

OPINION 6
SHADOW OF TERROR
LOOMS LARGE

NATION 8
MAMATA TO CARRY FIGHT
TO BJP'S ASSAM CAMP

MONEY 10
RBI NET SELLS \$18.66 BN OF
DOLLARS BETWEEN APR-SEP

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Terror revisits Amritsar

3 die, 20 injured in grenade attack on Nirankaris, Punjab Police thinks it is terrorist act; 2 arrested

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

In a reminder to dark days of militancy in Punjab, three people were killed while over a dozen were injured in a grenade attack during a religious congregation at Rana Sansi in Amritsar district at a time when the State was on high alert after terror inputs since Thursday.

The Punjab Police has described it as a "terrorist act" and is probing all "possible angles". By the evening, the police have arrested two suspects from Bathinda, and seized live cartridges from them.

Meanwhile, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has decided to investigate the incident that took place at Nirankari Bhawan in Adliwal village. The NIA has registered a case into the incident and its team, comprising senior officers, left from Chandigarh in the evening, and was expected to reach Raja Sansi late at night to further



Waiting relatives of a victim after two men on a motorcycle reportedly threw a grenade at the Nirankari Bhawan during a religious congregation, in Adliwal village near Amritsar, on Sunday

- ◆ Two youth, aged between 25 and 30, forcibly entered the Nirankari Bhawan and lobbed the grenade amidst the crowd when the congregation at Rana Sansi in Amritsar district was on
- ◆ Punjab Police has described it as a "terrorist act"
- ◆ The Police have launched a massive search operation to nab the suspects and also sealed Punjab's border with Rajasthan

investigate the matter.

The blast came at a time when the police have sounded high alert across Punjab, especially in Amritsar after the terrorist-outfit Ansar Ghazwatul Hind (AGH) chief Zakir Musa was reportedly spotted in the holy city along with a few other men on Friday.

Security was beefed up across the State since Thursday after four persons snatched an SUV at gunpoint near Madhopur in Pathankot district last week, followed by an intelligence input claiming that a group of six to seven Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists were reportedly in the State, possibly in Ferozepur area.

Sunday's blast attack at Nirankaris — considered to be a subsidiary of Sikhism but following their own living Guru and religious text - harked back about four decades back. In 1978, 13 Sikhs and three Nirankaris were killed in Amritsar following a violent clash between the two groups — an incident considered to be the starting of the Sikh militancy in Punjab.

As per initial inputs, two youth, aged between 25 and 30, with their faces covered, forcibly entered the Nirankari Bhawan and lobbed the grenade amidst the crowd when the congregation was on.

MHA prepares list of Rohingya sympathisers

Ex-diplomat, top lawyers, Amnesty International, India figure on list

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Following report by intelligence agencies, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has prepared a list of several suspected organisations and individuals, who are backing and providing assistance to Rohingya immigrants.

The organisations mentioned in the list include Working Group on Alternative Strategies, Crown Newsing, Community Mobilisation, Choton Das of Bondi Mukti Committee, Kolkatta, Md Saleel of Kerala Muslim Culture Centre and Amnesty International, India. The list also named a former Ambassador, top lawyers, civil society members and a professor of a renowned university.

The document accessed by *The Pioneer* also gives state-



wise data of Rohingya immigrants. "There are 1,234 illegal Rohingya immigrants in the national Capital. Of them 163 are untraceable. Demographic details of 894 have been captured", the document said.

As per the document, there are 6,523 illegal Rohingyas in Jammu and Kashmir. Of them, 6,461 are in Jammu and 62 in Kashmir.

There are 264 Rohingyas in Uttar Pradesh, 26 in Assam, 102 in Tamil Nadu, 60 in Karnataka, 16 in Kerala, and one in Maharashtra.

PM to inaugurate ₹6,400 cr KMP e-way in G'gram today

Modi to flag off Escorts Mujesar-Ballabgarh section of Delhi Metro's Violet Line, lay foundation stone of Vishwakarma Skill University

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After delay of nine years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate much awaited ₹6,400 crore Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP), also known as Western Peripheral Expressway (WPE), at Sultanpur village Gurugram on November 19.

Also, Modi will inaugurate the 3.2 km-long Escorts Mujesar-Ballabgarh section of Delhi Metro's Violet Line and lay foundation stone of Vishwakarma Skill University, Dudhola Palwal. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, along with his Cabinet Ministers, will also be present on the occasion.



The Expressway will not only ease burden of heavy traffic using Delhi as transit point but also provide high-speed link between northern Haryana and southern districts.

It will facilitate uninterrupted high-speed link for traffic, especially commercial traffic, from Haryana to the

neighbouring States.

The expressway will act as a Delhi bypass for traffic coming from north of Delhi on NH-1 and going to south of Delhi on NH2 and to the west along NH-8.

Once the KMP Expressway is fully operational, vehicles going from North India to the Western and Southern parts of the country would be able to do so without entering into Delhi.

According to officials, ₹6,400 crore had been spent on the expressway project and 3,846 acre was acquired at a cost of ₹2,788 crore. The design speed of the expressway is 120 kmph for light vehicles and 100 kmph for heavy ones.

Fadnavis Govt OK's quota for Marathas

Accepts Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission suggestions

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having accepted the recommendations made by the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC) on the socio-economic status of the Marathas, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday announced that his Government would grant reservations to Marathas in jobs and education under a new Socio-Economic Backward Class (SEBC) category.

Talking to mediapersons here on the eve of the start of the Winter Session of Maharashtra Legislature, Fadnavis said, "We have accepted the recommendations made by the MSBCC. We have decided to accord reservations to the Maratha community under a new SEBC category. The reservations to be granted to



Marathas will be independent of the existing reservations for the OBC category."

The Chief Minister said the State Government had constituted a Cabinet Subcommittee to take statutory steps to implement its decision.

Fadnavis said the MSBCC had made three recommendations in its submission to the Maharashtra Government on November 15. "The MSBCC has recommended that Marathas be given reserva-

tions on the basis their socio-economic backwardness under extraordinary situations. As per the guidelines of the Supreme Court (which has pegged the cap on reservations at 50 per cent), we have an extraordinary situation on hand. Based on the commission's recommendations, we have decided to create a new SEBC category under which we intend to accord reservations to Marathas without affecting the reservations already given under the OBC category," the Chief Minister said.

Replying to a question, the Chief Minister said there is no need for the State Government to seek the permission of the Central Backward Class Commission to grant reservations to Marathas in jobs and education.

Official sources said the Maharashtra Government

would introduce a Bill in the Winter Session of the State Legislature to create SEBC category and accord 16 per cent reservations to Maratha community in addition to the existing 52 per cent reservations in the State. When the law is enacted, the reservations will go up to 68 per cent in Maharashtra.

According to sources, the Maharashtra Government is contemplating to take the route adopted by the Tamil Nadu Government under late Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, which achieved its objective of increasing reservations to 69 per cent by passing the Tamil Nadu Act of 1994 and adding the 1994 Act to the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

Article 31B of the Constitution stipulates that the legislations in the Ninth Schedule cannot be challenged in courts.

14 killed as bus falls into gorge in Uttarkashi



Officials undertake rescue operation, rush injured to hospital

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Fourteen passengers died and 14 were injured when the bus in which they were travelling fell into a deep gorge near Janakichatti in Uttarkashi district at about 12:30 pm on Sunday. According to the Uttarkashi district emergency operation centre, the accident took place on the Naugaon-Damta-Vikasnagar Road in Badkot tehsil involving a private bus bearing registration number UK 07 PA 1127. The bus fell off the road down about 250 metres into the Yamuna riverbed.

The District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and other officials reached the site with six ambulances and doctors to undertake the rescue operation. Fourteen people were reported dead on the spot.

Of the 14 injured, six are in serious condition and were airlifted by helicopter. Three were admitted in AIIMS Rishikesh and three were admitted in Jolly Grant hospital. The remaining eight injured were transported by ambulance to Dehradun. In other accident which took place in Pithoragarh district three people died and two were injured when their car fell into 500-metre deep ravine in the afternoon. The accident took place at Gyarah Devi. One of the two injured was taken to Sushila Tiwari hospital in Haldwani while the other injured person was taken to the military hospital in Pithoragarh.

UPA adopted negative approach towards BJP-ruled States: Modi

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that 10 of the 15 years of BJP Government in Chhattisgarh were spent in struggle under the UPA rule at the Centre which adopted a negative approach towards BJP-ruled States.

Addressing a public rally in Mahasamund, he said that after his Government came to power at the Centre, Chhattisgarh witnessed development as various Government schemes and people's participation took the State to new heights.

"The first 10 years of Raman Singh Government were spent fighting the negative forces. The remote-controlled Government in Delhi did not allow Raman Singh to work for his State. It was only after 2014, that he could work to bring in development in the State," he said.

"Do you want to give an opportunity to people who ruined the lives of earlier generations of the State?" asked Modi while warning the people against voting for the Congress. The BJP, he said, was the answer for Chhattisgarh's progress.

Referring to Congress President Rahul Gandhi's pledge to waive farm loans if his party came to power in the State, Modi said the Congress' days of getting votes by "lying and misleading people" were over.

Referring to Rahul Gandhi,



Modi said "It has been almost a year since your party came to power in Karnataka but what happened to your promise of waiving loans of farmers?"

The Prime Minister denied that his Government waived ₹3.5 lakh crore of corporate loans of a handful of industrialists.

"It is them (Congress) who gave out indiscriminate loans and allowed the banks to be looted.

Between 2006 and 2014, they (Congress) gave out loans equal to the amount that was given after independence till 2006. It is our Government which dared to enact tough

laws and seized billions of rupees worth of properties of the fraudsters who have absconded," he said.

CAMPAINING FOR FINAL PHASE OF POLLS ENDS

Campaigning for the second and final phase of

Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh ended on Sunday evening. Polling in 72 constituencies spread across 19 districts will be held on Tuesday.

Leaders of many political parties held public meetings at various places to garner support for their candidates.

1 DRG trooper killed, 2 injured in IED blast

STAFF REPORTER ■ SUKMA

One District Reserve Guard (DRG) trooper was killed and two others were injured in an IED blast triggered allegedly by Maoists in Chhattisgarh's restive Sukma district on Sunday.

Sukma District Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhishek Meena informed that the incident took place at Elarmadgu village coming under Bheji police station area when a team of the DRG personnel were out on an anti-Naxal operation.

When the patrolling team reached Elarmadgu, ultras triggered an IED that left three Jawans injured, he said.

Later, one of the troopers, Kuhram Dara succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at Raipur where he was airlifted. Condition of one them is critical, he said.

On being alerted about the incident, reinforcement was rushed to the blast spot and efforts were on to evacuate the injured to Sukma town, the official said.

One of the troopers, Kuhram Dara succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at Raipur where he was airlifted

Cong a private limited company: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a fierce attack on the Congress, BJP president Amit Shah on Sunday described it as "private limited company" of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

Soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi at an election rally in Chhattisgarh dared the Congress to appoint a head from outside the family. Shah issued a statement saying the Congress had become more of a family enterprise aimed at dynastic service than a political party aimed at public service, and that no person outside the family had any right over it.

Taking a dig at the Congress leaders, including P Chidambaram who had named

several party presidents hailing from outside the Gandhi family, he said Modi's challenge had ruffled several feathers with "many courtiers going out of the way to prove their loyalty".

At a poll rally in Chhattisgarh on Friday, Modi had said if the Congress appointed someone not from the Gandhi family as its president for at least five years, then he would believe that Jawaharlal Nehru had indeed put in place a truly democratic system in the Opposition party. The Prime Minister repeated his words at another poll rally in the State on Sunday.

"The Prime Minister is right. The Congress (Indira) since its inception in 1978 has been led by four members of one family for

most of the years, thus making it more of a family enterprise aimed at dynastic service rather than a political party aimed at public service," Shah said.

"The Congress is Nehru-Gandhi family's private limited company over which nobody outside the family has any right," he added.

Shah was referring to the split in the Congress in 1978 following its loss in the 1977 parliamentary polls, with the Indira Gandhi-led faction recognised as the Congress(I). As she returned to power in 1980, her faction was later recognised by the Election Commission (EC) as the real Congress.

Two Congress chiefs, who were not from the Nehru-

Gandhi family, were treated in the "most shabby" manner possible in the recent past, Shah alleged.

While PV Narasimha Rao's body, after his demise, was never allowed inside the Congress office, Sitaram Kesri, a towering leader, was "roughed up by goons loyal to we know who," he added.

Modi, at a rally in Chhattisgarh on Sunday, also alleged that Kesri was not allowed to complete his term as the Congress chief and was forced to make way for Sonia Gandhi.

The BJP chief cited the examples of several "non-family" Congress presidents to back his claim. "Going further back in time, the likes of Babu Jagjivan

Ram, S Nijalingappa, K Kamaraj were humiliated by one family. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, though senior, was not allowed to be president by one family. U N Dhebar was asked to step aside as Congress president for Mrs. Indira Gandhi," he said.

Shah claimed that Acharya Kripalani, a stalwart who worked closely with Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, was "humiliated" by the Congress leadership through the 1950s and 1960s. "His crime — he moved the first motion of no-confidence against the Nehru Government," he said. Following Modi's challenge, Chidambaram had hit back by listing out the names of Congress presidents from outside the Nehru-Gandhi family.

Union Minister defends Govt for failing to bring AYUSH under PMJAY

In touch with health Min and Niti Ayog to resolve the issue, says AYUSH Minister

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik on Sunday sought to defend his Government for failing to bring the alternative medicine system in the ambit of the world's largest national medical insurance scheme under the Ayushman Bharat — Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (PMJAY) launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently, saying nitty-gritty's were being discussed.

He said, "My Ministry is in touch with the Union Health Ministry and Niti Aayog to ensure that the medical insurance cover is given to the patients seeking alternate medical system AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy). We hope this will happen soon," said the Minister on the sidelines of an event held here to mark the first Naturopathy Day.

Surprisingly, while the Government has been patting its back for promoting holistic alternative healthcare like never before, the PMJAY scheme which was launched with much fanfare by Prime Minister Narendra Modi a few months ago does not provide insurance coverage to the alternative medicine system AYUSH.

Earlier, after inaugurating the first Naturopathy Day Programme, Naik said his Ministry is introducing several schemes to expand the naturopathy treatment which is cost effective and side-effect-free system.

Work on building natural clinics is already in progress in Pune, Goa, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, the Minister said as he pointed out that the health challenges including rising non-communicable diseases we are facing today is because we have forgotten our traditional system of medicine.

Jaiprakash Aggarwal of International Naturopathy Organisation, which had organised the event in collaboration with the Ministry, explained that all the treatments given under Naturopathy are based on Pancha Mahabhootas theory and elimination of morbid matter is the best remedy in all disease conditions.

The Chairman of the Surya Foundation also favoured taking the system to each and every household.

Naturopathy experts such as Dr Yogesh Gupta and Shalalu Gupta, both from Delhi-based Ojas Nature Cure and Yoga Centre called for regulation and standardisation of the sector which is gaining popularity not only amongst Indians but foreigners too owing to its several benefits.

Dr Navdeep Joshi, naturotherapist from Navyoga Kendra, Delhi too agreed saying, that people are now accepting the efficacy of these sciences as panacea for psychosomatic ailments and lifestyle disorders.

Cong calls BJP misogynist over Khattar's rape remarks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the BJP leadership of being "misogynist", the Congress on Sunday demanded an apology from Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar for reportedly claiming that most rape cases were "fake" and took place among people who knew each other well.

"Misogyny has become a buzzword for BJP leadership. Humiliating India's women has become a characteristic style of BJP leaders. The Talibani thought process of the BJP leadership particularly Khattar has been exposed," Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said.

After courting controversy over his remarks on rape incidents, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday clarified that his statement had been twisted and asserted there should not be any politics on the issue.

"(My) statement has been twisted. I had said which is on record and I will again State it that during investigation in such cases, it was revealed that about 80 per cent of incidents took place between known...But there is a need to bring



awareness in the society. There should not be any politics on this issue," Khattar said.

On the other hand, Surjewala blamed the Bharatiya Janata Party for Haryana becoming a crime hub and rising incidents of crimes against women, particularly rape and molestation.

Asking Khattar to apologise for his derogatory remarks, Surjewala also demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi breaks his silence on BJP leaders often making sexist remarks.

Addressing a rally in Kalka town of Panchkula district, Khattar on Friday reportedly said that 80-90 per cent of the rape and molestation incidents took place amongst people who knew each other well.

"They roam around together for some time and if one day they get into some quarrel, they file an FIR claiming that they have been raped." In the run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, Khattar had made another sexist remark asking women to "run around naked if they wanted freedom".

He also came under fire from Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who indicted his Haryana counterpart for "justifying rape".

Govt wants to capture RBI reserves, alleges PC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A head of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Board meeting, Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday alleged that the Central Government was determined to "capture" the central bank to gain control over its ₹9 lakh crore reserves.

In a series of tweets, the former Finance Minister also claimed that the Government and the RBI were heading towards a "confrontation" in the Monday's board meeting of the bank.

"Government is determined to 'capture' RBI in order to gain control over the reserves. The other so-called disagreements are only a smokescreen (sic)," he said on Twitter.

Chidambaram said, "Nowhere in the world is the central bank a board-managed company. To suggest that private business persons will direct the Governor is a preposterous idea."

"November 19 will be a day of reckoning for central bank independence and the Indian economy," he tweeted.

The RBI has a massive ₹9.59 lakh crore reserves and the Government, if reports are to be believed, wants the central bank to part with a third of that fund — an issue which along with easing of

norms for weak banks and raising liquidity has brought the two at loggerheads in the recent weeks.

The Government on November 9 had said it was discussing an "appropriate" size of capital reserves that the central bank must maintain but denied seeking a massive capital transfer from the RBI.

Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg had also clarified that the Government wasn't in any dire needs of funds and that there was no proposal to ask the RBI to transfer ₹3.6 lakh crore.

"There is no proposal to ask RBI to transfer ₹3.6 or ₹1 lakh crore, as speculated," he had said.

"The Government's FD (fiscal deficit) in FY 2013-14 was 5.1 per cent. From 2014-15 onwards, the Government has succeeded in bringing it down substantially. We will end the FY 2018-19 with FD of 3.3 per cent. The Government has actually foregone ₹70,000 crore of budgeted market borrowing this year."

Garg said the only proposal "under discussion is to fix appropriate economic capital framework of RBI".

Economic capital framework refers to the risk capital required by the central bank while taking into account different risks.



Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik with Prof Amitabh Mattoo during the launch of the book "Empowering Youth of Jammu & Kashmir" at a function in New Delhi on Sunday



Senior TDP leader Syed Yousuf Ali joins Congress in presence of AICC Secretary Md Saleem in Hyderabad on Sunday

Govt to hold integration week from Nov 25

New Delhi: The National Integration Week will be observed across the country beginning November 25 with an aim to foster and reinforce the spirit of communal harmony.

The Government will organise meetings and seminars during the 'Qaumi Ekta Week' (National Integration Week) to emphasise on themes of secularism, anti-communalism and non-violence.

Besides, November 20 will be observed as "Welfare of Minorities Day" when fraternal processions will be taken out in riot-prone towns, according to an official release.

November 21 will be observed as "Linguistic Harmony Day" when special literary functions and "Kavi Sammelans" will be organised to enable people of each region to appreciate the linguistic heritage of other parts of India.

The release said November

22 will be observed as "Weaker Sections Day". Meetings and rallies will be organised to highlight programmes under various Governments which help SCs/STs and weaker sections with particular emphasis on the distribution of surplus land to landless labourers.

November 23 will be observed as "Cultural Unity Day" and cultural functions will be organised to present the Indian tradition of unity in diversity and for promoting cultural conservation and integration, it said. November 24 will be observed as "Women's Day" when role of women in Indian society and in development of nation-building will be highlighted. November 25 will be observed as "Conservation Day" when several meetings and functions will be organised to emphasise the growing need for awareness and action to conserve the environment.

Raj: Ex-Cong MLA joins BJP after son denied ticket

Jaipur: Former Congress MLA Mamta Sharma on Sunday joined the ruling BJP in Rajasthan after her son was denied a ticket by the Congress in the upcoming State Assembly polls.

Sharma met Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje here and announced her joining the party.

"I had demanded a ticket for my son from the Congress, but he was denied the same despite the fact that he has done so much work for the party. I was hurt at the party's style of functioning and therefore, decided to join the BJP," she told reporters after meeting Raje.

The former Congress MLA said the Chief Minister has promised her a ticket from Pipalda constituency of Kota.

34 judges appointed to six HCs: Law Min

New Delhi: A total of 34 judges have been appointed to six High Courts in the country, with Allahabad getting 28, according to the Law Ministry.

Despite fresh appointments made on Saturday, the 24 high courts of the country face a combined shortage of over 430 judges. The total approved strength is 1,079.

While 28 judges were appointed to the Allahabad High Court, the Gauhati High Court got two new faces.

Delhi, Meghalaya, Orissa and Madras High Court got one judge each, separate notifications issued by the Ministry said.

Out of the 34 judges appointed, 17 were lawyers and the rest were judicial officers.

The collegium of the Allahabad High Court had recommended 33 names

OUT OF THE 34 JUDGES APPOINTED, 17 WERE LAWYERS AND THE REST WERE JUDICIAL OFFICERS



for judgship. But the Supreme Court collegium found 17 names fit for the job. Out of these 17, the Government notified the appointment of 15 and returned two to collegium for reconsideration.

'Swachhh Bharat' a benchmark for other countries to follow: WHO

New Delhi: India's 'Swachhh Bharat' campaign is a good example of how countries can make safe sanitation services accessible to all, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Sunday.

Under the 'Swachhh Bharat' programme, household sanitation coverage increased at a rate of 13 per cent annually between 2016 and 2018, WHO said.

Everyone should have access to safe sanitation facilities including hygienic toilets that are connected to quality sewage systems, WHO said, adding that for many people in its South-East Asia region, as across the world, access to these services remains a problem.

WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh said 900 million people region-wide lack basic sanitation and more than 500 million practise open defecation. Singh said in recent years, member States have made significant progress and region-wide urban coverage of basic sanitation is now close to 70 per cent. In a majority of countries, rural coverage

exceeds 50 per cent and the share of the region's population practising open defecation has been reduced from more than 50 per cent to less than 30 per cent, while several member States have achieved more than 90 per cent coverage of basic sanitation services.

These advances are to be commended and they must also be built on, she said, adding that the return on every dollar invested in safe sanitation is estimated to be nearly six times increased productivity and fewer premature deaths.

"All people everywhere should have access to safe sanitation services, including hygienic toilets that are connected to quality sewage systems.

"For many people across the WHO South-East Asia Region, as across the world, access to these services nevertheless remains a problem, with 900 million region-wide lacking basic sanitation, and more than 500 million practising open defecation," Singh said.

"This leads to increased human-feces contact and transmission of a range of diseases, from cholera to typhoid and

hepatitis A and E to tapeworm," she said on the eve of World Toilet Day.

WHO's South-East Asia Region comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

As outlined in WHO's recently launched Guidelines on Sanitation and Health, there are several ways member states can sustain their many gains, accelerate progress and make safe sanitation services accessible to all, she said.

"First, health authorities should work across sectors to ensure all communities have access to toilets that adequately contain excreta. Of key importance is targeting communities in hard-to-reach areas, as well as those living informally in cities or urban zones.

"India's Swachhh Bharat campaign is a good example of how this can be done to rapid effect and on a large scale, with household sanitation coverage increasing at a rate of 13 per cent annually between 2016 and 2018," Singh said.

'Joint planning among Army, Navy, IAF key to win any war in shortest possible time'

New Delhi: Chief of Air Staff BS Dhanoa has strongly pitched for institutionalised structure for joint planning among the Indian Air Force, Navy and Army so that the country wins any war in future in the "shortest possible" time.

The IAF chief said all the three services will have to adopt a coherent approach to effectively deal with all possible security threats facing the country, asserting that his force strongly stands for "jointness".

"No single service can win the war solely on its own inherent organic capabilities given the variety of threats which nations are capable of inflicting upon each other," he said.

"Thus, it is imperative that the three services promote joint planning and exploit the strengths of sister services to help win a war in the shortest possible time. India by itself is one theatre," he told PTI in an interview.

There have been deliberations within the government and the three forces on whether India should go for integrated theatre commands where all

the manpower and assets of the three services will be under the command of one officer. The US as well as several western countries follow this model.

There were voices within the defence establishment who were in favour of setting up at least two theatre commands - one in western sector for dealing with Pakistan and other in eastern sector for dealing with any eventuality along the frontier with China.

Official sources said government is already seriously considering setting up of a Defence Cyber Agency, a Defence Space Agency and a Special Operations Division comprising the assets of the three services.

Giving a serious consideration to joint planning among the three forces, the government, in April formed a Defence Planning Committee (DPC) headed by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval to prepare a national security strategy with a focus on ensuring convergence among the Army, the IAF and the Navy.

Mizoram BJP chief alleges CM Thanhawla wanted to join BJP

Congress calls it 'joke'

Aizawl: Amid rising election campaign heat in Mizoram, the State's BJP unit chief V Hulna has claimed that Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla of Congress wanted to join the saffron party along with some other party MLAs before the poll process started, a claim dismissed by the ruling party leaders as a "joke".

The Mizoram BJP president also claimed that most of the elected Congress MLAs will join his party after the poll results for the State are out on December 11. The elections are scheduled to be held on November 28 for 40 Assembly seats of the State, where the Congress has been in power since 2008.

The BJP has never won an assembly election in this small hill state with a population of just about 10 lakh people, including nearly 7.68 lakh voters, but it is seen by the saffron

party as the "final frontier" in the North-East as it is in power in all other states of the region — either by winning polls or joining ruling alliances.

The BJP president Amit Shah recently declared that Mizoram, a Christian-majority state, will celebrate Christmas this December under the BJP rule.

"Lal Thanhawla himself, before this election, and his followers contacted the central leadership (of BJP) to merge the whole Congress in the state, just like the Arunachal Pradesh. They were in contact with them," Hulna told PTI.

"They did not contact me, they contacted our leaders in Delhi. From them, I learnt that Lal Thanhawla was willing to join BJP," he added.

In September 2016, the Congress lost its government in Arunachal Pradesh when 43 of its MLAs led by Chief Minister Pema Khandu defected wholesale and merged with the People's Party of Arunachal, just two months after it had regained power fol-

lowing the Supreme Court's judgement.

A senior leader of the principal opposition party in Mizoram, Mizo National Front (MNF), also made similar allegations against the chief minister and said that the deal fell through as the Congress leaders' "demands" were rejected by the BJP's central leaders.

Thanhawla, a nine-time MLA, could not be contacted for his reactions despite repeated attempts, but a senior minister of his Cabinet termed the allegations as the "funniest jokes ever known".

On condition of anonymity, an MNF leader, who is also contesting the Mizoram Assembly elections from a constituency in the capital city, claimed that Thanhawla had contacted a senior central leader of the BJP and had sought the Chief Minister's post for his daughter and the Governor's post for himself in return of joining the BJP with party MLAs.

"But these demands were rejected outright," he said.

C'garh all set for 2nd and final phase of polling on Nov 20

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The battle ground in Chhattisgarh is all set for second and final phase of polling on November 20.

In the second phase, a total of 1079 candidates are in the fray where 53,85,983 electors would be exercising their franchise to elect 72 candidates.

Out of the State's total number of electors, 77,46,628 are male while 76,38,415 are female and 940 are third genders.

To ensure full voting in 72 constituencies, a total of 19,296 polling centres have been established. The maximum number of electors in second phase of polling are at Kasdol at 3,33,472 while Manendragarh Assembly constituency has least number of electors at 1,31,283.

A total of 493 candidates are in the fray as Independent candidates. Raipur (South) constituency has maximum of 46 candidates in the fray while the minimum number of candidates in the fray are at Bindranavagarh at six.

Out of the 72 Assembly constituencies, in 11 constituencies, the total number of



candidates is more than 20. In the second phase, 119 women candidates are in the fray with maximum number of women candidates in Raipur (South) constituency where there are eight candidates.

In 18 assembly constituencies, there are no women candidates in the fray. The counting for first and second phase of polling would be held on December 11. As per information, around 650 battalions of para-military force have been deployed in 72 assembly constituencies for peaceful conduct of polling. The distribution of polling materials and polling team movement to respective polling booths will begin from November 19 early morning.

The first phase of polling was held on November 12 for 18 Assembly constituencies in insurgency-hit Bastar division and Rajnandgaon district.

Cong chargesheet a bundle of lies: Jain

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Countering the Congress party's 103-point chargesheet against Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP National General Secretary and party's Chhattisgarh In-charge Dr Anil Kumar Jain said that it is a bundle of lies.



"The Congress leaders are unable to see development made in the State. They are trying to showcase it as lies," he said.

The people of Chhattisgarh are politically mature but the Congress is spreading lies among them through allegations, Jain said.

People in Surguja expecting TS Singhdeo as next CM

ABHIJAT SHUKLA ■ AMBIKAPUR

There is a Congress wave flowing in Surguja and people of the region have even stopped selling their paddy crop in mandis expecting better support price as promised by Congress party in its poll manifesto, said Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament (MP) and party's Campaign In-charge from Bihar, Akhilesh Pratap Singh.

Singh while talking to *The Pioneer* said that there is tremendous enthusiasm among the people of Surguja as in this election, they believe that by casting their vote to Congress party, they are going to elect a Chief Minister in the form of T.S. Singhdeo of the region.

"There is great respect towards T S Singhdeo in the region and they (people) are expecting that he would be the next Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh", he said.

"I have campaigned and have held public meetings in almost all the 14 assembly constituencies of the region and I found that people here want to vote for change", he said.

"I am expecting at least 12 seats out of total 14 in favour of Congress party from here", he further added.

"I have conducted more than 20 public meetings at various places including Kusmi, Shankargarh, Raipur, Lundra, Lakholi, Sitapur, Mainpat, Bhayathan apart from the Surguja district headquarters Ambikapur", he said.

"In all the places, I was overwhelmed with the massive gathering in support of Congress party and with considerable number of MLAs from here, the Surguja region will play a vital role in formation of Congress Government in Chhattisgarh", he said.

Rajnath's Chopper develops snag; travels by road



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Bharatiya Janata Party's star campaigner and Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday had to travel by road to Dharamjaigarh about 270 kilometres from Raipur after the helicopter he was travelling in, developed a technical snag.

He had reached Lailunga to address a public rally and was to fly to Dharamjaigarh. After waiting for an hour, he left for Dharamjaigarh by road.

Singh's public meeting was delayed by two hours and his poll campaign ended at 5 pm



sharp as was the case with all the party's other star campaigners who were ensuring to reach public meeting venues on time.

Ex-Raipur Mayor Gajraj Pagaria back in Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Former Raipur Mayor Gajraj Pagaria on Sunday returned to Congress party fold.

He was welcomed by All India Congress Committee In-charge of Chhattisgarh P.L. Punia at State Congress office Rajiv Bhawan here on Sunday. Notably, Pagaria was



National Treasurer of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (Jogi) (JCC) (J).

Speaking on the occasion, Pagaria said he had cordial relations with JCC (J) Supremo Ajit Jogi but the support he was expecting from him after being manhandled by a party worker disappointed him. "Unhappy with the incident, I have now decided to return to Congress fold", he said.

Cong releases 103-point chargesheet against BJP Govt

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh unit of Congress party on Sunday released 103-point chargesheet against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party Government of the State.

The chargesheet was released by Chhattisgarh In-charge of All India Congress Committee, P.L. Punia and party's National Spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill at State Congress office Rajiv Bhawan on Sunday.

The points in the



chargesheet as per the party includes-failure in poverty alleviation, farmers' suicide, failure in tackling unemployment, atrocities against tribals, botched up eye surgery, sterilization deaths, issue of Jal-Jungle-Jameen, closure of Government schools among others.



The Rapid Action Force on Sunday held a flag march ahead of second phase of polling in Raipur. The polling is scheduled on November 20
Santosh Sahu | Pioneer

BJP will rid C'garh of Naxalism in next term: Adityanath

STAFF REPORTER ■ BILASPUR

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in its next term would free the State from Naxalism, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference here, Adityanath said that both BJP and Dr Raman Singh are creating

Chhattisgarh as a model State in the country. The work on infrastructure development has also picked up pace in the State, he said.

The Congress does not have a leader at national or at the State level, Adityanath said.

#ChhattisgarhVotes
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निर्वाचन 2018
सुगम, सुधर, समावेशी



ये देश के लिए जान दे सकते हैं क्या आप एक वोट नहीं दे सकते ?

द्वितीय चरण

मतदान तिथि: 20 नवम्बर 2018

मतदान करें
सेल्फी लें
ईनाम पाएं



जय जवान

मुख्य निर्वाचन पदाधिकारी, छत्तीसगढ़ द्वारा जनहित में जारी

Notification for 12 new ports issued by Govt

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government has issued notification for setting up 12 new ports. MoUs have been signed with different organisations for this and land is being acquired for the purpose, said Transport Minister Nrusingha Charan Sahu in reply to a question by MLA Dilip Ray in the State Assembly on Saturday.

Presently, three ports are functioning at Paradip, Dhamra and Gopalpur. In 1991, the Government had issued notification to set up a port at Bahabalapur in Baleswar district.

Similarly in 1996, a notification was issued for another eight ports. They are Astaranga and Bali Harchandi in Puri district, Includi, Subarnarekha and Chandipur in Baleswar dis-

trict, Bahuda in Ganjam district and Chudamani in Bhradak district, said Sahu.

Besides, a notification was issued in 2000 for a port at Jatadhari Muhan in Jagatsinghpur and in 2009 notification was issued for a port at Talsari in Baleswar district. In 2017, a notification was issued for a riverine port at Mahakalapada block in Kendrapada district, said the Minister.

Though notification was issued 17 years back for Bahabalapur port, the construction work has not made any headway. Similarly, in 1996 out of the notification which issued for eight ports, a MoU has been signed in 2008 with an organisation for a port at Subarnarekha and 700 acre of land has been acquired.

Even though the

Government had signed an MoU with the Aditya Birla Group for the port at Chudamani, later the company withdrew from the project. An MoU has been signed with the Navyug Engineering for the port at Astaranga in 2010. While the land acquisition process is on for the project, an agitation is continuing opposing the project. The expansion works for the Dhamra and Gopalpur Ports are being carried out.

After the proposed ports become functional, import and exports would increase; and due to the business activities employment opportunities would be created. The Government should complete the ports within a limited timeframe to expedite developmental activities, demanded Ray.

Youth kills 3 of family in Kendrapada

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Kendrapada: A youth allegedly murdered three members of his family at Madhusudanpur village under the Patkura police limits in Kendrapada district late on Saturday night.

Bikram Das, the accused, went absconding after the incident but was apprehended by police on Sunday afternoon. The deceased were Bikram's grandfather Dhruva Das, grandmother Saraswati Das and aunt Pratima Das. According to reports, Bikram returned home on Saturday night in an inebriated state and thrashed his wife after an argument between them. He also attacked his father and mother when they opposed his act.

When the deceased trio intervened in the matter, Bikram assaulted them with a sharp weapon killing Dhruva and Saraswati on the spot.

Pratima sustained grievous injuries in the attack and succumbed on the way to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack. PNS



Brahmapur murder: Man, paramour held

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

A 48-year-old salesman and his paramour have been arrested by police for the alleged murder of the former's wife at Military Line under the Town police station here on September 9.

Rabindra Behera, had allegedly killed his 45-year-old wife Papina. Rabindra and Papina were married for 24 years and have three sons, said ASP Santanu Dash at a Press meet.

Differences between the couple started due to financial crisis a few years ago. In the meanwhile, Rabindra developed a relationship with Bhanu Dakua (48), a resident of Hillpatna area.

In July, 2017 Rabindra, who worked as a salesman at a cloth shop in the city, left for Hyderabad for better employment. He had left behind his father Gopal Behera, Papina and elder son Rahul at their Military Lane house.

On September 6, 2017 the accused threatened Papina with dire consequences over phone.

Three days after he talked to his wife,



Rabindra returned home and assaulted Papina with a knife.

As Rahul was not at home, Gopal tried to resist the attack. By the time, neighbours reached the house, the accused fled the spot.

A complaint was later filed by Rahul with the police based on which a case of murder was registered.

Police on Friday received information that Rabindra and Bhanu were spotted at Chapan Chowk in Puri.

A team of Town police immediately left for Puri and arrested them. During interrogation, Rabindra confessed to his crime.

Both the accused were forwarded to court on Saturday, said the ASP.

K'put farmer ends life over crop loss

Koraput: A farmer reportedly committed suicide over crop loss in Maliguda village under the Potangi police station in the district on Sunday.

The deceased farmer was identified as Loknath Pangli.

Sources said Pangli consumed pesticides in his farmland and returned home and told his wife about it.

His family members rushed him to the Patangi Community Health Centre but he died while undergoing treatment.

Unable to bear the mental pressure due to crop loss and debt burden, Pangli consumed poison, alleged family members. Besides, Pangli's wife has lodged a complaint in the connection. On Saturday, a sharecropper Gouranga Charan Kap of Napang village allegedly committed suicide in Kendrapada district due to crop loss caused by the recent Titli cyclone.

PNS

INBRIEF

FISH MERCHANT COMMITS SUICIDE IN JSPUR

Jagatsinghpur: A 38-year-old fish merchant Baidanath Behera of Jaibada village here was found hanging in residence on Friday. Behera originally hailed from Teramanpur village in the Kujang area and was residing in a rented house in Jaibada village along with family. Neighbours seeing the deceased's house locked from informed police.

PARADIP SCRIBES' BODY OBSERVES PRESS DAY

Paradip: The Paradip Press Media (PPM) observed the National Press Day on Friday holding a meeting at the Press Club presided over by PPM advisor Chittaranjan Swain. Paradip Municipality Chairman Basanta Biswal, journalist Sudhir Ranjan Dash and President awardee former teacher Manoranjan Das attended as guests and criticised the attacks on working journalists in and outside the State. They spoke on the difficulties of reporters while collecting the news from fields.



WEIGHTLIFTING MEET KICKS OFF IN B'PUR

Brahmapur: A two-day-long Odisha Weightlifting and Wrestling Association organised by the Ganjam Weightlifting and Wrestling Association kicked off here in the presence of association president Chittaranjan Swain. Arjuna awardee Katulu Ravi Kumar, police officer Debabrata Chakra, association State secretary Narayan Sahu, advisor and senior journalist Rabi Rath, State VP Kumud Chandra Sahu, secretary Gagari Nayak, Laxmipriya Sahu, Manoranjan Mahapatra, block Chairman Santosh Kumar Padhy, Sangita Swain and Pranakrushna Patnaik attended as guests.



355 N'NAGAR SARASWATI +2 STUDENTS GET LAPTOPS

Brahmapur: As many as 355 Plus Two pass Commerce and Science students of the Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir, Nilakantha Nagar, highest in the State, were given laptops under the Biju Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana for 2018-19. School Principal S Mohan Rao, Umadhav Mohanty, managing committee president Dr Srikanta Mohapatra, VP Balakrusna Choudhury, secretary Sudarsana Padhy, joint secretary Mamata Panigrahy, treasurer B Gajapati Rao, members Pranati Samal, Bhima Sethi, Narayan Panda, Purna Chandra Panda, Nurusisingha Choudhury, Hari Kruna Padhi, Rabindra Nath Jena and Dharmaraj Sahu congratulated the teachers and students.



'UDAYABATA' CELEBRATES CHILDREN'S DAY

Jajpur Road: The magazine "Udayabata" celebrated Children's Day here recently under chairmanship of Dumsant Rout. Trade union leader Chandramani Samal, former Dharmasala block Chairman Kisan Panda, Rahas Bihari Pandit, Bidyutprava Ray, Surendra Sahu, Basant Patra, scribe Biswaranjan Pattanayak, Susant Kar, Upendra Mohanty, Niranjan Ghadai attended as guests.



Sundargarh girl cheated, ditched

Also cheated of ₹7L by accused

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH

A girl alleged to have been made pregnant after being lured on promise of marriage and cheated of ₹7 lakh by a youth in Sundargarh district.

Police after registering a case have conducted medical examination of the victim and recorded her statement.

The victim a 26-year-old tribal Christian girl and a resident of Shankara under Town police station in Sundargarh district alleged that Barun Bhoi(28) of Hemgiri area lured her by lying that he was working in OSAP, Koraput.

Later, he kept physical relationship with the girl.

The girl during the year 2018 became pregnant and on insisting marriage, Barun avoided her on one plea or the other. Barun allegedly had also taken from her around Rs 7 lakh by fraud.

When she came to know that Barun had cheated her, she told her to return the money but the latter too started avoiding her and did not receive her call.

Finding no other alternative, she went to the house of Barun about a month ago and told her parents to accept her as the wife of Barun and also demanded that her ₹7 lakh be returned to her.

She was allegedly beaten by family members of Barun following which miscarriage of her pregnancy occurred. The victim girl recently lodged complaint in the Town police station.

Shop lock smashed; cash stolen in Joda

PNS ■ CHAMPUPA



PNS ■ CHAMPUPA

On Saturday night, miscreants broke open the locks of a back shutter of a shop of Tata Sponge Employees Consumers' Cooperative Society at Bilaipada under the Joda Police Station limits and burgled cash of Rs 50,000.

Sources revealed that the co-operative shop is managed by three co-partners and two salesmen closed it at about 10 pm. Ramesh Kumar Sahu, one of the co-partners, had left for his residence after keeping the cash in a drawer and closing the shutter of the shop as usual.

However, on Sunday morning at about 9 am, when he opened the shop and cash counter, he found that the cash was missing. On checking he found that the lock of back side

door was open.

He immediately informed to the security staff watching in front of the shop besides that of the nearby police beat.

Beat in-charge Lalit Kumar Das who came for inquiry found that the thieves had entered into shop from the back side by breaking the shutter.

The thieves reportedly had left the broken lock and shovels including other materials which had been used to break the lock and shutter.

Now the security staff who stood guard in the area are under scanner.

Sources informed that on the fateful night, besides the patrolling staff, four security guards were on duty at the entry point of Tata Sponge colony where the co-operative store is located.

Admn gears up for Panchuka, Bada Osa in Dhabaleswar

DINESH DAS ■ ATHAGARH

The famous Bada Osa and Panchuka (last five days of holy month of Kartik) fair of Lord Dhableswar near Mancheswar village of Athagarh block would be observed with much pomp and gaiety this year.

A preparatory meeting was held recently in the temple premises, presided over by Cuttack DM Arvind Agarwal in presence of all line department staffers, members of servitor society of the temple and mediapersons. The meeting declared that this year Panchuka would be observed from November 19 to 23 and Bada Osa of the Lord would be performed on November 21 at the shrine.

In the dawn of November 22, the famous Gaja Bhoga and Tarana (liquid cake made of rice powder, sugar and required spices) Prasad of the Lord will be distributed among the devotees.

The Lord will be decorated in Badasinghara Beshha on the day of Bada Osa and will be given darshan to the devotees. As lakhs of devotees throng the shrine during Panchuka, the administration has taken certain precautionary measures to make the fair hurdle free.

Last year over five lakh devotees had thronged the shrine during Panchuka and this year the administration expects more than the number of the last year. As the temple is situated in an island in river Mahanadi, the devotees can reach the shrine either in waterways from Bidanasi side of Cuttack or through country's longest suspension bridge con-



The meeting declared that this year Panchuka would be observed from November 19 to 23 and Bada Osa of the Lord would be performed on November 21 at the shrine

necting from Mancheswar village to the shrine. But this year the administration has decided to stop boat service from the Bidanasi side. So the service will be available from the Mancheswar only.

The administration has decided Rs 20 as freight charge of boats to and fro for every passerby through waterway to reach the shrine and Rs 2 for passing the suspension bridge. Small country boats would not be allowed at any cost in the ferry ghats. Life jackets to passersby through boats will be mandatory. Fire brigade staff and ODRAF teams would be deployed at the ferry ghat to

assist the boatmen in their work to avoid any untoward incidents. At least 56 sections of police force will be deployed for smooth conduct of the fair, said SP (Rural) Madhab Chandra Sahoo.

The Dhableswar Seva Sanstha will organise Bhajana programmes in every evening of Panchuka in the shrine. Temporary first aid centres and information centres will be opened. Besides, uninterrupted power supply with generator facility, safe drinking water, sanitation of the shrine would be ensured.

Approach roads to the shrine would be repaired by the Works department ahead of the fair. Several NGOs and NSS and Red Cross volunteers have given consent to assist in the law and order of the fair.

DM Agarwal inaugurated a website on the Lord, www.dhableswar.org, from which all information can be gleamed.

NOV 19 WORLD TOILET DAY

98% sewerage not treated in Odisha

31% urban population in State defecate in open



MAYARANI PRAHARAJ

Toilets save lives, because human waste spreads killer diseases. The World Toilet Day is about inspiring action to tackle the global sanitation crisis. Today, 4.5 billion people live without safely managed sanitation and 892 million people still practice open defecation. The impact of exposure to human faeces on this scale has a devastating impact upon public health, living conditions, nutrition, education and economic productivity across the world. Sustainable Development

Goals 6 (SDG) aims to ensure that everyone has a safe toilet and that no one practices open defecation by 2030. Failure to achieve the goal risks the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

According to report by Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board, out of the 60 lakh people staying in 23 urban local bodies, 31 per cent approximately are defecating in open and among people using toilets, only 49 per cent households have septic tanks. Besides, only 2 per cent sewerage is treated in the State and 98 per cent either percolates to ground water or adjoining water bodies through surface drains without treatment.

The 2011 Census stated that an overwhelming 49.6 per cent of the State's households do not have any kind of bathing facility and about 1.7 lakh households (48.33 per cent) or 8.5 lakh people of the slum defecate in the open. The impacts of unsafe sanitation conditions and behaviour are immense that adversely affect the urban poor, women and children.

Odisha has an urban sanitation strategy that envisages the development of citywide sanitation plans and integration of all aspects of sanitation in an effective way with special emphasis on slums.

In 2011, the Government of Odisha notified an Urban Sanitation



Strategy, with the goal of transforming urban Odisha into community-driven, totally sanitised, safe, healthy, and livable cities and towns, and outcomes in line with the National Urban Sanitation Policy (NUSP), 2008.

The practice of constructing septic tanks and connecting it to open drains is rampant. With the growing number of toilets now being constructed and a lack of available urban land, sludge disposal is a major issue of concern. In Bhubaneswar in many areas sewerage water either seeps into ground or flows into storm water drains to be discharged into rivers and drains. In most of the unauthorised slums, people practice open defecation. This is due to inadequate provisions for sanitation. Very few people

depend on community toilets.

The Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board (OWSSB), which is entrusted with executing sewerage treatment plants (STPs) across the State, came up with an ambitious project - Integrated Sewerage System for Bhubaneswar City (ISSBC). The sewerage system of Bhubaneswar envisages laying of 412 km underground gravity sewer for collection of sewage of each household and establishment throughout the city in uncovered area, replacement and renovation of all existing old sewers, construction of main, intermediate and lift pumping stations, construction of sewerage treatment plants and construction of low cost sanitation units in the city area. The new sewerage system has been planned by dividing the city into six sewer-



age districts. The project will provide good and effective sewerage services to the urban population.

The project will ensure proper treatment of generated sewage in the city area and the overall sanitation condition of the city will be improved.

2018 Theme: When Nature Calls campaign is based on the following narrative: When nature calls, we need a toilet. But, billions of people don't have one. This means human faeces, on a massive scale, are not being captured or treated - contaminating the water and soil that sustain human life. We are turning our environment into an open sewer. We must build toilets and sanitation systems that work in harmony with ecosystems.

Weak sanitation has significant

health costs and untreated sewage from cities is the single biggest source of water resource pollution in India. This indicates both the scale of the challenge ahead of the Indian cities and the huge costs incurred from not addressing them. As per census 2011, 53.1 per cent of India's population had no access to toilet and 69.3 per cent of rural households and 18.4 per cent of urban households do not have access to latrine. India's sanitation crisis is an urgent priority as 53 per cent of Indian households had no toilet in 2011.

On October 2, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Clean India Mission (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan) to achieve an Open Defecation Free (ODF) India by 2019 and aims to build about 100 million toilets across India. The objectives of the mission are to promote a clean India through several initiatives that have been divided into urban and rural work-streams.

The rural component called Swachh Bharat (Gramin), strives to achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) status through emphasis upon behavior change and flexible delivery mechanisms that take into account local cultures, practices, sensibilities and demands. It also seeks to address solid and liquid waste management. Swachh Bharat (Gramin) is administered by the

Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

The urban component called Swachh Bharat (Urban) is focused on building individual toilets, community toilets and solid waste management. Swachh Bharat (Urban) is administered through the Ministry of Urban Development. This programme aims at (i) elimination of open defecation; (ii) eradication of manual scavenging; (iii) modern and scientific municipal solid waste management; (iv) to affect behavioral change regarding healthy sanitation practices; (v) generate awareness about sanitation and its linkage with public health etc.

Discharge from insanitary latrines, sewage flowing in drains, effluent from septic tanks and rampant open defecation are polluting the environment and having adverse health impacts to all of us. Looking at the smart approach in city planning it is imperative for all urban settlements to provide nature friendly sanitation for all. Safe collection, transport and treatment of sewage are necessary. There is a need to check the open discharge of raw sewage into drains and river to protect rural and urban ecosystem.

(Dr Praharaj teaches at Department of Architecture, College of Engineering and Technology, Bhubaneswar)

Toll rises to 76 in California fire

Chico (California): Northern California crews battling the country's deadliest wildfire in a century were bracing for strong winds, with gusts up to 50 miles per hour, creating the potential to erode gains they have made in containing a disaster that has killed at least 76 and levelled a town.

Even as hundreds of searchers sift through the rubble in the town of Paradise looking for the dead, nearly 1,300 people remain unaccounted for more than a week after the fire sparked in Butte County, Sheriff Kory Honea announced Saturday night.

Authorities stressed that the long roster does not mean they believe all those people are missing.

Honea pleaded with fire evacuees Saturday to review the list of those reported as unreachable by family and friends and call if they are safe. Deputies have located hundreds of people to date, but the overall number keeps growing because they are adding more names, including those from the disaster's chaotic early hours, Honea said.

"It's really very important for you to take a look at the list and call us if you're on the list," he said. The remains of five more people were found Saturday, including four in the decimated town of Paradise and one in nearby Concow, bringing the number of dead to 76. Honea said among the dead was Lolene



Rios, 56, whose son Jed tearfully told KXTV in Sacramento that his mother "had endless amount of love for me".

President Donald Trump toured the area Saturday, joined by California's outgoing and incoming Governors, both Democrats who have traded sharp barbs with the Republican administration.

He also visited Southern California, where firefighters were making progress on a wildfire that tore through communities west of Los Angeles from Thousand Oaks to Malibu, killing three people.

The president pledged the full support of the federal Government. Gov. Jerry Brown and Governor-elect Gavin Newsom thanked him for coming out. "We've never seen anything like this in California, we've never seen anything like this yet. It's like total devastation," Trump said as he stood amid the ruins of Paradise.

Rain was forecast for mid-week, which could help firefighters but also complicate the search for remains.

Northern California's Camp Fire has destroyed nearly 10,000 homes and torched 233 square

miles (603 square kilometres). It is 55 per cent contained.

The fire zone in Northern California is to some extent Trump country, and that enthusiasm was on display as dozens of people cheered and waved flags as his motorcade went by.

Kevin Cory, a wildfire evacuee who lost his home in Paradise, praised Trump for coming to a State that is often at odds with the White House. "I think that California's been really horrible to him and the fights. I mean they're suing him," he said. "It's back and

forth between the State and the feds. It's not right."

But for the most part, survivors, some who had barely escaped and no longer had homes, were too busy packing up what little they had left or seeking help to pay much attention to the president's visit.

Michelle Mack Couch, 49, waited in line to get into a Federal Emergency Management Agency center in the city of Chico. She needed a walker for her elderly mother and tags for her car.

"Let's hope he gets us some help," said Couch, who voted for Trump and whose rental home burned down last week. But as far as taking time out to watch the president, she said wryly, "We don't have a TV anymore."

Honea expressed hope that Trump's visit would help with recovery, saying the tour by the Republican president and California's Democratic leaders "signals a spirit of cooperation here that ultimately benefit this community and get us on a path toward recovery".

In Southern California, Trump also met briefly at an airport hangar with families and first responders touched by the shooting at the Borderline Bar & Grill in Thousand Oaks more than a week ago. Trump called the shooting at a country music bar, which left 12 dead, "a horrible, horrible event." AP

Lankan Prez holds all-party meet to end political crisis, no breakthrough

COLOMBO: An all-party meeting called by Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena failed to make any breakthrough on Sunday to end the raging political crisis set off by his controversial decision to remove Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe last month. The crisis erupted when President Sirisena suddenly announced on October 26 that he had sacked Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and installed ex-strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa in his place.

Sirisena later dissolved Parliament, almost 20 months before its term was to end, and ordered snap election. The Supreme Court on Tuesday overturned President Sirisena's decision to dissolve Parliament and halted the preparations for snap polls on January 5. The crisis talks came after Sri Lanka's parliament witnessed unprecedented violence as lawmakers threw furniture and chilli powder at each other. The lawmakers on Friday approved a second vote of no confidence against Rajapaksa but Sirisena refused to accept it, saying his advice was not followed.

Sirisena on Sunday called an all-party meeting which ended without making breakthrough, Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP)

maintained that his sacking by Sirisena was unconstitutional and illegal and he was still the Prime Minister. "We placed our cards on the table. We told Rajapaksa that if the Speaker's rulings are wrong, they can move a motion to challenge it and get it passed. Response from President Sirisena was nil," Lakshman Kiriella, a senior UNP leader, said after talks which lasted for over 2 hours.

"We told President we have the majority. We are in a position to present the affidavits we signed," Ajith P Perera, another UNP leader said. The JVP or the People's Liberation Front stayed away from Sunday's meeting. The party, in a letter to Sirisena, said that he was the creator of the crisis so he should end it. The party said it had no reason to attend the meeting.

Speaker Karu Jayasuriya, who on Wednesday announced there is no Prime Minister or Government following a no-confidence motion against disputed Prime Minister Rajapaksa, also boycotted the meeting. Sirisena and Jayasuriya are at loggerheads ever since Jayasuriya decided to summon parliament on November 14 despite Sirisena's dissolution of the Assembly to hold fresh elections. The chaos on Friday in Parliament forced the Speaker Jayasuriya to summon police inside the House. Jayasuriya, using a microphone, conducted the proceedings while standing on the floor of Parliament, which for the second time passed a no-confidence motion against Rajapaksa and his Government by a voice vote. Jayasuriya first offered to take the vote by name, but was unable to do so because of the commotion and opted for a voice vote. He then adjourned the house until Monday.

After the second vote against Rajapaksa, Wickremesinghe demanded that his Government be restored, but there has been no response from Sirisena yet. Wickremesinghe's party meanwhile asked Facebook to safeguard the identity of its supporters on the social media platform, fearing information sharing with what it calls the country's "illegal" Government can lead to a crackdown against the users. PTI

APEC leaders divided after US, China spat

Port Moresby: Leaders from 21 Asia-Pacific nations failed on Sunday to bridge gaping divisions at a summit overshadowed by a war of words over the US and China as they vie for influence in the region.

For the first time in the history of the APEC grouping, leaders were unable to agree on a formal written declaration amid sharp differences over trade policy. The leaders agreed that instead of a traditional leaders' declaration, they would leave it to the hands of PNG as the chair to issue a chair statement on behalf of all the members," said Zhang Xiaolong, a spokesman from the Chinese foreign ministry.

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau admitted there were "different visions on particular elements with regard to trade that prevented full consensus on a communique document."

The annual gathering, held for the first time in Papua New Guinea, was overshadowed by speeches from Chinese President Xi Jinping and US Vice-President Mike Pence, which appeared to represent competing bids for regional leadership.

Pence warned smaller countries not to be seduced by China's massive Belt-and-Road infrastructure programme, which sees Beijing offer money to poorer countries for construction and development projects. The "opaque" loans come with strings attached and build up "staggering debt", Pence charged, mocking the initiative as a "constricting belt" and a "one-way road".

He urged nations instead to stick with the United States, which doesn't "drown our partners in a sea of debt" or "coerce, corrupt or compromise your

independence."

In a speech to business leaders just minutes before Pence, Xi insisted the initiative was not a "trap" and there was no "hidden agenda" amid criticism that it amounts to "chequebook diplomacy" in the region. Xi also lashed out at "America First" trade protectionism, saying it was a "short-sighted approach" that was "doomed to failure".

The feisty barbs on a gleaming white cruise ship moored in Port Moresby set the scene for a potentially fiery meeting between Xi and US President Donald Trump at the G20 summit in Argentina at the end of this month.

But Xi and Pence, who both wore shiny, red shirts provided by the Pacific island did hold talks on Saturday night at the leaders' gala dinner.

Pence told reporters on Sunday: "I spoke to President Xi twice during the course of this conference. We had a candid conversation." He told him that the US is interested in a better relationship with China "but there has to be change" in Beijing's trade policies.

With fears that a trade war between the two rivals could cripple the Pacific Rim economy, some attendees voiced concern about the growing rivalry for influence in the region.

"Business leaders do not want to speak out, but behind the scenes here, they are talking over dinner saying 'how has this happened?'" said Denis O'Brien, the billionaire chairman of Digicel. "It's a very forced situation, one country is trying to force all the other countries to change tariffs agreed over years," O'Brien told AFP. Trump and Russian President Vladimir

Putin - both decided to skip the gathering, leaving the spotlight on Xi who arrived two days early to open a Chinese-funded school and road in Papua New Guinea's dirt-poor capital Port Moresby.

Xi has been the star of the show, front and centre at official photos whereas Pence has kept a lower profile, only deciding at the last minute to stay overnight in Port Moresby -- shelving original plans to fly in and out from Cairns in Australia.

As if to counter Chinese largesse, the US, Australia, New Zealand and Japan on Sunday announced a project to boost electricity capacity in Papua New Guinea.

The project aims to raise the percentage of the PNG population with access to electricity from 13 per cent to 70 per cent.

And as the US and China vie for influence in the region, the statement dangled the prospect of similar projects for countries that "support principles and values which help maintain and promote a free, open, prosperous and rules-based region."

With the official business of the summit relatively low-key, much of the focus has been on the unlikely venue of Port Moresby, which is hosting its first international event of this scale.

The city is on lockdown with hundreds of police and military patrolling the streets of the notoriously crime-ridden capital. Warships are stationed just off the coast to provide security for the leaders, and delegates and media have been housed in enormous cruise ships due to a dearth of hotel rooms. AFP

Khaleda Zia challenges 7-year sentence in graft case

DHAKA: Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Sunday challenged the seven-year sentence handed out to her in a corruption case for embezzling millions from a charitable trust in her late husband's name, claiming that she has been convicted "illegally and unjustly".

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chief challenged the trial court's decision four days after receiving the full text of the verdict announced on October 29.

The 638-page decision and the 700-page appeal petition also include a petition for bail, said her lawyer Kayser Kamal after submitting the petition to the High Court on Sunday, the bdnews reported.

"The BNP chairperson has been convicted illegally and unjustly," he was quoted as saying by the daily.

"We have appealed for her sentence to be dismissed and for her release. A High Court bench will be formed to decide on the appeal."

The trial court in its verdict in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case found the former prime minister guilty under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1947 and sentenced her to seven years in prison and fined her Tk 1 million. Zia, 73, has been in custody since February 8, when she was sentenced to five years in prison in another case related to embezzlement of funds of an orphanage named after her husband late president Ziaur Rahman.

The latest sentence, which comes ahead of general elections in December, is related to the Zia Charitable Trust.

According to the case, Zia and three others abused their



power and collected USD

The trial court in its verdict in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case found the former prime minister guilty under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1947 and sentenced her to seven years in prison and fined her Tk 1 million

375,000 for the trust from unknown sources.

The Zia Charitable Trust graft case was filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission in 2011.

The judge granted the three other suspects in the case the same sentence for abetting corrupt activity under the Penal Code.

The court order also allowed the government to seize the 70 decimals of land bought in the name of the Zia Charitable Trust. PTI

61-yr-old Indian shot dead by teenager in America

New York: A 61-year old Indian-origin man in New Jersey was shot dead by a 16-year old boy, who is facing charges in connection to the murder, prosecutors said.

Sunil Edla was shot to death Thursday evening outside his apartment in Ventnor city, Atlantic County Prosecutor Damon Tyner said in a statement.

Ventnor City Police Department was informed on the night of November 15 about the shooting. Police located Edla on the sidewalk, with gunshot wounds. Edla had succumbed to his injuries by the time the police arrived. Edla's vehicle, a 2002 Subaru Forester, was missing from the scene. The vehicle was subsequently found by Atlantic City Police Officers in a different area. After the vehicle was located by the officers, the suspect was subsequently tracked with the assistance of the Atlantic City surveillance center.

Further investigation by the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, Ventnor City Police Department and the Atlantic City Police Department led to the identification and arrest of the sus-

pect, a juvenile male, on the morning of November 16.

Preliminary autopsy showed the cause of death to be multiple gunshot wounds and the manner of death homicide. The suspect was charged via Juvenile Complaint with murder, robbery, carjacking, unlawful possession of a handgun. He is being held at the Harborfields Juvenile Detention Center in Egg Harbor City. "I'm just speechless right now. They could have just taken the car and let him go," Edla's son Morrison Edla said in a report in NBCPhiladelphia.Com.

A report in the Press of Atlantic City said Edla, a father of two and grandfather, was a 30-year resident of Atlantic County and worked in Atlantic City's hospitality industry. He was planning to travel to India to visit family. "He (Edla) was humble. He never argued. I helped him when he came to US in 1987. I was very close to him," his cousin Raj Casula said.

"Everyone was calling him and talking to him because he was leaving for India so soon," said Casula. Edla had planned a two-month trip to India to

visit his mother for her 95th birthday and celebrate Christmas with family.

Family friend Dave Nethagani said Edla was a kind man and active in the community. Edla was best known for playing piano during church services at Chelsea Community Presbyterian Church in Atlantic City.

A neighbour said the killer ambushed Edla and shot him dead right after the grandfather had brought a child into his house. Surveillance video showed the teen riding up to Edla's home. The boy dropped his bike and hid as he waited for Edla to exit the house. Just before 8 p.m. Thursday, family members said, Edla was leaving his home to work the overnight shift at the North Carolina Avenue

Rodeway Inn in Atlantic City. According to family, he started his car then went back in the house briefly. After walking back down the second-floor apartment stairs, he was shot on the sidewalk and left for dead. Ventnor police Chief Doug Biagi said an officer has been posted in the neighborhood "just to ease anybody's fears." PTI

Pak PM meets Abu Dhabi crown prince

Dubai: Imran Khan held talks with the crown prince of Abu Dhabi on Sunday and discussed matters of bilateral, regional and mutual interest, amid reports that the UAE is ready to extend financial assistance to Pakistan to minimise the cash-strapped country's dependence on an IMF bailout package. PTI

Taliban hold talks with US envoy in Qatar

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

with the Taliban.

A third individual with knowledge of the discussions said the Taliban pressed for a postponement of next year's presidential elections and the establishment of an interim government under a neutral leadership.

Abdul Sattar Sirat, an ethnic Tajik and Islamic scholar, was suggested as a candidate to lead an interim administration.

The individual, who also spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the talks, said Khalilzad wants to reach a settlement within six months, a timescale the Taliban said was too short.

Khalilzad also proposed a cease-fire, which the Taliban rejected, the individual said, adding that there was no agreement on the release of prisoners, opening the Taliban office or lifting a Taliban travel ban.

Khairkhwah and Fazl were among five senior Taliban members released from the US prison at Guantanamo Bay in 2014 in exchange for US Sgt Bowe Bergdahl, who was captured by the Taliban after walking off his base in Afghanistan in 2009.

Have been briefed on Khashoggi tapes but advised not to listen it: Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump said on Sunday he has been fully briefed on an audio recording related to the brutal killing of the dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, but was advised against listening to those "suffering" tapes.

Khashoggi, 59, who wrote for The Washington Post, was killed last month inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul where he had gone to collect papers related to his marriage.

Turkish investigators say they have audio recording of his killings, which it has shared with key partners including the US.

In an interview with Chris Wallace of Fox News, which was aired on Sunday, Trump for the first time acknowl-

edged that he has been briefed on the audio recording of the Khashoggi's murder.

Trump said he hasn't listened to it, as he was advised not to hear the "suffering tape", according to the news channel.

A day earlier, Trump spoke with the CIA chief on the agency's assessment of the killing of Khashoggi.

He expects a full report on it by Tuesday.

In the interview, Trump defended his policy on Saudi Arabia, saying "We have put on very heavy sanctions, massive sanctions on a large group of people from Saudi Arabia. But at the same time, we do have an ally and I want to stick with an ally that in many ways has been very good."

He also said it "takes two to tango" to resolve the conflict in Yemen, where Iranian-backed

insurgents are facing off against Saudi-backed forces, noting that "I want Saudi to stop, but I want Iran to stop also".

A day earlier he told reporters in California that it (Khashoggi's murder) was a horrible thing that took place.

"It's a horrible thing that took place, the killing of a journalist...It should never have happened," Trump told reporters travelling with him to California.

Asked about the reports that the CIA had assessed involvement by the Saudi Crown Prince, the President said, "they haven't assessed anything yet. It's too early. That was a very a premature report."

"We'll be having a very full report over the next two days, probably Monday or Tuesday," the US President said.

May warns rebels removing her as leader won't make Brexit easier

PTI ■ LONDON

Defiant British Prime Minister Theresa May on Sunday warned her Conservative Party rebel MPs that overthrowing her as leader would only make negotiation process with the European Union tough over the future of Britain's relationship with the bloc after Brexit.

Britain is facing a political crisis after this week's announcement about the Withdrawal Agreement struck with the 28-member European Union. Two Cabinet ministers and several junior government members have quit the May Cabinet and some of her party MPs have submitted letters of no-confidence.

May could face a no-confidence vote if at least 15 per cent of her party lawmakers -

meaning 48 MPs - submit letters saying she has lost their support.

According to reports, the party's influential 1922 Committee is edging closer to the 48-MP mark that is needed to trigger a leadership contest.

But May vowed to fight on for what she believes is the best deal possible.

"Politics is a tough business and I've been in it for a long time," she said during an television interview on Sunday, adding that the next seven days "are going to be critical" for the future of the UK and that she will be travelling to Brussels to meet with EU leaders before an emergency European Council summit on November 25.

Asked whether Sir Graham Brady, Chair of the backbench

1922 Committee, had hit the 48-letter mark from her party MPs needed to trigger a no-confidence vote in her leadership, she replied: "As far as I know, no - it has not."

"It is not going to make the negotiations any easier and it won't change the parliamentary arithmetic," she said.

The 585-page withdrawal agreement deal between London and the EU, which was published alongside a shorter document setting out what the UK and EU's future relationship could look like, triggered resignations from the Cabinet including that of her Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab.

Writing in 'The Sunday Times', the former minister launched an attack on the British PM's handling of the negotiations and called on her to stand up to bullies in the EU.

Whose wings clipped?

The CBI may be a caged parrot but the step taken by Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal is certainly dramatic



The question is why did Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu suddenly revoke the 'General Consent' that all Indian States offer the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)? And this, a few weeks after the Telugu Desam supremo ordered the Andhra Pradesh Police not to give protection to either Enforcement Directorate or Income Tax Department officials during raids. While Naidu's move also resulted in West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee following suit and that State, too, withdrawing its General Consent to the CBI under the Delhi Special Police

Establishment Act, one wonders what purpose this will serve. Even at the height of the vilification campaign by the Centre against certain State leaders in the past, such a move has never been initiated. There is certainly a risk for the political capital accumulated by both leaders in taking this step because while the public at large might be simpatico to the view that the CBI is an extension of the Central Government, the fact that no State Government has taken such a step in the past will be used by the BJP to imply that regional leaders have something to hide. On the other hand, reports of the ruling dispensation in Delhi allegedly using the CBI to try and 'fix' regional leaders also must be factored in.

Additionally, in the case of Andhra Pradesh, was this decision taken after several raids recently exposed the financial underbelly of the political world in that State? Considering the ruling TDP is under pressure from both the YSR Congress and the BJP, Naidu tried to gain first-mover advantage by switching sides from Narendra Modi to Rahul Gandhi virtually overnight. Essentially, this was because the Central Government did not extend the financial support it had reportedly promised for Naidu's new dream capital, Amravati. While there is no doubt that the Modi Government has spent money foolishly on some vanity projects, Naidu's pish plans for Amravati were never going to be funded in the main by the Union of India even if he was part of the NDA. Naidu twiggled and left. Mamata Banerjee, meanwhile, while looking as strong as ever on the ground and confident of increasing its Lok Sabha seats tally even further in 2019, is facing an aggressive BJP looking to win a few more seats in the forthcoming General Election. With the Congress and Communists virtually disappearing from the political landscape of West Bengal, this two-way battle was always going to be one of raids and arrests which the Trinamool leader seems to have moved to prevent. Who said politics in India was fair?

With the CBI itself in disarray on the BJP's watch and the two top officers of the agency fighting each other publicly, Naidu and Banerjee have gambled that by the time the CBI can regain its wits and mount a legal challenge to the decision it will become a fait accompli. However, it must be kept in mind that individuals always have legal remedies available to them if they feel they are being wrongfully prosecuted by the CBI. Yet, if the decision by two of the strongest State leaders in India today is such as they have taken, it implies a complete breakdown of trust in the Centre. The Supreme Court, which is dipping its hands into all manner of issues, is likely to come into play sooner rather than later. In the interim, it would help immensely if the CBI itself managed to get its act together and the Centre dispelled the suspicions of the States by reaching out and assuring them that the probe agency's neutrality would be maintained. As it is, all other police forces in India are highly politicised; if the CBI too heads that way as it certainly seems to be, other Opposition-ruled States may soon follow Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. At the end of the day, though, if India has any pretence of being a robust, rule of law state, it needs police reforms desperately, starting with the CBI.

Justice at last

The two senior-most surviving leaders of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia get their just desserts



The term Year Zero, applied to the takeover of Cambodia in April 1975 by the Khmer Rouge as the followers of the Communist Party of Kampuchea were known, is an analogy to Year One of the French Revolutionary Calendar. During the French Revolution, after the abolition of the monarchy, the National Convention instituted a new calendar and declared the beginning of the Year 1. The Khmer Rouge takeover of Phnom Penh was rapidly followed by a series of loony 'revolutionary de-industrialisation' policies resulting in a

death toll in the millions. On Friday, in 'Year 43', going by their demented, psychotic calendar, the two most senior surviving leaders of Cambodia's brutal Khmer Rouge regime were found guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in a historic ruling by an international tribunal officially called the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC).

Nuon Chea, former Brother Number 2 (to Pol Pot's Brother Number 1) and Khieu Samphan, the former head of state, have been sentenced to life in prison. They become the first Khmer Rouge leaders to be held to account by an international court for a campaign of genocide against the Vietnamese and Cham minorities in Cambodia in the 1970s. The Khmer Rouge takeover was achieved by promising an agrarian utopia which was sought to be brought to fruition by forcibly emptying the cities to establish vast rural communes; this so-called radicalism which had its admirers in India too resulted in what has been termed as "auto-genocide." Starvation, overwork and execution all contributed to this crime against humanity. The ECCC convictions covered the atrocities at Khmer Rouge established work camps where murder, deportation, enslavement, torture persecution on political, religious and racial grounds, enforced disappearances, forced marriages and rapes were common.

There has been some commentary that in practical terms a life sentence for Nuon Chea, 92, and Khieu Samphan, 87, and both in very poor health, doesn't mean much. But the symbolism of the verdicts cannot be underestimated. For crimes of the nature and magnitude perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge need to be called out if humanity itself is to be protected. The sense of closure the verdicts have brought to the Cambodian people, especially those from the Cham minority, many of whom were in the makeshift court inside the prison complex where the two were being held, is real. Equally, the message being sent out is loud and clear — whatever the ideological motivations, evil is evil. There are lessons to be learnt for all those who believe power still flows from the barrel of a gun.

Shadow of terror looms large

Every Sikh can decide for himself or herself whether s/he wants to follow in the footsteps of great Gurus and be inspired by their message and life or walk on the path laid by the British



BALBIR PUNJ

The news from Punjab is ominous. Media reports quoting intelligence sources and a string of terror related incidents that have hit the State in the recent past indicate the possibility of a revival of Pakistan sponsored violence in the border state. Delhi police is also on alert after inputs stated that a group of six-seven Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists are reportedly in Punjab, possibly in Ferozpur area and are planning to move towards Delhi.

Meanwhile, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) says a common link has been found to all the recent six killings of Hindu leaders in Punjab. The anti-terror probe agency has revealed that these killings were part of a larger conspiracy hatched by Pakistan's intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), to foment communal trouble and in turn revive Khalistani movement in the State.

Interrogation of the Jalandhar blast accused has established that a nexus of Kashmiri and Khalistani militant organisations is trying to revive militancy in Punjab on the directions of Pakistan's ISI. Intelligence agencies fear that Khalistan militants are getting consignments of illegal weapons, including AK 56, magazines, pistols and RDX from Pakistan as the same cannot be sourced from Jammu.

Whatever is happening today in the border state, is a mere repeat of all that shook the country in 1980s, resulting in unfortunate 'Operation Blue Star' by the Indian Army at the sacred Golden Temple in Amritsar, subsequent dastardly assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the hands of her Sikh body guards, followed by the horrible killings of innocent Sikhs in Delhi and several other parts of the country.

The hands of the ISI were obvious in creating this bloody mess, which posed a serious threat to the unity and integrity of the country. But how did a section of Sikh community (known for its valour and patriotism) get so alienated from the Indian mainstream that it became a willing partner in ISI's plans to dismember India? This unfortunate chain of events has its origins in British stratagem of "divide and rule", employed by them to perpetuate their control over India in the wake of the first war of Independence by Indians in 1857. The wily colonial masters underlined six fault lines in Indian society, did the necessary academic exercise to back their divisive plans and worked simultaneously on all of them.

The easiest to work on was the Hindu-Muslim fault line. The two communities have mostly been at war against each other for over 600 years. Their alliance during 1857 uprising was nascent and limited. The British wisely picked up Syed Ahmad Khan (please see my column of October 23, 2017



and October 22, 2018 in this paper) to carry forward their divisive agenda among the Muslim of the sub-continent.

The British obviously found it impossible to get someone in the patriotic community of Sikhs to play the treacherous role that Sir Syed was happily doing among the Muslims. So, they found someone from within their ranks. He was one Max Arthur Macauliffe, born on September 10, 1841, in Newcastle West, Ireland. He got into the coveted Imperial Civil Service (ICS) in 1862 and was quickly posted to Punjab in 1864.

Macauliffe soon converted to Sikhism and with the help of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, undertook the task of translating Sikh scriptures, including the holy *Guru Granth Sahib*. In 1897, Bhai wrote a pamphlet "Hum Hindu Nahi", the very basis of the present day Khalistan movement, which has since largely been hijacked by the ISI and Islamic zealots.

A white man converting to Sikh faith, was a major development in Punjab. His high profile in the British colonial set up naturally gave Macauliffe, now a 'devoted' Sikh, an esteemed position in the Sikh community. He undoubtedly pioneered the exercise of creating a divide between Hindus and Sikhs.

In an introduction to Macauliffe's celebrated work, "The Sikhs, Their Religion, Gurus, Sacred, Writings and Authors", noted historian and author, Sardar Khushwant Singh wrote: "It has been suggested that the British Government of the day had sinister motives in commissioning Macauliffe to under-



THE NEO-SIKHS DOMINATE THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND POLITICAL LIFE OF PUNJAB. NO WONDER PAKISTAN MAKES USE OF THIS GAP IN OUR POLITY. THIS UNFORTUNATE CHAIN OF EVENTS HAS ITS ORIGINS IN BRITISH STRATAGEM OF DIVIDE AND RULE



take this work. That Sikhs were fast relapsing back into the Hindu fold was recorded by Lord Dalhousie soon after he annexed the Sikh Kingdom. He and other British administrators felt that it would serve their interests better if the Khalsa Sikhs were encouraged to retain their distinct and separate identity."

The technique adopted by both, Sir Syed and Macauliffe, to achieve their dubious objective had lot in common. Both invoked 'divine' injunctions to alienate the targeted community from the main stream and convert it into an ally of the British masters. Here is a sample from Macauliffe's work (*The Sikhs, Vol 1*).

"One day, as Guru Teg Bahadur was in the top story of his prison, the Emperor Aurangzeb thought he saw him looking towards the south in the direction of the Imperial zenana. He was sent for the next day, and charged with this grave breach of Oriental etiquette and propriety." The Guru replied, "Emperor Aurangzeb, I was on the top story of my prison. But I was not looking at thy private apartments or at thy queens. I was looking in the director of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the seas to tear down thy pardas and destroy thine empire."

The follow-up of action on the divisive and motivated "academic" exercise by the colonial power was calibrated and swift. On May 1, 1905, the then manager of Golden Temple issued orders banning the practice of worshipping of Hindu deities on the banks of the holy tank by Brahmins. The statues of Hindu

Gods and Goddesses were thrown out. Those who spear-headed this divisive agenda termed themselves as "Tat Khalsa" or the "neo Sikhs". The trend of eviction of Hindu practices and symbols from the Golden Temple was subsequently followed in rest of Gurudwaras of Punjab.

The population of Sikhs, according to 1901 Census, was a little over a million. Prior to 1911 Census, the Census Commissioner of Punjab issued special instructions to the enumerators, to try to record Sikhs, separately from the Hindus. The result was that the number of Sikhs in the State moved up by 300 times, over three million, in just a decade.

In the British Indian Army, a separate Khalsa regiment was created wherein the soldier were required to observe all the five kakars, so as to underline the distinction between the Khalsa and other followers of Sikh Gurus.

In the following decades, (even after Independence) this divisive mindset and practices have continued unabated. The neo-Sikhs, completely different from the ones who follow the Gurus in letter and spirit, dominate the public discourse and political life of Punjab. No wonder Pakistan makes use of this gap in our polity.

Every Sikh can decide for himself/herself — whether s/he wants to follow in the footsteps of great Gurus and be inspired by their message and life, or, walk on the path laid by the British.

(The writer is a political commentator and a former BJP Rajya Sabha MP)

SOUNDBITE

We have two Chhattisgarhs — one of the rich and another of the masses, poor and the marginalised.



Congress president —Rahul Gandhi

History has shown that in confrontation, whether in the form of a cold war, a hot war or a trade war, will produce no winners.



Chinese President —Xi Jinping

I came from a long line of women who felt invisible for years. Courage is just fear said with prayers.



Actor —Viola Davis

The BJP is a puppet for the rich. They (rich) have a key, which they turn and make them (BJP) bend to their will.



Congress leader —Navjot Singh Sidhu

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Passenger's safety

Sir — A senior pilot of a Delhi-London Air India flight was found in an inebriated state before takeoff. He failed the pre-flight breath analysis test for alcohol for the second time. The passengers were stranded in the airport because of the delay.

The pilots, for all practical purposes, are not expected to consume spirits 12 hours before commandeering a passenger aircraft. After his present folly, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation was quick to bar him from entering the cockpit for three years. Alcohol limits are a lot stricter in India than some countries abroad.

Around 58 Air India pilots were apprehended for reporting drunk to duty in the last decade. Alcohol can cause giddiness, agitation, delirium, lack of coordination and clouding of consciousness — not a single symptom is safe for the pilot or the passengers.

An eagle's eye should be kept on the chronic alcoholics. Random checks should be in order.

Ganapathi Bhat Akola

Sabarimala row refuses to die down

Surprisingly, both BJP and Congress are on same page with regard to opposition on lifting the ban on entry of women in the age group of 10-50 to the Sabarimala temple. However, it is welcome that the sworn enemies have come together in espousing the cause of devotees rather than backing the Supreme Court judgment which has created ruckus. "We will implement the SC order. The Government is with the devotees. We don't have an agenda. There is no politics in this issue", says Kerala Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan.

The Chief Minister had mooted the idea of designating a separate date for women to enter the temple. This idea was quite in contrast to the popular feeling of devotees against the entry of women of menstrual age. This idea also contradicted his statement that he was with the devotees. The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) is expected to borrow more time to enforce the Supreme Court order. If the apex court makes a climb-



down on its September 28 judgment, it becomes an object of ridicule among the people that the apex court has succumbed to the pressure tactics of devotees. If it does not review its judgment to pave way for restoration of law and order with the BJP and Congress having locked horns with the Government, destruction of life and public property is imminent.

KV Seetharamaiah Hassan

Offensive remark

Sir — Congress leader Shashi Tharoor's latest remark crediting Jawaharlal Nehru for creating democratic institutions that enabled a 'chainawala' to become the Prime Minister of the country is not only laughable but absurd as well.

Narendra Modi is the consti-

tutionally elected Prime Minister of the country. The Constitution is the creation of the Constituent Assembly and institutions are creation of the Constitution, least of Nehru.

Tharoor should have gone through the history of his party. In 1946, in the process of nominations for the post of the president of Congress and thereby the first Prime Minister of India, 12

out of 15 Pradesh Congress Committees, the only legal bodies having power to nominate and elect president of the party as per the party constitution then, nominated Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The remaining three did not nominate Nehru or anyone else. Despite that, Gandhi managed Nehru's nomination by a few members of the Working Committee and Patel withdrew

his nomination in favour of Nehru. Thus, Nehru was elected as the Congress president by Gandhi's choice. Initially, as first Prime Minister of India, Nehru was neither the choice of the Congressmen nor elected by the people of the country.

MC Joshi Lucknow

World peace

Sir — November 17 was the International Day of Peace. When interest of one person or group clashes with that of the others, there is a possibility of violence. If a grave situation is not dealt in a calm manner and people immediately resort to violence, it may have serious repercussions and it may even wipe out the entire mankind. "An eye for an eye ends up making the whole world blind," said Mahatma Gandhi, who also said "the day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace."

TS Karthik Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Inclusive education for whole of India

No school has the right to deny high quality education to a child simply because s/he has a disability



UMA TULI

SUDHANSH MALHOTRA

As per the Census 2011, out of over 120 crore people, 2.2 per cent in India are disabled. In absolute terms, this implies that over 2.68 crore people live with one form of disability or another. It is significant to note that of these, 66 lakh are children in the age group 5-19 years. These numbers are most likely much higher — it is generally accepted that surveys all over the world grossly undercount the actual number of disabled people. The World Report on Disability jointly produced by the World Health Organisation and the World Bank in 2011 estimated that about 15 per cent of the global population live with disability. Whatever the actual number of the disabled, they constitute a significant resource that can and should contribute to the social, economic and political life of the nation. Children — with or without disabilities have the right to a quality education — no matter what special needs they may have. Education is the prime tool that equips a child to meet the challenges of life. Children with disabilities need this even more to supplement their different talents. Indeed, disability need not be an impediment to achievement.

Inclusive education is a model of education in which children with disabilities spend all or most of their time in school with children without special needs. Fully inclusive schools do not separate 'general education' and 'special education' programmes. Such schools are structured so that all students learn and grow together. Disability exacerbates existing vulnerabilities arising from social and economic inequities such as poverty and gender, lack of access to services, social stigma and so on. Universal access to inclusive education has the potential to shift society towards a more just and equitable future.

Inclusive education allows children with disabilities to develop friendships with peers and feel less isolated. Children who are placed in standard classroom environment generally have higher self-esteem than children who are isolated in special needs programmes. Policy-makers and civil society need to recognise that no school has the right to deny high quality education to children and families who want the best for their child simply because s/he has a disability. A common misconception that needs to be dispelled is that the presence of disabled children in classrooms impedes the learning of non-special needs children. In fact, children without disabilities in inclusive schools get an opportunity to receive their own education in a non-discriminatory environment and develop a more accepting and wholesome perspective.

Although much progress has been made in the education sector, India faces immense challenges in addressing educational needs of children with disabilities. In the age group five to 19 years, 28 per cent disabled girls have never attended an educational institution. The figure for boys at 26 per cent is only marginally better. Only 16 per cent of the disabled male population and nine per cent of the disabled female population has matric/secondary education. Not surprisingly, only nine per cent of males and three per cent of females with disability are graduates.

A mission approach is needed to make the provisions for inclusive education in the Right to Education Act 2009 and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 universally available in all educational institutions — public as well as private. Educational institutions in the private and NGO sector have made a beginning in introducing inclusive education. However, most of these schools are in urban settings. The need of the hour is to learn from these pioneering efforts to make inclusive education a reality in public sector institutions at scale. As the country strengthens the education sector further, the universalisation of inclusive education in the public and private sectors must become a foundational principle of the nation's education sector.

The Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust, New Delhi — a pioneer in the field of inclusive education in collaboration with the Asian Centre for Inclusive Education, Dhaka — is organising the 5th International Conference on Inclusive Education (ICIE) from November 28-30, 2018 in New Delhi. Over 300 participants from developing as well as developed countries are expected to attend the conference. Persons with disabilities, students, parents, educationists, academics, policy-maker, et al, will utilise the platform for sharing new initiatives. They will also exchange international trends and good practices, discuss policy-making strategies with different stakeholders and strengthen networking of national and international institutions that provide and promote inclusive education.

(Uma Tuli is founder & Managing Secretary, Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust. Sudhansh Malhotra is Former Regional Adviser — Child Health & Development, WHO, South East Asia)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE BJP AND THE CENTRE ARE USING CBI TO DESTABILISE THE GOVERNMENT. I DON'T GIVE CONSENT TO INVESTIGATE ANY CASE IN THE STATE.
 —ANDHRA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER
 N CHANDRABABU



THERE'S NO SOVEREIGNTY OF ANY STATE IN THE MATTER OF CORRUPTION. ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE A LOT TO HIDE TAKE THE STEP OF NOT LETTING THE CBI INTO THE STATE.
 —FINANCE MINISTER
 ARUN JAITLEY

Don't undermine national heroes

There is a trend in contemporary political debates to abuse Gandhi and Nehru by distorting historical facts to secure facile victories on public platforms and television debates



PRASHANT TEWARI

If any person chose to think of me, then I should like them to say: "This was the man with all his mind and heart, loved India and the Indian people. And they in turn, were indulgent to him and gave of their love most abundantly and extravagantly."
 —Jawaharlal Nehru

India is an ancient civilisation privileged to witness a rare cultural synthesis and fusion. To know India, one has to travel across the country to understand the unity in diversity. Yet in an era of hate and distrust, the national icons are targeted for an immediate political polarisation. It is a shame that figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Abdul Kalam Azad are disgraced in public debate without valid reasons. It is a fashion in contemporary political debates to abuse Gandhi and Nehru by distorting historical facts to secure facile victories on public platforms and television debates.

Likewise, the other side targets the right-wing leadership of Syama Prasad Mookherjee, Deendayal Upadhyaya, KB Hedgewar without realising that all of them have contributed their respective best to attain the freedom for our country. We are doing a great disservice to our great nation by disgracing our national heroes either way. The nation that doesn't worship its heroes leads to a path of utter disaster.

Jawaharlal Nehru was one among the few freedom fighters of India who sacrificed his life for the cause of the motherland. He was one of the fortunate leaders who brought the independence struggle to a successful termination. Among Gandhi's great lieutenants in the struggle for freedom, no doubt, Nehru had a prominent place. Jawaharlal Nehru, as one of the most distinguished leaders of Third World solidarity, reached out to the rest of the colonised world and forged a joint front against colonialism and reinvented imperialism.

Nehru was born on November 14, 1889 in an affluent family of Allahabad. His father Motilal Nehru followed his education with extreme passion. Young Nehru was sent to Harrow school, and then to Cambridge University in England to obtain a degree in natural sciences. After spending two years at the Inner Temple, London, he qualified as a barrister. During his stay in London, he studied subjects like literature, politics, economics and history. He got attracted to the ideas of liberalism, socialism and nationalism. He was, by temperament and experience, a cosmopolitan. His frequent visits to Europe, his deep familiarity with the past and his understanding of the contemporary ideologies of the day, from liberalism to Fabian socialism, to communist internationalism, had convinced him that the future of India was incomplete without the liberation of other colonies.

History fascinated Nehru. It gave him an insightful command over the past, a keen and immediate sense of the present and a rare foresight to think and plan for the future of all. Nehru was a historian of repute; he felt that many historical writings were uncritical descriptions of events and people. He was equally drawn to science and firmly believed that scientific

“ YOUNG JAWAHARLAL NEHRU HAD THE OPTION OF LEADING A COMFORTABLE LIFE BY INHERITING THE FLOURISHING LEGAL PRACTICE OF HIS FATHER BUT HE OPTED FOR THE JOURNEY OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE WHICH EVENTUALLY MARKED HIS ENTRY INTO INDIAN POLITICS ”



temper and scientific approach to problems would liberate India from economic misery and social injustice. Indeed amazing was his intellectual blend in science and history, idealism and realism, literature and politics, the revolution of Marx and the non-violence of Gandhi, all of which were integrated in his unique personality. As Norman Cousins observed Nehru "was not one man but a procession of men."

After completing his education in England, Nehru came back to India in 1912 and joined the Allahabad High Court Bar. Young Jawaharlal Nehru had the option of leading a comfortable life by inheriting the flourishing legal practice of his father but he opted for the journey of the freedom struggle, which eventually marked his entry into Indian politics. Indian National Congress already had a split due to the conflict between the moderates and the extremists. The Congress was yet to have a mass base. With the "divide and rule" policy of the British Government, the Muslim League was already formed. He met Gandhiji in the Lucknow session of the National Congress in December 1916 and was tremendously influenced by his towering personality.

Nehru was shocked with the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of April 1919; the event changed the life forever. When the non-cooperation movement was launched in December 1920, he participated in it and was arrested for his active role in the *satyagraha*. In 1923, he was appointed as the General Secretary of the Congress. As the official delegate of the Indian National Congress in 1927, he participated in the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels. Nehru utilised this opportunity to impress upon other countries about India's non-violent struggle against the imperial British Government and became

the global ambassador of peace. In 1928, the Congress rejected co-operation with the Simon Commission and Nehru participated in the *hartals* in protest of the Commission along with Subhas Chandra Bose and Srinivas Iyenger. Nehru put forward the demand that complete independence should be the goal of the Congress Party as opposed to the idea of Dominion status. He became the president of the Indian National Congress in Lahore and the historic independence resolution was passed on the midnight of December 31, 1929. He was re-elected as president of the National Congress in 1936, 1937 and 1946. Nehru participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement at Allahabad and was imprisoned till January 1931.

Nehru severely opposed the "Communal Award" of the British Government, which provided separate electorate to Sikhs, Muslims, Europeans and other oppressed classes. When Gandhiji started his fast till death against the communal award, it created a deep impression on Nehru. The Government of India Act 1935 was far away from the demands of the Congress. Nehru termed it as "a charter of slavery and oppression." Yet the Congress decided to participate in the election, which was announced as the provision of the Act. Under Nehru's leadership, the Congress secured absolute majority in six provinces and formed coalition Governments in two others out of the total 11 provinces and it established Nehru's leadership in the entire country.

With the failure of the Cripps Mission, Mahatma Gandhi urged for the right of self-determination to India. Gandhiji was determined to start *satyagraha*. The Quit India Resolution was moved by him and on August 8, 1942, at the Bombay session of the Congress, it was adopted. He

was arrested and imprisoned for three years. After the war when Nehru was released, he became a leading figure of the Congress in various negotiations with the British Government. Being invited by Lord Wavell to form the Government, he headed the first Indian (interim) Government of India. In the same year, elections to the Constituent Assembly was also held. Lord Mountbatten was deputed as the Viceroy of India and completed the transfer of power. Despite the opposition of Gandhi, Nehru and other Congress leaders, India was partitioned under the "two nation" theory of Jinnah.

On August 15, 1947, a free India was born. Nehru was elected as the first Prime Minister of independent India. He was the first Indian Prime Minister to hoist the National Flag and make his iconic speech "Tryst with Destiny" from the ramparts of the Lal Quila (Red Fort). The time had come to implement his ideas and build a healthy nation. Nehru's stint as Prime Minister of India is characterised by his secular and liberal approach. He carried out his vision to carry the young India towards the road of technological and scientific excellence with great zeal. He implemented a number of socio-economic reforms and paved the way for rapid industrialisation.

Nehru continued to be the Prime Minister of independent India till his death on May 27, 1964. He was the chief framer of domestic and international policies during his term as Prime Minister (1947-1964). It was under Nehru's supervision that India launched its first Five-Year Plan in 1951. He had laid the foundation of democracy, secularism, planning and socialism.

(To be continued in these columns on Tuesday. The writer is Editor-in-Chief, Opinion Express Group)

From denial to confession

As the plot thickens in the Khashoggi tapes affair, except for Trudeau, Western leaders keep dithering over the journalist's killing. The question, however, remains: What exactly can they do about Mohammed bin Salman's crime?



GWYNNE DYER

How odd! Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan sends an audio recording of the murder of journalist, Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul to the Governments of all Turkey's major NATO allies, and the only one that gets it is Canada. What happened to the copies that President Erdogan sent to the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Germany? Lost in the mail-room, no doubt, or maybe just lying unopened on somebody's desk. Or perhaps the Turks just didn't put enough stamps on the packages.

"We gave them the tapes," said Erdogan on November 10. "They've also listened to the conversation, they know it." But still not a word out of

Washington or London acknowledging that they have heard the recordings, and French Foreign Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian denied that France had received a copy. When asked if that meant Erdogan was lying, Le Drian replied: "It means that he has a political game to play in these circumstances." Like most Western politicians and diplomats, he is desperate to avoid calling out Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, as a murderer. The French has a highly profitable commercial relationship with the oil-rich kingdom, mostly selling it arms, and they don't want to acknowledge the evidence on the recording (which may directly implicate the Crown Prince) because it could jeopardise that trade.

Erdogan was furious when the French foreign minister issued his denial, and his communications director insisted that a representative of French intelligence had listened to the recording as long ago as 24 October. But it was all just "he said/she said" stuff until Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, blew the game wide



open on Monday. Yes, Trudeau said, Canadian intelligence has the recording, and he is well-aware of what is on it. In fact, Canadian intelligence agencies have been working very closely with Turkey on the murder investigation, and Canada is "in discussions with our like-minded allies as to the next steps with regard Saudi Arabia." Why did Trudeau come clean? One popular theory is the nothing-left-to-lose hypothesis. Last August, the tempestuous Crown Prince killed all future trade deals with Canada, pulled thousands of Saudi Arabian foreign

students out of Canadian universities, and generally showered curses on the country after Canadian officials called for the release of detained Saudi campaigners for civil rights and women's rights.

Canada's bridges to Saudi Arabia have already been burned, and according to this theory, Trudeau felt free to say the truth. But he's not really free: Canada still has a \$13 billion contract to build armoured vehicles for Saudi Arabia that the Saudis might cancel, and this is a real contract, not one of Trump's fantasy arms sales. Maybe

Trudeau is just braver than the others, but his purpose is clear. He waited more than three weeks after getting the recording for the "like-minded allies" to agree to a joint policy towards the murderous prince — nobody believes Khashoggi could have been killed without Mohammed bin Salman's consent — and then he spilled the beans. Of course, all the major NATO Governments have the recordings. They have had them for at least three weeks. They were just dithering over what to do about them, and Trudeau decided it was time to give them a push. Good for him, but what exactly can they do about Mohammed bin Salman's crime?

It almost certainly was Mohammed bin Salman, who ordered the killing. Since his elderly father, King Salman, gave him free rein to run the country less than three years ago, he has become a one-man regime. Nothing happens without his approval, least of the murder of a high-profile critic in a foreign country by a 15-strong Saudi hit squad, including several members of his personal

security team. No Western leader (except perhaps Donald Trump) will be seen in public with Mohammed bin Salman any more; foreign investment in Saudi Arabia this year is the lowest in several decades, and the price of oil is falling again. So, he has to go if it's still possible for anybody in Saudi Arabia to remove him from power. But that's the big question. The Saudi royal family is no longer a tight and united body that can just decide Mohammed bin Salman has to go and make it stick. It's a sprawling array of people, many of whom scarcely know each other, and without the agreement of King Salman, any smaller group within the family that organised a coup against the Crown Prince, would almost certainly fail.

So, he may go on for while despite the disaster of his military intervention in Yemen, his pointless, fruitless blockade of Qatar and even this ugly murder. He wouldn't be the only killer in power. But the bloom is definitely off this particular rose.

(The writer is an independent journalist)



FOREIGNEYE



TECH GIANT FAILS TO LOOK INTO DARK CORNERS

Facebook needs to own up to its many failings by establishing specific ethical practices to regain users' trust. The company needs to be honest and direct about how all personal data is used and sold. Security ought to be tighter. News feeds have to be valuable to users, not just advertisers. (Chicago Tribune editorial)

NRC DISPUTE

Mamata to carry fight to BJP's Assam camp

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Striking the iron while it is hot, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has decided to take the battle to the saffron camp in Assam. Agenda: Continued struggle against alleged "biased implementation" of National Register for Citizens in that State "pushing lakhs of Bengalis on the verge of denationalisation" and recent killings in Tinsukia district.

The Chief Minister has decided to launch a "sustained and intensified campaign" in that State leading the battle personally. Her Assam campaign is likely to commence in the month of January after the January 16 grand rally at Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata where the TMC chief has invited all the anti-BJP outfits.

TMC-led protests against the "discriminatory implementation of NRC" and killing of Bengali people in Assam, has already found support in that State.

According to sources the Chief Minister has formed a 16-member committee which will lead the campaign against attacks on the minorities, mainly the Bengalis in Assam and the allegedly discrimina-



tory NRC regime.

Seasoned Trinamool Congress Firhad Hakim has been asked to coordinate the movement in Assam. Hakim a Bengal Minister is likely to call upon the Muslim leaders too to join Banerjee's campaign. "Our campaign in Assam is not directed against any particular community but against the Government's initiative to drive out the minorities including the Bengalis, Biharis, UP wallas and Muslims. This cannot be tolerated and a sustained movement has to be built up in that State. The TMC will lead the movement there," Banerjee is known to have told her party delegates who had recently come from Assam.

Following the Chief Minister's directives TMC leadership in Assam has started taking measures to build up a movement in Barak Valley and

Brahmaputra Valley, sources said. "We will go to the people with the message that the TMC is by the side of all the tormented people in Assam."

The Assam unit of the party is planning to hold Mamata Banerjee's rallies at Goalpara, Dhubri, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup (rural), sources said adding the first such rally could be organized at Kharanpara in Guwahati.

TMC's Assam ambitions is further underscored by its decision to contest the panchayat elections in that State. The party is likely to field candidates from at least 9-10 districts where the Bengalis have sizeable population.

"The TMC has good prospects in Assam. We want to good in that State.

We have been able to find some base their too. But the gains can further be cemented if our leader Mamata Banerjee addresses a few rallies in that State," an Assam TMC leader has said.

Meanwhile, Telugu Desam Party chief and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is likely to meet his Bengal counterpart on Monday noon, sources said adding he is likely to invite Banerjee to the all-party meeting in Delhi.

3.5L submit proof for inclusion in NRC

Guwahati: About 3.5 lakh people, out of the total 40 lakh, who were excluded in the draft National Register of Citizens (NRC), have claimed that they are Indian nationals, two months after the window opens for claims and objections in the Supreme Court-monitored exercise, sources said Sunday.

Besides, less than 100 applications have been received by the authorities challenging the inclusion of the names of suspected illegal immigrants in the NRC, a list of Assam's residents.

So far, about 3.5 lakh people have submitted applications for inclusion of their names in the NRC and they have submitted relevant documents claiming that they are Indian citizens, a source privy to the development said.

The issue of low turnout in the claims and objections period was also discussed at Saturday's high-level meeting in New Delhi attended by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP president Amit Shah, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba, Director of Intelligence Bureau Rajiv Jain, among others.

The Supreme Court has also finalised a set of standard operating procedure (SOP) for disposal of claims and objections in the update of the NRC.

The draft NRC was published on July 30 and included the names of 2.9 crore people out of the total applications of 3.29 crore. There has been a huge controversy over exclusion of 40 lakh people from the draft NRC.

CYCLONE GAJA

Toll rises to 45, Opposition alleges poor relief work

IAN S ■ CHENNAI

The death toll due to the severe cyclone Gaja that devastated several districts in Tamil Nadu two days ago has risen to 45 and it damaged 1,17,624 houses, Chief Minister K Palaniswami said on Sunday.

Opposition leaders have criticised what they say was the Government's apathy in reaching out relief materials like food, drinking water and other materials to the cyclone affected areas.

In Pudukkottai district, people complained about not getting relief materials and protested on the roads. They also set fire to five government vehicles.

Speaking to reporters at Salem, about 350 km from here, Palaniswami said 45 persons have died in the cyclone and the loss of livestock was put at 735.

He added that 88,102 hectare of crop and 39,938 electricity poles were damaged in the cyclone.

The central government has been asked to depute a team from the National Disaster Management to assess the destruction.

To a query about dropping relief materials by helicopters, Palaniswami said removal of trees from the roads would be



A view of the damage caused by cyclone 'Gaja', after it hit Velankanni, in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu

PTI

completed fully on Sunday.

Palaniswami said he would visit the affected areas on Monday.

DMK President M.K. Stalin in a letter to the party cadres wondered whether Palaniswami's heart was made of iron as he appeared to be more interested with inaugurating projects rather than visiting the cyclone battered areas.

Stalin, who toured the areas, accused the government of failing to provide sufficient food, clothing and drinking water for the people at the relief centres.

He said had only the gov-

ernment carried out the dredging of canals and other water bodies, much of the damage could have been averted and several trees could have been saved.

Stalin said coconut trees in about 7,000 hectares in several districts have been damaged.

PMK founder S. Ramadoss said it was a shame that the AIADMK government was not providing even food for the cyclone affected people.

He said that various districts in the Cauvery delta region like Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Thiruvavur had been severely affected.

Tourist facilities to boost eco-tourism in VTR: Nitish

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has said a slew of facilities inaugurated by the State Government in Valmiki Nagar of Bihar's West Champaran district would promote eco-tourism in the area.

The Water Resources department has transferred 200 acres to Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department for developing eco-tourism in Valmiki Nagar Tiger Reserve (VTR), the Chief Minister said on Sunday.

There should be a convention centre here in Valmiki Nagar where people can hold programmes and also enjoy the natural beauty of the place, Kumar said.

He said he has plans to hold a cabinet meeting here, the timing for which would be decided later. The Chief Minister told reporters that a lot has been done for the development of tourism in Valmiki Nagar area such as constructing cottages which are running at full capacity throughout the year and can be booked online.

With the promotion of eco-tourism at VTR, people will become more aware about the forest and the issue of environment, he said. About 45,000 tourists had visited the VTR till mid-November in 2018 itself, Kumar said.

"I hope that the number of

tourists will cross over one lakh after the development of eco-tourism in the area," the chief minister said.

"People have an attraction for VTR as it is a unique place which is surrounded by mountain on one end, while river Gandak is flowing on the other side with the greenery of jungle.

"There can not be any other better place than VTR. There is huge potential for eco-tourism in Valmiki Nagar for which the state government is working hard to promote it," the Chief Minister said.

Various options of eco-tourism, including jungle safari and trekking, are already available at VTR. Eco-huts have been inaugurated in the area and old watch towers have been given a facelift.

The total number of tigers stood at eight in VTR when he took over the reins of the State for the first time in November 2005 and at present, the number of tigers has increased to more than 35. Stating that the green cover area of Bihar was nine per cent after its division, Kumar said it has increased to 15 per cent with the Government's massive plantation drive during which 22.50 crore saplings were planted.

"We have set a target of 17 per cent of green cover in the State," he added. PTI

Sushil Modi should speak up on Srijan scam, says Kushwaha

PTI ■ PATNA

Rashtriya Lok Samata Party Chief Uendra Kushwaha made a sharp attack on Sunday apparently against BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi by calling him a "pichhlaggu" (camp follower) of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Without naming Modi, Kushwaha in a series of tweets said some people are "publicity hungry, opportunist and pro-power by nature". He described Modi as a "loudspeaker" and "blood-sucking mosquito" which spreads diseases around it.

Kushwaha's remarks could deepen the differences within the National Democratic Alliance, which is struggling to find a seat-sharing arrangement for the 2019 general election. The RLSP chief has said the number of seats offered to his party was "not respectable" and the matter should be resolved by November 30.

On Saturday, shortly after Kushwaha set the deadline, Modi in a tweet responded to him, saying the NDA will "not be brow-beaten" and seats will be allotted based on "ground realities".

The JD(U) and the BJP last month announced they will contest equal number of seats, but did not say what their share would be.

Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party, the fourth partner in the alliance, has said it expects to contest a "respectable



number" of seats in the state.

During the 2014 election, the RLSP, which Kushwaha formed in 2013 after breaking out from the JD(U), contested and won three seats. The LJP contested seven seats then. Bihar has 40 Lok Sabha seats.

"There are people who are 'rajnitik pichhlaggu' (camp follower in politics). Such people are publicity hungry, opportunist and pro-power by nature. The utility of such people are merely confined to work as loudspeaker for alliance partner or its leader. Such people thrive in the party by sucking blood and spreading malaria and dengue in their own party," Kushwaha tweeted in Hindi.

By "loudspeaker", the RLSP chief apparently referred to Modi's denial that Chief Minister Kumar called him "neech" (lowly person).

During a programme on November 4 when Kumar was asked about the seat-sharing



issue with Kushwaha, he had said, "Itna neech baat ko nahile jaiye" (do not take the debate to such a low level). The RLSP chief construed that the chief minister called him a lowly person.

Also on Sunday, Kushwaha asked Deputy Chief Minister Modi to say "something" on the Srijan scam as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to provide a corruption-free Government. In another tweet, he said, "You have rightly said that our PM Sri @narendramodiji made every effort to provide corruption-free Government. Please say something on Srijan scam too."

Srijan scam, detected last year, is being probed by the CBI. The government funds worth about Rs 1,000 crore were allegedly transferred to the accounts of Srijan Mahila Vikash Samiti, Bhagalpur.

Kushwaha recently met RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and Sharad Yadav.

Operation to attach ex-Min Manju Verma's properties ends

PTI ■ BEGUSARAI

The Bihar Police on Sunday concluded its two-day operation to attach properties of former State Minister Manju Verma, who's evading arrest in an Arms Act case filed by the CBI while probing the Muzaffarpur shelter home scandal.

The exercise to attach Verma's property in Arjuntola village on Sunday was led by Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Suryadeo Kumar.

Police attached 16 articles on Sunday, while 109 articles were seized on Saturday, the SDPO said.

Armed with a court order, a police team led by Superintendent of Police Awakash Kumar had initiated the process of attaching Verma's property in Arjuntola village here on Saturday.

Police had handed over a list of the seized articles to Verma's brother-in-law, Hemant Verma, on Saturday.

"The operation to attach the property of Manju Verma in the Arjuntola area ended on Sunday," the SDPO said.

Police had removed the grill, doors, door frames of a house belonging to her while carrying out the attachment

Goa Government non-functional, Parrikar being self-centred: Velingkar

IAN S ■ PANAJI

The Goa Government has virtually become non-functional and Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar is being self-centred in not letting go of the top post despite suffering from pancreatic cancer, former State RSS chief Subhash Velingkar said on Sunday.

"People are being taken for granted. Had this happened in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, people would have stripped the politicians naked and taken them on a procession," Velingkar, who formally entered politics by joining Goa Suraksha Manch near here, he said.

Velingkar has served as the state RSS chief for more than two decades and is considered responsible for the political grooming of the State BJP's top leaders, including Manohar Parrikar, Union Minister of State for AYUSH Shripad Naik, and former Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar.

Velingkar also said that the State was heading for a mid-term poll along with the Lok Sabha elections next year because the Government was already beset with infighting

He was, however, sacked from the RSS in 2016, after he took on Parrikar, accusing the latter of going back on the principles of both the Sangh as well as the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Velingkar accused Parrikar of being self-centered in allowing his administration to "virtually shut down" on account of his illness, while holding on to more than two dozen portfolios.

"The Government is functioning in a way no Government ought to function at all. The CM is taking treatment. He does not have the courage to come and face the people. The Opposition has been demanding that they want to meet the CM, but he has not been able to meet them. Therefore, the departments and portfolios are not getting any justice," Velingkar said.

Velingkar also said that the State was heading for a mid-term poll along with the Lok Sabha elections next year because the Government was already beset with infighting due to Parrikar's inability to attend to office and take decisions.

This State of indecision would lead to the disintegration of the coalition of BJP, Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, Goa Forward and four independent MLAs, he said.

Along with the Congress, the BJP too will be demolished in the next elections and Goa will see the rise of a new leadership," Velingkar said. PTI

Kargil coldest in J&K at minus 9 degree C



IAN S ■ SRINAGAR

Kargil town was the coldest in Jammu and Kashmir at minus 9 degree Celsius on Sunday while the minimum temperature across the region was around the freezing point, the weather office said.

According to a Met Department official, the minimum temperatures in Leh, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and

Srinagar were minus 5.1 degrees, minus 4.5, minus 1.1 and 1.6, respectively.

"Dry weather conditions were likely to continue in Jammu and Kashmir during the next four days," the official said.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded 11.1 degrees Celsius, Katra 10.4, Batote 6.3, Bannihal 4.0 and Bhaderwah 2.8 as the night's lowest temperatures.

BRO personnel brave adverse weather conditions to lay first glaciated road in Ladakh

Srinagar: Braving extremely adverse weather conditions, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), under Project Himank, is carving out the world's first glaciated motorable road.

"The BRO is laying the motorable roads by cutting the world's highest glaciers which are here in eastern Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir," an official of the BRO said.

Being constructed at an altitude of over 17,800 feet, the road from Sasoma to Saser La will be a vital link paved in a region which is mostly cut-off during the severe winter months.

Saser La, also known as Saser Pass, is a high mountain pass which lies in the Karakoram range. It is located on the ancient summer caravan route from Leh in Ladakh to Yarkand in the Tarim Basin.

"As the temperature in the region falls to minus 50 degrees Celsius during winter and hovers around 12 degrees Celsius

during peak summer, work in such condition is a herculean task.

"Besides, the biting cold and bone chilling winds, there are dangers of unseen crevasses and avalanches. Further, the glaciers shift constantly when the snow melts, adding to the difficulty in construction," he said.

The months when construction works can be taken up are few, forcing officials to be ready with plans and strategies in advance to achieve targets.

"The short working period needs to be utilised to the maximum, thus requiring effective management of manpower and resources. Planning of work starts four to five months prior to the working season," he said.

The official said meticulous planning and hard work of the BRO officers has been extremely essential for the successful completion of the tasks. PTI



Congress leader and former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot being welcomed on his arrival at the airport in Jodhpur on Sunday

CRPF jawan killed in terrorist attack in J&K

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

A CRPF jawan was killed in a militant attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Sunday, police said.

Militants lobbed a grenade and fired on a CRPF camp in Kakapora area of the district in south Kashmir Sunday evening, a police official said, adding the attack was successfully repulsed by the security forces.

However, in the attack, a CRPF jawan identified as Head Constable Chandrika Prasad sustained injuries, the official said. Prasad was shifted to a nearby hospital where he succumbed to injuries.

The official said as the militants were trying to flee the area after the attack, security forces immediately cordoned off the area and initiated searches.

"Consequently, exchange of fire between security forces and terrorists took place till the last report was received," he said, adding further details were awaited.

2 terrorists killed in encounter in Shopian

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Two terrorists belonging to the Al-Badar outfit were Sunday killed in an encounter with security forces in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said.

Based on a credible input about the presence of militants, a cordon and search operation was launched by security forces at the crack of dawn in Rebban area of Zainapora in the south Kashmir district, a police spokesman said.

He said as the search operation was going on, the search party was fired upon by the hiding militants.

The fire was retaliated leading to an encounter in

which two militants were killed, the spokesman said.

He said the slain ultras have been identified as Nawaz Ahmad Wagay, a resident of Rebban Zainapora and Yawar Wani, a resident of Batnoor Litter Pulwama.

"They were affiliated with proscribed terror outfit Al-Badar. Both the killed terrorists were involved in a series of terror attacks on security establishments and many other civilian atrocities in the area," the spokesman said.

Arms and ammunition were recovered from the site of encounter.

No collateral damage took place during the encounter, he said.

SABARIMALA ROW

BJP observes protests, block traffic

PTI ■ SANNIDHANM (KERALA)

A calm atmosphere at the Lord Ayyappa shrine in Sabarimala marked the second day of the two month-long annual pilgrimage season, even as the rest of Kerala witnessed protests against the arrest of BJP General Secretary K Surendran while on his way to the temple.

Travancore Devaswom Board, which manages the shrine, will file a petition in the Supreme Court Monday seeking more time to implement the court's Sept 28 verdict allowing women of all ages to offer worship at the shrine, board president A Padmakumar said.

So far, no women in the 10-50 age group has sought police protection to trek the holy hills, though over 500 odd young women have made online bookings for darshan.

Facing flak over inadequate facilities and severe restrictions for devotees at the temple complex, Padmakumar

also said no unnecessary curbs would be there and the "small issues" being faced now should be seen as "starting troubles".

Briefing reporters at Thiruvananthapuram after a meeting with DGP Loknath Behara and M V Jayarajan, the Private Secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, he said the devotees would be allowed to perform the "Neyyabhishekam" ritual from 03.15 AM to 1230 PM daily.

"The police, board or government will not take any step causing hardships to the pilgrims", but police would take action against those coming to Sabarimala with an intention to protest, he said.

More parking facilities and bio-toilets will be provided at Nilackal and Pamba, he said.

Meanwhile, the State Human Rights Commission observed there was gross violation of human rights of the devotees and directed authorities to ensure all necessary basic facilities for them and

sought a report within two weeks.

The temple had opened Friday evening for the 64-day annual pilgrimage season as the stand-off continued over entry of menstrual age women into the shrine.

So far, more pilgrims have arrived from other states than from within Kerala. On the second day of the Malayalam month 'Vrischikom', the pilgrims offered prayers at the shrine early Sunday.

Though the devotees were relieved to get more time for 'darshan' due to less crowd, many were unhappy at not being allowed to spend some more time at the "sannidhanam" (the main temple complex).

Meanwhile, BJP workers blocked traffic on the national highways for over an hour across the state protesting against the arrest and remand of Surendran. In vatakara, a KSRTC bus was stoned, police said.

Surendran, who was taken into preventive custody as he tried to proceed to the Lord Ayappa temple, was Sunday produced before a magistrate and remanded to 14-day judicial custody after he was charged with non-bailable offences.

Condemning the manner in which Surendran was arrested, Union Minister Alphonso Kannamtham said it was "despicable" and described the police action as "condemnable".

"There is need to take a path of consensus on matters relating to Sabarimala, he said in a Facebook post.

Implementing things which were against people's interest had no place in democracy, he said adding the people's verdict was for five years not life long, he said.

CPI(M) state secretary Kodyeri Balakrishnan alleged the BJP's "agenda" was to create violence.

The Congress, which deputed a three-member del-

egation to Sabarimala, accused the CPI(M)-led state government of creating a 'terror-like atmosphere' in the name of security of the hill shrine.

The delegation comprising former state ministers Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, Adoor Prakash and V S Sivakumar took stock of the situation in the temple complex.

Prakash slammed the state government and the board for not making required facilities for devotees at Sabarimala.

Spearheading a campaign against the Kerala government over the Sabarimala issue, BJP state unit chief P S Sreedharan Pillai alleged the state government was making the Ayyappa shrine "a centre of dispute to destroy its uniqueness".

Condemning the police action against "peacefully agitating" devotees, he said BJP will extend all possible assistance to the protesters to protect the hill shrine from the "hidden agenda of atheists".

MAHA WINTER SESSION

After quota for Marathas, what about Muslims, Dhangars? asks Oppn

Roots for ₹50 k per hectare compensation for drought-hit farmers...calls BJP-led Govt 'thug of Maharashtra'

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Opposition Congress and NCP on Sunday set an aggressive tone for the winter session of the Maharashtra Legislature beginning here on Monday, by rooting for reservations to Muslims, Dhangars, Lingayats and other socio-economic backward communities along the lines of Marathas and a compensation of Rs 50,000 per hectare to drought-affected farmers in the state.

On a day when chief minister Devendra Fadnavis announced that his government would grant reservations to Marathas in jobs and education under a new Socio-Economic Backward Class (SEBC) category, the Opposition parties gave forecasts of their belligerent mood by boycotting the customary tea hosted by Fadnavis on the eve of the winter session of the State Legislature.

Addressing a news conference after a joint meeting of the group leaders of various Opposition parties held a day ahead of the start of the winter session of the State Legislature, leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil dubbed the BJP-Shiv Sena government in the state as the "Thug of Maharashtra" which had failed to fulfil all its promises during the last four years of its rule.

"The chief minister has asked the Maratha community to prepare themselves for celebrations on December 1 (over grant of reservations). While we are for the state government according reservations, what about the reservations for Muslims, Dhangars, Lingayats and other socio-economic backward communities?" Vikhe-Patil asked.



BJP and Shiv Sena Ministers during the tea party, hosted by Maharashtra Chief Minister on the eve of winter session in Mumbai on Sunday

Charging that the Maharashtra government had put pressure on the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC) to come out with its report on granting reservations to Maratha community, Vikhe-Patil said: "We would like the state government to clarify as to how it would accord reservations to Marathas without disturbing the existing reservations to other communities. We want the state government to table the MSBCC's report on the first day of the winter session of the State Legislature tomorrow".

Vikhe-Patil accused the Devendra Fadnavis government of having gone back on its promise of according reservations to Dhangar community. "A study report submitted to the State government by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) on socio-economic status of the Dhangar community is gathering dust," he said.

Slamming the state government for its failure to remedy the drought situation in the state, Vikhe-Patil said: "Though the state government declared drought in many parts of the state, it has not come relief measures or financial assistance. We demand that the farmers be given 50,000 per hectare of compensation and horticulturists be given Rs 1 lakh per hectare. In addition, the state

government should waive 100 per cent crop loans taken by farmers during Kharif season".

Leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Council Dhananjay Munde of the NCP, who addressed the news conference with Vikhe-Patil, also demanded a compensation of Rs 50,000 per hectare to the drought-affected farmers.

Munde came down heavily on the ruling Shiv Sena for raising the Ram Mandir issue at this stage. "Through an announcement by Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray that he would go to Ayodhya on November 25 to press for the construction of Ram Mandir, the Sena is running away from its responsibility of being the ruling party. What was holding the Shiv Sena from constructing Ram Mandir during the last four years?" Munde asked.

Charging Fadnavis and Uddhav Thackeray as "Thugs of Maharashtra", Munde said: "Fadnavis and Uddhav Thackeray have cheated the people of Maharashtra during the last four years. They deserve to be named as Thugs of Maharashtra".

Munde also hit out at the chief minister for its failure to act against the 16 ministers in his Cabinet facing allegations of corruption. "We will not rest till the state government does not act against these 16 ministers," he said.

CPM leader's son, daughter-in-law attacked; one held

PTI ■ KOZHIKODE

A worker of a right-wing Hindu outfit has been arrested in connection with the alleged attack on a CPM leader's son and his journalist daughter-in-law during a shutdown called by the outfits in Kerala on Saturday, police said.

Julius Nikithas and wife Sanioy Manomi, working with a leading Malayalam news channel, were attacked at Kuttiady as they were going to a hospital in a car to visit a patient.

Police Sunday said that a worker of a right wing outfit has been arrested in connection with the attack and a search was on to nab nine others.

Nikithas, son of party district secretary P Mohanan, suffered head injuries and Manomi was also injured.

The couple have been admitted to the government medical college hospital here.

The CPM had alleged that they were attacked by activists belonging to the Sangh Parivar. Right-wing Hindu outfits had observed a dawn-to-dusk har-

The CPM had alleged that they were attacked by activists belonging to the Sangh Parivar

tal in Kerala Saturday in protest against the "preventive detention" of Hindu Aikya Vedi state president P Sasikala, who was on a pilgrimage to the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple.

Sasikala was taken into preventive custody Saturday after she allegedly defied directions not to spend the night near the temple complex.

Police had decided not to allow devotees enter the temple premises when it was closed for the night.

Sasikala, who was on a fast at the Ranni police station, protesting her detention, was later produced before the subdivisional magistrate, who is also the Thiruvalla Revenue Divisional officer (RDO), and granted bail.

KJ Alphonso to visit shrine

Thiruvananthapuram: Union Minister of IT K.J. Alphonso will on Monday visit the temple town of Sabarimala to study the facilities meant for the pilgrims.

Alphonso told IANS that he will reach the Pamba base camp at 9 a.m.

"I had visited the temple town two months back and found out that it was in a pretty bad shape due to the floods. I had suggested that a lot of things had to be done to make

it fit for a smooth pilgrimage," he said.

He said he had come to know that the facilities were not up to the mark.

The bureaucrat-turned-politician's visit comes at a time when the Kerala unit of the BJP observed Sunday as a protest day by blocking highways across the state following the arrest and remand of its senior leader K. Surendran.

IANS



Police personnel stand guard at the 18 sacred steps of the Lord Ayyappa temple on the 2nd day of Malayalam month of 'Vrischikom' in Sabarimala on Sunday

Kerala Govt destroying Ayyappa temple's uniqueness: Pillai

Kochi: Spearheading a campaign against the Kerala government over the Sabarimala issue, BJP state unit chief P S Sreedharan Pillai Sunday alleged that the CPI(M)-led dispensation was making the Lord Ayyappa shrine "a centre of dispute to destroy its uniqueness".

Condemning the police action against "peacefully agitating" devotees, he said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will extend all possible assistance to the protesters to protect the hill shrine from the "hidden agenda of atheists".

Pillai said the BJP and Sangh Parivar will expand the ongoing agitation against the state government's "hasty move" to implement the Supreme Court verdict, permitting entry of women of all age groups into the temple, to other parts of the country.

"What is going in Kerala (over Sabarimala) is a fight between devotees and atheists," he told PTI.

"BJP workers will continue to join the devotees' protest if any woman in the menstrual age group tries to enter the temple. The devotees have so far succeeded in preventing such women from breaking the custom," he said. PTI



A tourist family takes selfies under the Chinar trees at a garden, during autumn in Srinagar on Sunday

Poor, downtrodden getting their share, says Maurya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that the poor and the downtrodden were getting their share in the Bharatiya Janata Party government because it was implementing the pro-people policies of the Narendra Modi government in letter and spirit.

"India has progressed in true sense in the last four-and-a-half years. The country had suffered because of the partisan policies of the previous government. Their policies were so lopsided that the chasm between the poor and the rich increased. It was BJP which tried to bridge that chasm," Maurya said while speaking at Loktantra Senani Aabhaar Sammelan held here on Sunday.

The loktantra senanis are leaders who were jailed during the Emergency.

Maurya said the Congress had ruled the country for the maximum time after Independence but it had not shown respect for leaders other than the Gandhi family.

"Everyone knows what happened to Sardar Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose. Even leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Sharad Pawar and Raj Narain were looked down upon by the Congress government. It is only Narendra Modi who broke the barriers of political lines and gave respect which was due to the leaders," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

"The world now knows about Sardar Patel and the Statue of Unity. This is the true respect the BJP government has given to the leaders," he added. Maurya said, in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was giving respect to the leaders of various political parties.

He said the Congress stooped low when it arrested a leader like Jayprakash Narayan during Emergency. "Then people like you revolted against the then government and courted arrest. It is history that all jails across the country were full but there was no ebb in your enthusiasm," he said.

"Leaders have taken lessons from your sacrifice and have not stepped into the shoes of dictator," he added.

BJP MLC Yashwant Singh also addressed the Loktantra senanis.



MAURYA SAID THE CONGRESS HAD RULED THE COUNTRY FOR THE MAXIMUM TIME AFTER INDEPENDENCE BUT IT HAD NOT SHOWN RESPECT FOR LEADERS OTHER THAN THE GANDHI FAMILY

Akhilesh threatens to sever ties with Cong

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After Bahujan Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday struck a blow to the prospects of a mahagathbandhan (grand alliance) of opposition parties for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls by launching a fierce attack on Congress, hinting that if the grand old party restricted the success of samajwadis, the SP would break the friendship.

Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday campaigned in Madhya Pradesh. "I want to tell the Congress that when they will be the weakest, the Samajwadi Party will be their dearest friend. But the Congress leaders don't want 'cycle' to succeed. Hence,

we have decided that if you try to stop the 'cycle', we will take your hands off the cycle and give the control to some other party," Yadav said at a rally at Damoh in Madhya Pradesh.

Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress are two sides of the same coin. Both the parties are responsible for the loot of public sector banks by big business and industrial houses. These two parties are behind the Rafale scam — first the Congress played the tricks and now the BJP is exploiting it for its narrow political gains," Akhilesh charged.

Cycle is the political symbol of Samajwadi Party.

Akhilesh dropped strong hints that his party may not ally with the Congress in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, saying



this would deal a huge blow to the Rahul Gandhi-led party as they had been rallying for a grand coalition to stop the BJP juggernaut in the country.

Apparently miffed with the Congress for refusing to share seats with SP and BSP in

Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, Akhilesh had on Saturday attacked the Congress while campaigning in Chhattisgarh. He had accused the grand old party of scuttling Samajwadi Party's prospects in the poll-bound state.

Hinting that SP might not enter into a tie-up with Congress for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Yadav said, "Humne bhi tay kar liya hai ki cycle ko rokoge to apka haath handle se hata diya jayega... Control aur kisi ke haath chala jayega (We have decided we will remove your hands from the cycle handle if you try to stop the cycle and the control will go in the hand of someone else)."

Without directly taking the name of any political party, the SP chief used their symbols (hand of the Congress and cycle of SP) to hint at the growing rift between the two parties.

Yadav's statement came during a rally in Durg in Madhya Pradesh while campaigning for SP and its alliance

partner Gondwana Gantantra Party.

The former Chief Minister had earlier also slammed the Congress for wasting time in "calculations" in the poll-bound states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. "When the alliance did not happen, we went with GGP. It is difficult to understand what the Congress is calculating and trying to do, but one thing becomes obvious... they want to stop SP from surging ahead," he had said.

Akhilesh said that there was no difference in the policies of the BJP and Congress. His anti-Congress statements come barely 20 months after the two parties entered into an alliance for UP assembly elections in March 2017.

CAG to report performance audit of GST soon

In current fiscal, GST collections stood at ₹1.03 lakh cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India is conducting performance audit of GST and is likely to finalise its report soon.

The performance audit report on implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) could be tabled in Parliament as early as in the forthcoming Winter session beginning December 11, according to sources.

The CAG is auditing the functioning of the new indirect tax regime since its implementation on July 1, 2017.

The audit aspect would include registration, refund, input tax credit, transition credit mechanism, ease of payment of taxes and the impact on the economic activity, the sources told.

The CAG team has already visited the GST Commissionerates in major states to get clarity on the functioning of the new indirect tax system and its efficiency and effectiveness, the sources said.



As part of the performance audit, the CAG looks at programmes, systems and activities to check if they are in accordance with the principles of economy and whether there is any scope for further improvement.

The performance audit will not take into account revenue collections. Its focus would primarily be on the implementation aspect of GST, which has subsumed 17 local taxes.

Tagged as the biggest tax reform since Independence, GST has faced some teething problems in the initial months

of its implementation with the GST Network unable to take look of last minute monthly return filing rush.

Also, there were hiccups with respect to refunds to be claimed by exporters as well as excessive transitional credit claims.

The monthly average revenue collection from GST in the previous fiscal (July 2017-March 2018) was ₹89,885 crore. In current fiscal, the collections stood at ₹1.03 lakh crore in April, ₹94,016 crore in May, ₹95,610 crore in June, ₹96,483 crore in July, ₹93,960 crore in August, ₹94,442 crore in September and ₹1 lakh crore in October.

RBI net sells \$18.66 bn of dollars between Apr-Sep

In FY17, RBI had bought \$12.351 billion of the US dollars on a net basis

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) net sold \$18.662 billion of the greenback in the spot market, during the first seven months of the current financial year, according to RBI data.

In the same period last year, RBI was a net purchaser of the greenback, as it had bought \$16.301 billion.

In September, 2018, RBI sold \$31 million of the US currency in the spot market on a net basis, as per the latest RBI data.

In the reporting month, the central bank purchased USD 1.012 billion, while selling \$1.043 billion in the spot market.

In August, and July, it had sold \$2.323 billion and 1.87 billion, respectively, on a net

basis. The apex bank said that in April, May and June, it had, on net basis, sold \$2.483 billion, \$5.767 billion and \$6.184 billion of the US currency, respectively.

In September 2017, RBI had net bought \$1.259 billion of dollar, after it purchased \$3.788 billion and \$2.529 billion in the spot market.

RBI maintains that its intervention in the foreign exchange market is to curb volatility in the rupee and not to target a level of the domestic currency.

The central bank has been very active in the past few months in the spot market to save the rupee which got battered against the US dollar.

The domestic currency fell to a historic low of ₹74.1 against the dollar in October.

In FY18, the apex bank had net purchased \$33.689 billion of US dollars from the spot market. It had bought \$52.068 billion from the spot market, while selling \$18.379 billion.

In FY17, RBI had bought \$12.351 billion of the US dollars on a net basis.

In the forward dollar market, the outstanding net forward sales at the end of September was \$1.358 billion, compared with a purchase of \$5.730 billion in August, according to RBI data.

RBI board to meet today, likely to reach common ground on key issues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing rift with the Government is set to play out at the RBI's crucial board meeting Monday, with the Finance Ministry nominees and some independent directors expected to take on Governor Urjit Patel and his team over issues ranging from MSME credit to the central bank's reserves, though both sides are in favour of reaching a common ground.

While there have been reports and demands from some quarters for the Governor to step down, sources said Patel is unlikely to yield under pressure and will rather mount a strong defence of the central bank's policies regarding stringent NPA recognition norms as well as measures taken to ease credit supply to MSMEs.

Patel and his four deputies, who all are members of the RBI's 18-member central board, will present a united front, while a few independent directors too are expected to support the central bank's mission to clean up bank balance sheets, sources said.

The central board, headed by the RBI Governor, is expected to discuss issues mentioned in the agenda circulated to the board members in advance.

Off-agenda items can also be raised in the meeting, with the chair's permission.

The RBI's central board currently has 18 members, though the provision is that it can go up to 21.

The members include Governor Urjit Patel and his

four deputies as full-time official directors, while the rest 13 have been nominated by the government, including two Finance Ministry officials -- Economic Affairs Secretary and Financial Services Secretary.

Sources said the government and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are looking to reach an agreeable solution with respect to relaxation of the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework and easing of lending norms for the MSME sector.

If not in this board meeting, the issue of relaxation of PCA framework would reach a resolution in the next few weeks, they added.

As a result of the relaxation, some banks may come out of the PCA framework by the end of this fiscal.

Of the 21 State-owned banks, 11 are under the PCA framework, which imposes lending and other restrictions on weak lenders.

These are Allahabad Bank, United Bank of India, Corporation Bank, IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Dena Bank and Bank of Maharashtra.

The PCA framework kicks in when banks breach any of the three key regulatory trigger points -- namely capital to risk weighted assets ratio, net non-performing assets (NPA) and return on assets (RoA).

Globally, PCA kicks in only when banks slip on a single parameter of capital ade-

quacy ratio, and the government is in favour of this practice being adopted for the domestic banking sector as well.

The RBI is also expected to consider a special dispensation for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) which have been facing liquidity issues.

The government feels that the MSME sector -- which employs about 12 crore people and plays a critical role in the economy -- needs some support after being impacted by demonetisation and implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

However, the central bank has been averse to the government's demand as it considers the sectors to be vulnerable.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Saturday said that growth must not be throttled by limiting credit availability and liquidity.

It is necessary that the growth process does not suffer due to the cleaning up of the banking system from the "collectively committed sins" during 2008-14 when the regulatory mechanisms also overlooked high debt accumulation, he said.

Amid growing tensions with the central bank, the Finance Ministry had sought discussions under the never-used-before Section 7 of the RBI Act which empowers the government to issue directions to the RBI Governor.

BSE to part ways with S&P Dow Jones; plans to develop its own indices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asia's oldest bourse BSE has decided to snap ties with S&P Dow Jones, which manages and operates benchmark Sensex, and plans to develop indices through its own in-house development team, exchange officials said.

The two entities had announced a joint venture -- Asia Index -- in 2013 to provide an array of indices enabling global and domestic investors to participate in South Asia's vibrant economies.

The deal with BSE came after the expiry of the licensing arrangement between India Index Services & Products (IISL), a joint venture of NSE and S&P-owned Crisil.

The exchange officials said that BSE will not renew its agreement with S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC which expires on December 31, 2018 and it is looking to develop indices through its own team.

"Basically, we had done this tie-up five years back, but the joint venture could not do much in terms of expanding in the foreign jurisdiction, the usage of the indexes and all," BSE Managing Director and Chief Executive Ashish Kumar



Chauhan told investors in a conference call.

"And that is why we have decided to not renew it, but overall the impact on profits or on the revenues will be minuscule," he added.

Rival bourse National Stock Exchange's indices are managed and operated by NSE Indices, an arm of NSE.

S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, a subsidiary of The McGraw-Hill Companies, is the world's largest global resource for index-based concepts, data and research.

BSE is Asia's oldest stock exchange and home to the iconic Sensex index -- a leading indicator of Indian equity market performance.

Petrol price cut by 20 paise

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol price Sunday was cut by 20 paise a litre and diesel by 18 paise, the 29th straight daily reduction in rates that has wiped away all of the massive price increase in petrol witnessed in two months since mid-August that had triggered a political uproar.

Petrol price in Delhi was cut to ₹76.71 a litre from ₹76.91 on Saturday, according to a price notification issued by state-owned fuel retailers.

Diesel is being now sold at ₹71.56 per litre as compared to ₹71.74 on Saturday.

With this, the reduction in rates in the last one month totals ₹7.29 per litre for petrol and ₹3.89 a litre for diesel.

Rates have been on the decline since October 18. This has wiped out all of the price hike on petrol in two months beginning August 16 and more than half on diesel.

The reduction in diesel rates has been slower due to moderate fall in its benchmark international prices, according to oil company price notifications.

Petrol price had touched a record high of ₹84 per litre in Delhi and ₹91.34 in Mumbai on October 4. Diesel on that day had peaked to an all-time high of ₹75.45 a litre in Delhi



and ₹80.10 in Mumbai.

Prices had started to climb from August 16. Petrol in Delhi was priced at ₹77.14 per litre and in Mumbai it cost ₹84.58 on August 15. Diesel on that day was priced at ₹68.72 per litre in Delhi and at ₹72.96 in Mumbai.

Petrol in Mumbai Sunday cost ₹82.28 per litre and diesel was priced at ₹74.97.

Between August 16 and October 4, petrol price was hiked by ₹6.86 per litre and diesel by ₹6.73.

On that day, the Government decided to cut excise duty on petrol and diesel

by ₹1.50 per litre each and asked state-owned fuel retailers to subsidise prices by another ₹1 a litre by reducing their margins. Many states including Maharashtra matched that with a reduction in local sales tax or VAT.

Subsequent to this, the petrol price came down to ₹81.50 per litre in Delhi and diesel to ₹72.95 a litre on October 5. In Mumbai rates fell to ₹86.97 per litre for petrol and ₹77.45 in case of diesel.

As the international oil prices continued to rise, price of petrol and diesel in Delhi increased to ₹82.83 and ₹75.69

on October 17. In Mumbai, rates touched ₹88.29 a litre for petrol and ₹79.35 for diesel.

But since then, international oil prices have been falling and rupee has also appreciated, resulting in decline in retail rates.

Industry source said as per the assessment, the retail prices of petrol and diesel may reign easy in the next few days.

The retail selling price of petrol and diesel is dependent on the international prices of benchmark fuel and the rupee-US dollar exchange rate. This is because a large proportion of country's requirement is met through imports.

BSNL vows swift action on BharatNet concerns

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Drawing flak from the telecom department over gaps in maintenance of BharatNet infrastructure, BSNL has promised to take action against erring officers, but asserted that its maintenance responsibility pertains to only the optical fibre portion, sources said.

The telecom PSU has also sounded out Department of Telecom (DoT) about ₹617 crore of dues pending from Bharat Broadband Network Ltd (BBNL), as operation and maintenance payment for BharatNet project.

When contacted, BSNL Chairman and Managing Director Anupam Shrivastava refused to comment on the matter.

But sources aware of the matter said the company has written to DoT pointing out that while the onus of preventive and corrective maintenance of the optical fibre portion connecting gram panchayats is with BSNL, the responsibility of remaining network elements lay with other agencies.

Responding to concerns raised by the Telecom Secretary on BharatNet project, BSNL has also suggested that mechanism be worked out at the earliest that allocates faults pertaining to only the optical fibre

portion, to the telecom corporation.

BSNL has claimed that BBNL has not taken steps to put in place such a mechanism despite the state-owned telecom service provider repeatedly insisting on the same.

Earlier this month, the telecom department reportedly pulled up BSNL and BBNL over underutilisation of BharatNet infrastructure as well as deficiencies in maintenance of the project that seeks to connect 2.5 lakh gram panchayats through high-speed broadband by March 2019.

Absence of a mechanism to segregate the faults in the network makes it difficult to initiate action against officials, as some of the problems may turn out to be beyond their area of responsibility, BSNL has said.

In the same breath, BSNL has assured DoT that it will take disciplinary action against the officials lacking in discharge of duties. Sources said BSNL CMD has also instructed Director (enterprise) to look into the outstanding issues in streamlining operations and maintenance of BharatNet.

BSNL has also pointed out that states would need to take equal responsibility of ensuring utilisation of the massive rural broadband infrastructure that is being put in place.

Vice-President launches Krea University

VIKAS KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday launched Krea University in New Delhi. Based in Sri City (near Chennai), the University offers BA (Hons) & BSc (Hons) degrees in a host of disciplines ranging from economics to computer science. The University has opened its admissions process for the first cohort of undergraduate students who commence classes in August 2019. The newly inaugurated university is backed by some of the best academics in the world and the top industrialists in India.



Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu said, "Happy to know that the core of this University's philosophy lies in a pioneering paradigm of Interwoven Learning, weaving together

thought and action. Institutions like the Krea University, with sights set firmly on the achievement of brilliance and distinction at the global platform, will doubtlessly serve us in good stead in our quest for fast track progress and all round development". Wishing Krea University all success, I hope that it will inspire many such universities to invigorate our thinking and lay building blocks of a new paradigm that sets us on the path to becoming a world leader in higher learning, the

celebrated 'Vishwaguru' yet again.

Krea University claims to bring a fundamentally different approach to higher education -- Interwoven Learning -- which brings together thought with action, arts with sciences, and the learnings of the past with preparedness for the future. In a world where employees are expected to re-skill themselves six times over the span of their career, Krea aims to produce graduates who remain resilient, agile and impactful.

NTPC invites EoI to build fly ash-based roads at its plants

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NTPC has invited expression of interest (EoI) for construction of fly ash-based geopolymer concrete roads at its plants to demonstrate use of this technology, a company official said.

"NTPC has invited players to construct fly ash-based geopolymer concrete roads. About 1,100 tonne of fly ash is used per km of geopolymer road," the official told PTI.

Earlier, the company has successfully completed similar project at Dadri station as per Indian Roads Congress (IRC) specifications & accreditation. Moreover, 1.2-km double lane stretch are being constructed at Ramagundam and Farakka stations. These projects are being developed by NETRA, the R&D wing of NTPC.

NETRA has also developed geopolymer concrete spun/hume pipes, tetra pods, tiles and is working on other

applications as well.

Geopolymer concrete, an eco-friendly construction material, is a 100 per cent replacement of cement and has a great potential as a binder as it sets to a material and gains strength more rapidly than Portland cement.

Geopolymer concrete has emerged as an important engineering material in recent times because of its utility in developing ecologically sound and sustainable construction materials.

Concrete demand is expected to grow to 18 billion tonne per year globally by 2050. Portland cement is not only energy intensive but also responsible for large scale emission of CO2, the official added.

During 2017-18, 32.23 million tonne of ash, which is 53.45 per cent of the ash generated, was utilised for various productive purposes by the company.

Govt should stick to fiscal deficit target, continue reforms: Panagariya

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre should stick to the fiscal deficit target for 2018-19 and continue with the reforms undertaken during the over four years of the Narendra Modi-led Government, former Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Arvind Panagariya said Sunday.

The present Government, Panagariya said, has made a huge progress in implementing reforms including some difficult structural ones such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) that previous Governments had difficulty in introducing.

"Government should not shift its goal posts as far as fiscal deficit target is concerned. Fiscal consolidation has been a key achievement of the government and it has played a central role in macroeconomic stability that has characterised the economy during the last four years," the eminent economist told.

The Government aims to strictly maintain 3.3 per cent fiscal deficit target for 2018-19

fiscal.

The NDA government came to power in May 2014 and the next general elections will be held before May 15, 2019.

"At this stage any reforms that require legislative change such as the Higher Education Commission Bill will have to wait till the elections.

But reforms that can be done through changes in rules and regulations can still progress. Lateral entry into civil service is one such reform. Privatisation of listed PSUs and closure of sick PSUs are other such reforms," Panagariya noted.

What matters most is the top leadership, he said, adding that if the top leadership believes in reforms, you can count on their implementation.

Panagariya, who is currently a professor of Indian Political Economy at Columbia University pointed out that in the last four years, growth has averaged 7.3 per cent compared with 5.9 per cent during the last two years under the UPA.

The former Niti Aayog

vice chairman also opined that under the previous UPA Government, Congress President Sonia Gandhi effectively led the government and she had no interest in implementing structural reforms.

Replying to a query on government's move to raise import duties on a host of products with an aim to contain current account deficit (CAD), Panagariya said, "Sadly, bureaucrats in the Department of Revenue and Ministry of Commerce have not understood the importance of openness to trade. If they had, they would also be better able to explain it to politicians they serve."

Stating that "we have forgotten the lessons of our own experience and returned to the road we had left many years ago", he said "let us hope we will soon do course correction".

Recently, the government Wednesday raised import duties on 19 items, including jet fuel and air conditioners, as it looks to check the widening current account deficit resulting from high crude oil prices.

Shastri defends poor travellers tag

Indian coach feels it's unfair to target India when most nations fail on away tour

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India are yet to shed their "poor travellers" tag but head coach Ravi Shastri feels that it's unfair to pick on one particular side when most of the nations have fared poorly on away tours.

India have lost two away Test series in 2018, against South Africa (1-2) and England (1-4). This was after both tours were seen as best chance for Virat Kohli's men to set the poor overseas record straight.

Asked how important it is for India to win the series in Australia, Shastri said: "You have got to learn from your mistakes. When you go overseas and when you look at teams that travel around now, there aren't too many sides (that travel well)."

"Australia did for some time in the 90's and during the turn of century. South Africa did it for a while and other than these two, in the last five-six years, you tell me which team has travelled well. Why pick on India?" questioned Shastri.

Questioned whether he or skipper Kohli has spoken to the team as to why they lost in South Africa and England, Shastri said that it was all about "seizing big moments".

"We have spoken about seizing the big moments. If you look at the Test matches, the scoreline really doesn't tell you the real story. There were some real tight Test matches and we lost some big moments badly, which cost us the series at the end of it."

"It could have been an hour in a session over four days whether it was SA or England. Either as a batsman or a bowler and see what happens after that," the coach said in his team's defence.

Shastri refused to believe that Australian team has lost its aura after what all happened during the past few months.



INDIA AGAINST FAB FOUR IN OVERSEAS TOUR

Venue	Season	Winner	Margin
England	2011	England	4-0 (4)
Australia	2011/12	Australia	4-0 (4)
South Africa	2013/14	South Africa	1-0 (2)
New Zealand	2013/14	New Zealand	1-0 (2)
England	2014	England	3-1 (5)
Australia	2014/15	Australia	2-0 (4)
South Africa	2017/18	South Africa	2-1 (3)
England	2018	England	4-1 (5)

playing when a team comes to India God forbid but if anyone thinks it's a weak team, you will be surprised.

"Similarly, we are taking no prisoners and we want to go out and put our best foot forward, focussing on our game rather than focussing outside," he sounded cautious.

He is confident that his pacers will enjoy bowling on Australian pitches.

"I think they (pacers) should enjoy bowling on these pitches if it's like the pitches we have seen in the past. It's important to stay fit as a unit."

Shastri broadly dropped a hint that injured Hardik Pandya's absence robs them a chance to play an extra bowler. Even former Australian batsman Mike

Hussey recently spoke about how Pandya's absence can hurt India.

"One player we will miss is Hardik Pandya, who has had an injury. He gave us that balance as a bowler as well as batsman, which allowed us to play that extra bowler. Even now we have got to think twice. Hopefully, he will get fit soon and if fast bowlers do well, we might not miss him then," the former all-rounder said.

Asked if this is the best chance for India's fast bowlers, Shastri said it will depend on if they can maintain "sustained intensity" for a long period of time.

"It doesn't matter what line-up they play as long as they are consistent. In the past, we have had one or two

Cummins says he will be surprised if Kohli keeps quiet

MELBOURNE: Refusing to buy Virat Kohli's self-appraisal that he is no longer the one looking for confrontations, pacer Pat Cummins on Sunday said that the Australians will hold their ground in the face of any verbal barrage from the India captain. Prior to departing for Australia, run-machine Kohli insisted he realised he doesn't need to get into confrontations to get a feel of the contest. Cummins doesn't think so.

"I think I heard him say in the media the other day he won't, but I'll be surprised if he doesn't," Cummins told Fairfax Media.

"He's so competitive, he really thrives on that."

"We'll hold our ground, we're going to be competitive and all those things. We wouldn't treat him differently to any others. I think you'll see a lot of passion from both sides but nothing super fiery like we saw against India a couple of years ago," he added.

Relations between the two sides hit a low after Australian captain Steve Smith, going against the rule, looked up to his dressing room for assistance for a decision review call during the second Test in Bengaluru last year. Smith later called it his "brain fade" moment.

South Africa chose not to engage with Kohli when they met at the start of the year, and the India skipper top-scored in England with three centuries.

"It might be something to talk about once we get the Test squad together, and talk about how we want to play, and our plans for individual batsmen," Cummins said.

PTI



Bowlers disappoint as NZ A score 458/9

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

New Zealand A's last-wicket pair frustrated India A attack with a 83-run stand as the home team kept the first innings lead down to just nine runs after third day's play in the first 'Unofficial Test' on Sunday.

In reply to India A's 467 for eight, New Zealand A declared their first innings at 458 for nine after being reduced to 375 for nine at one stage.

New Zealand A's No 10 batsman Seth Rance (69) and No 11 Blair Tickner (30) played out the next one hour to negate chances of a substantial lead for the visitors.

At stumps, India A reached 35 for no loss in their second innings with the young Prithvi Shaw (33 batting, 26 balls) hitting seven boundaries in the company of veteran Murali Vijay (2 batting, 22 balls). India's overall lead currently is 44 runs.

The Indian bowlers started off well in the third morning as New Zealand A were reduced to 211 for five from 176 for one within the first hour of play.

Tim Seifert (20) edged one to Parthiv Patel off Mohammed Siraj (1/104 in 29 overs). Centurion Hamish Rutherford (114, 181 balls) was cleaned up by Deepak Chahar (2/51 in 12.4 overs), who didn't complete his 13th over.

Left-handed opener Rutherford, who has played 17 Tests for New Zealand, hit 17 boundaries and a six. Chahar also got rid of Rachin Ravindra (0) while Navdeep Saini (2/88 in 25 overs) trapped Glenn Phillips (16) leg-before.

However, the Indian bowlers couldn't press home the initial advantage with the second new ball as Doug Bracewell (48) and Dane Cleaver (53) added 65 runs for the sixth wicket before off-spinner Krishnappa Gowtham (3/107 in 42 overs) castled him.

Cleaver and Kyle Jamieson (30) added another 53 to take the team past the 300-run mark. Jamieson and Cleaver were then dismissed in quick succession as New Zealand A were reduced to 346 for eight. Theo van Woerkom (11) added 29 with Rance before the final flourish from the last pair.

SINGLES

MOUDGIL WINS GOLD IN SHOOTING NATIONALS

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: India's number one women's 50m rifle 3 positions shooter Anjum Moudgil defended her crown in the event at the 62nd National Shooting Championship Competitions here on Sunday. Punjab's Anjum shot 458.6 in the finals to finish ahead of seasoned Tejaswini Sawant of Maharashtra, who managed 457.7. Sunidhi Chauhan of Madhya Pradesh won the Bronze medal with a finals score of 443.0. Moudgil, who had won five Gold in the last nationals and recently won a Tokyo 2020 Olympic quota place for her country, had earlier shot 1168 in the qualification to top the field. Tejaswini had finished second in qualification with a score of 1163.

SHARMA WINS ROOKIE OF THE YEAR HONOUR

DUBAI: India's Shubhankar Sharma became the first Indian to emerge as the Sir Henry Cotton Rookie of the Year on the European Tour despite a disappointing final round of 80 at the DP World Tour Championships on Sunday. Sharma follows Jon Rahm (2017), Wang Jeunghun (2016), Byeong Hun An (2015) and Brooks Koepka (2014) who have been the four Rookies before him. No Indian has won the Rookie of the Year award in European Tour, though three Indians - Arjun Atwal (1995), Shiv Kapur (2005) and C Muniyappa (2009) emerged as Rookie of the Year on the Asian Tour. Interestingly, the 22-year-old Sharma is the third Asian in last four years to win this European Tour accolade, after Byeong Hun An (2015) and Wang Jeunghun (2016).

ANKITA-KARMAN CLINCH TAIPEI OPEN

PUNE: Ankita Raina and Karman Kaur Thandi — India's top two singles players — combined well to win their maiden title on the WTA Tour, grabbing the doubles trophy at the \$ 125,000 Taipei OEC Open, on Sunday. Playing first time together on the Pro circuit, the Indians clinched the title when Russia's Olga Doroshina and Natela Dzalamidze opted out of edge-of-seat contest due to latter's injury. The match was on even keel with both the pairs splitting the first two sets. The Indians had won the first set 6-4 but lost the second 5-7. The super tie breaker was tied 12-12 when Natela fell and suffered a hamstring injury. She struggled to even walk and they were forced to retire.

EXTENDS WORLD TITLE TALLY TO 21

YANGON: Legendary Pankaj Advani on Sunday extended his world title to 21 by winning the long and short formats of the IBSF World Billiards Championship titles for a record fourth time here. While Pankaj has always won the timed version of the long format, the more recent short version eluded him over the years. Pankaj's city mate from Bengaluru, B Bhaskar, a two-time Asian Silver medalist and a Bronze medal winner at the world level, had to settle for Silver. Last year Pankaj did the unthinkable by winning the billiards short format title and then went on to annex the snooker title too. He is the only player in the world to play both billiards and snooker at the world level and win in both with great consistency.

DRIVER FRACTURES SPINE IN MACAU GP CRASH

HONG KONG: A 17-year-old female teenage driver suffered a fractured spine when her car flew off the track in a horrifying crash at the Formula Three Macau Grand Prix on Sunday. Van Amersfoort Racing's Sophia Floersch was conscious and stable after the smash when her car became airborne and hurtled into a marshals and photographers' area. Japanese driver Sho Tsuboi, two photographers and a marshal were also taken to hospital. "All were conscious during transit to the hospital and are now receiving medical treatment. Further updates will be provided as soon as possible," said the Macau Grand Prix Organising Committee in a statement cited by multiple sources, including the South China Morning Post and shared on Twitter by Italy's Prema Powerteam. Agencies

'When you have good team, you have to perform well'

PTI ■ PROVIDENCE

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur said that her team is bound to perform well because of the quality in the side which was proved during their thumping 48-run win against Australia in the final group league encounter of the ICC Women's World T20.

India were already in semi-finals after winning their first three matches but didn't let the intensity down against the formidable 'Southern Stars' in an inconsequential last group league encounter.

"When you have a good team, you have to perform well," Harmanpreet said at the end of the match on Saturday.

After a below-par fielding performance against Pakistan, Indian women were excellent against Australia.

"I am very happy with the



Smriti Mandhana plays a shot during her 83-run innings against Aus in T20 clash ICC

(performance from the) girls. We worked very hard and today, we fielded well. I am proud of the girls. Hope the sort of part-

nership I had with Smriti (68 in 7 overs) can keep coming."

Opener Smriti Mandhana, who finally converted a start, got

Group B	POINTS TABLE						
	Mat	Won	Lost	Tied	NR	Pts	NRR
India	4	4	0	0	0	8	+1.827
Australia	4	3	1	0	0	6	+1.515
New Zealand	4	2	2	0	0	4	+1.031
Pakistan	4	1	3	0	0	2	-0.987
Ireland	4	0	4	0	0	0	-3.525

83 off 55 balls and thanked Veda Krishnamurthy for insisting on a DRS when she thought the she was gone. "First three matches I got starts but couldn't convert it. So I just wanted to score big today," said Mandhana, adding, "Veda insisted on the review, and thanks to her we got 20-30 runs extra."

Harmanpreet's deputy also echoed her skipper's sentiments that both bowling and fielding were top notch against the Aussies.

"The way we bowled and fielded today was the best of the four games, but batting-wise the performance against New Zealand was better."

Team's youngest member Jemimah Rodrigues said that endeavour will be to keep up the momentum in the upcoming semi-finals on November 23.

"I think it's important not just because it's Australia, but for ourselves and our team, because we've got the momentum," Rodrigues was quoted as saying by ICC website.

"So we need to keep that

momentum, keep doing the things, don't focus mainly on the results. So I think it plays a huge impact on our team and I think we look forward to it, but not get carried away and try to do even better in the semi-finals," Rodrigues said.

Rodrigues said that Harmanpreet's epic 171 dring last year's ODI World Cup also came up for discussion during the team meeting on the eve of the Australia match.

"Yes, (that knock) was definitely discussed (before the match)," revealed Rodrigues. "In our meetings. It's always good to remember the good stuff we've done. And it plays an impact and motivates each other. So we have spoken about that."

India will now face Group A runners up in the second semi-final on Thursday to book berth for Saturday's final.

Eng eye top spot after series win

AFF ■ KANDY

Captain Joe Root set his sights on taking England to the top of the world rankings after his spin trio finished off Sri Lanka in the second Test on Sunday to seal the series with a match to spare.

England needed just 30 minutes on the fifth day to take the final three Sri Lanka wickets. Jack Leach got last man Malinda Pushpakumara caught and bowled to claim his first five-wicket Test haul.

Moeen Ali took four wickets and Adil Rashid one as England's three frontline spinners accounted for the whole innings, as well as 18 of Sri Lanka's 20 wickets in the game overall.

Root's 124 in England's second innings also played a key role in the 57-run victory and earned him the man-of-the-match award.

Celebrating England's first away series win since beating South Africa in 2015-16 and his first away triumph as captain, Root sees England — who are currently ranked third in the world — challenging India for the top Test team spot.

"It was a brilliant Test match," said Root, whose team had to twice fight back after their top order batsmen gave away cheap wickets.

"It ebbed and flowed throughout, like against India in the summer, and it's pleasing to see another close game go our way."

"We said we'd come out here and play bold cricket, and be courageous. It's easy to talk a good game but we've backed it up," Root said.

"We have to keep looking to improve. The team has grown in the last 18 months but we are not the fin-



MOST WICKETS IN A TEST BY SPINNERS				
Wkts	Runs	Teams	Venue	Season
38	1031	Eng-SL	Pallekele	2018-19
37	677	Ind-NZ	Nagpur	1969-70
35	552	Ind-Aus	Kolkata	1956-57
35	527	Ind-Pak	Bengaluru	1986-87
34	466	Ind-SA	Mohali	2015-16
34	693	B'desh-Aus	Dhaka	2017-18

ished article. We want to get to number one in the world and that means performing in all conditions around the world."

Sri Lanka needed 301 in their second innings to register an upset win but managed just 243 at the Pallekele ground.

They started the day needing 75 more runs and with three wickets in hand had an outside chance.

After Niroshan Dickwella was caught by Ben Stokes off Moeen Ali for

35 — the first wicket of the morning — Sri Lanka's hopes were all but extinguished.

Moeen then struck No 10 batsman Suranga Lakmal on the pad next ball for a strong lbw appeal which was turned down. He bowled Lakmal his very next delivery.

Pushpakumara lasted only eight balls before chipping the ball back to Leach and the game was over.

Lakmal insisted his side had been "unlucky". But England's triumph followed a crushing 211-run win in the first Test in Galle, and was set up by masterful performances from Leach, Ali and Rashid.

The spinners were dominant for both sides, as Sri Lanka's Dilruwan Perera took seven wickets in the game and Akila Dananjaya — who now goes off for an investigation into his bowling action — eight.

Yasir, Hasan fifiers put Pakistan on course

AP ■ ABU DHABI

Hasan Ali and Yasir Shah took five wickets each against New Zealand on Sunday as Pakistan regained control of the first test on day three.

New Zealand's lower order couldn't capitalize on patient half centuries from B.J. Watling (59) and Henry Nicholls' (55), losing its last six wickets for just 29 runs to get bowled out for 249. It gave New Zealand an overall lead of 175 runs after it conceded a slender 74-run first innings lead.

Pakistan started off its chase aggressively and was 37-0 at stumps with Imam-ul-Haq unbeaten on 25 with four boundaries and Mohammad Hafeez not out on 8.

Watling and Nicholls defied Pakistan for nearly 51 overs and raised a 112-run fifth-wicket stand before Shah (5-

110) claimed four wickets in three overs and Hasan (5-45) wrapped up the tail quickly.

Shah triggered the collapse when Nicholls was caught behind before Colin de Grandhomme (3) and Watling were both trapped lbw by the leg-spinner in his next over.

Neil Wagner was undone by Shah's sharp turning delivery that knocked back the left-hander's off stump before Hasan returned and dismissed Ish Sodhi (18) and Trent Boult inside three deliveries to wrap up the innings quickly.

Watling faced 145 balls and Nicholls negotiated 171 deliveries in their skillful display of batting against spinners and fast bowlers. The pair came together after Hasan struck twice before lunch with New Zealand just 34 runs ahead.

They batted resolutely throughout the middle session with Nicholls surviving an lbw appeal on 44 off Shah when Pakistan opted for an ultimately unsuccessfully television referral before the left-hander raised



Hasan Ali and Yasir Shah took five wickets each against New Zealand on Sunday as Pakistan regained control of the first test on day three.

Hasan's fifty just before tea. Watling completed his fifty soon after the interval with a crisp driven boundary to mid-wicket off Hasan before Shah returned and wrecked New Zealand's hopes of building a substantial lead.

Earlier, Hasan's twin blows in five deliveries toppled New Zealand's top order as Pakistan reduced the visitors to 108-4.

Hasan used reverse swing with perfection by nipping Ross Taylor (19) plumb leg before wicket. Four balls later Jeet Raval's (46) resistance finally ended when he edged the right-arm fast bowler behind.

Left-handed Raval was aggressive against Shah when New Zealand resumed on 56-1 and quickly wiped off the first innings deficit. Kane Williamson (37) added 10 to his overnight score of 27 before Shah bowled the New Zealand skipper off a delivery that moved enough and tipped the off stump ball to break the 86-run second wicket stand.

Taylor was also dominant against Shah by smashing three fours in the leg-spinner's one over that included two meticulous cuts and one over mid-wicket.

But Hasan's twin strikes in his fourth over pegged back Kiwi's progress. Nicholls and Watling kept Pakistan at bay until Shah wrecked the lower order after tea.

