor: Vineet Singh for *Mukkabaaz*

Best Actress: Alia Bhatt for *Raazi*

Best Director: Sriram Raghavan for *Andhadhun*

Best Supporting Actress: Surekha Sikri for *Badhaai Ho!*

Best song: *Halla* from *Manmarziyaan*

Best Film in Tamil: *Pariyerum Perumal*

Best Film in Malayalam: *Ee Ma Yau*

Best Film in Gujarati: *Tatvamasi*

Extraordinary Achievement Award: Reshma Pathan

your love flow," he added.

Music composer Amit Trivedi also bagged the trophy for Best Song for *Halla* from *Manmarziyaan* that starred Taapsee Pannu, Vicky Kaushal and Abhishek Bachchan.

The gala was hosted by actress Neha Dhupia but it was superstar Shah Rukh Khan who turned out as the surprise guest of the evening and entertained the attendees with his humour and wit.

In the videos from the extravaganza that have surfaced online, SRK is seen speaking about the craft of cinema.

Celebrities like Zoya Akhtar, Jackie Shroff, Aditi Rao Hydari, Rasika Dugal and Richa Chadha were also present.

—IANS

ON A SPANISH NOTE

Writer SALMAN RUSHDIE's new novel is inspired by the classic *Don Quixote*

Spanish classic *Don Quixote*, which remains the most-translated book in the world after the Bible, has inspired a new novel by Man Booker Prize-winning author Salman Rushdie, publisher Penguin Random House India announced.

The publisher in a statement announced acquisition of the novel *Quichotte* which is expected to hit Indian stands in August.

Inspired by the classic by the sixteenth century writer Miguel de Cervantes, Rushdie's *Quichotte* is the story of "an ageing travelling salesman who falls in love with a TV star and sets off to drive across America on a quest to prove himself worthy of her hand".

The publisher said that the title's



tragicomic tale is one of a deranged time and deals, along the way, with father-son relationships, sibling quarrels, racism, the

opioid crisis, cyber-spies and the end of the world.

Calling the book a perfect follow-on to the success of Rushdie's 2017 novel *The Golden House*, the publisher's Senior Commissioning Editor Manasi Subramaniam said that the author remains the master fabulist.

"In *Quichotte*, this rich epic of the immigrant experience in modern America, we are delighted to see that Rushdie is back — with his signature dazzling prose — to tell the tale of the here and now within the realm that all that could've been," she said.

The book will be published under Penguin's imprint Hamish Hamilton, which has many distinguished titles in literary fiction. —IANS

MC Sher on highway to heaven

Zoya Akhtar's *Gully Boy* brought the growing hip-hop culture in India to the fore. While Ranveer Singh received glowing praise for his portrayal of Murad, a slum boy who uses rap as an outlet for his frustration, his mentor MC Sher played by Siddhant Chaturvedi came in for praise for his rapping skills.

Siddhant's fan-base has grown substantially since the release of the film. And now, according to a daily, producer Ritesh Sidhwani and Zoya are planning a spin-off focused on MC Sher.

"The film is entirely based on Siddhant's character and traces MC Sher's journey to becoming a hero. This will also give the makers a chance to delve deeper into hip-hop culture and you can expect many engaging rap battles," says a source.

*Gully Boy* was inspired by Naezy, aka Naved Sheikh, who shot to fame with the song *Aafat*.

On a show, Siddhant also opened up about his first meeting with Zoya. "It was at a party. I was dancing to a Govinda song, *Tujhko Mirchi Lagi Toh Main Kya Karoon*. I was full-on and she saw me. Then the DJ played *Gallan Goodiyaan* from *Dil Dhadakne Do* and I went up



to her and danced with her. She was like, 'Hey, who are you?' And I said I was an actor on *Inside Edge*. She asked me to come and audition for *Gully Boy*," he said.

*Gully Boy*, which also starred Alia Bhatt, crossed over ₹100 crore at the box office in India and received glowing reviews from both critics and the audience.

On the other hand, Zoya Akhtar too reacted to the success of her last directorial *Gully Boy* by saying that while making a film, a filmmaker shouldn't look at the end result and should enjoy the process of filmmaking.

Zoya started 2019 on a positive note as both her film and digital project *Made in Heaven* received a good response from the audience.

Talking about her forthcoming projects, Zoya said, "It's been a good start. We are working on *Made in Heaven* season 2. We are also working on another show. We are working on two feature films with two other directors and we are working on Reema's (*Kagti*) and my next film. It's action-packed writing happening right now."

Talking about the success of *Gully Boy*, which featured Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in lead roles, Zoya said, "It feels good when it does well at the box office and when you have certain amount of critical appreciation. I feel you have to do something that you believe in and you have to do it as honestly and truthfully as you can and then, whatever happens, happens for the best. You can't look at the end result. You have to just enjoy the process." —With inputs from IANS

# Gomathi wins India's first Gold in Asian Athletics C'ships

Marimuthu runs supreme in women's 800m to win yellow metal; Shivpal wins Silver in Javelin

PTI ■ DOHA

Unheralded Gomathi Marimuthu gave India its first Gold medal in the women's 800m race as the country added four medals on the second day of the Asian Athletics Championships here on Monday.

The 30-year-old Gomathi clocked a personal best time of 2 minute 02.70 seconds in the half mile event to win a surprise Gold for India.

Shivpal Singh then added a Silver in men's javelin throw by sending the spear to a distance of 86.23m, his personal best. In the process, the 23-year-old Shivpal also booked a berth for the World Championships to be held at the same venue in September-October as he crossed the qualifying mark of 83m.

Jabir Madari Palliyalil and Saritaben Gayakwad bagged a Bronze each in men's and women's 400m hurdles respectively to swell the Indian medal tally.

With the four medals on Monday, India's medal tally stood at 1 Gold, 3 Silver and 5 Bronze. India had won 2 Silver and 3 Bronze on the first day on Sunday.



India's Gomathi Marimuthu, left, competes in the women's 800-meters race final; Jabir Madari Palliyalil celebrates with his national flag after winning the bronze medal in the men's 400-meters hurdles; Saritaben Laxmanbhai Gayakwad rests after racing in the women's 400-meters hurdles final



Sprinter Dutee Chand also shared some of the limelight as she smashed her own national record in 100m dash for the second time in two days.

The first Indian medal of the second day came from 24-year-old Gayakwad who clocked 57.22 seconds to

finish third in women's 400m hurdles, behind Vietnam's Quach The Lan (56.10) and Bahrain's Aminat Yusuf Jamal (56.39).

His male counterpart Jabir then added a Bronze by running the third fastest men's 400m hurdles by an Indian as he clocked a per-

sonal best of 49.13 seconds. In the process, the 22-year-old Jabir joined national record holder Dharun Ayyasamy as the second Indian to qualify for the World Championships 400m hurdles event to be held at the same venue in September-October. The

World Championships qualifying mark is 49.30 seconds. Dharun, who set a new national record of 48.80 during the Federation Cup last month, missed this Asian Championships due to injury.

Pre-race favourite Abderrehman Samba of

Qatar won Gold with a world leading time of 47.51 seconds.

In the women's 100m dash, Dutee bettered her own national record of 11.28 seconds set on Sunday during the heats by clocking 11.26 seconds while winning her semifinal race on Monday. She is, however, yet to touch the World Championships qualification mark of 11.24.

However in the men's 400m, India suffered setbacks as defending champion Muhammed Anas and last edition silver winner Arokia Rajiv failed to win a medal.

Rajiv finished fourth with a personal best time of 45.37 seconds while Anas, who has been struggling after a leg injury in an accident last year, ended at eighth with a time of 46.10 seconds.

## Hockey coach Reid asks players to put team first

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India's newly-appointed men's hockey chief coach Graham Reid on Monday took charge of the national camp and asked his players to put the team first in his maiden address to them.

Reid, who arrived in Bengaluru on April 20, got down to business on Monday, meeting players for the first time at the SAI Centre.

"The turf here is world class. I addressed the players when I arrived and expressed my expectations as one unit, one team and that we always need to put the team first," the 54-year-old Australian said.

"We also spoke about the importance of trust and communication and to make sure it is both ways," he said. Reid said the available talent in India makes him optimistic about the future.

"I am really glad that I also got to watch the 33 players from the Junior Core Group and being part of the National Trials this morning gives me a good sense of the talent that is available at the moment and it makes me feel very positive about the future," said Reid, a former player of the Australian national team.

Reid's first big assignment as chief coach will be the upcoming FIH Men's Series Finals in Bhubaneswar, starting June 6 where India will vie for top honours against Asian Games champions Japan, Mexico, Poland, Russia, South Africa, USA and Uzbekistan.

The Indian team will go for an exposure tour to Perth, Australia between May 6 and May 18 where it will



play a four-match series against the Australian national team as part of their preparations for the FIH Men's Series Finals in Bhubaneswar.

"We extend a warm welcome to Graham Reid on his arrival to India. Many players in the senior team are already familiar with him due to his stint as coach during Hockey India League," Hockey India President Mohd Mushtaque Ahmad.

"The Australia tour will be an ideal ground for him to understand further about the team and their temperament and short comings ahead of the crucial FIH Men's Series Finals in Bhubaneswar. We wish him the very best in his new role with the Indian Men's Hockey Team," he added.

## Bajrang, Sakshi to lead India's challenge

PTI ■ XI'AN

Olympic Bronze medalist Sakshi Malik and World No 1 Bajrang Punia will spearhead India's campaign at the Asian Wrestling Championships starting on Tuesday.

Besides Sakshi and Bajrang, Vinesh Phogat is another big names who would be vying for top honours during the mega-event.

Vinesh will hope to give a good account of herself in the women's 53kg — a relatively new weight category for her.

She had competed for the first time in that category at the UWW Dan Kolov-Nikola Petrov tournament in Bulgaria and had bagged a Silver medal.

In the same competition, Bajrang, who was competing in men's 65kg category, clinched a Gold.

Sakshi, the Bronze winner at the Rio Olympics, also settled for a Silver, in women's 65kg, while Pooja Dhandha won the yellow metal in women's 59kg category.

At the Asian Championships, Sakshi will go back to her 62kg category, while Navjot Kaur will represent India in women's 65kg.

Pooja Dhandha will fight in 57kg in this tournament.

Asian Games Bronze medalist Divya Kakran will return to competitive wrestling having recovered from an ankle injury and is all set to compete in women's 68kg category.

National champion Amit Dhankar will participate in men's 74kg in the absence of two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar, who decided to give the Championship a miss.

Dhankar is a former Asian Wrestling Championship Gold medalist at the 2013 New Delhi edition.

Rahul Aware, the wrestler from Maharashtra, is making a comeback to the Indian team and will compete in men's 61kg weight division.

In men's freestyle, Praveen Rana (79kg) and Satyavrat Kadian (97kg) are other key wrestlers from India who are expected to finish on the podium.

## Kavinder stuns world champ, Panghal beats Dusmatov

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kavinder Singh Bisht (56kg) upstaged reigning world champion Kairat Yeraliyev, while Amit Panghal (52kg) edged past familiar foe and Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov, assuring themselves of medals at the Asian Boxing Championships in Bangkok on Monday.

In the women's draw, world Silver-medallist Sonia Chahal (57kg) advanced to the last-four stage at the continental showpiece.

Bisht clinched a split verdict over Yeraliyev, who hails from Kazakhstan, in a high-intensity contest to assure himself of a

maiden Asian championship medal.

Panghal, who claimed a Bronze in the 2015 edition of the event, also secured a hard-fought 3-2 triumph over Dusmatov, the former world champion Uzbek he defeated to claim the Asian Games Gold just a few months ago.

Before that, the two boxers had also clashed in the world championship quarters where Dusmatov had emerged triumphant.

Sonia too fetched a similarly close victory over Korea's Jo Son Hwa.

Also making the semis was national champion Deepak Singh (49kg), who did not have to step inside the ring to fight for the spot



after Afghanistan's Ramish Rahmani gave him a walkover owing to injury.

However, world championship Bronze-medallist Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) bowed out of contention after a quarterfinal loss to reigning world champion Chen Nien-Chin of Taiwan.

In another women's bout, Seema Poonia (+81kg) lost to China's Yang Xiaoli 5-0, ending another disappointing international outing for her. Poonia had got a bye into the quarters.

In the last Indian bout of the day, Rohit Tokas (64kg) fought hard but could not avert a 2-3 loss to Mongolia's Chinzorig Baatarsukh in the quarterfinals.

## Former foes unite to lead France into Fed Cup final

AFP ■ PARIS

France set up a Fed Cup final against Australia on Sunday when Caroline Garcia and Kristina Mladenovic, who once were barely on speaking terms, teamed-up to crown a 3-2 victory over Romania.

Former Roland Garros doubles champions Garcia and Mladenovic beat Simona Halep and Monica Niculescu 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 to secure the winning point and a final date against Australia in November.

Victory was a diplomatic coup for France coach Julien Benneteau who teamed up Garcia and Mladenovic for the first time in Fed Cup since 2016 after which the pair had a bitter falling out which led to a self-imposed Fed Cup exile for

Garcia, her country's top player.

"Every match was incredible," said Benneteau. "I am so proud of them. It was always my intention to put them together — and it was not hard to do."

Earlier on Sunday, French Open champion Halep won her second singles of the weekend, seeing off Garcia 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 6-4 for a 2-1 lead in the semi-final.

Veteran Pauline Parmentier then beat a hobbling Irina-Camelia Begu 6-3, 2-6, 6-2 to pull France level.

In a tense deciding rubber, Halep, whose doubles ranking is in the 400s, committed a double fault to concede the break in the ninth game of the final set before Garcia held her nerve to serve out the victory.

## Mbappe flattens Monaco in title party

AFP ■ PARIS

Neymar joined the Paris Saint-Germain title party on Sunday when he made his first appearance since January as Kylian Mbappe swept aside Monaco with a hat-trick in a 3-1 win for the newly-crowned Ligue 1 champions.

Mbappe took his league tally for the season to 30 following his treble, which came just hours after PSG were crowned champions for the sixth time in seven years when closest challengers Lille dropped points.

Neymar's return at the start of the second half replacing Layvin Kurzawa is the cherry on the cake for Thomas Tuchel's side, who had been without the Brazilian superstar since January 23 with a right foot injury.

Edinson Cavani also returned to action as a second half substitute, having a late strike correctly ruled out for

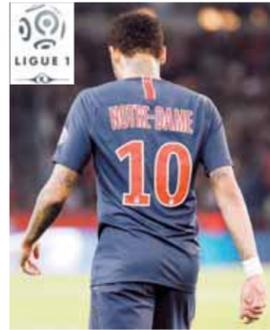
offside, meaning that PSG's famed front three are back together following months apart.

Mbappe has thrived in the absence of his strike partners, and gave his side a 2-0 first-half lead with two neat finishes, the first coming in the 15th minute and the second seven minutes before the break after a beautiful pass from Dani Alves.

The World Cup winner then put the three points beyond doubt when he tapped in Alves' low cross nine minutes after the break.

Aleksandr Golovin rolled home a consolation for the away side, who remain in trouble in 16th place and are only four points away from the relegation play-off spot.

On Sunday afternoon Lille ended their challenge with a goalless draw at Toulouse that left them 16 points behind PSG with only five games to play and allowed capital club to cele-



brate the title after missing chances to seal it in their previous matches.

The Parisians have struggled with key injuries in recent weeks and they lost Italian international midfielder Marco Verratti with what looks like a

knock to his left ankle.

PSG took the field wearing a shirt with a large image of Notre Dame replacing the usual sponsor's logo. "Notre-Dame" replaced the player names on the back of the shirts. The iconic Paris cathedral was damaged in a spectacular blaze last Monday.

The club said that they would put a limited edition of the shirts on sale on line during the match for 100 euros each. The club said the money "will be donated to associations related to firefighters".

The club also posted a "Homage to Notre Dame" video on their web site in which players praised the team-work of the Paris fire brigade and made a gesture that imitates the two famous towers that form part of the cathedral's facade.

The club said it was also using Sunday's game to thank the firefighters.



## Sissoko likely to miss Ajax opener

AFP ■ LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur suffered a fresh blow to their Champions League hopes on Monday when Moussa Sissoko appeared to be ruled out of the first leg of their semi-final against Ajax.

The midfielder, one of Tottenham's outstanding players this season, suffered a groin injury in the return leg of the quarter-final tie at Manchester City and Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino believes he will not be fit for another two weeks.

That would rule Sissoko out of the north London club's home leg against Dutch giants Ajax on April 30, with Tottenham already missing South Korea star Son Heung-min through suspension.

Son has been a key man for Spurs while England captain Harry Kane has been sidelined with an ankle injury.

"Moussa Sissoko is not going to be fit, maybe for the next two weeks, we hope he can recover before but I am not so optimistic," Pochettino said ahead of Tuesday's Premier League match at home to Brighton.

"Harry Winks we don't know because it is a problem that is one day very good, next day not very good, it is about assessing each day.

"We hope he will be available for Tuesday but we are not sure."

There are also doubts over the fitness of France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris, with Pochettino saying: "Lloris I hope yes, we are going to assess, we have a training session and we hope it is not a big issue, we hope he is going to be available."

## LOCAL EVENTS

HOCKEY CAMP

As many as 25 probables have been selected for the training camp of the Uttar Pradesh team, which will take part in the 9th Hockey India Sub-Junior Men's National Hockey Championship at Raipur from May 11.

**PROBABLES:** Ali Khan, Prateek, Talmizur, Mohd Haris, Manoj Yadav, Siddhant Singh, Satyam Yadav, Chandan Yadav, Rajesh Yadav, Ankit Singh, Amir Ali, Sandeep Pathak, Shamu Khan, Deepak Patel, Ajay Yadav, Ankit Prajapati, Nagendra Kumar, Arun Sahani, Saurabh Anand, Sujit Kumar, Mohd Jaid, Nitish Bhardwaj, Prashant Shukla, Adnan, Noor Yusuf.

MEDHAJ CLUB WIN

Medhaj Sports Club defeated Multi Cricket Academy by

six wickets in a league match of the 1st Gaurav Mehta Memorial Cricket Tournament at Multi Activity Centre on Monday.

**BRIEF SCORES:** MCA: 137 (Rohit Kumar 58, Ayushi 25, Vikas 24; Prabhat 19/3, Yash 17/2, Tushar 39/2) MSC: 138 (Shivam 70, Vipin 22; Harsh 42/2)

**ANJANEY SHINES**

Anjaney Pandey's allround show, 59 runs and 3 wickets, helped Soni Cricket Academy beat Kalyanpur Strikers in a league match of the 15th BBD 'D' League at R-B Tiwari Stadium on Monday.

**BRIEF SCORES:** SCA: 191 (Anjaney 69, Nimay 30, Aayush 30; Aditya 42/2, Aryan 9/2) KS: Utsav 30, Ayansh 29; Anjaney 23/3, Sundram 19/2, Ayush 26/2).

## Davies sets top four target for Spurs

AFP ■ LONDON

Ben Davies has challenged Tottenham to win their last four Premier League games as they aim to get their top four push back on track against Brighton on Tuesday.

Mauricio Pochettino's side suffered a setback in their bid to repeat their league finish for a fifth straight season when they were beaten 1-0 at Manchester City at the weekend.

It was a frustrating end to a memorable week that saw Tottenham reach the Champions League semi-finals with a dramatic away goals success at City.

Aided by Arsenal's surprise loss to Crystal Palace on

Sunday, Tottenham remain third, but they will drop to fourth if Chelsea defeat Burnley on Monday.

With the race to qualify for next season's Champions League heating up, Tottenham defender Davies knows his team have no margin for error in their remaining fixtures.

Davies believes only four successive victories will be enough to secure Tottenham's place in Europe's elite club competition.

"It's never easy to reflect but look, it's about kicking on and trying to win every game between now and the end of the season," Davies said. "That's the target and it starts against Brighton on Tuesday."



Demanding Tottenham display a more predatory instinct in front of goal after missing a host of chances in the City defeat, Davies said: "It's always hard to see any positives straight after a defeat.

"We certainly created the chances but unfortunately we didn't take them this time.

"That's the difference between this game and Wednesday night, we were a bit more clinical."

Brighton are desperate for points as they battle to avoid relegation, but Davies hopes the feelgood factor from Tottenham's new stadium will continue to provide a welcome lift. Pochettino's men have

won all three of their matches at the \$1 billion arena, scoring seven goals and conceding none.

"It will be tough, they are fighting for everything and they will go the full 90 minutes to try to get something out of the game. We have to be ready," Davies said.

"We've played well at the new stadium so far and we need to keep that momentum going for the rest of the season. Brighton are just one place and three points above the relegation zone after Saturday's 0-0 draw at Wolves. Chris Hughton's side haven't won in their last six matches in all competitions.



LEADERBOARD	
<b>RUNS</b>	<b>517</b> David Warner (SRH)
<b>WICKETS</b>	<b>23</b> Kagiso Rabada (DC)
<b>6S</b>	<b>496</b> IF MS HAS A FEELING THAT HE'S GOING TO WIN IT THIS WAY, I'M GOING TO BACK HIM EVERY TIME
<b>4S</b>	<b>1117</b> — STEPHEN FLEMING



# Rahane's ton in vain

## ...as Pant helps Delhi beat Rajasthan by six wickets

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rishabh Pant (78) and Shikhar Dhawan (54) slammed half-centuries to help Delhi Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by six wickets in the Indian Premier League here Monday.

Sent into bat, Rajasthan Royals scored 191 for six in the stipulated 20 overs, and then, Delhi Capitals chased down the target with four balls to spare.

Earlier, blending panache with power, Ajinkya Rahane roared back to form with a scintillating century.

Rahane remained not out on 105 off 63 balls, decorating his knock with three sixes and 11 fours, while Steve Smith contributed 50 off 32 deliveries.

Asked to bat after Shreyas Iyer called correctly at the toss, Rahane spearheaded Rajasthan Royals' innings after getting a life on 16, the culprit being Ishant Sharma, who dropped a sitter at sort fine-leg. The drop hurt the visitors, but Delhi did well to prevent RR from going past 200.

Entering the game with over 650 runs against Delhi in the league, Rahane chose his favourite opponents to find form, and when he walked back to the dressing room, he had over 750 to his name.

To start with, Rahane drove Ishant through a crowded off-side field for a boundary, a shot that had his characteristic ele-



gance written all over it. Stripped of captaincy last week following a string of poor results, the 30-year-old went into attack mode and smashed Axar Patel for a six and a four at the Sai Man Singh Stadium, which had a dash of pink. Seeing the flight early, Rahane danced down the crowd to hoist's Axar ball over him and into the sightscreen.

Unfazed by the sight of pacer Kagiso Rabada steaming in, he smoked the South African's short of a length delivery down the ground for another maximum.

He reached his fifty by dispatching Chris Morris over the mid-wicket for a four and celebrated it with fist pumps. A flurry of boundaries followed as Rahane galloped along to bring up his second IPL hundred, the first coming seven years ago. He raised his bat to acknowledge the applause from the crowd and his dugout that was as relieved as the batsman himself.

Meanwhile, Smith, who replaced Rahane as captain hours before the start of their last match against Mumbai Indians, struck medium pacer Sherfane Rutherford for three consecutive boundaries to score his second successive half century of the season.

And even as Smith and Ben Stokes gout out in quick succession, Rahane was going strong, swiftly hitting Morris for a boundary over mid-off. At the other end, Ashton Turner fell for a third golden duck.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Rajasthan Royals: 191/6 in 20 overs (Ajinkya Rahane 105 not out, Steve Smith 50; Kagiso Rabada 2/37). Delhi Capitals: 193/4 in 19.2 overs (Rishabh Pant 78 not out, Shikhar Dhawan 54; Shreyas Gopal 2/47).



# BCCI shifts IPL final to Hyderabad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Premier League final scheduled on May 12 was on Monday shifted from Chennai to Hyderabad after the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) failed to get requisite permission from the government to open the three closed stands.

While the Chennai Super Kings still have a chance to play Qualifier 1 at home if they finish among the top two teams in the league but the Eliminator (May 8) and Qualifier 2 (May 10) has been shifted to Visakhapatnam.

"We had to shift the matches from Chennai to Hyderabad after TNCA intimated us that they have not procured the requisite permission to open the three stands I, J and K," Committee of Administrators (CoA) chief Vinod Rai said on Monday.

"Since the gate sales of the knock-out matches is BCCI's prerogative, we had to take a call. We would be having two knock-out matches in Vizag,"

he added. The three stands make up for more than 12,000 tickets and BCCI would have lost out on a few crores of gate money.

The stands have remained closed since 2012 save one international match between India and Pakistan when an exception was made.

Asked if all the knock-out matches' ticket sales are BCCI's prerogative, why was Qualifier 1 allotted to Chennai, Rai reasoned: "CSK, by virtue of being defending champions, were allotted the Qualifier 1 and final. Now if they finish in top two, you cannot take away all the games. They deserve to get at least one of the knock-out games."

Hyderabad only got the final and not the Eliminator or Qualifier because of the general elections in the Cyber city on May 6, 8 and 10.

The first three-team mini women's IPL will be held from May 6-10 in Jaipur with a new team Velocity being added to the existing Trailblazers and Supernovas.



# Never expected Dhoni to miss that last ball: Parthiv

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Parthiv Patel, the man whose direct hit gave Royal Challengers Bangalore an improbable one-run win over Chennai Super Kings, said he was left quite surprised when Mahendra Singh Dhoni missed hitting the last ball of the cliffhanger.

Patel wasn't expecting a marauding Dhoni to miss Umesh Yadav's slower delivery before his direct throw sealed it for the home team on Sunday.

Dhoni scored 24 off the first five balls of the final over before missing the last ball. A scramble for one run ended in Parthiv's direct throw leaving Shardul Thakur short of his crease.

"We honestly wanted him (Dhoni) to hit through the off-side on the shorter side of the ground. If he had hit it on the leg-side, there were two runs because I don't think the way he runs, there was any chance of stopping those two," an elated Patel said at the post-match press conference.

"So we wanted (Umesh) to bowl slower and outside the off-stump and surprisingly he missed it. I wasn't expecting him to miss it but surprisingly he missed it," he said.

Patel said if Dhoni is around then 70 to 80 runs in the last five overs is always gettable at the Chinnaswamy.

"Playing in Bangalore or Mumbai, you know that 70 runs in the last five overs is gettable. You need at least have 80-90 runs to get in last five overs to defend. So, we wanted to squeeze him.

"We wanted to bowl as many dot balls to him as possible, and put pressure on other batsmen because everybody knows how MS is. He wanted the game to go down to last three-four overs and he almost won the game," said Patel.

The wicketkeeper-batsman scored his second half-century of the season and said that coach Gary Kirsten's advice of choosing the correct bowlers was key to his success.

"Before the game started, I was talking to Gary and he said 'you don't have worry of anything you need to choose your bowlers' and that is exactly what I did," said Patel.

# MI release players to manage workload

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai Indians have released all the players for four days to ensure that they relax, spend time with their families and return strong for the business end of the tournament. With the 2019 World Cup starting just after the 12th edition of the IPL, India skipper Virat Kohli had time and again spoken about the need for players to be smart and manage their workload well to stay fresh for the showpiece event.

The only team in the competition apart from Chennai to have three Indian players who will be headed to the World Cup — Rohit Sharma, Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah — the MI franchise made the move keeping in mind the interest of the players and the need to keep them fresh not just for the second half of the IPL, but also for the World Cup.

As per the sources, the management decided to release the players after their game against Rajasthan Royals on April 20 and the players will reunite in Chennai on April 25 before the game against CSK.

"Players are the priority and the only instruction to the boys was that whatever you do, don't get anywhere near a bat or ball. They should unwind, relax, switch off and focus on enjoying the four-day break," the source said.

Asked if the move was aimed at keeping the Indian boys fresh for the World Cup, the source said: "Not just the likes of Rohit, Bumrah or Hardik.



We have the likes of Quinton de Kock, Lasith Malinga and other players as well who will be playing the World Cup. The idea is to manage their workload in such a manner that they can give it their best when they play in the showpiece event. While the foreign players have mostly gone to Chennai directly and are enjoying there with their families, the Indian players have headed home."

# 'SRH will badly miss Warner, Bairstow'

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

David Warner and Jonny Bairstow have been primarily guiding Sunrisers Hyderabad to victories in the ongoing IPL and captain Kane Williamson says the departure of the two openers will be a huge loss to the side.

With the ODI World Cup scheduled to start on May 30, the two prolific batsmen will be leaving the IPL mid-way owing to national duty. "Without a doubt Warner and Bairstow will be big losses, they are world class players. We knew at the start of the tournament that we will lose them at the back end of the tournament and new guys will come in then," Williamson said.

Warner and Bairstow are currently sitting at the first and second spots respectively in the leading run-scorers' list in the IPL, and their formidable partnership at the top of the order has been the biggest reason behind Sunrisers' five wins this season so far. Warner, the top-scorer this season with 517 runs at an average of 73.85 and a staggering strike rate of 148.56 from nine games including six half-centuries and a ton, will depart for Australia by the end of April.

Bairstow, who is at second position with 445 runs, including a century, from the same number of matches at a strike rate of 158.36, will leave for England after Tuesday's match.

# Up Next CSK, SRH AIM TO SORT OUT BATTING WOES

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The wretched form of Chennai Super Kings' top three will be primary worry for Mahendra Singh Dhoni as Chennai Super Kings aims to arrest the mini-slide when they take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in an Indian Premier League encounter at Chepauk on Tuesday.

If CSK's problem is the non-performance of the top-order, Sunrisers Hyderabad's issues are that there are no performers in the middle-order with bulk of the runs being scored by openers David Warner (517 runs) and Jonny Bairstow (445 runs).

A win will almost ensure a play-off berth for the defending champions, who lost back-to-back away matches against Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bangalore respectively.

While Dhoni's Herculean effort to pull off another miraculous chase has been the talking point, it is difficult not to shed light on the poor show of CSK's top three which is putting the skipper under unimaginable pressure.

Last season's hero Shane Watson (147 runs), Ambati Rayudu (192) and Suresh Raina (207) haven't lived up to expectations. The pressure has been entirely on Dhoni, who leads the charts with 314 runs and the batting unit needs to step up.

"The top three needs to finish more matches," Dhoni said after CSK's one-run loss to RCB.

Back at its den after a schedule of away games, Dhoni's men will be slight favourites as it will be Bairstow's last game for the last year's runners-up as he heads back to England for World Cup preparations.

The Chepauk pitch has been sluggish in the games played so far and coach Stephen Fleming attributed it to being one of the reasons for top-order's poor show.



MS Dhoni chats with Sunrisers players after SRH beat CSK on 17th April | IPL/Twitter

# Good to be World Cup underdogs: Sarfraz

AFP ■ LONDON

Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed said on Monday that being underdogs in next month's World Cup eases the pressure on his young team, who leave for the tournament this week.

Pakistan will play three warm-up matches before taking on joint-hosts England in a five-match one-day series and a Twenty20.

The 1992 World Cup winners start their campaign against the West Indies in Nottingham on May 31.

Sarfraz he would prefer his side to go into the tournament under the radar.

"Look, when we go as favourites, then it's a problem, but if we go as underdogs then other teams feel the danger, so I think being underdogs is good for us and eases the pressure," Sarfraz told a press conference in Lahore before they depart for England on Tuesday.

Sarfraz, 31, was among five key players rested for the white-wash ODI series defeat by Australia last month to freshen up



the squad before the competition. The high-voltage clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India scheduled for Manchester on June 16 promises to be one of the most tense of the tournament.

But Sarfraz played down the hype, saying all games are important. "For us all nine matches are important so we will take every match as a match against India," he said of Pakistan's bitter rivals —

who have won all six of their previous World Cup clashes. But Pakistan took the Champions Trophy against India in 2017 with a stunning 180-run victory in the final.

"We have beaten India in a bigger event recently so we will have that advantage," said Sarfraz.

**'WE HAVE, WE WILL'** He said the theme of Pakistan's World Cup mission is

"we have, we will", citing the team's previous glories.

Along with the Champions Trophy two years ago, Pakistan won the 1992 World Cup and the 2009 World Twenty20.

"I think these are exciting times for Pakistan cricket and for the team," said Mickey Arthur, who took over as head coach in May 2016.

"We leave on a journey for which we have worked really hard," he said, adding that they have "a good team, both in talent and attitude".

"The initial thing is to qualify for the last four and take it from there, so I think we have the potential to certainly go all the way but before that we have to play very well," South African Arthur added.

Pakistan have named two extra players in their squad for the five-match one-day series against England, with paceman Mohammad Amir and batsman Asif Ali in addition to the 15 for the World Cup.

But they have until May 23 to finalise their squad for the tournament.

# Hassan and Asghar named in Afghan WC squad

PTI ■ KABUL

Pacer Hamid Hassan and former captain Asghar Afghan were on Monday named in Afghanistan's 15-strong World Cup squad headlined by IPL stars Rashid Khan and Mohammad Nabi.

Gulbadin Naib will lead the side which also features Mohammad Shahzad and spinner Mujeeb ur Rahman. Afghanistan was removed as captain in all formats earlier this year.

Hassan has been recalled after nearly a three-year hiatus. However, his fitness remains under scrutiny after he had been laid low by a thigh injury. The 31-year-old has represented Afghanistan in 32 ODIs with 56 wickets to his credit.



"We selected the best squad considering factors such as experience, fitness, team balance, current form & conditions," chief selector, Dawlat Khan Ahmadzai said in a statement.

Ahmadzai said the side will aim to play inspirational cricket during the tournament

which starts May 30 in the United Kingdom. "The mission is to play inspirational cricket in the tournament; I know there are strong teams but we will do our level best to achieve our goals," he said.

Ikram Alikhil, Karim Janat and Sayed Shirzad were named the three designated reserves by the committee.