

OPINION 8

RAFALE DEAL: SMOOTHEN
RUFFLED FEATHERS

WORLD 12

SAUDI REJECTS THREATS AS STOCKS
PLUNGE AFTER TRUMP REMARKS

SPORT 16

DELHI ENTER VIJAY
HAZARE SEMIFINAL

RANCHI, MONDAY OCTOBER 15, 2018; PAGES 16 ₹3

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SONAKSHI
RECALLS HER
TIME IN BHUJ
13 VIVACITY

Akbar fights back MeToo

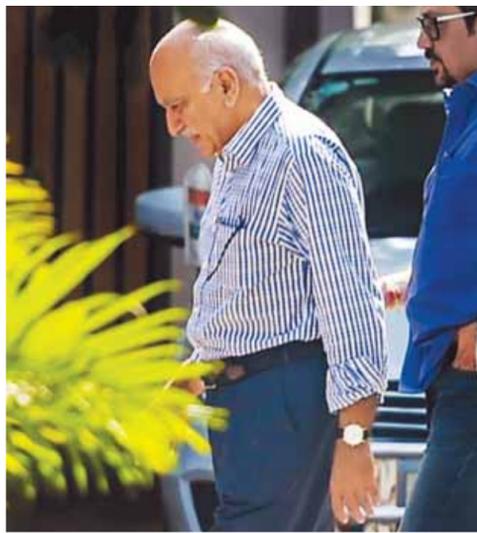
Trashes charges, threatens legal action, gives no indication of stepping down

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister MJ Akbar on Sunday tried to brazen out the charges of sexual misconduct levelled against him by several women journalists and threatened them with legal action while giving no indication of stepping down from office. Akbar described the charges against him as "false and fabricated" and gave a political twist to the whole controversy by suggesting that this was part of an "agenda" as the charges came a few months before a general election.

As many as ten women journalists, who served under Akbar when he was the editor of a national daily, have narrated horrifying tales of sexual assault made on them by their boss. Soon after returning from a trip to Africa, the Minister of State for External Affairs issued a statement trashing the charges against him, saying accusations without evidence have become a "viral fever" among some sections.

The tone and tenure of the statement and the threat of legal action he held out against the alleged "victims" showed that as of now Akbar enjoyed backing of the Government and the party on this sensitive matter. However, with more and more women coming out against him and the Government facing flaks for shielding him, Akbar has reasons to face sleepless nights.



Union Minister MJ Akbar, who is facing allegations of sexual harassment by a number of women journalists, at his residence after his arrival from a foreign tour in New Delhi on Sunday

DEFENSIVE

- Soon after returning from a trip to Africa, the Minister of State for External Affairs issued a statement
- Accusations without evidence have become a "viral fever" among some sections.
- Give as political twist to the whole controversy by suggesting that this was part of an "agenda" as the charges came a few months before a general election.
- Lies do not have legs, but they do contain poison, which can be whipped into a frenzy. This is deeply distressing, he says

of the PM's office. The country has been waiting for days for Modi to clear his stand on this," Congress leader Anand Sharma said at a Press conference.

Describing the allegations of misconduct made against him false and fabricated, Akbar said, these were "spiced up by innuendo and malice."

"Accusation without evidence has become a viral fever among some sections. Whatever be the case, now that I have returned, my lawyers will look into these wild and baseless allegations in order to decide our future course of legal action," he said in the statement.

Akbar said even journalist

Priya Ramani who started this campaign with a magazine article a year ago did not accused him of doing anything. "She did not however name me as she knew it was an incorrect story. When asked recently why she had not named me, she replied, in a Tweet, "Never named him because he didn't do anything." "If I didn't do anything, where and what is the story? There is no story. This was admitted at the very inception. But a sea of innuendo, speculation and abusive diatribe has been built around something that never happened. Some are total, unsubstantiated hearsay; others confirm, on the record, that I didn't do anything. Let me note examples. Shrutapa Paul states, "The man never laid a hand on me," he said.

Akbar then referred to Shuma Raha and pointed out that she too said he didn't actually 'do' anything. "One woman, Anju Bharti, went to the absurd extent of claiming I was partying in a swimming pool. I do not know how to swim," he said.

"Another accusation was made repeatedly by Ghazala Wahab, in an effort to damage my reputation. She claimed that she had been molested in office, 21 years ago. This is 16 years before I entered public life, and when I was in media. The only office where I worked with her was that of *The Asian Age*. A part of the editorial team

then worked out of a small hall. At the time concerned, I had a very tiny cubicle, patched together by plywood and glass. Others had tables and chairs two feet away. It is utterly bizarre to believe that anything could have happened in that tiny space, and, moreover, that no one else in the vicinity would come to know, in the midst of a working day. These allegations are false, motivated and baseless," he said.

Akbar went on to add, "Wahab states that she complained to Venu Sandal, who wrote features for the paper. Sandal has described Wahab's version as nonsense, in an interview to the *Indian Express*. Ms Sandal has also said that she has never heard, in 20 years, anybody accusing me of any such thing.

Akbar then went on to remind that both Ramani and Wahab kept working with him even after these alleged incidents. "The reason why they remained silent for decades is very apparent: as Ramani has herself stated, I never did anything. This is the reason why no one went to the authorities for so long, because I had done nothing.

Akbar ended his statement on threatening note saying, "Lies do not have legs, but they do contain poison, which can be whipped into a frenzy. This is deeply distressing. As indicated above, I will be taking appropriate legal action."

Maj Gen, 6 jawans get life in Dangari fake encounter case

5 youths were gunned down in 1994 by Army

ANUP SHARMA ■ GUWAHATI

Seven personnel of the Indian Army, including a Major General, have been sentenced to life imprisonment by a Summary General Court Martial (SGCM) for their involvement in a fake encounter that had taken place in Assam in 1994.

"I am extremely happy to see that justice is finally delivered in the infamous Dangari encounter case where five innocent youths were killed. The verdict of the court martial yesterday once again brought to the fore the neutrality of the Indian Army. It has proved that one must have faith in Indian judicial system, democracy and the discipline and neutrality of an institution like Indian Army," said Jagdish Bhuyan, who has been pursuing the case for the last 24 years.

The Army jawans from 18 Punjab Regiment had picked up nine youths and student leaders from different areas of Tinsukia district on February 18, 1994 for their alleged role in killing the general manager of a tea estate. The arrest



caused widespread public outrage. The army branded them as Ulfa militants and gunned down five of them in what has now been established as fake encounters. Four others were released in a jangle.

The then All Assam Students' Union leader Jagdish Bhuyan filed a habeas corpus petition in the Gauhati High Court the same month seeking to know the details of these youths. Based on the petition filed by Bhuyan, the Gauhati High Court ordered the Army to produce the nine at the nearest police station. Later, the army produced five bodies at the Dholla police station.

The investigation of the case was later handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which filed a chargesheet against the seven Army personnel.

CAPSULE

PARRIKAR DISCHARGED FROM AIIMS, BACK IN GOA
Panaji: Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar arrived in his home State on Sunday afternoon from New Delhi, where he was undergoing treatment at the AIIMS for pancreatic ailment. Parrikar, 62, was flown in a special flight and later taken to his private residence at Dona Paula near here, in an ambulance.

PM HAS MUCH TO HIDE ABOUT RAFALE: CONG
New Delhi: Continuing with its campaign against the Government over the Rafale deal, the Congress on Sunday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was directly involved in it, adding that he had much to hide about it.

MALAYSIA KEEN ON ADOPTING AADHAAR
New Delhi: Taking a cue from India's Aadhaar initiative, Malaysia wants to bring changes in its national identity card system for target delivery of welfare schemes and Government subsidies to avoid duplicity and fraud.

6 NEW ZIKA VIRUS CASES, TOTAL 61 IN RAJASTHAN
Jaipur: Six new cases of Zika virus were detected in Jaipur on Sunday, taking the total number of infected people to 61. The figures were issued after a review meeting chaired by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) medical and health, Venu Gupta. "Forty-five out of the total 61 patients are healthy after treatment," the official said.

Eye to State elections, Cong pursues youth

Party mulls doles for jobless in its manifesto

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to wrest power in Hindi belt of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in the upcoming polls, the Congress is conducting an elaborate exercise to gauge their mood, aspirations and hopes to woo youth offering them lucrative offers in the party manifesto for the three State Assembly polls. A group of dedicated professionals are working on the task.

Sources said the party has already started a survey to identify the qualifications of youths, degree of unemployment and how their "frustration" can be redressed by the grand old party. "We are conducting an independent survey and not based on Government data. Anything further can be worked upon only after the data collection as how they can be offered employment, re-engagements, allowances etc," said a top AICC functionary.

- A group of dedicated professionals are working on the task
- Rajasthan Congress has conveyed to the party high command that in its manifesto it would like to offer a monthly allowance of ₹3,500 to unemployed educated persons in the State
- Taking a dig at poll promises by the BJP, the Congress leader said, "Ours will obviously not be a collection of political jumla"

A team member of the manifesto committee said as per Government data while Madhya Pradesh has an employment rate of 43 per cent (40 per cent in rural and 44 in urban areas); Rajasthan has an extreme rate of 71 per cent unemployment with 43 per cent urban and 77 per cent rural.

In the Gujarat Assembly elections, too, the Congress had promised an unemployment allowance of up to ₹4,000 a month for each jobless youth in the State. The Congress has been highlighting what it alleged rising unemployment and shrinking job opportunities in the BJP-ruled States and the country in general in its campaigns, public rallies, statements etc.

Rajasthan Congress has conveyed to the party High Command that in its manifesto it would like to offer a monthly allowance of ₹3,500 to unemployed educated persons in the State. Indian Youth Congress (IYC) launched an 'Employment Form' under the Yuva Shakti programme and a campaign is already underway.

"To fulfil the needs and expectations of youngsters, there will be no dearth of resources. An atmosphere will be provided where there will be opportunities, quality education and loans on easy terms. Details of educated unemployed will be gathered and after forming the Government, we will provide ₹3,500 assistance to them.

The party will include this in the election manifesto," said a senior leader looking after Rajasthan affair.

"Taking a dig at poll promises by the BJP, the Congress leader said, "Ours will obviously not be a collection of political jumla".

Will dig out Naxals, urban criminals: CM

PNS ■ RANCHI

Sending out a stern warning to anti-social elements working against development of Jharkhand Chief Minister suggested them to come to the mainstream and leave the path sooner than later.

Addressing a gram chaupal at Dumaria of Ghatshila on Sunday the CM also lauded the efforts of the people for defying naxal threat and joining constructive mode. "You people of this area worked courageously to chase down naxals from the area. Gun is not a solution to the deformity into the system. System cannot be changed by diverted people be it naxals or urban criminals. They should join the mainstream else we would smoke them out and eliminate them," said the CM sitting before hundreds of villagers, peoples' representatives and civil administration.

He went further stating that none should dare the system which is working in a constructive way for the betterment of the people. Coming to the measures taken by the Government, the CM named Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna, Ujjwala scheme, sanitation projects and the health insurance scheme to boost his point.

"The Prime Minister has put 2022 deadline for providing house to all but the State



Chief Minister Raghubar Das during the inauguration of Bhartiya Nav Yuvak Sangh Puja Pandal at Bakri Bazaar in Ranchi on Sunday. Ranchi Mayor Asha Lakra, Chairman State Khadi Board Sanjay Sethi are seen here

Government has even brought it lower. We would be providing houses to all by 2020. It was the Prime Minister who after 70 years of independence understood plight of women and constructing toilets for them. Ujjwala has liberated women from firewood collection. Now Ayushman Bharat is here which would not allow anyone to die in the want of medical attention," said Das.

He assured people of the State on the occasion about making the health insurance scheme universal by 2019 by extending its coverage from present 85 per cent to complete when even APLs would be added with some

kind of compensation.

"We are progressing well which was not in sight for early 14 years of the State. But we also need support and contribution from every quarter. The Government cannot do tasks like sanitation, education, girl child protection alone. You should treat boys and girls equally and provide your daughters education without any discrimination. The PM has given slogan of 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padoo' and we at State level supported it though 'Pahle Padhai-Phir Bidai'," said the CM while lauding the idea of village chaupals where ideas about social upliftment and development

can be exchanged freely. Raghubar Das also encouraged the villagers to negate intoxication, illiteracy, child marriage, dowry and witchcraft besides eliminating middlemen from the system who, he said, are eating up the share of poor. "I also see role of gram pradhan, sahiyas, anganwadi workers in generating awareness among villagers. People need to come out of the mindset of poverty which is possible if we all come together," added the CM. Jamshedpur MP Bidyut Baran Mahto, local MLAs Laxman Tudu, Menka Sardar and Kunal Sadangi were also present on the occasion.

Writing for TV soaps and also life too!

DIVYA MODI

A small town boy with big dreams, headed on a journey unplanned towards an unconventional career. Rahul Modi a resident of Upper Bazaar, Ranchi, hails from a traditional Marwari family. Leaving his family business of Ayurvedic medicine dealership, he decided to join the television and media industry in Mumbai.

But, this is not what he had always planned to do in life. Keen on doing an MBA, he wanted to join his father, learn the nuances of the trade and take the family business to new heights. He completed his schooling from DPS, RK Puram, Delhi followed by a graduation in economics from the prestigious Hindu College, Delhi

University. A person never interested in books, Rahul was always enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities. He knew to achieve what he wanted; he needed a good mark-sheet and studied only to score well.

While doing his graduation from Hindu College, Rahul got introduced to the world of theater and dramatics. Interactive sessions with the alumni gave him a taste of what the industry was like. Being actively involved backstage as a script writer and also in the creative team, this is true calling lied. He enjoyed seeing his work enacted upon. "The plan was to do an MBA after my graduation, script writing just happened by chance," recalls Modi.

Staying in Pune for further education, Modi came across a

PROUDLY RANCHIITE



lot of projects in Mumbai. Working as an intern for these projects, this is when he first set

foot in the television industry and since then there has been no looking back. Emotional

Atyachar- Season 1, Agle Janam mohe Bitiya hi kijo and Llife without Wife are some of the

projects he worked on as an intern.

Working as an associate creative head for one of the shows, Rahul got a call from the famous Rajshri Productions. Joining the production house in June 2011, he started working on Yahan Mein Ghar Ghar Kheli as an associate creative head. He got his first break in writing for the popular TV show 'Pyaar ka dard hai, Meetha Meetha Pyara Pyara', which was aired on Star Plus from June 2012 to November 2014, for which he was the dialogue writer.

Following that he did a string of popular TV soaps like Jhilmil sitaro ka aangan hoga aired on Sahara One and Mere Rang main Rangane Wali aired on Like OK. His last serial Piyaa Albelaa aired on Zee TV

was just wrapped up in August 2018. In between all this he also did Aaj Phir Jeene ki Tamanna hai aired on Doordarshan for BBC Productions as a dialogue writer. Five years down the line Rahul hopes to host Filmfare Awards.

Rahul feels it is the producer and director Sooraj Barjatya who has been a great source of inspiration for him and is his creative force. He considers Raj Kumar Barjatya fondly known as Raj Babu his mentor and says there is no one like him. "He taught me what is writing and all the praises that I have ever received, I owe it to him," said Modi. His biggest critics and closest friends are Chandan, Paras, Prerit and Akshay while he draws his strength from his family.

Continued on Page 4

SIT to probe shooting of judge's family

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been set up under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner of Police East of Gurugram to investigate the Saturday incident in which both the wife and son of Additional District Judge Shrikant, were shot at by the judge's security guard.

While the wife, Ritu (38), died overnight, the 18-year-old son, Dhruv, is at a hospital, police said. They were seriously hurt after being shot from close range by Mahipal Singh, a Haryana Police Constable hailing from Bhungarka village in Mahindargarh posted with the judge for nearly two years.

Police seize 100 boxes of illicit liquor in Giridih

PNS ■ GIRIDIH

The Mufasil police team of the Giridih recovered 100 boxes of illicit liquor from a house at Maheshpur village under the same police here on Saturday night. None could be arrested, said Dy SP Santosh Kumar Mishra as all accused managed to escape from the spot. A case under the Excise Act has been registered at the Mufasil police station, said Officer-in Charge, Sanjeev Kumar Mishra.

While addressing mediapersons, Santosh Kumar Mishra, Dy SP, said that Giridih SP Surendra Kumar Jha got a tip-off about Suresh Sahu, a resident of Maheshpur village smuggling illicit liquor from a mud house of Shyam Mandal to different places of Giridih. He bought the liquor from unknown places on cheap rates and were selling in villages of Giridih on higher rate, Dy SP added.

Police sources said the Mufasil police team, lead by Dy SP, Santosh Kumar Mishra alongwith Officer-in Charge Sanjeev Kumar Mishra and forces raided a mud house at Maheshpur village on Saturday late night and recovered 100 boxes of illicit liquor from there. Mishra said all accused belong to middle class families, managed to escape from spot.



Traffic police bans entry of heavy vehicles at MG Road

PNS ■ RANCHI

In a bid to ensure smooth vehicular movement and from security viewpoint, entry of heavy vehicles has been prohibited here in State Capital from Sunday at some of the busiest avenues. According to the traffic route plan, no heavy vehicles will be permitted to enter MG Marg from 4 PM onwards till 4 PM.

Following the traffic route chart plan, the new arrangement will be applicable for all heavy vehicles from October 15 (sixth day of Durga Puja) onwards and will continue till 'Vijay Dashmi'.

As per the traffic route chart, the entry vehicles coming from Doranda, Over-bridge towards Main Road will be allowed to enter till Sainik Market. Similarly, vehicles taking the routes -- Piska More to



Security personnel stand guard near a Puja pandal ahead of Durga Puja festival at Ratu Road in Ranchi on Sunday. *Murmu | Pioneer*

Ratu Road via Meenakshi Cinema will be stopped near Kishore Ganj Chowk Drop Gate. All vehicles from Kanke Road heading towards

Kutchery will be stopped near CCL Headquarters - Darbanga House. Meanwhile, according to route chart, Lalpur Chowk via Kokar routes will be one-

way route. Vehicles have to take Booty More route. As many as 20 drop gates have been earmarked covering prime routes like Karamtoli Chowk, Lalpur

Chowk, Radium Chowk, SSP Residence, etc.

On the other hand, besides traffic management, the district administration is vigilant and is taking all necessary measures to prevent any untoward incident. Nearly 200 additional police constables have been deputed to keep an eye on miscreants. Security around the major puja pandals has been beefed up.

Recently, Ranchi SSP Anish Gupta along with Ranchi DC Rai Mahimapat Ray conducted a meeting with puja samiti members and issued series of instructions. The district administration is taking assistance of Jharkhand Armed Force (JAF) and Rapid Action Force (RAF) in managing the security affairs while all necessary services ranging from ambulances to fire brigades will be stationed at the busiest localities as the plan.

Weekly special train to meet festive rush

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

In order to clear heavy rush of passengers during ensuing festival season, South Eastern Railway notified running of a weekly special train between Santragachi and Hapa via Tatanagar from October 12 till November 19.

The 02834 Santragachi-Hapa Special train left Santragachi station at 7 pm (it will run on every Friday). It will reach Hapa at 4.35 pm on Sunday. In the opposite direction, the 02833 Hapa-Santragachi Special will leave Hapa at 10.40 am on every Monday will arrive Santragachi at 5.45 am on Wednesday.

The special train consisting of 14 AC 3-tier coaches will have stoppages at Santragachi,

Kharagpur, Tatanagar, Chakradharpur, Rourkela, Jharsuguda, Bilaspur, Raipur, Durg, Gondia, Nagpur, Wardha, Badnera, Akola, Malkapur, Bhusawal, Jalgaon, Nandurbar, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Nadiad, Ahmedabad, Viramgam, Surendranagar, Wankaner and Rajkot between the two destinations.

Meanwhile, the computerised reservation centre at Tatanagar is witnessing a huge rush of passengers with waiting list crossing the 100 mark for most long-distance mail and express trains headed towards New Delhi, Mumbai, Patna and other destinations. The officials at the ticket reservation counter here said that in almost all the long distance trains waiting list has virtually reached the 'no

room' stage.

SER, Garden Reach, Kolkata issued orders to add additional number of coaches to the trains ferrying from Tatanagar. "From Durga puja to Chhat we expect the passengers rush to maintain the same trend and it is therefore additional arrangements are being made on temporary basis," said a senior booking official at the Tatanagar ticket booking counter.

Meanwhile, the decision of SER to introduce coaches has given people a reason to smile. "Durga Puja is one of the most important festivals of east India. Every year the rush of passengers increases. I think the authorities should make proper arrangements to ensure hassle free travel," said UK Srivastava, a senior functionary of Chottanagpur Passengers' Association.

Union Coal Minister Piyush Goyal hails sports academy of CCL

PNS ■ RANCHI

Union Coal Minister Piyush Goyal motivated the budding sports talent and young cadets during his visit at sports academy at Khelgaon, Hotwar on Saturday and motivated them to do hard work for securing gold medals for the country in the 'Olympic Games- 2024'.

Goyal appreciated CMD of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) Gopal Singh and his team for making this sports academy a huge success in this short span of time. This sports academy is indeed a significant enterprise of CCL and Jharkhand Government, to fulfill the dream of our PM and support his flagship programme 'Khelo India'.

"Government is working to create an environment and infrastructure to nurture the sports talents in the country and this academy will be an example in this direction.

Upliftment of the downtrodden and welfare of the last man of the society i.e. "Antodaya" is the prime objective of our PM and the State Government under Chief Minister Raghubar Das is working tirelessly towards it," said Goyal.

He further asked the management to scout the talents from the far flung areas and villages of Jharkhand as there is no dearth of talents here. Jharkhand has given the country sports icon in form of MS Dhoni, Deepika Kumari, Madhumita Kumari and many more.

Acknowledging on the transparent and scientific selection process of the academy, Goyal said that while favoritism should not be accommodated at any cost to ensure that only the best talent should get selected in the academy. The Minister also asked to scale up the infrastructure and develop it into a world class facility to include



Union Minister of Railways, Coal and Corporate Affairs Piyush Goyal along with CCL CMD Gopal Singh and other during his Piparwar visit on Sunday. *PNS*

young kids from other states also.

The Minister interacted with the sports cadets and inspected their hostel to take stock of the facilities, hygiene, training, and diet provided to the cadets in the academy. He also presented them with blazers and answered their curious question about country and his thoughts about the academy. He said that the social bond and cultural diversity is what makes our country unique.

Gopal Singh expressed his gratitude towards the minister. Singh said that it was the vision and initiative of CM, Jharkhand State, Raghubar Das and the Minister which led to commencement of this sports academy. He said that these young cadets are doing justice to the facilities provided to them and guidance of their coach through.

"I am pretty sure that our sports cadets can compete

Piyush Goyal visits CCL's Piparwar Project, inspects mines

PNS ■ RANCHI

Union Railway and Coal Minister Piyush Goyal visited the Piparwar Project of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL). He inspected the mines in Ashoka Project, Piparwar Area and enquired about the various mine activities and expansion plans. On this occasion, CMD, CCL, Gopal Singh, Director (Technical / Operations), AK Mishra, Director (Planning / Project) VK Srivastava, General

Manager of Piparwar Area and other officials of the district were also present.

CMD Gopal Singh briefed the Coal Minister about the activities of mining and future plan of CCL and to boost dispatch further. Minister emphasized on the need for coal production, productivity and dispatch, while giving necessary directions to the officers. He said that CCL has important role to play in the mission "Power For All" of Government.

with any competitors from across the country in their respective sports. We nurture

these kids to become a good human being," Singh further added.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
JHARKHAND POLICE HOUSING CORPORATION LIMITED
 LINE TANK ROAD, RANCHI
 (CIN: U45200JH2002SGC012154)

Notice Inviting Tender No. 15 / 2018-19

Letter No.- CE /2794/986 Date: 13.10.2018
 Chief Engineer, Jharkhand Police Housing Corporation Limited invites percentage rate bids on approved Bill of Quantities from contractors registered with JPHCL in appropriate class for the works mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Tender Reference No.	Name of Work	Approximate value of work (in Lacs)	Cost of BOQ (in Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.)	Period of Completion
1.	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	JPHCL / GR 01 / NIT 15 / 2018-19	Renovation Work of JPHCL Head Quarter Building in the district of Ranchi.	4.23	1250.00	9000.00	15 days

2. Bid document with detailed terms and conditions will be available on our Website <http://jphcl.jhpolice.gov.in> from 15.10.2018 at 11:00 AM to 25.10.2018 up to 5:00 PM. Bids must be submitted offline before 3:00 PM on 26.10.2018, in the office of Chief Engineer, JPHCL, Line Tank Road, Ranchi. Technical Bids received will be opened at 3:30 PM on 26.10.2018.

3. Further details can be seen on Website <http://jphcl.jhpolice.gov.in> Prospective bidders may contact Tel. No. 0651-2214712 also for any help, if required.

4. Corrigendum/Addendum, if any, will be published only on the above mentioned Website.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, JPHCL, Ranchi



Principal Secretary of Health Department Nidhi Khare meets Governor Droupadi Murmu at Raj Bhawan in Ranchi on Sunday. *PNS*

Fire safety norms violation rampant during Durga Puja

Social Science exhibition 'Reverberations' at SBPS

SHORT CIRCUIT CAUSES DAMAGE TO KISHOREGANJ PANDAL

PNS ■ RANCHI

Timely action by the workers saved a major fire from spreading at a puja pandal at Kishoreganj area in Ranchi in the night intervening Saturday and Sunday. Fire Safety Department sources informed that the pandal was made of hay adding that a wire was running close by which is complete violation of the safety norms.



Durga Puja pandal of Pragati Pratik Club Puja pandal catches fire after a short circuit accident at Saturday night in Ranchi PNS

After a short circuit sparks flew from the wire cause and fell on the hay igniting a fire. The workers engaged in the pandal making however separated the burning hay from the pandal thus preventing blaze from spreading. "We reached the infor-

mation regarding fire at around 2:55 am. However by the time we rushed to the spot the blaze was brought under

control by the workers," said the state fire officer RK Thakur. The fire officer stated that

violation of the fire safety norms is widespread in the pandals this puja season as well.

He added in general the pandals have been asked to set up the pandals at open spaces so that fire extinguishers could reach the spot.

The organisers have been told to use PVC wire and also insulate the joints.

They have been asked to keep trained volunteers and also make emergency exit door. In addition they have also been advised to minimize use of inflammable materials in making of the pandals.

He said four magistrates and four officers of the fire department were inspecting the pandals to ascertain the implementation of the guidelines since Saturday.

They are likely to submit the report later in the evening.

Thakur however added that preliminary reports have indicated that most of the pandals have violated the standard fire safety norms. "We could only issue instruc-

tions. The power to enforce them is with the district administration," he said.

It may be noted here that during an inspection of the pandals on Sunday the Ranchi DC Rai Mahimapat Ray and the SSP Anis Gupta also found lapses in the safety norms in the pandals and issued the necessary direction.

Meanwhile the state fire department is geared up to meet any emergency situation in the state capital. Officials informed that over two dozen fire extinguishers have been kept in ready state to meet crisis situation during the Durga puja.

As per the instruction of the administration the fire extinguishers have been kept in Police Control Room, Firayal Chowk, Sadar police station and Doranda.

Leaves of all firemen have been cancelled and officers of the fire department are also working on Sundays.

PNS ■ RANCHI

Dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi's 149th Birth Anniversary and to emulate his principles of simple living and oneness among the students, Sarala Birla Public School (SBPS) organised a Social Science Exhibition 'Reverberations' on the school premises. Different exhibits which included various charts and models were put up by the students of Std. KG to V along with the help of their mentors.



The models included the French Revolution, Swachhta Abhiyan, the Seven Wonders of the world, Haldighati Battlefield, working in Coal Mines, working of Bangle Industries, working of Wind Mill and Solar Panel, Volcanoes, Jog Fall, tribal weapons etc. The working of the models and the charts were explained by the students which were highly appreciated

by all the visitors. A book fair was also organised on the school premises which added value to the event.

School Head Personnel & Admin. Pradip Varma praised the sincere effort of the students and teachers and said that through such exhibitions students learn things practically in addition to the theoretical knowledge. Principal Paramjit Kaur appraised the magnificent work done by the students. She further added that such exhibitions will help to lift up the spirits of the students to do excellent work in future too.

CM lays foundation of road construction projects

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Chief Minister Raghubar Das on Sunday laid foundation stone for six road construction schemes of Road-Construction Department at Bhababandi village of Khardiya Panchayat in Dumariya block of East Singhbhum district.



Chief Minister Raghubar Das interacts with a woman during 'Jan Chaupal' programme at Dumariya Block of East Singhbhum on Sunday PNS

As per the project construction of 32.80 km long road will take place from Dumaria to Kovali to be built at a cost of ₹ 55.506 crore. Construction of the Lilam Valley road from Kovali-Length 6.50 kilometers, to be constructed at a cost of Rs 17.68 crores. With completion of project Jharkhand's Potka and Dumria block will be connected directly to Odisha.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated 21 smart classes and two science centers for Bhababandi village. Smart Classes are being set up in 21 schools in the district, under SCA scheme. Along with this, this facility is also being pro-

vided in Residential School, operated in the remote area of Lakshadham. Children of rural areas will be educated with the help of audio-visual equipment. All teachers of all schools will be given training

from time to time for 3 years so that teachers can be equipped with latest technology.

Science center has been established to develop and popularise the interest in science among children. The science center will play an important role in bringing the hidden talent in the children. Through this, scientific thinking will be developed in children.

Keeping this in view, under the special Central Assistance Scheme, the science center at the cost of 17 lakhs has been set up in the two schools of the district, Ashtakoshi Plus-II High School, Bhalukpatra, Block Dumaria and Milnebethi Plus-to-High School, Jwalkata, Block Gaurabanda.

The Chief Minister said that the government is working fast in developing infrastructure. The government is working on the basis of the schemes made by the people of the village. The Chief Minister said that by December 2018, the aim is to electrify 32,000 villages of Jharkhand. Work will be done to make a separate feeder for 2019 for cultivation, separate feeder for the industry and electricity from the separate feeder for the general public.



State's largest car dealer Premsons Motor's renovated showroom Arena was formally inaugurated amid much fanfare on Sunday. Religious heads of different sects together inaugurated this mega showroom. The renovated showroom of Maruti Suzuki is lashed with hi-tech facilities. As many as 1300 employees are associated with this firm. Director, Premsons Motor - Pankaj Kumar Poddar along with his team welcomed the visitors. Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

Bharti Kashyap bags National IMA honours for third time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jharkhand's own crusader against cervical cancer, Dr. Bharti Kashyap was today conferred the "Women Empowerment Award" by the Indian Medical Association, at I.M.A. House, New Delhi, for her dedicated and pioneering work in organising health awareness campaigns - Cervical Cancer Screening Camps, throughout the far flung and rural areas of Jharkhand, to combat the high incidence of cervical cancer, educating women to take better care of themselves and making them strong enough to gain greater control over all decisions affecting them.

Statistics reveal that in India, every hour, an average of 6.8 women die due to cervical cancer. The statistics further said that around 44.2 percent of deaths of women are due to breast and cervical cancer.

A specialist in Femto Laser Assisted cataract surgery and Femto Laser Bladeless Lasik surgery and currently, Chairperson of the women Doctors' Wing, IMA, Jharkhand Chapter, Dr. Bharti Kashyap has been conferred with Nari Shakti Puraskar, 2017, by the H'ble President of India, at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi in March 2018, for exemplary work in the field of women empowerment.

On 24th September 2018, Dr. Kashyap was bestowed with the coveted British Excellence Award at the European Society for Cataract and Refractive Surgery's annual conference at Vienna, Austria, by Honorable ambassador of India to Austria H.E. MsRenu Pall for her exemplary work in organising series of free Cervical Detection Campaigns throughout the state of Jharkhand, that has facilitated early detection and cure of cervical cancer - the most common cause of deaths amongst women, in India and to the society at large.



On 24th September 2018, Dr. Kashyap was bestowed with the coveted British Excellence Award at the European Society for Cataract and Refractive Surgery's annual conference at Vienna, Austria, by Honorable ambassador of India to Austria H.E. MsRenu Pall for her exemplary work in organising series of free Cervical Detection Campaigns throughout the state of Jharkhand, that has facilitated early detection and cure of cervical cancer - the most common cause of deaths amongst women, in India and to the society at large.

tribals and underprivileged women in the far flung and rural areas of Jharkhand.

"This is a proud moment for me. I have received accolades from various international bodies. However a recognition of my humble and dedicated service to society at my home country strengthens my resolve to re-dedicate my life for the service of mankind," Dr. Bharti Kashyap, speaking on

the occasion, stressed. At all Cervical Cancer Detection camps organised by me as chairperson of Women Doctors' Wing, IMA, Jharkhand, hundreds of women who were detected with genital infections and pre cancer of the cervix were treated with Colscope guided Cryo Treatment and cured free of any cost. In addition Kit 2 and Kit 6 tablets, iron folic acid and

calcium tablets were distributed amongst women suffering from genital infections. In addition women doctors working at the various state run hospitals of the state were provided with training on use of Coloscope and Cryo machines for early detection and cure of cervical cancer with help from experts of Chittaranjan Cancer Institute, Kolkata, Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, New Delhi and Service Beyond Borders, USA, she revealed.

Dr. Bharti Kashyap is also the founder director of the Kashyap Memorial Eye Bank, Ranchi and the Kashyap Memorial Eye Hospital, Ranchi, both accredited by NABH. Till date, she has completed eye screening of over 2 million school children enrolled in various government run schools all over the state, distributed thousands of eye glasses free and performed hundreds of congenital and traumatic surgery free of cost thereby enabling thousands of children, who had earlier dropped out of schools, to go back to schools to pursue their dreams.

Ex-MP Suraj Mandal joins BJP

PNS ■ RANCHI

Former MP from Godda and leader of Jharkhand Vikas Dal Suraj Mandal joined the BJP on Sunday in the presence of State party president Laxman Gilua. Host of other leaders such as Salini Gupta of Koderma Zila Parisad and Sunil Kumar Singh of AAP also switched to the saffron party.



Mandal once into Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, had set up his own party. He had represented the Lok Sabha constituency in 1991. Welcoming Mandal and others on the occasion the BJP chief said the party is committed to nationalism.

"Only is BJP committed to national interest while the rest are committed to their family interests. Now people of this country have lone faith over the BJP under which India is progressing all round and getting respect at the world stage," said Gilua.

He also named welfare schemes launched by the prime ministership of Narendra Modi such as Jan-Dhan scheme,

Ujjwala, PMAY, Ayushman Bharat to drive home his point. Speaking on the occasion Mandal hit out the JMM for nepotism.

"We had fought for separate Jharkhand for the State and not for any family and other members. It was paining me and to turn the dreams of martyrs into reality I have come to the BJP. The country has become powerful in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I am thankful to the BJP for providing me the platform and work harder to again reinstate him to the position," said the leader.

BJP State vice president Aditya Sahu helped the leaders in joining the party through online mode. MLA Navin Jaiswal, BJP spokesperson Pratull Shahdeo and several others were present on the occasion.

RANCHI RAILWAY STATION

Glance of dying tribal art forms to mesmerise pandal shoppers

PNS ■ RANCHI

Portraying the rich art and culture of the tribal inhabitants of the 'Land of the Forest', another major puja pandal of Ranchi which registers a distinct place in showcasing the creativity, colour combination and concept has come up with a theme capturing the way of life of indigenous population. As a mark of accolade to the tribal populace, popular art works of Jharkhand has been adorned to gratify the look of Ranchi Railway Station puja pandal being decked up here since decades.



Workers of Ranchi Railway station made Puja pandal on the theme of a tribal art ahead of Durga Puja festival in Ranchi on Sunday Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

Hoppers mulling to witness dying art forms ranging from Sohrai to Dhokra to Kohbar including the lifestyles of tribal people will get to see a whole new concept here combined with a popular folk art form.

Interestingly, milieu of famous dance-forms Chhau, a semi classical Indian dance with martial, tribal and folk traditions, with origins in the eastern States of Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha has been used primarily in boosting the entire concept.

Crafted out with the use of biodegradable stuffs like clay, terracotta, ply-boards, bamboo sticks etc, besides the tribal paintings and other art works, the ambience of this pandal has been created on a similar lines to that of a tribal

CS inaugurates puja pandal

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Secretary, Sudhir Tripathi on Sunday inaugurated the Puja Pandal set up annually by the committee members of Rajasthan Mitra Mandal. Based on the theme of art and culture of three States of India - Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Bihar, Rajasthan Mitra Mandal is one of the oldest puja pandals of the City decked up primarily focusing on traditional themes. Notably, a few main puja pandals of the Capital City was opened for the visitors on Sunday.

lifestyle. According to the organisers of the puja samiti, the decoration of the pandal has been inspired from the zest of tribal customs.

Traditional tribal weapons have been kept on the premises of puja pandals to add more practicality to the concept. Also, figurines of Ravanaa

including Lord Hanumaan measuring 15 feet and 20 feet respectively have been decked up on the puja pandal premises adorned with Chhau masks. "Sculpts of the deities prepared out of clay and plaster of paris have been designed taking inspiration from the folk dance form get-up. The back-

drop of the main podium also carries the essence of tribal customs. Special focus has been given on designing the masks and other jewellery of the figurines that matches the texture of Chhau dance," said president of Ranchi Railway Station Puja Pandal, Munchun Rai.

The puja pandal decorated at a cost of Rs 35 lakh have deities measuring 15 feet each. "The puja pandal has been decorated with eco-friendly materials while attempts have been made to make people aware about its lost heritage. From contemporary themes to giving a glimpse of tribal customs to the visitors, this is for the first time that our committee has tried a concept which is inspired from local culture, art and subsistence of a particular community," added Rai.

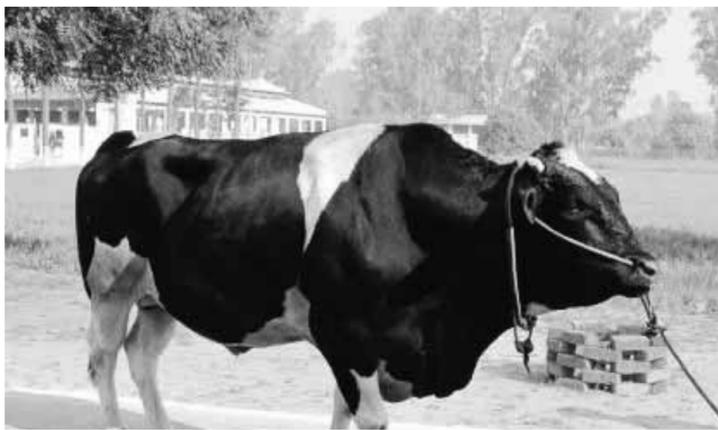
Army sells 16K imported cows at throwaway prices

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to streamline its resources to improve operational preparedness by giving up non-critical functions, the Army has closed down 15 military farms and sold 16,000 imported Frieswal cows.

The cows were sold to various States at a price of ₹1,000 each and the Army plans to sell the remaining 9,000 high-yield milch cattle shortly. Moreover, the remaining 24 military farms, a colonial legacy, will also be shortly closed down and land handed over to the local military authorities.

The decision to close down the Rajera military farms set up by the British to rear milch cattle for providing dairy prod-



ucts to the Armed forces was taken by the Government last year to improve teeth to tail

ratio of the Army. It means more soldiers deployed for operational role than static duties like maintenance of vehicles and farms amongst others.

Following the official directive, the Army has so far closed down 15 farms out of total 39 located all over the country. As regards 25,000 Frieswal cows, a cross breed between Holstein-Friesian cows of Netherlands and native Indian Sahiwal breed, the Army first decided to auction the milch cattle. Each cow can yield at an average more than 3,500 litres of milk per lactation and costs ₹1 lakh each.

However, there were no takers for the cows in the auction and the authorities then

decided to sell each cow at a nominal price of ₹1,000 each to various States provided they were ready to foot the transportation bill.

This scheme met with success and 16,000 cows were sold in the last few weeks, officials said here on Saturday. While 9,000 of the sold cattle were already dispatched the remaining 7,000 will be transported shortly, they added. Nagaland and West Bengal have already bought cows and some more States have evinced interest, they said.

The closure of military farms is one step in restructuring the Army as recommended by the Lt General (retired)DB Shekatkar committee report.

The committee was constituted by the Defence Ministry to recommend measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces. The committee submitted its report in December 2016.

Some of the recommendations for implementation included optimisation of signals establishments to include Radio Monitoring Companies, Corps Air Support Signal Regiments, Air Formation Signal Regiments, Composite Signal Regiments and merger of Corps Operating and Engineering Signal Regiments.

The other proposals were restructuring of repair echelons in the Army to include Base

Workshops, Advance Base Workshops and Static/Station Workshops in the field Army besides redeployment of Ordnance echelons to include Vehicle Depots, Ordnance Depots and Central Ordnance Depots apart from streamlining inventory control mechanisms.

Better utilisation of supply and transportation echelons and animal transport units, closure of Military Farms and Army Postal Establishments in peace locations, enhancement in standards for recruitment of clerical staff and drivers in the Army and improving the efficiency of the National Cadet Corps(NCC) were the other recommendations.

'Need to work on social behaviour change to eliminate child marriage'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Voices of Adolescents organised its first event adolescents in the city from different schools and backgrounds at Dylogg Coworking on Sunday.

This was to mark the International day of the girl, and was targeted to sensitise young children on gender, stereotypes, equality and

A film called 'Muskaan' on female foeticide and girl child was screened at the beginning. A whiteboard depiction game to redefine characteristics on male and female gender was played. Students then engaged in learning about other students and building trust exercises with them. They opened up about gender in their homes and families, jokes among friends and the changing times.

Current statistics were discussed and quizzed, on sex ratio, access to education by Kokila Bhattacharya. Children believed that some Bollywood songs and item numbers are deprecating, discriminatory and do not respect women, and so they rewrote some of them in groups.

Michael Juma, Chief, UNICEF, Madhya Pradesh



A film called 'Muskaan' on female foeticide and girl child was screened at the beginning

interacted with the students during International Day of Girl Child re-emphasized on

this year's theme, 'With Her: A Skilled Girl Force' and reiterated the need to improve and widen scope of opportunities for girl child as well as the need to increase investments to enhance ease of their access to quality and inclusive education, health, nutrition, sanitation and protection aspects to enable realize their potential. He stressed the need to collectively work on social behaviour change interventions to eliminate child marriage in an effort to equitably give girls a platform to realize their dreams.

'Matdaan Deepotsav' at Marine Drive today

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Matdaan Deepotsav would be organised on October 15 at Marine Drive, capital city Raipur in which Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) would be making 'rangoli' and light lamps to spread awareness on importance and need to cast each vote.

The initiative has been taken by 'Mor Raipur-Mor Vote'. It would be held from 6.00 pm.

As per information received, under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign, the school and college Persons with Disabilities children along with Mor Raipur Club with other civil organizations would organize the 'Matdaan Deepotsav'.

The students from Gurukul, Durga college, Government Nursing College along with other 25 schools and college students would participate.

Election Commission has also made arrangement for display of EVM machine and



would explain on how to use it. Students will also organize

events at Selfie point, which is attraction at the event.

'Govt has failed in combating Titli'

DOUP SEEKS PROPER ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGES

PNS ■ BRAHMAMUR

The Dakshin Odisha Unnayan Parishad (DOUP) on Sunday alleged that the State Government has completely failed in tackling the Cyclone Titli in districts of Ganjam, Gajapati and Rayagada.

"The Chief Secretary had been telling media about the possible cyclonic storm Titli and claiming that the State Government was fully prepared to ensure least damage and zero casualty.

However, the reality is different now. It is very disappointing that about 30 people have died by the impact of Titli in the three districts," said DOUP convenor Rabi Rath in a statement.

He said the Government's claim of shifting 3 lakh people was not at all true as there was no information about shifted people made public. Officers from district level to the Chief Secretary made the claim only to take credit.

He criticized Minister

"THE CHIEF SECRETARY HAD BEEN TELLING MEDIA ABOUT THE POSSIBLE CYCLONIC STORM TITLI AND CLAIMING THAT THE STATE GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY PREPARED TO ENSURE LEAST DAMAGE AND ZERO CASUALTY"

Surjya Narayan Patra for saying that he was unaware of the death of 16 people due to landslide in Baraghara village in Gajapati district. Rath said three persons were killed as walls collapsed over him at different places in Kashinagar and Mohana blocks and six persons washed away in Sorada block.

Rath demanded that the State Government provide relief to all the affected families and make a proper assessment of loss of human lives and damages and provide adequate compensation.

Was a mask for Cong as working president: Uike

NEVER INCLUDED IN ANY DECISION MAKING OF PARTY

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

As working president, the Congress has converted me as a mask. There has been no role left in which one can play a key role. Before the media, it was being reflected that all due respect is being accorded," said BJP leader and former Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee working president Ramdayal Uike while addressing the media on Sunday.

Uike said, "I was never included in any decision mak-

ing of party. Even in distribution of the party ticket to the candidates, no information was being provided as they did not show any confidence nor had any faith in me."

"I was always being asked and even forced to give statements which were against my character. Bhupesh Baghel, Charandas Mahant, Jai Singh Agrawal among others led the pack which was causing mental agony," he adds.

On Arvind Netam, former union minister, Uike said even though he has been taken in Core Committee of party, just to showcase it. But Netam should also remember it is the same Congress which threw him out. Bhanwar Singh Porte was also expelled. "Fed up after continuous harassment, I was forced to quit the Congress," he adds.



"Now my target is to work with dedication under leadership of Chief Minister Raman Singh to help him to

form BJP government. The four seats of Korba district would be taken by BJP, the work would be done on that

basis," he pointed out over a query. He said that it is like home coming and is feeling too emotional.

On CPCC president Bhupesh Baghel, he said that he had brought shame to women of state by involving in the sleaze CD case. Lack of sensitivity and leadership has been his weaknesses.

He said the issue of termination of membership of Bhupesh was also raised with national leadership but nothing happened.

He points out that CPCC president do not know how to respect others and is against caste and tribal community. He should seek apology for terming me as 'Unlucky'.

Commenting on Chhattisgarh incharge P L Punia's statement, he said that he feels insulted including the tribal community of state that with respect BJP could have given 'something' other.

Lawyer misbehaved by cops in U'kote

PNS ■ UMARKOTE

Umarkote Bar Association member Md Husain has alleged that a team of the Chandhandi police misbehaved him using slang language during a vehicle checking on Friday evening.

Husain was returning home after Friday prayer in his bike when he was stopped by a team of police and MV officials on Chandahandi-Jharigam Main road. As asked by them, Hussain produced all documents. However, the team took his bike on the plea that he was not wearing a helmet then.

"When I protested saying MV checking after sunset is illegal, they verbally abused me and booked me in a false case," alleged Husain.

Basing on his complaint, the Umarkote Bar Association called a meeting here on Saturday and condemned the act of police. The association threatened to take bold steps if the cops don't not withdraw false case and release his bike unconditionally.

"Lawyers are now protesting attack on a lawyer of the Orissa High Court. This incident would add fuel to the fire," said association president Prasant Kumar Sahu.

Kejriwal, Sisodia among star campaigners for AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has released its 20-member star campaigners' list for electioneering in the state for its General Assembly Election 2018 for which the schedule has been announced by the Election Commission of India.

AAP has claimed to fight in the 90 seats. In the letter submitted to Election Commission of India, the list of 20 star campaigners has been named.

As per the list Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, minister Gopal Rai, the Chief Minister candidate for Chhattisgarh Komal Hupendi and State coordinator Dr Sanket Thakur find the name for star-campaigners.

The others are Sanjay Singh, Dr Sushil Gupta, Narain Dass Gupta, Rajender Pal Gautam, Somnath Bharti, Sanjeev Jha, Vandana Kumari, Manoj Kumar, Ajay Dutt, Rituraj Jha, Akhilesh



Tripathi, Soni Souri, Suraj Upadhyaya, Ravi Manav and Narendra Duggad.

As per party sources, soon the programmes for the star campaigners would be finalised. The dates for trip to Chhattisgarh

and where and when the meetings are to be held will be decided. The AAP has planned for a public meeting of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in each revenue division for which the preparations are underway.

Writing for TV soaps and...

From Page 1

Recalling their childhood, his younger sister Ridhima said, "Since childhood he was very creatively inclined and always wanted to be a part of Rajshri Productions. Seeing him realizing his dreams, I feel extremely happy for him and make it a point to follow his serials."

Belonging to a traditional family where no one had any idea that a career in the film industry can be respectable and possible for an outsider, Rahul had a tough time convincing his family. "Coming from a joint family in Ranchi, when I told everyone I want to join the television industry, all hell broke loose. They told me to think about it, take as much time as I wanted, but they certainly wanted me to reconsider my decision," remembers Rahul.

"One of my uncles said, Beta yeh sab jagah aur kaam hum log ke live nahi hai (Son this work and these places are

not for us)," reminisces Rahul. In spite of what everyone in the family had to say, his parents were always very supportive and encouraging. "Most of the family members were not very happy with his decision, but we as parents supported him from the beginning. When Rahul got a job with Rajshri Productions we were very happy and satisfied. Initially we would not watch any of the daily soaps but now because our son is a part of this industry; we make it a point to follow his shows and give him our feedback. We enjoy his creativity and especially his dialogue writing," remarked his parents Kavita and Ravikant Modi.

Rahul believes the universe and especially the industry has been very kind to him. "Two years after I set foot here, I was welcomed in the Rajshri family and since then everyday has been a new journey for me."

Odisha: No flights from Jharsuguda for a week

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

The recently-inaugurated Veer Surendra Sai Airport (VSSA) at Jharsuguda has disappointed people of western Odisha with no operation of flights under the UDAN scheme in the past one week.

Even three weeks after the commissioning of Odisha's second major airport, air passengers hardly got the flight services to other destinations from here.

After its inauguration, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had released a schedule for flight operations from the airport.

However, passengers are still waiting to get services.

As per the schedule, the flight services to Bhubaneswar, Raipur and Ranchi from Jharsuguda were to be operated six days in a week excluding Sunday.

The regular schedule for flight operations had com-



menced from September 24.

Reports said that not a single flight by the Air Odisha has been operated in the past seven days. Rather, the airport has turned into a point of amusement for public.

The flight operations have been halted due to technical glitches, a source in the Air Odisha said.

The flight services would be resumed after getting notification from the DGCA about a winter flight schedule. The operations would probably

start from Monday, he said.

Notably, the VSSA was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 22 under the UDAN (Udega Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme. Built with an investment of ₹210 crore, the airport was expected to play a major role in development in sectors of Odisha Tourism and hotel industries.

However, the irregular flight services from the airport have raised doubt on its long-run operations in future.

DEGRADATION BY RISING FOOTFALLS IN HIMALAYAS — Niti Ayog favours green cess

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's top think tank, Niti Ayog has favoured imposing a 'green cess' from tourists to arrest the environmental degradation caused by the rising footfalls in the Indian Himalayan region.



tourism industry.

The Niti Ayog proposal in its recent 'Report of Working Group II Sustainable Tourism in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR)' follows observation that the region annually records about 100 million tourists and the number is expected to increase to 240 million by 2025, putting huge pressure on resources.

The 'green cess' will help boost revenue services as well as ensure sustainable development of the region that stretches about 2,400 km across the northern border of India, covering an area of about 500,000 sq km, as per the report. It also suggested payments for environmental services (PES) such as charging entrance fees from tourists and services sector as a long term solution within the

resources and biodiversity and harness opportunities that change brings.

Also, sustainable aspects of tourism development in the IHR, such as carrying capacity of potential destinations, do not find enough resonance in planning long-term investments.

The think tank also noted that the movement of Indian tourists is increasingly becoming individualistic as standards of living have gone up and people travel to IHR landscapes as and when they want. "As a result, traffic congestion and air and noise pollution, over-booked hotels, non-availability of parking places, and local water and energy security are becoming recurrent problems, even in smaller towns such as Dharamsala.

"Even trials of control mechanisms to restrict the number of visitors to very fragile sites (e.g. Rohtang Pass from Kullu-Manali or Amarnath Yatra), have not yielded desired results as people find alternative routes and means to reach such

sites.

"Even Sikkim, which has good experience with ecotourism, is increasingly challenged by mass tourism, as per Vikram Singh Gaur from NITI Ayog and Dr. Rajan Kotru from International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the lead authors of the report. Among other contributors were Ashok K Jain (NITI Ayog), Sejal Worah (WWF India) and Mridula Tangirala (Tata Trust).

Not only the panel has favoured 'tourism tax' as being imposed by many countries like Bhutan as sources of revenue, it also suggested PES schemes that offer financial incentives for locals to provide a wide range of ecosystem services untouched by normal market transactions.

The panel has also called for carrying out tourism development management of Destination Carrying Capacity as the destinations have their own limited natural and heritage resources and infrastructure.

PM Modi has much to hide about Rafale deal: Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing with its campaign against the Government over the Rafale deal, the Congress on Sunday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was directly involved in it, adding that he had much to hide about it.

Questioning Modi's silence over the deal, senior Congress leader Anand Sharma claimed that only the Prime Minister was aware that the offset contracts would not be given to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). "It was his (Modi's) decision. Only he was privy to what he was going to do," said Sharma at AICC Press conference.

"It was expected that the Prime Minister would speak on this issue of national importance, but he continued to remain silent while making tall claims about his Government. The Prime Minister has much to hide in the Rafale deal. His silence raises fundamental questions, because he is directly complicit and personally accountable for it," he alleged.



Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma addresses a Press conference at AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Sunday

PM's silence raises fundamental questions, because he is directly complicit and personally accountable for it
—Anand Sharma

Claiming that the Rafale deal was the biggest scam in the history of the country, Sharma reiterated his party's demand for setting up a Joint Parliamentary Committee to look into it.

The former Union Minister also questioned Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's visit to France, during which she will take stock of the progress of French firm Dassault Aviation supplying 36 Rafale jets to the Indian Air Force under the ₹58,000-crore deal. Sharma maintained that there was a

hike in the price of the fighter aircraft India was buying from France and asserted that the Prime Minister needed to clear many doubts about the deal that had been raised. He said more details of the deal would emerge if a forensic audit of it was carried out.

The Congress has been claiming that the aircraft will cost significantly more than what the previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government was negotiating. The Opposition party has also been demanding answers from the BJP Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government as to why HAL was not involved in the deal as finalised during the UPA regime.

Railway proposes RPF to safeguard Metros

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cash starved Indian Railways has proposed that Railway Protection Force (RPF) be given the responsibility of securing the premises of all upcoming metro stations in the country. Presently Metro property is being managed by the elite Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).



while the RPF charges only ₹78,000 per jawan yearly.

The railway board has written to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs saying that the RPF which is already guarding the Kolkata Metro be made in charge of security for the new metros in Lucknow, Nagpur, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Indore, Bhopal and Hyderabad.

"Having a single dedicated force for the Metro Railway is advantageous since the staff can be trained in the safety and security requirements of the metro. The RPF has specialised training because it is already securing sub-urban stations for years," a senior railway official said.

The official also pointed out that the move will also be cost effective. The CISF charges ₹1.84 lakh annually per jawan for securing metro premises,

Also, as the RPF is entrusted with the responsibility of protection and security of railway property, passenger area and has the power to arrest, investigate and prosecute criminals, it would be able to use them at stations as well.

"The RPF with only 900 staffers is managing Kolkata metro which has a footfall of about five to six lakh commuters daily. They have both the expertise and the experience to manage and secure mass transport system like Railways, so they are equipped to deal with metros," the official said. The RPF has a sanctioned strength of 74,456 personnel

Rajnath Singh to celebrate Dussehra along Indo-pak border

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Home Minister Rajnath Singh will celebrate Dussehra and perform 'shastra puja' in Bikaner along the highly sensitive Indo-Pak border with BSF jawans. During the two-day visit, the Home Minister will arrive in Bikaner on October 18, stay the night at the BOP, before celebrating the festival with the jawans on October 19, said Home Ministry officials.

Singh is expected to review the situation on the border and assess the progress in various infrastructure projects. He will attend a 'Bada Khana' (feast with the jawans) and address the security personnel, they said.

The 3,323-km-long Indo-Pak border is considered to be highly sensitive. Even though the border in Rajasthan is peaceful, the border guarding forces of the two countries often engaged in massive firing in Jammu & Kashmir, leading to loss of human lives and properties. Last year, the Home Minister had celebrated Dussehra at Joshimath in Uttarakhand along the Sino-Indian border with ITBP jawans.

China's Confucius Institute on India's covert agencies' radar

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The role of China's Confucius Institute, which is overtly an intellectual institution, has now come under the scanner of the Indian covert agencies, which suspect that the institute is exploited by Beijing worldwide for Intelligence gathering. The establishment of one Confucius Institute centre in Mumbai University and efforts at setting up similar centres in Vellore, Sullur, Coimbatore and Kolkata has sent alarm bells ringing in the Intelligence community here.

The Chinese agencies' efforts through Chinese businessmen to gain access to decision making levels in Indian establishments have also emerged as another area of concern, a senior Intelligence official said. Amid China's growing geopolitical ambition, the Indian Intelligence agencies are apprehending aggressive Intelligence gathering by Beijing.

The agencies are keeping a watch on the MoUs signed with Indian universities /colleges, student exchange programmes and attempts to manipulate the post-Dalai Lama situation in their favour. China has reportedly sought the custody of the

17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje from Washington. Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje deceptively exited from India to the US in April last year.

Karmapa is the second most important leader in the Tibetan Buddhism hierarchy after Dalai Lama. China already has taken custody of another key Tibetan Buddhist leader Panchen Lama.

Union Home Ministry sources said Home Minister Rajnath Singh is seized of the threats emanating from Chinese penetration in Indian educational institutions and has sought a strategy to be put in place to deal with the challenge.

The Intelligence agencies have advised the States to keep a watch on the Chinese activities and inform the Central agencies for collation of data and remedial action.

"The modus operandi of the Chinese Intelligence gathering apparatus globally is using amateurs and its expatriate community settled worldwide which is not only a big challenge to detect but also difficult to prove in a court of law. China is the most active nation involved in cyber espionage with formidable capabilities," an Intelligence official said.

The Chinese intelligence

agencies are also known to be different from their counterparts in US and Russia where in Beijing exploits its soft power for espionage activities under the cover of legitimate activities. Notably, China indulges in intelligence gathering through academics and scholars, business people and Intelligence operatives under official cover of diplomats, defence attaches and journalists, another official said.

India and China share a complicated relationship due to the lack of delineation of India-China boundary, lack of clarification of the Line of Actual Control, Beijing's concern about presence of the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso in India and New Delhi's concerns regarding post-Dalai Lama scenario.

The relationship is further complicated by Chinese support to Northeastern insurgent groups, increased Chinese interest in the Indian Ocean Region and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC, a part of BRI) which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and growing Chinese influence in India's neighbourhood especially Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Maldives, added the official.

Top court comes to rescue of SC man who was terminated twice by UP Govt

New Delhi: In a rare instance, the Supreme Court has come to the rescue of a man belonging to the Scheduled Caste category whose services were terminated twice by the Uttar Pradesh Government owing to a dispute over his caste certificate.

The top court, held that the subsequent change in law does not have the effect of reversing all the decisions made prior to the fresh view taken by a court of law.

The Supreme Court in 2013 had upheld an Allahabad High Court order by which Vijay Shankar was reinstated to service with all consequential benefits, holding him as a member of SC category after state government had withdrawn its appeal following a lengthy hearing.

The Uttar Pradesh government, however, in 2015 again dismissed him from service, saying a larger bench of the high court has taken a different view and his caste does not fall under the Schedule Caste category.

Shankar, who belongs to the 'Kasera' community, a sub-caste of 'Shilpkars' which is a SC category notified under the Constitution, challenged the decision once again before the Allahabad High Court, but it dismissed his plea saying that the law has now been changed by a larger bench of the top court.

A bench of justices S A Bobde and L Nageswara Rao said the high court in its judgment, dated August 12, 2015, has completely "misappreciated and misapplied the law".

"The difference between a superior court reversing a decision, which is in appeal before itself, and overruling the view is well known," it said.

The apex court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to immediately release the withheld pension and other retirement benefits of Shankar, who superannuated from the post of assistant prosecution officer during his second termination period.

The court, while allowing the appeal of Shankar, set aside the high court order of August 2015, rejecting his plea and his dismissal order of June 15, 2015.

"If a point is settled inter-parties and there is a subsequent change in the law because the court takes a different view, the change in a

law does not have the effect of unsettling the rights settled earlier.

"The subsequent change in a law does not have the effect of reversing all the decisions made prior to the fresh view," the bench said.

It said in the present case, Shankar's rights were settled by the earlier high court judgment of December 23, 2011, which was upheld when the appeal of the state government was dismissed as withdrawn by the apex court.

The apex court said it was not permissible for the principal secretary, home department, to rely upon the subsequent contrary decision and dismiss the appellant (Shankar) from service again.

The ordeal of Shankar, who joined the service in 1991 as assistant prosecution officer, started when he was terminated on May 21, 2007, by the state government on the ground that he has obtained the job by submitting a forged Scheduled Caste certificate.

It was found that Shankar's caste was recorded as 'Kasera' in his school certificate, which according to the state government was not a SC category.

Shankar, first challenged his dismissal order before the Uttar Pradesh State Public Services Tribunal, which granted him relief by setting aside the punishment order and reinstated him with all consequential service benefits and continuity in service.

The tribunal also observed that 'Kasera' is a sub-caste of 'Shilpkar' as per a government order dated December 12, 1950. It said there are 26 sub castes of 'Shilpkar' and that 'Kasera' was one of them.

Thus, 'Kasera' being a sub-caste of 'Shilpkar' comes under the category of Scheduled Caste, the tribunal said.

Aggrieved by the tribunal's order, the Uttar Pradesh government moved the Allahabad High Court that on December 23, 2011, upheld the tribunal's order, saying the caste of his parents as per the National Citizen Register, was found to be 'Shilpkar', which is a Scheduled Caste.

The State Government, then moved the apex court where after a lengthy hearing, the appeal was withdrawn and the order of the high court reinstating Shankar was upheld. PTI

Dehradun-based plant will convert e-waste into high grade fuel: Harsh Vardhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will soon be able to convert its plastic wastes into high-grade petrol and diesel with the help of Dehradun-based Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP). "The plant has been set up at Dehradun and it will be operational by January next year. The plant converts plastic into gasoline, diesel or aromatics through the use of a combination of suitable catalysts. It will also produce LPG as a common by-product.

The IIP, a constituent lab of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, has for the first time in the country developed a technology to convert plastic waste into petroleum products. Such a technology is so far available only in Germany, Japan and the US while Australia and the UK are still working on it.

According to Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan, the facility, which will be run on pilot basis, is capable of converting plastic waste into bio-diesel. The model will then be replicated across the country. The Union Minister said that the plant has the capacity to convert one tonne of plastic waste into 800 litres biofuel which will be of highest quality and it can be used in any diesel automotive vehicle. E-waste is the world's fastest growing waste stream and India is the fourth largest e-waste producer. At present around 95 per cent of the waste is processed by the informal sector, using practices harmful to their health and the environment.

6 new Zika virus cases detected in Rajasthan

Jaipur: Six new cases of Zika virus were detected in Jaipur Sunday, taking the total number of infected people to 61, a Rajasthan health department official said.

The figures were issued after a review meeting chaired by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) medical and health, Veenu Gupta.

Of the infected people, 11 are pregnant women, a source in the Union Health Ministry said.

The Centre will review the outbreak of Zika in the capital city of Rajasthan on Monday, the source said.

"Forty-five out of the total 60 patients are healthy after treatment," the Rajasthan health

department official said. Most of the cases which have been reported are from Shastri Nagar area here where fogging and other anti-larvae activities are being carried out to prevent the spread of the virus.

Till Saturday, door-to-door survey at 76,000 households was conducted in Shastri Nagar and mosquito larvae was found and

quarantined in nearly 64,000 households, the officer said.

The state health department has also issued an advisory for pregnant women staying outside the affected area to not visit Shastri Nagar.

The virus, transmitted through the aedes aegypti mosquito, causes fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint

pain. It is harmful to pregnant women, as it can lead to microcephaly, a condition in which a baby's head is significantly smaller than expected, in newborn children.

In India, the first outbreak was reported in Ahmedabad in January 2017 and the second in Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri district in July that year.

NATIONAL PROJECT TO CONVERT DCs INTO E-UDIDs

Development moving at a snail's pace in all States

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Launched in 2016, the national project to convert disability certificates (DCs) into e-Unique Disability Identity cards (UDIDs) that aims to ensure Persons with disabilities (PwDs) avail all the Government benefits like pension irrespective of their domicile status is moving at a snail's pace in almost all the States.

Data available as on October 9, 2018, from the Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry shows that a minuscule percentage ie 7 per cent of the total 1.44 crore PwDs having DCs have been issued the UDID cards. The laggard States are Delhi, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab, Telangana, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Bihar and almost all the Northeastern States which have either not started or taking their own time in issuing the UDIDs. (See Box) These States have sizeable population of PwDs. However, five States-four BJP-ruled — Chhattisgarh,

Rajasthan, Odisha, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh have comparatively fared better, reaching the double digit enrolment with Rajasthan leading the pack. Rajasthan has issued UDID cards to 61% of its PwDs population, followed by Madhya Pradesh (42%), Chhattisgarh (26%). Gujarat

and Odisha are limping at 15% and 17% respectively.

With an 18-digit UDID number, the card is designed to reduce the duplicate and fake entries and ensure that benefits such as admission, employment and pensions reach the deserving beneficiaries. But the cards have not reached

majority of the beneficiaries due to lack of awareness and updated data, admitted an official from the Ministry.

Clearly, the sector does not seem to be the priority pointed out that, in fact the PwDs population could be several times higher, firstly because of

the widening of disability categories from seven to 21 as per the new Disability Act announced in 2016. Also, just less than 20-25% PwDs actually get the DCs.

Also, many families don't acknowledge their presence while people and children suffering from involuntary body movements, Down's Syndrome and multiple disabilities do not have an Aadhaar card, a mandatory document to get the UDID.

APATHY GETTING IN THE WAY OF PWDS RIGHTS

STATES	DCS	E-UDID CARD	%WRT DCS ISSUED
Andhra Pradesh	9,38,220	415	5.38
Assam	2,76,030	0	0
Bihar	12,35,434	206	0.02
Chhattisgarh	3,15,833	82,726	26.19
Delhi	1,34,705	0	0
Gujarat	4,89,629	73,179	14.95
J&K	1,79,385	14	0.01
Jharkhand	4,20,895	5,969	1.42
Karnataka	9,72,305	0	0.00
Kerala	4,22,087	1,227	0.29
MP	6,60,313	282,728	42.82
Maharashtra	13,47,949	24,160	1.79
Odisha	8,42,250	1,38,864	16.49
Punjab	3,58,206	6,078	1.70
Rajasthan	4,49,618	27,56,29	61.30
TN	11,19,151	27,808	2.48
UP	19,43,868	79,965	3.96
Uttarakhand	98,881	0	0.00
WB	10,81,316	1	0.00
Total	144,32,999	10,18,680	7.06

*DCs: disability cards



Artists preparing effigies of Ravana for the upcoming Dussehra in New Delhi on Sunday

BENGAL DURGA PUJAS

Govt makes massive police arrangement

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The bitter memory of the Nagerbazar blast that left two persons, including a child, dead less than a fortnight ago still fresh in the mind, the Bengal Government has thrown an unprecedented security net across Durga Puja pandal-bound Kolkata, police sources said.

With the pandal hoppers already cramming the roads from Dwitiya (second day of the 10-day-long celebrations) the administration has made massive police bandobast deploying 8000-strong police force across the city.

This figure is in addition to several thousand civic volunteers and private security operations, sources said. "Our officers to the rank of Deputy Commissioners will personally man vital positions in north and South Kolkata," said a senior official, adding that the police officers will be deployed in three shifts.

The first shift will work from 8 am to 4 pm. The second

shift will work from 4 pm to 12 in the midnight and the third shift will be deployed from 12 to 8 am, officials said adding about 800 police pickets have been put up in places near important Durga Puja Pandals like Ahiritola, Bagbazar, Md Ali Park, College Square, Sealdah in the North and Ekdalia Evergreen, Ballygunge Cultural, Tridhara Sanmilani, Deshapriya Park, Suruchi Sangha, Chetla Agrani etc.

"We have deployed 25 divisional mobiles and 46 watch towers at important locations," said a Deputy Commissioner adding 74 additional CCTV cameras have been installed at various locations. "This is in addition to the existing ones," he said adding the CCTV feed will be monitored round the clock by the police officials in the control room."

The Government was not willing to take chances during the Durga Pujas, said a senior IAS officer adding these Pujas Kolkata is likely to witness more than 30 million crowd

spread across 5-6 days.

"In order to make pandal hopping during the Pujas safer, secure and trouble-free we have set up 27 trauma care ambulances that will move around the city to tackle emergencies" he said adding nine missing person's squads will also be deployed to help people find their children who often are lost in the crowd. This year the police expects about 20 lakh people to visit Kolkata from distant districts and states.

Immersion of Durga idols will take place from Vijay Dushmi which falls on October 19. Some select clubs will however be required to take part in the Durga Carnival to be organized at historic Red Road on October 23.

A brainchild of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about 100 clubs will march past the Red Road a la the Republic Day Parade with guests and revelers enjoying the occasion from the galleries raised on the two sides. Durga Carnival became a huge success in 2017.

BJP to use occasion to improve outreach

PTI ■ KOLKATA

As Bengal's biggest festival Durga Puja nears, the Opposition BJP in the State is leaving no stone unturned to use the mega platform to reach out to the masses and has decided to set up nearly 3,000 bookstalls displaying books on the party's ideology outside pandals in the State, party leaders said.

In addition to books on BJP's ideology, those on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the works of Jan Sangh icons — Deen Dayal Upadhyay and Shyama Prasad Mookherjee — would be put up on display in these stalls.

Besides, literature on National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship (Amendment) Bill would be exhibited to make people aware of the contentious issues.

"This year, we had received requisitions for nearly 3,000 bookstalls from across the state. We hope to come up with stalls outside various puja mar- quees," BJP State general secretary Sayantan Basu told PTI.

According to State BJP president Dilip Ghosh, the number of stalls coming up this Durga Puja is the highest in the history of the State BJP.

"Earlier, our party organi- sation was not so strong that

we could afford to set up stalls outside puja pandals. But things have changed and more and more people are getting connected with our party," Ghosh said.

The BJP aims to highlight the NRC issue in Assam as well and how its updation exercise earlier this year was carried out to benefit the northeastern State as well as the country.

The complete draft NRC was published in July this year with 2.9 crore names in which over 40 lakh people were left out from the document, touted to be a proof of Assamese identity.

"We will use this (plat- form) to propagate about NRC in Assam and how it is done for the benefit of that state and country, contrary to the propaganda of the TMC. We will also issue articles on violence and misuse of TMC Government and the devel- opmental work done by the Narendra Modi Government in the last four-and-half years," he said.

According to party sources, the State leadership has been buoyed by its performance in the last Panchayat polls and now wants to do even better in the next Lok Sabha polls by reaching out to the people of the State.

The BJP had emerged as

the number two in West Bengal after TMC in the three-tier local bodies' polls recently, leaving behind CPI(M) and the Congress.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah have on several occasions said that West Bengal is a priority State for the party in the coming parliamentary poll.

Shah recently set a target of winning 22 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal for his party workers.

The BJP leadership apprehends it would be denied permission for setting up bookstalls under "instructions of TMC leaders in respective areas".

For years, various political parties including the CPI(M) have been setting up stalls in the State to promote their books and literature outside Puja pandals as a public relations exercise.

After the Left Front was voted out of power in 2011, the TMC has been promoting party mouthpiece "Jago Bangla" outside puja pandals in the State.

"For us, Durga Puja is integral part of Bengali culture, heritage and history. We look up to it as a festival, unlike the BJP which tries to use religion to create rift among the masses," TMC Secretary General Partha Chatterjee said.

Ex-BJP Min Bimal Shah may join Cong

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

Bimal Shah, former Transport Minister in the BJP-run Keshubhai Patel Government who has been side-lined for almost one decade, may join the Opposition Congress party after the Diwali.

Sources in the Congress party said that Shah has put some condition in order to join the Opposition party that includes ticket for the Lok Sabha seat in Central Gujarat. Even in the ruling BJP many believe that the ex-MLA from Kapadvanj assembly constituency would join the Congress.

He was elected to the State assembly from Kapadvanj seat in Kheda district in 1998 and 2002, and had served as Minister of State for Transport in 1998. Although in 2007 assembly polls, BJP won with thumping majority, but Shah lost measurably and since then his role in the ruling party reduced gradually.

In order to keep his sinking political career afloat, the 57-year-old political leader contested from Kapadvanj as an independent candidate after the saffron party ignored him. He however couldn't make his mark as an inde-

pendent candidate as he could secure nearly 47,000 votes and stood third.

Sources in BJP said that because of Shah, BJP lost Kapadvanj seat as division of votes helped the Congress candidate Kalabhai Dabhi to win the seat by defeating BJP candidate Kanubhai Dabhi with margin of 27,000 votes.

Despite Shah's denial to join the Opposition party in near future, a senior leader in Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) said that very shortly Shah would meet Congress president Rahul Gandhi. Meanwhile Shah is maintaining that he would let media know if any such development would take place. In case Shah would join Congress, he may contest from Kheda Lok Sabha Constituency as the opposition party didn't have powerful leader in the constituency to take on the saffron brigade.

With Lok Sabha polls coming closer, political migration from one party to another would start not only in Gujarat but across the country. Being a home-state of the Prime Minister, Congress party is trying hard to make major dent in PM Modi's bastion as in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls BJP won all 26 seats.

Man injured in blast dies in Kolkata hospital

IANS ■ KOLKATA

A fruit seller injured in a bomb blast in West Bengal's Dum Dum area died at a Government hospital here on Sunday, police said.

"The injured Ajit Halder (38), who had a fruit stall in Dum Dum's Nagerbazar, succumbed to his injuries at SSKM Hospital on Sunday," the police said.

With this, the toll has risen to two. An eight-year-old boy was killed and nine others, including Halder, injured in a socket bomb blast in front of a multi-storeyed building in Nagerbazar area on October 2.

The blast that had taken place near Halder's fruit shop severely damaged at least two shops and shattered the window panes of an adjacent multi-storeyed building.

The State's Criminal Investigation Department is probing the blast.

67% people unaware of emergency kits, disaster preparedness in Kerala: Survey

Thiruvananthapuram: The people of Kerala, the State which has an enviable record in several human development indicators, have largely been found to be unaware of precautionary measures and emergency kits to be used at times of disasters with two-thirds of respondents of a survey pleading ignorance.

The findings in the State-wide survey held just over two months after the State was devastated by unprecedented floods of a century have prompted the organiser, Kerala State Literacy Mission (KLSM), to pitch for a "disaster management literacy programme".

The State is known for its high literacy, lowest infant mortality and highest life expectancy rates among others.

Yet according to the survey, 66.77 per cent of people, cutting across cities and villages, were unaware of precautionary measures and emergency kits to be used at times of disasters.

The detailed report of the survey-How and What the Flood-Affected Kerala Thinks-carried out by the KLSM, was

released by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan at a function here on Saturday.

At least 20.02 per cent of people, who took part in the survey, had not even heard about climate change, though it is one of the most discussed topics globally, it says.

Only 43.74 per cent of people were aware of different forms of natural disasters such as drought, flood and earthquake, while just 8.43 per cent knew that cyclone is a form of disaster, the report said.

The initiative, carried out with the support of about 50,000 students pursuing the mission's equivalency programmes on October 2, covered over 2.91 lakh households in all the 14 districts of the State.

Besides men and women, the survey covered over 35 transgenders also, the mission sources said.

At least 66.77 per cent of people were unaware about the emergency survival kits that can be used during the time of disasters, the survey report said.

Director of Literacy

Mission P S Sreekala said it was also interesting to note that 41.86 per cent of people did not have an idea about the precautionary measures to be taken during the time of emergencies.

Carried out as part of the rebuilding initiatives of the State Government post the August deluge, the survey was aimed at assessing the public's scientific knowledge on climate change, disaster management and environment-friendly lifestyle, she said.

Based on the report, the Literacy Mission has submitted a set of recommendations to the Government.

One of the major proposals was to introduce a disaster management literacy programme in the State, Sreekala said. Disaster management, emergency preparedness and climate change should be made part of the public education system, she said. Floods and rains had claimed at least 493 lives and left a trail of destruction during this year's South West Monsoon in Kerala. PTI

Teenager killed in snowstorm

PTI ■ JAMMU

A 15-year-old boy was killed and four of his family members were injured in a snowstorm in the higher reaches of Poonch district in Jammu & Kashmir, a police official said Sunday.

Over 150 sheep and goats also perished in the snowstorm which swept the high altitude Hill Kaka area in Pir

Panjal yesterday, trapping a Bakerwal family from Rajouri district, the official said.

He said the family comprising five members was undertaking the bi-annual migration from central's Kashmir's Budgam to their Rajouri home town when they got stuck in the storm while crossing Choti Marg near Hill Kaka.

After getting information

After getting information about the incident, a police party with some villagers from Bafliaz reached the remote area and recovered the body of Usman Ali (15), a resident of Androte area of Rajouri, the official said

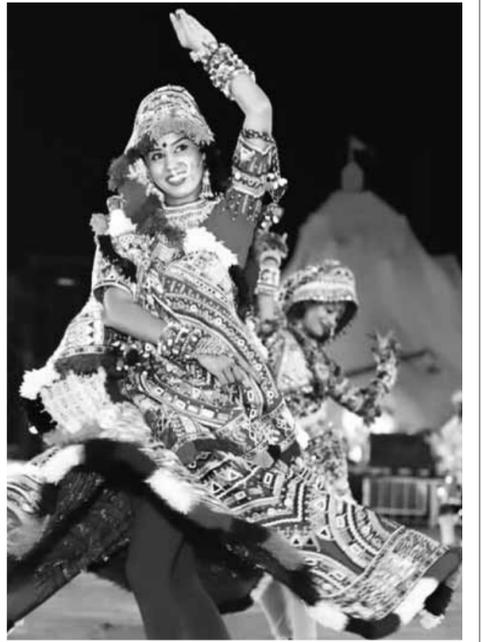
about the incident, a police

party with some villagers from Bafliaz reached the remote area and recovered the body of Usman Ali (15), a resident of Androte area of Rajouri, the official said.

Four other family members - Mohammad Aslam, his wife Bano Bi, Nazir Ahmad and Mohammad Yusuf - were rescued with injuries to their feet and shifted to a hospital in Srinagar.



The longest dance festival, 'Navaratri Garba,' is in full swing in Gujarat. The Gandhinagar Cultural Forum is organising the nine-day long Garba in the State Capital. Nayan Dave | Pioneer



Scientific solution to beach erosion makes a coastline breathe easy

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

There is an Indian solution for beach erosion, the fall-out of global warming and climate change. Scientists of the National Institute of Ocean Technology (under the Ministry of Earth Sciences) have reconstructed a beach which fell victim to erosion over the years.

"It was a beach nourishment programme. The Puducherry coastline, one of the scenic and serene beaches, had lost much of its surface charm and area due to sea erosion over a period of time. We were contacted by the Government of the Union territory when it became a cause of concern and that was how NIOT entered the scene," Dr M Atmanand, director, NIOT, told The Pioneer.

Scientists led by Dr M V Ramana Murthy, project director, undertook a study of the coastline with satellite pictures and field data and used it to run models which

Formation of Beach
Significant extent of beach has formed to the south of the reef and people have been thronging in large numbers.



Present Status



revealed the intensity of the erosion.

The engineering minds of the institute felt that a

"new" beach could be built with the introduction of sub-

merged dyke using steel caisson (a giant structure made of 900 tonnes of steel which is submerged into the sea) and allowing the beach to grow by itself.

"This submerged structure, which is at a distance of about 100 metres from the shore, reduced the wave activity by working as a breakwater and allowed free movement of the sand towards the shore," explained Dr Murthy.

The pilot project saw the beach gaining an extent of 60 meters and this led to the major venture. The sand dredged from the port was used for "nourishment" For the complete restoration, another dyke at the south side is being worked.

The steel caisson built by the NIOT is of 60 meter long, 50 meter wide and has an elevation of 2.5 metre. It acted as an artificial reef and was lowered into the sea on August 2018.

As a consequence, the sandy beach started to restore of the south side of the beach and is still growing. It is

expected to grow to the extent of the expectations to restore as looked on old days, so as to walk along the coast," said Kiran Bedi, the Lieutenant Governor, Puducherry.

Bedi, who is monitoring the project to restore the beach has expressed her desire to have the restoration of the entire stretch which was swallowed by the sea. Dr Atmanand is of the view that it was possible and NIOT could take up the project soon.

The submerged dyke venture could be extended to other parts of the country for restoring and reconstructing the beaches which vanished due to erosion. The process developed by the NIOT could be the ideal beautification programme for Mother India, the country was looking for, feels scientists of NIOT.

"It all depends on factors like topography, speed of the wind and some more geographical features. We are confident of resolving the issue of beach erosion," said Dr Atmanand.

Free ₹5 L insurance for Vaishno Devi pilgrims

Jammu: Pilgrims heading for the Vaishno Devi shrine will get free insurance cover of ₹5 lakh.

This was decided on Saturday at a meeting of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (MVDSB) chaired by Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik.

The Board has approved enhancement of free accident insurance cover for pilgrims visiting the shrine to ₹5 lakh besides free treatment to trauma victims. The Governor is also the Chairman of the Board. The spokesman added that the insurance cover shall be in addition to the accidental cover available to each pilgrim once he or she collects the yatra slip and commences the journey.

It is pertinent to mention that premium on providing insurance cover to the pilgrims is borne by the Board and the insurance cover has been upgraded after a gap of eight years", the spokesman added.

The meeting also reviewed the functioning of the Shri

Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Super Speciality Hospital.

"The Board ... approved a medical support policy for the treatment of victims of trauma under its social support initiative at the super speciality hospital.

"The beneficiaries will include public trauma victims of road accidents, landslides or shooting stone incidents and such calamities from surrounding areas of the shrine referred to the hospital by Deputy Commissioners.

"The medical assistance would be provided in all such cases by the Board till the stabilization of the patient up to a ceiling of ₹2 lakh as a goodwill gesture.

"The Board also decided to create a new medical unit at Bhairon temple at an estimated cost of ₹1 crore keeping in view futuristic requirements," spokesman said. Each year over two crore pilgrims visit the shrine situated on the Trikuta hills in Reasi district of Jammu region. IANS

Discharged from AIIMS, Parrikar returns to Goa

PTI ■ PANAJI

Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar arrived in his home State Sunday afternoon from New Delhi, where he was undergoing treatment at the AIIMS for pancreatic ailment.

Parrikar, 62, was flown in in a special flight and later taken to his private residence at Dona Paula, near here, in an ambulance.

The flight landed around 2.35 pm at the State's Dabolim airport and the ambulance was brought out from the gate of the naval enclave INS Hansa, which is a part of the Navy-run airport.

Earlier, Parrikar was on Sunday morning discharged from the AIIMS.

According to sources in the AIIMS, he was in the morning shifted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for a while after his condition deteriorated. But later, the administration decided to discharge him.

The state-run Goa Medical College and Hospital near here has made elaborate arrangements at his private residence with a team of doctors on standby to take care of his health.

Parrikar was admitted to the AIIMS on September 15.

On Friday, Parrikar met Goa BJP's core committee members and ministers from coalition partners at AIIMS to discuss ways to ensure his Government functions normally during his absence from office due to ill health.

Leaders of the ruling BJP



Ambulance and other vehicles outside the private residence of Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar in Panaji on Sunday

PARRIKAR HAS BEEN AILING SINCE MID-FEBRUARY AND HAS BEEN TREATED AT DIFFERENT HOSPITALS INCLUDING THOSE IN GOA, MUMBAI AND THE US

and its allies, who met Parrikar separately, had ruled out any change in leadership in the coastal State.

The core committee is the BJP's key decision-making body in Goa, comprising senior leaders like Parrikar, Union Minister Shripad Naik and party State chief Vinay Tendulkar, among others.

Parrikar has been ailing since mid-February and has been treated at different hospitals including those in Goa, Mumbai and the US.

"I got the news that he is coming back but I can't believe

that he is returning. His health is improving and he was expected to stay at the AIIMS for a few more days," the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said.

Naik dismissed any possibility of dissolution of the Goa Assembly and expressed confidence that the Parrikar-led government will complete its five-year term.

Questions over the stability of the Goa government have been raised by the Opposition Congress because of Parrikar's illness.

In the 40-member Goa Assembly, the Parrikar-led government has the support of 23 MLAs.

These comprise 14 BJP MLAs, three each from the Goa Forward Party and the Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP) as well as three Independents.

The Opposition Congress is the single largest party in the state Assembly with 16 MLAs.

Parrikar should've stayed at AIIMS, completed treatment, says Minister

FIANS ■ PANAJI

Ailing Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar should have stayed back at the AIIMS in New Delhi and nursed himself back to health instead of returning to the State, a Minister said here on Sunday.

Speaking to the media ahead of Parrikar's arrival in Goa, Union Minister of State for AYUSH Shripad Naik said: "I have got the news. I still cannot believe it. I met him day before yesterday. His health has improved over last 15 days but I feel he should stay there for a few days more".

Naik also said that it was imperative that Parrikar takes adequate rest as part of his healing process after being treated for advanced pancreatic cancer.

"After he returns, I will meet and speak to him. He must have returned (to Goa) because the last chemotherapy must have been administered. He can take future treatment in Goa."

Parrikar was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences last month.

The former Defence Minister has been in and out of hospitals in Goa, Mumbai, New York and now Delhi for the last seven months.

On Friday, Parrikar also held a meeting of his cabinet ministers and senior BJP state executive committee members at AIIMS.

The opposition Congress has been demanding Parrikar's resignation on account of his prolonged illness and absence from office.

Rupani arrives in city, to invite Yogi

PNB ■ LUCKNOW

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani will formally invite Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to attend the function to unveil the Statue of Unity, deemed to be the tallest statue, at Kveda in Gujarat.

The Gujarat Chief Minister and a 14-member delegation accompanying him will meet the UP Chief Minister at his official residence here on Monday morning.

Rupani has arrived in Lucknow with his team and will have a series of meetings, including an interaction with the Gujarat samaj in the state capital. He will also address the media to give details of the statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He is expected to return to Gujarat on Monday evening.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's statue, named as the Statue of Unity, will be unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 31. During the meeting, both the Chief PM to unveil Patel statue on Oct 31

Ministers and their officials would discuss various issues, including attacks on north Indians in Gujarat after a rape incident.

Earlier, the UP Chief Minister had expressed his concern over the security of north Indians living in Gujarat after the violence.

The Chief Minister is also likely to reiterate his request for land for construction of Uttar Pradesh Bhawan at Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat complex which

will come up near the Statue of Unity.

Yogi had earlier written a letter to Rupani demanding land for construction of UP Bhawan. In his letter on September 12, 2018, the UP Chief Minister had sought land around the Statue of Unity.

"If Gujarat government gives land, the UP government will build a bhawan for the benefit of the people of Uttar Pradesh who visit Gujarat," he said. Yogi further wrote: "This is a great proposal of the Gujarat government to allow various State Governments to build their own bhawans at Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat complex. This initiative is commendable."

The Statue of Unity when unveiled will be the tallest statue of the world.

BJP launches 'Booth Chalo Abhiyaan' in UP

Lucknow: Apparently in a bid to identify its prospective voters rather early in the run-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has embarked on 'Booth Chalo Abhiyaan' (let's go to the polling booth) in the State. UP BJP leaders are also of the view that the campaign may help the party to identify the "unauthorised voters" including Rohingyas and those from Bangladesh. The Booth Chalo Abhiyaan started on October 5 and continued till October 10, UP BJP spokesperson Manish Shukla said. Elaborating about the campaign, Shukla said.

"The Booth Chalo Abhiyaan revolves primarily on three issues - youngsters turning 18 on January 1, 2019 should be made voters, names of all the unauthorised persons (including Rohingyas and others who have illegally entered India) to be deleted from the voters list and correction of names of voters in the voter list be carried out." PTI

Krishi Kumbh to boost all sectors

PNB ■ LUCKNOW

This will be a Kumbh of a different kind in which farmers and agricultural scientists from across the country will brainstorm for three days in the State Capital from October 26 to search avenues for increasing the income of the farming community.

The agri-meet — Krishi Kumbh-2018 — will also be attended by Haryana and Jharkhand as partner States.

Chief Secretary Anup Chandra Pandey said that Uttar Pradesh had already organised UP Investors' Summit 2018 and MSME conclave — One District One Product

Summit — and the Krishi Kumbh would be the third important summit that will give a boost to all the three sectors, particularly ODOP.

The aim is to promote modern agricultural techniques and diversification of crops which in turn help the farmers to double their income. Over 100,000 farmers, scientists, experts and entrepreneurs are expected to take part in this three-day event.

Manish Sharma, a senior official looking after the preparations for Krishi Kumbh, said that this event would include all aspects of rural economy, such as agriculture, horticulture, dairy, pisciculture, bee-keeping,

food processing, animal husbandry and farm implements to provide a holistic picture to farmers for increasing their income.

The summit seeks to introduce farmers to the evolving dynamics of farming so that they may increase their earnings by tapping the vast potential in agriculture and post harvest management of crops, he said.

Sharma said that the Bharatiya Janata Party government always advocated diversification in the farm sector as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath believed that in present day scenario, diversification in farm sector would lead to better

profits to farmers.

The Chief Minister advocates that farmers should take up vegetable growing, fruit production, horticulture, pisciculture and dairy development other than conventional farming.

In a recent meeting with a delegation of Asian Development Bank, the Chief Minister had said: "It is a beneficial effort to enhance agricultural production. Experts in this field should be roped in for wide ranging deliberations. This will also help the government in fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream to double the income of farmers by 2022."

Fire breaks out in Obra power plant

PNB ■ LUCKNOW

A fire broke out at the Obra thermal power plant, a subsidiary of Uttar Pradesh Thermal Power Generation Corporation Limited, leading to the closure of its 200 MW power units on Sunday morning.

The Obra thermal power plant, situated on the border of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand, supplies power mostly to UP. Due to the fire, power generation was stopped at Obra and this disrupted power supply in some parts of the State.

Official sources said here that the fire started from the switch gear in the cable yard around 5 in the morning and the fire spread to nearby areas within an hour.

About 12 fire-tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the flames. Due to the fire, unit numbers 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the power plant generating around 200 megawatt (MW) electricity were shut down.

OFFICIAL SOURCES SAID HERE THAT THE FIRE STARTED FROM THE SWITCH GEAR IN THE CABLE YARD AROUND 5 IN THE MORNING AND IT SPREAD TO NEARBY AREAS WITHIN AN HOUR

Senior officials of the UP Thermal Power Generation Corporation Limited along with district authorities rushed to the spot. Sonebhadra's District Magistrate Amit Kumar Singh said the units had been shut down and the employees had been evacuated. He said no one was injured in the fire.

Official sources said the loss due to the fire could be in several crore of rupees. They also said that the losses would have been much higher had the fire not been brought under control immediately and the entire Obra thermal power plant, which generates 800 MW of power, would have to be shut down leading to major power crisis in the State.

Goa Forward MLA quits party over fish mafia row

FIANS ■ PANAJI

Goa Forward vice-president Trajano D'Mello resigned from the party after accusing the BJP-led Government of brazenly backing the fish mafia in the State, adding to the state's political turbulence.

Even as the BJP-led coalition in Goa battles to stay afloat amid Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar's prolonged illness, a past ghost of a formalin-in-fish controversy continues to dog the government, especially BJP ally Goa Forward.

On Sunday, D'Mello resigned from the party, claiming that the Government was backing the fish mafia which uses formalin, a carcinogenic preservative used to preserve cadavers, to preserve fish sold in the state's fish markets.

"I would like to state that if fighting for justice for an upright officer who is mentally tortured is anti-party

The controversy involving use of formalin in fish erupted in July this year, Fernandes found traces of formalin in fish being sold in Goa during a raid

activity, I would prefer to fight for the injustice meted out to an officer who has alerted and saved the trusting Goan from the deadly cancerous poisoning of our brethren," D'Mello said in his Facebook post on Sunday.

D'Mello was referring to the targeting of the whistleblower Food and Drugs Administration official Iva Fernandes, who exposed the formalin-use scandal and has now complained to the Human Rights Commission claiming harassment by her seniors after she conducted the raid in July.

The controversy involving use of formalin in fish erupted in July this year, Fernandes found traces of formalin in fish being sold in Goa during a raid.

The BJP-led coalition Government, of which Goa Forward is a part, has been on the backfoot ever since, after several of its Ministers were accused of allegedly protecting fish-traders who were allegedly importing formalin-laced fish consignments into Goa from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

D'Mello, who had been served a show cause notice by Goa Forward for his critique of the party last week, also said questioned the party leadership about its silence against the harassment of Fernandes.

"If Goa Forward, which forms one fourth of the state cabinet with its three Ministers, cannot insist on a crackdown on those who poison fish consumed by the people of Goa, then who can?" D'Mello said.

Cong 'divided house', BJP sure to win State polls: Vasundhara

Jaipur: Terming Congress as a "divided house", Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje Sunday exuded confidence that the BJP would form the next Government both in the Centre and the State.

The Chief Minister ridiculed the Congress saying its various leaders have already become Chief Ministers and started forming their cabinets even before the state assembly elections.

"The BJP has the unity and uniformity while the Congress has several faces and is a divided house. Various Congress leaders have already become Chief Ministers and formed their cabinets even before the elections but the BJP workers would clear their misunderstanding in the upcoming assembly elections," she said.

Raje made the remarks Sunday during a meeting of the party workers at Ranakpur in Pali district.

The meeting was attended

by the BJP workers from 31 assembly constituencies, including those from Bikaner, Churu, Hanumangarh, Jodhpur and Sriganganagar. The workers submitted to the Chief Minister their written suggestions in sealed envelopes.

Raje said the workers have the right to claim tickets from the party, but their targets should be to ensure that "lotus" blooms in the State again.

The Chief Minister also sought to ridicule the Congress' "optimism" over the tradition of the state having the BJP and the Congress Governments alternatively since 1990 and said had it been so, the Congress would not have ruled the State for 50 years.

Raje exuded confidence that her party will form Governments both in the State and the Centre under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah.

PTI

J&K youth important stakeholders in peace process: Guv Malik

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik Sunday said the State's youth were the most important stakeholders in the peace process and it was essential to engage them regularly and effectively.

The Governor said this during an interactive session — 'Kashmir Youth Dialogue' — organised by the Jammu Kashmir Youth Alliance at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) here.

Malik said it was important that the youth were given momentum in right direction to channelise their creative, intellectual and innovative energies and talents in a productive manner.

Conveying the commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure free and fair elections in the state, he said the students are torch-bearers for emerging societies and urged them to partake in the democratic process as leaders and participants to shape the new future for the state.

Malik assured full support of the State and Central administration for the overall development of the youth.

The Governor also participated in one-on-one interaction with the youth during the session, in which the youth put forth their grievances and concerns on a variety of subjects.

"To provide youth with proper launch platforms, there have been talks to host IPL matches in Kashmir, besides holding matches where local players are provided opportunities to compete with players of national and international repute," he said.

On the concerns with regard to the education sector, Malik said he will ensure that universities and other higher educational institutions will prepare and adhere to an academic calendar, clear backlogs, besides ensuring timely conduct of examination and declaration of results.

PTI

TDB invites stakeholders to discuss Sabarimala issue

Thiruvananthapuram: Amid continuing protests on the Sabarimala issue, a temple body which manages the Lord Ayyappa shrine on Sunday invited stakeholders for a meeting to discuss 'various aspects', including preparations for the annual pilgrimage season, beginning next month.

As Various Hindu outfits and Lord Ayyappa devotees have been staging protests over the last few days all over Kerala against implementation of the Supreme Court order, permitting women of all age groups into the shrine, the call for talks is considered an attempt for a consensus.

The Travancore Devaswom Board has invited tantries (temple priests), Padalam royals and devotee groups to the meeting.

TDB president A Padmakumar said the meeting is scheduled to be held on October 16 at its headquarters here.

Besides the Tazhomon tantri family and the Padalam royals, various stakeholders of the Sabarimala shrine, including Ayyappa Seva Sangam, Ayyappa Seva Samajam, tantri mahamandalam and Yoga

Kshema Sabah would be invited for the talks, he said.

"TDB has no prejudice over any matter related to Sabarimala...Let them come and share their views. We will take a suitable decision on all aspects regarding the temple after that," Padmakumar told reporters.

The members of the Padalam royal family and tazhomon tantries later said a collective decision would be taken soon on whether to attend the TDB meet or not. The three-month-long annual 'Mandalam-Makaravilakku' pilgrimage season of the Sabarimala Temple will begin on November 17.

Meanwhile, various devotee groups and Hindu outfits took out protest marches in different places across the state, demanding that the sanctity of the temple rituals be protected.

The BJP-led NDA's 'Long March', which started last week from Padalam in protest against the CPI(M)-led LDF Government's decision to implement the top court order, without going for a review, reached the capital city Sunday. Actor-turned-MP Suresh

Gopi flagged off the rally here at Alamkode. "Each BJP worker will fight till his final drop of blood is shed to protect the sanctity of the centuries old tradition of Sabarimala" party state president P S Sreedharan Pillai said addressing the rally.

The march, which criss crossed the southern districts of the State, would conclude before the State Secretariat, the administrative hub here, Monday. Hundreds of activists of Antarashtriy Hindu Parishad (AHP) also took out a rally here, urging the State and Union Governments to address the concerns of devotees of Lord Ayyappa.

AHP president Pravin Togadia called for a hartal in the State on October 18 if the Left Government implements the apex court order.

"We demand that the state Government file a review petition in the Supreme Court. Till that petition is pending, they should not implement the court order," he said addressing the rally.

If the State fails to do so, the AHP would announce a hartal in Kerala on October 17, 10 pm to October 18, he said.

PTI



Devotees of Lord Ayyappa, the deity of Sabarimala temple, participate in a rally to protest against a recent Supreme Court verdict, in Ahmedabad on Sunday

School principal hacked to death in front of students

PTI ■ BENGALURU

A school principal was hacked to death Sunday by a six-member gang in front of 20 students, for whom he was holding a special class, police said.

Ranganath (60), principal of the Havanur Public School in suburban Agrahara

Dasarahalli, was holding classes for 10th standard students when the gang barged into the classroom and hacked him to death, they said. They later fled in the car in which they came to the school, police said.

One of the gang members was nabbed later from Mahalaxmi Layout area here,

based on a tip off.

The man suffered a leg injury when police fired at him after he attacked them. He was later taken to a hospital and treated.

Police suspect a land dispute relating to the school building to be the reason behind the killing.

Maharashtra to allow online sale, home delivery of liquor

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government has decided to allow online sale and home delivery of liquor in the state, saying it could curb the cases of drunken driving.

"We want to curb the instances of drunken driving. Allowing home delivery of liquor will help in this," Excise

Minister Chandrashekar Bawankule told PTI on Sunday.

He did not elaborate as to when the decision would come into effect. Speaking on the condition of anonymity, a senior official in the excise department said increasing the revenue was also a prime objective behind the decision. PTI

Flying unsafe

As an Air India Express plane crashes into an airport wall and flies for four hours, the scanner is on airport security

What does it say about Indian airport security that it took several hours for the airport authorities and the pilots to realise that an Air India Express plane had grazed the airport wall at Tiruchirappalli Airport. There are nowadays almost weekly incidents that are affecting Indian aviation, from taking-off and landing on wrong runways, forgetting to pressurise the plane and now hitting a wall and not realising it. We have had a horrible few months. But thankfully there has been not a single fatality in any of these cases, some aircraft damage to be sure but planes can always be repaired like the aircraft involved in this incident even with its ripped underbelly will be.

Aviation traffic has grown dramatically in India over the past few years. India's civil fleet has grown from just over 200 planes to over 500 now. New aircraft are arriving every few weeks and new airports are bringing connectivity to the farthest corners of the country. However, like with any growing industry there will be growth pangs. The problem is that these growth pangs are playing with the lives of fare-paying passengers. Airport perimeter security and careful flying are important to ensure that incidents are kept to a minimum. Of course, that is not to say that incidents will not happen and when incidents happen with large commercial aircraft there tends to be a media frenzy, quite unlike a bus or a train accident, because like it or not, the passengers on a plane are what we would consider 'people like us', and while one can argue whether that is fair, that is what will happen. Incidents also tend to be blown out of proportion by a sensationalist television media in particular. Having said that, it must be pointed out that there is genuine concern among passengers on airport safety in particular and the scary bit is not that the Air India Express aircraft hit the wall but that it took off and flew for four hours with a seriously damaged underbelly before anyone on the ground noticed it and alerted the captain. It was providential that a major air disaster did not take place.

Many of the recent incidents have been avoidable and that could spark a fear of flying among the general public. And with high fuel prices and declining yields, this is not something that India's airlines or the government itself wants right now. For one, India's aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) needs urgent reform to improve their incident reporting and investigation teams, the DGCA has been rife with allegations of nepotism for years and the kith and kin of several officers are employed by the airlines in a perverse quid pro quo. Similarly, Indian airport security that obsessively focuses on passengers, should improve their security to become more holistic. One hopes that the incidents remain ones where nobody gets hurt, but that is just a hope.

50 WORD EDIT Poor air quality, warm winter

If it wasn't enough that the beginning of crop stubble burning my farmers looking to clear their field for the next sowing cycle in the adjoining States of Haryana and Punjab combined with rising construction, roadside and vehicular pollution has left residents of the Capital wheezing and coughing, now comes news that the El Nino weather phenomenon will make the coming winter in Delhi warmer. From the frying pan into the fire about sums it up.

River of pain

Lack of due recognition to GD Agrawal's contribution to India's environmental movement is a matter of shame

Ocotogenarian environmentalist GD Agrawal died on October 11 on the 11th day of his fast to save the Ganga. It is a national tragedy that he was martyred in a cause to which he dedicated his entire life. There have been unfortunate attempts to link his tragic death with the alleged inaction of the Government of the day despite the environmentalist's demands, which has riposted with pointing to what the Opposition when it was in power did or did not do despite repeated urging also from Agrawal. This is as ironical as it gets because both sides are wrong. And both equally guilty in some measure though it must be understood by those trying to make his sad death a mobilisation tool that all administrations have to balance competing and sometimes contradictory demands from the people who elect them.

Yes, Agrawal died at a time when the BJP-led NDA Government has undertaken the ambitious Namami Gange project to clean the sacred river for which ₹20,000 crore has been allocated but not even 25 per cent of it has been spent. Equally, the Congress in the past, despite Manmohan Singh having come in for some praise from the Ganga crusader Agrawal for his controversial decision to stop all construction on the Bhagirathi and Lohari Nagappa hydro power projects, too has fallen woefully short of keeping its promises to Agrawal and others activists like him. Much is also being made of the three letters he wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi with great expectations given the latter's avowed commitment to the cause of the sacred river. While it certainly true that Agrawal was disappointed by the current regime's performance which was not up to the standards he had wanted, he is also known to have had higher and better expectations from the Modi regime than its predecessors. Especially, since Modi had set up a separate Ministry for cleaning the Ganga. The civil-engineer-turned-environmental-seer was a real grass-roots crusader who believed in action on the ground. One did not have to agree with everything he said to have immense respect for him. The lack of due recognition to his contribution to India's environmental movement which more media-savvy activists have garnered is a shame.

Agrawal died as he lived, uncompromising on his demands for which his last fast ended with his immortal soul having been freed from its mortal coil on October 11. His charter was clear: Cancel all hydel power projects under construction on the Alakananda, Dhauilganga, Nandakini, Pindar and Mandakini; nix all new proposals for power plants; ensure a complete stoppage of illegal sand mining in Haridwar and its surroundings.

COMMENT & ANALYSIS Rafale deal: Smoothen ruffled feathers

Row over Rafale could inflict a serious dent on defence preparedness. Government must aim to develop a robust defence industry with participation from the private sector and encourage foreign investment



Defence procurement has always been in the vortex of politics in India as the Opposition seeks to find chinks in such deals. Everyone remembers the Swedish Bofors Guns which, according to many experts, won India the Kargil War with Pakistan but had rocked the boat of the Rajiv Gandhi Government. Politics for electoral benefits precedes national security concerns when it comes to smelting corruption in defence deals. To acquire power is the primary concern of the Opposition and for this reason, the Congress had made a big hue and cry over the signing of Government-to-Government agreement between France and India in April 2015 during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France for the purchase of 36 Rafale aircraft at the cost of 7.7 billion Euro, which approximately would cost around ₹58,000 crore.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi has directly blamed the Prime Minister for indulging in 'crony capitalism' and his entire party is in hyper mode to garner public opinion on this matter. The party has also filed a Public Interest Litigation in the Supreme Court, which came up for hearing on October 10. The Court has sought details of the decision-making process that resulted in the award of Rafale jet purchase to the French firm, Dassault Aviation in a sealed cover. The three-member Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, made it clear that it is not expressing any opinion on the suitability of the Rafale aircraft, but wants to be satisfied about the legitimacy of the decision-making process. Cacophony on the Rafale deal has cast a cloud on the country's defence preparedness and our enemies are having a hearty laugh over our bickering. The country has already suffered during the past 15 years in defence preparedness. The Congress was in power for 10 years and itself has much explaining to do about its inaction. It is, however, of utmost interest to review the parameters available in the public domain with a focus on India's defence needs. The Air Force is awfully short of multi-purpose aircraft to meet external threats from two fronts. As against the requirement of 44 Squadrons, it has only 32 Squadrons (half of these squadrons are of vintage Mig 21, Jaguar and Mig 27, which



IF OUR LEADERS CONTINUE TO BE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS NO GOVERNMENT CAN FINALISE THE RAFALE DEAL EVEN IN THE NEXT 50 YEARS

are more than 40 to 55 years old) to guard the Indian skies. Never ending controversies in defence purchases meant that our forces could never get the weapons to its full strength. First, criticism from the Congress. The very next day after the deal was signed in April 2015, the Congress spokesperson raised the question of its cost and asked for making public the details of the agreement. He also questioned the escalation of cost of a single aircraft from ₹715 crore to ₹1,600 crore. The party blamed the Modi Government for bypassing the procurement procedure and smelled a rat over the signing of an agreement between Dassault, the manufacturer of Rafale, and the Anil Ambani-led Reliance defence firm for implementing the 50 per cent offset clause. The interview of former

French President Francois Hollande to a French TV, about the Indian Government proposing the name of Reliance Defence for the offset clause, only added fuel to the fire and gave the Opposition another handle to beat the Government with.

The Government has stoutly rejected the allegations and questioned the rationale of comparing the two different base year prices even as it insisted that it got significantly better terms than those quoted in the original bid under the UPA, with a total saving of more than 1,600 million Euros (350 million Euros on the cost of aircraft with a further reported saving on weapons, allied maintenance and training package amounting to a round 1,300 million Euros or ₹1,260 crore). However, a cost breakdown of Rafale in the original bid under UPA and in the 36 aircraft in the Government-to-Government deal will never be available in the public domain due to the secrecy clause between the two Governments. The Government's stand has been strongly supported by the serving Air Chief as well as his predecessor as they said that the two prices cannot be compared as these are being fully loaded with India-specific high-end technology. Former Defence Minister Shradha Pawar, too, has opined that he cannot level accusation unless he gets the proof.

Now let us examine it from the perspective of informed citizens. The Rafale aircraft was

developed by the then UPA Government in 2012 over its other rivals. However, negotiations with Dassault dragged on over disagreements on warranty for aircraft to be produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), India wanted Dassault to ensure the quality of aircraft produced by HAL but Dassault refused to do so. The other cause of difference was HAL demanding three times the manpower days than offered by Dassault.

In January 2014, Dassault informed that the cost of each aircraft had increased by 120 million dollar (₹75 crore). There was no further action by the then UPA Government and in May 2014, the NDA dispensation took over. Soon thereafter, the Air Force seriously flagged the issue of replacing its ageing fleets before new Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar. This ultimately led to the signing of the Rafale deal as a Government-to-Government venture during the Prime Minister's France visit in April 2015. The deal was thus an emergency response to the demand of the Air Force to replace its ageing fighter for air-to-air and air-to-ground attack and is nuclear-capable. Its on-board electronic warfare systems can also perform reconnaissance and radar jamming roles.

If our leaders continue to beat each other's heads, no Government can finalise the deal even in the next 50 years. There is also a catch

in Hollande's remarks. When asked by the French media about the conflict of interest involving former President's partner Julie Gaye (whose film was funded by Anil Ambani) he took a diversionary tactic to escape. In international arms deals, firms do lobbying and Reliance must have been in touch with Dassault which should be none of our business. The air on this has been cleared by Dassault and the French Government. It is a fact that the country's enemies will try to derail this deal through clandestine planting of false reports directed at the doors of opposition leaders and in dinner gossips. Hence, the Government should seriously plan to develop a robust defence industry with private sector participation and encourage foreign investment with private players.

As for HAL, it has taken almost 33 years to develop 'Tejas'. They will now face competition from private sector in the long-term which in effect is an opportunity for them. Now Reliance, Tata and Adani, all new in the defence sector, have forged alliances with foreign arms manufacturers and people should welcome this trend. The 50 per cent offset clause in this deal should be used to develop the defence infrastructure in the country. Let us end the saga of mathematics of incompetence in defence procurement where incompetence plus incompetence equals incompetence.

(The writer is a retired civil servant)

POINT-COUNTERPOINT



It is going beyond boundaries and tolerance level now. She (Kangana Ranaut) is missing the #MeToo movement. —Vikas Bahli's ex-wife RICHIA DUBEY

Another ex-wife to her ex-husband's rescue. Why do they leave their better-than-thou husbands in the first place? —Amitr KANGANA RANAUT

Indigenous edifice for new education

As we pass through an era that is witnessing weakening of sincere, committed and selfless pursuit of new knowledge, a course correction is needed. Who else can guide us better in this endeavour than Swami Vivekananda?



JS RAIPUT

The current state of Indian education system is a cause of concern on various fronts. It is very clearly visible in most learned narrations on education. It is indeed intriguing, and even amazing, that the real concern is not new — it is practically the same as it was articulated by Swami Vivekananda over a 100 years ago: "Education which does not help the common mass of the people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength and character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion — is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs."

The import implications of advance batteries for EVs is even more serious than electric parts import as batteries constitute almost 55-60 per cent of the total value of an electric vehicle. Hence, it is obvious that we need to try quickly to facilitate the manufacturing of advance batteries in India. For this, aggregation of demand from other applications such as renewable energy storage, energy back up for telecom towers, defence requirements, and home applications, among others, are needed where Government incentives can help. However, this in itself will not be enough given the fact that China, which has the globally largest and fully integrated battery manufacturing industry, will attain 73 per cent of the global market share by 2021. Hence, at the global stage, access to latest battery and process technology and secured raw materials supply are essential for these investments to be viable. Moreover, even if we start today, it will take at least three to four years for these plants to go on line. So, can India afford to carry on with a business-as-usual approach in the intervening period? The answer is clearly no.

Some analysts propose that a cess be levied on all fossil fuels vehicles which can be used to incentivise electric vehicles, thereby resulting in demand generation which will in turn lead to efficient manufacturing ecosystem created in the country. To my mind, this is myopic, over simplistic approach and clearly fails to address many fundamental questions. For instance, what are the costs and benefits of such an approach? Is this the optimal pathway for creating viable demand for EV parts manufacturing? Does it mean taxing the Indian industry to create demand for imports from China? Does this approach support other technology options that substantive-

jugation of its history, culture and heritage as a result of planned efforts to destabilise its time-tested traditional yet dynamic education system. Swami was active in a period characterised by rampant poverty, hunger, demoralisation of a slave nation, and people resigned to their fate. The British had successfully achieved an attitudinal transformation amongst the English-educated Indian elite who were overwhelmed by the superiority of the West in every aspect, right from knowledge to culture to social systems! When Swami Vivekananda appeared on the scene, people were hesitant to even talk about independence. India needed someone to give a wakeup call; let people realise who they are; what they were missing; how they have been deprived not only of their material affluence but also of the sense of pride in their culture and heritage. Most importantly, how their minds have been made to drift away from their own people, people who were reduced to live in inhuman conditions, who had lost the will to resist injustice and humiliation. If resurgence was ever conceivable, it needed a messiah who knew India and Indians!

And knowing India was no easy task in view of the country's diversity of every conceivable variety in men and material, spiritual and religious pursuits and systems of government and delivery justice. Swami travelled across the nooks and corner of the country, and what he saw, convinced him about the inherent unity of the Indian nation and its people. He also realised how India could play a leading role on the global stage in efforts to create a world of social cohesion and human dignity. A well-known instance of comprehending and then connecting India is that of Adi Sankaracharya. He realised the need to travel around, and in his short sojourn on the plains of Earth, he established shrines that strengthened the unity of minds of the people and also of the regions and places. One can also recall another example how Gopal Krishna Gokhale had advised Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to 'know India' before beginning work in India after all the name and fame he had already earned in South Africa. He dutifully travelled every nook and corner of the country and developed an understanding that could not be matched by any of his political associates in freedom struggle.

Swami Vivekananda was quick to realise the cause of the decline of great number of people who claimed to be the 'children of immortality; *Amitriyaya Putra!*' They had already understood that "all this that is changeable in this ephemeral world must be enveloped by the lord!" The query, in spite of all this and much more about national degradation, was answered by Swamiji. Attitude to false superiority played the most prominent role in the downfall of the children of god. While on the one hand, India boasted of Taxila, attracting learners from 60 nations, its social structure gradually declined, even a journey on sea was declared sinful and invited heavy penalties.

How can any system, social structure or a civilisation, maintain its dynamism if it isolates itself from the world outside? In 1894, Vivekananda said in his book, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, "To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration coming was the building of a wall of custom — whose foundation was hatred of others — round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindu from coming in con-



to realise the cause of the decline of great number of people who claimed to be the 'children of immortality; *Amitriyaya Putra!*' They had already understood that "all this that is changeable in this ephemeral world must be enveloped by the lord!" The query, in spite of all this and much more about national degradation, was answered by Swamiji. Attitude to false superiority played the most prominent role in the downfall of the children of god. While on the one hand, India boasted of Taxila, attracting learners from 60 nations, its social structure gradually declined, even a journey on sea was declared sinful and invited heavy penalties.

IF INDIA IS TO STAND WITH ITS HEAD HIGH IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY, IT HAS TO PREPARE A YOUNG GENERATION WHICH IS CONFIDENT, PROUD OF ITS HERITAGE, HISTORY AND MOTHERLAND. THEY ARE KEEN TO PROVE THAT THEY ARE NOT INFERIOR TO ANYONE

text with the surrounding Buddhist nations." In the same piece he offered the solution: "Give and take is the law; and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give us. Expansion is life, contraction is death."

Finally, in this very piece he exhorted: "We must mix with all the races of the Earth." The lamp that was lit by Swami has spread its light across the nation, across the communities and the entire world now realises and relishes India's global presence. But never travel around and outside, opening up the sea shores and airports alone is only one initial step. It alone is not sufficient to give Indians their due on the global stage.

If India is to stand up with its head high in the global community, it has to prepare its young generations, who are self-assured, confident, proud of their heritage, history and motherland, and are keen to prove that they are not inferior to anyone. It must make them believe that they all have the capa-

bility and potential to lead a global renaissance. For a committed researcher and explorer, knowledge pursuit is a pious task. Indian culture and tradition links it to the individual's urge to gain better understanding of the forces of nature, and utilise that knowledge for the welfare of the people, humanity and that, too, without any distinction or selfish motive. He prays for one and all — men and women of all religions and faiths, of all colours and creeds. No distinction, every soul being divine.

The *rishis* and *munis*, saints and sages — they all created knowledge and disseminated it for the "human welfare." Things have changed in the modern world and India and Indians are no longer exceptions. Now, knowledge quest is often pursued with the sole commercial considerations getting a patent earlier than others and takeover the market! Historical interventions impeded Indian knowledge traditions, and today, we are just copying the trends of much-glamourised globalisation.

However, as we are passing through an era of weakening of sincere, committed and selfless pursuits of new knowledge, a course correction is urgently needed. Essentially, it amounts to broadening of the vision of knowledge quest that India must articulate in the current-day idiom, accept and implement.

How to proceed to comprehend this change was so lucidly elaborated by Swami Vivekananda: "Everyone born in this world has a bent, a direction towards which he must go, through which he must live, and what is true of the individual equally true of the race. Each race, similarly, has a peculiar bent, each race has a peculiar *raison d'être*, each race has a peculiar mission to fill in the life of the world. Each race has to make its own result, to fulfil its own mission. Political greatness or military power is never the mission of our race; it never was and, mark my word, it never will be. But there has been the other mission given to us, which is to conserve, to preserve, to accumulate, as it were, into a dynamo, all the spiritual energy of the race, and that concentrated energy is to pour forth in a deluge on the world whenever circumstances are propitious." Can India not build the edifice of its new education for resurgent India on this outstanding posture?

(The writer is the Indian Representative on the Executive Board of UNESCO)

Confidence for the future

Generational change is now passé. With longevity increasing and pace of change seeing rapid growth, learning has new challenges



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Any thinking person knows that change is the law of life. There are classes and categories of change. Next to the topic of leadership (perhaps the largest block of time), researching topics of universal interest to human kind is the topic of change. Like leadership, attempts to understand it have taken place from the vantage point of philosophy, sociology, literature, management and more. Clearly, the list can be added to. Yet, the predictive validity of directions, content and speed of change are always a challenge to discern.

In the context of present times, it is obvious that technology is the biggest variable in the processes of change. Illustratively, those who cannot keep pace with digitalisation are likely to be enveloped by the expanding frontiers of the Jurassic Park. The second most significant aspect of change of present times is its speed. People in the generation of this writer have in the four decades, beginning mid-80s of the 20th century, lived through at least seven generations of changes in desktop computing. Similarly, felicity with numerals and numbers has become exceedingly important. In the late 50s and early 60s, the permission to take a 'log table' into the examination hall of school leaving 'O' level certificate examination of Cambridge University was considered a revolutionary move. There was heated exchange of opinion amongst those who claimed to know, whether this move strengthened accurate and ethical assessment or weakened it. Six decades down the line, young boys taking the school leaving examination may even find it difficult to understand the content and purpose of a 'log table'.

Put simply, generational change is now a passé. People undergo three to five significant changes in a life span of say 80 years. Longevity increases, pace of change increases and aid to learning becomes critical. There is as yet no programmed formula to facilitate this. This then becomes one of the core challenges of the present times. What has to change is the selection, content and execution of research themes. Higher education system in most parts of the world seem to have hardly developed a method of reorienting themselves to respond to this challenge.

The conflict between the outcomes of learning and the requirements of livelihood, as they stand today, need to be understood if they are to be tackled. The almost endemic spread of digitalisation has encumbered learning to a point where video medium of transference of learning seems to become incrementally more important. Obviously, whether in a face-to-face situation with a person or through intermediary of videos, learning content would in many ways remain the same. Valuable elements touch delivery of knowledge, the assessment of precision and volume of transfer of knowledge. It is there that the challenge lies.

There is one more area which needs to be flagged. If elements of change are as noted above, the sources of livelihood would also get affected. There was a time where the mason was literally the building block of a physical structure. Today, that profession is not eliminated but has been substantially taken over by prefabricated walls and structures. A skilled person, who can put them together, is now in demand. A clear case of a profession which is receding, and a skill which is expanding in replacing it.

When this is the global scene, for a like the World Economic Forum cannot be left far behind. They survive on riding the crest of the current interests. They are credited with a report, 'Future of Jobs Report 2018'. It is their estimate that global change will throw up emerging roles. By 2022, there will be 133 million emerging roles. By the same token, by 2022, declining roles would be about 75 million. Hence, the approximate rise in the emerging roles will be about 58 million. Like many reports, the derivation of this figure and its methodology is not clearly stated. It may be closer to truth to observe that there may be a likelihood of expanding the number of emerging roles. However, this does not necessarily convert itself into the actual number of available jobs. And this is the catch. Globally, there is talk of recession and the prophets of doom are talking of the possible repeat experiences of a decade ago. Irrespective, one thing is clear. That one thing is that skills of employability would have completely transformed. This would have rendered escalation of the ability of self-learning and sourcing of information to the top of the list. One needs to wake up to this reality.

In the future, the skills of postal service assistants, material recording and stock-keeping assistants would have been rendered obsolete and the requirement of operations and coordinating managers, artificial intelligence and machine learning intermediaries would have gone galloping. The question is simple: Is this, above phenomena, widely recognised enough to give confidence to everyone for the future?

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GETTING SERIOUS

Sir — This refers to the 50-word edit, "Martyr to Ganga" (October 13). The passing away of eminent environmentalist professor GD Agrawal is sad news. He will be remembered for his significant contribution towards rejuvenating the Ganga river, which remained the hallmark of his career. Agrawal, was fasting unto death for the last 11 days to save the holy river. His demands included the closure of all hydel projects that cause irreversible damage to the river, thereby obstructing its flow. While Agrawal was not the lone

crusader for the Ganga's cause his contribution will remain unparalleled. He has left behind a large number of grass root environmentalist whom he mentored during his life time. They will, perhaps, carry forward his legacy. **Ramesh G Jethwani** Bangalore

GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER

Sir — This refers to the article, "Chronicle of a death foretold" (October 13) by Hirammay Karlekarkar. The UN's special report on climate change precisely extols the impending catastrophe in the disguise of global

warning. It is high time for countries all over the world to introspect and join hands together to save our saviour ie mother earth. Otherwise, the day may not be too far when humanity may have to beg for its own existence. **Sudeepa Gandra** Kurukshetra

LOGICAL CONCLUSION

Sir — This refers to the article, "MeToo movement: A spark or fire?" (October 12) by Ajoy Kumar. It is shameful that despite the presence of laws aimed at women's security and a Government at the helm that boasts of

Busting Rahul's myth on the Rafale deal



This refers to the report, "Rafale row: Repeating lies not going to change reality: Goyal to Rahul" (October 13). Congress president Rahul Gandhi has been misleading the people of the country by branding the Rafale deal as the biggest scandal ever.

His allegations must be seen in light of the forthcoming elections to five crucial States as well as the 2019 General Election. Gandhi has, in fact repeatedly been targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and day out on the issue of purchase of fighter planes, accusing him of forcing the French aviation company, Dassault, to pick up Reliance Defence as its offset partner.

However, Dassault has made it clear that it freely chose to get into a partnership with Reliance Group in the joint-venture, Dassault Reliance Aerospace Ltd (DRAL). Besides, other partnerships have also

been signed with companies such as BTL, DEFSYS, Kinetic, Mahindra, Mairi and SAMTEL, while negotiations are ongoing with a hundred-odd other potential partners. While using interperate language against Prime Minister Modi, Gandhi called him *bhrast* and *corrupt* (and thief).

Interestingly, Gandhi himself is out on bail in the multi-crore *National Herald* scam. **MC Joshi** Lucknow

women empowerment, the women had to take recourse to social media to make their voices heard about what they went through. The move must not end with just naming and shaming. Those accused must pay for their acts.

Via email **STRENGTHEN JUDICIAL SYSTEM** Sir — This refers to the article, "MeToo movement: A spark or fire?" (October 12) by Ajoy Kumar. The #MeToo movement has been empowering women to step forward and take a stand against their oppressors. Shaming the men and

making them a subject of public scrutiny might be a very effective tool against powerful people at a time when the judicial system has not been effective. However, to ensure that this doesn't lead to a situation where, once you are accused on social media, you are guilty unless proven innocent, a comprehensive system for booking the culprits and delivering brisk justice to the affected is needed.

MA Siddiqui Lucknow
Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



There is a need to improve policies which can give fillip to skill development programmes at colleges, schools, skill centres to produce skilled population for our nation. The policymakers should put more efforts into linking education with employment and entrepreneurship through skill development to ensure that our skilled youth can get jobs

Khurshid Ahmad Ganai, Advisor to J&K Governor

BUZZ FROM GOVT

Under the current scenario, I see at least another three plus quarters of losses. Why? Because personally, I do not think the present tariffs are sustainable for long term health of the industry. Already we have been through two quarters of losses (this fiscal). So something dramatic has to happen in the next two quarters and we know that is not going to happen

Rajan Mathews, Director General, COAI



Govt invites bids for int'l Udan flights

OPERATIONS UNDER THE SCHEME WILL BE PERMITTED THROUGH FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT ONLY WITH MORE THAN 70 SEATS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Central Government has invited proposals from interested air operators for the international version of its 'Udan' (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme as it seeks to enhance air connectivity from India to select overseas destinations.

This is despite the domestic format of the scheme failing to yield desired results with almost half of the routes approved in the first phase of the bidding for the scheme still to be launched.

National airports operator AAI, which has been mandated to implement the international version of the Udan scheme, has invited 'e-proposals' (bids) from international bidders for selection of airlines under the International Air Connectivity Scheme, IACS

Udan," according to a notice in a leading English daily.

The Government, in its bid to make flying more affordable for masses, had in October 2016 announced the Udan scheme with airfares capped at ₹2,500 for a one-hour journey through subsidised ticket rates and to provide air connectivity to smaller towns.

In the subsequent developments, five airlines were mandated to fly on 128 regional routes in the first phase of the bidding in March 2017, and 15 airlines on 325 regional routes, including those having chopper operations, in the second phase in January this year.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is also the implementing agency for the domestic format of the regional connectivity scheme.

The bids could be submitted to the AAI by November 22, according to the notice inviting e-proposals.

The AAI has invited the bids on behalf of the civil aviation ministry and the Assam Government, as per the notice.

The Central Government had in August unveiled a draft scheme for extending the UDAN scheme to international circuits, with state governments identifying routes for the operations.

The draft International Air Connectivity (IAC) scheme envisages to increase the international ticketing to 20 crore by 2027.

As per the draft, the scheme is to be made operational only for states which demonstrate their commitment to implement and provide the requisite support for promoting operations under the scheme.

The BJP-ruled Assam had last year offered to provide Rs 100 crore as viability gap funding towards extension of the scheme for international air connectivity from the state capital Guwahati.

According to the draft scheme, State Governments will identify the routes to be connected, and airline operators will assess demand on the identified routes and submit proposals for providing connectivity.

Operations under the scheme will be permitted through fixed-wing aircraft only with more than 70 seats.

The scheme has proposed to set up an International Air Connectivity Fund (IACF) — dedicated for providing subsidy support under the scheme. It will be created through the contributions of State Governments.

Bank credit rises by 12.51%, deposits by 8.07%



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Bank credit rose by 12.51 per cent to ₹89.82 lakh crore in the fortnight ended September 28, while the deposits grew by 8.07 per cent to ₹117.99 lakh crore, according to the RBI data.

In the year-ago fortnight, advances stood at ₹79.83 lakh crore, while the deposits at ₹109.17 lakh crore.

In the fortnight ended September 14, bank credit had risen by 13.46 per cent to ₹87.98 lakh crore, while the deposits grew by 8.58 per cent to ₹115.70 lakh crore.

In August this year, non-food credit rose by 12.4 per

cent, as against an increase of 5.5 per cent in the year-ago month, the RBI data showed.

Advances to industry rose by 1.9 per cent in August, against a contraction of 0.3 per cent in August 2017.

Bank loans to agriculture and allied activities were up by 6.6 per cent, compared with an increase of 6.5 per cent in the same month last year.

Credit to the services sector expanded by 26.7 per cent, against 5 per cent last year.

Personal loans rose by 18.2 per cent in August 2018, compared with 15.7 per cent in August 2017.

Govt may not further hike import duty on non-essential items

THE IMPORT DUTY ON MOBILE PHONES HAVE BEEN SPARED IN THE RECENT DUTY HIKE AS THE LEVY HAS ALREADY BEEN RAISED EARLIER

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government may not go for another round of import duty hike on any more items and could take other measures to contain the impact of rupee slide on current account deficit (CAD), an official said.

The Government, within a span of two weeks, has hiked import duty on a host of household items like refrigerators and air conditioners, and telecom and communications system products as it looked to cut import of non-essential items.

"Further hike in import duty on non essential goods is not likely," the official said.

In the latest round of duty hike effective October 12, the Finance Ministry increased the levy of import of base station, IP Radios, soft switches and

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) equipments, and optical transport equipments, among others, to up to 20 per cent.

The import duty on mobile phones have been spared in the recent duty hike as the levy has already been raised earlier.

"This round of duty hike was suggested by the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeiTY), after discussion with Ministry of Commerce and Industry. We have gone ahead with their suggestion," the official added.

Indian rupee had touched a historic low of 74.50 to a dollar on October 11. It later recovered and ended October 12 trading session at 73.57 to a dollar as global crude prices eased. The rupee has depreciated about 13 per cent since the beginning of 2018.

"We expect the rupee to rise from here. No more import curbs would be needed at the moment. Rather we should look at ways to check dependence on petrol, diesel," another official said.

The Government, effective September 27, had doubled duties on import of 19 items, including air conditioners, household refrigerators and washing machines (less than 10 kg), to 20 per cent. The cost of import of these items was ₹86,000 crore in 2017-18 fiscal.

Following a meeting by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government had on September 14 announced that the centre would impose curbs on import of non-essential items to contain the widening CAD and check the rupee fall.

To address the issue of expanding CAD, the Government will take necessary steps to cut down non-essential imports and increase exports. The commodities of which imports will be cut down will be decided after consultations with concerned ministries and will be WTO-compliant," Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had then said.

Earlier in the day, a finance ministry official had said more steps will be taken to check CAD and hoped that the rupee would appreciate.

"Rupee, Balance of Payments, CAD are the main worries, we have strategy in place to tackle situation. We will take action at opportune time on these issues," the official said.

The CAD widened to 2.4 per cent of the GDP in the first quarter of 2018-19.

Large trade deficit and rupee decline against the US dollar are putting pressure on the CAD, and these steps are likely to have a positive impact on the external sector.

Results, rupee movement to guide mkts this week: Experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Quarterly earnings from blue-chips like Infosys and RIL as well as movement of the rupee and crude oil prices will dictate the market trend in the holiday-shortened week ahead, say experts. "Currently, broader markets look attractive while investors may seek more clarity from upcoming quarterly results. The continuity of this trend largely depends on stability on bond yields and INR."

"However, worries about US Fed rate hike, US-China trade dispute and political uncertainties in India on account of upcoming state elections may impart sentiment in the short-term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

"Companies like Infosys, Federal Bank, ACC, Reliance are to announce their results this week," said Prateek Jain, Director, Hem Securities. Over the last week, the BSE 30-share Sensex gained 356.59 points to close at 34,733.58 on Friday.

Govt may give ₹2.5K cr bank guarantee for State-owned firm STC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State Trading Corporation (STC) may soon get relief from the Government in terms of bank guarantee of ₹2,500 crore to help the company resolve the liquidity problem, sources said.

The commerce ministry has approved the proposal and sent that to the finance ministry for final approval.

"There is also a plan to restructure loans of STC as the company is facing financial hardship," the sources said.

The firm is also in the process of preparing a plan to sell its non-core assets to raise funds.

The move assume significance as there was a proposal of the commerce ministry for a merger of STC and another state-owned trading firm MMTTC.

STC has posted 88.44 per cent fall in standalone net profit to ₹1.46 crore during April-June 2018-19, on account of poor income.

The company, while releas-

The Commerce Ministry has approved the proposal and sent that to the Finance Ministry for final approval

ing its unaudited financial result for the quarter ended June 30, 2018 in August, had stated that it has appointed financial advisor for restructuring of existing loans and for raising additional loans.

It had also proposed to raise additional working capital funds against its properties. "Therefore, the Company has approached its lender banks for an appropriate resolution plan with the objective to make the operations of the company viable and sustainable. The lender banks have formed Joint Lender Forum to finalise the reconstruction plan," it had said.

Govt to give priority to State power producers for coal supply

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has asked Coal India Ltd and its subsidiaries to prioritise coal supply to State power producers like NTPC, leaving private electricity plants in a lurch, multiple sources said.

The Coal Ministry has directed CIL to prioritise the coal supply to select central and State Government-owned power houses under the pretext of building coal stocks at these plants.

Following this, all subsidiaries of Coal India like South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) have been directed to supply coal to state power generators such as NTPC.

This has come at the cost of private power producers, who are running out of feedstock used to produce electricity.

Sources in private producers say rationally Coal India should give first priority to those plants having critical coal stocks. Next should come plants facing supplies below contractual obligations and then to most efficient plants, irrespective of ownership.

Preferential and priority

distribution should not be limited to public sector, they said, adding that private power plants should not be discriminated against.

As per the sources, following the instruction from coal ministry, Coal India has its subsidiaries like SECL to supply 25 rakes per day of coal to NTPC's Korba, Mouda and Bhilai power plants and such other state power plants.

Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) has also accorded priority supplies to central public sector plants and WCL has been verbally instructed to supply coal to only Mahagenco (formerly known as Maharashtra State Electricity Board) plants.

As a result, SECL in October increased the supplies to state and central generating companies from an average 10 rakes per day (40,000 tonnes) to 17 rakes per day (68,000 tonnes) whereas for private power plants it has reduced from an average 10 rakes per day to only 6 rakes per day (24,000 Tons).

Private power generators feel such priority supply only to state and central PSU electricity generating companies is

discriminatory.

This discrimination based on ownership of assets puts into question the sanctity of level playing field and ease of doing business besides being bad in the eyes of law and equity, they said.

The move comes just when the festive season has started when power demand goes up. Also, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana will go to polls this year.

Also, power tariff in spot market have hit a record high past few days. In last week of September, spot electricity price touched nine year high of ₹14.25 per unit and swelled further to ₹18.20 in the first week of October on Indian Energy Exchange.

This spark in power tariff was attributed to inadequate coal supplies from Coal India, the sources said.

While domestic coal production during April-September has risen to 256 million tonnes from 232 million tonnes in the year ago period, increased power demand has meant that coal imports have also risen to 119 million tonnes from 105 million tonnes in April-September 2017.

74 firms generated 11 bn euros revenue in Germany: Survey

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As many as 74 Indian companies have generated annual revenues of 11 billion euros and employed nearly 23,300 people in Germany, a recent survey said.

According to a survey titled 'Indian Investment in Germany: Update 2018' conducted by EY, Indo German Chamber of Commerce and CII, four dominant sectors accounted for almost 95 per cent of the revenue generated by Indian companies in Germany, as well as 89 per cent of the 23,300 people employed.

"Out of the total number of more than 213 Indian subsidiaries operating in Germany, nearly 74 Indian companies each with annual turnover of more than 10 million euros generated combined annual revenues of around 11 billion euros," the report said.

The four dominant sectors include automotive, metals and metal-processing, chemicals and pharmaceuticals and professional, scientific and technical services. "The top 10 Indian compa-

nies alone account for more than 74 per cent of all revenues generated by Indian companies and employ around 59 per cent of this groups total workforce," it said.

The report noted that excellent infrastructure, favourable R&D and innovation conditions as well as a highly skilled labour force comprise top-rated business environment factors by Indian investors in the 2018 update.

"In addition, the opportunity to access European market post Brexit is an important factor for Indian investors," it said.

The study noted that Indian investors viewed the quality of living at affordable prices very positively. "The quality of education, which is offered for free by the Government, makes Germany an attractive location for relevant research and development activities."

"Also, the security standards, personally and for financial investments, qualify Germany to be a perfect destination for Indians, who intend to diversify risks investing their private wealth in the Federal Republic," the report added.

'Continued investment in infra will help industry'

The CEO of SpotOn, a Bangalore-based logistics firm, **Abhik Mitra** talked to *The Pioneer*. Here are excerpts of his interview taken by **Vikas Kumar**:

Recently you developed Piece Level Tracking System to track products being delivered. How does it work?

The technology that we use for tracking a consignment or boxes/pieces within a consignment is a combination of track and trace system which is supported by Piece Level Tracking System. Piece Level Tracking means the box of a consignment can be tracked. A consignment may be from say a auto spare parts to a distributor. He may be sending one consignment box. But in that one consignment note there could be 10 boxes, so we can track each box in that consignment. The technology has been developed in house. What it helps us to do and the customer to do is know exactly where his shipment is, in

which vehicle it is and in which hub or service centre it is.

Purpose of this technology is visibility for the customer and control for SpotOn; so that we know where every shipment is. And we can move the shipment fast enough and correctly so that we make an accurate delivery.

You are going to provide air services in 2019 across India. What are your plans to provide the same to neighbouring countries in particular and world in general? And why are you coming up with air services after long seven years of establishment of your company?

The air services that we are starting in April 2019, for which the work has already started in building the IT platform and building the infrastructure that we need is something we are going to do for domestic air cargo. Where the product will be available to our existing customers and B2B

"Yes, there is a time lag but while it is (fuel prices) challenging; but not that challenging that can affect our business"



customers. We believe this could have happened a little earlier but as you know there was a transaction was going on. Our earlier investors were existing and new investors were coming in so as a result of that we just delayed the whole process by a period of around 6-8 months.

We started planning process for this about a year ago when we knew the new investors were coming on board. And now we have started work so that we can launch the product by April

What are the challenges logistics sectors is facing due to rising fuel prices? Tell us how hard is it to run operations during such volatile market conditions?

Of course it is hard, having said that the stability of network is never compromised, because service is most important thing. We typically get a pass through to our vendors who compensate us for higher prices, and we also get compensated by our customers. Yes there is a time lag but while it is challenging but it is not that challenging that

can affect our business.

Is logistics industry facing any hurdles due to Government rules and regulations? What suggestions would you like to give to the Government so that logistics sector easily can comply with the regulations?

Not really. The GST has been a very positive step for us. E-Way bill has been positive. Of course the implementation and execution takes a little bit of time. And the Government has been listening to us in terms of our situations; especially under the express industry because as an express industry we do not move from one pick up point to one delivery point. We move through hubs and spokes. And obviously large number of e-way bills need to be made, which are made using technology as manually it is impossible to do that and I don't think there are any negatives. These are positives.

Obviously continued

investment in infrastructure, will help the industry. The ability to move through tolls (I understand the need for tolls) - but if trucks could move faster through toll booths faster than what happens now it would improve the speed and predictability of the network.

Did the recent truck union's strike hamper your operations?

Yes of course it did, because our trucks were stopped and held back at different places. Loads were in the trucks. Customers did not get the service they should have got. Couple of the trucks was also attacked. Fortunately we didn't lose anything. A strike does impact the industry.

In an express network - for us a network is like a loop. A truck leaves Delhi to Mumbai and there are 2 en-route after that. The truck which has left from Delhi needs to reach Mumbai and go back. If this loop is broken it certainly takes time to settle down.

India International Silk Fair to begin this week

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Smriti Irani will Tuesday inaugurate India International Silk Fair (IISF), a three-day event where over 108 exhibitors of silk and blended silk will display their produce here.

"The fair will give a platform to exporters to display their products and to overseas buyers an opportunity to place orders and source their merchandise," the textiles ministry said.

"The IISF-2018 is expected to generate business of over \$20 million for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) engaged in producing silk and blended silk garments, fabrics, accessories and floor covering," it added.

Over 218 buyers from various countries will participate in the fair. Artisans from Jammu & Kashmir and north-east will showcase their unique

THE IISF-2018 IS EXPECTED TO GENERATE BUSINESS OF OVER \$20 MILLION FOR THE SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs) ENGAGED IN PRODUCING SILK AND BLENDED SILK GARMENTS, FABRICS, ACCESSORIES AND FLOOR COVERING

products from their region which will be an added attraction for buyers.

India is the second largest producer of silk in the world. The country's silk industry is agriculture based and labour intensive and provides gainful employment to around 8 million artisans and weavers in rural areas.

OPEN-ENDED (GROWTH)

SCHEME	NAV
HDFC MUTUAL FUND	
Index Fund Sensex Plus Plan-Direct Plan	469.996
Index Fund-Sensex Plus (FV-Rs32.161)	462.5623
Index Fund Sensex Plan-Direct Plan	309.9354
Index FundSensex Plan (FV Rs 32.161)	306.5626

ICICI PRUDENTIAL MUTUAL FUND	
Blended Plan A - Dividend	13.5898
Blended Plan A - Direct Plan Bonus	10.9152
Blended Plan A - Growth	22.7587
Blended Plan A-Direct Plan - Dividend	13.6408
Blended Plan A-Direct Plan - Growth	23.0933

KOTAK MAHINDRA MUTUAL FUND

Bluechip Fund - Dividend	31.676
Bluechip Fund - Dividend - Direct	34.468
Bluechip Fund - Growth	210.87
Bluechip Fund - Growth - Direct	223.999
Emerging Equity Scheme - Dividend	21.286
Emerging Equity Scheme - Dividend - Direct	24.64
Emerging Equity Scheme - Growth	34.688
Emerging Equity Scheme - Growth - Direct	37.015
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Bimonthly Direct	20.0423
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Bimonthly Direct	20.2378
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Dividend	10.7359
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Dividend - Direct	11.0381
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Fortnightly - Regular	23.0584
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Growth	25.6888
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Growth - Direct	26.4285
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Fortnightly - Direct	23.5305
Equity Opportunities Fund - Dividend	22.969
Equity Opportunities Fund - Dividend - Direct	24.696
Equity Opportunities Fund - Growth	105.988
Equity Opportunities Fund - Growth - Direct	112.65
Equity Savings Fund - Direct - Growth	13.8901
Equity Savings Fund - Direct - Monthly Dividend	11.3976
Equity Savings Fund - Direct - Quarterly Dividend	11.0045
Equity Savings Fund - Regular - Growth	13.52
Equity Savings Fund - Regular - Monthly Dividend	11.1333
Equity Savings Fund - Regular - Quarterly Dividend	10.9059
Global Emerging Market Fund - Dividend	15.195
Global Emerging Market Fund - Dividend - Direct	15.973
Global Emerging Market Fund - Growth	15.196
Global Emerging Market Fund - Growth - Direct	15.902
India EQ Contra Fund - Dividend	19.58
India EQ Contra Fund - Dividend - Direct	21.698
India EQ Contra Fund - Growth	48.034
India EQ Contra Fund - Growth - Direct	51.667
Infrastructure & Economic Reform Fund - Standard Plan-Div	16.193
Infrastructure & Economic Reform Fund - Standard Plan-Growth	17.774
Infrastructure & Economic Reform Fund-Direct Plan- Div Option	18.948
Infrastructure & Economic Reform Fund-Direct - Growth Option	19.166
Small Cap Fund - Dividend	34.375
Small Cap Fund - Dividend - Direct	37.134
Small Cap Fund - Growth	66.567
Small Cap Fund - Growth - Direct	71.434
Standard Multicap Fund - Dividend	21.113
Standard Multicap Fund - Dividend - Direct	22.587
Standard Multicap Fund - Growth	31.609
Standard Multicap Fund - Growth - Direct	33.437

SAHARA MUTUAL FUND

BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES FUND- GROWTH - Direct	64.5499
BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES FUND- GROWTH OPTION	60.8821
BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES FUND-DIVIDEND - Direct	21.9234
BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES FUND-DIVIDEND OPTION	21.5229
Growth Fund-Dividend	37.8643
Growth Fund-Dividend- Direct	38.5599
Growth Fund-Growth	130.3965
Growth Fund-Growth- Direct	145.5617
Infrastructure Fund FIXED PRICING -Direct-Dividend	20.328
Infrastructure Fund FIXED PRICING OPTION-Direct-Growth	25.4496
Infrastructure Fund FIXED PRICING OPTION-Dividend Option	17.2523
Infrastructure Fund FIXED PRICING OPTION-Growth Option	23.6255
Infrastructure Fund VARIABLE PRICING OPTION-Direct-Dividend	22.3093
Infrastructure Fund VARIABLE PRICING OPTION-Direct-Growth	28.0185
Infrastructure Fund VARIABLE PRICING OPTION-Dividend Option	20.1426
Infrastructure Fund VARIABLE PRICING OPTION-Growth Option	27.3815
Midcap Fund-Auto Payout	71.5549
Midcap Fund-Auto Payout- Direct	76.4255
Midcap Fund-Bonus	71.5549
Midcap Fund-Bonus- Direct	76.4255
Midcap Fund-Dividend - Direct	32.0292
Midcap Fund-Dividend Plan	31.5581
Midcap Fund-Growth Option - Direct	76.4255
Midcap Fund-Growth Plan	71.5549
Power & Natural Resources Fund - Dividend Option	16.5529
Power & Natural resources Fund - Growth - Direct	20.8981
Power & Natural resources Fund - Growth Option	19.4074
Power & Natural Resources Fund-Dividend - Direct	16.0357
R.E.A.L Fund - Dividend Option	19.5224
R.E.A.L Fund - Dividend Option- Direct	19.9131
R.E.A.L Fund - Growth Fund	19.5192
R.E.A.L Fund - Growth Fund- Direct	21.5048

Star Value Fund-Dividend - Direct	16.9545
Star Value Fund-Dividend Option	16.68
Star Value Fund-Growth - Direct	23.1748
Star Value Fund-Growth Option	21.5681
Super 20 Fund - Dividend - Direct	16.3573
Super 20 Fund - Dividend Option	18.9689
Super 20 Fund - Growth - Direct	20.6309
Super 20 Fund - Growth Option	18.9873
Wealth Plus Fund-Fixed Pricing Option-Direct-Dividend Option	29.4685
Wealth Plus Fund-Fixed Pricing Option-Direct-Growth	41.5708
Wealth Plus Fund-Fixed Pricing Option-Dividend Option	28.9942
Wealth Plus Fund-Fixed Pricing Option-Growth Option	40.7108
Wealth Plus Fund-Variable Pricing Option-Direct -Dividend	34.8372
Wealth Plus Fund-Variable Pricing Option-Direct-Growth	48.5678
Wealth Plus Fund-Variable Pricing Option-Dividend Option	34.3497
Wealth Plus Fund-Variable Pricing Option-Growth Option	47.3791

SBI MUTUAL FUND

MAGNUM NRI FLEXASSET PLAN-DIVIDEND	30.3025
MAGNUM NRI FLEXASSET PLAN-GROWTH	30.1918
ONE INDIA FUND - DIV (PREV CLOSE ENDED UPTO 14/01/2010)	10.43
ONE INDIA FUND - GR (PREV CLOSE ENDED UPTO 14/01/2010)	10.43

OPEN-ENDED (INCOME)

DHFL PRAMERICA MUTUAL FUND

FIXED MATURITY PLAN - SERIES 47 - DIRECT PLAN -GROWTH	14.096
FIXED MATURITY PLAN - SERIES 47 - REGULAR PLAN -GROWTH	13.9784

ICICI PRUDENTIAL MUTUAL FUND

Blended Plan B - Dividend Option - I	15.0425
Blended Plan B - Growth Option - I	23.9631
Blended Plan B - Monthly Dividend Option - I	10.266
Blended Plan B - Daily Dividend Option - I	12.4926
Blended Plan B - Direct Plan - Dividend Option - I	17.7362
Blended Plan B - Direct Plan - Growth Option - I	24.0808
Blended Plan B - Direct Plan - Monthly Dividend Option - I	10.3063
Blended Plan B - Direct Plan - Half Yearly Dividend Option - I	10.0227
Blended Plan B - Direct Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option - I	10.7
Blended Plan B - Half Yearly Dividend Option - I	10.3661
Blended Plan B - option I-Bonus	11.9703
Blended Plan B-Direct Plan - Daily Dividend Option - I	12.032
Child Care Plan Study - Cumulative	69.6122
Child Care Plan Study - Direct Plan- Cumulative	72.4243
Dynamic Bond Fund - Annual Dividend	10.6484
Dynamic Bond Fund - Bonus	19.6984
Dynamic Bond Fund - Daily Dividend	10.0171
Dynamic Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Daily Dividend	10.5669
Dynamic Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Growth	20.425
Dynamic Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Half Yearly Dividend	10.2129
Dynamic Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Monthly Dividend	10.4618
Dynamic Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Annual Dividend	10.6164
Dynamic Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Bonus Option	20.23
Dynamic Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Quarterly Dividend	10.4779
Dynamic Bond Fund - Growth	19.6985
Dynamic Bond Fund - Half Yearly Dividend	10.2388
Dynamic Bond Fund - Monthly Dividend	10.9656
Dynamic Bond Fund - Premium Plus Growth	20.7632
Dynamic Bond Fund - Quarterly Dividend	10.408
Interval Fund - Annual Interval Plan I - Retail Dividend	10.7894
Interval Fund - Annual Interval Plan I - Retail Growth	22.5035
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan I - Direct Plan Bonus	12.628
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan I - Growth	17.983
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan I - Direct Plan - Dividend	N.A.
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan I - Direct Plan - Growth	18.0131
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan I - Dividend	10.8172
Interval Fund - Annual Interval Plan II - Retail Dividend	11.9883
Interval Fund - Annual Interval Plan II - Retail Growth	22.6497
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan II - Direct Plan - Growth	23.4449
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan II - Dividend	11.8549
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan II - Growth	23.3622
Interval Fund - Annual Interval Plan III - Retail Dividend	11.7874
Interval Fund - Annual Interval Plan III - Retail Growth	21.8977
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan III - Direct Plan - Growth	17.7978
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan III - Dividend	10.8352
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan III - Growth	17.7495
Interval Fund - Annual Interval Plan IV - Retail Dividend	11.6845
Interval Fund - Annual Interval Plan IV - Retail Growth	21.7637
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan IV - Dividend	11.7708
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan IV - Direct Plan - Growth	20.4818
Interval Fund Annual Interval Plan IV - Growth	20.4088
Interval Fund - Monthly Interval Plan I - Retail Dividend	10.0016
Interval Fund - Monthly Interval Plan I - Retail Growth	21.1844
Interval Fund Monthly Interval Plan I - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.0692
Interval Fund Monthly Interval Plan I - Direct Plan - Growth	13.4735
Interval Fund Monthly Interval Plan I - Dividend	10.0015
Interval Fund Monthly Interval Plan I - Growth	13.4637
Interval Fund - Quarterly Interval Plan I - Retail Dividend	10.0025
Interval Fund - Quarterly Interval Plan I - Retail Growth	21.9999
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan 1 - Retail Qtrly Div Payout	10.0022
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan 1 - Direct Plan - Growth	17.6211
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan 1 - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.0017
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan 1 - Growth	17.5944
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan 1 - Dividend	10.0017
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan 1 Plan - Direct - Qtrly Div Payout	10.0023
Interval Fund - Quarterly Interval Plan II - Retail Dividend	10.0271
Interval Fund - Quarterly Interval Plan II - Retail Growth	22.0296

Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval - Direct Plan - Growth	20.0513
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval - Dividend	10.0013
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval - Growth	19.9985
Interval Fund - Quarterly Interval Plan III - Direct Qtrly Div Payout	10.0085
Interval Fund - Quarterly Interval Plan III - Retail Dividend	10.0083
Interval Fund - Quarterly Interval Plan III - Retail Growth	20.7912
Interval Fund III Quarterly Interval - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.1854
Interval Fund III Quarterly Interval - Direct Plan - Growth	17.5014
Interval Fund III Quarterly Interval - Dividend	10.0061
Interval Fund III Quarterly Interval - Growth	17.4312
Interval Fund - Series VI - Annual Interval Plan - A - Cumulative	13.9619
Interval Fund - Series VI - Annual Interval Plan - A - Direct - Cumulative	13.9796
Interval Fund - Series VI - Annual Interval Plan - A - Direct Plan - Div	10.9291
Interval Fund - Series VI - Annual Interval Plan - C - Cumulative	14.9423
Interval Fund - Series VI - Annual Interval Plan - C - Direct - Cumulative	14.9835
Interval Fund - Series VI - Annual Interval Plan - D - Cumulative	14.9023
Interval Fund - Series VI - Annual Interval Plan - D - Direct - Cumulative	14.9454
Interval Fund - Series VI - Annual Interval Plan - D - Direct Plan - Div	10.441
Interval Fund - Series VII - Annual Interval Plan - C - Cumulative	13.774
Interval Fund - Series VII - Annual Interval Plan - C - Direct - Cumulative	13.7979
Interval Fund - Series VII - Annual Interval Plan - C - Dividend	10.8654
Interval Fund II - Qtrly Interval Plan A - Direct Plan - Qtrly Div Payout	10.2479
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan A - Retail Dividend	10.0016
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan A - Retail Growth	21.1917
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan A - Quarterly Div Payout	10.0015
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan A - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.0016
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan A - Direct Plan - Growth	13.6172
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan A - Dividend	10.0017
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan A - Growth	13.6425
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan A - Retail Qtrly Div Payout	10.224
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan B - Retail Dividend	10.0124
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan B - Retail Growth	20.9682
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan B - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.0051
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan B - Direct Plan - Growth	14.1819
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan B - Dividend	10.0016
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan B - Growth	14.2363
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan B - Quarterly Div Payout	10.0016
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan C - Retail Dividend	10.0038
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan C - Retail Growth	22.1759
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan C - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.0016
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan C - Direct Plan - Growth	14.0323
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan C - Direct - Qtrly Div Payout	10.2204
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan C - Dividend	10.0039
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan C - Growth	13.9772
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan C - Instl Qtrly Div Payout	10.2061
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan D - Retail Dividend	10.0799
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan D - Retail Growth	22.795
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan D - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.0051
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan D - Direct - Qtrly Div Payout	10.1535
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan D - Direct Plan - Growth	17.7073
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan D - Dividend	10.005
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan D - Growth	13.469
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan D - Quarterly Div Payout	10.2309
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan F - Retail Dividend	10.0742
Interval Fund II - Quarterly Interval Plan F - Retail Growth	20.25
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan F - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.0168
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan F - Direct Plan - Growth	17.7138
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan F - Direct - Qtrly Div Payout	10.0095
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan F - Dividend	10.1825
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan F - Growth	17.716
Interval Fund II Quarterly Interval Plan F Retail Qtrly Dividend Payout	10.0046
Interval Fund IV - Quarterly Interval Plan B - Retail Dividend	10.0009
Interval Fund IV - Quarterly Interval Plan B - Retail Growth	19.7164
Interval Fund IV Quarterly Interval Plan B - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.001
Interval Fund IV Quarterly Interval Plan B - Direct Plan - Growth	18.1794
Interval Fund IV Quarterly Interval Plan B - Growth	18.1012
Interval Fund IV Quarterly Interval Plan B - Dividend	10.1688
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan - II Retail Quarterly Div Payout	10.234
Interval Fund V - Monthly Interval Plan A - Retail Dividend	10.0033
Interval Fund V - Monthly Interval Plan A - Retail Growth	20.0008
Interval Fund V Monthly Interval Plan A - Direct Plan - Dividend	10.0033
Interval Fund V Monthly Interval Plan A - Direct Plan - Growth	13.9183
Interval Fund V Monthly Interval Plan A - Dividend	10.0033
Interval Fund V Monthly Interval Plan A - Growth	13.8735
MIP - Direct Plan - Dividend Half Yearly	13.6318
MIP - Direct Plan - Dividend Monthly	12.7914
MIP - Direct Plan - Dividend Quarterly	13.8562
MIP - Direct Plan - Growth	49.7829
MIP - Direct Plan Bonus	13.7171
MIP - Dividend Half Yearly	12.8248
MIP - Dividend Monthly	12.3602
MIP - Dividend Quarterly	13.5226
MIP - Growth	48.1366

JM FINANCIAL MUTUAL FUND

Income Fund - Bonus Option - Principal Units	19.5701
MIP Fund (Direct) - Bonus Option - Principal Units	25.9834
MIP Fund (Direct) - Dividend Option - Annual Dividend	20.9404
MIP Fund (Direct) - Dividend Option - Quarterly Dividend	19.5151
MIP Fund (Direct) - Growth Option	25.7788
MIP Fund (Direct)-Dividend Option - Monthly Dividend	12.6302
MIP Fund - Bonus Option - Principal Units	24.5085
MIP FUND-Annual Dividend	19.4034
MIP FUND-Growth	24.1503
MIP FUND-Monthly Dividend	11.4362
MIP FUND-Quarterly Dividend	18.1976
Short Term Fund (Direct) - Daily Dividend Option	13.7662

Short Term Fund (Direct) - Dividend Option	10.5901
Short Term Fund (Direct) - Growth Option	25.4269

KOTAK MAHINDRA MUTUAL FUND

Banking and PSU Debt - Annual Dividend	16.1842
Banking and PSU Debt - Daily Dividend Reinvestment	10.188
Banking and PSU Debt - Direct Daily Dividend Reinvestment	10.2604
Banking and PSU Debt - Growth	40.0173
Banking and PSU Debt - Monthly Dividend	10.5059
Banking and PSU Debt Direct - Annual Dividend	17.1427
Banking and PSU Debt Direct - Growth	40.6285
Banking and PSU Debt Direct - Monthly Dividend	10.6102
Bond - Annual Dividend - Direct	22.0861
Bond - Growth - Direct	50.1636
Bond - Quarterly Dividend - Direct	13.5759
Bond Regular Plan Annual Dividend	29.391
Bond Regular Plan Bonus Plan	30.696
Bond Regular Plan Bonus Plan - Direct	22.7736
Bond Regular Plan Direct HF dividend	40.4758
Bond Regular Plan Growth	47.9724
Bond Regular Plan Quarterly Dividend	10.7277
Bond-Deposit-Dividend	13.6554
Bond-Deposit-Growth	42.9354
Bond Short Term Plan - Direct Plan - Normal Dividend	10.2716
Bond Short Term Plan-(Dividend)	10.1317
Bond Short Term Plan-(Dividend) - Direct	10.9516
Bond Short Term Plan-(Growth)	33.1652
Bond Short Term Plan-(Growth) - Direct	34.5907
Bond Short Term Plan-(Half Yearly Dividend)	12.0897
Bond Short Term Plan-(Half Yearly Dividend) - Direct	12.2705
Corporate Bond Fund- Retail Plan-Growth Option	2034.9063
Corporate Bond Fund- Direct Plan- Growth Option	2410.4554
Corporate Bond Fund- Direct Plan- Monthly Dividend Option	1106.9616
Corporate Bond Fund- Institutional Plan-Growth Option	2090.4924
Corporate Bond Fund- Regular Plan-Growth Option	2359.5035
Corporate Bond Fund- Regular Plan-Monthly Dividend Option	1052.9376
Corporate Bond Fund- Regular Plan-Quarterly Dividend Option	1066.6837
Corporate Bond Fund- Retail Plan- Monthly Dividend Option	1040.0538
Corporate Bond Fund- Retail Plan- Weekly Dividend Option	1052.3061
Corporate Bond Fund- Retail Plan-Daily Dividend Option	1052.6393
Corporate Bond Fund- Standard Plan-Daily Dividend	

Saudi rejects threats as stocks plunge after Trump remarks

AP ■ DUBAI

Saudi Arabia warned on Sunday it will respond to any "threats" against it as its stock market plunged following President Donald Trump's warning of "severe punishment" over the disappearance of *Washington Post* contributor Jamal Khashoggi.



Trump made a point of visiting the kingdom on his first overseas trip as President and has touted arms sales to Saudi Arabia. But both the White House and the kingdom are under mounting pressure as concern grows over the fate of the veteran journalist, who hasn't been seen since he entered the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul on October 2.

Already, international business leaders are pulling out of the kingdom's upcoming investment forum, a high-profile event known as "Davos in the Desert."

"The kingdom affirms its total rejection of any threats and attempts to undermine it, whether by threatening to impose economic sanctions, using political pressures or repeating false accusations," the statement published by the state-run Saudi Press Agency read. "The kingdom also affirms that if it receives any action, it will respond with greater action, and that the kingdom's economy has an influential and vital role in the global economy."

The statement from the world's top oil exporter came after the Tadawul exchange in Riyadh dropped by 7 per cent at one point during the week's first day of trading, with 182 of its 186 listed stocks showing

Sunday, Trump told CBS' "60 Minutes" that the consequences of Saudi Arabia being involved would be "severe."

"There's something really terrible and disgusting about that, if that was the case, so we're going to have to see," Trump said. "We're going to get to the bottom of it and there will be severe punishment."

However, Trump in the same interview said: "As of this moment, they deny it and they deny it vehemently. Could it be them? Yes?"

Other stock exchanges in the Mideast saw less volatility Sunday. US markets have been rattled by rising interest rates, signs of a slowdown in the global economy and the US-China trade dispute.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has aggressively pitched the kingdom as a destination for foreign investment. But Khashoggi's disappearance, and suspicions he may have been targeted over his criticism of the crown prince, have led several business leaders and media outlets to back out of an upcoming high-profile investment conference in Riyadh.

Trump also said "we would

be punishing ourselves" by canceling arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which his administration touted on his first overseas trip.

The sale is a "tremendous order for our companies," and if the kingdom doesn't buy its weaponry from the United States, they will buy it from others, he said. Trump said he would meet with Khashoggi's family.

American lawmakers in both parties have been more critical of Saudi Arabia, with several suggesting officials in the kingdom could be sanctioned if they were found to be involved in Khashoggi's disappearance and alleged killing.

Khashoggi, who was considered close to the Saudi royal family, had become a critic of the current government and Prince Mohammed, the 33-year-old heir apparent who has shown little tolerance for criticism.

As a contributor to the *Post*, Khashoggi has written extensively about Saudi Arabia, including criticism of its war in Yemen, its recent diplomatic spat with Canada and its arrest of women's rights activists after the lifting of a ban on women driving.

Turkey accuses Saudi of not cooperating as Trump threatens 'punishment'

Istanbul: Turkey accused Saudi Arabia of failing to cooperate with a probe into the disappearance of a journalist inside its Istanbul consulate, as US President Donald Trump threatened "severe punishment" if it turns out he was killed.

Comments by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu represented a hardening of Ankara's hitherto circumspect tone over the case of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who has not been seen since he stepped inside the consulate on October 2.

Turkish officials have said they believe Khashoggi was killed inside the consulate and lurid claims have been leaked to media that he was tortured and even dismembered, while Trump has also struck a pessimistic tone about the missing journalist's fate.

Saudi Arabia insists

UK, US may boycott Saudi conference over scribe's killing

London: Britain and the US are considering boycotting a major international conference in Saudi Arabia after the disappearance of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the *BBC* reported on Sunday.

Khashoggi, a critic of the Saudi Government, vanished on October 2 after visiting its consulate in Istanbul, triggering tensions between Riyadh and Ankara.

The authorities in Istanbul believe he was murdered there by Saudi agents. Saudi Arabia has rejected the allegations as "lies". Several sponsors and media groups have decided to pull out of this month's investment conference in Riyadh, dubbed Davos in the Desert, as a result of concerns over Khashoggi's fate.

Trump wants people to come to US on basis of merit

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has said he wants people with merit to enter the United States, a move that can help technology professionals from countries such as India. "I'm very tough at the borders. We've been very tough at the borders. People have to come into our country legally, not illegally. Legally. And I want them to come in on merit," Trump told reporters at the White House.

Responding to a series of question on illegal immigration, the president reiterated that he wants people based on merit, a move that can help technology professionals from countries such as India.

"What I want is merit. I

want a lot of people to come in. We have great car companies entering our country again. This hasn't happened for 35 years. We have companies like Foxconn going to Wisconsin with a massive, massive plant," he said.

"We need people coming in, but we want them to come in on merit. We want people that are going to help us. It's very important," Trump said. Observing that immigration is not tricky to him, he insisted that the administration and the Congress have to do the right thing whether there's an election or not.

He opposed the chain migration policy and said, "If that's a bad policy, then guess what, a lot of bad things are



going to happen. But a lot of people agree with me. I would say a vast majority of our country agrees. They don't want criminals coming into our country. They don't want people that they don't want in the

country that aren't going to help us as a country. They don't want these people coming in. So we have a very strong policy."

"The one thing that really has changed over the last couple of years since I've been President — our country is doing so well, even with real interest — not with false interest rates. Zero interest. Anybody can do well with zero interest. We're the hottest country in the world, economically, by far. You take a look at us compared to China, compared to everybody else, we're the hottest country in the world. A lot of people are trying to come in. Our border security, our ICE, our law enforcement is doing an incredible job," he said.

Ready to share debt details of CPEC with IMF: Pak

Islamabad: Pakistan is ready to share details of the debt related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with the IMF, Finance Minister Asad Umar has said while rejecting the US' view that China-funded projects were to blame for the cash-strapped country's current economic woes.

Speaking to the media here on his return from Indonesia where he requested International Monetary Fund's Managing Director Christine Lagarde for a bailout package for Pakistan, Umar said the decision to approach the global lender was taken after consultations with friendly countries.

The IMF team, Umar said, was scheduled to arrive in Pakistan on November 7 to

negotiate the programme, likely to span over a three-year period. He said Pakistan's current year debt repayments were about \$9 billion but obviously it would not entirely be available from the IMF.

Lagarde has made it clear that the IMF would require absolute transparency on Pakistan's debts, including those owned by China under the \$50 billion CPEC.

Umar, however, rejected the US State Department's statement, suggesting that the debt accrued on the CPEC projects was to blame for Pakistan's current economic crisis. The CPEC is a network of infrastructure projects that are currently under construction throughout Pakistan that will



connect China's Xinjiang province with Gwadar port in Pakistan's Balochistan province. It is the part of Chinese President Xi Jinping's ambitious Belt and Road initiative.

The US said the huge Chinese debt was responsible for the economic challenges in Pakistan, adding it will review Islamabad's bailout plea to the IMF from all angles, including the country's debt position.

"We understand that Pakistan has formally requested assistance from the IMF. In

all cases, we examine that closely from all angles of it, including Pakistan's debt position, in evaluating any type of loan programme," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert had said, adding this is something the US has been tracking fairly closely. Responding to a question, Nauert said; "The secretary (of state Mike Pompeo) had spoken about this a few months back. I know, in some interviews not that long ago. I think part of the reason that Pakistan found itself in this situation is Chinese debt, and the fact that there is debt that governments have incurred that they maybe thought wouldn't be so tough to bail themselves out of, but has become increasingly tough." **PTI**

Pak auto rickshaw driver summoned after Rs 300 crore found in his account

Karachi: An auto rickshaw driver got the scare of his life when he received a call from Pakistan's top investigation agency which sought an explanation from him about a whopping Rs 300 crore worth of transactions made to his account. The driver, identified as Muhammad Rasheed, who lives in Karachi came to know about the huge transactions in his account when the Federal Investigating Agency (FIA) summoned him for an explanation.

"I got a call from the FIA office and they told me to show up for questioning. I was so scared as I didn't know what had happened," Rasheed said. "When I went to the FIA office they showed me the record of my bank account," he said.

"The FIA officials told me that transactions of some 300 crore rupees were made through my salary bank account which I had opened back in 2005 when I was working for a private company as a driver," Rasheed said. Rasheed said he had quit job just after a month to start his own work. "Three hundred crore rupees is a dream. I have never even seen Rs 1 lakh in my life," he lamented. **PTI**



A view of the sail boats taking part in the 50th edition of the traditional Barcolana regatta in the gulf of Trieste, north-eastern Italy on Sunday. The Barcolana is an annual sailing race in the Gulf of Trieste with hundreds of participants which is described by the organisers as "everybody's regatta" **AP**

Mattis 'could be' leaving as US Defence chief: Trump

Washington: US President Donald Trump said in an interview airing on Sunday that Defence Secretary Jim Mattis "could be" leaving, referring to him as "sort of a Democrat."

Mattis, seen as one of the steady members of Trump's cabinet, has served as a low-profile counterweight to the president in his often abrasive treatment of US allies.

In an interview, Trump was asked whether he wanted Mattis to leave. "It could be that he is. I think he's sort of a Democrat, if you want to know the truth," Trump said, according to an excerpt released by CBS. "But General Mattis is a good guy. We get along very well. He may leave. I mean, at some point, everybody leaves." Trump said he had lunch

with Mattis two days earlier and Mattis, a retired Marine four-star general, had not told him that he was leaving.

The exchange on Mattis came after Trump alluded to upcoming changes in his cabinet, which last week saw the surprise resignation of Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the United Nations.

"I'm changing things around. And I'm entitled to. I have people now on standby that will be phenomenal. They'll come into the administration, they'll be phenomenal," Trump said.

"I think we have a great cabinet. There're some people that I'm not happy with. I have some people that I'm not thrilled with. And I have other people that I'm beyond thrilled with," he said. **AFP**

4 men killed in shooting at child's birthday party in Texas

Taft (US): Investigators say a party in South Texas to mark a toddler's first birthday erupted in gunfire, leaving four men dead and a fifth man wounded. The Texas Department of Public Safety says the shooting happened shortly after 5 pm in Taft, 19 kms north of Corpus Christi. Sgt Nathan Brandley says an altercation erupted between two families attending party and escalated into deadly shooting.

Brandley said the wounded man was airlifted to a Corpus Christi hospital. His condition wasn't clear. Brandley said two suspects are on the loose. No identities or other details have been released. **AP**

US is loser by abandoning Iran N deal: Rouhani

Tehran: Iran's President boasted Sunday the US has lost against the Islamic republic's "righteousness and wisdom" by walking out of the landmark nuclear deal. "Everyone knows that America has lost legally and politically by giving up on its international obligations and that we have achieved victory,"

said President Hassan Rouhani in a speech at the University of Tehran to mark the beginning of the school year.

"There are but a few countries in the world that would call the US withdrawal from the JCPOA a good move," he added. "Those that are cautious express disappointment, those

that are more frank say it was a mistake, and the outspoken say it was illegal." Washington pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers in May and is reimposing punishing sanctions on the country, hoping to pressure Tehran into what Trump calls a "better deal." **AFP**

As sea ice melts, some say walrus need better protection

AP ■ ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Given a choice between giving birth on land or sea ice, Pacific walrus mothers most often choose ice.

Likewise, they prefer sea ice for molting, mating, nursing and resting between dives for food. Trouble is, as the century progresses, there's going to

be far less ice around. How well walrus cope with less sea ice is at the heart of a legal fight over whether walrus should be listed as a threatened species, giving them an added protection against human encroachment.

The federal government in 2008 listed polar bears as a threatened species because of

diminished sea ice brought on by climate warming. That year the Center for Biological Diversity petitioned to do the same for walrus.

However, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded in October 2017 that walrus are adapting and no one has proven that they "need" sea ice. "It is unknown whether Pacific walrus can give birth, conduct their nursing during immediate post-natal care period, or complete courtship on land," said Justice Department lawyers in defending the decision.

A federal judge in Alaska will hear the center's lawsuit challenging the government's decision not to list the walrus as threatened. There is no court date set for the lawsuit.

Pacific walrus males grow

to 12 feet (3.7 meters) long and up to 4,000 pounds (1,815 kilograms) — more than an average midsize sedan. Females reach half that weight. Walrus dive and use sensitive whiskers to find clams and snails in dim light on the sea floor.

Historically hunted for ivory tusks, meat and blubber, walrus since 1972 have been shielded by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Only Alaska Native subsistence hunters may legally kill them.

An Endangered Species Act listing would require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to designate critical habitat for walrus and plan for their recovery. Federal agencies, before issuing permits for development such as offshore drilling, would be required to ensure walrus and their habi-

tat would not be jeopardized.

Inaccessibility protected walrus for decades, but a rapid decline in summer sea ice has made them vulnerable.

In the Chukchi Sea between Alaska and Russia, where Pacific walrus females and juveniles spend their summer, ice can be absent during that season by 2060 or sooner, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Since 1981, an area more than double the size of Texas — 610,000 square miles (1.58 million square kilometers) — has become unavailable to Arctic marine mammals by summer's end, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center.

By late August, as sea ice recedes beyond the shallow continental shelf, female walrus and their calves face a



choice: Stay on ice over water too deep to reach the ocean floor for feeding — or come ashore for rest periods, where the smallest animals can be crushed in stampedes triggered by a hunter, airplane or bear.

More open water already has meant more ship traffic. Walrus also could find more humans in their habitat with a reversal of U.S. policy on Arctic

CYCLONE LESLIE SLAMS INTO PORTUGAL, 27 HURT

Lisbon: A weakened hurricane Leslie slammed into the coast of Portugal, leaving 27 people injured as it uprooted trees, brought down power lines and smashed store windows with gusting winds and heavy rain.

19 KILLED IN MIGRANT VEHICLE CRASH IN TURKEY

Istanbul: Nineteen people, including children, died on Sunday when a vehicle carrying migrants reportedly heading for EU member Greece ploughed off the highway into a waterway in western Turkey.

TALIBAN ATTACK AF ARMY BASE, 17 SOLDIERS KILLED

Kabul: Afghan officials say the Taliban have attacked an Army base, killing 17 Afghan soldiers and abducting 11 others.



Trend Glazer

Sonakshi recalls her time in Bhuj

Actress SONAKSHI SINHA said that certain experiences become a part of who you are while calling the time that she spent with soldiers in Bhuj an "unforgettable" one. "Thanks for this amazing opportunity. Sports girl for life, volleyball, Jai Jawaan, Bhuj, Punjab Regiment, Army camp," tweeted Sonakshi, who was at the camp to shoot for a news channel. "Will never forget the time I spent with our amazing soldiers, tried some of the things they do, made them smile and left with an unforgettable experience," she added. She will soon be seen in *Kalank*, which is conceptualised by Karan Johar.



'I have a lot of friends. I do not believe in having 'best friends' because I am a social person. I get along well with a lot of people and establish a good relationship with each of them. I met Erica (Fernandes) for the first time on set. We hit it off right away.'
—Parth Samthaan



Actors ABHAY DEOL and PANKAJ KAPUR's films are among the 11 projects chosen for the first edition of the South Asian Film Market (SAFM). It includes a selection of 11 filmmakers and their projects giving them an opportunity to showcase



them for a jury, which includes producers like Marc Baschet, Shaailish R. Singh and Saurabh Gupta. Through this initiative, SAFM intends to introduce promising new filmmakers to the world of independent cinema. The 11 projects chosen for the first edition of SAFM are *Aadi*, *Barasinghey*, *JL50*, *18 Not Out*, *So Sicily*, *Khwaish*, *Samir*, *Maadathy*, *Country Of Blind*, *Charulata* and *Hum Bhi Akele Tum Bhi Akele*.

Caity wants 'girlmances'

Actress CAITY LOTZ said there are a lot of great 'bro-mances' on *Legends of Tomorrow* so she wants to see more of 'girlmances.' "Now that we have so many girls on our cast, I'd like to have more missions where it's all ladies. We need some more girlmances. If a 'bro-mance' was to happen with girls, what would it be called? Anyway, I'd like to see more of that," said Lotz. She also praised actress Jes Macallan, who is seen as Ava Sharpe on the show, "Jes is an amazing actress. We have so much fun working together. The chemistry in real life comes out on screen."



BEYOND 377

While the Supreme Court has decriminalised homosexuality, the road ahead is long for the LGBTQ+ community to get their fair share of rights, says AYUSHI SHARMA



Rights, for centuries has been nothing more than an empty word for the LGBTQ+ community. They have been denied basic rights like Right to Dignity, Personal Liberty, Health, Education, and even the Freedom of Expression. The Keshav Suri Foundation which aims to work towards the upliftment of the marginalised LGBTQ+ community, is a step in that direction.

While the Supreme Court's historic verdict might have decriminalised homosexuality and paved the way for same-sex couples to legally cohabit and conduct their personal affairs without fear of persecution but it did not automatically translate into a seamless transition to equality for the lesbian gay bisexual transgender queer (LGBTQ) community. For while it has opened the doors for several changes to be introduced to marriage, medical, adoption and inheritance laws for same-sex couples but legal experts say that even though the judgement was historic, same-sex couples still have an uphill task ahead of them. The verdict is indicative of consequential revolutionary changes, but these don't follow automatically. The government now needs to act on this and frame laws to allow same-sex marriages or adoption by LGBTQ couples.

Advocate Neeha Nagpal, who is a practicing lawyer at the Supreme Court for over 10 years, says, "Although the onus is on the government to formulate legislation permitting LGBTQ couples to marry, adopt and inherit their spouse's property, this verdict lays down the legal basis for the formulation of such legislation. At the same time, individuals who face discrimination because of their sexual orientation can now count on the Judiciary." The fact that we can be proud of the country today, is because of the Supreme Court's verdict

which has finally put an end to all the worthless conversations. Now is the time to have a conversation about how to move forward, become more inclusive and equal because one thing is to change the law and the other is to change what's in people's mind.

Advocate Saurabh Kripal says, "Once this judgement stands the test of time and people accept the homosexual relationships, I think it'll become a new normal and once it becomes normal then we can ask for something a bit more abnormal which will then again become a normal. Don't push the pace of change because everyone knows slow and steady always wins the race. I think there's an inherent human desire to push as much they possibly can but remember we must distinguish between the political space and the judicial space. We need to give time in order to get what we desire."

"I strongly feel employment and medical are the major issue which we have to fight for. If your partner falls ill and you aren't married you might not be able to take a combined medical policy. For this you need to have a positive action which will happen but will take time. Nevertheless you need extra rights to bring everyone up, equal and in power. The only solution is to go back to court, and I think the court is ready to face it. The court has laid down the judgement which is a very broad in framework. Now it will think beyond 377," adds he.

Keshav Suri, executive director of The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, who launched the foundation, is excited about the endeavour and he says, "We are glad that Section 377 has been read down. However, we have merely scratched the surface. Building on the success of the It Gets Better campaign, the Keshav Suri Foundation will illustrate how it can improve in the Indian context. The founda-



tion aims to provide employable skills to the community and sensitise organisations on incorporating more diverse and inclusive practices. The idea at the foundation is to give individual attention to all members. Each story is different and every person has baggage. Counsellors will evaluate each individual, basis of their story. They will then be helped to achieve a skill set best suited to their personality in order to earn a livelihood and lead a life of dignity. Role models from the LGBTQ+ community will also interact with members. This is being planned to help lift the self-esteem and morale of all. These efforts are all centred around one goal — usher the community into mainstream society by putting an end of discrimination."

The motto of the foundation is to embrace, empower, and mainstream the community. It is building a discrimination free platform, enabling community members to share their stories and stigmas - physical, emotional or mental.

Alex Mathew, better known as Maya the drag queen who outed himself as a gay man in October 2014 says, "Things got better after I met Keshav Suri, who has changed my life completely. Because of him, I'm now currently working as a PR and marketing executive at The Lalit

Ashok Bangalore. Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, a transgender rights activist, faced many difficulties and challenges in life. But things improved for her when she had the guts to say 'NO' to the abusive behaviour of people towards her and when she found her husband in Anjali Gopalan. Laxmi says, "Anjali has taught me to speak my mind. I was like an animal in a cage where trans community member said, 'Oh she's divine' but not heaven treated me like a piece of waste. The day I got to know the reason of their hatred towards me, people loved me so much that they hated me. It got better when I was exposed to this different world (LGBTQ community). When there was a controversy about me being a bad woman, I said good girls go to heaven whereas bad girls go everywhere. I have the power to go everywhere."

Satyashri Sharmila who hails from Ramanathapuram district in Tamil Nadu is India's first transgender woman to enroll as a lawyer in the TN bar council. She says that, "Change is the only constant and it begins from home. The family must start accepting their child for who they are. When you have support from your parents and your family you can fight all the battles. I'm so glad that Keshav has his mother by his side all the time supporting him and he's so blessed to have a mother like her. If I had someone like her, trust me, my journey would have been so much easier. Family is the first frontier."

In response, Jyotsna Suri, chairperson and managing director of Bharat Hotels Limited and mother of Keshav says, "It's the primary point. Unless parents don't support their children, we are not going to make a change. It's not the politicians, not even the judiciary, it is we the people of India who have to make that difference. Judiciary has done its part by decriminalising. We have to begin from home."



From Russia with love

Bollywood, Russian films and books are an important cultural connect between the two countries. A festival aims at revitalising the existing relations to strengthen them, says CHAHAK MITTAL

The fan following of veteran legends like Raj Kapoor, Nargis Hema Malini and Mithun among the Russian public was as massive as India, if not more. On the other hand, through books and Russian classical films, there's a lot that even India has learnt and admired about the Russian film industry. The ties between the then USSR and India have been linked closely to the cultural exchange between the two nations for years.

Exchanges like these continue to merge various cultural habits of both the countries even today. Initiatives like Russian Film Days, by the Russian Federation bring a range of Russian classics and contemporary films to revitalise the relations and strengthen linkages between the two nations.

As the fourth edition of the film festival begin in three major cities — Delhi, Mumbai and Pune — Russian actresses and Russian Ambassador to India inaugurated the three-day festival on Friday at the Russian Federation Centre. He said, "Generations of Russians have experienced emotions through Raj Kapoor's films." The first day saw the world premiere of the Russian film *The Last Trial*, starring Anna Churina, Alisa Grebenshchikova, among others, who were also present at the inauguration. Among the others at the event were Galina Lemesheva, general producer of Russian Film Days in India, TV presenter, editor-in-chief of *The Hollywood Reporter*, Russian edition, actress Valentina Mazunina, Artem Tkachenko, and Vladimir Poluektov, press secretary.

Lemesheva highlighted the importance of the festival, saying that it is important for a better understanding between two nations and their cultures. She said, "People's knowledge of the Russian culture might only be based on books and old classical films. But what is currently happening in Russia can only be found in contemporary movies."

As the festival showcases around seven Russian films, the question arises that on

what criteria are these chosen? There are three broad ideas. "The film *The Last Trial* is one of the highest grosser at the box office and that's why it was chosen. The second basis is new idea and experimental. *Gogol*, the film was originally shot as a serial but the producers decided to first make it as a film and then bring it as a TV series. The third is the variation, where we want to bring a variety of movies and hence, we bring different genres like animation, comedy, war, blockbusters." She said that they are trying to bring out the newest and the best movies, for example, the film *The Last Warrior*.

While the current Indian film industry has been high on realism and are more inclined towards sports films, or biopics these days, the Russian films veer towards patriotism. "For example, the film, *Spaceworkers*, shows one big country where two heroes work for the nation and a woman who saves all the hostages," she said

She believed that the Russian film industry has evolved to a great extent over the years as compared. "After the fall of the Soviet Union, we have had a huge gap in the progress. In Russia, we mostly shot commercial movies which were not produced with very good quality, but now the landscape has changed. Now, for the past seven-10 years, we have been trying to screen our films at every place in the world because they are worth showing and are of good quality like the Russian classics. Now we are using our knowledge of the past to head towards a better future."

Russians have always admired Indian actors and Anna Churina told us that one of her favourites is actor Shah Rukh Khan. Representing his film *Gogol*, which was much loved in Russia, Artem Tkachenko said that it was not his first visit to India and that he "loved coming here, its culture and wants to keep coming back to the country."

Highlighting the significance of the film festival, he said that the festival enables them to come to India without having any political tensions where they do not have to answer any serious questions. Here "we just have to answer about the characters we play in our films and about how the character has evolved."

Among the films that will be shown are among a wide range of genres — a sports drama, *Ice*, cosmic drama, *Spacewalkers*, cinema series, *Gogol: The Beginning*, comedy, *Well, Hello There Oksana Sokolova*, fairytale, *The Last Warrior* and animation series, *Sheep and Wolves*. (The festival ends today.)

Amitabh and Aamir shake a leg



Ace choreographer Prabhudeva directed *Vashmalie*, a fun dance number for *Thugs Of Hindostan* that will see the duo dance their heart out after getting drunk. The film will see of the biggest icons of Hindi cinema Amitabh Bachchan and Aamir Khan for the first time on big screen. They've even danced together in the film. Vijay Krishna Acharya, director of *Thugs of Hindostan* says, "It is amazing that we could write a suitable moment in the film that sees these two icons of Indian cinema shake a leg with each other and the song will stand out because of their infectious energy and camaraderie. The sequence will show them getting drunk during the celebrations and then breaking out to dance on this high energy number. It is a priceless moment." Sukhwinder Singh and Vishal Dadlani have sung this number while celebrated lyricist Amitabh Bhattacharya has penned the lyrics. Ace music composers Ajay-Atul have created this track. The film is releasing this Diwali.

Streets of nostalgia

Designer RAHUL MISHRA talks about how walking down the lanes of memory brought him closer to the idea of his new collection. By C MITTAL



How do you preserve the memory of home? By reconstructing the sights of childhood in varying gradients, like a child would sort out a messed up up jig-saw puzzle, or probably by recalling your old toys and clothes that you've outgrown physically but still adore. Internationally-acclaimed designer Rahul Mishra's collection on the third day of the Lotus Make-up India Fashion Week looked back in time. "My true motivation was my home and childhood which in turn was inspired by my three-year-old daughter," said Mishra. Opening the floodgates of memory, his collection, titled, *Gossamer*, brought back the "1980s in colour" and was aimed at "exploring an intimate relationship with the things of my

blazers with floral and leaf motifs gave the garments a vibe of spring. The jackets, if styled with either a denim or even a skirt, would look equally gracious. There were long skirts and one-strap long dresses with striped patterns. Precisely, Mishra's collection set an example of wearable and very sustainable fashion, that is light-weighted, much-loved and instantly worth falling for.

He points towards one his designs worn by a model with its special element being that "it has only four stitches so as to make the whole garment wrap around the body in such a way that it looks both like a dress as well as a jacket to be worn over a dress." Well, there's yet another element in the garment that will make one applaud the designer's creativity instantly — that it is made from one cloth without any cuts or wastage. The chequered design pattern indeed makes one go back to the weavers who wore such *lungis* with blue checks and white stripes. "Gossamer is also the very thin thread that spi-



ders produce to make their webs. I have perceived them as the threads of memory through which we weave this collection," said Mishra, about the significance of the title of his collection.

As he talked about the fabrics, he said, "Taking the craft of *Chikankari* and *Daraz*, I wanted to elevate them to luxury fashion. Because memory is a luxury, after all."

He applauded the craftsmanship, "The Maheshwari textiles in the collection with their blue and white checks are an ode to the memory of a village, from where around 75 per cent of the weavers come. The work gives them a chance to improve their lot's condition as well. And, it makes me grow as a designer working with them. The fine cotton was woven in West Bengal. The textile creation very much relates to the collection's theme — memory and relation."

Mishra recently also presented a wide range of collection made of fabrics like *Chanderis*, *Banarasis* and *Maheshwaris* at his debut at the Paris Fashion Week. Photo: Pankaj Kumar



Engagement with data, information and policy can aid in preventing forest fires, says TEAM VIVA

At a time when India has managed to increase its forest cover to over 20 per cent of its geographical area, forest health continues to show signs of strain. Regeneration is either inadequate or absent in about 45 per cent of all forest area and about 95 per cent of all forest plots inventoried show some signs of degradation, according to the report, "Strengthening Forest Fire Management in India", jointly prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the World Bank. The report discusses policies on forest fire prevention and management (FFPM) at the national, state and local levels. It provides recommendations on five broad themes – policy, institutions and capacity, community engagement, technology, and data and information and looks at national and international best practices in FFPM.

According to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the annual carbon emissions from forest fires globally range between 2.5 billion to 4.0 billion tons of CO₂, adding large volumes of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

The report was released by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. "Forest fire management is part of our long-term vision for sustainable forest management. It is also crucial for sustaining progress towards our global pledge of creating additional sinks of 2.5 billion to 3 billion tons worth of CO₂ stored in its forests by 2030,"

Technology can save India's forests

he said. "The new study will provide critical inputs for the preparation of Government of India's National Action Plan on Forest Fire Prevention and Management," he added. Just 20 districts (mostly located in the Northeast) accounts for over 40 per cent of all forest fires detected between 2003 and 2016. Similarly, the top-20 districts (mainly in Central India) account for about 48 per cent of the total fire-affected area, while having just 12 per cent of the country's forest cover in the year 2000 and 7 per cent of its land area.

"Forest fires are a challenge across many countries. They lead to the loss of lives and livelihoods for people directly dependent on forest produce. This report discusses policies on forest fire prevention and management and underscores the need for better fire prevention practices and a well-equipped and trained workforce to fight fires," said Junaid Ahmad, World Bank Country Director in India. "We are delighted to have this opportunity to work with the MoEFCC on this important agenda, and to contribute towards informing its National Action Plan on Forest Fire



Prevention and Management in India."

GOOD MANAGEMENT IS BUILT ON GOOD KNOWLEDGE

Today many states in India are trying out innovative solutions for fire prevention and management. Madhya Pradesh was the first state to develop an SMS-based system to alert field staff about active forest fires in their area. Odisha has pioneered the use of fire suppression equipment and states like Mizoram, Tripura and MP have effectively involved the community in preventing forest fires. States can learn from each other's experiences to make these systems more effective. "We recommend that a formal mechanism for knowledge sharing between states should be established so that states

can learn from each other," note Urvashi Narain, lead economist, and Pyush Dogra, senior environmental specialist, World Bank, and lead authors of the report.

INVESTING TO MAKE SERVICE DELIVERY MORE EFFECTIVE

While India has made great strides in the use of technology for detecting forest fires, there is still a need to strengthen fire prevention practices and to build a well-equipped and trained workforce to fight fires. Investments in modern technologies for fire detection, investing in adequate fire suppression and safety equipment, while at the same time working to build capacity across the rank of forest officers and improving accountability will help the forest department deliver on this mandate, the report says. Rather than prescribing specific fire-suppression tools to be used in all states, states be encouraged to experiment, and best practices be scaled up, where appropriate. There is also an urgent need to fill vacancies for field staff, particularly in fire-prone areas, and to make adequate and reliable funding available, the

report adds.

PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITIES AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

Recognizing the fact that people will continue to use forest fire, and that some fire is desirable, engaging with the communities that depend on forests and involving them in the decision-making process is therefore vital, as is improving coordination with the other agencies that are involved in managing forests and responding to forest fires, such as disaster management agencies, the report says. It also suggests that the National FFPM Action Plan should delineate the roles and responsibilities of the MoEFCC, state forest departments, communities, and disaster agencies.

IMPROVING DATA AND RESEARCH

Lastly, there is a need to support forest fire management through improved data, and research to fill critical knowledge gaps. A national forest fire information database, bringing together satellite-based remote sensing data, and field-reported data, will be instrumental for assessing longer-term trends across states and regions and for planning fire prevention and response. Also, defining a national research agenda for fire management and provision of funding opportunities for scientific research would help to establish formal cooperation between members of the research community and the forest department.



BE A KARMA YOGI

Fight the urges of vices with a spiritual war within. By RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Bhagavad Gita — the song of spirit or the divine song is one of the greatest contributions India has made to the world, and is ranked as one of the greatest repository of wisdom since ages. For centuries people have been daily reading and teaching the message of the Gita with great devotion and it has been the guiding post for many seekers of truth who wish to know in detail about the existence of soul, god and karma. There have been numerous interpretations, commentaries and expositions on the verses of the Gita. Still most people see it in a literal sense, because they believe that the conquest of evil was achieved by a bloody war between two armies and the good men won because they were fighting for dharma or righteousness and because God was supporting them. However, there are clear references in the Gita towards another kind of war. There are numerous verses pertaining to the subtle war against vices such as lust, anger, greed, attachment etc.

In the Gita, God tells Arjuna that by means of this war gates of heaven will open and that if anyone dies fighting this war he will go to the heaven. It is further clarified in the Gita as to who is entitled to go to heaven. When the righteousness in man gets to the highest limits of perfection, it is only then that man attains the highest and purest heaven. Hence, the war is symbolic of the spiritual endeavour to conquer all vices and make oneself pure. It is further said that in this war within the human mind, one must conquer lust and anger. Violence is born from anger so how can God promote violence on one hand and exhort us to conquer anger? Even the word warrior refers to a person who battles the vices or Maya with the weapons of spiritual knowledge and yoga. A yogi is the one who stabilises his mind on God and conquers all forms of Maya or vices. Such a person is brave, courageous and a powerful soul.

His power comes not from any martial skills of warfare but spiritual knowledge and true love for God. So then why does the Gita put so much emphasis on violence and war? The word war implies strong action and decisiveness. Human souls are sleeping in a deep slumber of spiritual ignorance and even though they are living in subjugation of vices, they continue to be indolent and carry on their passive existence. Thus, when we realise that we are in a battlefield and are at war, we cannot be apathetic and careless in our thoughts, decisions and actions and we cannot go on ignorantly indulging in vices, because in a battlefield one has to be constantly attentive, alert and active. A warrior has to be skillful, agile and intelligent. He cannot afford to make mistakes or be sluggish. In a war there are only two responses — fight or flight. Hence, the realisation that vices are the soul's enemies and have to be conquered will bring out the qualities of courage and will give power to fight this war within our mind. However, there are many who choose to take flight or to escape from vices by renouncing active life and worldly duties. They believe that is the only way to free the soul from the vicious grip of lust, greed and attachment. But the Gita espouses the path of *karmayoga* — which entails living in the world and yet transcending its vices. Hence, by practising true spiritual knowledge, being in yoga with the Supreme and by imbibing divine virtues, a *karmayogi* is able to manifest the highest level of perfection and gain victory over all vices. Moreover, such a spiritual endeavour happens on a war-footing at a time when the forces of evil and chaos are at their peak in the world i.e. at the end of *Kaliyuga*. Hence the war against vices is described as the great war of Mahabharata. It is at this time that Supreme being Himself is awakening humans from their deep ignorance and empowering them through knowledge and yoga to gain victory over vicious tendencies. In this way He is preparing humans to open the gates of heaven.

(The writer is a spiritual educator.)



India needs world class higher education system

The growth in the sector has been phenomenal but the focus has been on quantity over quality

India has the third-largest higher educational system in the world. In 2016, there were 799 universities and 39,071 colleges spread across the country. The growth of higher education in India over a little more than half a century has been even more staggering. Between 1950 and 2014, the number of universities in India increased by 34 times. This quantitative explosion in higher education institutions has not been matched by the quality of the education they provide. To become such a leader, India needs to develop a world class higher education system.

Two years ago, the Narendra Modi administration attempted to put some focus on quality in higher education with its introduction of draft regulations for a new initiative called the UGC (Declaration of Government Educational Institutions as World Class Institutions) Guidelines, 2016. By 2018, when the first six institutions were named under this initiative, they were designated as Institutions of Eminence as opposed to world class institutions. This is to elevate the status of these institutions. But enhancing the capacity of a few institutions, thus possibly enabling them to be rated a little higher in the world rankings of higher education institutions, does nothing for the many.

That's not to say that India does not need world class institutions of higher education. India needs a world class higher education system. It is one where the student is the focus rather than the institution. It comprises



certified and caring institutions that have the resources required and the core mission of ensuring that students/customers acquire the knowledge/skills/abilities and dispositions that they need to achieve their individual goals and to maximise their contribution to society. The current system has been almost exactly the opposite of that. The emphasis has been on a few institutions and individuals rather than embracing and addressing the needs of the whole.

There are many steps that must be taken to change this. They include:

- Increase public financing: The federal

and state governments currently provide limited funding for higher education. As a result, over 70 per cent of the higher education institutions are operated by the private sector. These institutions are not well regulated and are of highly variable quality. Public sector financing could be used to support existing public institutions and to establish new ones in regions in which there are limited higher educational opportunities.

- Enhance the infrastructure: Colleges and universities throughout India have inadequate physical settings, lack equipment, and suffer from a shortage of competent

teachers. Ensuring that each higher educational institution is infrastructurally sound, establishes the proper environment for learning and growth.

- Expand access to and participation in higher education: The enrollment in higher education is approximately 15 per cent of the eligible population. This needs to be much higher to be considered and to become a developed or developing country. It also needs to be representative of the entire population.

- Enforce standards and requirements appropriately: The announced replacement of the UGC with the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) created considerable debate. The essential question regardless of whether there is a UGC or HECI, is the proper data being collected and used to monitor performance and ensure accountability for each institution in the higher education system?

- Place an emphasis on vocational education: The higher education system must meet the needs of potential employers and prospective employees. Currently, there is a mismatch.

There are many other steps that must be taken, such as addressing politicians controlling many educational institutions but there must be only one mindset. That mindset must be that the country's higher education system must be restructured, redesigned, and renewed to benefit all Indians.

-IANS

“ It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light. —Aristotle ”

MOTHER'S PUBERTY LINKED TO SON'S

The age at which a young woman experiences her first menstruation is associated with the age at which her son experiences puberty, according to a latest research. While it has been known for some time that mothers' age at puberty is associated with their daughters', much less was known about the link with their sons' age at puberty.



The findings, published in the journal *Human Reproduction*, suggested that mothers who reported having their first menstrual bleed earlier than their peers had sons with signs of puberty starting earlier than their peers. "The relationship in sons has only been sparsely investigated," said Nis Brix, a researcher.

ABNORMAL VISION IMPAIRS BRAIN FUNCTION

Children with abnormal vision are likely to have impairment in functions of brain areas responsible for things such as attention, a new study has found.

The researchers uncovered differences in how the brain processes visual information in patients with various types of lazy eye.

Lazy eye, known as amblyopia, is a loss of vision that originates in the brain, typically when a child develops an eye turn. The unequal input causes the brain to ignore information from the weaker eye during brain development. The findings demonstrated that the brain can divert attention away from a lazy eye when both eyes are open.



IMMUNE SYSTEM LINKED TO PREMATURE BIRTH

Researchers have found that the immune system may play a role in preventing premature labour and birth. It was previously known that cytokines are found in the amniotic fluid of many women who gave birth prematurely.

Although the immune system ought to attack the foetus, a foreign body in the mother's womb, something blocks that from happening during pregnancy. It means that the protection is stopped for some women, causing premature labour, the researchers said. "There's a lot of anti-inflammatory mechanisms that prevent the foetus from being rejected. So we thought maybe dangerous inflammation, that can break down the tolerance barrier, could mediate the start-up of birth even — or especially — premature birth," said Anthony Vella, an immunologist at the University of Connecticut.



LAB-GROWN EYES DECODE HUMAN VISION

US biologists have grown human retina tissue in the laboratory to determine how cells that allow people to see in colour are made, an advance that can lead to the development of therapies for diseases such as colour blindness and macular degeneration.

The study explored how a cell's fate is determined or what happens in the womb to turn a developing cell into a specific type of cell, an aspect of human biology that is largely unknown.

The team from the John Hopkins University in Maryland, US, focused on the cells that allow people to see blue, red and green — the three cone photoreceptors in the human eye.

"Trichromatic colour vision delineates us from most other mammals," said lead author Kiara Eldred, a graduate student at the varsity.



C-SECTION BIRTHS DOUBLED GLOBALLY

The number of babies born through caesarean section nearly doubled from 12 per cent to 21 per cent of all births between 2000 and 2015, worldwide, according to research published in *The Lancet*, that shed light on a huge gap in childbirth care between rich and poor mothers. While C-section is a life-saving intervention for women and newborns, it is not without risk for mother and child, and is also associated with complications in future births.

It is estimated that 10-15 per cent of births medically require surgery due to complications such as bleeding, foetal distress, hypertensive disease. However, the researchers estimate that more than one in four countries in 2015 had lower levels (28 per cent), while most countries used C-section above the recommended level (63 per cent).



Novak seals Shanghai title

Djokovic defeats Coric in straight sets, reaches second in ATP rankings

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

The "new" Novak Djokovic warned that he was gunning for Rafael Nadal's world number one ranking after winning the Shanghai Masters with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Borna Coric on Sunday.

The 14-time Grand Slam champion has been imperious all week and barely offered a sniff to the 19th-ranked Croatian, a good friend and sometime-training partner.

The end when it inevitably arrived was anti-climactic, with the Serb winning the championship point after a video review.

Djokovic buried his head in his hand at the absurdity of it.

The 31-year-old will leapfrog Roger Federer into second in the world when the rankings are released on Monday but will not stop there as the season reaches its climax.

Spanish great Nadal, who was not in Shanghai or Beijing last week because of a knee injury, will be just 215 points ahead of Djokovic in the race to finish as year-end number one.

"I could not ask for a better scenario," Djokovic, who last sat atop the rankings two years ago, said of his late surge to the summit of men's tennis.

"I am very close now to Nadal in the rankings and put myself in a good position for the last period of the year."

Red-hot Djokovic has now been victorious in 18 ATP matches in a row and in recent months won Wimbledon, the Cincinnati Masters, the US Open and now Shanghai for a fourth time.

It is all a far cry from just five months ago, when Djokovic fell to 22nd in the world as he struggled following elbow surgery in February.

He missed the second half of 2017 with elbow and off-court issues, but said he had adapted his game since the operation.

Djokovic, who has been particularly dominant on his serve, not dropping one service game in Shanghai, said: "I think you're seeing the new Novak."

"I don't need to describe him, that's all I can say."



Winner's Novak Djokovic, left, holding the winner's trophy shakes hands with Borna Coric after the award ceremony for the Shanghai Masters

"I had to reinvent myself and find, you know, (a) proper formula for success."

"I found it and I'm just trying to hold on to it as long as I can."

Asked by AFP if he had a message for the under-pressure Nadal, the Serb smiled: "I will leave that up to your creative spirit of journalism."

The 32-year-old Nadal could return from his latest injury for the Paris Masters, which starts at the end of this month.

Djokovic said he could play Vienna or Basel, the week before

Paris, in an effort to further rein in his rankings rival.

RUTHLESS DJOKOVIC

The 21-year-old Coric said that he had no complaints about losing to "one of the best in the history of tennis".

In what was the biggest match of his life, he wore heavy strapping on one thigh and has been troubled by a stiff neck that saw him ponder pulling out before the tournament.

But he refused to blame those for defeat to the man he considers something of an idol.

"He was the much better player on the court. I was playing good, really, I was really happy how I played," he said. "I felt even if I was serving a little bit better, he'd still return my serves, so there is nothing I can do."

Coric, the 13th seed, was chasing only the third title of his career and defeated top seed Federer in the semi-finals to underline his rich promise.

He also dispensed of three-time Grand Slam winner and Federer's fellow Swiss Stan Wawrinka in his opening match.

Paes wins Santo Domingo trophy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Old warhorse Leander Paes is still going great guns as the veteran tennis star won his second Challenger level title of the season, lifting the Santo Domingo Open trophy with partner Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela.



The second seeded Indo-Mexican pair, playing its second consecutive final, came from behind to beat Ariel Behar and Roberto Quiroz 4-6, 6-3, 10-5 in the summit clash, which lasted one hour and 26 minutes.

Paes, who is ranked 69, added 110 ranking points to his kitty and shared a prize purse of \$ 7750 with his partner.

Last week, the 45-year-old Paes and Angel ended runners-up at Montrey Challenger to Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Marcelo Arevalo.

Paes also ended runner-up at Chicago, Dallas on the ATP Challenger circuit and won the Newport Beach event in January.

Apart from these, Paes also reached the final of Winston-Salem Open and Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships on the ATP World Tour, ending runner-up with Jamie Cerretani in both the tournaments.



GARCIA STUNS PLISKOVA, WINS TIANJIN OPEN

AP ■ TIANJIN

Second-seeded Caroline Garcia won her first tournament of the year with a 7-6 (7), 6-3 win over top-seeded Karolina Pliskova in the Tianjin Open on Sunday.

It was the 16th-ranked Garcia's first title since she won back-to-back trophies at the Wuhan and Beijing tournaments in Asia just over a year ago.

The Frenchwoman's two titles at the end of last season earned her a spot into the year-end WTA Finals in Singapore. This year, the victory in Tianjin is not enough to put Garcia into a second consecutive year-end final appearance.

Pliskova's failure to take the title also kept her from confirming a berth in the WTA Finals.

Currently in eighth place in the race to Singapore, the Czech will have to wait out the results from next week's tournaments in Luxembourg and Moscow to see if she qualifies for one of the three remaining spots. Pliskova is scheduled to play in Moscow.

American Sloane Stephens, Ukrainian Elena Svitolina and Dutchwoman Kiki Bertens are the other remaining contenders for Singapore.

Garcia was down 1-5 in the first set tiebreaker before she rebounded. She saved a set point for Pliskova at 5-6 to go on to win the hour-long first set.

In the second set, Garcia raced to a 5-0 lead, and first served for the match at 5-1, but had to wait for her victory to come

three games later. She secured the title with her sixth ace of the match.

DANYA WINS WTA TITLE

HONG KONG: Ukrainian teen Dayana Yastremska won her maiden WTA title by upsetting sixth-seeded Wang Qiang of China 6-2, 6-1 in 65 minutes at the Hong Kong Open on Sunday.

The 18-year-old was playing in her first career WTA final in only her 11th career appearance in the WTA tournament main draw.

Yastremska is the sixth teenager to advance to a WTA final in 2018 and the second to win a title. Serbian teen Olga Danilovic won the Moscow River Cup earlier in the year.

Prior to arriving in Hong Kong, Yastremska held a 3-10 record in WTA-level matches this season. Her best previous result was reaching the 2017 Istanbul quarterfinals.

The victory, in which she posted 33 winners to 21 unforced errors, will move the 102nd-ranked Yastremska to a new career high ranking in the top 80 when the next rankings are released on Monday.

Yastremska's win prevented the 24th-ranked Wang from winning her first career title. Earlier this fall she won the Nanchang and Guangzhou trophies.

Wang, who was playing in her fifth consecutive tour semifinal, will move up to a career-high No 23 ranking despite failing to lift the title.

Dutch embarrass Germany 3-0

AFP ■ AMSTERDAM

Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk led the Netherlands to a crushing 3-0 win over Germany in the Nations League to ramp up the pressure on German coach Joachim Loew.

A first-half header by Dutch skipper Van Dijk gave the hosts the lead in Amsterdam. With the German defence in disarray, late goals from Memphis Depay and Liverpool's Georginio Wijnaldum sealed the win on a golden night for the Oranje at Amsterdam's Johan Cruyff Arena on Saturday.

This is the first time the Dutch have beaten Germany for 16 years and the comprehensive defeat leaves Loew under increasing pressure to resign after 12 years in charge.

These are dark days for the Germans, still reeling from their woeful World Cup display when they crashed out early after finishing bottom of their group.

Defeat in Loew's 168th international means Germany are once again last — this time bottom of Group One in the Nations League.

Van Dijk opened the scoring with a well-taken header after Ryan Babel had headed against the crossbar on 30 minutes.

Depay then compounded Germany's misery by stroking home a pass from Quincy Promes three minutes from time after the pair got in behind the defence.

Depay then hit the Germany crossbar moments before Wijnaldum netted Holland's third goal just before the final whistle.

Germany now face world champions France in Paris on Tuesday and Loew can ill



Georginio Wijnaldum, left, celebrates with Memphis Depay after scoring third goal against Germany

afford another heavy defeat.

Earlier Saturday, Munich-based newspaper, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung, revealed there is a release clause in Loew's contract, which runs until 2022, allowing either party to end the agreement prematurely.

Loew had promised an improved performance from the Germans.

Yet again, his senior players let him down as the Bayern Munich axis of Manuel Neuer, Jerome Boateng, Mats Hummels and Thomas Mueller struggled.

Loew pulled a surprise before kick-off by starting Manchester City starlet Leroy Sane on the bench.

Schalke striker Mark Uth made his debut up front with RB Leipzig winger Timo Werner and Mueller on the flanks.

Loew opted for a 4-3-3 formation, just

like his opposite number Ronald Koeman who started with Besiktas' Babel, Lyon's Depay and Eindhoven striker Steven Bergwijn up front.

Uth and Werner both forced chances early on to keep Jasper Cillessen, Holland's Barcelona goalkeeper, busy.

The Dutch went ahead after 30 minutes when Babel out-jumped Germany midfielder Joshua Kimmich to the ball, headed onto the post and Van Dijk pounced on the rebound.

Germany had their chances as Mueller and then his replacement Sane, who came on for the last half an hour, both fired wide with the goal at their mercy.

Having broken the German defence in the final 10 minutes, Depay hit the net, then the crossbar before Wijnaldum swept in their third goal just before the final whistle.

Messi is not a leader for Argentina: Maradona

AFP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Lionel Messi "is not a leader," said Diego Maradona of the current Argentina talisman in an interview in Mexico.

"It's useless to try and make a leader out of someone who goes to the bathroom 20 times before a game," Maradona said on Fox Sports.

"Before speaking to the coach and players he will be on the PlayStation. Then, on the field, he wants to be the leader," Maradona said as he answered questions in a stumbling voice, sometimes seeming to contradict himself.

"He is the best in the world along with Cristiano [Ronaldo]," Maradona said. "But he's not a leader."

Maradona, who led Argentina to victory in the 1986, said Messi, who was again unable to emulate that feat in Russia this summer was expected to be "the saviour of the fatherland."

"Let's stop making a god out of Messi. Messi is Messi for Barcelona, but playing in an Argentina shirt he is another Messi."

Maradona, who is in Mexico coaching second-division Sinaloa, said that if he was Argentina coach he would "not call on Messi" before adding "never say never."

"You have to take the leadership away for him to be the Messi we want him to be," Maradona said.



Lionel Messi disappointed after loss in WCup

Messi, who is 31, has not played for Argentina in three low-key friendlies since a 4-3 loss to eventual champions France in the first knock-out round at the World Cup, but has not officially retired from the national team.



Deschamps backs Henry for success in Monaco

AFP ■ PARIS

Thierry Henry has "everything" needed to become a good manager, France coach and former international teammate Didier Deschamps said of the newly-named Monaco coach.

"Thierry's ready," Deschamps told TFI. "He has everything" to be a good coach.

"He's throwing himself into an exciting, exhilarating project where he'll have to take responsibility. It'll be up to him to take the reins."

Former Arsenal star Henry was named Monaco coach on Saturday, his first job in club management after leaving his position with the Belgian national team.

The 41-year-old French World Cup winner, who had been working as an assistant to Belgium coach Roberto Martinez since 2016, returns to the club where he began his professional career.

Henry, who has signed a contract with Monaco until June 2021, said it was "fate" that he had returned to the Principality.

Henry replaces Leonardo Jardim, who in 2017 guided Monaco to their first Ligue 1 title since 2000. He was sacked on Thursday after a string of poor results left Monaco in the relegation places.

The former striker will be joined by Joao Carlos Valado Tralhao, under-23 coach at Benfica, and Patrick Kwame Ampadu, coach at Arsenal's academy and father of Chelsea player Ethan Ampadu.

Henry graduated from Monaco's youth system and made his debut for the club in 1994.

He notably scored seven goals in the 1997-98 Champions League as the Monaco team of the time, then coached by Arsene Wenger, reached the semi-finals, where they lost to Juventus.

"It is with great pride that I am delighted to announce that I have accepted the position to become the manager of AS Monaco FC," he said on Twitter.

"I'm incredibly excited to be given this opportunity but now the hard work must begin. Can't wait."

Deschamps, who captained the France team featuring Henry that won the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000, also started his coaching career at Monaco, back in 2001.

"The first season was very complicated," he said, wishing Henry "lots of courage and big success".

INDIA ENTER HOCKEY 5s FINAL

PTI ■ BUENOS AIRES

The Indian men's and women's teams advanced to the final of hockey 5s competition in the Youth Olympics after registering emphatic wins over their respective opponents here.

India defeated hosts Argentina 3-1 in the men's semi-final match on Saturday while the women's team beat China 3-0 in their last-four match.

The Indian men face Malaysia in the summit clash while their women counterparts take on hosts Argentina in the final.

This is the first time India is taking part in a hockey competition in the Youth Olympics.

The country did not feature in the earlier two editions. Hockey 5s, the five-a-side version, is played on a pitch smaller than the normal 11-player game and it was introduced in



the 2014 Singapore Youth Olympics.

In the men's semi-final match, Sudeep Chirmako (12th and 18th minute) and Rahul Kumar Rajbhar (3th) scored for India while captain Facundo Zarate found the target for Argentina.

India took the lead through Rahul Kumar but Argentina were

quick to equalise as they scored through Facundo Zarate in the 4th minute.

In the second period, India maintained pressure and benefited from it as they took the lead in the 12th minute through Sudeep Chirmako who produced a fine finish to swing the match in India's favour.

Indian attackers also created

chances and were successful again in the 18th minute as Sudeep Chirmako scored his second goal of the match to give a two-goal advantage for his side.

In the women's semifinal, India outplayed their Chinese opponents with goals coming from Mumtaz Khan (1st minute), Reet (5th) and Lalremsiami (13th).

Wrestler Simran wins Silver

PTI ■ BUENOS AIRES

Indian wrestler Simran settled for a Silver in women's freestyle 43 kg category competition after she lost to Emily Shilson of United States in the final bout here.

Simran, who had won a 40kg class Bronze in the 2017 Cadet World Championships, lost 6-11 as the American registered a victory by points to clinch the Gold on Saturday night.

Simran conceded a 2-9 lead to Shilson in the first period and that virtually sealed her fate.

The Indian produced a better show in the second period by scoring four points as against two by his American opponent but that proved to be too little, too late to have any impact on the result of the bout.

Shilson is the Gold medalist in 43kg in the 2018 Cadet World Championships.

This is India's fifth Silver along with three Gold in the ongoing Youth Olympics. The medals won by shuttler Lakshya Sen (Gold), shooter Manu Bhaker (Silver) and judoka Tababi Devi (Silver) in mixed team events are not counted in the country's total medal tally as they had paired with athletes of other countries.

The other Indian in the wrestling competition, Mansi finished eighth after losing her classification match to Imbabi Ahmed of Egypt who received a 'victory by fall' decision.



Simran poses with Silver medal

DOUBLE DONE & DUSTED

India crush West Indies in three days by 10 wickets to win second Test, wrap series 2-0

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

A clinical India completed one of the most ruthless clean sweeps in recent times, demolishing a listless West Indies by 10 wickets in the second Test, inside three days, to clinch the series 2-0 on Sunday.

Umesh Yadav's maiden 10-wicket haul (6/88 and 4/45) on a decent track was the highlight as India reached the meagre victory target of 72 in 16.1 overs, courtesy unbeaten partnership between openers Prithvi Shaw (33) and KL Rahul (33).

While any Test series victory is welcome, it hardly was an ideal preparation for the big away-series against Australia, starting December 4 in Adelaide.

West Indies were back to their worst despite showing signs of fight in the first innings as they couldn't last two full sessions and were bowled out for 127 in only 46.1 in their second innings.

Out of the four innings in this series, West Indies couldn't cross the 200-run mark thrice which was a testimony to their plight during the series.

For India, it was their 10th series win at home since their last defeat against England way back in 2012.

Virat Kohli's side did an encore of 2013 series which India won by an identical margin in that year's most lopsided contest with Sachin Tendulkar's farewell taking limelight.

The second innings started with Yadav on split hat-trick but Kraigg Brathwaite (0) survived one delivery before gliding one into Rishabh Pant's gloves.

Kieran Powell (6) edged one off Ravichandran Ashwin to Ajinkya Rahane in the slips.

Shai Hope (28) hit three delightful boundaries off Umesh while Shimron Hetmeyer (17) was trying to be more assertive against spinners in their 39-run stand.

However, a rush of blood saw Hetmeyer give Kuldeep Yadav the charge only to be caught by Cheteshwar Pujara at point.

From 45 for 3, there was not much resistance as Hope was snapped when he played a Ravindra Jadeja delivery for the turn to give Rahane his second catch.

West Indies' biggest hope Roston Chase (6) got a sharp inswinger while Shane Dowrich (0) played on with Umesh getting his ninth wicket of the match.

The wicket had its share of wear and tear but it wasn't a difficult track where



surviving would be an arduous task. Yet, it was another instance of lack of application from the West Indies batsmen with opener Brathwaite and young Hetmeyer playing atrocious shots.

Jason Holder (19) and Sunil Ambris (38) added 38 runs for the seventh wicket but once Holder edged one to Pant off Jadeja, any chances of match going to fourth day slowly disappeared.

However, West Indies had started off well by dismissing India for 367, keeping the first innings lead down to a mere 56 runs.

In the process, they denied Rishabh Pant (92) and Ajinkya Rahane (80) from reaching their hundreds.

In a space of 16.1 overs, India lost five wickets for 25 runs to move from a comfortable 314 for 4 to 339 for 9 before Ravichandran Ashwin (35, 83 balls) made a useful contribution.

West Indies captain Jason Holder

MOST CONSECUTIVE TESTS VS AN OPPOSITION WITHOUT A LOSS

Matches	Team	Opposition	Time Period
47	England	New Zealand	(1930-75)
30	England	Pakistan	(1961-82)
29	West Indies	England	(1976-88)
24	Australia	South Africa	(1911-52)
24	West Indies	India	(1948-71)
22	Pakistan	India	(1980-99)
22	Australia	New Zealand	(1993-11)
21	India	West Indies	(2002-18)*

Faisal Features

WINNING MOST HOME SERIES IN SUCCESSION

Matches	Team	Time Period
10	Australia	(1994/95-2000/01)
10	Australia	(2004-2008/09)
10	India	(2012/13-present)

Faisal Features

mance on Saturday came back well to take 3/107 in 20.4 overs.

Holder first got one to rear up from back of length to shatter Rahane's dreams of a 10th Test hundred. The Indian vice-captain was caught at gully for 80 off 183 balls to give the opposition captain his third wicket. His innings had seven boundaries.

Rahane-Pant duo added 152 runs for the fifth wicket and once the visitors got the breakthrough, the floodgates open.

Pant (92), who added seven more runs to his overnight score, got a short ball from Shannon Gabriel, which he pushed at only to be caught by Shimron Hetmeyer at cover point.

In two consecutive Tests, Pant has been dismissed for identical scores of 92. This time he played 134 balls hitting 11 boundaries and two sixes.



Umesh Yadav celebrates after dismissing West Indies batsman during the third day of 2nd Test PTI

For the record, during the West Indies second innings, the new SG Test ball had to be changed twice inside 12 overs.

On Saturday, Mohammed Siraj and Hanuma Vihari were released to play Vijay Hazare quarter-finals for their respective teams Hyderabad and Andhra.



Virat Kohli celebrates with Rishabh Pant after scoring hundred PTI

Kohli expects batsmen to replicate form in Australia

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India captain Virat Kohli has no issues with the team's bowlers but wants his batsmen to replicate their home form when they travel to Australia next month.

While the bowlers have done the job for India, both home and away of late, batsmen have let the team down time and again.

After hammering Windies, Kohli said the batsmen must keep delivering to compliment the good work of the bowlers.

"I'm really happy to see these guys fit and hungry. It's up to the batsmen to do the rest of the job. I think this game was tougher for the batsmen. This first innings was more challenging than the last one (in Rajkot)," said Kohli at the post-match presentation.

Compared to Rajkot, the batsmen had it tougher against the West Indies pace attack comprising Jason Holder and Shannon Gabriel. India were put under a little bit of pressure in their first innings before Rishabh Pant and Ajinkya Rahane steadied the ship with a 152-run partnership.

"Jinx has been batting really well, he got runs in Nottingham and we won the Test. He wanted runs under the belt. His partnership with Pant is something we want to see more of," said Kohli.

He was also all praise for Umesh Yadav, who became only the third Indian pacer to take 10 wickets in a Test at home. Ahead of the Australia series, he has given a selection headache to the team.

"If you look at the three new guys (Vihari in England, Shaw and Pant) who've come in, they've grabbed their opportunities. I think all these things are a big positive. But from this Test I want to single out Umesh.

West Indies captain Jason Holder conceded that the embarrassing back-to-back three-day defeats against India is "difficult to digest", considering pitches were batsman-friendly.

"Honestly, it's hard to take it. I am trying to understand the reasons why it is happening. It's a case where we all need to put our heads together — the management, the selectors and the players. The onus must be on the players and we must be responsible for our actions," said Holder.

Asked about the positives, the skipper termed Roston Chase and Sherman Lewis' performance.

"It's a tough series and we didn't play our best cricket. We look back in the last two years and we have some good results. India is No 1 team in the world and we expected to be pushed by them. They're quality cricket side, especially in their own backyard. We all saw some positive performances from Roston Chase. I thought Sherman was awesome."

He admitted that batting has been an issue for them for quite some time now.

"You can look and honestly say we didn't put enough runs on the board. Quite for some time now, we've been relatively inconsistent and that has really let us down in the recent past. We haven't been getting the runs we've been looking for. We have heavily relied on middle and lower half which is not ideal. So we need to rectify at the top. The guys in the top five have to put hands up and come to the party," he said.

SINGLES

INDIA A TO TAKE ON AUSTRALIA A IN WOMEN'S CLASH

MUMBAI: India A will take on their Australian counterparts in the first of three women's limited overs games here at the Mumbai Cricket Association's Bandra-Kurla complex facility on Monday. The latter two matches are also to be played at the same venue on October 17 and 19. The games are expected to test the bench strength of hosts and all eyes will be on skipper Poonam Raut. Poonam, who played a key role in the Indian team reaching the World Cup final last year, will like to lead from the front. Along with her are likes of Mona Meshram, Rajeshwari Gayakwad and Shikha Pandey in the squad. They will all be eyeing to put up an impressive show in front of the selectors and force their way into the senior team. The 50-overs series will be followed by a T20 series and the BCCI will announce the squad for it later. The visitors will be also looking to begin the series on a winning note, but will have a tough task at hand in adapting to the wicket and weather conditions.

SHUBHANKAR FINISHES T-10 IN CMB CLASSIC

PARIS: Overnight joint leader Shubhankar Sharma could not play his best golf on the final day, managing only an even par round to finish Tied-10th at the \$ 7 million CIMB Classic on Sunday. Coming on the heels of a period during which he has had six missed cuts in nine starts, a joint lead by round three augured well for the 22-year-old from India. However, it did not turn out to be his day and he was understandably disappointed at not being able to convert his second career 54-hole lead into a maiden PGA Tour title. The genial Australian Marc Leishman, who came close to quitting the game in 2015 when his wife was discovered with a rare life-threatening condition, continued his fine run to win his fourth title on the PGA Tour. Leishman, playing a very high level of golf since his second round 62, carded a 7-under 65, that took his total to 26-under 262, equalling the tournament record set in 2015 by Justin Thomas. Leishman ended five shots ahead of second placed trio — first round leader, Bronson Burgoon (68), Emiliano Grillo (66) and Chesson Hadley (66) — who finished T-2 with 21-under 267.

FINAL SOUTH AFRICA-ZIMBABWE T20 ABANDONED

BENONI: Rain and a wet outfield caused the abandonment of the third and final Twenty20 between South Africa and Zimbabwe on Sunday. South Africa won the series 2-0 after winning an earlier one-day series 3-0. The matches were largely one-sided and South Africa used them to test the depth of their resources, using 22 players across the five matches. South Africa travel to Australia later this month to play three one-day internationals and a Twenty20 international, while Zimbabwe depart later this week for Bangladesh where they will play three one-day internationals and two Tests. The first ODI is in Dhaka next Sunday. JP Duminy, who was due to captain South Africa on Sunday, said the objective of giving opportunities to several players had been achieved. "The selectors got a look at quite a few guys," he said. "We will be going into Australia with some confidence, although it is a work in progress."

SURYA VARATHAN WINS JK NOVICE CUP

COIMBATORE: Chennai's Ashwin Datta moved a step closer to his maiden Euro JK title in the 21st JK Tyre FMSCI National Racing Championship as a dramatic Round 3 — replete with ups, downs and upsets — came to an end here on Sunday. Ashwin (74 points after Round 3), who was just two points ahead of Nayan Chatterjee (66 after R3) as the action began on Saturday, made the most of Nayan's DNF to widen his lead. But Chennai's Karthik Tharani (68 after R3) won the next two races to come back into the equation. The final race of the weekend, however, saw a totally new set of winners, with Nirmal Uma Shankar, Brayan Perera and Yash Aradhya claiming the podium places. Ashwin finished fourth, though, ahead of his key competitors to be 6 points ahead of the field. Agencies

'Shaw has bit of Sachin, Sehwag and Lara'

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India coach Ravi Shastri saw in Prithvi Shaw's batting, glimpses of two of the greatest batsmen of modern era and a non-conformist who redefined batsmanship.

An overwhelmed Shastri on Sunday, in one breath, mentioned the names of three legends — Sachin Tendulkar, Brian Lara and Virender Sehwag — while trying to describe the 18-year-old Shaw who accumulated big runs in his first brush with top-flight international cricket.

"He (Shaw) is born to play cricket. He's been playing since the age of eight in the maidans of Mumbai. You can see all that hard-work showing. He's a spectator's delight. There's a bit of Sachin there, a bit of Viru in him and when he walks — there's a bit of Lara as well," Shastri said.

"If he can keep his head on his shoulders and keep the work ethic, he has a bright future."

Shastri was speaking after India completed a 2-0 series sweep over the West Indies with a 10-wicket victory here.

MAN OF THE SERIES ON DEBUT SERIES

Player	Country	Against	Year
S Ganguly	India	England	1996
J Rudolph	South Africa	Bangladesh	2003
S Clark	Australia	South Africa	2006
A Mendis	Sri Lanka	India	2008
R Ashwin	India	West Indies	2011
V Philander	South Africa	Australia	2011
J Pattinson	Australia	New Zealand	2011
R Sharma	India	West Indies	2013
M Hasan	Bangladesh	England	2016
P Shaw	India	West Indies	2018

Faisal Features

Opener Shaw flayed the Caribbean attack during his 52-ball-70 on the second day of the second Test to give India a flying start, days after hitting a century on debut.

Even skipper Virat Kohli gushed about the 18-year-old.

"The guy (has) grabbed his chance beautifully. He looks like someone who can get you off to a kind of start you require. Making a mark in the



Prithvi Shaw bats during the second day of the second Test AP

first series that you play, from that point of view, it is great to have a guy who is so fearless. And he is not reckless, he is very confident about his game," he said.

"You might feel that he will nick one now and then but he hardly nicks the ball. That we saw in England as well. He was batting in the nets, really attacking but was in control. But that kind of rare control against new ball is a great thing to have. Any of us weren't even 10 percent of what when he is at 18 or 19," added the captain.

Gambhir takes Delhi into semis

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Captain Gautam Gambhir smashed 104 off 72 balls after left-arm pacer Kulwant Khejroliya ran through the Haryana batting with a hat-trick to set-up a five-wicket win, sending Delhi into the semifinals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Sunday.

Batting first, Haryana were all out for 229 with Khejroliya collecting six wickets for 31 runs in 10 overs, his career-best performance in List A cricket. Navdeep Saini, with figures of three for 39, was a good foil for Khejroliya.

Birth day boy Gambhir then ensured his team cantered with a whirlwind knock comprising 16 fours. In the end, Delhi got home with 64 balls to spare and five wickets in hand. The other major contribution from the bat came from Dhruv Shorey (50 off 85).

Chasing 230, Umukt Chand (15) and Gambhir gave a good start, putting on 54 runs for first wicket before the former was caught by C N Saini off Arun Chaprana.

The skipper was at his furious best against Yuzuvendra Chahal, smashing him for three consecutive boundaries in the 16th over.

Gambhir and Shorey then put together a 118-run partnership as Delhi cruised towards the target.

After Gambhir was caught by Nitin Saini off Rahul Tewatia, Nitish Rana (37 off 28) nearly ferried the team to victory post, before getting out. Earlier, Chaitanya Bishnoi top-scored for Haryana with 85 off 117 balls with six boundaries and two sixes, while Pramod Chandila struck 59 off 88 balls with three boundaries and a six.

In the other quarterfinal, Mumbai sailed into the semifinals after comprehensively beating Bihar by nine wickets.



Gautam Gambhir and Dhruv Shorey bat during Vijay Hazare

Bihar were skittled out for 69 runs in 28.2 overs with Mumbai riding high on the back of Tushar Deshpande's five-wicket haul.

He finished with figures of five for 23 in nine overs. Deshpande was ably supported by Shams Mulani who bagged three wickets after conceding 18 runs in 8.2 overs.

Opting to bat, Deshpande wreaked havoc by removing the top three batsmen — Vikram Ranjan, Vijay Bharati and Babul Kumar — leaving Bihar struggling at 29 for three.

No Bihar batsmen reached double figures, except M D Rahmatullah (18) and Babul Kumar (16). Mumbai chased down a paltry 70-run target in 12.3 overs as openers Akhil Herwadkar (24) and star India player Rohit Sharma (33 not out) shared a 53-run stand.

Pakistan under pressure to beat Australia: Azhar

AFP ■ ABU DHABI

Senior batsman Azhar Ali admitted Pakistan will be under pressure of expectations in the second Test against Australia starting in Abu Dhabi from Tuesday.

Pakistan dominated much of the first Test in Dubai but failed to get the last two wickets as Australia finished at 362-8.

Set a daunting 462 runs Australia's fightback was led by opener Usman Khawaja's 141, ably assisted by Travis Head (72) and skipper Tim Paine (61 not out).

"I can't say if the pressure will be more on Pakistan or Australia but we are the home side and obviously people expect us to win and so there is pressure," said Azhar on Sunday.

"However, having said that these are favourable conditions for us and we have to make the most of it."

"Pressure is always different in every match and obviously this is a decider. Being the home team we have to win it and we will enter the field thinking that. We will look to play positive cricket and hopefully the result will go our way."



Usman Khawaja returns to pavilion after playing match saving innings against Pakistan in 1st Test at Dubai CA

Pakistan will be forced to make a change after regular opener Imam-ul-Haq fractured his finger in the first Test and was ruled out, opening an option to bring Azhar as opener.

The 33-year-old held the opening spot since the Oval Test in England in August 2016 and struck a triple century against the West Indies in Dubai and a double hundred against Australia in Melbourne — both in 2016.

He went to his customary number three position for the two Tests against Sri Lanka last year and in last week's first Test against Australia.

Pakistan can also bring in limited over specialist Fakhar Zaman to play his first Test, despite a poor form in the Asia Cup scoring only 56 runs in five matches with two ducks.

Azhar said he will do it against for his team.

"When playing for Pakistan one has to be ready for everything," said Azhar. "I have always believed in that and whatever the team management decides or the captain decides, I will be ready to do that." Azhar admitted Pakistan players were disappointed at not winning the first Test.

"We are not disheartened but, yes, disappointed, obviously after dominating the Test match throughout and then not winning it," said Azhar, a veteran of 66 Tests.

"Unfortunately we couldn't win but I think we also have to give credit to the Australians as well as they showed resilience and kept fighting till the end." Azhar said he remains focused despite not in the best of form, managing only 95 runs in the last four Tests.