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## Patnaik to probe SC 'fixer' claims

Panel to look into 'conspiracy against CJI' charge only, not into sexual harassment allegation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday ordered a probe headed by former SC judge Justice AK Patnaik into allegations made by advocate Utsav Bains that there is a "corporate" conspiracy to frame the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi on charges of sexual misconduct.

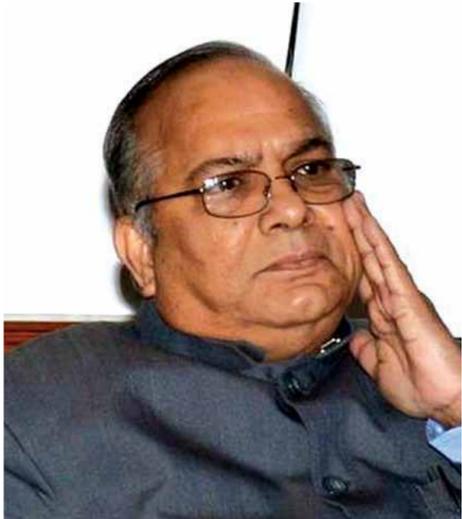
A Bench of Justices Arun Misra, RF Nariman and Deepak Gupta also directed Delhi Police, CBI and Intelligence Bureau to cooperate with Justice Patnaik in the probe. On the completion of inquiry, Justice (Retd) Patnaik will file a report in a sealed cover before the court after which the matter will be heard again.

Justice Patnaik was earlier appointed by the SC to probe the allegations against former CBI Director Alok Verma.

Anguished over "systematic attack" to malign the judiciary, the SC said the time has come to send a message to the country that the top court is "not vulnerable" and nobody can "remote control" it either by money or political power. The top court, warned that if such attempts are not stopped the institution "will die".

During the course of the hearing, Bains, who made the claim about a conspiracy to frame Justice Gogoi, filed an additional affidavit in a sealed cover in the court in support of his claims.

The court — while exam-



ining an affidavit by Bains — noted that the allegations of "Bench fixing are so serious that it requires investigation".

The SC also noted that the probe committee will not go into the issue of sexual harassment allegations against the CJI and the outcome of the Justice Patnaik probe will not affect the in-house enquiry.

Meanwhile, Justice NV Ramana, part of three-member in-house enquiry panel set up to examine the allegations of sexual harassment against Gogoi, recused himself from it on Thursday.

The development comes a day after the former apex court woman employee, who levelled the allegations against the CJI, wrote a letter to the panel expressing reservation over the inclusion of Justice Ramana.

Observing that the apex court cannot be run by money or political power, a three-judge special Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra said the day has come for them to rise and tell the country's rich and powerful that they are "playing with fire".

"Do not think that the SC

can be remote controlled by anything on the earth, whether money power or political power," the Bench said. "We are anguished with the way this institution is being treated in the last three-four years and we must say that it will die and it will not survive if this will happen. There is systematic attack, systematic game to malign this great institution," the SC said.

The Bench said letters were being written and books were being printed in matters pending in the court and this practice has to be stopped.

"Do the rich and powerful of this country think that they can remote control the SC," the Bench said.

The hard hitting observations by the Bench came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said there should be a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) on the allegations levelled by Bains in his affidavit as he

has claimed a larger conspiracy which concerns the administration of justice.

"You (Mehta) are provoking us to speak. We are not inclined to say but now listen. So many things are going on. There are serious allegations that need to be probed. The Supreme Court cannot be run by money power or political power," Justice Mishra said.

"It is an institution of you people and not ours. Judges come and go but if these things will happen then it (institution) will die and it will not survive," the Bench said.

During the hearing on Thursday, the Bench said, "We cannot mention several things. People are trying to manage the court registry by money power. When somebody tries to improve things, he is killed and maligned? We have come to this extent of blackmailing."

Continued on Page 4



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to the crowd during a roadshow in Varanasi on Thursday

Pioneer

## Varanasi echoes with Modi during roadshow

DEPAK K UPRETI ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a massive 7-km roadshow in Varanasi, touching all ancient ghats which have presence of different communities settled from across the country for centuries. Ahead of filing his nomination papers on Friday, the PM sought a second term for himself as party painted the ancient city saffron.

raining flower petals on him.

Clad in a saffron kurta, Modi, in a repeat of 2014 roadshow, greeted people with folded hands and incessant waving.

Modi's roadshow meandered through localities like Lanka, Assi Ghat, Sonarpur, Narad Ghat, Madanpura, Gadoliya and concluded at Dashaswamegh Ghat where he performed the famous Ganga Aarti amid sound of "Shankhs" and "Ghantis".

Madanpura is largely a Muslim populated part of the city where the Prime Minister passed through in the evening. Modi, who will file his nomination papers on Friday at about 11.30 am in the presence

of NDA alliance partners, including Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Shiv Sena chief Udhav Thackeray and former Punjab CM Prakash Singh Badal, was accompanied by UP CM Yogi Adityanath, Union Ministers Piyush Goyal, Sushma Swaraj, and JP Nadda during the roadshow.

Amid loud shouts of "Modi, Modi", the Prime Minister's cavalcade slowed-down at many places with the PM acknowledging people waving at him from rooftops.

Boats in the Ganga were lighted with Modi's cut-out and display of "Mai Bhi Chowkidar" and BJP's symbol lotus.

## UP Board HS, Inter results tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The results of UP Board High School and Intermediate exams will be declared on April 27. An announcement to this effect was made on Thursday. Candidates who appeared in the exams would be able to see their results on the UP Board's official website (up result.nic.in). UP Board secretary Neena Srivastava told mediapersons on Thursday that the results would be announced at 12:30 pm on April 27. Around 32 lakh students had registered for the exams in High School while 26 lakh for Intermediate exams. About 58 lakh students are waiting for their results. The results of both High School and Intermediate examinations conducted by UP Secondary Education Service Selection Board were announced on April 29 last year. This year, the exams began on February 7.

The examination of High School was completed in 14 days while that of Intermediate in 16 days. Earlier, these exams usually lasted for about two months.

## Arsenal storage tunnels to secure regions along China

Indian Army ropes in NHPC to build caverns along LAC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to boost its defences in the region facing China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Army in collaboration with the public sector National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) will build tunnels or concrete caverns to store ammunition.

Huge bunkers will ensure that the ammunition cannot be destroyed by artillery fire or aerial bombing besides ensuring smooth supply of bombs and bullets to the troops without any hindrance.

The pilot project costing about ₹15 crore for four tunnels has to be completed within two years after the Army and the NHPC signed a MOU here on Thursday. Three of the four tunnels will be built in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh facing China while the fourth will come up in the mountain



region of Jammu division.

Each ammunition bunker has the capacity to store more than 200 metric tonnes of ammunition and will also be safe from the vagaries of weather, including ammunition getting damaged due to dampness.

Explaining the significance of the project, officials said China already has built similar storage tunnels in the Tibet region. While India also has similar underground caverns in the plain regions of the country, this pilot project, if successful, will pave the way for constructing similar dumps in

the inaccessible mountain regions facing China, they said.

Once the project meets all the requirements of the Army, more such storage facilities may come up in Ladakh which has a long border with China besides some sensitive places in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and the north-eastern States, they said.

The Army had earlier tried to build such caverns in the mountains of Sikkim but it proved to be expensive and issues like dampness and seepage hampered the project.

Continued on Page 4

## Maruti to pull plug on diesel cars from April next year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Thursday announced that it will stop sales of all diesel-engined cars from April 1, 2020. This is the day that Bharat Stage 6 (BS6) emission norms come into force in India and no old Bharat Stage 4 diesel engine vehicles will be allowed to be registered.

"The Supreme Court has made it clear that it will not allow the sale and registration of any BS4 from April 1, 2020", MSI chairman RC Bhargava said explaining the decision.

Some of the company's models like Vitara Brezza and S-Cross currently come with a diesel engine option only.

During the carmakers annual results conference on Thursday, Bhargava said making existing diesel engines BS6 compatible was not technically possible and also the cost of a BS6 diesel option on smaller cars would add at least ₹1 lakh to the existing cost of a diesel car.

Detailed report on P10

## Cong ends suspense around Priyanka, picks Ajay Rai against Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday fielded old-hand Ajay Rai from Varanasi to take on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, ending speculation of a possible electoral duel between Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and the PM.

The suspense finally ended with the party nominating Rai, who unsuccessfully contested against Modi in 2014 and finished third after the BJP leader and AAP's Arvind Kejriwal. In 2014, Modi won by a margin of over three lakh votes against Kejriwal. While Modi got over 5,81,000 votes, Rai managed about 75,000 votes.

The Congress also fielded Madhusudan Tiwari from Gorakhpur against BJP's Ravi Kishan, a popular Bhojpur film star.



Speculation on Priyanka making her electoral debut from Varanasi had been rife for the past few weeks and was fuelled after Congress president Rahul Gandhi, to a question on whether he planned to field his sister against PM Modi, said last week, "I will leave you in suspense. Suspense is not always a bad thing"

Continued on Page 4

## CAPSULE

### 2 HIZBUL TERRORISTS KILLED IN ENCOUNTER

Srinagar: Two Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, including one pursuing Bachelor of Physiotherapy, were killed on Thursday in an encounter with security forces in Anantnag district of Jammu & Kashmir. P6

### NEED TO BOLSTER 'TECH ASYMMETRY', SAYS IAF

New Delhi: If the Indian Air Force possessed high levels of "technological asymmetry", then it would have been able to inflict heavy damage on Pakistan during the adversary's unsuccessful aerial raid on February 27, according to an IAF report. In the report, the IAF said there was a need for India to bolster its "technological asymmetry" for aerial combat.

### EX-ARMY CHIEF NEW ENVOY TO SEYCHELLES

New Delhi: Former Army chief Dalbir Singh Suhag has been appointed as India's next high commissioner to Seychelles, a country which is of strategic importance to India in the Indian Ocean region. P5



Samajwadi Party candidate from Kannauj Dimple Yadav seeks blessings of BSP chief Mayawati during an election campaign rally in Kannauj on Thursday (Report on Page 2)

PTI

## IGIA vigilant to wildlife illegal trade

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to create awareness against wildlife crime, WWF — TRAFFIC (India) has put on display Snow Leopard, Greater One-Horned Rhinos, pangolins, Asian Elephant, and Don't Buy Trouble (which lists prohibited wildlife species for possession or trade in India) photos/signage at the Customs checkpoint at Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi International airport (IGIA) in Delhi.

Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO of WWF-India, said, "Lack of awareness is one of the biggest hurdles in efforts to curtail wildlife trafficking in the air transport sector. These displays will help raise awareness and sensitise both travellers and airport staff about wildlife trafficking."

To educate air travelers on wildlife crime — poaching and illegal trade — Indian Customs



Department, TRAFFIC and WWF-India are reaching out to travelers passing through IGIA which is considered one of the

busiest airport in the world.

Dr Amandeep Singh, Additional Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of Customs, IGI Airport, Terminal-3, Delhi, said, "Illegal wildlife trade has grown to become a very serious crime globally. Here at customs, we recognise this threat to our country's biodiversity and have therefore undertaken this awareness initiative to help enlighten travelers as well as customs officials about the species impacted by illegal wildlife trade. Customs department is pulling out all stops to control wildlife crime in the country."

At a time, when consumer demand for wildlife products is a leading threat facing many wildlife species, traffickers rely on existing transport links to smuggle illegal wildlife products to consumers across the world.

Continued on Page 4

# AKY, Maya, Cong cannot keep country safe: Shah

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hitting out at Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party national president Amit Shah said that 3G in Congress was centered around a dynasty comprising Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, while in the BJP, 3G meant development of Gaon (village), Ganga and Gau (cow).

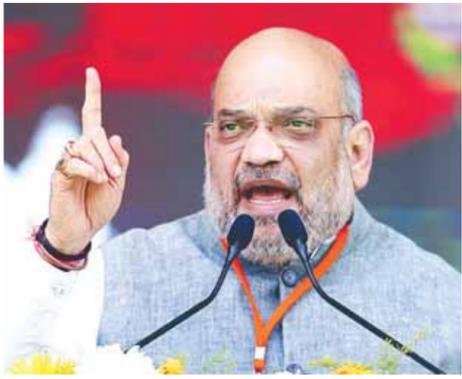
Addressing a series of election meetings in Ghazipur, Unnao and Auraiya, Shah said that Congress had made 3G a part of the family and for it the family comes first while for BJP, 3G centred around development. "We have a Prime Minister who thinks about people and formulates policies for development. This is reflected in our election manifesto which talks about development of all sectors, including farm, industry and manufacturing," Shah said, stressing on the policies of the NDA government.

He said during the last five years, Modi had made it clear that no one could take India for granted any more.

Shah said the opposition leaders could not look after the country's security.

"These mahamilavati people talk about the country. Akhilesh, Mayawati and Congress cannot keep the country safe," he said.

He said that BSP supremo Mayawati and her Samajwadi Party and Congress counterparts, Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi, respectively, were upset with the Balakot air



strikes. "What happened in Balakot is now history. When Indian Air Force carried out the airstrike, gloom descended on two places, one in Pakistan and the other in the offices of the Congress, Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party.

"I do not know why they looked sad? Is it because their relatives were killed in that attack?" he asked, adding that the opposition could have soft corner of the terrorists but Modi had made it clear that if Pakistan fired a bullet India would fire a bomb.

Shah said that there were some leaders who wanted a separate prime minister for Kashmir and they belonged to that party whose leaders had chanted Pakistan zindabad.

"Congress is silent on these leaders. Not even Bua and

Bhatija are talking about it. This clearly shows that these leaders have pro-Pakistan leaning," the BJP chief said. Shah in all his speeches talked about achievements of the Modi government and how people stood benefited by them.

The response of the people made it clear that they again want to see Modi as the next prime Minister of the country.

In Ghazipur, Shah said that BJP ideologue Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya had said that when the party wins Ghazipur, we will form government at the centre and in 2014. This happened. Manoj Sinha won election from Ghazipur and BJP formed majority government at the Centre, Shah said, and added, "This time too BJP will form government because the party is going to win Ghazipur seat with a massive votes."

# SP, BSP have turned Azamgarh into a 'stronghold of terrorism': Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that because of the appeasement policies of the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party governments, Azamgarh, which was once known as a centre of education, had turned into a "hub of terrorist activities".

Addressing Vijay Sankalp rallies in Azamgarh and Jaunpur on Thursday, Yogi said that both the SP and the BSP governments had given shelter to criminals.

He said the leaders of both these parties had supported the accused in the Batla House case and today the youth of the area faced embarrassment because of it as they were not getting work outside Azamgarh and even if they got a job, no one was ready to let out house to them.

"We must link Azamgarh to art and culture and not with terrorism and crime," he said, adding that a decision had been taken to set up a university in Azamgarh to encourage education.

"I have an emotional attachment with Azamgarh. When I was attacked here the whole of Azamgarh came out on streets in my support. Therefore, I invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi who laid the foundation of Purvanchal Expressway from this city," Yogi said adding that the expressway would connect Azamgarh with the state capital Lucknow



and improve the industrial scenario.

Yogi said the first three phases of polling had given a clear indication that Bharatiya Janata Party was sweeping the election. "In 2014, we won 73 seats and this time the BJP and its ally will win 74 seats from Uttar Pradesh," he added.

"In Azamgarh, the BJP has fielded Bhojpuri super star Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua'. He fought poverty and created a niche for himself in the world of art and cinema. He will give a new identity to the youth of this region. So, vote for him and ensure his victory," Yogi said.

Addressing a rally in Jaunpur, the BJP star campaigner said that all the corrupt parties had joined hands only to remove Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said the so-called mahagathbandhan in UP had a shelf life till May 23 and after that it would disintegrate because leaders of these parties had their own axe to grind. "Jaunpur is famous for its itra, imarti and imaandari (honesty). BJP will join all these and help in taking the district to the global platform," he said.

to remove Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said the so-called mahagathbandhan in UP had a shelf life till May 23 and after that it would disintegrate because leaders of these parties had their own axe to grind.

"Jaunpur is famous for its itra, imarti and imaandari (honesty). BJP will join all these and help in taking the district to the global platform," he said.

In his almost 45-minute speech, Yogi talked about development schemes of the BJP governments at the Centre and in UP.

"Poor are getting free electricity connections, houses and health facilities. This is possible only because of Modi hai to mumkin hai," he said.

# 'Bhaagti Janata Party' runs away from questions: Akhilesh

Lucknow (PNS): Through a series of tweets, on Thursday, Samajwadi Party president and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav took a jibe at the Bharatiya Janata Party, saying the "Bhaagti Janata Party" runs away from the questions asked by people and journalists. In a series of tweets on the twitter handle #Vikas puchh raha hai (Vikas is asking), Akhilesh says: "Vikas (development) is asking if you have also heard anything new? Have heard that people have found a new meaning of the BJP — 'Bhaagti Janata Party' — as pradhan ji is running away from press conferences, his leaders run away from questions of journalists and his party workers are demanding ₹15 lakh and employment from the people."

This tweet was in reference to the interview of Prime Minister Narendra Modi by cine star Akshay Kumar that was repeatedly telecast by news channels and carried prominently by newspapers. In the interview, Modi opened his heart about his daily life and struggle in the childhood. Questions were raised why the Orime Minister agreed to give interview to a cine star and not to a seasoned journalist.

In another tweet, the SP chief hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi by tagging a picture of Khazanchi, a child born during demonetisation.

"Vikas wants to know if you know this child Pradhan Sewak ji?" Yadav asked.

"His name's #Khazanchi. He was born in a bank during notebandi. Now he wants to vote out the party who caused his mother pain. But we said you're too young and just because you were wronged doesn't mean you wrong others!" the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister added

# LS polls will see end of those chanting Nammo, Nammo: Maya

Kannauj (PTI): Lashing out at the BJP, Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on Thursday said this Lok Sabha election would see the end of those who chant "NaMo, NaMo". She was addressing a joint rally here with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Rashtriya Lok Dal president Ajit Singh.

"This election will see the end of those chanting 'NaMo, NaMo' and pave the way for those who raise Jai Bheem. Seeing your response it appears you are going to ensure the victory of alliance candidates," she said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is often referred to as 'NaMo' by his supporters.

Dimple Yadav, the sitting SP MP from Kannauj and wife of Akhilesh Yadav, is seeking re-election from the seat as the joint candidate of the SP-BSP-RLD alliance.

Mayawati reminded the electorate that the Congress did not implement the Mandal Commission's report and that when the party was in power, it did not give Bharat Ratna to Dalit leader and architect of the Constitution BR Ambedkar. "In its long rule in the country and in UP, the Congress did nothing to eradicate poverty and unemployment. In their rule, migration from UP started for jobs. They also did not fill Dalit, backward and scheduled tribe quota during their regime," the BSP chief said, adding that the Congress was ousted for its "faulty policies".

Hitting out at the BJP government at the Centre, she alleged that it paid lip service to the poor, down-trodden, youth and farmers by making lofty promises and not fulfilling them.

On Congress' promise of ₹72,000 per year to poor



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and his wife and party candidate Dimple Yadav (R) present a memento to BSP supremo Mayawati during an election campaign in Kannauj on Thursday

families under its proposed minimum income guarantee 'Nyay' scheme, she said if the alliance (SP-BSP-RLD) government comes to power, she will ensure permanent jobs in government and private sector.

Akhilesh Yadav expressed confidence that the SP-BSP-RLD alliance in UP will give a new prime minister to the country. Slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the SP chief said the BJP would not be able to talk about its performance. "So, how can they face the SP-BSP-RLD alliance," he asked.

The alliance has been formed with an aim to ensure social justice and take the ideals of BR Ambedkar, Ram Manohar Lohia, Kanshiram and 'Netaji' (Mulayam Singh Yadav) forward, the SP chief said. On Monday, he had said that regional parties would get more seats than the Congress and the BJP in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

# EC letting Modi violate model code: Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati on Thursday once again targeted the Election Commission accusing it of ignoring the alleged model code violations by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"PM Modi is moving about freely despite facing numerous serious allegations of the model code of conduct violation, thanks to the ECI. That's why he has started crossing the limit as far as respect for women is concerned. Hasn't the BJP/RSS imposed a lajawab neta upon the country?" Mayawati asked.

In another tweet, the former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party for asking who was the prime ministerial face of the opposition.

"Why is the BJP & co. repeatedly insulting masses by claiming that the opposition lacked leadership for the post of the Prime Minister? Who after Nehru was the arrogant question asked earlier too. But people gave a befitting reply to all this nonsense and will surely give another one shortly," the BSP chief added.

# Eyeing Bundelkhand, PGV holds roadshows

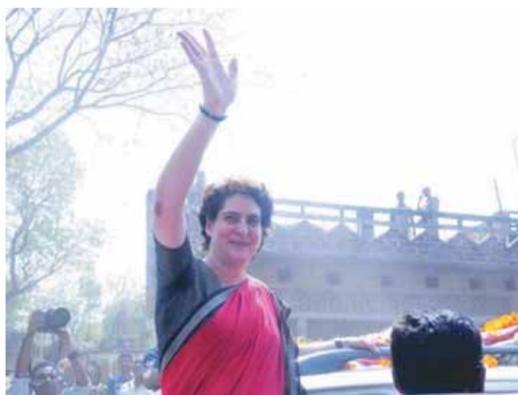
PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an attempt to turn the tables in favour of Congress candidates in the Bundelkhand region, AICC general secretary and in-charge UP east, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, took out a massive roadshow in the scorching heat in Jhansi and Jalaun on Thursday.

A day earlier she had held a roadshows in Mahoba and Hamirpur.

Sitting atop a vehicle wearing a violet saree, Priyanka exchanged pleasantries with the people lined up on both sides of the narrow and congested roads of the busy commercial area of Jhansi, appealing to the people to ensure victory of Congress candidates.

As the young voters and Congress workers showered flowers on her cavalcade, she was greeted with slogans of "chowkidar chor hai" from the crowd at some places. Priyanka got off her vehicle and offered prayers at Gopal Mandir and Jain Mandir (on Gandhi Road). The roadshow covered almost a distance of 10 kilometres.



Former Union minister Pradeep Jai Aditya was also present on the occasion.

In Jhansi, Shiv Sharan Kushwaha, brother of Jan Adhikar Party founder Babu Singh Kushwaha, is in the fray after the party forged an alliance with the Congress.

Jhansi is the largest town in

Bundelkhand, a parched and underdeveloped region spread over Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

In Jalaun, Priyanka Gandhi garlanded the statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar and then offered a chaadar at the mazar (grave) of Sayyad Padam Pahl Shah, before starting her roadshow. Jalaun goes

to poll on April 29.

Eyeing Bundelkhand, Priyanka holds two roadshows Earlier on Wednesday, Priyanka had held a roadshow in Mahoba town of Banda constituency which goes to polls on May 6. She also addressed an election meeting in Hamirpur where polling will be held on April 29.

Addressing the meeting, Priyanka accused the NDA government of pursuing anti-people policies. "The (Narendra) Modi government is ignoring the poor, farmers and women. It is bothered only about acquiring power," she had said.

"What have you done in the past five years? What has happened to the promises made five years ago?" she had asked the BJP.

"Elect a government, a leader who is your hamdard (sympathiser)," Priyanka Gandhi had said.

The Congress won the Jhansi seat twice, in 1999 and 2009, after it won all the four seats of Bundelkhand region in 1984.

Bundelkhand has four Lok Sabha constituencies — Jalaun, Jhansi, Hamirpur and Banda.

# SP candidate alleges manipulation in EVM strongroom

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party candidate from Budaun, Dharmendra Yadav, on Thursday complained about manipulations in the strongroom in which electronic voting machines (EVMs) have been stored at the Mandi Samiti hall in Bahjoi area of Sambhal.

"There is a nexus between the district authorities and Bharatiya Janata Party candidates and a video has of the manipulation of EVMs in the strong room gone viral," the SP candidate told reporters in Sambhal on Thursday.

"We have a video footage and pictures that prove that the net on the outer doors of the strongroom was damaged and the seal of the inner gate, where the EVMs have been kept, was broken. A new seal has been put in its place," he said.

After the incident came to light, hundreds of SP supporters assembled near the strong room and raised slogans against the district authorities.

Sabhal ADM (Administration) Lavkush Tripathi said a parrot had got entangled in the net and in an effort to take it out, a part of the net of the outer gate was shifted from its place.

District returning officer Avinash Kumar Singh denied the allegations of the SP candidate, saying there is no truth in the charges.

# Congress, BJP workers clash in Amethi during live TV debate

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A major clash broke out between Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party workers during a live TV news channel debate in Amethi on Thursday night. A couple of people received minor injuries in the clash. Gunner of Congress MLC Deepak Singh was also injured.

The clash took place during a live debate organised by a private news channel at Ramlila Ground in Amethi city. Both BJP and Congress supporters threw plastic chairs at each other and they even attacked each others with lathis.

Congress MLC Deepak Singh, who was present in the debate, managed to escape unhurt.

Later, the Congress MLC said that the debate was going on smoothly but a phone call from BJP candidate Smriti Irani to one of the leaders changed the entire scenario. "BJP and Ms Irani are fully responsible for the clash," Singh said.

However Bharatiya Janata Party leaders blamed the Congress supporters for starting the violence.

The situation was controlled after security personnel rushed to the spot.

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD**

**NOTICE**

**Organizing of Pension Revision Camp on 09.05.2019 by Allahabad Division/ NC Railway, Allahabad.**

Allahabad Division/ North Central Railway Allahabad is organizing a Camp on 09.05.2019 to be held on Allahabad, Aligarh, Tundla, Fatehpur and Mirzapur regarding Revision of Pension/ Family Pension as per Pre-2016 rules.

As such retired Railway Pensioner/ Family Pensioner of Allahabad Division who have still not received the revised PPO are requested to fill up under noted Pension revision related documents and attend the above mentioned Camp on 09.05.2019 at 11.00 AM.

- PPO Copy
- NEFT Form
- Under taking and Option Form

567/19 FA

North central railways @CPRONCR

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD**

**WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR DOCTORS**

North Central Railway, Allahabad Division intends to engage 06 (Six) full time Contract Medical Practitioners (CMP) General Duty Doctors on Contract Basis for a duration of One Year as per details given below:

SN	Specialty	Vacancy	Place of posting
1	General Duty	01	HU/KHURJA
2	General Duty	02	SDH/TUNDLA
3	General Duty	01	HU/ALJN
4	General Duty	01	HU/NYN
5	General Duty	01	HU/MZP

The contract is extendable up to ten years on a year to year basis. Reservation will be as under- SC=01, ST=Nil, OBC=02, UR=03 Date, Time and venue of Walk-in-Interview and medical examination- The interested candidates can appear in the walk-in interview followed by Medical Examination at the following venue as per time and date indicated below:

Walk-in-Interview & Medical Examination	Date	Time	Venue
Central Hospital	03.05.2019	09.30 hrs.	Conference Hall / NCR / ALD

\* Medical examination of candidates will be held simultaneously along with walk-in-interview. Note: (i) Candidate must submit their applications in duplicate on the prescribed and enclosed proforma latest by 9.30 a.m. on 03.05.2019 at the respective venue mentioned above. (ii) In case the number of candidates is more and they cannot be interviewed/medically examined on the nominated day, they will be interviewed / medically examined on the next working day / days. As such, if needed, the candidates should make their own arrangement for stay for a period of two days and come prepared accordingly. **Essential Educational Qualification:** MBBS. **Desirable Qualification:** Candidate having Post Graduate Degree and prior working experience will be preferred. All proper educational & working experience documents should be submitted on the day of interview. **Remuneration:** Rs. 75,000/- for General Duty Doctor is fixed, if Govt. accommodation is not provided. If Railway accommodation is provided an amount equivalent to the sum of House Rent Allowance and License Fee of the accommodation provided will be deducted. **Age for open market CMP's:** Age of candidate as on 01.05.2019 should not exceed 50 years but there is 05 Years relaxation for SC / ST & 3 years for OBC Candidates. **Terms and Conditions:** The engagement of doctors would be on contract basis initially for a period of One Year, which is extendable on annual basis up to a maximum period of 10 Years as per administrative requirements on the basis of assessment of performance of CMPs. However, the services of the Doctor's can be terminated before the expiry of one year after giving 15 Day's notice on either side. Railway administration will be at liberty to terminate the contract of the doctor with immediate effect by paying honorarium in lieu of 15 Day's notice period, if the circumstances, so warrant. The services rendered as contract doctor is a stop gap arrangement and will not have any bearing in respect of consideration of their period in case of their subsequent regular selection through UPSC. It will also not confer upon any right for regularization or permanent absorption in the Railway. **No Private practice is allowed. Note:-** (i) The contract Doctors shall not be entitled for Railway quarter etc. as a matter of right. However, if such a quarter is available, they will be provided accommodation. The detailed instructions with regard to their duties while on contract with the Railway, shall be given to them in the event of their selection along with the offer of engagement. (ii) Willing candidates should bring their application form with **Original and Attested** copies of all Certificates & Mark Sheets, duly filled up on the prescribed format with them. **No TA/DA is admissible for this interview.** (iii) The offer of engagement to the selected candidates shall be assured subject to the availability of vacancy as per requirement in Hospitals / Health Units located at different stations on "as is where is basis". Administration has right to change the place of posting as per administrative needs. (iv) The places of notified vacancies may be changed as per requirement of the Administration. (v) The notification can be downloaded from North Central Railway website [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in). (vi) After approval of the panel by competent authority, the panel will be uploaded on same day at NCR's website [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in). The suitable candidates will be called through speed post/registered letter, Telephone calls and SMS to report on a particular fixed date at Central Hospital/N.C Railway, ALD for posting. The candidates who do not report at the assigned date and at time will forfeit their chance of contract engagement and such engagement will be offered to the next empanelled candidates. (vii) The candidates are also required to indicate their preferences for the stations where vacancies are notified in this notice above. To the extent possible, this will be kept in view while offering them contract engagement. The exact place will, however, be known only after they report for taking posting order as per para (viii) above. The administration reserves the right to effect changes in Station/Place of engagement at any stage. 549/19(A)

North central railways railway northcentral@CPRONCR

# 23-yr-old girl shot dead for 'honour'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A 23-year-old girl was shot dead when she was home alone in Maal on Wednesday night. Police said rivalry over love affair could be the motive for murder while hate or honour killing could not be ruled out either. Her brother was taken into custody by the police for interrogation. A mobile phone was recovered from the crime scene and its call detail records were obtained. The police found out the name of a youth with

presently deployed for security of a politician, told the police that he had left his house around 6 pm on Wednesday. "My wife Geeta and my son Ramendra had gone to attend a wedding in Kakori while Rekha was all alone in the house. They found Rekha lying dead in a pool of blood. There were firearm injuries on her forehead and it seemed that she was shot from point blank range," he said.

It surfaced during investigation that the girl had a long conversation with a youth of



**Victim's brother was taken into custody by the police for interrogation. A mobile phone was recovered from the crime scene and its call detail records were obtained**

whom the victim had a conversation before she was murdered. Besides, about half-a-dozen persons, including family members of the victim, are on police radar.

As per reports, the girl, identified as Rekha of Gopramau village, was found lying in pool of blood in her house around midnight. She was spotted by her mother and brother, who returned home from a wedding.

Deceased's father Om Prakash Yadav, a homeguard

of the locality. "Rekha's parents had no knowledge about the phone which was recovered from the scene. It is suspected that Rekha was gifted the phone by the youth with whom she had talks the previous night. She had been in talks with him for a long time," sources said.

They said the police also suspect that some jilted lover killed Rekha on the disclosure of her closeness with the youth. "At the same time, the youth is also under scanner as he also

# Auto-driver objects to amorous advances towards wife, killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

An auto-driver was killed for opposing his neighbour's amorous advances towards his wife in Mohanlalganj. The stunning incident came to light after victim's body was recovered from a drain under a culvert in Korana village of Mohanlalganj on Thursday morning. Victim's wife lodged an FIR against four persons, two of whom she identified as Anjani Sahu and his brother Mohit Sahu. Both the accused are deceased's neighbours.

As per reports, some villagers spotted the body, with both hands and legs tied with a scarf, lying under the culvert when they passed by in the morning. Meanwhile, photos of the deceased were uploaded on social media. Following this, a woman, Ram Dulari aka Nirupama of Dalona village under PGI police station,

identified the body as that of her husband Asharam Rawat (45). It surfaced that Asharam, along with his family consisting of wife and four children, had been living in Dalona village for several years. He had an old enmity with his neighbours Anjani Sahu and Mohit Sahu.

"Mohit had an evil design against me in his mind and he would often barge into our house at odd hours. On several occasions, Asharam objected to this act. But Mohit and his brother Anjani are the most feared persons in the locality and also have a good rapport with lower-rung cops. Due to their fear, we did not open our mouth in public and did not complain to the police," Ram Dulari told the police.

She said she had a gut feeling that Anjani and Mohit killed her husband and dumped the body into the

drain. "We are convinced with the claim of the deceased's wife. But we are puzzled over how and when the accused dumped the body. The place from where the body was recovered is far away from the deceased's house and remain abuzz with traffic movement even during late night hours. The deceased was also not reported missing. We are cross-examining every aspect related to the incident. The police also obtained the call detail records of the deceased's phone and also those of his wife and both the named accused," ASP, Rural, Vikrant Veer said.

Sources said Mohit used to pressure the deceased's wife to talk to him. "On the disclosure of the same, Asharam had a bad blood with Mohit. To clear the hindrance, Mohit got him eliminated," the sources said.

has a motive to kill the girl over some discord," the sources said.

They said the police also suspect honour killing angle and that was why some of the family members were on police radar and victim's brother was detained for interrogation. The sources said the main gate of

the house was found bolted from inside and the family came to know about the incident only after they climbed the boundary wall to enter the house. "The father of the victim informed the police about the incident around 1.30 am on Thursday," they said.

# Training for micro-observers, magistrates conducted



Polling personnel casting votes through postal ballot on Thursday

Pioneer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Training was carried out for micro-observers and sector & zonal magistrates at Jai Narayan PG College on Thursday. District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma, also the district election officer, said the polling personnel not only attended the training but also voted through postal ballot. The district administration officials said since the polling personnel had not their duty cards or photo cards and were also not aware of their serial numbers, a lot

of time went waste in the process.

Keeping this in mind, the DM has issued instructions that all those who have to vote through postal ballot should write details a separate piece of paper so that they face no problems. He said that they should carry valid ID cards (either the EPIC, bank pass book with a photograph, passport or driving license). He said that a lot of time was wasted because the polling personnel did not have valid identity cards. He said that a total of 878 personnel voted

through postal ballot. The DM said that all the polling personnel, including gunners, ardal and presiding officers who would be busy with election duties had to vote through postal ballot till May 1.

**CORRIGENDUM**  
In the E-Auction Notice published on dated 24.04.2019 in The Pioneer, Lucknow Edition is the Serial No. 05 in the M/s Sultan Education Society, Demand Notice Date 29.01.2008 should be read as Demand Notice Date 05.02.2014.  
Authorized Officer, Bank of India

# Case of fraud against govt officers, employees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A case for fraud and tampering with government documents in connection with the alleged anomaly in elevation of 70 peons as clerks in the Land Consolidation department was registered against two department officers and some employees at Hazratganj police station on Thursday night.

Police spokesman AK Dwivedi said the department, on behalf of Umesh Giri (deputy sanchalak), lodged a complaint accusing additional sanchalak Suresh Singh Yadav, joint sanchalak Ravindra Kumar Dubey and some employees of the department of indulging in fraud by appointing class IV employees as clerks in the department.

"As per the exiting manuals, a class IV employee can be elevated to the post only after he or she clears a departmental exam. But Yadav and Dubey in connivance with others promoted the class IV employees as clerks, and the fraud surfaced during an internal inquiry," he said.

Dwivedi said the case was registered under section 420 of IPC and under section 467/468/471 of IPC for tampering with government documents. "We also booked the accused under sections 7 & 13 of Prevention of Corruption Act. Further investigations were underway," he said.

It surfaced that the above-named officers were members of the selection committee and they elevated the peons as clerks. Subsequently, a complaint was lodged at the department and the internal probe was conducted by the agricultural produce commissioner. On the findings of the probe, the department forwarded the matter to the police.

# Supporters of BJP, Jansatta Dal clash in Pratapgarh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Supporters of Bharatiya Janata Party and Jansatta Dal candidates in Kaushambi clashed after the two groups came in front of each other in Pratapgarh district on Wednesday. Interestingly, both the candidates later denied any dispute. However, the administration has strengthened police force in the district to avert any untoward situation as both the groups are flexing their muscles to win the election. Earlier this week, Raghuraj Pratap Singh aka Raja Bhaiya, president of Jansatta Dal, had filed a defamation suit against Samajwadi Party candidate Indrajeet Saroj who is also contesting from Kaushambi.

Sources said that the procession of Jansatta Dal candidate Shaileendra Kumar and that of BJP's Vinod Sonkar came in front of each other during campaigning at Hathigawa locality in Pratapgarh district on Wednesday evening.

It may be mentioned that the area is in Pratapgarh district

but is part of Kaushambi parliamentary seat. The leaders of both the parties refused to give way to each other and even started shouting slogans against each other. The two groups also clashed and some goons waved guns in the air to terrorise the opposite party. However, local officers reached the spot with police force following which both the groups gave way to each other averting a major clash. Later Kumar and Sonkar denied any clash but made allegations of abuse against each other. Sonkar later gave an application in this regard to circle officer of Kunda in Pratapgarh district demanding action against the opposite group. He also threatened to stage demonstration if no action was taken.

Meanwhile, Congress candidate Umed Singh from Ambedkar Nagar Lok Sabha seat on Thursday alleged that the district administration 'intentionally' rejected his nomination papers during scrutiny along with the papers of seven other candidates on

Wednesday. Singh, who along with his supporters staged a protest outside collectorate, alleged that the authorities had given him a notice about the bank account detail after he filed his nomination papers on April 22. "I had furnished all the bank details along with another set of nominations on the next day. If there was any such lapse in the nomination papers, the authorities should have given me notice, but they did not say anything and rejected my nomination on Wednesday," he said while alleging foul play by the returning officer to kill the spirit of the democracy.

Singh said that he would approach the Election Commission and if required the court, over rejection of his nomination papers. A total of 20 candidates had filed their nominations from Ambedkar Nagar and now 12 are in the fray. Returning officer Suresh Kumar told reporters that all the rejections were made on technical grounds as the candidates had not filled up the required details in their forms.

# Panic as fire breaks out at bank's record room

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A fire broke out at the Syndicate Bank under Ghazipur police station area on Thursday morning, creating panic among people living nearby. The police evacuated a school located close to the bank as a precautionary measure. Nine fire tenders were pressed into service even as a police spokesman said no casualty was reported in the incident while losses were being

estimated. "The fire broke out in record room of the bank due to a short circuit," the SHO Ghazipur said.

Meanwhile, blowing horn to a group of youths cost dearly to a school van driver, who was not only attacked but the vehicle was damaged in Jankipuram on Thursday night. The attackers also looted cash and gold chain from the victim. As per reports, Dinesh Tiwari of Jankipuram Extension was returning home in his Van.

When he reached a crossing near DPS, he saw a group of youths.

"Some of the youths were sitting on the road divider. As I blew horn, they turned aggressive. Some of them forcing me to apply brakes. They pulled me out and looted Rs 6,000, my gold chain and mobile phone. Before leaving the crime scene, some of them pelted the van with stones, breaking the window panes," Tiwari told the police.

# Rise in number of candidates with criminal cases in fourth phase

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has witnessed a rise in the percentage of candidates with criminal background in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha polls, with 21 per cent of the candidates having criminal antecedents.

Besides, 39 per cent candidates in this phase are crorepatists.

Thirteen Lok Sabha constituencies will go to polls on April 29 in the fourth phase.

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and UP Election Watch in their scrutiny of the affidavits of 145 candidates out of the

total 152 in the fray for 13 in this phase, found that 31 candidates or 21 per cent had admitted criminal cases against them with 26 candidates or 18 per cent disclosing that there were heinous criminal cases against them.

Of the criminal background candidates, BJP leads with 58 per cent followed by Samajwadi Party (43 per cent), Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Lohia (38 per cent), Bahujan Samaj Party (33), Congress (17 per cent), and Independents (7 per cent), said UP Election Watch, UP head Sanjay Singh here on Thursday. He said the num-

ber of candidates having criminal antecedent had gone up by one per cent in comparison to phase three.

BJP candidate from Unnao, Sakshi Maharaj, tops the list of candidates having criminal background with 4 cases followed by Uday Pal Singh of PSPL, contesting from Farrukhabad and Alok Kumar of Sabh Jan Party contesting from Kanpur.

Altogether 57 candidates or 39 per cent have declared assets worth over one crore rupees. All the BJP candidates are crorepatists, while 92 per cent candidates of Congress and 86 per cent of

BSP-SP fall in this bracket.

BJP candidate from Jhansi, Anurag Sharma, is the richest candidate in this phase, with asset worth over Rs 124 crore. Sharma is followed by Congress candidate Anu Tandon from Unnao who has assets worth Rs 81 crore while Shiv Sena candidate from Kanpur Balbir Singh Chandel has assets worth Rs 66 crore.

Six candidates have not given their PAN number while eight candidates have accepted that their annual income is Rs 50 lakh.

In the fourth phase of polls, 18 candidates or 12 per cent are women.

Rajdhani Nagar Sahkari Bank Ltd.				E-AUCTION
32, Station Road, 4th Floor (P.C.F. Building) Charbagh, Lucknow-226018				SALE NOTICE
<b>Sale notice for sale of immovable properties</b>				
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.				
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical (whichever is applicable) possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of <b>Rajdhani Nagar Sahkari Bank Ltd.</b> Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on Auction Date as under: For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <b>Rajdhani Nagar Sahkari Bank Ltd.</b> Secured Creditor's website: E Procurement technologies limited Auction Site- Sarfaesi. auctiontiger.net				
<b>Date &amp; Time of Auction : 31 May, 2019 at 11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M (With Unlimited Extension of 10 Minutes)</b>				
Sl. No.	Name of the Account / Borrower/s and Guarantor/s	Description of Property Mortgaged/ Owner of the Property	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money (Amt. in ₹)	Amount O/s (₹) as mentioned in the notice u/s 13(2) Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession
<b>Branch: Alambagh, Lucknow</b>				
1.	<b>Borrower: M/s Balaji Enterprises, Prop. Sant Saran Amar, Guarantor: 1. Mr. Shahab Siddiqui, 117, Rojgar Karyalaya, Guru Govind Singh Marg, Lucknow</b>	All that part the property at House no. 459/313, Old no. 459/95/1, Mohini ka Purwa, Lucknow, Measuring approx 107.74 sq.mtr. standing in the name of Mr. Sant Saran Amar. <b>Boundry: East: Road wide 12 ft., West: Plot Badri &amp; Baboo Lal, Madhyaon Gaon, Kazi Tola, Sitapur Road, Lucknow</b>	<b>19,81,435.00</b> <b>1,98,144.00</b>	<b>Amount Due ₹7,57,907.00</b> upto 31.05.2018 & Other Expenses Extra. <b>04/06/2018</b> <b>29/08/2018</b>
2.	<b>Borrower: M/s Bajpayee &amp; Sons Director: 1. Mr. Abhishek Bajpai 2. Smt. Meera Bajpai</b>	All that part the property at House no. 342, D Block, Rajajipuram, Lucknow, Measuring approx 297.686 sq.mtr. standing in the name of Sri Anand Kumar Bajpai. <b>Boundry: East: Plot no. 340, West: Plot no. 344, North: Rasta 30ft wide, South: Plot Arazi Deegar</b>	<b>97,12000.00</b> <b>97,12000.00</b>	<b>Amount Due ₹35,99,391.00</b> upto 31.05.2018 & Other Expenses Extra. <b>04/06/2018</b> <b>29/08/2018</b>
3.	<b>Borrower: 1. Swasti Bajpai, 2. Meera Bajpai, 3. Abhishek Bajpai</b>	<b>Guarantor: (1. Dr. Gaurav Mishra, 414, Prime Plaza, Munshipulia, Indira Nagar, Lucknow, (2. Smt. Mahima Mishra, 275, Heeraj Nagar, Unnao, U.P.</b>		<b>Amount Due ₹22,36,614.00</b> upto 31.05.2018 & Other Exp. Extra <b>04/06/2018</b> <b>29/08/2018</b>
<b>Branch: Gomti Nagar, Lucknow</b>				
4.	<b>1. Kanak Lata W/o Kedarnath Soni, 520/184, Rahim Nagar Mahanagar, Lucknow</b>	Plot No. 575, House No. 529/18 Rahim Nagar, Mahanagar, Lucknow, Area- Sq.ft. Owner: Kanak Lata Chauhan <b>Boundry: East: House of Aradhana Shrivastava, West: 15 ft. Wide Road, North: House of Munna Tell, South: Plots of Madan Seth</b>	<b>28,55,756.00</b> <b>2,85,576.00</b>	<b>Amount Due ₹19,47,039.00</b> upto 30.06.2018 & Other Exp. Extra <b>05/07/2018</b> <b>12/12/2018</b>
5.	<b>2. Sri. Abhishek Soni S/o Kedar Nath Soni, 520/184, Rahim Nagar Mahanagar, Lucknow</b>	<b>Guarantor: 1. Santosh Kumar Yadav, 2. Rajkumar Valmiki</b>		<b>Amount Due ₹2,55,673.00</b> upto 30.06.2018 & Other Exp. Extra <b>05/07/2018</b> <b>12/12/2018</b>
<b>Branch: Vikas Nagar, Lucknow</b>				
6.	<b>Borrower: Rashmi Singh D/o Late Rajesh Kumar Singh, 86/08, Sarojini Devi Lane, Maqbool ganj, Kurmi Tola, Lucknow</b>	All that part the property at Juj Part of Building no.1 & Building no. 1(A) Constructed house on Minjulia of Khasra no. 197 standing in the name of Smt. Beena Singh W/o Rajesh Kumar Singh, Measuring approx 278.81 sq.mtr. <b>Boundry: East: Plot of Jha Sahab, West: 20ft. road, North: House of Garibe, South: 20ft. road</b>	<b>35,81,432.00</b> <b>3,58,143.00</b>	<b>Amount Due ₹ 3,83,550.00</b> upto 31.05.2018 & Other Exp. Extra <b>05/06/2018</b> <b>04/09/2018</b>
<b>Branch: Kasaibara, Lucknow</b>				
7.	<b>Gupta Hardware &amp; Pant Store, Prop. Rajesh Kumar Gupta S/o B.M. Gupta, Shop No. 55, Sector B, Shopping Complex Ailganj, Lucknow.</b>	H. No. D- 82, Mahanagar, Extension Scheme Vighyanpuri, Mahanagar, Lucknow Area- 150.557 sq. mtr. Owner: Rajesh Kumar Gupta. <b>Boundry: East: Plot No. D- 83, West: Plot No. D- 81, North: 12 Feet Wide Gali, South: 8 Feet Wide Road</b>	<b>80,08,000.00</b> <b>8,00,800.00</b>	<b>Amount Due ₹ 40,41,697.00</b> upto 30.06.2018 & Other Exp. Extra <b>02/07/2018</b> <b>12/12/2018</b>
8.	<b>Lucknow Goods Career, Prof. Jagdish Chandra Gupta, 536, Rajendra Nagar, Gali No. 2, Lucknow</b>	H. No. 136/127, Dirvijay Ganj, Ward Vasirate Ganj, Lucknow Area: 450 sq. ft. Owner: Urmila Aghani. <b>Boundry: East: 8 Feet Wide Gali, West: House of Chote Lal, North: Khruhdh Bagh Colony, South: 8 Feet Wide Gali</b>	<b>8,45,408.00</b> <b>84,541.00</b>	<b>Amount Due ₹ 2,87,717.00</b> upto 30.06.2018 & Other Exp. Extra <b>02/07/2018</b> <b>12/12/2018</b>
9.	<b>Sri. Nishant Kumar &amp; Trapt Bemwal</b>	Plot No. 8, Khasra No. 342, Village- Chandan, P.T & Distt. Lucknow Area- 1650 sq. ft. Owner: Trapti Bemwal W/o Nishant Kumar. <b>Boundry: East: 20 Feet Wide Road, West: Aaraji Khasra No. 341, North: Plot No. 9, South: 25 Feet Wide Road</b>	<b>40,17,534.00</b> <b>4,01,753.00</b>	<b>Amount Due ₹ 37,05,082.00</b> upto 30.06.2018 <b>02/07/2018</b> <b>12/12/2018</b>
<b>Branch: Jankipuram, Lucknow</b>				
10.	<b>Sumita Hospital, Prop. Sumita Malik W/o Haqiqat Roy, H.No. 45/10, Sector 'A' Sitapur Road Scheme, Lucknow</b>	1. Plot No. 19, Khasra No. 04, Area: 3200 Sq.ft. Location: Bithauli Khurd, Mahona Pakshi Ka Talab, Sitapur Road, Lucknow. <b>Boundry: East: Plot Committee, West: Plot Committee, North: Plot Committee, South: Road 20 wide Owner: Sumita Malik</b>	<b>19,03,345.00</b> <b>1,90,335.00</b>	<b>Amount Due ₹ 26,92,245.00</b> upto 30.08.2018 & Other Exp. Extra <b>05.07.2018</b> <b>12.12.2018</b>
		2. SS- 4/588, Vaibhav Khand, Gomti Nagar Scheme, Ward Chinnahat, Lucknow Area: 36.75 sq. mtr. <b>Boundry: East: Plot No. 4/589, West: Plot No. 4/587, North: Plot No. 580D, South: 6 Meter Wide Road Owned: Dr. Sanjeev</b>	<b>26,22,000.00</b> <b>2,62,200.00</b>	
Bidders are requested to visit the Bank's website- E Procurement technologies limited Auction Site- Sarfaesi. auctiontiger.net for detailed terms & conditions of e-auction rule and other details before submitting their Bids for taking part in the e-auction. Bidder may also visit the website :Sarfaesi. auctiontiger.net of Service Provider e-Procurement Technologies Limited (Auctiontiger)   Contact Person- Ram Sharma Mobile No.+91-8000023297 & Shobhit Shukla -8707586217.   Toll Free No. 18001035342 Email Id : up@auctiontiger.net & support@auctiontiger.net and www.tender.gov.in. The intending bidders must have valid e-mail ID to participate in on-line Auction. The terms and conditions of sale shall be strictly as per the provisions of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.				
<b>Date : 26.04.2019 Place : Lucknow</b>				<b>Authorised Officer, RAJDHANI NAGAR SAHKARI BANK LTD.</b>

# YC members hopeful of high voting percentage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Youth Congress members are tapping the youths of the city focusing on the issue of unemployment. The president of the Youth Congress, Sajeet Singh Barnala, while talking to *The Pioneer*, said that there would be a very high percentage of voting by the youths this time because a large number of them were jobless.

He said that they were taking the election manifesto of the Congress to the youths in the colleges and universities and emphasising on the issues which had been raised for the young voters. "Unemployment has increased in a major way during the past 45 years," he said. He said if the current government wanted to do something for the youths then it should release some data in connection with the jobs that it had provided to them during the past few years.

He pointed out that in the manifesto of the Congress it had been highlighted that the fees for the government examinations would be exempted which was a big thing for the students because many a times people approach their parents and ask for money for sitting for an examination which the father refused. "Many a times a person cannot sit for the examination due to this issue only. This is something which we have observed at the ground level. When we tell

them these things the students at once relate to what we are telling them," he said. He pointed out that they would also carry out road shows in which the students could know more about these issues. "We will be carrying out 'nukkad natak' and 'nukkad sabhas' also on these issues," he said.

On being asked whether they had caught the raw nerve of the youths with an issue that touched them closely and would thus be able to pull them out from their houses for voting, he said, "The current figures show that the number of newly-joined young voters in Lucknow district is between 1-1.5 lakh and this time the youths will come forward in a major way to vote. "This time the city voting percentage will be around 70 per cent and the voting percentage of the youths will be 40 per cent. Last time in the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 the voting percentage was 52 per cent and the percentage of youths was around 15-20 per cent," he said. He said that the youths who had gone outside the state would also come and vote in the elections this time.

Ankit Saxena, a member of the City Congress Committee, said, "The young members of the party are fanning out to different parts of the city reaching out to the colleges as well as the institutes to highlight the issues of

the manifesto because the opposition edits the manifesto of the Congress and then presents it in a bad light. The opposition points out that the Congress has done no work during the past 70 years. However we have taken upon ourselves the task of telling the youths that all the institutes and facilities which have come up in recent years were due to the Congress," he said.

He said that they also explained the details of the content of the manifesto. "The fees has increased considerably during the past five years and the youths are worried about it and will vote on it," he said. He also said that the youths would vote in large numbers this time. "After the GST and demonetisation the youths are a troubled lot because many have lost their jobs and hence we expect that they will vote in large numbers. Also there are issues such as 10 per cent reservation but the youths are not benefiting because of it. I personally had also applied for it but my form was not accepted. Those who have passed out with MBA and education courses are without jobs and the government is announcing that the jobs will be given on a contract basis only," he said.

The general secretary of National Students' Union of India (NSUI), Naina Singh, said that this time the percentage of voting by the youths would be higher than the last time.

# LS poll: Getting attention for men's issues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Kapil Mohan Chowdhary, one of the candidates for the Lok Sabha constituency from MARD party, is getting an interesting response from people of the city as he is canvassing for himself highlighting the men's issues.

Talking to *The Pioneer*, he said that in the campaigning which he carried out on Thursday, he found that most people could relate to him because of the issues which he raised. "People said that laws are being made for women alone. If there is some problem which a woman is facing, people reach in large numbers, but it is not the case as far as men are concerned," he said.

He said they would be driving an e-rickshaw in the lanes

for the campaigning. He further pointed out that it was one issue which was not being raised by any other political party. "We want to make a start. We are not expecting to win but then there should be some sort of a start. This should be a topic of discussion. We are not against laws for women but men's rights also need to be protected," he said. Among the issues which the party has raised are that moral education should be made necessary at college level, gender-specific laws should not be made, one who files a false case should also be penalised, a date centre should be created for nutrition and security, 100 per cent rebate on the income tax should be given to those who, under the directions of court, are paying alimony.



# Won't be able to explore Lucknow: Aashka



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Actress Aashka Goradia, who was in Lucknow on Thursday, said she had not explored the city but was looking forward to buying chikan garments and savouring vegetarian kebabs. The actress was in the city to inaugurate a jewellery store.

She said it was a short visit and she would be unable to explore Lucknow. "I think jewellery has been there for years but where we have evolved is the design and one thing is for sure that it is very essential for women who want to have it for the rest of their lives because

they identify with it. It's an essential part which identifies your personality," she said.

The actress said that she was not a big jewellery person but understood that she had never heard jewellery going out of fashion. "Jewellery is like wine, the older it gets, the better it is. It's a part of our life when we buy it," she added.

Regarding her work, she said currently, she was doing a show called 'Dayan'. On why the supernatural genre has flooded the TV producers of late, she said: "These are the shows which are also being watched by men because of the deepest emotions they evoke. If you look around, people have always been superstitious, especially when it comes to issues like a black cat crossing the path."

Aashka said people watched these shows also because they were stressed out and wanted to de-stress. Excited about launching a new brand of eyelashes, she said: "These eyelashes are cruelty-free as we don't use any animal fur. They are reusable and three dimensional."

## CITYBRIEFS

### RAMZAN FROM MAY 7

As per an official communiqué from the office of Shia cleric Dr Kalbe Sadiq, the moon for Ramzan will appear on May 6 and the holy month will begin on May 7. Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated on May 5. "The disclosures are based on astronomical studies using technology within the ambit of Shariah while the 'Chaand Committees' make announcements about the visibility of moon only on the basis of

principles of Shariah," Dr Sadiq clarified.

### SOLO THEATRE SHOW

Repertwahr Performata, a venture of Repertwahr Foundation, hosted its first solo theatre show titled 'Gigolo'. It was a story of an ordinary Indian boy who was traded for sex and became one of the most notorious and wanted criminals in the country for killing over 17 people in less than a year. The show was produced

by Repertwahr Foundation and written, directed and performed by Devang Tewari.

### FROG DAY

The Wildlife Institute of Lucknow University will be celebrating 'Frog Day' (April 27) with schoolchildren and slum kids. Amita Kanaujia from the Wildlife Institute said they would organise competitions, including poster competition and leap frog race, and make a pond with the children.



Punjab National Bank's zonal manager Vivek Jha and circle head Shikha Sharma giving sanction letters to customers during a mega credit camp at Hazratganj branch. Loans to the tune of Rs 3 crore for housing, car, education, PM Awas Yojana and MSME were given to 70 borrowers

**PARADIP PORT TRUST**  
**e-TCN NO. EM/IOHP-15/2019**  
 Name of the work "Repair / restoration of existing dust control system in Iron Ore Handling Plant" Estimated cost : Rs. 1,99,37,378/-. Last date & time of submission of bid : dt. 13.05.2019 up to 17:15 Hrs. Refer our website for details <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.  
 Executive Engineer (O) PPT/PR/22/2019-20, Dt.25.04.2019

# 'LMRC equipped with finest security equipment'

Lucknow (PNS): Keeping in mind the convenience and comfort of Lucknowites the LMRC is not only providing extremely suave means of mass rapid transport but is also equipped with the finest security equipment where no suspicious activity or a person can remain untouched by the Metro security system.

A senior LMRC official said that one such mechanism in place is the X-BIS (X-RAY Baggage Inspection System) which not only detects dangerous objects but also checks the alertness of the security personnel. "LMRC has used such systems for security checks on its metro stations, which not only detect the smallest suspicious object but also ensure that the security personnel posted on duty are fully prepared or not. This is done through Threat Image Protection (TIP), a software used to detect the alertness of the security personnel. This software periodically generates a false image of danger-

ous or suspicious objects (such as a gun or knife, etc) without any prescribed patterns and the security personnel sitting on the inspection machine will have to click on the image to make sure that the image of that dubious material is scanned properly," said an official.

He said that if this image was ignored by the security personnel, then it got recorded and reports were generated for such lapses at regular intervals. He further said that the X-BIS machines were capable of detecting metals as thin as 35 mm and were prepared to provide a back-up of half an hour in case the power supply was switched off. "Moreover, the images of the scanned luggage are stored in the feed machine and if the information of any previous event is required then the respective image can be taken from there. These machines can store up to 50,000 images and can also check 300 bags in an hour," said the official.

कानपुर विद्युत आपूर्ति कम्पनी लिमिटेड 14/71, सिविल लाइन्स, केसा हाउस, केसा, कानपुर ई-निविदा विस्तारण सूचना अपरिहार्य कारणों से ई-निविदा सं-12/आईटीओ सेल/18-19 दिनांक-06.05.2019 तक विस्तारित की जाती है, जो केसा की वेबसाइट <http://kesco.co.in> पर <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर (E-tender आइकन) उपलब्ध है। (आयको सिटि) अधिशासी अभियन्ता आईटीओ सेल पत्रांक-209 दिनांक-25.04.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में विजिली बचाये"

## SCHOOLSCAN



### EARTH DAY & OPEN DAY

Students of City Montessori School, Rajendra

Nagar Campus II, took out a march under the leadership of school's founder Jagdish

Gandhi to mark 'Earth Day' and urged people to keep the planet clean. After the march,

the students planted saplings at Jai Jagat Park near the school. Meanwhile, Open Day celebrations were held amid joy and enthusiasm. The students presented several programmes sending across the message for cleanliness. The students had their parents mesmerised with their talents in an art & craft and science exhibition.

### VOTER AWARENESS

St Joseph Inter College, Thakurganj, on Wednesday conducted a voter awareness campaign ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elec-

tions in Lucknow on May 6. Students of schools have already participated in various activities to encourage their family members and neighbours to exercise their right to vote. St Joseph Group of Institutions pasted posters about the importance of vote for future on all school vehicles to encourage people of Lucknow to go out and cast their votes. Managing directors of the school Rajesh Agrawal and Seema Agrawal urged the drivers and conductors of all the vehicles to motivate their family members, relatives and neighbours to vote.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF RAILWAY RESEARCH DESIGNS & STANDARDS ORGANISATION**  
 Manak Nagar, Lucknow-11.

**Notice for inviting E-Tender**

For and on behalf of President of Union of India. The Town Engineer RDSO, Lucknow invites open E-tender (online) for the following work :-

S. No.	Open tender No. & Name of work	Approx. Cost (Rs.)	Cost of Tender Document (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Completion Period	Date of closing/opening
1	<b>Tender Notice No. WKS-1341C1-TEN 25.04.2019</b> Zone work for year 2019-20 in sector-C quarters no C-1 to C-187, Hospital, Bahart Ghar, SSE/Sector-C Office, Recreation club, NDT Hostel and cooperative Market.	7545421.55	5000.00	150900.00	12 (Twelve) months	16.05.2019
2	<b>Tender Notice No. WKS-1341ASB1-TEN-25.04.2019</b> Zone work for year 2019-20 in sector-A and Service Building	7667084.07	5000.00	153400.00	12 (Twelve) months	16.05.2019
3	<b>Tender Notice No. WKS-1323C-TEN 24.04.2019</b> Civil work in connection with - (i) Repairing of roofs, existing cycle stand, Chemistry lab etc of KVS and provision of shed in prayer ground (ii) Extension of Skyway from existing FOB to Annex-I (iii) Provision of Air-conditioning in book section of Central Library in Annex-I Building at RDSO (iv) Replacement of roofing sheet of Shed No. 2 (Berthing complex of testing Directorate) including other civil work.	7542304.74	5000.00	150900.00	10 (Ten) months	16.05.2019
4	<b>Tender Notice No. WKS-1337A-TEN 25.04.2019</b> Construction of New Measuring Wheel Lab in premises of Old Fatigue Testing Laboratory.	13308351.65	5000.00	216600.00	10 (Ten) months	16.05.2019
5	<b>Tender Notice No. WKS-1326B-TEN 25.04.2019</b> Comprehensive operation & maintenance of the 1.6 MLD STP plant.	10971119.16	5000.00	204900.00	36 (Thirty Six) months	16.05.2019

Details of above e-tender are available on web site. ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)). Tenderers can submit their bids on 16.05.2019 up to 15.00 hrs. The above E-tender will be open on same day at 15.00 hrs. in the office of the Town Engineer, RDSO, Manak Nagar, Lucknow.

Town Engineer, RDSO, Lucknow.  
 For and on behalf of the president of union of India

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### PATNAIK TO PROBE...

The Bench asked Attorney General KK Venugopal about the issue of privilege claimed by Bains over some communications being protected under provisions of the Advocates Act.

Venugopal, while referring to provisions of law, said there was no lawyer-client relationship in this case as Bains has filed affidavit in his personal capacity and thus he cannot claim privilege over certain communications. Senior advocate Indira Jaising, who is appearing in person in the matter, told the Bench that they should clarify there is no connection between the hearing on affidavit of Bains and the separate in-house inquiry committee proceedings on allegations of sexual harassment against the CJL.

### CONG ENDS...

Priyanka Gandhi herself added to the buzz by saying on Tuesday that she would abide by her party's decision on the matter. Responding to questions on the decision to not field Priyanka Gandhi from Varanasi, Congress spokesperson Ragini Nayak said, "We have a process and system for fielding candidates. We believe the whole State (Uttar Pradesh) and the whole country needs Priyanka Gandhi's leadership. She is the general secretary for a large part of the State. We aim to win maximum seats from that region and voters are impacted by her leadership and simplicity." "Her (Priyanka Gandhi's) impact will be on the entire country," she said. Priyanka Gandhi has proved to be the party's star campaigner with her roadshows and rallies evoking tremendous enthusiasm during the poll campaign, the Congress leaders said.

### ARSENAL STORAGE...

Since the NHP has the expertise to construct such tunnels in tough terrain, the Army started negotiations last

year for the pilot project and the proposal by the company was cost effective and met all operational parameters of the force, they said. Underground storage in the tunnels will provide improved safety, easier camouflage from enemy observation and satellite imagery and protection from enemy strikes. Also, the tunnels will be built in the folds of the mountain thereby providing safety and security from the weather and enemy bombing. Moreover, as the conditions in the caverns are monitored and controlled, it ensures better safety of sensitive ammunition minimising accidental explosions. These cavern store bullets, anti-tank rockets and surface to air missiles.

### IGIA VIGILANT...

"Misuse of the aviation system by smugglers to evade customs and other enforcement agencies is a major concern. Meanwhile, both international and domestic airline passengers are sometimes unaware about the illegality of buying certain wildlife products and the grave conservation impact of their actions on various species in the wild," said a WWF official. Manish Kumar, IRS, Commissioner of Customs, IGI Airport, said, "Stamping out wildlife crime and smuggling is a high priority objective for Indian Customs. At the IGI Airport, we are constantly on alert against any attempts to smuggle wildlife contrabands. We appreciate the efforts undertaken by TRAFFIC and WWF-India for engaging in initiatives that will help to curtail smuggling of wildlife products and derivatives." Dr Saket Badola, Head of TRAFFIC's India office, said, "This is the first time TRAFFIC has partnered with Customs at Delhi's IGI airport and we hope this partnership can be extended to other airports in the country."

# Goods worth lakhs destroyed as wood godown catches fire



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Goods worth lakhs of rupees were destroyed when a devastating fire broke out in a wood godown on Kutchery Road near the Anand Hospital here on Thursday. Besides the godown, the towering inferno also engulfed a tiles and paint shop situated adjacent to it. Though no loss of human life was reported yet a number of cattle in the wood godown were roasted alive.

Commotion prevailed when the fire broke out in the wood godown. On seeing leaping tongues of flame people from the nearby areas poured water on the burning wood but all their efforts ended in vain. The fire assumed an alarming proportion and spread to a tile and paint shop situated close to it. The

chemicals at the paint and the tiles shop aggravated the situation.

On being informed about the incident the fire brigade personnel rushed to the spot. Twelve fire-tenders were pressed into service to extinguish the blaze. The fire brigade personnel battled the blaze fire for several hours and only then could they control it.

Shocked by the incident, the owner of the wood godown, Sunil Jaiswal, said that goods worth lakhs of rupees were reduced to ashes. The owner of the paint and tiles shop too said that the goods kept in his shop were completely destroyed and he incurred a huge loss.

The fire brigade personnel said that the cause of the fire could not be ascertained. Efforts were on to find out what caused the fire.

# US agencies to visit India to unravel Thowheed

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The US State Department and a host of officials from American covert agencies are set to make a beeline to India to get first-hand account and perspectives on the National Thowheed Jamat (NTJ) that executed the deadliest attack in the region in the last one decade by hitting luxury hotels and churches in Sri Lanka on Sunday.

The move comes as the US State Department was caught unaware despite the NTJ twitter handle following at least six officials of the US State department officials but could not get an assessment on the outfit's nefarious agenda even as India provided actionable inputs to Colombo two weeks before the bombings. The NTJ handle followed a total of 28 handles.

Interestingly, the security architecture of the servers of NTJ's online services is also based in the US which also hosts the servers of Pakistan-based terror groups Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba as also the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

## No travel advisory to Indians in Lanka by Doval's NSCC

**New Delhi:** While India provided actionable inputs to the Sri Lankan Government days ahead of the serial suicide bombings in capital Colombo, the National Security Council Secretariat headed by the National Security Advisor Ajit Doval did not bother to ensure issuance of a travel advisory to Indians against visiting luxury hotels and churches in the island nation. Had the travel advisory been issued in time, the precious lives of about a dozen Indians killed in the attacks could have been saved. The failure has been brushed under the carpet and even an enquiry has not been ordered till for the lapse. **PNS**

According to the inputs provided by India over two weeks before the serial suicide bombings, the NTJ was planning to target five-star hotels and churches following which the Sri Lankan police issued an alert to various police units but could not prevent the attacks.

As per the inputs with the Indian agencies, the NTJ had first tried to hit the Indian embassy in Colombo on April 4 but after finding the security tight enough, the outfit tried to target the US embassy on April 11 but to no avail. Following the failures, the NTJ decided to target the luxury hotels and the churches on April 21.

Post-26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, the who's who of American intelligence and investigation agencies had travelled to Mumbai to question Mohammad Ajmal Kasab, the lone terrorist nabbed in the case.

However, the NIA team had returned empty-handed from the US that had visited the US in 2009 to quiz David Coleman Headley, one of the conspirators of the Mumbai terror attacks.

The NTJ clearly posed itself as an anti-democracy organization and posted radical religious posts on its Twitter handle with a follower base of around 3,000 people.



## IN SHORT

### ARMY STARTS PROCESS TO INDUCT WOMEN AS JAWANS

**New Delhi:** In the first step of its kind, the Army on Thursday began the process to induct women as jawans or soldiers in the military police, nearly two years after Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat said women will be recruited as jawans. The Army started the online registration for recruitment in the Corps of military and the last date for filing application has been fixed as June 8.

### RAPE CASE: SAD SEEKS EC'S INTERVENTION

**New Delhi:** The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Thursday urged the Election Commission (EC) to direct the Punjab Police to take prompt action against a school board member accused of raping a minor girl. In a complaint submitted to the EC, the SAD urged the poll panel to get the issue probed by a senior police officer keeping in view the seriousness of the charges. **New Delhi:** Having been banned by the EC from holding public rallies for 48 hours over his derogatory remarks against Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Himachal Pradesh BJP chief Satpal Satti has been issued another notice by the poll body on why action should not be taken against him for making "derogatory" and "inciting" remarks against his political opponents.

### SC DIRECTS EC TO ACT ON COMPLAINT OF TMC

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Election Commission to take action on a complaint by TMC candidate Mahua Moitra against BJP leader Mahadev Sarkar for allegedly making sexually coloured remarks. A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi directed the EC to pass a reasoned order forthwith.

### SC IRKED OVER ASSAM'S RESPONSE ON FOREIGNERS

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court got irked on Thursday over unsatisfactory response of the Assam Government on deportation and conditional release of illegal foreigners and cautioned the State's Chief Secretary, saying that it would issue a contempt notice against him.

### Bumper foodgrain output expected this kharif season

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

**W**ith the Indian Meteorological Department forecasting "near normal" monsoon this year, the Agriculture Ministry on Thursday set its target for foodgrain production during kharif season 2019-20 at 147.9 million tonnes (MT), with rice output pegged at 102 MT. These targets are higher when compared to the actual kharif output for 2018-19, which is 142.24 MT, as per the second advance estimates.

The Ministry also expects the production during the 2019-20 rabi season to be tentatively around 143.2 MT. At the National Conference on Agriculture, officials said rice production would touch the 102 MT-mark this kharif season, while maize production would be around 21.3 MT. The production of bumper foodgrain output expected this kharif season, cereals will be about 35.8 MT, while that of pulses would be around 10.1 MT. The output of jowar, bajra and ragi will be 2.1 MT, 9.5 MT and 2.3 MT, respectively. Also, total oil seeds production is likely to be 25.84 MT and the sugarcane output is expected to be 385.50 MT, the Ministry said. Cotton output is estimated to be 35.75 million bales (each of 170 kg).

## OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY DISCUSSED

# 3-day Navy commanders' meet ends

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

**A**s tension prevails between India and Pakistan post Pulwama attack and the three Armed Forces are now on full alert to meet any situation, functional reorganisation of Indian Navy towards improving operational efficiency formed the core of discussions during the three-day Navy commanders' conference which ended here on Thursday.

The conference assumed greater significance in the backdrop of Pulwama-associated events that have brought country's defence under sharper focus and provided the higher naval leadership a forum to discuss the emerging challenges in the maritime domain and fine tune the strategies for responding to the evolving geo-strategic environment, officials said here.

Forty Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed on February 14 in Pulwama in a suicide attack. The IAF carried out air strikes on Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) training camp in Balakot, Pakistan on February 26. Pakistan retaliated the next day and tried to conduct air strikes against military installations of India in Rajouri sector.

Inaugurating the conclave, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman complimented the Indian Navy for maintaining a



high operational tempo and its ability to not only safeguard India's interest in the maritime domain but also coerce an adversary into submission as was evident during the recent standoff.

During the interaction, the Defence Minister reviewed the combat readiness, pace of modernisation and progress of various acquisition and infrastructure related cases. While praising the Indian Navy's foreign cooperation efforts to support the Navies in the region, she urged the Naval Commanders to optimally utilise available resources to

build a strong Navy that is ready and vigilant to counter any challenge that may emerge in the maritime domain.

Chairing the conference, Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba addressed the Commanders on various important issues pertaining to operational readiness, capability enhancement, maintenance, op logistics, infrastructure development and human resource management.

Functional Reorganisation of Indian Navy towards improving Operational Efficiency and 'Optimal Manning'

formed the core of discussions towards finalising the long term road map of the Navy.

In keeping with the Navy's ethos of harnessing niche technologies, concrete plans to incorporate 'Big Data Analytics' and 'Artificial Intelligence' for solutions in the domains of naval combat, convergence of networks, information, logistics, administration and equipment health monitoring for sustained operation were also discussed.

The next edition of Naval Commanders' Conference is scheduled in October or November this year.

## Forces Tribunal directs Govt to reply in 3 weeks regarding Vice-Admiral's plea

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

**T**wo days after Vice Admiral Bimal Verma approached the Armed Forces Tribunal again challenging the selection of his junior Karambir Singh as the next Navy chief, the Tribunal on Thursday directed the Central Government to submit its response within three weeks. The new Navy chief takes over on May 31 after incumbent Admiral Sunil Lanba retires that day. Verma in his plea had sought a stay on the Government order on March 23 appointing Singh as the next Navy chief.

Verma, now heading the strategically important Andaman and Nicobar Command, had earlier withdrawn his plea on April 8 after the Tribunal asked him to first exhaust all other ways including seeking redress from the Navy through a statutory complaint. The officer, however, again appealed to the Tribunal on Tuesday. His daughter Rhea Verma and Ankur Chibber are representing Verma in the legal battle.

Incidentally, Verma, younger brother of former Navy Chief Nirmal Verma, had filed the statutory complaint on April 10. The petitioner retires in November. During the proceedings here on Thursday, the centre sought four weeks time regarding the appeal filed by Verma on April 23 and the

matter will now come up for hearing again on May 20, Verma's daughter Rhea said. She also said the central government has to positively decide on the complaint by May 15.

In the latest petition filed in the Tribunal on Tuesday, Verma had sought that the government order on March 23 to appoint Karambir Singh as the next Navy Chief instead of him be stayed.

The petition filed by his daughter Rhea Verma said "Call for confidential reports of the applicant and Vice Admiral Karambir... examine them to see whether any irrelevant and extraneous considerations were placed to reject applicant's case and if so, to expunge the extraneous considerations and direct the competent authority to re-examine the case," the plea said.

The plea said the Vice Admiral had filed a statutory complaint before the Defence Ministry for not being appointed the next Navy Chief despite being the senior most and asked it to decide the matter urgently within ten days. "The complaint is still pending with the competent authority and hence this original application (petition)," the plea said.

In a communication dated March 23, he had stated that the government has "illegally" and in a "wrongful" manner appointed his junior Karambir Singh as the next Navy chief.

Verma had stated that he felt that the respondents (government) had illegally and in a wrongful manner used the two letters of Severe Displeasure, which were issued to him in 2005 and 2007, to deny him the post of the Navy chief.

The two letters were issued to Verma on October 28, 2005, and June 20, 2007, and he was promoted to the rank of Commodore and Rear Admiral afterwards, thereby taking away the sting of the said letters.

Verma also said "it is imperative that the Armed Forces court apply the 'Wednesbury rule' and consider whether relevant facts are not considered and irrelevant facts were considered by the respondents before passing the impugned letter."

The Naval headquarters forwarded the name of Verma along with Vice Admiral Karambir Singh and Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar, the Flag Officer Commander-in-Chief Western Naval Command and Vice Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla, the Flag Officer Southern Naval Command, to head the Navy. Verma retires in November end.

It is the second time in the current NDA regime that the seniority tradition was overlooked. In the first case in 2016, Bipin Rawat was appointed the Army Chief superseding the senior most officer Lt General Pravin Bakshi.

## Ex-Army chief appointed Indian envoy to Seychelles

**New Delhi:** Former Army chief Dalbir Singh Suhag has been appointed as India's next high commissioner to Seychelles, a country which is of strategic importance to India in the Indian Ocean region.

"He is expected to take up the assignment shortly," the Ministry of External Affairs said while making the announcement. General (retired) Suhag was the Army chief from July 31, 2014, to December 31, 2016. He was also part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka in 1987.

His appointment as Indian High Commissioner to Seychelles comes amid deepening military ties between India and the island nation.

India is developing Assumption Island in Seychelles as a naval base to expand its footprint in the strategically-key region where China has been trying to enhance its military presence. An agreement to develop the island was inked in 2015 between India and Seychelles.

In June last year, Seychelles President Danny Faure visited India during which both countries agreed to work together on the Assumption Island project. Before his visit to India, there were reports from the island nation that it was cancelling the pact with New Delhi. **PTI**

## Candidates will have to advertise criminal records from poll expenses: EC

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

**T**he Election Commission (EC) has made it clear that candidates will have to bear the cost of advertising their criminal antecedents in TV and newspapers as it comes in the category of 'poll expenses'. The poll panel has made it compulsory for candidates contesting elections to advertise their criminal antecedents in TV and newspapers at least thrice during electioneering.

Though directions in this regard were issued on October 10, 2018, the rule is being used for the first time in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

EC officials said political parties have been informed

that candidates will have to bear the cost of the advertisement from their poll expenses. Some parties had approached the poll panel urging it to allow the advertisement expenditure be borne by them and not the candidates.

The parties too will have to advertise the criminal records of the candidates they have fielded. The expenditure of advertisement by the parties will be borne by them.

This means that candidates and parties contesting the elections will have to publicise their criminal records at least on three different dates in widely circulated newspapers and popular TV channels during the campaign period.



Candidates who do not have records have to mention that. The candidates will now have to fill up an amended form (number 26). They will have to inform parties about their antecedents such as cases in which they have been convicted and cases pending against them.

The parties, the EC said, will be "obliged" to put the information about the candidates on their websites. The EC direction of October, 2018 was silent on whether the candidates will have to pay from their pocket for the publicity.

Parties which fail to comply, face the prospects of getting their recognition withdrawn or

suspended. Candidates have to submit clippings of their declaration published in papers and parties have to submit details about the number of such candidates in a state.

While there is a ceiling on expenditure of candidates, the parties have no such limit. Candidates in Lok Sabha polls can spend up to ₹70 lakh.

All registered political parties have to submit a statement of their election expenditure to the election commission within 90 days of the completion of the Lok Sabha elections.

All candidates are required to submit their expenditure statement to the poll panel within 30 days of the completion of the elections.

## CBI calls TDP leader for questioning in bank fraud

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

**T**he CBI has called former Union Minister and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader YS Chowdary for questioning in connection with a bank fraud case. He has been asked to appear on Friday at the agency's office at Bengaluru.

"I can confirm that I do not have any connection, knowledge or acquaintance with the company referred or its affairs at any point time. I will be taking appropriate steps in the matter," Chowdary asserted. The CBI had registered a

case against electrical equipment manufacturer Best and Crompton Engineering Projects Limited for allegedly cheating Andhra Bank to the tune of ₹71 crore in 2017. In its FIR against the Chennai-based company and its five directors, including Managing Director Kakulamari Srinivas Kalyan Rao, the CBI has slapped charges under Indian Penal Code sections pertaining to criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery among others and relevant provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, they added.

## 1 hour a day: WHO issues guidelines for under-5 kids' screen time

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

**W**atching television or videos or even playing games on mobiles should not be more than an hour at a go for kids under 5, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has said, concerned at the inactivity fueling a rise in the numbers of obese or overweight children worldwide.

Toddlers are most vulnerable to screens. The WHO in its first of its guidelines for the parents said that infants aged 18 months and younger should not be exposed to any digital media.

Obesity in young age can lead to premature death from

heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and some forms of cancer. Also, shorter sleep duration has been associated with more TV viewing and time spent playing computer games, said the global health agency in its guidelines released recently to its member states.

It noted that under-fives should also be physically active and get adequate sleep to help develop good lifelong habits and prevent obesity and other diseases in later life.

"What we are cautioning on is over-use of those electronic screen times with young children," WHO expert Dr. Fiona Bull said in a statement here.



The WHO said children between one and four years old should spend at least three hours in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day. "Infants under one should interact in floor-based

play and avoid all screens," it said as it noted that being inactive is fueling a rise in the numbers of obese or overweight people worldwide.

"Preventing these deaths needs to start in very early life," Bull said.

One in three adults today are overweight or obese, and one in four adults does not do enough physical activity, she said. "In this age group of under 5s, it is currently 40 million children around the world (who) are overweight. Of that (figure) 50 per cent are in Africa and the southeast Asia region," Bull said. That translates into 5.9 per cent of children globally.

Noting that early childhood is a period of rapid physical and cognitive development during which habits are formed and family lifestyle routines are adaptable, the WHO said, "sedentary behaviors, whether riding motorized transport rather than walking or cycling, sitting at a desk in school, watching TV or playing inactive screen-based games are increasingly prevalent and associated with poor health outcomes."

Chronic insufficient sleep in children has been associated with increased excessive fat accumulation as measured by body mass index (BMI), it said.

# 2 Hizbul terrorists killed in Anantnag

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces early Thursday morning neutralised two Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, including an under graduate, pursuing a course in Physiotherapy, in Bagender Mohalla of Bijbehara in South Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Security forces suffered no collateral damage in the clinical operation, launched in the thickly populated area after receiving a specific intelligence input about the presence of armed terrorists in the area.

Since one of the terrorists neutralised in the gun fight was a resident of Bijbehara, sporadic protests were reported in the area at several places.

The security forces exercised restraint to contain the law and order situation.

Police spokesman said, "security forces on Thursday

morning recovered two dead bodies from the hide out after the encounter was called off in the area". One of the terrorist was identified as Safder Amin Bhat, a ninth class drop out, resident of village Zirpara in Bijbehara. He was active in the area since May 2017, police spokesman said.

Another terrorist, according to police was identified as Burhan Ahmad Ganie alias Saifullah.

After completing his class 12, Burhan was pursuing a graduate course in Physiotherapy. He is a resident of Malipora Hablish, Kulgam, at present residing in SK Colony of Anantnag. He was active in the area since June 2018.

Police also recovered one AK rifle and one SLR from their hideout.

Meanwhile, security has been beefed up along the 300 km long Jammu-Srinagar

National Highway ahead of the shifting of the Durbar move offices from April 27.

Due to strict security related restrictions, the state government has chalked out a comprehensive schedule of movement of durbar move employees to ensure their hassle free travel.

To prevent any attack on the movement of the vehicles elaborate security arrangements would remain in place.

In the wake of regular suspension of traffic on account of land sliding on the National Highway the state government has already made parallel arrangements across different district headquarters to meet any contingency.

Due to security restrictions on the highway the state government has also appealed to the state govt employees to remain alert and respond to the situation appropriately.

## IN BARMER'S LAST BORDER VILLAGE

# Farmers mortgage jewellery to feed their cattle

**Barmer:** Hajeeb Ali, 70, had to mortgage his wife's jewellery to feed fodder to his beloved cattle in Bandasar, a last village in Barmer Lok Sabha constituency along the international border with Pakistan. Ali is not alone in his village, a Muslim-dominated area.

There are many in Bandasar who are facing acute difficulties for a long time to arrange fodder in Barmer, which has no pasture land for cattle.

Shortage of fodder is a major poll issue in the Thar district Lok Sabha constituency. Ali says in every election, candidates of political parties come to the village to seek votes, but after winning polls, they never return.

A drought is a bad time for cattle as their source of food dries up, even if they are abandoned and allowed to roam freely by farmers.

In Bandasar and 150 villages nearby, small and big — such as Munabav, Ramsar, Bhigusi, Gagaria, Bhajpar, Derasar and Bikusar, when there is no rain, farmers have to



look for other things, including working under MGNREGA and going to Ahmedabad, around 500 kilometers from Bandasar, in search of work to feed both family and cattle. Ali has 28 cows and calves. But, he said, he and his wife, who considered them as a part of their family, worry every two-three days as to how to arrange fodder instead of feeding their children as arrangement of their food cost them much less than what cattle eat.

He says he has around 100 acre land in Bandasar, but it is lying useless as he cannot use it

because of the drought-situation.

"I had to mortgage 170 grams of gold jewellery of my wife to arrange money for fodder for my cattle. I and my wife consider cattle like our family. Our cattle is everything to us.

"Government should find a permanent solution to this problem existing across the Thar desert area," Ali said.

When there is rain, pasture land is easily available for cattle, Subha Momin, another villager, said.

Ramesh Chand, a former

sarpanch of the nearby border village of Gatra, said the Rajasthan government used to run fodder camps where cattle food was available at subsidised rates for farmers, but for the last three years, no such camp has been organised.

Chand also said that farmers having not more than 12 acres of land would only be covered by the scheme, and because of this, most farmers, who have desert land ranging from 40 to 100 acres, are deprived of state-run programmes.

There are around 300 small and big villages in Barmer Lok Sabha constituency, falling within a 50-70 km radius from the international border.

Government has constructed concrete wells to store rain water, but this is only useful when there is good amount of rainfall.

Due to water scarcity in the desert area, people have to shell out Rs 2,000 to 3,000 to buy 2,500 litres of water which is used for both family members and cattle.

"Not only Barmer, the

entire Thar desert area of Rajasthan has been facing water scarcity. But government is doing nothing. Being far-reach areas, candidates come only for campaigning, and once elections are over, nobody comes to these villages," says Changa, who goes by his first name.

Apart from shortage of fodder and water scarcity, health is also an issue in those villages where no hospital facility has been set up by authorities.

Desar village, 50 km from the international border, has a population of 6,000 persons, but it and its nearby areas do not have any health facility.

Nawaj Ali, a villager, says when a person has fever, he or his family has to spend around Rs 1,000 on the transportation to reach the city area of Barmer to get medical treatment.

"In case of emergency, we have to rush patients to a health facility located at Barmer's city point to get him or her medical treatment, and this situation is a brisk business for transporters," he said. Barmer goes to polls on April 29. **PTI**

# Giriraj booked for violating model code of conduct

**Begusarai (Bihar):** Union Minister Giriraj Singh was on Thursday booked for violating model code of conduct by making controversial remarks against the Muslim community at a rally here a day ago where BJP national president Amit Shah, among others, was present.

According to District Magistrate, Begusarai, Rahul Kumar, the FIR was lodged at Town police station under relevant sections of the Representation of People Act and the Indian Penal Code taking suo motu cognizance of the "controversial" remarks made by Singh at Wednesdays rally.

Besides Shah, the rally was attended by a number of other BJP leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi. Singh is contesting from Begusarai Lok Sabha as the NDA candidate and he is engaged in a three-cornered fight with CPI's Kanhaiya Kumar and RJD's Tanveer Hassan.

Video footage of Singh's brief address at the rally was telecast on news channels wherein he can be heard saying, "I would like to say, Giriraj Singh's ancestors died and were cremated. You need a yard of land even after you die, for burial of your mortal remains. If you say you cannot chant Vande Mataram, this nation will never forget you".

"There are many people who are trying to spread communal passions. We will not allow that to happen anywhere in Bihar including Begusarai. The RJD candidate in Darbhanga recently said he had problems with reciting Vande Mataram", Singh said referring to Abdul Bari Siddiqui's comments on Sunday last.

"In Begusarai too, many can be seen spewing venom wearing bade bhai ka kurta and chhoti bhai ka pyjama", he said referring to the long shirts and short trousers that are usually associated with devout Muslims. **PTI**

# Amid fresh dissidence, HDK meets Cong leaders

**Bengaluru:** With dissidence in ruling coalition partner Congress surfacing again, Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Thursday took stock of the situation with his deputy G Parameshwara and senior Minister DK Shivakumar.

During the meeting, the Congress-JD(S) coalition leaders are said to have discussed about the threat by rebel Congress MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi to quit the party along with other legislators with him, and its implications on the Government.

The meeting also came in the backdrop of the BJP predicting the fall of the coalition Government after the Lok Sabha election results are declared on May 23.

Emerging out of the meeting with Chief Minister, who has taken a break after busy campaigning for about a month, Parameshwara ruled out any threat to the coalition Government.

"We have discussed politics also, but we also have information that there are no such developments (threatening the

Government)," the Congress leader told reporters.

"we don't have any apprehension about the collapse of the government as being claimed by the BJP," he said.

The government isstable, he asserted, adding they held discussions with the chief minister about facing drought situation in parts of the state.

Speculation about the longevity of the Congress-JD(S) coalition government in Karnataka has again come to the fore after the second and final phase of Lok Sabha polls in the state on Tuesday, with state BJP chief B S Yeddyurappa predicting its collapse after the election results.

There are talks within political circles that any adverse results for the coalition in the Lok Sabha polls will have its implications on the stability of the state government.

The Congress and JDS, which stitched an alliance after contesting the assembly elections separately last year, had an understanding for the Parliamentary polls despite resentment among the grass root workers and leaders of

both the parties.

Adding to this was the threat by Jarkiholi, who has been hobnobbing with the BJP for some time now and threatening he along with other MLAs would resign from Congress soon.

His public posturing has caused fear among the ruling coalition leaders as it could trigger the number game in the assembly.

Karnataka Pradesh Congress President Dinesh Gundu Rao, however expressed hopeness that Jarkiholi would think with "good sense" and not quit. Rao also warned of adverse consequence by believing in BJP.

"Congress has not done any injustice to him (Jarkiholi), party has always stood by him, he is five-time MLA from the party and has been a Minister.

"He too may not have any negative opinion against the party and is giving somestatement due to some reasons, this is my feeling," he added. Rao, however, ruled out any talks with him and said May 23 Lok Sabha poll results will put an end to every thing. **PTI**

# Those trying to tinker with Art 370 are playing with fire: Abdullah

**Srinagar:** National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah on Thursday said those who are trying to repeal articles 370 and 35-A of the Constitution, which guarantee special status to Jammu & Kashmir, are playing with fire.

"The need of the hour is to douse these flames and not to add fuel to the fire," Abdullah said, addressing a poll campaign rally at Devsar in Kulgam district.

The former Chief Minister asserted that no one can subdue Kashmiris.

"History bears the testimony to the fact that no one was able to enslave Kashmiris. We have fought Mughals, Pathans and other despotic regimes and never let anyone subdue us.

"New Delhi will have our respect, only if they respect the people of this State. No one should dare tinker with our self

esteem of the Kashmiris have always responded to the brickbats thrown at them with determination," he said.

Cautioning the people against forces inimical to the state's special status, Abdullah said the forces which have been inimical to the state's special status come in different hues and colors trying to destroy it.

"Kashmiris, however, have never allowed such forces to succeed in their nefarious designs; today the situation is no different. Today we see the BJP-RSS cheekily taking vows to destroy the identity and integrity of our State," he said.

He added that articles 370 and 35-A protect the state natives rights to jobs, land holdings and scholarships.

"Any move to scuttle the articles will have far reaching consequences on the people of the state. So it is imperative for

the people across the state, in particular the people of south Kashmir to vote. Every vote you cast will set the recourse of our State for the next half a decade," he added.

The former chief minister said the people of Kashmir can tackle their problems only through ballots and not guns.

"The problem cannot be resolved by using guns or pelting stones. It is only through the use of vote that the people of Kashmir can find a way forward.

"The gun culture has only added to the miseries of the people and made us susceptible to the machinations of those who are inimical to our identity. The people have to forge unity and come in large numbers to vote in order to save the identity, integrity, pluralistic visage and special constitutional status of our state," he said. **PTI**

# India had shared actionable inputs with Sri Lanka before blasts, says Rajnath

**Mumbai:** Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has said Indian authorities shared "actionable" intelligence with Sri Lanka before the serial blasts rocked the neighbouring country.

Nearly 360 people were killed in the Easter Sunday bombings in the island nation. "Desired and actionable inputs were shared with the authorities in Sri Lanka prior to the blasts. But unfortunately, they (plotters) succeeded," Singh told PTI.

Asked if Sri Lanka failed to act on those inputs, he said it is not a question of blaming that country's Government for it.

Nine suicide bombers, believed to be members of local Islamist extremist group named National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ), carried out the series of blasts that tore through three churches and three luxury hotels.

However, the NTJ has not

claimed responsibility for the attacks.

According to officials, intelligence inputs about a possible terror attack in Sri Lanka, targeting the Indian High Commission, were shared by Indian agencies with their counterparts in the island nation earlier this month after the National Investigation Agency completed its probe into an ISIS-inspired module planning to kill prominent leaders in south India.

The inputs were sent through diplomatic channels to Sri Lanka after a thorough investigation pertaining to the ISIS case in Coimbatore was carried out by the NIA, which has filed a charge sheet against seven people. During investigation, the probe team had stumbled upon videos of NTJ leader Zahran Hashim, which was indicative of a terror attack on the Indian High Commission in Colombo. **PTI**

## MAMATA ON KURTA REMARK

# 'PM using my civility for political gain'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

While articles as innocuous as "chuninda Kurta" and "Bangali Mithai" threatening to upset Mamata Banerjee's minority appellation, the Bengal Chief Minister on Thursday took initiative to control damage done by Narendra Modi's off-the-cuff remark on how "Didi occasionally sends him chuninda Kurta and Bangali Mithai."

In an apparent bid to establish her political difference with Modi more than ever before, the Chief Minister on Thursday mounted a no-holds-barred attack on the Prime Minister saying courtesy was the last thing that would appear in his dictionary.

"I sent him kurta and sweets as I regularly do to the other politicians irrespective of their political identity. But that is a part of my courtesy and here this man is trying to make use of that to gain political points," Banerjee told a huge rally at Durgapur adding "I send such gifts during the Durga Pujas which represents my culture and upbringing."

The Prime Minister had in an interview to film star Akshay Kumar said that "though this may cause some political flutter I must concede that Mamata Didi often sends me choicest kurta mostly selected by her personally. In fact after learning that I had liked the sweets sent to me by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, she did the same by regularly sending me some delicious Bangali Mithai." A subsequent statement



by Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh tended to rub salt in injury when he claimed "I have no problems in sending gifts. Even I have a good personal relationship with the Chief Minister. I appreciate her gesture when she calls me up to inquire after my health whenever I am unwell."

The Prime Ministerial interview was televised on Wednesday causing an immediate reaction in the ruling Trinamool Congress circle even as Banerjee's nephew and MP Abhishek Banerjee said "had such gifts been sent to him why he did not make it public earlier and why is he telling it now." Banerjee who earlier said that she would "send gifts to him but not allow him to take votes" on Thursday increased her decibel level following reports that the Left Front the earlier 'custodians' of the minority votes in the State had gone to town (read villages) raising questions on the "setting (read adjustment) between Didi and Modibhai."

This even as Bengal CPI(M) secretary and party politburo member Suryokanto

Mishra said "the Prime Minister has finally spilled the bin exposing the real chemistry between the two sides. We have been for long been telling how the two sides were working on an adjustment basis which first started in 2001 when Mamata Banerjee sent a bouquet to Modi when he became the Chief Minister of Gujarat."

## WOMAN FORCED TO DRINK ACID AFTER VOTING FOR CONG

In a gruesome incident relating to post-poll-violence, a homemaker was allegedly forced to gulp down acid by her in-laws. Her fault: she had voted for Congress Party. The incident took place on Tuesday at Mohanpur village in Murshidabad parliamentary constituency and came to light on Thursday.

Makhan Biwi, the victim was fighting for her life in hospital, son Rafzal said. "My mother was pulled back home by her hair after she emerged from inside the booth. I tried to protect her but my father, grandfather and uncles locked me inside a room. From there I saw them forcing apart her mouth and pouring acid in it."

The boy and his sister were also beaten up for trying to intervene, he said adding her mother had allegedly voted for the Congress which was not liked by his family which backed the TMC. Murshidabad had already seen one poll-related death and three near-fatal injuries on Tuesday with alleged TMC goons stabbing to death a Congress worker.

# BJP is not politicising soldiers' valour, says Nirmala Sitharaman

**Mumbai:** Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday denied Opposition's allegation that the BJP was politicising security forces' valour to seek votes, saying her party was only talking about the "political will" necessary to combat terror.

"Who is politicising the (valour of) security forces? We haven't done it," she said, speaking to reporters here.

The UPA government led by Manmohan Singh lacked the political will to combat terrorism which was evident after the 26/11 Mumbai attack, the BJP leader said.

The Narendra Modi government took "decisive" steps and showed "political will" to combat terror, which was seen in the 2016 surgical strike and Balakot air strike in February in the aftermath of Uri and Pulwama attacks, respectively, Sitharaman said.

"The Congress feels hesitant to talk about political will, hence it thinks we are politicising (the valour of soldiers)," she said. "We are not politicising the

valour, but talking about the political leadership's will to take action which is not politicisation," the defence minister said.

She also attacked the Congress over its poll promise to review the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, saying it would be difficult for the Army to operate in a state such as Jammu and Kashmir in its absence.

"For AFSPA to be removed, changes have to be brought on the ground first through programmes. Till that time, it cannot be removed," the minister said. Sitharaman also hit out at Opposition for questioning the Balakot air strike or seeking the proof of the surgical strike.

She felt "sad", she said, adding that Pakistan would like Opposition's language.

To a question, Sitharaman said due procedure was followed in negotiating the Rafale deal. There was no need to change the defence procurement policy in the context of the deal, which the Congress is criticising for alleged irregularities, she added. **PTI**

# Bengaluru under security blanket after blasts in Lanka

**Bengaluru:** In the wake of the terror attacks in Sri Lanka, the police here on Thursday stepped up security and initiated elaborate measures to prevent such an incident.

In addition, the police have decided to set up an anti-terrorist cell in the city and have written to Karnataka Government in this regard.

As part of the measures, the police convened a meeting with head of various institutions, religious places and commercial establishment with a foothold of more than 500.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, city police commissioner T Suneel Kumarsaid he has instructed deputy commissioners to gather information on religious places where lots of people congregate.

The deputy commissioners, in turn, have been directed to instruct the managers of malls and hotels. Further, the commissioner decided to hold a meeting with the trustees, board members and managers of religious institutions and commercial places. **PTI**

# An electoral battleground for many political stalwarts

**Mumbai:** From Dalit icon Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to noted Communist leader Sripad Dange, many a political stalwart have tried their luck in parliamentary elections from Mumbai. There have also been surprises like when firebrand trade union leader George Fernandes trounced Congress heavyweight S K Patil from the Mumbai South Lok Sabha constituency in 1967.

Before delimitation in 2008, the city district had three Lok Sabha constituencies - Mumbai South, South Central and North Central. Mumbai district was divided into Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburb in 1990. In 1952,

Mumbai's parliamentary constituencies were Mumbai South, Mumbai North and Mumbai Suburbs. While in 1957, there were Mumbai City South, Mumbai Central and Mumbai North.

In 1962, the Lok Sabha seats were Mumbai City South, Mumbai City South Central and Mumbai City North Central (SC). Ambedkar, who was the law minister in the Jawaharlal Nehru government formed after independence, contested as the candidate of the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) from Mumbai North in 1952. However, the chief Constitution-maker was defeated by Congress candidate

Narayan Kajrolkar. Kajrolkar had bagged 1,38,137 votes, while Ambedkar polled 1,23,576 votes.

In 1957, Defence Minister VK Krishna Menon of the Congress won from Mumbai North.

While Dange, a founding member of the Communist Party of India (CPI), was elected to the Lok Sabha from Mumbai Central in 1957, Fernandes emerged as a "giant killer" in 1967 by defeating Congress's Patil from Mumbai South.

Another interesting feature is that in 1971, Shiv Sena leader Manohar Joshi contested from Mumbai North

Central but lost to R D Bhandare of the Congress.

In 1984, Joshi, who later went on to become the first Shiv Sena Chief Minister of Maharashtra, unsuccessfully contested as the BJP nominee against Sharad Dighe of the Congress from Mumbai North Central.

Another top Sena leader, Wamanrao Mahadik, had contested on a BJP ticket from Mumbai South Central in 1984.

Communist stalwart Ahilya Rangnekar was elected from Mumbai North Central in 1977 and Pramila Dandavate, the wife of former Union minister Madhu Dandavate, had made it to the Lok Sabha from the same constituency in 1980.

In 1984, trade unionist Datta Samant was elected to the Lower House of Parliament from Mumbai South-Central as an independent.

The metropolis now has half a dozen Lok Sabha seats — Mumbai North, Mumbai North-West, Mumbai North-East, Mumbai North-Central, Mumbai South-Central and Mumbai South — which go to the polls on April 29. **PTI**

### CAT stays suspension of IAS officer who checked PM Modi's helicopter

**Bengaluru (PTI):** The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) here on Thursday stayed the order of the Election Commission suspending IAS officer Mohammed Mohsin for checking Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's helicopter in Odisha. The officer from Karnataka cadre, deployed in Odisha as a general observer, was suspended on April 17 for checking Modi's helicopter in Odisha's Sambalpur in viola-

tion of norms for dealing with SPG protectees and sent back to the state. The CAT maintained that during an election process while reasonable assurances of protection and security must be made available to

SPG protectees, it cannot be said "they are eligible for anything and everything." Mohsin had tried to check some luggage in the convoy of the Prime Minister and the EC order had said he had acted in

violation of existing instructions of the commission. In its order, the CAT, which adjudicates disputes involving central government employees, noted that there was a circular regarding the SPG protectees

that they are exempted from certain examinations on certain grounds. It also said: "We will not go into the SPG protectees guidelines as per the bluebook right now but the rule of law must prevail." The tribunal

also took note of the submission of the applicant's counsel who pointed out that there were news about heavy packages unloaded from prime minister's cavalcade being taken away in other vehicle.

## NOTICE

Obra-C Badaun Transmission Limited having its registered office at C/105, Anand Niketan, New Delhi intends to apply to the Government of Uttar Pradesh to confer upon him all the powers under section 164 of the Electricity Act, 2003 for the placing of electric lines or electrical plant for the transmission of electricity or for the purpose of telephonic or telegraphic communications necessary for the proper coordination of works which telegraph authority possess under the Indian Telegraph Act 1885 with respect to the placing of telegraph lines and posts for the purpose of a telegraph established or maintained, by the Government or to be so established or maintained and will undertake the survey, construction, installation, inspection, erection and other works to be followed by commissioning, operation, maintenance and other works for the following transmission schemes within the state of Uttar Pradesh :-

**Name of The Scheme:** "Evacuation of power from Obra-C (2x660 MW) Thermal Power Project & Construction of 400 kV GIS Substation Badaun with associated Transmission Lines".

**Work Covered under the Scheme :-**

- LILO of 765 kV Anpara 'D' Unnao S/C line at Obra-CTPS.
- Establishment of 400/220/132 kV (GIS) substation (2x315 + 2x160) MVA, at Badaun:

<p><b>400 kV:</b> ICTs: 2x315 MVA ICT bays: 2 no. Line bays: 4 nos. Line bays :2 nos. for 13th plan as per Sr. No 7 Space for future line bays: 2 no Space for future ICT 400/220/132 kV 315 MVA Space for future ICT bay 1 no.</p>	<p><b>220 kV:</b> ICTs: 2x160 MVA ICT bays: 4 nos. Line bays: 6 nos. Space for future line bays: 2 no. Space for future ICT 220/132 kV 160 MVA Space for future ICT bay 2 nos.</p>	<p><b>132 kV:</b> ICT bays: 2 no. Line bays: 4 nos. Space for future bays: 4 no. Space for future ICT bays : 1 no.</p>
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- 400 kV D/C Roza – Badaun line
- LILO of 220 kV C. B. Ganj (220kV) – Badaun (220kV) S/C line
- LILO of 220 kV Chandausi (220kV) – Badaun (220kV) S/C line at 400 kV Badaun substation
- 132kV Badaun Ujhani – Badaun (400 kV) S/C line And 132 kV Bilsil – Badaun (400 kV) S/C line  
**Note:** Both the above 132 kV SC line shall be constructed as a combine double circuit line upto (i) 30 kms from 400 kV substation Badaun and thereafter separate single circuit line for Ujhani and Bilsil.
- 2 Nos. 132 kV bays (one each at 132 kV substation Ujhani and Bilsil substations)
- 2 Nos. 400 kV bays at Badaun for 13th plan substations
- 400 kV Double Circuit Jaunpur - Obra line (upto LILO point of Obra 'B' – Obra 'C' Line)  
The transmission lines covered under the scheme will pass through, over, around and between the following villages, towns, and cities in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

**1. LILO of 765 kV Anpara 'D' Unnao S/C line at Obra-CTPS.**

**District:** Sonbhadra **Tehsil:** Robertsganj  
**Name of Villages:** Obra Bazar, Billi, Billi, Kharaitiya, Gurur, Chakari, Kharaitiya Ghat, Mairadand, Tapu, Gusari, Gusari, Satichaura, Kharahara, Amila, Babhni, Kaspani, Chakari Ghat, Kariya.

**400 kV D/C Roza – Badaun line**

**District:** Shahjahanpur **Tehsil:** Shahjahanpur  
**Name of Villages:** Ramanpur, Barkatpur, Paintapur, Nigaua, Ahmadnagar, Bilandpur, Maholia (Khand), Gori Khurd, Sirhra, Seora, Daudpur, Kahilla Rs, Benti, Ainthapur, Jalalpur Taluka Behti, Nawada, Samadhi, Dudaun, Samadhi, Pasiani, Bilandpur Ki Gauntia, Zainuddinagar (Zindi Nagla), Loikhera, Bandigaon (Nasratpur), Dilawarpur, Parmali, Chaundera, Tahwarganj, Dilawarpur, Jalalpur, Kaneg, Gunwari, Samadhi, Rausarpur, Rausarpur Kothi (Roza), Daniapur, Utaha, Sujatpur, Badshahnagar, Faridapur, Nagarpal, Deokali, Sujatpur, Shahbazpur, Daniapur, Bijlapur, Rudrapur, Paintapur, Natpura, Kani Kaunpur (Nausara)), Mazra Saftiara, Saftiara, Saraura, Samadhi, Samadhi, Saraura, Sarauri, Khand Baura (Khar Baura), Manpur Malkapur, Babakkarpur, Chandapur, Sisinai, Qasimganj, Panthi, Shahbazpur, Panchauli, Mundgaon, Mansurpur, Shikarpur, Mutiasa, Naugawan, Khulauli, Sindhauli, Mohammadpur Azampur, Uddali Girdharpur, Kurseli, Aliapur, Jalalpur, Paracha, Tandaparbatpur, Deora Jhala, Barnawa, Mathurapur, Ikhtiarpur Baghaura, Nanakpur, Bahlalpur , Kapurpur, Nagaria Alampur, Azizpur, Barwa Khurd , Barwa Buzurg, Raskupa Bahadurpur, Larpur Sarai, Yarpur Muhal (Kamainainpur), Nabipur, Kant, Abhen, Rawatpur, Gurthana, Babarpur, Umarha, Bhuria, Bhanpur, Khizipur, Bikrampur, Balipur, Kota, Jaraon, Naushera, Milkia, Sikandarpur Khurd, Dilawarpur, Dingarpur, Rahmannagar Muafi, Mitepur, Mohanpur, Mamrezipur, Kuria Dhondhon, Ganganagar, Kuria Hatipur, Mirbaispur, Udupur, Khananpur, Samadhi, Kutwapur, Gangapatti, Hardopatti, Samadhi, Samadhi, Hashimkhera, Hashimkhera, Nagla Banwari, Padriali, Narayanpur Phatak, Saidapur, Khotaria, Bhitia Pauki, Mandrauli, Patti Juhjar, Akbarpur, Ramanpur Muafi, Bheeta Phatak, Partabpuralkhmi, Muhammadpur Mahiopol, Shamsheerpur, Simra, Jaitapur, Bhagwanpur, Narayanpurpatti Karmu, Saraivan Pemraj, Nawada, Prithipur, Sundarpur, Partabpur, Bari Khas, Haripur Jigina, Ismailpur, Kuria Jamalpur, Harsinghpur, Gunta, Jhapka Dilawarpur, Bandha, Kudaiya, Partabpur, Dukri Khurd, Dukri Kalan, Banjuria, Amrauli, Amkhera, Panna Gauntia, Sikandarpur Kalan, Fazilpur, Muria Rasu, Firozpur Dundra, Mirza Bhanpur, Dharmangadpur, Dhappia, Narayanpur, Baroopatti Sunaik, Madnapur, Chandokha, Puranpur, Nagla Kirori, Nazirpur.

**District:** Shahjahanpur **Tehsil:** Jalalabad  
**Name of Villages:** Matehna, Umarsand.

**District:** Shahjahanpur **Tehsil:** Tilhar  
**Name of Villages:** Saidpur Pahadi (Dhirpur), Mathana, Nagla Mathana, Rajputpur (Chitti), Kakrawa, Shamspur, Harnarayanpur, Jaunra, Shivdarshanpur, Muhammadpur Nayagaon, Binaura, Makrandpur Taluka Bauri, Nahrosa, Keshopur, Narha Bauri, Nardara, Puchhia, Samadhi, Bauri, Anandpur, Sarainda, Nagla Am (Banthra), Biharipur Khurd, Sondha, Gularia, Banthari, Balrampur, Biharipur Kota, Jhabra, Bhuria, Kota Khas, Raghunathpur Bauri, Chaitia Pathia, Bhop Gauntia, Kishan Gauntia, Chandpur, Sainakhera, Ramnagar, Arungpur, Balgara, Dangara, Kalyanpur, Manrai, Sahibganj, Saidapur, Barkhera, Sarsawan, Gauntia (Saidapur), Shankarpur, Bihliha, Arsinha Bari, Nibdari, Shahi, Bharia, Keshopur, Lakhanpur, Bhari, Gohai, Malaria, Bakarpur, Pindaria, Rampura, Mulaim Nagla, Gogepur, Chamur Gauntia, Lochan Nagla, Mandhpuri, Sanheora, Rahpara, Navbastia, Khiria Ratan, Maghatia, Moghata, Chhota Gharia, Karia, Pipalthata, Bhatia, Kunjalpur, Jargawan, Prithvipur (Khera Ghasa), Garhia Rang, Kuber Gauntia (Tharan Ghasa), Kishanpura, Asi Nawada, Chakdaha, Rampur, Prithvipur (Khera Ghasa), Murawan Gauntia, Kalyanpur , Ghasa Kalyanpur, Ghasa Kalyanpur, Majhara Khas, Basti Nagla, Amerri, Khaju Ki Gauntia, Dana Gauntia, Nawat Bhari, Chhedapatti, Paharpur, Paharpur Gauntia, Jaunra, Bhatapur, Simra, Ehtmall, Gauntia Gharam, Gauntia Atu, Mawar, Bari, Parsidhpur, Rapra, Pariona, Naugawan, Jaunra, Tantrabad.

**District:** Badaun **Tehsil:** Dataganj  
**Name of Villages:** Tikanna, Kadhoka, Noni, Katkora, Nagla Budhpalsingh, Jalebi Nagla, Audho Nagla, Nagla Dalsingh, Nagla Nawabasingh, Lalpur Khadar, Pura Bhandra, Nagaria Khanu, Patti Bija, Sherpur, Nawada Baden, Nagaria Khanu, Kalakand, Sundarpur, Harinagla, Patti, Deochari, Bhenda, Raipur, Bihanpur, Katkora, Jamalpur, Dhani Nagla, Tika Nagla, Azampur, Afzalpur, Abhipur, Sisaiyan Kishan, Bakhatpur, Pahladpur, Pasia Nagla, Deori, Saprenda, Koli, Simri, Kakrawa, Nathpur Angradrai, Salempur, Baura, Kanspur, Kansu Nagla, Kansu Nagla, Shimbhu Nagla, Gauntia Ramnarayan, Hashampur, Keshopur, Shahjahanpur, Parshidpur, Kuria Raipur, Lalsi Nagla, Dudhari, Andharau, Biria Dandi, Ghilaur, Para, Katka Chhatu, Kalaura, Dataganj, Bhura Mazra, Puraini, Dhillwari, Behta Madhu, Palia Guzar, Gungola, Pappar Hamzapur, Daharpur Kalan, Bihanpur, Brahmedev, Ghatampur, Bhatauli, Kanakpur, Palia Latu, Kudha, Mailha, Kuthia Sultampur, Angadpur, Raipur, Dhirpur, Gadha, Chachau, Karliha, Dolapur, Sakatpur Bela, Kans, Simaria, Kauri Mankapur, Majhara, Bakarpur, Prahladpur, Khanpur Dalya, Bhudeli, Dhaurera, Malikpur Budh, Nathpur Banwari, Gularia, Malikpur, Firozpur, Sirsa, Nagaria Khurd, Begamganj, Sisaiyan Kalan, Sisaiyan Khurd, Jagwasai, Samadhi, Kata Gauntia, Nawalpur, Hasanpur, Gauntia, Hatni Bhur, Kalakunda, Samadhi, Mugarra, Mosampur, Kadaribad, Bamyana, Mahmudpur, Jafarabad, Koni, Williamganj, Janiganj, Fatehpur, Milik, Hasiganj, Amirtapur, Nurpur, Tilokpur, Bhagwanpur, Lalpur, Kishorpur, Amanabad.

**District:** Badaun **Tehsil:** Badaun  
**Name of Villages:** Kundra, Bilhat, Kana Nagla, Nadhauia, Ahirwara, Nawada, Rasulpur, Mullapur, Tisanga, Rahpura, Sikrauri, Sherganj, Bichhuria, Faridpur, Bahorpara, Mahamdi, Sarai, Chandaura, Puthi, Resulpur Puthi, Gularia, Gularia Gauntia, Sadullahpur, Bithara, Ataganj, Ghat Behti, Bijai Nagla, Dhakia, Kartoli, Kartoli, Gauntia, Takipur.

**District:** Bareilly **Tehsil:** Aonla  
Singha, Dalpatpur, Majhara, Nagla, Shankarpur, Sareri, Sirohi, Nitoi, Yusufpur, Tahirpur, Khuli, Chandpur Matki, Bhikampur, Makrandpur.

**LILO of 220 kV C. B. Ganj (220kV) – Badaun (220kV) S/C line**

**District:** Badaun **Tehsil:** Budaun  
**Name of Villages:** Rasulpur Puthi, Puthi, Gularia, Gularia Gauntia.

**District:** Bareilly **Tehsil:** Aonla  
**Name of Villages:** Tahirpur, Khuli, Sirohi, Yusufpur, Chandpur Matki.

**LILO of 220 kV Chandausi (220kV) – Badaun (220kV) S/C line at 400 kV Badaun substation**

**District:** Bareilly **Tehsil:** Aonla  
**Name of Villages:** Sareri, Sirohi, Yusufpur, Tahirpur, Khuli, Chandpur Matki, Bagarpur, Naugawan, Kiratpur, Hazratpur, Bikhampur, Makrandpur, Kuddha, Nitoi, Majhara.

**District:** Badaun **Tehsil:** Badaun  
**Name of Villages:** Puthi, Sarai, Mahamdi, Chandaura, Rasulpur Puthi, Gularia, Gularia Gauntia, Sadaullahpur, Bhitara, Ataganj, Bichhuria, Faridpur, Ghat Behti, Sherganj, Rahpura, Sikrauri, Dhakia, Bijai Nagla, Gauntia, Kartoli, Kartoli, Muhammadnagar, Useta, Mirzapur, Pachtaur Muafi, Takipur, Titauli, Amratpur, Rajomai, Nawanganj, Rajomainagra, Sallannagar, Sirsua, Mundia, Barkhera, Malikpur, Bhinduliya, Dadmai, Ranjhaura, Anguia, Singraura, Faqirabad, Darabnagar, Bhainsama, Bihari Gauntia, Muhammadpur, Ghatpuri RS, Paliyahanda, Miyanganj, Gurpuri Chandan, Lochanpur, Ojha, Nizampur Pachtaur, Bari Shamspur, Razaganj, Inayatganj, Imlia, Kaili, Faridpur, Lahi Faridpur, Kuadanda, Lalai, Hari Nagla, Qasimpur, Gauntia, Babat, Bhunpur Kusena, Ansir, Qazipur, Barkhin, Ambiapur, Bhatauli, Yusufnagar, Ahruia, Bhansi, Bangarh, Azamganj Mudia, Ganj, Kunwargaon, Nandgaon, Hasanpur, Mohiuddinagar, Dugraia Birahimpur, Badhal, Naurangabad, Faridpur Chakolar, Ballia, Bangawan, Kunar, Banai.

**District:** Badaun **Tehsil:** Bisauli  
**Name of Villages:** Harnathpur, Bagarpur, Samadhi, Nimma, Garruiya, Alinagar, Rota, Soi, Dharampur.

**132kV Badaun Ujhani – Badaun (400 kV) S/C line And 132 kV Bilsil – Badaun (400 kV) S/C line**

**District:** Bareilly **Tehsil:** Aonla  
**Name of Villages:** Sareri, Sirohi, Yusufpur, Tahirpur, Khuli, Chandpur Matki, Bagarpur, Hazratpur, Bikhampur, Makrandpur, Kuddha, Nitoi, Majhara.

**District:** Badaun **Tehsil:** Budaun  
**Name of Villages:** Puthi, Sarai, Mahamdi, Chandaura, Rasulpur Puthi, Gularia, Gularia Gauntia, Sadaullahpur, Bhitara, Ataganj, Bichhuria, Faridpur, Ghat Behti, Sherganj, Rahpura, Sikrauri, Dhakia, Bijai Nagla, Gauntia, Kartoli, Kartoli, Muhammadnagar, Useta, Mirzapur, Pachtaur Muafi, Takipur, Titauli, Amratpur, Rajomai, Nawanganj, Rajomainagra, Sallannagar, Sirsua, Mundia, Barkhera, Malikpur, Bhinduliya, Dadmai, Ranjhaura, Anguia, Singraura, Faqirabad, Darabnagar, Bhainsama, Bihari Gauntia, Muhammadpur, Ghatpuri RS, Paliyahanda, Miyanganj, Gurpuri Chandan, Lochanpur, Ojha, Nizampur Pachtaur, Bari Shamspur, Razaganj, Inayatganj, Imlia, Kaili, Faridpur, Lahi Faridpur, Kuadanda, Lalai, Hari Nagla, Qasimpur, Gauntia, Babat, Bhunpur Kusena, Ansir, Qazipur, Barkhin, Chamur Gauntia, Rahma, Malik Gauntia, Duanjit, Tilokpur, Girdharpur, Ujhali, Gaimtiya (Paukula), Dumahara, Khaspur Ki Gauntia, Nai, Khaspur, Husainpur, Karautia, Nadi Gauntia, Meghaunia, Phulwaya, Alampur, Padhauia, Baqarpur Kharer, Chandannagar, Khunak, Miyaganj, Khera Buzurg', Arifpur Nawada, Salarpur, Shikrapur, Mungar, Silahri, Mauzampur Chhajji, Dahemi, Bhajpura, Bhagautipur,

**District:** Badaun **Tehsil:** Bilsil  
**Name of Villages:** Garhi, Dabhiyari, Purgawan, Niranjapur, Khera, Shahzadnagar, Khulet, Shahbazpur, Raipur, Haidalpur, Ramnagar, Ulaia, Bihtajawai, Sundarnagar, Badhauil, Haibatpur, Sateti, Sitapur, Ramnagar, Jahanabad, Nizampur, Garhauil.

**400 kV Double Circuit Jaunpur - Obra line (upto LILO point of Obra 'B' – Obra 'C' Line)**

**District:** Sonbhadra **Tehsil:** Robertsganj  
**Name of Villages :** Baghmanwan, Gauradah, Kanach, Garai Dih, Murkata Ghat, Kurail, Darar, Chopan, Patwadh, Patwadh, Mangesarnath, Unchidih, Kerwa Ghat, Morola Pahar, Tekmatola, Gunhwan, Naukatola, Bauradih, Lalganj, Bairahwantola, Belach, Akelwa, Rudauli, Bhatwa, Makri Bari, Dhauradih, Telaitola, Kuniwan, Mungadih, Pakriwahan, Naukadih, Salkhan, Adalganj, Baghnari, Kotia, Gangati, Beldaha, Baghnar, Paika, Deoriatola, Avai, Chakaria, Baheratola, Markundi, Ghurma, Kewata, Obritola, Pathraha, Karki, Belkap, Mahuan Khurd, Chirhuli, Chirhuli, Mahuan Kalan, Agori RS, Bhuniaritolta, Balui, Madhuban, Mahuwar Ghat, Kawai Ghat, Bhilai, Garaura, Kandakot, Bahuwar, Chhapka, Uriya, Balui, Lodhi, Semra, Tiauli, Dhobahan, Kukrahi, Kacharia, Amauli, Baghuwari, Mahuwar Khurd, Bhadra Khurd, Kallan, Urmoura, Gorari, Petrahi, Mahuwar, Pampi, Patehera, Basauli, Raghunathpur, Bhargawan, Bahuwahr, Karauli, Nipraj, Bhat Purwa, Barhauil, Gordiha, Gorari, Ghurman, Jamgain, Baralia, Kamoji, Muther, Bhunwari, Baibari, Senduri, Raipura, Bhattha, Rajpur, Barak, Bishunhari, Bajutara, Bichhya, Beohari, Kaithi, Jait, Khatauli, Khatauli, Madra, Sunwat, Sonauti, Majhgaun, Khachar, Parasi Guru, Parasi Pande, Khairahi, Baunwar, Adhwar, Unchidih, Saliya, Banaura, Barabada (Ganshankar), Deori, Kusani, Panwar, Dehra, Raj Purwa, Tiara, Dehri, Karahi, Budhawari, Bagthari Khurd, Chauki, Bagthari Kakan, Durawal Kalan, Deori Khurd, Sona, Harihapur, Jiwar, Bhagwantpur, Chandauli (Orauli), Oini Chaube, Mahurasar, Petrahi, Kanhaura, Kanhaura, Oini Misra, Umri Kalan, Inama, Kusrat, Deora, Jamsokpur, Chandauli (Orauli), Oini Chaube, Mahurasar, Petrahi, Misra, Umri Kalan, Rajkharh, Arangi, Gheuri, Karki, Basdewa, Macholwa, Pateri, Patila, Jawahi.

**District:** Sonbhadra **Tehsil:** Ghorawal  
**Name of Villages:** Sikri, Sathahi, Jamgaon, Sahuar, Barauli, Tiwar, Dhuter, Usri Khurd, Usri Kalan, Amurh, Lasri Kalan, Shahngang, Belatend, Khajuri Khurd, Khajuri Kalan, Petrahi, Masoi, Dabha, Bhurkura, Dohari, Durawal Khurd, Lasri Khurd, Inam, Barsot, Kunan, Belua, Thauli, Khaira, Khairahi, Kapura, Nichintpur, Bharuha Nisf, Barwa, Jamgain, Ashatali, Chhotkapur, Chauhata, Kingari, Majhaganw, Uchaka, Rupraudi, Sauli, Sauli, Birbhua, Mokarsin, Rani Tara, Bari Mahewa, Jhakahi, Semri Misir, Shirpur, Bhurhiya, Pande Pokhar, Tiara Shiodutt, Dudhiya, Phulwari, Bahorika, Pagia, Salaia, Judwariya, Shahpur Khurd, Shahpur Kalan, Bandardewa, Kamhariya, Gedar, Bholai, Saranga, Jogini, Koiraliya, Silahata, Sitabhar, Tedhwa, Sirsiya Jethi, Karkauli, Itwa, Sirwit, Karanwah, Dhaurahra, Karman, Ganeshpur, Karkauli, Mahuwaraha, Sahdeiya Baidand, Bishar, Magardaha, Madainiya.

**District:** Mirzapur **Tehsil:** Marihan  
**Name of Villages :** Karman RS, Bishunpur, Garhwa, Sonbarsa, Khamhariya, Satauhan, Bhagwanpur, Bharaunha, Kon, Kuri, Gareri, Karaunda, Baghaura, Imliya, Dadra, Salaiya, Panigawan, Bainskatwa, Rajgarh, Nadihar, Teliyaganj, Kandharpur, Dhansiriya, Amhawa, Dhansiriya, Bhati, Bhagalpur, Rampur (Duberpur), Rampur, Darwan, Bhawanipur, Lusa RS, Hinauta, Lusa, Baghaura, Pokhraudh, Sarson, Sarson RS, Semri, Bishunpur, Matihani.

**District:** Mirzapur **Tehsil:** Chunar  
**Name of Villages :** Baihat, Sidhnath, Tala, Kodwari, Patar, Jaugarh, Saktesgarh, Saktesgarh, Kothilawa, Saktesgarh Rs, Chauka, Gedurnawan, Lalpur, Nanauti, Imliya Bandhwa, Lahaura, Golanpur, Misirpura', Misirpura, Tendua Kalan, Kuba Kalan, Subhau, Lahaura, Puraianin, Gogdhara, Anantpur, Tendua Kalan, Kuba Kalan, Dhanshia, Taranga, Alga, Kuha Khurd, Bargawan, Margara, Piprahi, Chhitampur, Karkachahan, Tokia, Tiwari Ki Marai, Kuba, Saphi, Kankatwa, Chaudhiran, Kanauha, Kanauhi, Morpna, Bhaunrahi, Lalganj, Bithalpur, Bhualpur, Nazirpur, Aibkpur, Bithampur, Goraiyan, Karyat Sikhar, Ghamhi, Ramgarh, Pernapur, Ramgarh Chak, Kantapur, Manjhara Khurd, Manjhara Kalan, Ratanpur, Dhannu Ka Pura, Vidyapur, Piprahi, Piprahi, Pasiahi, Dhanaita, Hardara, Pahon, Kansadohi Pahon, Kansadohi Mukandpur, Bhagirathpur, Domanpur, Taktakpur, Khaira, Semra, Phulha, Hansipur, Chhitakpur, Tilanga, Bagha, Pachraon, Bari, Batauwan, Larchhut, Basantpur, Puranpatti', Jeori, Chanchala.

**District:** Mirzapur **Tehsil:** Mirzapur  
**Name of Villages:** Sagar Semar, Kalan, Pasaiyan Dagmagpur, Lachhmanpur, Muri, Dherua, Lalpokhra, Lal Pokhra, Sukbana, Chandlewa Kalan, Chandiewa Kalan, Taunga, Shivgarh, Padri, Pathraha, Gurkhauli, Hinauti, Parsanpur, Dagmagpur RS, Sindhaura, Newadhia, Saraiyan, Sindhaura Ghat, Nahian, Kathnehi, Chandika, Barhawan, Belwan, Dhanhi Pura, Terha, Chhitampur, Jarha, Putariha, Belwan, Anantpur, Tulapur, Mitai, Jalalpur, Sabesar, Pohila Ka Pura, Prem Ka Pura, Bajahan, Damodarpur, Gotwa, Maksudpur, Suriya, Jalrampur, Het Ka Pura, Tiwaripur, Chak Chariyan, Godhana, Godhana, Baisan, Larwak, Diaon, Chandla, Bandhwa, Loharpur, Pandepur, Dunai, Hirapur, Gorahi, Lachhnirampur, Koharhia, Gobindpur, Jamalpur, Narainpur, Jamua, Manjasur, Ahi, Saoli, Majwan, Paderi, Gobardhanpur, Bhikharipur, Tiwaripur, Narotampur, Nigatpur, Chakia, Chakia, Kalyanpur, Beaspur.

**District:** Varanasi **Tehsil:** Varanasi  
**Name of Villages :** Tilanga Sani, Kansadohi Khaira, Ramaipur, Bahadurpur, Jamunipur, Marui, Marui, Malik Pachain, Musepur, Pachai, Manikpur, Chandapur, Harnampur, Kanakpur, Bhualpur, Milki, Khajuri, Asarh, Bahelwa, Bhanjanpur, Piloni, Rajpur, Dorhi, Bimauri, Bansipur, Partabpur, Bhikhipur, Kalipur, Islampur, Tikra, Amini, Amini, Khalispur, Mirza Murad (Gaur), Ganeshpur, Madhukar Shahpur, Kosra, Chakarpanpur, Mughlabir, Atarsua, Lalapur, Jaddupur, Nigatpur, Badalpur, Badipur, Lachhapur, Lachhapur, Gurdaspur, Birbalpur, Ramsinghpur, Pur, Katalya, Kori, Mughlabir, Khonchwa, Bhedaha, Bhedehra, Dangharia, Shivrampur, Kharagrampur, Ranrathauhan, Chak Tai Parewa, Dewapur Khurd, Sonbarsa, Dekaha, Dilwalpur, Bhikhampur, Kathurwa, Rampur, Barki, Pura Bariar, Newadia, Lahia, Domanpur, Jogapur, Dewapur, Lalpur, Kansraipur, Ledaui, Todarpur, Bhondaria (Bhor Kalan), Bhor Kalan, Nayapura, Rupapur, Bhojpur, Madhukar Shahpur, Ghamhapur, Chitarsenpur, Manapur, Chhateri, Thatra, Domaila, Birapur, Chakatarwa, Jogiapur, Jhori Khurd, Kinnupur, Milkipur, Chak Padri, Marikpur (Patti Kiratrai), Nagesara, Kakopur, Bhagwanpur, Nonra, Chak Maira, Mohanpur, Chhunganpur, Konhdaur, Daswatpur (Patti Kiratrai), Bharaut (Patti Jiarat), Kabiruddinpur, Dehuwa, Chhirati, Parmalpur, Sakra, Chak Baburia, Jitapur, Baharuwa, Bharthpur, Dubepur, Sankhan Ka Pura, Chak Maigar, Rampur, Shambhupur, Raghunathpur, Nohra, Bhanapur, Raghoraipatti Muafi, Rampur, Kotgaon, Hajipur, Newada, Bauriya, Pura Dayal, Kaseru, Patti Bharatrai, Rakebipur, Pura Jiwan, Jamalpur, Pura Lala, Hathera, Manhgupura, Chak Barhwal, Thathar, Manhgupura, Misran, Tivran, Thathar, Sorha, Pura Dayal, Pattanpur, Patti Bharatrai, Raghoraipatti, Khemapur, Ramnagar, Haripur, Rajapur, Pura Janki, Chaturbhujpur, Gadhauna, Dhanapur, Karmahi, Nawapur, Madhupatti, Duwan, Manapur, Bani Dih, Jiaupur, Parsupur, Raswadia, Ban Purwa, Khargupur, Saidipur, Golaipur, Aunra, Ghanshyampur, Kumbhapur, Dadra, Bhagwanpur, Sirauli, Asapur, Sirauli, Gauripur, Raipur, Jogapur, Junapur, Jaunsiupur, Bharahpur, Gota, Zirakpur, Balbhadarpur, Chak Domanpur, Chak Belkarna, Attaria, Parewa, Gopalpur', Shekhpur, Duban, Ranapur, Dharampur, Bharsat, Dhanajapur, Krishnapur, Ahirauli, Adipur, Budhipur, Saidupur, Chak Sumesherpur, Chak Mohni, Garwa Homraj, Mahewa, Fattupur, Kaslaon, Jaunsiupur, Jamalapur, Adhanpur, Pura Uttam, Dihwa, Sarauna, Patti, Dinapur, Chhangapur, Manui, Damodra, Chaur, Achanakpur, Barauli, Usri, Nidhapur, Jaiampur, Mangra, Tulsipur, Mathia, Chak Inglis Damodra, Sarai Bikram, Haripur, Dihanpur, Bhuapatpur, Nakhhadpur, Haripur, Dhanipur, Narharpur, Pure Dala, Kharwa, Bhanaur, Ganeshpur, Bhanaur Rs, Singarpur, Sukhaiganj, Sarai Hatia, Gahlai, Pathan Ka Pura, Tatash Pur, Taliiani, Ojhan Muhaila, Banjari, Manapur, Loran, Teigarh, Jagdishpur, Raipur, Kundanpur, Bongaon, Nawada, Sir, Seoratala, Seora, Bhikampur, Makhdumpur, Kamirpatti, Ramnagar, Chak Qasba, Rasulpur, Chak Dost Bongaon, Muhammadpur, Salempur, Bhaunras, Lakhraon, Ghanapur, Sonai, Haidarganj, Chandarbanpur, Khurdanpur, Chaturbhujpur, Umram, Dhawa, Paltupur, Piparian, Gaddopur, Amarpur, Lakhnapur, Raghopur, Saphi, Mainpur, Rajapur, Narayanpur, Nagwa, Kishanpur, Rampur, Salarpur, Bijainpatti, Meja, Brahmdeewa, Kakrahi, Diha, Shivpur, Rakhwa, Pitambarpur, Mirpur, Jagannathpur, Belwa, Belwa, Ban Purwa, Dharmdaspur, Kandh Bansipur, Dabilha, Dabilha, Hardwari, Rampur, Sahupatti, Chak Inglis, Dharmapur, Parsat, Saraiya, Mahmudpur, Bhatkaiya, Mangri, Chak Narayanpur, Bareri, Bareri (Barapura), Nadiyon, Bhubhuwar Marhaiyan, Patti, Gauhar, Gaura, Gagaura, Utrain, Utrain, Hasanpur, Jamua, Barauli, Bhawanipur, Yaqubpur, Chhaundhi, Jamalpur, Ranipur.

**District:** Varanasi **Tehsil:** Pindra  
**Name of Villages :** Akorha, Sarawan, Bairahna, Sarawan, Mahimapur, Dhaunkalganj Bazar, Dayalpur, Durjanpur.

**District:** Sant Ravidas Nagar **Tehsil:** Aurai  
**Name of Villages :** Jhauwa, Pilkhini, Durasi, Sikandra.

**District:** Sant Ravidas Nagar **Tehsil:** Bhadohi  
**Name of Villages :** Athgorwa, Bhagwanpur, Gobindpur, Tikaitpur, Harahibari, Kachhwa Bojh, Kapal Dih, Horilha, Narpatpur, Gonda Chamrahta, Gonda Mir Imam Ali', Jolahpur, Dhanapur, Jhori Sorbarsa, Kandhia, Manapur, Jaddupur, Bahri Khas, Chandapur, Bhoilaipur, Dattipur, Asogapur, Amwa Muafi, Amwa Kalan, Lachhapur, Jagdishpur, Bhardanian, Bardaha, Gopalpur', Jamua, Chauri Khas, Udhopur, Chak Bhoindpur, Kolahar', Vedmanpur, Parsotampatti, Chauri Danupatti, Chauri Nidurpatti, Harchandpur, Banpurwe, Aneppur, Manikpur, Ahopur, Bhawanipur, Amwa Khurd, Mai, Dih, Pachpatia, Rajputan, Majhilaupur, Arzi Debur, Gandhi Ghat, Ramdeopatti, Sheodaspur, Parsotampur, Raweli Khas , Durwa Kukrauthi, Sewakpura, Newada, Chhitauna, Tilangra, Mai, Raimalpur, Sonhar, Tilangra, Raghunathpur, Madanpur, Domanpur, Pargaspur, Sikari, Chak Serwa, Sarauli, Saunlepur, Serwa, Pathraha.

**District:** Jaunpur **Tehsil:** Mariahu  
**Name of Villages :** Kuchari, Majhilapur, Kuchari, Kurwa, Ganjari, Mahaitpur, Hirapatti, Malethu, Malethu, Sureri, Murkatia, Kamapur, Audiar, Hanumanganj (Audiar), Gurbaripur, Karaundi Kalan, Karaundi Khurd, Arzi Karaundi, Misirpura, Saraiya, Patkhauli, Mungauna, Madtipura, Sureri, Dih, Dhanesarpura, Jagdishpur, Jamawa, Pataila, Phiphiauna, Arzi Muafi, Raipur, Bamanpura, Bhanpur, Bhanpur, Bhanpur (Dhundapur), Ghuraha, Bhadkhin, Dehua, Palhanpur, Munlapur, Basupur, Sarai Dih, Nonauti (Patti Jiarai), Patti Jiarai, Ugapur, Chak Karingwa, Chak Padri, Marikpur (Patti Kiratrai), Nagesara, Kakopur, Bhagwanpur, Nonra, Chak Maira, Mohanpur, Chhunganpur, Konhdaur, Daswatpur (Patti Kiratrai), Bharaut (Patti Jiarat), Kabiruddinpur, Dehuwa, Chhirati, Parmalpur, Sakra, Chak Baburia, Jitapur, Baharuwa, Bharthpur, Dubepur, Sankhan Ka Pura, Chak Maigar, Rampur, Shambhupur, Raghunathpur, Nohra, Bhanapur, Raghoraipatti Muafi, Rampur, Kotgaon, Hajipur, Newada, Bauriya, Pura Dayal, Kaseru, Patti Bharatrai, Rakebipur, Pura Jiwan, Jamalpur, Pura Lala, Hathera, Manhgupura, Chak Barhwal, Thathar, Manhgupura, Misran, Tivran, Thathar, Sorha, Pura Dayal, Pattanpur, Patti Bharatrai, Raghoraipatti, Khemapur, Ramnagar, Haripur, Rajapur, Pura Janki, Chaturbhujpur, Gadhauna, Dhanapur, Karmahi, Nawapur, Madhupatti, Duwan, Manapur, Bani Dih, Jiaupur, Parsupur, Raswadia, Ban Purwa, Khargupur, Saidipur, Golaipur, Aunra, Ghanshyampur, Kumbhapur, Dadra, Bhagwanpur, Sirauli, Asapur, Sirauli, Gauripur, Raipur, Jogapur, Junapur, Jaunsiupur, Bharahpur, Gota, Zirakpur, Balbhadarpur, Chak Domanpur, Chak Belkarna, Attaria, Parewa, Gopalpur', Shekhpur, Duban, Ranapur, Dharampur, Bharsat, Dhanajapur, Krishnapur, Ahirauli, Adipur, Budhipur, Saidupur, Chak Sumesherpur, Chak Mohni, Garwa Homraj, Mahewa, Fattupur, Kaslaon, Jaunsiupur, Jamalapur, Adhanpur, Pura Uttam, Dihwa, Sarauna, Patti, Dinapur, Chhangapur, Manui, Damodra, Chaur, Achanakpur, Barauli, Usri, Nidhapur, Jaiampur, Mangra, Tulsipur, Mathia, Chak Inglis Damodra, Sarai Bikram, Haripur, Dihanpur, Bhuapatpur, Nakhhadpur, Haripur, Dhanipur, Narharpur, Pure Dala, Kharwa, Bhanaur, Ganeshpur, Bhanaur Rs, Singarpur, Sukhaiganj, Sarai Hatia, Gahlai, Pathan Ka Pura, Tatash Pur, Taliiani, Ojhan Muhaila, Banjari, Manapur, Loran, Teigarh, Jagdishpur, Raipur, Kundanpur, Bongaon, Nawada, Sir, Seoratala, Seora, Bhikampur, Makhdumpur, Kamirpatti, Ramnagar, Chak Qasba, Rasulpur, Chak Dost Bongaon, Muhammadpur, Salempur, Bhaunras, Lakhraon, Ghanapur, Sonai, Haidarganj, Chandarbanpur, Khurdanpur, Chaturbhujpur, Umram, Dhawa, Paltupur, Piparian, Gaddopur, Amarpur, Lakhnapur, Raghopur, Saphi, Mainpur, Rajapur, Narayanpur, Nagwa, Kishanpur, Rampur, Salarpur, Bijainpatti, Meja, Brahmdeewa, Kakrahi, Diha, Shivpur, Rakhwa, Pitambarpur, Mirpur, Jagannathpur, Belwa, Belwa, Ban Purwa, Dharmdaspur, Kandh Bansipur, Dabilha, Dabilha, Hardwari, Rampur, Sahupatti, Chak Inglis, Dharmapur, Parsat, Saraiya, Mahmudpur, Bhatkaiya, Mangri, Chak Narayanpur, Bareri, Bareri (Barapura), Nadiyon, Bhubhuwar

## New face of terror

Attacks on faith shrines are increasing in South Asia, according to a report. Are we identifying the right sources?



The terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka, the largest in the history of South Asia, are a reminder of how militant groups are now sparking up new hotspots where they had no influence before. And they are doing them on a visually soul less scale, like attacking faith shrines, to attract global shock and awe besides working up least expected touch points like the Philippines, Indonesia, New Zealand, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. That also explains why the Islamic State (IS) chose the relatively calmer Sri Lanka to imprint its signature

despite having an operative base in neighbouring Maldives. Besides, most of South and Southeast Asia are multi-cultural and eclectic societies, which may not host the idea of monolithic socio-religious identities but where divisions can be fomented by playing on latent communal fears and insecurities. The mosque attacks in Christchurch or the church blasts in Sri Lanka are the manifestations of a global trend of an increasing pattern of hitting at faith shrines in South Asia, a sort of theatre for the new-age crusades, according to the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database. The study shows that the region alone accounts for about 24 per cent of all terror strikes on places of worship worldwide between 2000 and 2017. Of the total 1,909 terror attacks on religious institutions globally, 458 incidents have been recorded in the South Asian region, which comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. After Pakistan and Afghanistan, India is reportedly the third-most affected country in the region with 63 terror attacks on religious shrines.

Clearly the IS, which is increasingly under fire in its old strongholds and almost floundering in both Iraq and Syria, has some funding and the digital infrastructural network to rebuild its relevance. So it is spreading to virgin areas, setting off new counter-polarities easily and keeping its need for a global *jihad* alive. As usual, operatives are using online propaganda to radicalise disaffected youth in Europe, recruiting from waning organisations like the Taliban in Afghanistan and Boko Haram in Nigeria and looking for places that have a security vacuum. Sri Lanka fits the bill perfectly on this count because post the decimation of the Tamil militants, the island nation has by and large been peaceful, developed itself as a booming tourist economy and risen on the world map of top beach hotspots. The casualties would be high in such a porous set-up. The surprise element was such that till two days after the blasts happened, nobody had talked about simmering tensions between Sinhala Buddhists and Muslims, which were inherent but never explosive enough. You could say they were contained flashpoints that militant organisations are now linking to stage a new global conflict. If we look at Southeast Asia, then Thailand and the Philippines have had long-standing conflicts along territorial and religious lines. In Indonesia, the Aceh province and Papua island have been in conflict with Jakarta while Bali continues to hold off fundamentalism. Myanmar is riven by issues of ethnicity, territory and religion as the purging of Rohingya Muslims, which sparked an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and further deepened divisions, has shown. Sadly, these attacks have also set up polarised contexts that have further fuelled hate speech and increasingly led to an assertion of identity through new faith shrines. As hate speeches encourage the intolerance of otherness, becoming the new normal, and the attendant fake news factory rapidly unleashes a communication war, the terrorists get a swell of divided sentiments to play upon. As for the States, they are left with little option but to crack down, somewhat at the cost of existing religious freedoms. But curbing terror is just one facet, there is a new face of terror emerging in 2019, one that is not confined to the Middle East but to the former Soviet republics. In 2017, at least 8,500 fighters from former Soviet republics had flocked to Syria and Iraq to join the IS and are now being deployed, given their ease with some European languages, to newer areas. In short, the only way to kill rapidly mutating terror is to be prepared for the unexpected. Till governments form an alliance to think two steps ahead, terror will continue to be the worst scourge of human history.

## Talking and driving kills

Drinking and driving are dangerous but using your smartphone while driving is a fast-growing killer



A study by the World Health Organisation (WHO) says in no uncertain terms that those people who use a mobile phone while driving, even with hand-free aids, are four times more likely to have an accident than those who do not. This report emerged on the day when footage went viral of a Delhi resident, who was driving an SUV, running over his three-year-old nephew because he was distracted by his mobile phone. Across the country people are being killed and injured

everyday because car drivers cannot get off their mobile phones in an utter desperate need to stay connected. And are you innocent yourself? Chances are that even you, dear readers, have used a mobile phone while driving. Everyone, car drivers, motorcyclists, auto-rickshaw drivers and even rickshaw pullers and pedestrians are on their phones while on public roads, thinking matters need to be attended to immediately than wait. Mobile phones are clearly making matters worse on Indian roads that are downright dangerous with over 150,000 fatalities reported every year.

This at a time when the government is trying to mandate additional safety features in cars and is cracking down on riders, who are not wearing helmets, or car drivers and passengers not using seatbelts. From the middle of this year, new and improved braking systems will become mandatory on motorcycles and cars. Vehicles will additionally be required to have driver and front passenger airbags as well as reversing sensors. All this in the name of safety, but Indian car and motorcycle owners readily play chicken with their lives by using their mobile phones, driving their cars with one hand or cradling phones on their necks. The death of a three-year old is shocking but is it enough to wean people away from a dangerous addiction? The traffic authorities across the country will need to crack down on mobile phone usage with punitive fines and suspensions of driving privileges. However, car makers are now installing several innovative hand-free connected systems on their models but the WHO report also argues that these are only slightly safer. Human beings, particularly the male of the species, are not really wired to multi-task and talking on the phone, even through a hands-free device, could be extremely distracting. And god forbid, if you have an argument and get into a bad mood while on a call, you will almost certainly take your frustration out on the road. The bigger question, therefore, is if a call is worth taking a risk on the move? Simply pull over if you have to.

## Imported jihad

Muslim assertiveness is not new in Sri Lanka. But for the first time, the community has turned against Christians. The provocation seems to be imposed rather than indigenous



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Sri Lanka is no stranger to violence — a complete generation underwent the ordeals of the Tamil-Sinhala Civil War (1976-2009). But the serial blasts that bloodied the Easter celebrations in the island last Sunday were on a different plane. Its roots seem to puzzle those who had studied the history of Sri Lanka.

Tamil insurgency was an outgrowth of bad blood between the two ethnic communities viz, Tamil and Sinhala, in post-colonial Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon). These two communities, unequal in size and inhabiting different geographical zones of the island, once viewed themselves as co-founders of the island's civilisation. For one complete century between the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms (1829-32) — which gave colonial Ceylon a legislative council — and the Donoughmore Commission (1931), when territorial elections were introduced, the relationship between the Tamils and Sinhalese deteriorated sharply.

The Tamils, though in a numerical minority, could previously take a much-relaxed view as long as their representation in the Council was the same as the Sinhalese. But as political reforms progressed in the crown colony, relationships worsened under the shadow of Sinhala majoritarianism. The Tamils were the makers of modern Ceylon. But they found themselves falling from the frying pan to the fire after Ceylon gained independence.

Between 1951 and 1976, one finds Tamils trying to fashion various political responses to the Sinhala clout. Then finally came the Vaddukottai Resolution (May 14, 1976), which pitched for an independent "Tamil Eelam", an expression first used in modern time as early as 1923 by Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam (1853-1924). The uncrowned king of Ceylonese Tamil civilian politics viz, SJV Chelvanayakam (1898-1977), exhorted the Tamil youth to take up arms to resist Sinhalese hegemony.

An independent Tamil Eelam was, thus, not the brainchild of either the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), or the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) or People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). But a resolution passed by those politicians who had tried to handle the issue by Constitutional means far too long without any success. The situation erupted into a bloody, messy and cruel civil war that lasted for three decades. It ended in May 2009 with the defeat of the LTTE by the Sri Lankan Army, accompanied by the carnage of Tamils caught in the crossfire.

The Easter bloodbath, on the other hand, does not seem to be an outgrowth of natural politics. It was directed against Christians (regardless of ethnicity) and foreigners, who stay in plush hotels like Shangri-La, Cinnamon Grand and



Kingsbury in Colombo. The blasts coincided with the US-Sri Lanka Naval exercise off the Hambantota Port, owned by China on a 99-year lease.

The Sri Lankan Government found the blasts to be the handiwork of Islamic radicals, and the Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the bombings. Both Christians and Muslims are small minorities and do not hope to play an independent role in the overall politics of the island. They do not have a history of turning against one another as a group either.

The Muslims, who have a dominant presence in eastern districts like Batticaloa and Trincomalee, could still foster some territorial ambitions. But Christians, who are to be found both among Sinhalese and Tamils besides Burghese (who are Anglo-Indians in Sri Lanka), can at best manage to influence politics as part of some group.

Various Prime Ministers and Presidents of Sri Lanka, right from DS Senanayake to Mahinda Rajapaksa, have had a Christian family background. Christian presence in Sri Lanka goes back to Portuguese invasions in the 16th century. Various Sinhalese (Buddhists) and Tamil (Hindus) had con-

verted to Christianity. But as the Donoughmore Commission (1931) recommended franchise base on territory, many of those leading families re-converted to Buddhism to ingratiate themselves to the masses. They are generally referred to as "Donoughmore Buddhists."

Interestingly, it was such families, who remained at the helm of Sri Lankan politics but it was not before Ranasinghe Premadasa (1924-1993), a genuine Buddhist, who became the Sri Lankan President, that they held an official post. However, such re-converted families were never shy of using Buddhism as a state policy to marginalise the Tamils.

Those who remained Christians (amongst Sinhalese and Burghese) felt political power passing away from their hands. In January 1962, there was a "Christian coup d'état", popularly called "Operation Holdfast", to overthrow the democratically-elected Government of the then Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The top brass of the Army, Navy and police involved in it were Christians, and pained that Bandaranaike was advancing the policies of her slain husband SWRD Bandaranaike which related to

the aggressive "Buddhitisation" of Sri Lanka. But the attempt was exposed and neutralised.

During the Civil War, the Christians settled down on the respective side of the ethnic divide. While the Sinhalese Christians tried to prove their Sinhalese credentials, the Tamil Christians were active in the LTTE. Young women from Tamil Christian families were the first to volunteer for LTTE's woman brigade. This was because they were comparatively free from the conservatism of Hindu families. The Muslims, though they were Tamil-speaking, did not join the LTTE. They eventually came to be at the receiving end of the LTTE's policies. In the Kattankudy mosque massacre, 147 Muslim men and boys were killed on August 3, 1990, by the LTTE.

The Muslims, though Tamil-speaking, did not consider themselves as part of the Tamil nation. Way back in 1885, a debate arose when Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan (1851-1930), in a speech to the Ceylon Legislative Council, had tried to prove that Tamil Muslims were descendants of low-class Tamil Hindus, who had converted to Islam. The Muslim community (then called Moors in Ceylon) was enraged and argued that they

were descendants of Arab traders, who settled down in the island centuries ago and gradually adopted Tamil while forgetting Arabic.

Muslim assertiveness is not new in Sri Lanka. Way back in 1915, there were Candy riots between Sinhalese (Buddhists) and Muslims. Last year in March 2018, there were similar clashes between Sinhalese and Muslims. Religious places of each community were attacked by the other. But this is the first time in historical memory that Muslims have turned against the Christians. The provocation seems to be imported rather than indigenous. The terror attacks rather seem to be part of the global *jihad* or more particularly, retaliation for Christchurch mosque attack on March 15. In recent years, missionary activities by Christians and Muslims are on the rise in the island. These terror attacks, though a grave security risk, might not indicate any shift in the politics of Sri Lanka. But it is a signal that *Jihad bi-al Qital* has appeared on the shores of the palm-fringed island.

(The writer is an independent researcher. The views expressed herein are his personal)

## SOUNDBITE

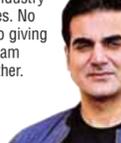
Imran Khan is a friend of mine. But the kind of divisive politics that is going on (over nationalism with reference to Pakistan) is dangerous.

TMC candidate  
—Moon Moon Sen



I have been in the industry for over two decades. No one is going to keep giving me work because I am Salman Khan's brother.

Actor  
—Arbaaz Khan



The Chinese military sent warships (Taiwan) in accordance with the law to identify the French ship and warn it to sail away from Chinese waters.

Chinese spokesman  
—Ren Guoqiang



I don't think the time has come to even rethink on AFSPA. However, the Army has been taking adequate precautions to protect human rights.

Army Chief  
—Bipin Rawat



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A leader's character

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Who's the bigger star?" (April 25). During the hour-long non-political interview of Prime Minister Narendra Modi by actor Akshay Kumar, where the former showcased his personal life — right from his childhood days, to his struggles and his relationship with political rivals like Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee and Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, his love for mangoes — was candid and made an interesting listen.

There is not an iota of doubt that the rise of Modi from being a *chaiwala* to becoming the Chief Minister of Gujarat and subsequently the Prime Minister was a long arduous journey. Otherwise, Modi would have been an Army man or a *sanyasi*. This only reveals that he never dreamt to reach such high positions. The Prime Minister rounded off the interview on a bright note by saying that he would always be focussed on responsibilities — whether in or out of power — which is a positive trait very few leaders possess.

KR Srinivasan  
Secunderabad

### Let's face some home truths

This refers to the article, "No outsiders in Kerala" (April 23) by Kumar Chellappan. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) never came anywhere close to a victory in any seat in any general election except in the 2014 election when its candidate in the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency secured 32.3 per cent of the votes polled. He came second. It is true parties encourage tactical voting to maximise their seat shares when in serious contention for power. Here, the BJP could hardly plead lack of knowledge about such tactics. Who doesn't know about the covert play of political parties for vote-banks to defeat the Left candidates in some constituencies?

Lord Ayyappa temple, tucked in the dense forests of Sabari Hills, had become a cherished destination of pilgrims across the country under the regimes of the LDF and UDF. The High Court of Kerala imposed a ban on the entry of young women into the temple in 1991. That order was enforced scrupulously without even preferring an appeal in the Supreme Court. Later, some RSS



*pracharaks* approached the apex court with the pretext of pursuing lofty goals of gender equality and freedom to worship. However, sensing a "golden opportunity" in the order of the Constitution Bench that lifted the ban on women entry, the right-wing took an unapologetic U-turn to discredit the verdict. These were skilful political jockeys unconnected to the faith.

Haridasan Rajan  
Kozhikode

### Time will heal

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Terror returns" (April 23). Churches and luxury hotels in and around Colombo were targeted during Easter Sunday. The bomb attacks must be condemned in the strongest terms. This was, perhaps, the biggest terrorist attack in Sri Lanka

since the cessation of Civil war. The bloodshed would certainly have an adverse impact on trade and tourism in the island nation. It is baffling that the island nation did not take warnings about a possible terror attack seriously enough.

Some of the blasts took place in places of worship. This goes to show, once again, that terror has no respect for religion.

Terrorism can be battled only through coordinated efforts by the international community by sharing intelligence, choking financial support of terrorists and greater collaboration of preventive measures are reliable strategies. Simultaneously, the investigation into the blasts should be speeded up.

Ramesh G Jethwani  
Bengaluru

### Dikshit is worthy

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "The three-way split" (April 24). In the ongoing extremely vituperative political cauldron, the electorate must be desperate to find a sane and sober personality who is endearing.

The one reason why one can have a sigh of relief is former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit is the Congress' candidate from North East for the Lok Sabha election. Dikshit still sports a suave, down-to-earth demeanour that ought to have far greater appeal than what she had earlier.

If the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Arvind Kejriwal sends impressions of being a maverick, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has the ever voluble Prime Minister, who still continues with the 2014 rhetoric but with improved spelling and syntax. This time, Delhi must be longing for the return of the genial and maternal figure.

R Narayanan  
Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

## A new vehicle for real estate growth

As India makes a foray into a new investment model, its success will depend on an efficient regulatory system that can ensure best interests of all



**RK ARORA**

One may not be aware but Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) sway our life consistently. From the place where we live, to where we work, REITs surround us. A great many people don't have the time or resources to buy or manage large-scale income-producing real estate. But the good news is that REITs allow us to own a share of the kind of real estate that would have otherwise been financially out of reach. How? These are mutual funds-like institutions that enable individuals to purchase/sell REITs on open stock trades.

**Benefits of investing in REITs:** Global capital allocation towards REITs is increasing exponentially. In a major signoff, investors have started taking fancy to Indian real estate — the sector has garnered a whopping ₹8,000 crore in the last fortnight alone. This comprises the ₹3,200 crore QIP by DLF and the Blackstone-Embassy combine, raising ₹4,750 crore in India's first ever REIT offering. Private equity players have invested close to \$53 billion since 2008 in India's real estate story. For investors, the chance to own a share of valuable real estate has meant income as well as diversification for their investment portfolios.

To qualify as a REIT, an entity must have a bulk of its assets and income connected to real estate investments. It must also distribute at least 90 per cent of its taxable income as dividends to shareholders. As a result of these necessities, REITs give a one-of-a-kind mix of all-out return that sits among stocks and bonds. By comparison, equity returns have mainly come due to capital appreciation. Fixed income returns have been more dependent on income or coupons. An extraordinary blend of development and required investor payouts that REITs give may be appealing to add up to return financial specialists with a pay centre. Alongside their extraordinary, income-oriented attributes, REITs may likewise help diversify a portfolio and lower the overall risk. In addition to strong historical performance, it is believed that going forward, opportunities for real estate investors will keep coming. The current REIT cycle has been a bit lengthy but long and persistent economic cycles are common in real estate. Given the nature, rising loan fees are worth considering. In these periods, REITs have really been extensively increasingly adaptable, completely beating fixed pay after some time.

**Success of first REIT and impact on real estate:** REITs in India are expected to provide people with an opportunity to invest in fixed income securities, which also provide long-term capital appreciation. Due to limited investment opportunities, savings made by such investors are usually channelised into gold and housing, which are unproductive assets. As an investment, REITs are expected to convert such capital into productive assets. Additionally, they open to little financial specialists a field (for example, lease creating land resources) that was until now the syndication of extensive financial specialists. Since REITs have to distribute 90 per cent of the income back to shareholders, the returns are higher than the stock market. It will help developers improve their debt-equity balance and assist in the growth of a more stable and mature market. REITs, being pure equity capital, will also provide developers with institutional capital to sell their assets and utilise funds for further development or paring of bank debt. With access to public markets for IPOs not being a short to medium term option for developers in India, this option is all the more attractive.

The real estate sector is strongly associated with infrastructure and is fundamental to its growth. Given its capital-intensive nature and the limited options available to developers as well as owners for raising funds, REITs offer a way forward. In general terms, a REIT is an investment vehicle that owns and operates real estate-related assets and allows investors to earn income produced through ownership of commercial real estate without actually having to buy an asset. Typically, the income-producing real estate assets possessed by a REIT incorporate office buildings, shopping malls, apartments, warehouses and mortgaged property. REITs were first introduced in the US in the early 1960s and have since been adopted as a preferred investment mode across the world. Over the years, they have constructively changed the way the real estate market operates, benefitting investors and developers.

Thus, the success of REITs in any country depends on its capability to customise rules and regulations governing REITs in such a way that they fit into individual markets. The support of governing authorities to ensure a less restrictive REIT regime and favourable tax transparency status is a critical factor in the development of a vibrant REIT sector in a new market. To conclude, India has the entire gradient to witness a successful REIT regime in the long-term. All that is required is an efficient regulatory system framed that can ensure the best interest of the investor, the market and economy, while also making the instrument attractive in terms of greater yield and less risk to entice domestic and foreign investors.

(The writer is Chairman of a real estate development firm)

AS PER THE HIGH COMMAND'S DECISION, MINISTERS IN PUNJAB, WHO DO NOT ENSURE VICTORY FOR THE CONGRESS, WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE CABINET.

—PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER  
**CAPTAIN AMARINDER SINGH**

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**



I WELCOME THE HIGH COMMAND'S DECISION. BUT, IN THE END, IT IS THE STATE LEADERSHIP THAT MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

—SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER  
**PARTAP SINGH BAJWA**

# Roots of Islamophobia

Anti-Muslim sentiment has become a tool for populist politicians to describe Muslims as the 'other' and the ones to blame for the economic or cultural decline of a Western country



**NADEEM PARACHA**

On March 15, when a horrendous attack by a White Australian supremacist left 50 Muslims dead in a mosque in New Zealand, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, fired a series of tweets against Islamophobia. Interestingly, in Pakistan, the tweets received some rather mixed responses. Many accused him of exhibiting "outright hypocrisy" while others were more tongue-in-cheek in their response, pointing out that it was ironic that a Prime Minister of a country, where religious and sectarian minorities are constantly attacked by radical Islamist outfits, should be lamenting the state of Islamophobia in the West.

Indeed, there is always much irony in Muslim states that overtly criticise Islamophobia while doing precious little to address the persecution of minority faiths or sects in their own realms. Therefore, a prominent Muslim (or for that matter, any Muslim) should be very careful in his/her criticism of Islamophobia. If their laments are to be taken seriously, without sounding so obviously contradictory, then they should be well-informed about the inherent contradictions that these laments carry. The wording of their criticism should, thus, be a more measured exercise.

Prime Minister Khan should have observed how Pakistan's military establishment has been wording its responses in this context. Ever since 2015 — when the military initiated a widespread operation against militant outfits — it condemns violence against Muslims elsewhere but always attaches a reminder to it that Pakistan has fought a vicious war against religious terrorism and won. This somewhat neutralises the contradictions that emerge when a country, with a history of sectarian bloodshed and violence against minorities, wags a finger at a country guilty of exhibiting Islamophobia. Because when this question does arise, it is countered by the reminder that Pakistan is actually doing something about it.

But Prime Minister Khan went slightly off the rails in his tweeted outrage against Islamophobia. He failed to balance his critique by confessing that Pakistan, too, has a problem of religiously-motivated violence but one that it is trying to address seriously.

But when he was in Opposition, Khan and his party had actually opposed any serious action against religious militancy. Yet, it is also true that the complex reality of being in power is gradually transforming his views. So one now expects him to be a bit more aware when commenting on the violence unleashed by White supremacists against Muslims.

But what really is Islamophobia? This question needs to be answered in a more thorough manner, especially by the Muslims themselves if they are to critique it without sounding contradictory. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Islamophobia is an "intense dislike or fear of Islam." In an article in the October 2015 issue of *The Atlantic*, Tanya Basu wrote that the term was derived by the French word, "Islamophobic." It was first coined by French author Alain Quellien in 1910 to criticise the behaviour of French colonial administrators



towards their Muslim subjects.

In her essay for the March 2006 issue of the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, LP Sheridan wrote that the term's first known usage in English appeared some 90 years later in 1991. It then made its way into the Oxford English Dictionary in 1997. This suggests that Islamophobia, as it is understood today, is a recent development. Professor Emeritus Bichara Khader, in his essay for the 2016 anthology, *The Search for Europe*, wrote that Islamophobia in Europe and the US is often linked to migrants from Muslim countries that are seen as a threat to Western culture and security.

He questioned this assumption by adding that migration was not an issue at all in the West till the early 1970s, after thousands of Muslims from South Asia, South East Asia, the Middle East and North Africa began arriving in various European cities from the 1950s onward. They were looking for work and higher wages. Khader wrote that as post-war economies boomed in Europe, these migrants were seen as being vital contributors to this boom. He added that it was only when the economies of Europe began to recede — especially after the 1973 oil crisis — the term "migration problem" came into play.

Yet, it was never linked to a "Muslim problem" as it is today. Khader said that during the turmoil of the 1970s and 1980s — which saw riots involving migrants and locals, especially in France and England — these were explained as "race riots" and also included migrants from the Caribbean islands and non-Muslim Indians. The reasons were economic.

Neo-fascist outfits accused their Governments of allowing non-white migrants to steal "white jobs." It really wasn't a clash of cultures as such. Or not yet. According to Khader, till the early 1980s, Muslim migrants

RECENTLY, PRIME MINISTER KHAN WENT SLIGHTLY OFF THE RAILS IN HIS TWEETED OUTRAGE AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA. HE FAILED TO BALANCE HIS CRITIQUE BY CONFESSING THAT PAKISTAN, TOO, HAS A PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUSLY-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE BUT ONE THAT IT IS TRYING TO ADDRESS SERIOUSLY

were not very public or exhibitionistic about their faith. For example, they were happy with a few basement mosques.

Once settled, Muslim migrants began to marry women from their own countries and then brought them to Europe — even though it wasn't uncommon for some to marry European women as well. Khader wrote that most of the women who came as wives, were from rural and semi-rural areas of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Egypt among others. This development changed the settlers' attitude towards their religion and cultural values. Whereas once they were fine with their small 'basement mosques', now they began to demand proper mosques.

The change in behaviour attracted preachers, who began to set up shop in various European cities. They were particularly appealing to second generation migrants, especially from families who had failed to be fully integrated by European integration policies. Khader wrote that, as the presence of veiled women and mosques grew, this is when the 'migration problem' began to be seen as a 'Muslim problem', triggering Islamophobia.

Authors such as Khader and George Morgan in (Muslims and Moral Panic in the West) agree that the more outward exhibition of 'Muslimness' in the West did contribute in the making of the above-mentioned scenario. Nevertheless, they are of the view that Islamophobia is still largely a construct of populist right-wing parties.

Khader wrote that there are 23 million Muslims in Europe. This means they are just five per cent of Europe's total population. Thus, Islamophobia has become a tool for populist politicians to describe Muslims as the 'other' and the ones to blame for the economic or cultural decline of a Western country.

(Courtesy: The Dawn)

## Establish the rule of law

Without getting into the nitty-gritty of the allegations against the CJI, it is imperative that an impartial hearing, based on settled principles, be held. However, by not providing for just representation of women in the enquiry committee, the court has undermined the POSH Act



**ANJU KAPUR**

On April 19, a complaint of sexual harassment against the Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi (CJI) was sent to the Residence(s) of 22 judges of the Supreme Court of India, along with an affidavit and other supporting evidence. The complainant had asked for the constitution of an inquiry committee of senior retired judges to investigate and adjudicate on the serious allegations of sexual harassment.

Under the Indian law, complaint(s) of sexual harassment at the workplace are required to be addressed in accordance with the procedure, as established under the Sexual Harassment of Women

at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act). The Act mandates that every organisation — with more than 10 employees — must set up an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), comprising at least four members and 50 per cent of them should be women. Further, it also states that the presiding officer of the ICC should also be a woman.

Thus, the spirit of the POSH Act lies in providing women greater representation in the inquiry committee and in including an external member on the board to ensure transparency and fairness.

The Supreme Court has constituted an ICC and also framed The Gender Sensitisation & Sexual Harassment of Women at the Supreme Court of India (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Regulations 2013, to investigate the complaints of sexual harassment.

However, in gross violation of the procedure as established by the law and in absolute negation of the

'rule of law', the Supreme Court on April 20, held a *suo moto* hearing of the complaint. The Bench comprised three male judges, presided by the CJI himself.

On acute criticism by various lawyers and Bar Association(s) of the *suo moto* hearing held by the apex court, on April 23, a special Bench comprising three male judges issued notice to a lawyer, Utsav Bains, who claimed that a man had approached him to file a false case of sexual harassment against the CJI. However, no investigation was instituted to examine the veracity of the complaint of sexual harassment.

Then in a series of surprises, the top court constituted a new Bench on April 23, comprising two male and a female Supreme Court judges to examine the complaint of sexual harassment against the CJI. This Bench issued notice to the complainant on April 24 and directed her to appear before the Bench on April 26, that is today.

In setting up a predominantly male Bench, headed by a male judge

(even though there are three sitting women judges at the Supreme Court) the court has side-stepped and corroded the sanctity of the predominantly women-led ICC.

Undoubtedly and inherently, a reason exists for POSH to insist on a committee led by a woman with them being in majority. This, to provide an environment conducive for a woman to speak freely and fearlessly about a sexual assault on her physical body. Presence of women members in majority can ease, facilitate and enable them to speak about incidents that outraged their soul.

It is fearsome and intimidating for them to express about unwanted physical contact by men in authority before strange men. Ask any woman — no matter how rich or powerful, educated or illiterate — whether they would be able to explain the gory and graphic details of the violence committed before strange men.

To facilitate, enable and create a conducive environment — where victims are encouraged to speak

freely in the presence of other women — POSH insists on this specific composition which must necessarily be strictly and scrupulously adhered. Any breach would only further perpetuate injustice.

In not providing more representation to women in the committee and by not including an external member, the Supreme Court has undermined the sanctity of the POSH Act.

The apex court has been the torch-bearer of women's right to equality and safe spaces. The court itself laid down the Visakha Guidelines in 1997 to protect women against sexual harassment and abuse at workplace. Even thereafter, it took almost 15 years for the POSH law to be enacted.

The POSH Act is unique. This progressive and welfare legislation cannot be permitted to be undermined lest Indian women lose their right to safe work places.

Without getting into the merits of the allegations levelled against the CJI, it is imperative that a fair and impartial hearing of the mat-

ter be conducted that is based on the settled principles and the procedure established by the law. This is a *sine qua non* for upholding the rule of law.

Looking at the gravity of the complaint at hand and in keeping with the spirit and objectives of the POSH Act, the Supreme Court must lead by example and ensure that the presiding officer and majority of the members of the inquiry committee are women. Further, the board must include external member/members as well.

It is incumbent on all citizens of India, especially women, to voice their concern on side-stepping of the women-led complaints committee in a matter of sexual harassment.

If we choose to remain quiet on this grave violation of principles of natural justice and the procedure established by the law, it will send the Indian women back to decades. The spirit and sanctity of the POSH Act must be fiercely protected, preserved and prevented from being reduced to a mockery.

(The writer is an advocate)



**FOREIGN EYE**



### WHEN HUNGER STRIKES...

The main reasons for people needing emergency food are benefits which consistently fail to cover the cost of living, and delays or changes to benefits being paid. The charity believes ending the five-week wait for a first universal credit payment should be the government's first priority to help create a future without food banks. That is surely correct, and a simple change to make. (The Independent editorial)

# Dish TV forays into OTT segment with Watcho

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dish TV on Thursday forayed into online Video on Demand segment by launching OTT (over-the-top) platform 'Watcho', and expects to have 10 million user-base within a year, said a top company official.

Essel Group's DTH arm is targeting the young millennial across the country, and as per its strategy it will offer short format contents, which are economically viable along with user-generated platforms in languages such as Hindi, Kannada and Telugu.

Besides, the company has also plans to add contents on its platform in other regional languages, including Bhojpuri and Gujarati, to expand in the OTT market.

The company will provide OTT service to its existing DTH subscribers of Dish TV and D2H brands, which are estimated to be around 23 million, free as of now.

The OTT platform will synergise with the existing DTH platform as this would help to control churning rates and benefit the customers, who now prefer to consume entertainment contents on the go, Dish TV India executive director & group CEO Anil Dua said.

## TRAI pulls up Dish TV India

New Delhi: Telecom regulator TRAI has directed Dish TV India to comply with the provisions of the new framework for broadcasting and cable TV services, acting on consumer complaints, pertaining to the operators' specific offering and grievance redressal helpline. TRAI, which has promised strict action against those cable TV and direct-to-home (DTH) players who are found violating its new tariff order and regulatory regime, had earlier this week also pulled up Bharti Telemedia on similar grounds.

As per complaints, the DTH operator "is forcefully offering a bouquet of free-to-air channels with no choice to subscribers and without their consent", the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), which is also the broadcast regulator, said in a directive on its website. PTI

"It would help us to grow the basic platform with its active base much more strongly because it would block one more exit route. This is meant to strengthen the existing platform rather than creating a new platform," Dua told PTI.

The move will also help Dish TV to have presence in both the mediums — the traditional DTH and fast growing online streaming market.

"We aim to reach over 10 million users in the first year itself," Dua said, adding that the company was also looking to have a preferred network partner for its OTT platform.

Watcho will offer over 1,000 hours of library content, including movies and short films. Its subscribers can also enjoy their favourite TV shows and popular drama series through live or catch-up TV.

According to a Boston consulting group report, Indian OTT market is rapidly growing and has potentials to reach USD 5 billion by 2023, helped by access to affordable data, mobile penetration into rural markets etc.

The number of players in the Indian OTT market had grown from 9 in 2012 to 32 players in 2018.

Rural India will play a big role in OTT consumption as 48 per cent of India's Internet users (about 650 million by 2023) are expected to be from this area, the report said.

Major players in the domestic OTT market are Netflix, Amazon Prime, ALT Balaji, Sony Liv, Eros Now and Hotstar.

# Stocks succumb to late sell-off; rupee, oil prices weigh

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks surrendered early gains to end sharply lower on Thursday as boiling crude prices and a depreciating rupee kept investor sentiment at a low ebb amid expiry of derivatives contracts.

Auto, metal, energy and financial stocks witnessed robust selling on concerns over valuation and earnings, traders said. On the global front, crude oil prices surged past the USD 75 per barrel mark, sparking concerns over growth and macroeconomic stability.

After starting on a positive note, the indices succumbed to a sudden sell-off in the last half-hour of trade amid expiry of April futures and options contracts.

The BSE Sensex slumped 323.82 points, or 0.83%, to close at 38,730.86, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 84.35 points, or 0.72%, to 11,641.80.

Maruti Suzuki tumbled 2.23 per cent after the country's largest car maker reported a 4.6% decline in net profit to ₹1,795.6 crore for the March quarter. Other losers in the Sensex pack included Tata Steel, Vedanta, SBI, Coal India, Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, HUL, RIL, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, M&M, Kotak Bank and Infosys, falling up to 2.89%.

Bharti Airtel, TCS and Bajaj Auto were the only gainers, spurting up to 1.06%.

Domestic markets made new highs during the month but could not sustain there due to profit-

booking at higher levels, analysts said.

"Crude remained in focus as Brent oil rose above USD 75 per barrel for the first time in 2019 due to suspension of Russian crude to Europe over quality concerns. Higher oil prices can have a negative impact on the current account deficit (CAD), the rupee, inflation and does not augur well for the domestic markets."

"General elections will keep the markets buzzing in the near term. However, the major factor that will decide the direction of the market is Q4FY19 earnings. A revival in earnings will help the markets sustain the current valuation," said Hemang Jani, head of advisory, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Sectorally, the BSE telecom index saw the biggest losses, falling 2.26%, followed by metal, bank, finance, auto, energy and tech. In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and smallcap indices lost up to 0.58%.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 1.25% to trade above the USD 75 per barrel mark. The rupee depreciated 37 paise to 70.23 against the US dollar intra-day.

Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased equity worth ₹974.88 crore on Wednesday, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) sold shares to the tune of ₹657.06 crore, provisional data available with stock exchanges showed.

Elsewhere in Asia, benchmark equity indices in Shanghai, Tokyo and Seoul ended on a mixed note. European equities started weak.

# Maruti to stop diesel vehicle sales from April 1 next year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki today clearly announced that they will stop sales of all diesel-engined cars from April 1, 2020. This is the day that Bharat Stage 6 (BS6) emission norms come into force in India and no old Bharat Stage 4 diesel engine vehicles will be allowed to be registered. During the carmakers annual results conference, Chairman R C Bhargava made this unequivocal statement about diesels and announced that this would apply to all Maruti-Suzuki products including hatchbacks, sedans, SUVs and commercial vehicles. Bhargava said that this was because making existing diesel engines BS6 compatible was not technically possible and new engines and costs for a BS6 diesel option on smaller cars would add at least ₹1 lakh to the existing cost of a diesel car. He felt that alongside factors such as higher cost and the fact that diesel vehicles will be deregistered in the National Capital Region within ten years, a plan which might be implemented nationwide and with diesel prices rising, the demand for diesel vehicles would collapse. "The Supreme Court has made it clear that it will not allow the sale and registration of any BS4 from April 1, 2020", Bhargava said explaining this decision.

This had a negative impact on the Maruti's share price which crashed after this announcement after having climbed earlier after the company beat investor expectations with a relatively positive result. This is because 23 percent of Maruti's sales are of diesel vehicles, almost all are of the 1.3 litre diesel engine that Maruti licenses from Fiat, and the company recently announced a new 1.5 litre



diesel engine for the Ciaz sedan. Bhargava however said that the company continued to work on hybrid vehicles and while no 'strong hybrids' will be launched in the coming year, Maruti-Suzuki continues to work on the technology for a potential future launch. Bhargava expressed negativity on the possibility of more electric vehicles being launched in the small car space given costs and without a comprehensive study on commodities and carbon costs. Unit sales for the year climbed to 1,862,449 units including exports, a growth of 4.7 per cent and thus net sales stood at ₹83,026.5 crore a growth of 6.3 per cent. However with foreign exchange volatility and rising commodity prices, net profit declined 2.9 per cent to ₹750 crore, and thus the company only declared a dividend of ₹80 per share. One other reason for declining profitability was the increase in customer discounts which rose from ₹15,849 per vehicle on average in 2017-18 to ₹18,277 per vehicle in 2018-19. The company also said that while the last few quarters have been weak, sales in the fourth quarter declining 0.7 per cent over the previous year this was in line with most pre-election years in India. That said, Maruti-Suzuki expected sales to grow between 4-8 per cent in Fiscal Year 2020.

## NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11735.70	11796.75	11624.30	11641.80	-84.35
ULTRACEMCO	4450.50	4686.60	4448.50	4635.00	240.35
GRASIM	876.10	940.00	876.10	923.00	42.45
DREDDY	2851.65	2940.00	2839.45	2936.70	77.30
BHARTIARTL	322.80	332.90	321.00	332.70	8.20
BPCL	348.95	359.45	347.60	357.80	8.80
UPL	955.50	973.90	946.00	969.75	21.55
TCS	2170.00	2205.00	2168.05	2203.00	19.55
WIPRO	293.05	295.95	292.85	295.20	2.15
BAJAJ-AUTO	3073.95	3110.00	3027.60	3095.90	39.20
BAJAJFINSV	7663.50	7735.95	7625.00	7671.00	13.05
ONGC	168.35	170.00	166.55	169.00	0.35
HEROMOTOCO	2618.00	2638.00	2597.65	2610.85	-1.05
CIPLA	558.70	563.95	551.15	558.25	-0.30
ASIANPAINT	1450.00	1460.00	1438.10	1449.00	-1.05
ITC	307.25	309.80	302.00	306.00	-0.45
COALINDIA	254.85	255.20	248.30	253.50	-0.50
BRIT	1366.85	1380.55	1352.15	1357.90	-2.75
BIANNTIA	2988.00	2999.00	2962.65	2972.00	-6.20
HCLTECH	1141.00	1151.40	1129.05	1136.00	-2.95
TITAN	1155.00	1165.00	1135.40	1145.65	-3.50
NTPC	134.00	135.35	132.30	133.50	-0.45
TECHM	820.00	827.00	813.45	816.00	-2.75
BAIFINANCE	3099.80	3114.40	3072.65	3081.95	-11.10
ZEL	419.45	424.25	412.30	416.15	-1.75
IOC	153.60	155.45	151.85	153.10	-0.70
M&M	671.00	673.00	664.00	665.00	-3.15
POWERGRID	192.20	195.80	190.70	191.00	-0.95
KOTAKBANK	1368.90	1377.00	1355.00	1359.00	-7.75
ADANIPTS	390.00	392.90	387.65	389.00	-2.75
HDFCBANK	2286.90	2298.80	2257.95	2262.25	-17.50
YESBANK	241.00	250.40	248.30	247.25	-1.90
INFY	736.45	737.65	727.05	730.05	-6.45
HINDUNILVR	1756.00	1762.60	1727.20	1735.15	-15.40
EICHERMOT	20510.45	20639.00	20300.00	20350.00	-181.55
GAIL	346.00	349.00	341.10	342.80	-3.25
TATAMOTORS	223.40	225.90	220.25	221.20	-2.40
SUNPHARMA	465.25	474.60	459.50	463.25	-6.10
ICICIBANK	409.00	402.40	394.30	395.65	-5.45
SBIN	311.00	312.00	306.50	306.50	-4.25
RELIANCE	1389.10	1412.40	1362.60	1370.00	-19.50
INDUSINDBK	1716.00	1724.00	1673.00	1675.00	-24.25
HDFC	1987.55	1998.80	1946.55	1951.45	-28.95
AXISBANK	754.00	758.55	738.55	741.30	-11.55
IRUHSNGIN	733.00	741.90	724.00	735.60	-13.50
JSWSTEEL	291.50	294.25	285.50	286.70	-5.65
HINDALCO	200.85	202.65	195.75	196.80	-3.90
MARUTI	7014.75	7144.95	6865.00	6880.00	-136.70
VEDL	174.60	175.20	170.00	170.35	-4.45
TATASTEEL	522.00	529.30	509.00	511.00	-14.25
INFRATEL	287.35	298.00	265.65	272.90	-29.00

## NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28093.65	28186.30	27871.95	27914.95	-142.90
SHREEM	19400.00	20140.05	19281.60	19930.50	-533.05
URL	1427.00	1466.40	1425.30	1461.50	32.65
HINDPETRO	269.50	278.00	264.00	274.85	6.05
SIEMENS	1181.95	1201.80	1165.80	1200.90	24.30
AUROPHARMA	786.00	815.00	785.10	800.00	13.70
ICICIPRULI	362.00	380.25	362.00	368.25	5.05
INDIGO	1480.00	1511.00	1473.00	1493.00	20.40
BIOCON	621.05	623.70	614.50	620.15	6.75
ACC	1066.00	1066.75	1063.00	1062.10	17.10
LUPIN	860.00	874.90	853.10	873.10	8.85
HDFCAMC	1587.05	1625.00	1587.05	1607.40	15.15
SBILIFE	699.60	619.70	608.05	614.35	4.05
PETRONET	236.00	237.80	234.80	237.50	1.45
ICICIGI	1078.90	1090.00	1065.00	1076.00	5.55
ABB	1498.00	1499.80	1475.00	1498.00	6.65
SAIL	56.25	56.90	55.90	56.65	0.20
DMART	1339.00	1361.95	1320.25	1334.95	3.80
PGH	10570.00	10649.00	10380.00	10577.00	20.45
HAVELLS	77.80	78.50	77.00	77.40	-0.65
OFSS	3548.00	3557.05	3520.00	3536.00	-2.70
DLF	177.00	178.70	173.00	175.50	-0.55
HDFCLIFE	400.80	402.00	396.40	398.40	-1.60
MOTHERSUMI	149.20	150.50	146.80	148.10	-0.75
BOSCHLTD	18010.00	18193.90	17900.00	17916.60	-89.15
MRF	56049.00	56192.95	55300.00	55330.00	-312.40
GICRE	250.00	250.20	244.20	248.00	-1.65
PIDILITIND	1223.50	1238.30	1205.00	1213.00	-8.95
HINDZINC	274.35	277.65	271.40	273.40	-2.10
DABUR	398.65	401.70	393.80	395.10	-3.55
PEL	2578.00	2584.35	2531.30	2558.20	-37.45
BAJAJHLING	3326.90	3328.00	3251.25	3265.00	-35.40
NHPC	23.35	23.55	23.00	23.10	-0.25
MCDOWELL-N	554.50	556.80	544.80	548.80	-6.20
COLPAL	1218.00	1220.00	1198.25	1201.10	-13.75
AMBUJACEM	222.35	229.85	219.50	221.35	-2.75
DIVISLAB	1736.25	1742.50	1710.55	1720.50	-22.20
IDEA	16.75	17.25	16.30	16.90	-0.25
NADIA	185.00	186.00	180.00	182.00	-2.70
CADILAH	329.55	331.35	323.00	324.30	-5.25
ASHOKLEY	91.45	92.50	89.55	89.75	-1.50
NMDC	102.50	102.95	100.25	100.65	-1.70
L&FH	140.25	140.80	136.60	137.25	-2.35
BHEL	73.85	75.15	71.70	72.15	-3.30
CONCOR	507.60	507.60	488.50	494.00	-9.55
MARICO	364.00	364.85	355.00	356.00	-6.90
SRTANSFIN	1184.95	1194.00	1146.00	1156.00	-23.00
PAGEIND	23700.00	23749.95	23000.95	23125.00	-460.50
BANDHANBNA	607.00	613.00	587.30	592.00	-13.50
BANKBARODA	125.20	125.75	121.50	122.00	-3.10
GODREJCP	675.00	677.50	647.25	650.90	-23.45

## BSE 500



Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
RPOWER	7.84	8.25	7.82	7.94
SPIECEIT	127.00	133.45	126.80	131.50
YESBANK	241.40	250.15	236.50	237.70
IBREALTE	116.05	127.30	113.35	123.45
RELIANCE	1392.90	1419.00	1365.00	1374.55
MARUTI	7019.00	7145.20	6865.00	6902.95
PCJEWELLER	137.25	140.00	130.80	132.30
JETAIRWAYS	171.25	177.80	162.50	169.90
MARUTI	7.20	7.48</		

# SL continues crackdown on terror suspects; 16 held

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Authorities in Sri Lanka continued their search operations with the help of army and arrested 16 more suspects in connection with the horrific Easter Sunday blasts in which more than 350 people were killed. The arrested people were being interrogated at length by investigation sleuths in connection with the country's deadliest attack.

Nine suicide bombers, believed to be the members of a local Islamist extremist group National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ), carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through three churches and three luxury hotels. As many as 359 people have been killed in the attacks while 500 others injured, according to authorities. Officials said that with the arrest of 16 more people on Wednesday, the total number of suspects under police custody has risen to 76.

Many of the arrested people have suspected links to the NTJ, the group blamed for the bombings. However, the NTJ has not claimed responsibility for the attacks. The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attacks and identified suicide bombers who carried out the devastating blasts.

Authorities have deployed thousands of troops to help police carry out search operations. Over 5,000 army personnel have been deployed around the country. "During the last 24 hours, there have been no major incidents. We have deployed over 6,300 troops. This includes 1,000 from the Airforce and 600 from the Navy," military

spokesman Brigadier Sumith Atapattu said.

Meanwhile, a minor explosion happened behind the magistrate's court at Pugoda, the western province town, 40 Kms north of Colombo. There was no immediate report of any casualty. Search operations of suspected properties, arrests and detention of people and to place road blocks for search operations have been facilitated by the newly-enforced emergency regulations. The regulations were adopted without a vote in Parliament on Wednesday.

The curfew which was imposed at 10 PM on Wednesday was lifted at 4 AM on Thursday. President Maithripala Sirisena has convened an all-party meeting. He would meet religious leaders. Both parleys are to discuss the attacks dubbed as among the five deadliest terrorist attacks carried out since the 9/11 in the US. Though Sirisena has asked police chief Pujith Jayasundera and defence ministry secretary Hemasiri Fernando to step down, there was no confirmation if they have resigned.

The police chief's position is an independent post determined by the Constitutional Council. He cannot be constitutionally removed unless he resigns himself or removed through a parliamentary procedure, officials said. Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the head of the local catholic church, has asked all churches to stop masses until the situation improved, his office said. On Wednesday, the Sri Lankan government admitted that "major" intelligence lapses led to the horrific coordinated attacks.

## 'Islamist extremist group may have planned Easter attacks for 7-8 years'

Colombo (PTI): The Islamist extremist group behind the deadly Easter Sunday blasts in Sri Lanka would have been planning the suicide attacks for "at least 7 to 8 years" and could be led by someone having the calibre of slain LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran, according to Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka. Speaking during the emergency debate in Parliament, Fonseka, who led the Sri Lankan military that vanquished the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 2009, was quoted by the media as saying that the Easter attacks were a long planned one.

"It took 12 years for the LTTE to carry out a suicide attack on the then Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeyeratne. Therefore, these people must have planned the recent attack at least seven to eight years ago," he said on Wednesday. "The LTTE's terrorism was markedly different as it was an organisation fighting to divide the country. Its motives were political, whereas this group is pushing a religious agenda," the 68-year-old Field Marshal said, apparently referring to the little-known National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ).

Authorities have accused the NTJ of carrying out the devastating blasts that tore through three churches and three luxury hotels on the Easter Sunday,

killing over 350 people, including 11 Indians and injuring nearly 500 others. Daily Mirror quoted Fonseka as saying that the group that carried out Sri Lanka's worst terror attack, might have already established a leader of Prabhakaran's calibre. Prabhakaran is generally credited with perfecting the recruitment and use of suicide bomber units of Tamil Tigers against the Lankan military and political leaders.

On Tuesday, the Islamic State said it had carried out the attacks, and released a propaganda video of men it says were the bombers, pledging allegiance to the group chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In the video, all but one of the seven men can be seen with their faces covered. Three of them were holding knives. The bearded man with his face uncovered has been named as the suspected ring-leader, Sri Lankan Islamist preacher Zahran

Hashim.

It is unclear if Hashim was among the suicide bombers. Fonseka also criticised the government for ignoring the advance intelligence on the attack. "I regret that the intelligence reports on the recent attack were ignored," he was quoted as saying by Ceylon Today.

Fonseka, described as Sri Lanka's most successful general, also criticised the government for not consulting him earlier in the aftermath of the massive attack. "I was given a chance to meet the Prime Minister 48 hours after the terror attack. I did not earn the title Field Marshal for selling snacks in Galle Face," he said, referring to the ocean-side urban park in Colombo.

"There is no member in this Government who has more knowledge than I have with regard to national security related matters. If there is any such person, I will give this title to him. This Government never uses our knowledge. I do not need any positions. Just utilise the knowledge of people like me to ensure national security," he said in Parliament. He also said the Easter Sunday tragedy was the result of a "weak" government and faulted President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and defence officials for the country's worst terror attacks.

## 11 Indians dead in Lanka blasts

Colombo (PTI): The number of Indians killed in the massive Easter Sunday bombings rose to 11 on Thursday, as one more person succumbed to injuries, taking the total number of foreigners who died in the attack to 36, according to the Lankan Sri foreign ministry.

Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry, in a statement, said that as of Wednesday April 24, the number of foreign nationals who have been killed in the attack rose to 36. It includes, one from Bangladesh, two from China, eleven from India, three from Denmark, one from Japan, one from the Netherlands, one from Portugal, two from Saudi Arabia, one from Spain, two from Turkey, six from the UK, one from USA, two holding US and UK nationalities, and two holding Australian and Sri Lankan nationalities," the statement said.

The ministry further added that 14 foreign nationals are unaccounted for at present, and could be among the unidentified victims at the Colombo Judicial Medical Officer's mortuary. The mortal remains of 13 foreign nationals have been repatriated to date, the statement said. The ministry said that 12 foreign nationals injured in the attacks are receiving treatment at the Colombo South Teaching Hospital and private hospitals in Colombo while

others have been discharged following treatment.

### Catholic churches suspend public mass

Sri Lanka's Catholic churches on Thursday suspended all public services until the security situation improves as the head of the church urged politicians to leave aside differences to rebuild the country struck by the Easter Sunday bombings that killed nearly 360 people. Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, the head of the local Catholic church, said that Easter Sunday's attacks were coordinated by an organised group with powerful nations behind them and also noted that these attackers had no religion. All Catholic churches were asked to stop public mass until the security situation improves, Cardinal Ranjith's office quoted him as saying. "There will be no public mass said until further notice," an official said.

He urged the government to leave aside all political differences and work together at this time to rebuild the country again. Sri Lankan media and some ministers have criticised the rift between President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe after it emerged that authorities had prior intelligence from India and the US about the possible attacks by the National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ) jihadist group.

## Sri Lanka suspends visas on arrival prog

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka on Thursday suspended its plans to grant visas on arrival to citizens of 39 countries after the devastating Easter suicide bombings that killed nearly 360 people. "Although arrangements were in place to issue visas on arrival for citizens of 39 countries, we have now decided to hold it for the time being in consideration of the current security situation," Tourism Minister John Amararatunga said in a statement.

"Investigations have revealed foreign links to the attacks and we don't want this facility to be abused," Amararatunga added. The visas on arrival pilot programme was part of a larger initiative to increase tourist arrivals to the country during the six month off-season period from May to October.

The island nation received 7,40,600 foreign tourists in the first three months of 2019. Around 450,000 Indians visited Sri Lanka last year and the island nation was expecting the total Indian tourist arrivals to cross one million mark in 2019. Sri Lanka's tourism industry, which accounts for around five per cent of the country's GDP, is likely to suffer due to the Easter blasts. Tourism revenues in Lanka increased to USD 362.7 million in November from USD 284 million in October 2018, according to reports.

Meanwhile, the Lankan authorities Thursday intensified their raids with the help of the army and arrested 16 more suspects in connection with the country's worst terror attack that killed 359 people and left over 500 injured. President Maithripala Sirisena has said that 139 people have been identified as suspects in connection with the attacks.

Addressing an all-party conference at the Presidential Secretariat here, Sirisena said that a Combine Operation Centre will be established within the defence ministry for the enforcement of the country's security measures from Friday.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said that the police had searched several houses connected with the terrorist group which carried out the Easter blasts.

They are located in the Colombo city limits and the immediate suburbs of Dehiwela, Panadura, Wattala and Negombo. The houses have been sealed for further investigations.



An Ahmadi Muslim refugee woman holds her newly born baby at a community center that they took refuge in Pasyala, north east of Colombo, Sri Lanka, Thursday. Hundreds of Ahmadi Muslims from Pakistan who sought refuge in Sri Lanka now huddle together in fear following attacks and harassment after the Easter bombings. They are just some of the Muslims scared the Islamic State-claimed assault will bring both government and mob retaliation. (2) Pakistani Christians light candles during a vigil and special prayer service for the victims of the bomb explosions in churches and hotels in Sri Lanka, in Islamabad, Pakistan, Thursday, April 25, 2019. The Easter Sunday suicide bombings at churches and hotels killed over 350 people and injured 500 and (3) Sri Lankan navy soldiers perform security checks on motorists at a roadside in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Thursday. Sri Lanka banned drones and unmanned aircraft and set off more controlled detonations of suspicious items Thursday four days after suicide bombing attacks.

## China silent over Pak ships absence at navy fleet review

PTI ■ BEIJING

The Chinese military said on Thursday that it "always attached importance" to relations with the Indian and Pakistani counterparts and was ready to make more efforts to advance the ties, but kept silent over the absence of ships from its all-weather ally at the fleet review of the 70th anniversary celebrations of China's navy.

Two Indian battle ships, including INS Kolkata - the biggest indigenously built stealth

destroyer - along with INS Shakti - one of biggest fleet support ships - took part in the fleet review at Qingdao on April 23 which was presided over by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Significantly, conspicuous by their absence were the ships of Pakistan Navy at the parade. The Pakistan Navy reportedly could not send its ships to PLAN's most celebrated moment despite the all-weather relations due to the recent Indo-Pak hostilities after the

deadly Pulwama terror attack in February.

However, a delegation headed by Pakistan Navy chief Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi attended the event.

Asked how China viewed the participation of the Indian Navy ships, Chinese defence ministry spokesman Col Ren Guochang told a media briefing that more than 60 countries sent their naval delegations and 13 countries have sent their ships to take part in the review.

He said the Chinese navy's 70th anniversary celebrations will "undoubtedly concretise the friendship and mutual relations between the PLA Navy (PLAN) and its international counterparts."

"At the same time, China always attached importance to the military-to-military relations between China and India and China and Pakistan. We are ready to make more efforts with the two nations to push forward the military relations and

exchanges," he said. He, however, evaded answer to a question over the absence of the Pakistan Navy ships in the fleet review.

Col Ren was critical of the French naval ship which was scheduled to take part in the PLAN celebrations.

China reportedly withdrew the invitation to the French naval ship Vendemiaire on the ground that it trespassed into Chinese waters at the Taiwan Strait, which Beijing claims as part of it.

## Afghan official says Taliban ambush police convoy, kill 9

Kabul (AP): The Taliban ambushed a security convoy in western Afghanistan, killing nine policemen, and in Kabul, a would-be attacker died when a bomb he was trying to plant at a private university detonated prematurely, officials said Thursday.

According to a councilman in western Farah province, Abdul Samad Salehi, the ambush took place in Anardara

district as the convoy was heading to defuse a roadside bomb on Wednesday afternoon.

Shortly after the attack, other Taliban insurgents targeted and briefly overran the district police headquarters, setting off hours-long clashes, Salehi said.

arrived later and managed to wrest back control of the headquarters. The resurgent

Taliban, who have been active in the area and have launched large-scale attacks against Afghan security forces in Farah in the past, did not immediately comment on the attacks.

The insurgents have been staging near-daily attacks across Afghanistan even as they hold talks with a U.S. envoy tasked with finding a peaceful resolution to the 17-year war.

## US-led 2017 blitz on Syria's Raqa killed 1,600 civilians: Report

AFP ■ BEIRUT

Intensive US-led coalition bombardment on the Syrian city of Raqa killed more than 1,600 civilians over four months in 2017, according to a report released on Thursday.

The findings were compiled after months of field research and extensive data analysis, including via a project that saw 3,000 digital activists scan satellite imagery online. In mid-2017, Raqa had been the de facto Syria capital of the Islamic State group's cross-border "caliphate" for three years and the US-led coalition launched a military campaign to crush the jihadists in their main remaining hub. The unprecedented investigation, carried out by Amnesty International and the Airwars monitoring group, urged top coalition members to show more transparency and accountability.

"Many of the air bombardments were inaccurate and tens of thousands of artillery strikes were indiscriminate," said Donatella Rovera, crisis response advisor at



Amnesty. The civilian death toll for the coalition campaign, which supported Kurdish-led ground forces in their successful advance against IS, stands at more than 1,600, according to the report.

The coalition has admitted to around 10 percent of those deaths, it said. "Coalition forces razed Raqa, but they cannot erase the truth," Rovera said. "Amnesty International and Airwars call upon the Coalition forces to end their denial about the shocking scale of civilian deaths and destruction caused by their offensive in Raqa." Rovera said a number of reasons explained the high casualty toll among civilians,

including failing intelligence and surveillance, and the use of inappropriate weaponry. In many cases, buildings in Raqa were targeted following insufficient remote surveillance, Rovera said, killing entire families that were still living or sheltering in them.

"If there had been adequate surveillance of these buildings... a civilian pattern of life would have been very detectable," she told AFP. Rovera, who spent months going to strike sites in Raqa since it was captured by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces in October 2017, also said the coalition's choice of weapons was a problem.

## Scientists track Indian Ocean's 'missing' plastic waste

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Indian Ocean is the world's biggest dumping ground for plastic waste, but where the trash ultimately ends up has remained a mystery, scientists say. According to researchers from the University of Western Australia (UWA), little research had been done to measure and track plastic waste in the Indian Ocean. The team found that unique characteristics of the southern Indian Ocean transport floating plastics towards the western side of the ocean, where it leaks past South Africa into the South Atlantic Ocean.

"Because of the Asian monsoon system, the southeast trade winds in the southern Indian Ocean are stronger than the trade winds in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans," said Mirjam van der Mheen, a PhD student at UWA. "These strong winds push floating plastic material further to the west in the southern Indian Ocean than they do in the other



oceans," she said in a statement.

In the northern Indian Ocean, the simulations showed that there may be an accumulation in the Bay of Bengal. It is also most likely that floating plastics will ultimately end up on beaches, transported by the reversing monsoon winds and currents, researchers said. "Our study shows that the atmospheric and oceanic attributes of the Indian Ocean are different to other ocean basins and that there may not be a concentrated garbage patch. Therefore the mystery of the missing plastic is even greater in the Indian Ocean," said van der

Mheen.

"As technology to remotely track plastics doesn't yet exist, we need to use indirect ways to determine the fate of plastic in the Indian Ocean," said Chari Pattiaratchi, from UWA. In a research paper published in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, researchers used information gathered from more than 22,000 satellite tracked surface drifting buoys that had been released around all the world's oceans since 1979, to simulate pathways of plastic waste globally with an emphasis on the Indian Ocean.



In this April 16, 2019 photo a man deposits an empty wine bottle into a recycling container with an election poster showing the face of Socialist prime minister Pedro Sanchez in Madrid, Spain. A substantial pool of undecided voters and a right-wing splintered by a rising populist party are making confident predictions harder to come by as Spain prepares for its third parliamentary election in less than four years. Election message reads 'Make it happen. Vote PSOE, The Spain that you want' AP

# Kim, Putin vow to seek closer ties at first talks

AFP ■ VLADIVOSTOK

Russia's Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un met for their first-ever summit on Thursday, vowing to seek closer ties as they look to counter US influence. Putin emerged from the talks saying that like the United States, Russia supports efforts to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula and prevent nuclear conflicts.

But he insisted that Pyongyang needs guarantees of its security and sovereignty, and took a veiled swipe at Washington for trying to strong-arm North Korea. "We need to... return to a state where international law, not the law of the strongest, determines the situation in the world," Putin said.

The summit in Russia's Far Eastern city of Vladivostok came with Kim locked in a nuclear stand-off with Washington and Putin keen to put Moscow forward as a player in another global flash-point. The two leaders shook hands and shared smiles before heading into one-on-one talks that lasted nearly two hours, longer than expected, at a university campus on an island off the Pacific coast city.

In brief statements before their meeting, both men said they were looking to strengthen ties that date back to the Soviet Union's support for the founder of North Korea, Kim's grandfather Kim Il Sung. Kim said he hoped to turn the modern relationship with Moscow into a "more stable and sound one" while Putin said the visit would give a boost to diplomatic and economic ties.

Putin said he supported Kim's efforts to normalise relations with the United States and hoped to find out "what Russian can do" to help with



Russia's Vladimir Putin (right) and North Korea's Kim Jong Un during a meeting on Thursday

the issue of denuclearisation. The meeting — which Kim described as "a very meaningful exchange" — later expanded to include other officials.

About five hours after he arrived, Kim left the campus following a long final handshake with Putin, waving through the window of his black limousine as it drove away. Putin then addressed reporters alone, saying he would fill in Washington on the results of the talks.

"There are no secrets here, no conspiracies... Chairman Kim himself asked us to

inform the American side of our position," said Putin, who was due to fly on to Beijing for another summit. Kim, who arrived a day earlier in his armoured train, was expected to stay in Vladivostok on Friday for cultural events that Russian media have reported will include a ballet and a visit to the city's aquarium.

The meeting was Kim's first with another head of state since returning from his Hanoi summit with US President Donald Trump, which broke down without a deal on North Korea's nuclear

arsenal in February. It followed repeated invitations from Putin after Kim embarked on a series of diplomatic overtures last year. Since March 2018, the formerly reclusive North Korean leader has held four meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, three with South Korea's Moon Jae-in, two with Trump and one with Vietnam's President. At the meeting with Trump in Hanoi, the cash-strapped North demanded immediate relief from sanctions, but the talks broke up in disagreement over what Pyongyang was pre-

pared to give up in return. Russia has already called for the sanctions to be eased, while the US has accused it of trying to help Pyongyang evade some of the measures — accusations Russia denies. There were no concrete announcements or agreements, but analysts said Thursday's meeting was valuable to both sides.

"For North Korea, it's all about securing another exit. China talks about sanctions relief but it doesn't really put it into action," said Koo Kab-woo, a professor at the

University of North Korean Studies in Seoul. "For Russia, North Korea is elevating it back to one of the direct parties, on the same footing as China."

Among the issues that were likely discussed was the fate of some 10,000 North Korean labourers working in Russia and due to leave by the end of this year under sanctions. Labour is one of North Korea's key exports and sources of cash. Pyongyang has reportedly asked Russia to continue to employ its workers after the deadline.

Moscow was a crucial backer of Pyongyang for decades and their ties go back to the founding of North Korea, when the Soviet Union installed Kim Il Sung as leader.

The USSR reduced funding to the North as it began to seek reconciliation with Seoul in the 1980s, but Pyongyang was hit hard by its demise in 1991. Soon after his first election as Russian president, Putin sought to normalise relations and met Kim Jong Il — the current leader's father and predecessor — three times, including a 2002 meeting also held in Vladivostok.

China has since cemented its role as the isolated North's most important ally, its largest trading partner and crucial fuel supplier, and analysts say Kim could be looking to balance Beijing's influence. While ties between Moscow and Pyongyang have remained cordial, the last meeting between their leaders came in 2011, when Kim Jong Il told then-president Dmitry Medvedev that he was prepared to renounce nuclear testing. His son has since overseen by far the country's most powerful blast to date, and launch of missiles which Pyongyang says are capable of reaching the entire US mainland.

# Nirav to appear for hearing via videolink today



PTI ■ LONDON

Fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi, undergoing extradition proceedings in the UK in the USD 1-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud and money laundering case, is set to appear before a London court for a remand hearing on Friday. The 48-year-old, who has been behind bars at Wandsworth prison in southwest London since his arrest last month, is set to be produced before a judge at Westminster Magistrates' Court via videolink from the jail.

The hearing follows his bail being rejected by Chief Magistrate Emma Arbuthnot on March 29 on the grounds that there was a "substantial risk he would fail to surrender". "This is a case of substantial fraud, with loss to a bank in India of between USD 1-2 billion. I am not persuaded that the conditional bail sought will meet the concerns of the government of India in this case," Judge Arbuthnot had noted in her ruling.

The hearing this week takes place as per the 28-day time frame for judicial remand in such cases. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), arguing on behalf of the Indian authorities, had confirmed earlier this month that Modi intends to appeal against the rejection of bail in the UK High Court. However, such an application has not been logged so far. The hearing on Friday is expected to be procedural unless some new factors are placed before the court to consider. Modi can make a third bail application at Westminster Magistrates' Court but only if the grounds for the bail plea are substantially different.

Previously, Modi's legal team, including solicitor Anand Doobay and barrister Clare Montgomery, had offered 1 million pounds as security alongside an offer to meet stringent electronic tag restrictions on their client's movements, "akin to house arrest". The diamond dealer's "lack of

community ties" in the UK and an attempt to acquire the citizenship of Vanuatu - a remote island country located in the South Pacific Ocean - in late 2017 went against him as the judge said it seemed like he was trying to "move away from India at an important time".

CPS barrister Toby Cadman had argued that there was a "substantial risk" that the prime accused in the PNB fraud case would flee and attempt to interfere with witnesses and evidence. "Due to the nature of his business he has at his disposal diamonds gold and pearls," Cadman told the court.

During the course of the hearing last month, it emerged that Modi had made death threats to witnesses and also attempted to destroy evidence such as mobile phones and a server holding "material critical to the fraud". His defence team, the same as that deployed by former Kingfisher Airlines boss Vijay Mallya in his extradition case, denied the allegations and said their client saw the UK as a "haven where his case will be fairly considered".

Judge Arbuthnot noted a sense of "deja vu" with the case, in reference to her having ordered the extradition of Mallya in December last year, which is currently going through a High Court appeals process. Modi is believed to have been living in the UK on an Investor Visa, applied for in 2015 - at a time when the so-called "golden visa" route was relatively easier for super-rich individuals to acquire residency rights in the UK based on a minimum of 2-million pound investment. He was arrested by uniformed Scotland Yard officers from a Metro Bank branch in central London as he attempted to open a new bank account on March 19. During his first court appearance a day later, it emerged that the diamondaire accused of defrauding PNB via fraudulent Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) had been in possession of multiple passports, since revoked by the Indian authorities.

# Iraq on track to be third oil supplier in 2030: IEA

AFP ■ BAGHDAD

Iraq is on track to produce nearly six million barrels of crude daily by 2030, the International Energy Agency said on Thursday, which would make it the world's third biggest oil supplier. The IEA's wide-ranging report found that Iraq's production in the next decade could increase by an impressive 1.3 million barrels per day to a total of 5.9 million bpd.

"Iraq is and will remain one of the key pillars of the oil market in the years to come," IEA head Fatih Birol told reporters on Thursday. The optimism stemmed from Iraq's 50 percent increase in oil production since 2012, Birol said, despite several years of low prices and the devastating rampage of the Islamic State group across a third of the country. "It shows the resilience of the Iraqi oil industry," said the IEA's executive director. The agency acknowledged a range of potential roadblocks to its outlook, including global market conditions, foreign investment in Iraq, political stability and a steady supply of the water needed to actually produce oil. Iraq is currently the fifth-largest oil producer worldwide, and the second-largest from among the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Iraq has the capacity to produce 4.6 million bpd, but last month exported just under 3.4 million bpd after agreeing to trim its oil production alongside others so prices would go up.

Prices have indeed enjoyed a strong recovery, jumping even further Thursday to a nearly six-month high of USD 75.60. It came amid supply concerns as the United States said it would end sanctions relief next month for eight countries importing Iranian crude. Oil minister Thamer al-Ghadban said on Thursday Iraq could boost its production to meet the shortfall but would do so only in coordination with fellow OPEC members. "Iraq does not take unilateral decisions," said Ghadban.

"We have a huge capacity to increase, but knowing that, it is important to keep the market stable and remove the surplus of oil in the market," he told reporters.

# Biden launches 2020 White House bid

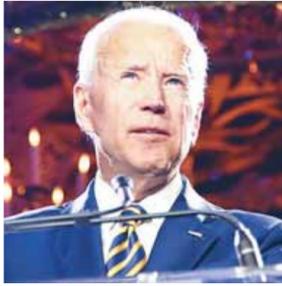
AP ■ WASHINGTON

Former Vice-President Joe Biden formally joined the crowded Democratic presidential contest on Thursday, declaring the soul of the nation at stake if President Donald Trump wins re-election. In a video posted on Twitter, Biden focused on the 2017 deadly clash between white supremacists and counter protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia. Biden noted Trump's comments that there were some "very fine people" on both sides of the violent encounter, which left one woman dead.

"We are in the battle for the soul of this nation," Biden said. "If we give Donald Trump eight years in the White House, he will forever and fundamentally alter the character of this nation — who we are. And I cannot stand by and watch that happen." The 76-year-old Biden becomes an instant front-runner alongside Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders,

who is leading many polls and has proved to be a successful fundraiser. Among Democrats, Biden has unmatched international and legislative experience, and he is among the best-known faces in US politics. He quickly racked up endorsements on Thursday morning, becoming the first Democrat running for president with the backing of more than one US senator. Still, Biden must compete in a field that now spans at least 20 Democrats and has been celebrated for its racial and gender diversity. As an older white man with occasionally centrist views, Biden has to prove he's not out of step with his party. He's betting that his working-class appeal and ties to Barack Obama's presidency will help him overcome those questions. Biden has said he would campaign as an "Obama-Biden Democrat," who is as pragmatic as he is progressive.

Just minutes after the announcement, the GOP lashed out against Biden's record in the Obama adminis-



tration, a line of attack in sharp contrast with recent criticism against other 2020 Democrats that has largely focused on them being too liberal, or even socialists.

"Biden's fingerprints are all over foreign policy blunders and the weakest economic recovery since World War II," Republican National Committee

spokesman Michael Ahrens said. "We don't need eight more years of Biden. Just ask President Obama, who isn't even endorsing his right-hand man." While it's true that Obama hasn't explicitly endorsed Biden's bid, the former president took the unusual step of weighing in on Thursday's announcement through a spokeswoman.

"President Obama has long said that selecting Joe Biden as his running mate in 2008 was one of the best decisions he ever made," Obama spokeswoman Katie Hill said. "He relied on the vice presidential knowledge, insight, and judgment throughout both campaigns and the entire presidency. The two forged a special bond over the last 10 years and remain close today." Privately, Trump allies have warned that Biden might be the biggest re-election threat given the former vice president's potential appeal among the white working class in the Midwest, the region that gave Trump a path to the presidency.

# Indian investment on rise despite Brexit

PTI ■ LONDON

The number of Indian companies investing in the UK registered a jump over the previous year despite the ongoing uncertainties around Brexit, according to a new report tracking Indian investments in the UK. The annual 'India Meets Britain Tracker' released in London on Wednesday finds that the number of Indian companies doing business in Britain has increased from 800 in 2018 to 842 in 2019, with a combined turnover of 48 billion pounds.

The report, published by business advisory firm Grant Thornton UK LLP and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), revealed a more than doubling of the Corporation Tax paid by these companies to hit 684 million

pounds, up from 360 million pounds in the previous year. "The headline figures in the Tracker are startling. They are testament to the strength and entrepreneurialism of the Indian business community, with some companies growing by more than 100 per cent year on year," UK minister for investment Graham Stuart said at the launch.

The minister pointed out that the figures are likely to see a further jump from next year, when the UK's Corporation Tax, from the current level of 19 per cent, will drop to 17 per cent. "We will always welcome Indian investments and we recognise India's importance as one of our most critical bilateral investors," he said.

Among some of the other highlight figures from the Tracker, 24 per cent of Indian

companies in the UK have at least one woman on their board, up from 19 per cent last year, and they employ an estimated 104,783 people in the country. "The report brings out in such graphic terms the contribution that Indian businesses are making to the UK. We all wondered how the Brexit process would have affected the investment sentiment from India and now we have the answer - Indian business retains its positive outlook towards the UK," said Ruchi Ghanashyam, the Indian High Commissioner to the UK.

The report, now in its sixth year, provides a tracker of the fastest growing Indian companies in the UK with turnover of more than 5 million pounds, year-on-year revenue growth of at least 10 per cent and a minimum two-year track-record in

the UK. Among these Accord Healthcare Ltd, Milpharm Ltd and Secure Meters (UK) Ltd have been consistently recorded as fast growing ever since the Tracker was launched in 2014. Anuj Chande, Partner and Head of South Asia Group at Grant Thornton UK LLP, noted: "Given the continuing uncertainty driven by the UK's exit from the European Union (EU), it is encouraging to see that Indian investors continue to invest confidently in the UK and in fact, there are now more Indian businesses active in the UK than ever before."

"The fall in the value of sterling has also had a role to play, making UK assets increasingly attractive to overseas investors. Low rates of corporation tax and the ease of doing business in the UK also remain significant draws."

# Navy warned off French warship in Taiwan Strait, says China

AFP ■ BEIJING

China said on Thursday its navy warned off a French warship that had entered the Taiwan Strait earlier this month and has lodged an official protest over the rare move by a European power. Beijing sees self-governed and democratic Taiwan as its territory awaiting reunification, and the United States has traditionally been the country that defies that territorial claim by sailing through the strait.

But now it is France that has angered China. Chinese defence ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang said the French warship "illegally entered China's territorial waters" on April 7. "The Chinese military sent warships in accordance

with the law, in order to identify the French ship, and warn it to sail away," Ren said at a monthly press briefing. "The Chinese side has already made solemn representations to the French side." "The Chinese military is always on high alert and firmly defends the sovereignty and security of the country," he added.

Ren did not identify the vessel but a French frigate, the Vendemiaire, had been expected to take part in an international naval parade commemorating the 70th anniversary of China's navy earlier this week. The French ship never showed up, without an explanation from either country. Paris reaffirmed its commitment to "freedom of navigation under maritime law" following the

spat with Beijing. "The (French) national navy crosses the Taiwan Strait about once a year, without any incident nor reaction," an aide to French Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly said after China confirmed lodging an official protest.

US warships periodically conduct "freedom of navigation" exercises in the narrow waterway separating the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, triggering angry responses from Beijing every time. The US diplomatically recognises China over Taiwan but remains the island's chief military ally and arms supplier. In February, a US destroyer and the USNS Cesar Chavez cargo ship sailed through the Taiwan Strait.

# Harry and Meghan: Newest royal baby could be an American

AP ■ LONDON

What would the founding fathers think? Almost 250 years after the United States launched a revolution to rid itself of the British royal family, the next royal baby could be an American. The idea that a scion of the former colonies would be seventh in line to succeed Queen Elizabeth II to the throne could change the royal family from within — and help extend a surge in popularity for the monarchy.

The child of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex — Meghan Markle became a duchess when she

wed Prince Harry a year ago — is due very soon. Baby Sussex, as the child is known ahead of its birth, will be a product of two cultures: its father a prince who is a symbol of Britain; its mother quintessentially American — a self-made TV star with a white father and an African American mother. The child is unlikely to ever become king or queen, but the presence of a half-American child who may choose to hold dual nationality could shake up the royal family, just as the arrival of Meghan has had a modernizing effect on the stately but sometimes stodgy House of Windsor. "It's quite possible the



child will have a lot of American influence," royal commentator Hugo Vickers said. "The royal family is not totally unused to that kind of thing. Children have been born with Greek mothers or German mothers in the past, obviously, but Meghan is the first American mother so close in the royal family." Certainly, Meghan isn't following any of the royal scripts when it comes to childbirth preparations. Unlike Harry's brother Prince William and his wife Kate, Harry and Meghan have chosen to keep the details about their baby planning private, despite — or perhaps because of — intense media

interest in the baby's arrival, expected in the next few weeks.

The couple haven't revealed where Meghan intends to give birth, so there isn't likely to be a 24/7 media stakeout outside the hospital as was the case for the births of William and Kate's three children, Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis. Don't expect a photo of the happy family walking out of the hospital looking picture perfect hours after the birth either — Harry and Meghan have said they want to celebrate privately with their extended family before telling the world a baby has been born.

# Trick or treat

There are certain skills that make life easier. Here are six shortcuts that every cook should know to make things trouble-free in the kitchen

There are certain small skills that make life better and easier. I'm well aware that many of them take place outside of the kitchen, and I probably don't know as many of those as I should. I'm of no use if you have a flat tire or need to calculate the circumference of something or want to find your way out of the woods.

But after many years of clanking around in the kitchen, I have collected a fair arsenal of cooking tips and shortcuts. Here are a few that everyone should know:

## HOW TO QUICKLY RIPEN AVOCADOS

If you have a hard avocado and you need it to be soft in a day or so, simply place it in a brown paper bag with a banana or apple and fold the top to close it up. The natural ethylene gases emitted by the other fruit will cause the avocado to ripen faster. Depending on how hard your avocado is, it might take a couple of days.

## HOW TO MINCE GARLIC SUPER FINE

If you are using minced garlic in a dish, particularly where the garlic is uncooked, big chunks are not what you are looking for. Just smash a clove or two (or five) with the side of a

heavy knife, slip off the papery skin and start chopping on a cutting board. As the garlic gets chopped, add a pinch or so of kosher or sea salt and keep chopping. The salt acts as an abrasive so the garlic gets minced fine. Every once in a while, use the side of the knife to smear the garlic against the cutting board, then scrape it back up and keep mincing. You can hear the salt crunching under the blade as it works to pulverise the garlic.

## HOW TO MAKE BUTTERMILK

Unless we are really planning ahead, when 'buttermilk' comes up as an ingredient in a recipe, it's unlikely most of us have it on hand. Easy solution — Make your own. Place one tablespoon lemon juice or white vinegar in a measuring cup and then fill it with milk to the one cup line. I like to use whole milk, but you can also use 2 per cent. If you see slight curdling, don't worry it won't affect the finished product. This may not be as thick as regular buttermilk, but the acidity in the milk will perform the same function — getting you to a tender, flaky and flavorful baked good.

## HOW TO PEEL GINGER WITH A SPOON

Ginger's skin is thin enough



## HOW TO SOFTEN BROWN SUGAR

If you have a day or two, just place a piece of fresh bread in a container with the brown sugar, seal the container and your brown sugar will soften right up. If you are in a hurry, place the brown sugar in a bowl, place a damp paper towel over it, cover the bowl with a plate and microwave it for 20 seconds. Check to see if it's soft and if not, continue microwaving in 20 second bursts until it is. Use it pretty quickly, and when you store any leftovers, make sure to put a piece of fresh bread in the container with the sugar.

## HOW TO GET HONEY (OR MOLASSES, MAPLE SYRUP OR CORN SYRUP) OUT OF A MEASURING CUP

Anything sticky is just plain hard to measure. You pour it into the cup or spoon and then into your bowl or pot, and a thick coating is always left inside the measuring cup, drip-drip-dripping, but never fully getting out of the cup. The quick hack is cooking spray. Just spray the inside of the cup or measuring spoon with non-stick cooking spray, measure your sticky ingredient and it will slide right out. Cleanup is easier, too.

—AP

# CHEF TALK

## 'AWARENESS IS THE KEY'

Chef TARUN SIBAL tells AYUSHI SHARMA that our lifestyle choices are the exact opposite of what's required for a healthy body. The change needs to start with the use of local, seasonal produce and by restricting the intake of processed food options

### Given livestock, certain foods won't last beyond 2030-50 as predicted by Lancet, how do we change food culture to make sustainable choices?

This situation has become alarming. We need to go back to the consumption of local produce. The focus on westernised diets which are based on three crop varieties and an overconsumption of meat needs to be tackled. Refined sugars, saturated fats, dairy are areas where the restrictive approach can work in our favour. We will also need to inhibit wastefulness as a habit.

### What are the challenges to a sustainable food culture in India?

The sheer size and diversity of the country presents a huge challenge in terms of food. Indian food culture is an amalgamation of varied food interpretations. Sustainable culture will need education for the farmer and evolution of the consumer at various levels of the economy.

### In what way do we need to change the way we eat, given our lifestyle choices?

It can only start with the understanding that we need to make a change, so awareness is the key. Our lifestyle choices are the exact opposite of what's required for a healthy body and mind. Hence the intake becomes the most important aspect we can work on. As I said, it will start with the use of local and seasonal produce. And by restricting the intake of processed food options.

### As the population grows and yields get squeezed, a growing number of farmers are switching to practices that conserve resources and at the same time are more productive. What do you have to say about the native crops that India has stopped growing?

It's a shame that we end up lapping what the West brings us with respect to super foods. We have always had abundance in terms of produce that is good for you. From ghee to barley, millet to coconut, moringa to rosella. We have it all. We need to make all of this mainstream and enhance its usage. We also have to create suitable demand and maintain a healthy rate of supply.

### What do you have to say about the current food culture in India?

We have a head start when it comes to sustainable food culture as a major chunk of the Indian population is vegetarian. By focusing on grains, legume, pulses, vegetables and fruits, the balance



of the food ecosystem is maintained. But with an increase in the urban population that centres around a western diet, this balance is shifting.

### Has Indian cuisine made a mark on the global palate? Is it being appreciated by connoisseurs and the masses adequately?

You will be surprised if I tell you that Indian cuisine is classified as a heritage one by the UN, with Mexico and China being the other two countries with the same status. We have been eating the same for ages. Indian cuisine is a feast as it's rich, varied, seasonal and has all the elements that ensure that it is appreciated across the globe. International chefs have opened up to Indian cuisine and Indian chefs have started using global techniques while working with ingredients and flavours from the country. Indian chefs have made huge efforts in making the food look delectable.

### Food preferences are subjective. Some may like a dish and some won't. How do you deal with negative criticism to your cooking?

I rather call it feedback. And no one can please everyone. But each guest is important and we try to match his/her expectations.

### What is the biggest thing you stand for and support as a chef?

Kitchens are high stress ecosystems and chefs are burning out. I stand for creating an environment that's less taxing and is built on camaraderie and balance. My food logic is simple. I make the familiar exciting and the unfamiliar approachable. Having said that, seasonality, tastefulness and balance of flavours play a vital role.

## gorge us

As the city take a step forward towards the summer season, the craving for chilled shakes and drinks go up. Pablo — the food cartel is serving the most innovative shakes, mocktails and smoothies like Blueberry Green Tea, Avocado and Pineapple Smoothy, Pineapple Kiwi and Flaxseed Smoothy, Parle-G Shake among others. **Price:** ₹1,200 for two **Date:** April 30 **Time:** 8 am to 10.30 pm **Venue:** GL-19, Cross Point Mall, DLF phase 4, Gurugram.

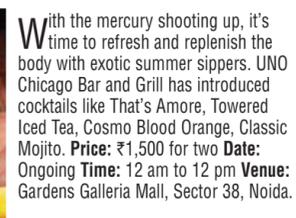


Burma Burma, is all set to bring in the Burmese New Year festivities. On the menu are special dishes like Spicy Avocado Tea Leaf Salad, Quack Palata, 999 Noodles. **Price:** ₹1,500 for two, plus taxes **Date:** Till May 5 **Time:** Lunch — 12 pm to 4 pm and Dinner — 6.30 pm to 11.30 pm **Venue:** At Burma Burma outlets in Select City Walk, Cyber Hub and DLF Mall of India.

Savour the flavours of tender and juicy Kebabs and grills at Farzi Cafe. From tender and succulent Tandoori New Zealand Lamb Chops rubbed with garlic and chill to signature Murgh Shorba, Pulled Chicken. **Price:** ₹1,500 for two, plus taxes **Date:** On till May **Time:** 12 pm to 11.45 pm **Venue:** 7-8, DLF Cyber City, Gurugram.



With the mercury shooting up, it's time to refresh and replenish the body with exotic summer sippers. UNO Chicago Bar and Grill has introduced cocktails like That's Amore, Towered Iced Tea, Cosmo Blood Orange, Classic Mojito. **Price:** ₹1,500 for two **Date:** Ongoing **Time:** 12 am to 12 pm **Venue:** Gardens Galleria Mall, Sector 38, Noida.



Local, bar and cafe's Mutton Galouti Warkhi Parantha is certainly worth making a beeline for. Dig into their street specials which include Pani Puri Shots to Tacos and Panko Chicken with Chips, Wok Salt and Pepper. **Price:** ₹1,000 for two, plus taxes **Date:** Throughout May **Venue:** Showroom no 11, Atmaram Mansion, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, CP.

Swad presents an extensive new menu — Bedmi Poori with Aloo Sabji, Dilkhush Pizza Dosa, Vegetarian Cooker Meat, Mock Meat dish, Kathi Kabab with Roomali, Gulab Jamun and Tiramisu. **Price:** ₹750 for two **Date:** Throughout May **Time:** 12 pm to 11.30 pm **Venue:** 43, Chiranjivi Tower, Nehru Place.



## HAZELNUT CHOCOLATE MUD SLIDE

### WHAT YOU NEED

#### For the Pastry:

- Butter: 140 gm
- Golden caster sugar: 100 gm
- Plain flour: 225 gm
- Almond: 50 gm
- Egg (beaten): 1

#### For the Filling:

- Blanched hazelnut: 85 gm
- Golden caster sugar: 50 gm
- Dark chocolate: 200 gm
- Butter: 100 gm
- A splash of brandy
- Egg: 1
- Egg yolks: 3



### METHOD

● Begin with pastry and mix the butter and sugar together, then add flour and almonds. Blend everything together with egg. If the pastry is very soft, chill it for 20 minutes. If not, roll out to fit in a deep 23 cm fluted flan tin; if the pastry breaks, press scraps of it into the gaps, leaving a slight overhang. Chill for 20 minutes.

● Heat the oven. Line the case with baking parchment and baking beans, then bake for 10 minutes. Remove beans and cook for another 10 minutes until golden. ● Meanwhile, toast the nuts in a dry pan until turns brown. Scatter over four tablespoons of sugar, cook until it caramelises. Then tip nuts onto a baking tray lined with parchment.

Leave to cool, then chop roughly.

● Over a pan of barely simmering water, melt the chocolate, butter and alcohol together, then set aside to cool slightly. Over the same pan, beat the egg, yolks and remaining sugar until pale and fluffy. Take off the heat, then fold in the chocolate mix.

● When case is cooked, remove from oven and turn the heat down. Scatter most of the hazelnuts over the base, then tip in the chocolate mix, pressing it down slightly. Cook the tart for 15-20 minutes until the chocolate has almost set. Leave to cool, then serve with the remaining nuts.

Courtesy: Chef Sanjay Singh Yadav at Vapour Bar exchange, Gurugram.

## MARMALADE FRENCH TOAST

### WHAT YOU NEED

- Milk: 25 ml
- Egg yolk: 1
- Egg white: 1
- Caster sugar: 10 gm
- Marmalade: 20 gm
- Salt as per taste
- Bread toast: 2 slices

#### Accompaniments:

- Berry coulis: 25 gm
- Whipped cream: 200 gm
- Maple syrup: 30 ml

### METHOD

- Make a smooth batter.
- Mix all the



ingredients other than the egg whites.

- Beat the egg whites stiff and fold into the mixture.
- Place two slices of bread toast into the

batter, cook on a griddle and serve with accompaniments.

Courtesy: Neelabh Sahay, executive chef at Novotel Kolkata Hotel and Residences.

## RECIPES



## JALAPENO CORNITOS WITH SOUR CREAM

### WHAT YOU NEED

- Cornitos jalapeno flavour nachos: 1 packet
- Cornitos chunky salsa: 1 jar
- Onion (finely chopped): 1
- Cornitos sliced jalapeno peppers
- Avacado: 1
- Tomato (finely chopped): 1
- Sour cream: 1 cup
- Coriander

### METHOD

- Arrange layer of cornitos wasabi flavour nachos on a platter.
- Top it up with chopped tomatoes, onions, avocado and salsa.
- Repeat the same with another layer of nachos on top of it.
- Again top it with chopped tomatoes, onions, sliced fresh jalapeno chunky salsa and coriander leaves.
- Serve it fresh with sour cream on top.

Courtesy: Cornitos.

## MANGO MULE

### METHOD

- Add lime juice and put mango juice.
- Add lime juice and vanilla syrup and stir well.
- Top up with Ginger ale and splash of grenadine syrup.
- Garnish with mint sprig and rosemary.

Courtesy: Puneet Kaushal, Bartender at The Deltin, Daman.



Trend Blazer

Parineeti lip-syncs Nick's Sucker

Actress **PARINEETI CHOPRA** was seen lip-syncing Jonas Brothers' new song titled *Sucker*. Sharing a video of herself singing, Parineeti gave a shoutout to Nick, who sang the song with his brothers Joe Jonas and Kevin Jonas. "My jam to get into the mood for the scene yesterday! Haha, Nick Jonas. Whatsay!" she captioned the video. Replying to Parineeti, Nick commented, "Haha love it!" while her cousin and Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra, who featured in the music video and is married to the American singer, said she too loved the video.



**'The way we conceive, develop and make films today is completely different from how we did 20 years ago. The makers and the audience as well have evolved and we are making films that are breaking genres. It's a great time to be an actor and experiment with various characters and different kinds of films.'**



—Kunal Kemmu

Veteran actor **ANUPAM KHER** will be with actor-turned-politician and Chandigarh MP Kirron Kher when she files her nomination papers for the Chandigarh seat.

In a short video, the actor is heard saying, "Once again Kirron Kherji is getting a chance to become a member of parliament from Chandigarh. We will take part in this event of democracy and will go to the office of the Deputy Commissioner to file the nomination."

He captioned the video, "Looking forward to be with the BJP candidate Kirron Kher and the people of Chandigarh to participate in the nomination filing ceremony. Good luck to everybody. Let's participate in this amazing and the largest festival of democracy."

Rami joins James Bond 25

Oscar-winning actor **RAMI MALEK** has bagged a role in the new James Bond film, which is tentatively titled *James Bond 25*.

Producers Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson together with director Cary Fukunaga revealed that Malek along with other new faces Ana De Armas, David Dencik, Lashana Lynch and Billy Magnussen have joined Daniel Craig in his fifth and final 007 outing.

Malek will play the role of a villain in the film. He said, "I promise you all I will be making sure Mr Bond does not have an easy ride of it in this, his 25th outing." The film is scheduled to release in April 2020.



'A BUMP DOESN'T STOP YOU'

Designer **CÉCILE REINAUD** tells **AYUSHI SHARMA** that there is a huge demand for maternity fashion on a global level from what it used to be a few years ago. It started in America, trickled into Europe and it has now reached India

**F**rumpy, loose, unbecoming and not in the least stylish — these are some words that are associated with maternity fashion. However, pregnancy doesn't have to mean dressing up in sacks or its closest equivalent. Celebrities like Kareena Kapoor Khan and Beyonce amping up the fashion quotient during pregnancy has ensured that there is no flagging in the social pressure to look good even during this time.

It's true that fashioning clothes for a changing body is a daunting task but designer Cécile Reinaud apprises us that there is a huge demand for maternity fashion on a global level compared to what it used to be a few years back. It started in America, trickled into Europe and it has now reached India, a nation that has spread its arms wide to welcome this niche segment. The consumers demand something comfortable yet fashionable, so it will definitely flourish exponentially in the coming years.

Just like traditional fashion, many trends exist in maternity garments as well. She notes that denim wear is extremely popular because most women love to dress up their closet with the fabric. From skinny jeans to denim dresses and shirts, this is a favourite across the globe. The other trend is floral prints — from pale pinks to light blues, these never go out of fashion. It is not just the safest to follow but also a classy style to adopt during this phase.

There has been a substantial change in the way expectant mothers live their lives as compared to yesteryears. This sensibility too has to be blended into designs. She says that women are educated, well-travelled and they believe in being always on point. The same attitude can be seen even when they are pregnant. Every woman wants to look stylish and elegant no matter whether it is in office or at a party — a bump doesn't deter



**'IN A PROFESSIONAL SPACE, IF YOU DON'T DRESS UP WELL, PEOPLE DON'T TAKE YOU SERIOUSLY, ESPECIALLY WITH A BIG BELLY. IT BECOMES EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO DRESS SHARP TO SHOW YOU ARE ON TOP OF THINGS. THIS PHENOMENON STARTED 15 YEARS AGO IN THE UK AND NOW IN THE NEW GENERATION OF CAREER-DRIVEN INDIAN WOMEN'**

them. Since, it is a new chapter in a woman's life, nothing should detract them from enjoying it to the fullest. The designs are created keeping in mind the modern woman's desire to look chic everyday and also be able to re-use these apparel post-pregnancy.

Dressing in the way you like can keep you positive, happy and comfortable, even as you face this big change in life. Fancy maternity outfit is becoming a necessity as compared to the past, especially in India. She says that women in metros have a career and they want to look smart and sophisticated as they head out. "In a professional space, if you don't dress up well, people don't take you seriously, especially with a big belly. It becomes even more important to dress sharp to show you are on top of things. This phenomenon started 15 years ago in the UK and now has gained prominence among the new generation of Indian women who are career-driven. With the advent of the social media, women take inspiration from the way celebs and influencers dress up, regardless of the situation or their phase of life. This has driven the demand for more comfortable clothes for every stage of a woman's life, including pregnancy," adds Cécile, who has also designed outfits for many royals including the future queen of England, Kate Middleton.

She believes that the maternity fashion scene in India is not very different as compared to other countries. However, Cécile further adds, "Indian women like to dress up more modestly, so they avoid low cut V necks. They are more comfortable with sleeves attached to their dresses and tops. Weather too plays a role. It is hot most of the months in the country so we look for fabrics that are light and that will keep you cool, while making you feel adequately covered and elegant."

(The designer is also the founder and the managing director of Séraphine.)



Living with electricity

Spending a week with an electric car can change one's outlook towards such vehicles but upfront costs are an issue



KUSHAN MITRA



**A**t the outset, I should make one thing clear that the BMW i3s is a luxury car, it might be an eco-friendly BMW with recycled plastic being used as well as environmental-friendly fabric for the seat and the few bits of (fake) leather were offcuts from the production line, but this is a BMW nonetheless. This is therefore, not a car for everyone, but is one of the most popular electric vehicles in Europe. Priced at around 40,000 Euros, if it were to come to India, if incentives are offered for the import of electric vehicles, such as no additional excise, it will still cost at least ₹35 lakh, only a bit less than a brand-new BMW 3-series or X1. However, driving one for a week, complete with its new green registration plates that electric vehicles are allowed to use was an eye-opener for this writer.

To be fair, this column had been written about the i3s when we had driven it in Portugal a year and half ago, but that was a media drive where one did not have to deal with the nitty-gritty of living with an electric vehicle, that is charging. Now, we know that India does not have enough charging infrastructure as yet, and more on that later. But I could charge the i3s at home, thanks to a couple of reasons. Firstly, I had covered parking and a plug-point as well as a three-phase power connection. While charging from a low amperage point meant that the car took over twelve hours to charge from empty and on 'Comfort' mode it took twelve hours.

In 'Comfort' mode, the default mode of the car had 218 kilometers of range on full charge. On 'Eco Pro' mode, the car had around 250 kilometers of range and in 'Eco Pro+' over 300 kilometres of range. I, however, kept the car on 'Comfort' most of the time as it allowed me to use the air-conditioner without any issues, it is summer in Delhi after all. I'd also plugged in my mobile phone so as to listen to music and actual range was a lot higher than the initial indicated one because the i3s has a very good regenerating system that charges the battery whenever you lift your foot off the pedal so much so that you rarely end up using the brakes.

So what are the headline numbers. The car claimed that it was consuming 12.9 kilowatt-hours (units) of electricity for every 100 kilometers of driving. Now, in Delhi, residential power costs ₹7.75 per unit at maximum rates, this means that the i3s has a running cost, if you buy power at the peak rate, of just ₹1 per km. That, frankly, is unbeatable by any petrol or diesel car. Keep in mind that fixed costs remain the same, any few



households fall into the peak charge for electricity. So overall costs will, using a back of the envelope calculation, be around 80 paise per kilometre. A small petrol hatchback such as the Hyundai i20 or Suzuki Baleno would have a per-kilometre cost of ₹5.5. Even with BMW's 1,00,000 kilometre warranty on the battery and rising fuel prices going forward, which is almost certain, savings on running cost over that period will be ₹8 lakh at best, not enough to make up the difference. Maybe if you considered this over a BMW X1 for example, you might save money but that is all dependent on a benevolent government which wants to promote electric car usage in India and keeps import duties low or at zero at least

initially to seed the market. But this does not preclude the fact that the i3s will, even if not charged import duties, cost 3.5 times that of a standard hatchback. And then there is an issue with infrastructure, there are some charging stations built in and around Delhi by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) for the fleet of government electric vehicles, including one at Jor Bagh Market near the offices of the Environment Ministry. But guess what, that charging system is not compatible with that of the BMW. This is like needing an iPhone charger and finding a Micro-USB charger. So well, I could not try that out. This incompatibility issue is something that the industry and govern-

ment will need to deal with. The i3s is actually an amazing car to drive around the city. For one the instant power delivery and almost perfectly linear acceleration means that it overtakes with surprising ease, it can be rather quick if you want it to be and thanks to its excellent centre-of-gravity, it handles like you expect a BMW should. But this is just a technology-demonstrator brought here by BMW to showcase their technology and train their service engineers. However, I do wish that the car-maker does share this car with someone in the government and let them drive around and get some idea of how to formulate electric vehicle policy going forward.



Chinese artist writes book using only emoticons

**Book from the Ground** is a novel written using only emoticons by a Chinese artist Xu Bing that illustrates the ability to create a universal language using graphic symbols, he said.

Xu's aim to create the book, which so far has only been published in the US, is for any person anywhere in the world to be able to understand the story without having to know any given language in advance, since the emoticon symbols are universally shared and used. This preoccupation with language, which permeates all of Xu's work, stems from his childhood. When he was 11, the Cultural Revolution erupted in China and he had to learn new, simplified Chinese characters in order to be able to read and write according to the government's new guidelines.

"It's the first book that everyone in the world can read, since it needs no translation," said the artist, adding that currently, by using a very simple system of signs, emoticon users, especially young people, enjoy the ability "to communicate on the international level." "The idea for the book began 13 years ago, when I was having exhibitions all over the world and I spent a lot of time on airports," said Xu.

The book includes 24 chapters. Xu presented his new book at the Art for People exposition, where on display is a banner given to him by the Museum of Modern Art in 1999 on which can be read the slogan "Art for the People" with the English letters grouped in a way that simulates Chinese writing.

Using the same calligraphic technique, the artist has also adapted or translated the 15th century poem *El bon poble* by Ausias March in a work inspired by the Valencian culture.

—IANS

# Noisy Neighbours too loud for Utd

Manchester City go top of Premier League with 2-0 derby day win

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola believes his side has raised the bar in the Premier League after edging one point back ahead of Liverpool in a titanic title race with a 2-0 win at Manchester United on Wednesday.

Bernardo Silva and Leroy Sane struck for the visitors in 12 second-half minutes at Old Trafford to inflict a seventh defeat in nine games on United, who remain three points adrift of the top four.

City cannot match their record 100 points tally in romping to the title last season, but victories over Burnley, Leicester and Brighton will clinch the title on 98 points and ensure Liverpool's 29-year wait to win the league continues despite already posting a club record points tally in the Premier League era.

"We increased the level for the Premier League last season with 100 points. That's the level Liverpool are chasing. What they have done is incredible but it's in our hands," said Guardiola.

"Both teams deserve the title. But it can be just one. The team that is going to lose can't have regrets because they have given everything."

City's trip to Old Trafford was billed as the last big hurdle left for Guardiola's men to clear despite United's terrible run of form.

However, Guardiola warned of the tight turnaround before a very different type of test at Burnley on Sunday.

"Normally with this kind of victory you can enjoy it the most but we have to be calm," added Guardiola.



City's trip to Old Trafford was billed as the last big hurdle left for Guardiola's men to clear despite United's terrible run of form

"Now we go to Burnley and we know how tough it will be. It's important to be calm. We are still not champions with three games left — it's incredible with the points we have and Liverpool have."



## STANDARD BEARERS

United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer slammed his players' attitude after a 4-0 at Everton on Sunday and was rewarded with a far more energetic and committed performance, even if City's greater quality eventually shone through.

Raheem Sterling shot too close to De Gea after weaving through a host of United bodies inside the area before Sergio Agueiro dragged well wide when unmarked at the edge of the box as City went through the gears towards the end of the first-half.

"Today we didn't play like Manchester United. It's not right. The bare minimum is to work hard and give all for the badge, the supporters, the club and yourself."  
—Marcus Rashford

"Every one of us wants to do the back to back. We're really happy about this win because it is the derby, a special game, and also really important for the Premier League."  
—Leroy Sane

"I told them (Man City players) we needed to play to win, it doesn't matter if we concede."  
—Pep Guardiola

But it was an enforced change early in the second-half that swung the game City's way as Guardiola boldly introduced Sane when the more defensive-minded Fernandinho went down injured.

David de Gea has been a rare model of consistent brilliance as United have fallen behind City in recent seasons.

But the Spaniard's dramatic dip in form of late continued as he could have done better for both goals.

Guardiola's positive change was instantly rewarded when Bernardo cut inside onto his favoured left foot and beat De Gea at his near post.

Sane has been scarcely used by Guardiola of late, but the German, whose winning goal inflicted Liverpool's only league defeat of the season in January, again showed his capability to make a difference in the biggest games.

Sterling led a City counter-attack before feeding Sane, whose powerful shot De Gea could not keep out.

# WOLVES INFLICT MORE AWAY-DAY PAIN

AFP ■ LONDON

Unai Emery refused to give up on Arsenal's Champions League hopes after seeing his side embarrassed by Wolves in a 3-1 defeat at Molineux on Wednesday.

Ruben Neves, Matt Doherty and the outstanding Diogo Jota scored the goals that condemned Emery's side to a third defeat in four Premier League games, severely denting their hopes of a top-four finish with just three games to go.

The Arsenal manager admitted his team were outplayed by Wolves, who scored three goals in the first half to give the visitors a mountain to climb.

Despite the chastening defeat the Spaniard said his side will keep striving for Champions League football, which they can achieve either through a top-four finish in



the Premier League or by winning the Europa League.

Defeat in the Midlands left Emery's men a point behind fourth-placed Chelsea.

"I usually am very critical with myself and I am angry with myself that we didn't do the gameplan we wanted — not with the players," said Emery when asked if he was angry with his team.

"First it is with me and after that my style and idea is to look in front and find a solution, not who is the player who is worst."

"First I am thinking about the solution and the solution for me is to take the possibility on Sunday at Leicester and get our best performance and the best possibility to take the three points."

# Pogba odd man out in PFA team of the year



LONDON: Manchester United's Paul Pogba is the only non-Manchester City or Liverpool player to be named in the Professional Footballers' Association's Premier League team of the year on Thursday.

The 26-year-old French World Cup-winning midfielder's inclusion is a surprise after an indifferent season, although he hit a purple patch after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer arrived at Old Trafford as interim manager.

City and Liverpool have been locked in an enthralling duel for the title, with City going top again after beating United 2-0, with Pogba unable to inspire his side to a much-needed win.

City provide six of the 11 players — goalkeeper Ederson, centre-half Aymeric Laporte,

midfielders Bernardo Silva and Fernandinho and forwards Sergio Aguero and Raheem Sterling.

The remaining four places are filled by Liverpool players — full-backs Andrew Robertson and Trent-Alexander Arnold, central defender Virgil van Dijk and forward Sadio Mane.

Van Dijk and Sterling are believed to be in the running for the player of the year award.

There is no place, though, for Liverpool's Egyptian star Mo Salah, who has scored 19 Premier League goals this season, Spurs pair Harry Kane and Son Heung-min or Chelsea playmaker Eden Hazard.

The PFA Team of the Year is voted for by members of the Professional Footballers' Association.

Manchester City had five players in the 2017/18 side but only Argentine star Aguero retains his place from the team of 12 months ago. AFP

## SINGLES

### ROONEY FIRES DC UNITED TO TOP

NEW YORK: Wayne Rooney fired DC United to the top of Major League Soccer's Eastern Conference standings on Wednesday, scoring the game's only goal in a 1-0 win over Columbus Crew. Former Manchester United and England star Rooney curled home a low free-kick in the 27th minute to give United all three points and their first win in Columbus since 2007. The victory leaves United three points clear of second-placed Montreal Impact at the top of the Eastern Conference standings with 17 points from nine games. Montreal kept pace with United after a 3-0 away win against the New England Revolution.

### LEE BOWS OUT OF SUDIRMAN CUP

SHANGHAI: Malaysia's badminton king Lee Chong Wei, under treatment for nose cancer, has withdrawn from next month's Sudirman Cup in China after doctors advised him against "exerting himself", an official said on Thursday. The decision to skip the May 19-26 tournament in Nanning marks the third time Lee, 36, fails to make a comeback and will probably dash his hopes to play in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. He had earlier skipped the All England Open in March and the Malaysia Open in April. "I would like to confirm that Lee Chong Wei will not compete in the Sudirman Cup mixed team event," Ng Chin Chai, secretary general of the Badminton Association of Malaysia. "He is on treatment. Lee is advised by his doctor against exerting himself and not to participate in competition yet."

### RANI NAMED IN WOMEN'S NAT'L CAMP

NEW DELHI: Star skipper Rani Rampal headlined a 60 player probables list for the women's hockey national camp, beginning in Bengaluru from Friday. Rani, who missed out of the five match bilateral series with Malaysia due to injury, joins the two-week camp alongside goalkeeper Savita and defender Deep Grace Ekka. A selection trial will be held on May 4 to prune down the list to 33 core probables, a Hockey India media release said. "While I am looking forward to seeing and testing the new talent coming into the National Camp, the athletes will need to perform and show their capabilities," India's chief coach, Sjoerd Marijne said. "We are constantly looking to improve and good players posing a challenge to seniors will only increase the competition within the core group and also help create depth in the team."

### IND FACE RUSSIA IN FIH FINALS OPENER

NEW DELHI: Favourites India will open their campaign against lowly Russia in the International Hockey Federation (FIH) Series Finals, an Olympic qualifier event, to be held in Bhubaneswar from June 6 to 15. World ranked fifth India will take on world No 22 Russia in the final match of the opening day, which also feature games between South Africa and United States and Poland and Uzbekistan. India are placed in Pool A alongside Poland (ranked 21), Russia and Uzbekistan (43rd), while Pool B consists of South Africa (16th), Asia Games Gold medalist Japan (18th), USA (25th) and Mexico (30th). After Russia, India will be up against Poland (June 7) and Uzbekistan (June 10) in their remaining pool matches. The final of tournament will be played on June 15 at the Kalinga Stadium. Agencies

# ATLETICO EDGE 5-GOAL THRILLER WITH VALENCIA

AFP ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid delayed Barcelona winning La Liga by a few days at least after Alvaro Morata and Antoine Griezmann each scored in a 3-2 victory over Valencia on Wednesday.

Defeat at the Wanda Metropolitano would have crowned Barca kings of Spain for a 26th time in their history, with the Catalans now set to celebrate at their own Camp Nou on Saturday instead.

A Barcelona win there over Levante will wrap up their fourth league triumph in five years and they could even be home and dry before kick-off, if Atletico fail to take a point at home to struggling Real Valladolid earlier in the day.

Regardless, success for Ernesto Valverde's side is sure-



ly now only a matter of timing given Atletico remain nine points behind the leaders with four games left to play.

Angel Correa's stunning strike in the 81st minute proved the winner after Valencia had fought back, Kevin Gameiro and a Dani Parejo penalty twice pulling them level after goals from Morata and Griezmann.

Morata's early strike continued his excellent form since his move to Atletico in January, his finish at the back post taking his tally to six goals in 13 games for the club.

Griezmann, meanwhile, back from suspension, now has 25 goals in all competitions this season, an impressive return, particularly in a side not renowned for its creativity.

# Lewandowski brace wins thrilling German Cup semis

AFP ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich will face RB Leipzig in the German Cup final next month after Robert Lewandowski fired them to a 3-2 win over a valiant Werder Bremen on Wednesday.

Lewandowski scored twice in a highly entertaining last-four tie to reach the final for the 23rd time. Bremen were unfazed by their role as underdogs, attacking Bayern all night and briefly overturning a two-goal deficit.

Yet Lewandowski's late penalty ultimately decided a fiery cup tie in Bayern's favour.

"It was the tough game that we were expecting,"



man of the match Thomas Mueller told ARD.

"Football is fun in an atmosphere like this. I have to say, I'm a bit of a Bremen fan. I love watching them, and their fans are great."

Both sides threw

the sucker punch when he scooped in a second just after the hour mark.

Rashica, though, hauled Bremen back into the tie with two minutes of magic.

The Kosovan set up Yuya Osako to pull a goal back on 74 minutes, before tearing through Bayern with a brilliant solo run a minute later to net the equaliser.

Yet Lewandowski restored the lead from the spot on 80 minutes after Kingsley Coman went down in the box.

Bayern will face RB Leipzig in the final at Berlin's Olympic Stadium on May 25, where they hope to win the trophy for the 19th time.

# Hamilton wary of rivals' street smarts in Baku

AFP ■ BAKU

Championship leader Lewis Hamilton is expecting his main rivals to give him a tough time on the demanding streets of Baku at this weekend's Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

The five-time world champion, who heads the embryonic 2019 title race by six points after three races, has struggled to master the Baku circuit in the past and won last year only after Mercedes' team-mate Valtteri Bottas had a puncture when leading with three laps remaining.

That disappointment was a body blow for Bottas who did not fully recover and failed to claim a win as Hamilton romped to his fifth drivers' crown. This time, Hamilton expects him, and Ferrari, to respond.

"I was fortunate to get the win here last year," admitted Hamilton, who has developed a habit of turning unpromising races into valuable podium finishes or wins.

"I wasn't quick enough really,



right through the weekend so it will be interesting this time.

"I'm expecting Valtteri to be quick and I expect the Ferraris to be particularly quick. It will be interesting. I'm going with a mind-set that I've got to improve on my previous performances."

Victory last year was Hamilton's first at the tricky track made up of the season's longest — and very fast — straight and tight corners, some with little run-off and walls.

# NADAL SEES OFF TEARFUL FERRER

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Rafael Nadal showed no mercy towards an emotional David Ferrer as he eased into the quarter-finals of the Barcelona Open on Thursday with a straight-sets victory.

Ferrer is set to retire after the Madrid Open next month and made a tearful exit on what was his last appearance at this tournament.

But there was no room for sentiment for Nadal, who won 6-3, 6-3 to take one step closer to a record 12th Barcelona title.

Four of those triumphs came after beating Ferrer in the final and, at the end of this latest victory, Nadal's 37-year-old opponent saluted the crowd before placing his pink headband down on the service line.

Ferrer reached a career-high ranking of number three in the world in 2013, the same year he went closest to winning a Grand Slam too, undone by Nadal again in the French Open final.

Nadal will be gunning for his 12th success at Roland Garros next month and this was more



like the sort of form expected of the world number two, who had won 30 consecutive sets in Barcelona before falling one behind to Leonardo Mayer on Wednesday.

Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff or the talented 20-year-old Greek, Stefanos Tsitsipas, now await in the last eight before a potential semi-final meeting with Dominic Thiem, whom Nadal beat in the French Open final last year.

# Osaka downs Hsieh in Stuttgart opener

AFP ■ STUTTGART

World number one Naomi Osaka defeated Hsieh Su-wei 6-4, 6-3 in her first clay court match of the season in Stuttgart on Thursday.

US and Australian Open champion Osaka, who lost to Taiwanese veteran Hsieh in Miami last month, secured a place in the quarter-finals against Croatia's Donna Vekic.

Osaka, 21, broke Hsieh three times in total to beat Hsieh for the second time in three attempts this year, having also defeated her on the way to lifting the title in Melbourne.

"She's a really tricky opponent. You never really know what she's going to do," said Osaka.

Osaka needed 84 minutes to dispatch the unconventional Hsieh, a win that ensures she will hold on to top spot for at least another week.

She is less than 200 points ahead of Simona Halep in the WTA rankings, although the Romanian pulled out of this week's tournament with a hip injury.

The Japanese star arrived in Stuttgart, where she last played in Stuttgart as a qualifier in 2017, after suffering early exits in her last three tournaments.

Osaka will meet Vekic, a 6-1, 7-5 winner over Daria Kasatkina, for a spot in the last four, while seventh seed Anastasija Sevastova defeated Germany's Laura Siegemund 6-4, 6-3.



**LEADERBOARD**

<b>RUNS</b>	<b>574</b>	David Warner (SRH)
<b>WICKETS</b>	<b>23</b>	Kagiso Rabada (DC)
<b>6S</b>	<b>550</b>	T20 IS ABOUT PRESSURE MOMENTS AND WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DO THAT IN THE LAST FEW GAMES
<b>4S</b>	<b>1212</b>	— R ASHWIN

# IPL 2019



## Archer scripts RR win

### DK's 97-run knock goes in vain



PTI ■ KOLKATA

A 12-ball 27 runs by Jofra Archer gave Rajasthan Royals a three wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders in their must-win IPL fixture here on Thursday.

Earlier, under-fire skipper Dinesh Karthik silenced his critics with a career-best 97 not out as Kolkata Knight Riders recovered from an atrocious start to post a competitive 175 for six against Rajasthan Royals. Under pressure to perform after a string of five straight defeats, the World Cup-bound Karthik promoted himself to No 4, shrugging off criticism, and smashed nine sixes and seven fours in his 50-ball unbeaten knock, as KKR hit top gear in the back end of the innings, scoring 126 from the last 10 overs and 75 off the last five.

On a day their impact player Andre Russell looked lacklustre in his run-a-ball 14, in which he was dropped twice, it was a one-man show from Karthik who

went berserk against the likes of Jaydev Unadkat and Shreyas Gopal.

Karthik seized the momentum in the 11th over when he hit Shreyas Gopal for a six followed by three boundaries in an over that yielded 25 runs and KKR did not look back since then.

Karthik completed his fifty from 35 balls and smashed Jofra Archer for successive sixes in the penultimate over before bettering his previous best of 86 when he went berserk against Unadkat by hitting him for two sixes and one four in the final over.

Unadkat conceded 50 runs for his one wicket and was the most expensive of the lot as he undid all the good work done by Varun Aaron (2/20) who had a fine new ball spell of 3-1-10-2.

Put in to bat, KKR got off to an atrocious start to be 32/2 in powerplay overs against an all out pace attack from Rajasthan Royals.

Playing his only second match this season, Aaron extracted pace and swing

from the fast-paced Eden track and removed both the openers Chris Lynn (0) and Shubman Gill (14) cheaply.

Aaron set up Lynn brilliantly with his first two balls before bowling a delivery that sharply came back as the Australian played it on to his stumps in a wicket- maiden first over.

Then the talented Gill had no answer to negotiate an inswinger as he was completely beaten by pace to see the ball clip his bails.

Archer capped a superb powerplay for Royals with another maiden as the spirited KKR found themselves going nowhere and seemed to be losing the plot before skipper Karthik revived them at the back end of the innings.

**BRIEF SCORES:**  
**Kolkata Knight Riders:** 175 for 6 in 20 overs (Dinesh Karthik 97 not out; Varun Aaron 2/20)  
**Rajasthan Royals:** 177 for 7 in 19.2 overs (Riyun Parag 47, Ajinkya Rahane 34, Jofra Archer 27 not out; Piyush Chawla 3/20).

### Up Next

## CSK look to dodge MI blues

PTI ■ CHENNAI

They might have already reached the cut-off limit of 16 points needed for the play-offs, but Chennai Super Kings would like to consolidate their position at the top when they take on an inconsistent Mumbai Indians in an IPL match here on Friday.

The MS Dhoni-led side roared back to form after two losses, with a six-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Tuesday night, riding on Shane Watson's big hitting.

Come on Friday, the hosts would be looking to continue the momentum.

The visitors, currently in third spot with 12 points from 10 games, are coming off a defeat against Rajasthan Royals and will be keen to keep themselves in the hunt for the playoffs.

While CSK's must have welcomed Watson's return to form, the team would be hoping for Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu and Kedar Jadhav to get going ahead of the knockout phase.

It is important for Jadhav to get his touch back with the World Cup looming.

The bowlers have played a big role in CSK's success so far, especially at home, on sluggish tracks. The much-improved Deepak Chahar will be key in the matches to come with his intelligent bowling at the start and at the death.

Though Imran Tahir, who is the second highest wicket-taker with 16, went wicketless in



Live on Star Sports 1 & 2

**CSK vs MI**  
CHENNAI  
FRIDAY | 8:00 PM

**HEAD TO HEAD**  
M 25  
CSK 11  
MI 14

the SRH match, the South African veteran will be expected to stymie the powerful Mumbai Indians batting line-up along with fellow spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Harbhajan Singh.

Mumbai have had a roller coaster season so far and they now need to be at their best in the last lap of the preliminary phase.

In Rohit Sharma, they have a shrewd captain who leads from the front, and a solid batting unit that includes Quinton de Kock, Kieron Pollard and the Pandya brothers — Hardik & Krunal.

Jasprit Bumrah & Co will be wary of CSK's batting with Watson having found his mojo again and the ever-reliable Dhoni.

An interesting battle looms between the two three-time champions.

## Steyn ruled out of IPL after brief stint

PTI ■ BENGALURU

After a brief two-match stint, Royal Challengers Bangalore pacer Dale Steyn was on Thursday ruled out of the Indian Premier League owing to an inflammation in his shoulder.

The veteran South African fast bowler, who had recently joined RCB as an replacement for injured Nathan Coulter-Nile, was forced to sit out of the match against Kings XI Punjab on Wednesday after he picked up a niggle.

"Dale Steyn has been prescribed with ample rest due to inflammation in his shoulder. On account of state of his health, Dale will not be available to take part further in the



ongoing season of IPL," Sanjeev Churiwala, Chairman of RCB, said in a statement.

The injury-prone pacer had returned to the IPL after a gap of two years and straight away contributed to team's winning cause by picking up four wickets in two games — against Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings.

"His presence has helped the team immensely and we are very thankful for the inspiration and passion that he brought to the squad. The team will deeply miss his energy and presence around. We wish him a speedy recovery and all the luck for all future endeavours," RCB Chairman said.

With the ODI World Cup scheduled to start on May 30 in UK, Steyn may not be willing to aggravate his injury.

## Saina, Sindhu sail into quarters



ASIAN BADMINTON C'SHIP

PTI ■ WUHAN

Two Indian women shuttlers Saina Nehwal and P V Sindhu registered straight-game wins to sail into the quarter-finals of the Asian Badminton Championship here on Thursday.

London Olympic Bronze medalist Saina, who was the last Indian to take the court on Thursday, needed just 38 minutes to get the better of Kim Ga Eun of Korea to enter the last eight round of the women's singles event.

Saina, seeded seventh, has a tough next encounter as she will be up against third seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan.

The other Indian in fray, Sindhu, seeded fourth, took just 33 minutes to beat Indonesia's Choirunnisa 21-15, 21-19 in another second round women's singles match.

The world number six will next play the unseeded Cai Yanyan of China in the quarter-finals.

Besides the female duo, Sameer Verma too continued his impressive run by progressing to the men's singles quarter-finals.

Sameer brushed aside Hong Kong's Ng Ka Long Angus 21-12, 21-19 in his second round encounter.

But a Herculean task awaits Sameer in the last eight round as he will clash with second seed Shi Yuqi of China.

Among other Indians, mixed doubles pair of Utkarsh Arora and Karishma Wadkar crashed out in the second round after losing 21-10, 21-15 to Hafiz Faizal and Gloria Emanuelle Widjaja of Indonesia.

There was another defeat in store in the mixed doubles as the combination of Venkat Gaurav Prasad and Juhvi Dewangan too perished in the second round after losing 10-21, 9-21 against second seeded Chinese duo of Yilyu Wang and Dongping Huang.

## India's young brigade dominates mixed team competitions in shooting WC

PTI ■ BEIJING

Young Indian shooters dominated the mixed team competitions by winning two Gold medals on day three of the ongoing ISSF World Cup to take the country on the top of medal tally here on Thursday.

The teenage pairing of Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary won their second Gold in 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event in as many World Cup stages this year while another teenager Divyansh Panwar struck Gold in Air Rifle Mixed Team event partnering the more accomplished Anjum Moudgil to help cap a memorable day for India.

The start of the day was all about a new pair, a new format



ISSF WORLD CUP

and a new result.

Anjum partnered Divyansh, who was in only his second senior competition, for the first time to beat the formidable Chinese pair of Liu Ruxuan and Yang Haoran 17-15 in a pulsating Gold medal match.

The win was even more creditable given that a new format was being tried by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) for the mixed events in Beijing.

The second Indian team in the event, Apurvi Chandela and Deepak Kumar also reached the finals but finished sixth eventually.

Then came the icing on the cake with Manu and Saurabh's vic-



tory in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event. The teenage stars comprehensively defeated yet another Chinese pair consisting of former Olympic champion Pang Wei and 2019 New Delhi World Cup finalist Jiang Ranxin, 16-6 in the Gold medal match.

Manu and Saurabh began from where they had left at the home World Cup in Delhi a couple of months back, beating top class opponents en route to the Gold. They did enough to make it to the final eight and then beat an experienced German pair in the quarter-finals, a second Chinese pair in the semifinals, before comprehensively beating Pang and Jiang 16-6 in the Gold medal match.

The new format entailed the top eight teams qualifying for the final round where four quarterfinals, two semifinals and a final would determine the eventual medalists.

The quarterfinal was a 30-shot match-up between pairs in rifle while it was a 40-shot affair in pistol. The medal events would entail a series of single shots per competitor per team.

To decide the medals, the pair with the higher series aggregate would be allotted two points and the first team to reach 16 points would be adjudged the winner.

In the Air Rifle event, a single shot would start the final before the series of two shots kicked in.

## KAKRAN, MANJU HAND TWIN BRONZE

PTI ■ XI'AN

India's Divya Kakran and Manju Kumari bagged Bronze medals for the country in the women's competition of the Asian Wrestling Championships here on Thursday.

Asian Games Bronze-medallist Kakran defeated Battsetseg Soronzonbold of Mongolia via fall in the play-offs of the 68kg category to finish on the podium.

It was double delight for India as Manju also secured a Bronze medal earlier in the day by beating Vietnam's Thi Huong Dao 11-2.

Seema, who also made it to the play-offs, however failed to register a hat-trick of Bronze medals for India after losing to Valentina Ivanovna Islamova Brik of Kazakhstan 5-11 in the 50kg category.

Silver-medallist in the 69kg category at the 2017 edition of the Asian Championships, Kakran lost out on a place in the final of 68kg after going down to Feng Zhou of China 4-14 in the semifinals.

In the 59kg category, Manju had lost to Battsetseg Altantsereg of Mongolia 6-15 in the last four stage to settle for a place in the bronze-medal round.

Manju had earlier beaten Kazakhstan's



Madina Bakbergenova 5-3 in the quarter-finals.

In the 50kg category, Seema defeated Meng Hsuan Hsieh of Chinese Taipei 10-2 in her repechage bout. She had earlier lost to Yuki Irie of Japan in the qualification round but made the repechage after her Japanese rival reached the final.

However, India's campaign got over early in the 55kg and 76kg weight divisions when Lalita and Pooja lost their respective quarterfinal bouts to bow out of the event.

## Lords of the Ring: 6 Indians enter Finals

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Amit Panghal (52kg) and Kavinder Singh Bisht (56kg) remained on course for their second successive international Gold medals this year and India looked good to notch up its best ever performance in the Asian Boxing Championships here on Thursday.

Panghal and Bisht were the most impressive on a day when Shiva Thapa's (60kg) unprecedented fourth successive semifinal appearance ended with a Bronze after a gruelling battle which could have gone either way.

Deepak Singh (49kg) and Ashish Kumar (75kg) joined Panghal and Bisht in the men's finals, while Pooja Rani (81kg) and Simranjit Kaur (64kg) advanced to Friday's summit clashes in the women's draw.

Panghal defeated China's Hu Jianguan in a split verdict, which was a surprise given that the Indian was clearly the more dominant of the two boxers and dictated the bout with his tremendous pace and aggression.

Bisht, on the other hand, turned in a lion-hearted show in a bloody battle which left him and his opponent — Mongolian Enkh-Amar Khakhuu — with bandaged right eyes. The draining fight ended 3-2 in the Indian's favour.

Thapa came out all guns blazing too, against 2015 edition's Silver-medallist

ASIAN BOXING C'SHIP



Kazakhstan's Zakir Safiullin, but a loss of momentum in the final round ended up tilting the scales against him in a split decision by the judges.

Also finishing with a Bronze among men were Ashish (69kg) and Satish Kumar (+91kg).

Settling for Bronze medals among the women were veteran former champion L Sarita Devi (60kg), last edition's Silver-medallist Manisha (54kg), former junior world champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and world Silver-medallist Sonia Chahal (57kg).

Manisha lost to Taiwan's Huang Hsiao-Wen, while Sarita (60kg) went down to China's Yang Wenlu.

Pooja was up against Kazakhstan's Fariza Sholtay and emerged triumphant in a unanimous decision.

Zareen gave it her all in the clash against Vietnam's Nguyen Thi Tam but signed off with a Bronze after losing the bout on a split verdict by the judges.

Sonia was squared off against local favourite Nilwan Techasuep and although the Indian seemed to be a more precise puncher than her rival, the judges ruled in the Tha's favour much to the crowd's delight.

In the last Indian bout of the day, national champion Simranjit faced a rather sluggish opponent in Uzbekistan's Maftunakhon Melieva and controlled the proceedings from start to finish for an easy 5-0 triumph.