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IT'S OKAY TO BE SELFISH: MANISHA 13 VIVACITY

Hollande, Rahul in queer sync: FM

Jaitley questions 'perfect coincidence' of France-India Opps' Rafale barbs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has defended the Rafale deal and said a controversy is sought to be created on the basis of a statement made by former French President Francois Hollande, that the Reliance Defence 'partnership' with Dassault Aviation was entered at the suggestion of the Indian Government.

In Facebook blog titled, "A Questionable statement Which circumstances & facts demolish," Jaitley claimed that in a subsequent statement the former president has sought to suggest that Reliance Defence emerged on the scene after the agreement with the Indian Government was entered into. "He has, in a subsequent statement, said he is 'not aware' if Government ever lobbied for Reliance Defence and that 'the partners chose themselves.' Truth cannot have two versions," he said.

In an interview to news agency ANI, Jaitley also said there is a "perfect coincidence" between Rahul's tweet of August 30 and Hollande's statements.

Rahul, on August 30, tweeted, "Globalised corruption. This #Rafale aircraft really does fly far and fast! It's also going to drop some big bunker buster bombs in the next couple of weeks. Modiji please tell Anil, there is a big problem in France."

"And then what happens [Hollande's claim] is in perfect rhythm with what he predicted," Jaitley said.



COUNTERPOINTS

- Rahul is in some kind of a revenge mode
- French Government and M/s Dassault Aviation have categorically denied the correctness of the former President's first statement
- French Government has stated that the decision with regard to the offset contracts of Dassault Aviation is taken by the company and not the Government

Adding further, Rahul is in some kind of a revenge mode. We were called corrupt and you brought in evidence."

Back to his Facebook blog, Jaitley said the French Government and M/s Dassault Aviation have categorically denied the correctness of the former president's first statement. The French Government has stated that the decision with regard to the offset contracts of Dassault Aviation is taken by the company and not the Government, he said.

He went on to add that the Dassault Aviation itself has suggested that they have entered into multiple contracts with several public sector and

private sector companies with regard to the offset contracts and the decision is entirely theirs. "Without commenting on the correctness or otherwise of a controversy in the French media, it may be mentioned that the former French president, Hollande, is countering statement made against him with regard to a conflict of interest in his dealing with the Reliance Defence," Jaitley said.

Jaitley said the accuracy of the statements made by the individuals may be questioned but circumstances never lie. This is evident from the following facts: There is no 'partnership,' as suggested by the former

President, with regard to the 36 Rafale aircrafts to be supplied by Dassault Aviation to the Government of India.

It was a Government to Government agreement under which the complete weaponised aircrafts are to come to the Indian Air Force. No manufacturing is to be done in India. It is, therefore, erroneous for anybody to suggest that there is a 'partnership' in the supply of the 36 Rafale aircrafts. M/s. Reliance Industries Ltd., in February, 2012, had entered into an MoU with Dassault Aviation. This was reported by the PTI on 12.2.2012. This was at a stage when the contract relating to

126 Rafale aircrafts, of which 18 were to be manufactured in France and 108 in India, was at an advance stage of consideration by the UPA Government. Rahul's misplaced criticism could equally apply to the 2012 MoU. The offset contract ensures investment by the original equipment supplier i.e. Dassault Aviation, in India, in as much as they make purchases from Indian companies to the extent of fifty per cent (in this case). The choice of the offset partner under the 2005 offset policy is of M/s Dassault Aviation and they have selected several public and private sector companies to make the supplies.

Cong accuses Modi of breach of oath by leaking info to Anil

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley of "lying" on the Rafale issue and persisted the demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe for an "uncorrupted truth" to come out.

"Mr Jaitley's speciality is his ability to spin '2 truths', or lies, with fake self righteousness and indignation to defend the indefensible.

It's high time he, the RM and our PM stop lying and call a JPC to establish the full,

uncorrupted truth about the Rafale Scam)," Rahul tweeted.

Also, he pointed towards media report highlighting how former French president Francois Hollande's charges have hit the Modi Government on the Rafale issue.

The Congress also demanded a clarification from the Prime Minister on the disclosure made by Hollande about the choice of Indian offset partner in Rafale deal and accused the PM of violating the oath of confidentiality by leaking information to Reliance Defence chief Anil Ambani.

Amit Shah to join BJP Mahila meet at Puri today

200 office-bearers to attend 3-day meet

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

BJP national president Amit Shah will inaugurate the three-day national executive meeting of the BJP Mahila Morcha at Puri on Monday.

Ahead of executive meeting, Morcha's national office-bearers' meeting was held on Sunday evening.

Around 200 women office-bearers from across the country would attend the meeting, informed an official release.

According to the schedule, Shah would first attend the women workers' conference and discuss various issues with them at Puri. Later, he would inaugurate the executive meeting at 3 pm.

Among senior leaders, Union Ministers Jugal Oram, Dharmendra Pradhan, State

Around 200 women office-bearers from across the country would attend the meeting, informed an official release

president Basanta Panda, BJP

Legislature Party Leader KV Singh Deo would attend the meeting, informed Morcha national president Vijaya Rahatkar at a Press meet here.

"The Odisha Government is anti-women. It has failed provided health, education and security to women.

A Mahila Yatra had been taken out to make women aware about the State Government's failure. As it achieved a bih success, the national executive was scheduled in Odisha," said Rahatkar.

She said three resolutions of political, women policy and condolences on sad demise of

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, would be taken up during the meeting.

A broad discussion would be held against failures of the BJD Government on different fronts relating to women, she said.

While the Narendra Modi Government's pro-women programmes like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao', 'Mudra', 'Swachh Bharat', 'Sukanya Samruddhi', 'Ujjwala Yojana' have benefited crores of people across the country, the Naveen Patnaik Government in Odisha has remained mute spectators to the rising violence against women, alleged Rahatkar.

Among others, State Mahila Morcha president Pravati Parida, former Minister Surama Padhee, State secretary Lekhashree Samantsinghar and general secretary Babita Patra were present.

Cuttack trader shot dead ahead of Dusshera

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The deteriorating law and order situation in Cuttack, with a broad daylight firing in the heart of the city on Sunday afternoon, has spread panic among citizens ahead of the week-long Dusshera festival beginning in the third week of next month.

Briefing reporters after the incident, city DCP Akhileswar Singh said one Dilip Kumar Sahu, a trader of Malgondwan, was allegedly shot dead by one Ajit Jena of the local Peethapur area.

While the motive behind the murder was not ascertained yet, it was believed that Ajit in a fit of rage shot at Dilip when the latter demanded his money which he had lent to Ajit.

While police were yet to apprehend Ajit, preliminary investigations revealed that he had no criminal antecedents.

Continued on Page 4

Another dengue patient dies in SCB

OVER 100 ADMITTED IN HOSPITAL

PNS ■ CUTTACK

With the death of one more dengue patient at the SCB Medical College Hospital here on Sunday, the vector-borne disease has claimed five patients so far during the past six months.

Hospital sources said that one Soumya Ranjan Naik (18) of Jagatsingpur district had been admitted at the hospital on Thursday last. "As the patient was critical, he was undergoing treatment with special care in the ICU. But he died early on Sunday morning," the sources said.

The sources further disclosed that currently 92 dengue patients are undergoing treatment in the special dengue ward of the hospital.

And 17 others, whose conditions are stated to be critical, are also undergoing treatment in the ICU, the sources added.

POST ANDHRA MLA KILLING

Security heightened on Odisha border

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

After the killing of an MLA and a former MLA of Andhra Pradesh by Maoists in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday, security has been beefed up on the borders of Odisha.

IG of Police Operations RP Koche said Central forces like BSF and CRPF

and the Special Operations Group of Odisha have been asked to remain on high alert.

Police stations on the border areas in the Maoist-infested districts have been instructed to remain vigilant.

Sources said that after the killings of the lawmakers in Andhra Pradesh, it is apprehended that Maoists might sneak into Odisha.

'NDA hasn't given a single project to Odisha'

It only believes in publicity: Srikant

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Srikant Jena on Sunday slammed the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for trying to take mileage out of inauguration of the Veer Surendra Sai Airport at Jharsuguda and laying of foundation-stone for renovation of the fertiliser plant at Talcher.

"The present NDA Government has not given a single project to Odisha during the last four and a half years. While a decision had already been taken and technical process initiated in 2008 for renovation of the Talcher fertiliser project, the airport at Jharsuguda was a brainchild of the



UPA Government," said Jena at a Press conference here.

Jena also alleged that the NDA Government has delayed in taking up the Talcher fertiliser project and completing the airport at Jharsuguda.

He said the Odisha Government knows it all which Central Government initiated these two

projects.

He also wanted to know why the MCL Medical College, which started during the UPA Government, has not yet been inaugurated and why the ESI Hospital, for which land had been identified and a boundary wall constructed, during the previous Government was withdrawn.

Jena alleged that the BJP and the BJD have secret understanding, and they are working to protect their individual party interests only.

"Be it the Paradip Refinery or the Jharsuguda airport or any other Central projects that have come up in Odisha, they all were approved and initiated during the UPA Government.

The BJP Government at the Centre and the BJD Government in the State have merely become publicity-oriented," alleged Jena.

PCC election campaign committee chairman Bhaktra Charan Das was present.

BIJU SWASTHYA KALYAN YOJANA
FREE TREATMENT FOR ALL
AT ALL GOVERNMENT FACILITIES
UPTO DISTRICT HEADQUARTER HOSPITAL

ODISHA ONE

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'Not facilities but mindset defines a smart city'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A Smart City is not about wide roads, beautiful landscapes, an efficient drainage system and better traffic; it is the mindset of the people living there which defines its character, an eminent social worker said here.

"Safety of women and attention given to the handicapped and underprivileged decide how smart a city is. It is not about branded clothes, the shade of a girl's lipstick or the brand of a boy's shaving cream," Namrata Chadha, a former Member of the State Women's Commission, said while speaking at a workshop held to create awareness against gender discrimination at the SOA University on Saturday.

The workshop was jointly organised by the SOA NSS Bureau, the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation and the United

Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Dhal also spoke at the workshop focusing on the society's refusal to change.

"What is needed is a change in the mindset of the people who need to view things in proper perspective. Girls face discrimination everywhere, both within the family and outside," Chadha said, adding, "We still find matrimonial advertisements looking for beautiful, fair, tall, educated and homely girls' as match for boys."

And at interviews, girls are asked "Can you work during the night?" she said, fuming, "It reeks of discrimination."

"Why is it that the tradition of people from a boy's family visiting a girl's home during matrimonial negotiation still continues? Why doesn't it happen the other way round?" Chadha asked.

Lincon Subudhi, who has been campaigning against child

marriage, said the problem stemmed from the fact that people refuse to respect a woman.

"If we refuse to take responsibility for a nation's development and are not worried about things happening around us, such a mindset will continue," she said.

Talking about smart cities, Subudhi said it is the responsibility of the people of the city to protest discrimination and prevent atrocities against women and children.

"We need to build that kind of a system using technology to ensure the safety of women and children," she said.

Social worker Pritichanda Dhal hit out at the 'double standards' in people's mentality which allow violence and discrimination against women. "We may have advanced technology, but our mindset has been on a downhill trip," she observed.

TORTURE, KIDNAPPING BY DRUG MAFIA NHRC seeks ATR from OHRC

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) to submit an action-taken report (ATR) regarding the torture of a minority community victim, Hasinara Khatun, and kidnapping of her husband by some anti-socials in the Haladipadia slum under the Laxmisagar police station in the city.

The NHRC passed the direction based on a petition filed by civil society organisation Human Rights Watch secretary Sangita Swain.

In her petition, Swain alleged that a minority community woman Hasinara Khatun is being humiliated and severely tortured by local anti-socials, who are carrying out drug trade in the Haladipadia slum.

She also alleged that Khatun's husband was kidnapped and her house was damaged by the drug mafia.

She further alleged that the drug trade was flourishing in the slum by engaging children.

The local police are framing innocent persons in false cases to shield the drug mafia.

Swain prayed the commission to take criminal action against the responsible police and anti-socials and trace her kidnapped husband, take steps to provide the land and house to the landless minority victim and compensate Rs10 lakhs immediately to save the life of the victim and provide free medical facilities.

In this regard the Odisha police HRPC Additional DG, Cuttack directed the Bhubaneswar DCP, for an ATR but till date no report has been received.

BG teachers to join duty from today

BUT AGITATION TO CONTINUE ON ROTATION BASIS

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Block Grant teachers, who are on agitation under the banner of the Odisha School and College Teachers' and Employees' United Forum demanding fulfilment of their demands, have decided to join duty from Monday (September 24).

However, they would continue their agitation on a rotation basis at the Mahatma Gandhi Marg in the State capital. Those conducting classes at schools would wear black badges until their demands are met, informed forum leader Golak Nayak.

He further said that the forum has decided to organise a 12-hour strike on October 2 in front of district Collectorate. Later, all teachers would gather again on October 9 at the Mahatma Gandhi Marg for a 'Shiksha



THEY WOULD CONTINUE THEIR AGITATION ON A ROTATION BASIS AT THE MAHATMA GANDHI MARG IN THE STATE CAPITAL

Banchao, Odisha Banchao' rally.

Notably, the teachers are on agitation since August 16 seeking benefits of the 7th Pay Commission, better service condition and job regularisation, among others, under the new Grant-in-Aid (GIA) system. They had also stopped conducting classes in schools from September 6.

OKM opposes Talcher fertiliser plant renovation

Demands funds paid as pension to farmers using bio-fertiliser

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Krushak Mahasangha (OKM) has strongly opposed the Talcher Fertiliser Plant revival, for which Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation-stone on Saturday, and suggested that the allocated funds be used for payment of pension to farmers to encourage using bio-fertiliser instead of chemical fertilisers.

"Use of chemical fertilisers

decreases the fertility of land and is very expensive. Besides, it is injurious to health. Hence, use of bio-fertiliser needs to be promoted," said OKM president Bibhudendra Pratap Das.

He argued that when an acre of land, with use of chemical fertilisers, produces 15 to 20 quintals of paddy that Shreedhan, the same acre of land yields 30 to 35 quintals of paddy when bio fertiliser is used.

Paddy cultivation with

- "Use of chemical fertilisers decreases the fertility of land and is very expensive. Besides, it is injurious to health. Hence, use of bio-fertiliser needs to be promoted," said OKM president Bibhudendra Pratap Das
- He argued that when an acre of land, with use of chemical fertilisers, produces 15 to 20 quintals of paddy that Shreedhan, the same acre of land yields 30 to 35 quintals of paddy when bio fertiliser is used.
- Paddy cultivation with use of bio fertiliser is called Shreedhan method and is being undertaken in Nayagarh and some other districts, he said.
- Farmers should be encouraged to undertake Shreedhan method of cultivation with payment of monthly pension through insurance companies.
- He also argued that incidents of farmer suicides will decrease if peasants get an enhanced paddy production by adopting Shreedhan method of cultivation.

Farmers should be encouraged to undertake Shreedhan method of cultivation with payment of monthly pension through insurance companies. If Rs 10,000, which is set to be spent for the Talcher fertiliser renovation plant, is paid as premium to insurance companies, as many 50,000 farmers would get pension of Rs 14,000 per month, pointed out Das.

Stating that he has written to the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister for adoption of Shreedhan method of cultivation many times during the last 12 years, Das further argued that a major chunk of Rs 1,30,000, which is paid as sub-

sidy to the fertiliser and pesticide companies by the Union Government, is siphoned off midway and that can be used for providing incentive to farmers for use of bio fertiliser.

He also argued that incidents of farmer suicides will decrease if peasants get an enhanced paddy production by adopting Shreedhan method of cultivation.

He informed that Sumant Kumar, a farmer of Kartrisara block in Bihar, has made a record in the world by harvesting 102 quintals of paddy from an acre of land through Shreedhan method of cultivation.

IN BRIEF

SKIS OBSERVES INT'L DAY OF PEACE

Bhubaneswar: The Shree Krishna International School (SKIS) observed the International Day of Peace here on Friday to strengthen the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples. School Principal Dr Swarupnanda Mishra gave a peace message to the students. On the occasion, different competitions were held among the students on the theme of peace and the winners were felicitated. School Vice-Principal Kabindra Dash also spoke.

39 STUDENTS QUALIFY NTSE STAGE-II FROM STATE

Bhubaneswar: The FIITJEE again proved its supremacy in the National Talent Search Exam (NTSE 2018) stage-II results with 400 long term classroom programme students of FIITJEE out of a total 756 selections across India from general category. The stage-I examination was held on November 2017 and Stage-II exam was held on May 13, 2018. Aniket Dey, one of the successful scholars from FIITJEE Bhubaneswar centre have scored 170/197 marks, respectively.

'Ensure raw materials for J'suguda plants'

MLA Das submits memo to PM

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

During the inauguration of the Veer Surendra Sai Airport here on Saturday, local MLA Naba Kishore Das submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

requesting him to ensure supply of adequate raw materials to industries in the district. Among other points, the memorandum mentioned that many industries are now closed and many others don't operate to full capacity due to shortage of raw materials.

In an example, it said the Vedanta Aluminium Company has become sick due to the

shortage of 'alumina' and 'bauxite'. Other demands included opening of an AIIMS, a separate rail division at Jharsuguda, establishment of an agriculture-based food project in the city and opening a Skill Development Centre in the district. The memorandum was submitted to the Prime minister by MLA on the date itself.



Deserted woman pleads for justice

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A woman, Tapaswini Pradhan, who had filed a complaint against her husband at the Dhauli police station for deserting her, is leading a life of penury and still waiting for justice.

Sources said Tapaswini had a love marriage with one Pitambar Yadav and was residing at Nuagaon village under the Dhauli police.

Based on her complaint on August 24, 2018, the Dhauli police sent Tapaswini and her baby to Madhyam in Bhubaneswar for counselling. She requested the Madhyam authorities to issue a notice to her husband for personal appearance and counselling. However, her husband is yet to turn up before the Madhyam authorities, informed her lawyer Kabiraj Sahoo.

Meanwhile, Tapaswini and her baby are facing various problems in getting accom-



Based on her complaint on August 24, 2018, the Dhauli police sent Tapaswini and her baby to Madhyam in Bhubaneswar for counselling

WOMAN MURDERED IN BBSR HOTEL NHRC asks for report from Khordha SP

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an action-taken-report (ATR) from the Khordha district Superintendent of Police, over the suspicious murder of a woman in a Bhubaneswar hotel near the Mancheswar police station.

The order of the NHRC came pursuant to the petition and subsequent submissions by civil rights lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy. He pointed out that in the last week of August; Laxmipriya Biswal of Kaimatia in Jatni was brutally murdered at a hotel, barely a few metres from the Mancheswar PS.

Biswal had married a resident of Gada Khordha about 15 years ago and the couple has two children. However, they were living separately since 2012. Biswal was staying in a rented house under the Khandagiri PS.

Biswal came to the hotel along with a man identified as Aditya Mohapatra of Puri district and the duo claimed that they were husband and wife. Biswal and Mohapatra had furnished their Aadhaar cards as identity proof to the hotel authorities and checked into a room

The hotel staff asked Mohapatra to clear the bills at about 7 pm. He said that his wife was in the room and he was going to an ATM kiosk to withdraw money.

After some hours, the hotel staff attempted to call Mohapatra, but his mobile phone was switched off.

Then they went to the room and called Biswal. When she did not respond, they broke open the door of the room and found her lying on the ground.

On being informed, Mancheswar police rushed to the spot and seized the body. While the victim had sustained injuries on her face and head, police seized an iron rod and her mobile phone from the spot.

Tripathy requested the NHRC to investigate the case and direct the State to ensure arrest of the accused and payment of compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of the victim.

Amicus Curiae says 'treat devotees like VVIPs or else go home'



BISWARAJ PATNAIK

A lawyer loses licence to enter bar if found engaged in any other money making activity than legal practice. So stringent are rules for lawyers. The objective is to keep lawyers focused on law and such other knowledge and skills to give best service to clients.

Similarly, the temple servants in India are expected to render service to the deities on an exclusive mode, meaning their sole job is to remain glued to the deities and earn whatever wage comes their way. The logic is simple: their

concentration does not become diluted and the deities are not neglected in any manner.

In the ancient times when monarchs established temples, servants from specific caste-communities were handpicked if they did not volunteer to offer services due to fear of 'no wage' or 'low-wage' systems in place. Big temples were popular from the day deities were installed and, therefore, devotees thronged in big numbers even in those days of primitive transport facilities.

The Jagannath Temple in Puri began big on every front. The founder monarchs organised devotee comfort by involving willing servants to take property and extend hospitality to the poorest of the poor pilgrims from far and wide.

Even in those days, the Jagannath Temple had huge meals of countless food items offered to the deities everyday and part of it was given to the servants by way of wages.

For centuries on end, the

servitors were a sacrificing, volunteer lot without greed or guile to make money not due to them. Because of all these tough arrangements, the successors were not willing to become servitors. The monarch, therefore, recommended a hereditary servitor system so that at least one or two from the initially chosen clan could become a servitor ensuring temple rituals to continue without hindrance. Most servitors remained perpetually impoverished.

Now, everything has changed. The invariably famous Jagannath Temple has become a fashionable shrine mainly because of the novo rich servitors who are only "mushroom and nothing bigger or better" as Prabhupada of ISKCON preached and publicised the Jagannath culture across the world very successfully.

Televisions started airing the Car Festival and the servitors became visible, some of the



smart ones, particularly the non-Brahmin ones capitalising visibility to attain star status. No one knows who or how the erroneous message of 'hereditary rights' came to be discussed among the public.

The temple has a few robustly designed 'Records of events' placed chronologically as well as of 'rites and rituals'. But unfortunately, someone has erroneously titled the doc-

ument in the fashion of 'Record of Rights'. So, cunningly some vested interests have popularised the grossly wrong message that any male born into a servitor family becomes a servitor after the 21st day of existence.

By this make-believe culture, now the number of principal servitors including the Daita community's has far exceeded the required critical

number of approximately 95 per day.

There are nearly 119 categories of servitors, most of whom do not claim hereditary right at all. The Brahmin caste and Daita servitors only get their male children inducted as servitors. Interestingly, the Daita community is not even endogamous as the Brahmin class servitors are.

The number of the assortment of servitors is now nearing 20,000, which means utter chaos and cutthroat competition to flourish and show off. No wonder, on some lean days, there are more servitors than devotees in the temple premises. Hence, their unruly and uncivil behaviour and conduct, the latest PIL at the Supreme Court and the visit of an Amicus Curiae.

Very interestingly, Gopal Subramaniam, the Amicus Curiae chanted such Jagannath hymns in chaste Sanskrit that the Shankaracharya, the Gajapati King and the talkative

servitors were left gaping in utter awe and confusion put together.

The Puri District Judge had made twelve strong recommendations, which have been gladly accepted by the apex court. The temple administration and all others involved have agreed to all except the hereditary rights abolition suggestion.

The friend of the court, dressed like a pure priest, made it clear that the worthy members only shall be inducted into service on the basis of knowledge and skills, thereby reducing the number of servitors to a decent one so that managing them would be easy.

The left-out ones shall be packed off with a respectable compensation package. They can merrily go back to their hotels, shops and services with the government and corporate agencies.

The exceptionally learned Amicus Curiae made it amply clear that the clan shall not be

ignored, but the mad number will be curtailed drastically. Each clan will have to nominate members with knowledge and skills to compete and pass tests to become servitors with fat salaries.

But double games shall not be tolerated as the attention of such servitors shall remain focussed on the private business and profit activities as is normal by human nature. The servitors will have to remain on job exclusively.

The way the friend of the court has talked and explained, there is no scope for confusion anymore.

He has also categorically made it clear that violation of any reformed rule may result in dismissal of servitors.

People who are revelling over the joyous development have started believing that Mahaprabhu, the Lord Jagannath, is taking care Himself as He knows by now that enough is enough and things need instant fixing!

Fluoride content found in N'pada groundwater

School, AWC, health centre tube-well water unsafe

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

Fluoride in groundwater of Nuapada district is a menace for its people. Suffering due to this contamination is gradually increasing.

About 60 per cent of the tube-wells here, which are the main sources of drinking water, contain more than the permissible fluoride level of 1.00 mg per litre.

The RWSS department has tested water samples of 352 sources between April and August and it was found that all these sources have fluoride contamination of more than 1.50 mg/L.

It is a matter of concern that 58 of these 352 sources are located either in schools, Anganwadi Centres or inside the health centres.

Samples of 707 sources tested between September 2017 and March 2018 also have similar findings. Out of these 707 sources having fluoride content of more than 1.5 mg/l, 115 are located inside educational and health institutions and AWCs.

The district administration boasts of taking several steps like pipe water supply, installation of de-fluoridation plants etc, to address the problem but the ground realities are different.

A tube well located near the primary school of village Jarelpadar under Bharuamunda panchayat of Sinapali block is the only source of drinking water for the people of Katapada habitation with 150 population. In addition, this source also serves as the only source for above 160 children of the primary school here.

"The Government says tube well water is safer than the open well; so we prefer this for drinking and cooking," says Bilasini Kata of Katapada without knowing that the water they are drinking is contaminated with 3.45 mg of fluoride per litre.

The students of Bharuamunda High School, above 230 in number, including 65 boarders, drink 5.25 mg of fluoride per litre.



"Considering the high level of fluoride in the old tube well, the administration sunk another one in our premises, but the water quality of this new one also does not seem good," says the Headmaster of the school. Sample of the new one is yet to be tested.

The permissible limit of fluoride in drinking water according to World Health Organisation (WHO) is 1.00 mg/L, whereas in India it is considered to be 1.5 mg/L. Consumption of fluoride beyond this limit causes fluorosis - a disease that causes

5.25 mg/L (High School Pada of Bharuamunda).

"In the absence of alternative, above 4,000 people of the panchayat are forced to depend on the contaminated sources," says ZP member Priya Ranjan Meher.

"We agree that the Government has made effort to create alternative, but the Government people do not accept their failure," says Sarpanch of Bharuamunda KabitaTandi.

"One PWS project made six / seven years ago with an investment of about Rs 60 lakh in our panchayat, proposed to supply water to 26 habitations of two panchayats, but after completion, it was seen that 19 habitations remained unreachd.

The PVC pipes are of low quality that breaks regularly due to high pressure of supply and it becomes difficult to fill the overhead tank located at a distance of one and half kms from the source," adds Kabita.

Executive Engineer of Fluoride Special Project, Nuapada, GopalNaik says the villages of Bharuamunda GP

have been excluded from the mega project, because they were in the 'Commissioned Project' list of the RWSS due to the PWS project. "However, if the existing pipe lines laid for PWS project are in good condition, we will link that to our mega project," he adds.

But, this seems uncertain, first, because the proposal of linking the mega to the PWS is yet to be officially put in papers and second, the pipe lines are not in good conditions.

"Our Panchayat spends above Rs 60,000 every year to replace the torn pipes to continue supply of water to seven habitations, in addition to the electricity dues of Rs 1.5 lakh per annum," says Kabita.

As the PWS project in official records is still recorded as functional, now it is to be seen how the Government deals with such a situation to address the water problem of villagers.

The work agreement with the construction agencies allots a period of two years for completion of the project.

The villagers demand supply of water in tankers during the commissioning period.

INBRIEF

AMWAY OPENS EXPRESS PICK, PAY STORE IN R'KELA

Rourkela: The Amway India opened an express pick and pay store at Sumitra Heights in Rourkela recently. This is the 60th such store opened by the company in India and third in the State after Brahmapur and Cuttack. Inaugurating the new store, Amway India East regional manager Chandra Chakraborty said Rourkela is one of key markets for Amway in western Odisha, and the State is amongst the top five markets for Amway India. The store would play a key role in increasing accessibility and visibility of Amway's products to drive growth in western Odisha, he added. All Amway products would be available in the new express pick and pay store.



TENT OWNERS HOLD BLOOD DONATION CAMP IN B'PUR

Brahmapur: The Brahmapur Tent Owners' and Suppliers' Welfare Association organised a blood donation camp here on Sunday. Local MLA Dr RC Chyapatnaik inaugurated the camp. Gopalpur MLA Dr Pradeep Panigrahi, Mayor K Madhavi, BDA Chairman Subash Moharana, former Union Minister Chandra Sekhar Sahu and BCC Bank Chairman Alekha Choudhury were present. Association president Kiran Kumar Subudhi, vice-president Bhagawan Panda and secretary Butu Patnaik coordinated the programme. A total of 72 units of blood were connected.



RI, PEON HELD TAKING BRIBE IN BALESWAR

Cuttack: Vigilance officials on Saturday caught Baleswar Kedarpur Revenue Inspector (RI) Kamini Prava Panigrahi, Peon Basanta Kumar Panda and a private person, Banamali Dixit, of Bana Paria village red-handed for demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 4,200 (Rs 3,000 for submission of an inquiry report and Rs 1,200 for preparation of sketch maps). They were taking the bribe from one from complainant Purna Chandra Majhi of Sunari village in six mutation cases for transfer of ownership of lands in Majhi's name. Panigrahi, Panda and Dixit were arrested and forwarded to court.

Newborn girl stolen from MKCG rescued

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

A three-day-old baby girl, who had been allegedly stolen from the MKCG Medical College Hospital here on Saturday, was rescued by police from Konisi village in the Golanthara area in Ganjam district later in night.

The baby was then handed over to her parents. A woman, Kuni Pradhan, has been detained at the Baidyanathpur police station for questioning in connection with the incident. One Jyoti Nahak of R Narayanpur village in the Kabisuryanagar area in the district had delivered the baby at the hospital three days

ago. On Saturday, the baby was taken to the outdoor by her grandmother for immunisation, during which a woman, identifying herself as a volunteer working in the hospital, took the baby and disappeared.

A 'missing' complaint was lodged by the parents of the infant with the Baidyanathpur police in this regard.

"After three years of marriage, Kuni Pradhan had no children. To have a child in her house, she made a plan and took away the baby from its grandmother Gurubari Nahak from the ticket counter," said ASP Santanu Das and others at a Press conference held on Sunday.

Brahmapur Muslim Association holds mass weddings

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Ganjam Muslim Cultural Association organised a function here on Sunday where 12 poor couples got married of which nine were Muslim couples and three were Hindu couples.

Local MLA Dr Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik, district Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange, DIG of Police (SR) Ashish Kumar Singh, Brahmapur SP Pinak Mishra, Ganjam SP Brijesh Kumar Rai and



3 Hindu couples also participated

Brahmapur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) Commissioner Chakravarti Singh Rathore attended as guests. The association every year holds this unique philanthropic activity by conducting marriages for the poor who cannot afford wedding expenses on their own.

The association solemnises multiple marriages at a time under one roof where religion, caste and creed is no bar.

Witchcraft suspicion: Two M'bhanj women killed

Accused also injures aunt

BARIPADA: Two tribal women were allegedly hacked to death by a man of the community at Madhupur village under the Jamda police station in Mayurbhanj district on Sunday as they were suspected to be practising witchcraft.

Later, the accused shot an arrow at his aunt Jaba Baske. The man was identified as Shyam Baske of the same village. The deceased women were identified as Karmi Murmu and Surya Hembram.

Sources said Shyam suspected that the women were practising sorcery on him, as a result which he was unable to father a child. And when his suspicion crossed the limits, he decided to eliminate them.

Shyam hacked the duo, who happened to be his neighbours, with an axe; and after returning home, he attacked his aunt with an arrow injuring her critically.

The woman was rushed to the Jamda hospital and her health condition was stated to be critical.

Soon after his killing spree, Shyam surrendered before the local police. A probe into the incident was underway. **PNS**

Leprosy detection drive in Ganjam from Sep 27

BRAHMAPUR: An eight-day Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC) would be held from September 27 to October 6, excluding Sunday and Wednesday, in Ganjam district, informed Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) in a release.

Out of a total of 3,370 villages surveyed, 26 villages (0.77 %) were having continuous leprosy detection and 1,052 villages (31.21%) have inter-current case detection during the last first five years and the rest 2,318 villages (68.78%) didn't not have leprosy cases. The CDMO said that all health functionaries from district to village-level would be provided training and intensified IEC activities would be held before and during the campaign.

Various important activities would be conducted before seven days and GKS meeting and awareness would be created among all the GKS members. House to house survey and physical examination of family members would be conducted. **PNS**

9-yr-old raped, killed in K'mal; one held

PHULBANI: A nine-year-old girl was allegedly raped and strangled to death at Hatapada Sahi under Kotagarh block of Kandhamal district. The body of the minor girl was found at a farmland on Saturday evening.

Acting on a complaint lodged by the girl's family members, the Kotagarh police have detained one Gagan Pradhan of the locality over his alleged involvement in the crime. According to reports, the girl had gone missing at around 2

pm on Saturday. Her family searched for her at various places but in vain. In the evening at around 6 pm, the girl's body was found at a farmland in the village. Injury marks on the body indicated that the girl was raped and then killed. Police reached the spot, seized the body and started investigation. Locals told the police that they had seen Gagan Pradhan near the place from where the body was found. The police detained Pradhan for questioning; and probe was underway. **PNS**

IN KENDRAPADA

Official thrashed during ration card verification

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

A panchayat official on duty was allegedly thrashed while making verification of ration card beneficiaries in Kendrapada district.

The victim was identified as Bibeknanda Mallick, the Panchayat Executive Officer of Sanabadagopalpur. A written complaint was lodged with the Rajnagar police by the BDO accusing the

attacker of beating up Mallick and snatching away the official documents from him.

The incident took place at Badaolara village on Saturday while Mallick was verifying the ration cards and collecting data about the beneficiaries.

During the process, suddenly a man identified as Gurucharan Bal of



A written complaint was lodged with the Rajnagar police by the BDO accusing the attacker of beating up Mallick and snatching away the official documents from him

Gobindapur village of B a n d h a p a d a

panchayat allegedly threatened the officer to add ineligible beneficiaries to the list.

When Mallick did not agree, the man snatched the register, manhandled him and started thrashing him on village road, it was further alleged.

The officer alleged that the attacker even tried to kill him.

A video was shot featuring the attack on the official by the youth.

W ODISHA HC BENCH DEMAND S'pur lawyers show placards to PM

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

The lawyers here who are on a dharna for last three weeks demanding a High Court Bench, irrespective of their party affiliation, were in PM Narendra Modi's meetings in Jharsuguda with placards in hands to stake their demand.

Earlier they sought permission from the office of the Prime Minister (PMO) to meet him for a few minutes at Jharsuguda to apprise him of the genuine demand of the people for the bench. When they didn't get it, they stood

They stood silently with placards at the meeting venue to draw the attention of the PM

silently with placards at the meeting venue to draw the attention of the PM.

"After clearance from the State Government and a letter from the Chief Minister, the ball is now in the court of the Government of India and we wanted to draw the PM's attention at least by this means," said Sambalpur District Bar

Association president Bijitendriya Pradhan.

However, the BJD legal front has strongly criticised the attitude of the Central Government and the PM in particular on this issue. A Press release issued by Basanta Mishra of the legal front states: "We expected some declaration by the PM in western Odisha itself since we have communicated the matter to his office and the Union Law Ministry frequently. Moreover, the PM must have intelligence inputs. But much to the dissatisfaction of the people here, nothing of that sort happened."

Bhadrak rly station building, FOB unveiled

PNS ■ BHADRAK

Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Jual Oram inaugurated a new station building and six-meter wide new Foot Over Bridge (FOB) at the Bhadrak railway station on Sunday.

Oram said that the inaugural function is just a few among the various steps being taken by Railways to improve the stations and rail infrastructure.

Oram appreciated and congratulated the East Coast Railway authorities for bringing improvement in passenger amenities and station develop-



Oram said that the inaugural function is just a few among the various steps being taken by Railways to improve the stations and rail infrastructure

ment. Earlier, General Manager, East Coast Railway Umesh Singh while addressing the function stated that operationalisation of the Bhadrak New Railway Station and Foot Over Bridge will help avoid congestion.

IN SUNDARGARH No Govt aid yet for 3 orphan minor siblings

Parents die in short span; eldest works to feed brother, sister

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH

Three minor siblings of Bonei block of Sundargarh district, who are orphans and living in helpless condition, have not got any assistance from the Government.

According to sources, Jadumani Kishan and wife Gura suddenly died on August 28. Just a day after, Jadumani died. The three children became orphans after the death of their parents.

The situation was so bad that elder son Santosh started working in a shop to feed his younger brother and sister. Santosh's younger brother Jagannath studies in 9th Class and sister Priyambada studies in 5th Class in village school.

ning her family and meeting treatment expenses of her husband.

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The situation was so bad that elder son Santosh started working in a shop to feed his younger brother and sister. Santosh's younger brother Jagannath studies in 9th Class and sister Priyambada studies in 5th Class in village school.

There is no toilet or electricity in their house. The final rites of their parents were completed with the help of their relatives and villagers. The financial assistance under



Harischandra scheme, which should have been provided to these three children just after the death of their parents, has not yet been provided to them. The three siblings are now struggling to survive but have not yet got a helping hand. Meanwhile, when asked, Badgoua Panchayat PEO J Mishra assured of assistance to the siblings. **PNS**

Attacking scribe: OUWJ leader held

KHORDHA: Police on Sunday arrested three persons for attacking a scribe named Ishwar Chandra Mangaraj near the court premises here on Friday.

The arrestees were identified as Prakash Kumar Hati, Ranjit Patnaik and Soumyaranjan Hati.

Sources said that Mangaraj was allegedly attacked by a group of persons led by Odisha Union of Working Journalists (OUWJ), Khordha president Prakash Kumar Hati.

When Mangaraj's two sons reached the spot, they were also attacked by the miscreants. And when the police rushed to the spot, the miscreants fled. Later Mangaraj's wife Binodini Mangaraj had lodged an FIR in the matter in the Town police station. **PNS**

2 girl students meet watery grave in Nilgiri

One battling for life

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Two girl students met a watery grave and another was critical after they entered into a pond for taking bath in Nilgiri of Baleswar district on Sunday morning.

The deceased were identified as Banashree Behera of Baligahiri and Jyotirekha Moharana of Kahalia under the Nilgiri NAC. Both were aged about 12 years.

The girl student, who was critical, was identified as Ishwari Barik of the same locality.

The three girls had gone to a nearby place for tuition together. After returning from



the tuition, they took bath in the pond.

However, they fell into water one after another after their legs slipped into deep water.

Locals at the site entered into the water and rescued the girls, who were rushed to the Berhampur Community Health Centre (CHC), where the doctors declared Banashree and Jyotirekha dead.

Till the last report came in, Ishwari was battling for life in the hospital.

NSG team arrives to review Shreemandir security

PNS ■ PURI

A three-member team of the elite National Security Guards (NSG) arrived here on Sunday to conduct a review of the security arrangements at the Jagannath Temple, which is on the radar of terror outfits.

The team would carry out the review for two days. It would conduct a thorough security inspection of both internal and external parts of the temple, sources said.

An official announcement regarding the security inspection of the temple by the NSG was made by the district administration.

Earlier, an NSG team had inspected the Shreemandir's security arrangements in August 2017 and suggested for some changes.

This time, the team would also inspect whether the security reforms they had suggested last time have been implemented or not, sources said.

Notably, the NSG team had suggested for construction of watchtowers around the temple and shifting of all shops



around it. But nothing has been done in these respects. The NSG usually conducts reconnaissance after sensitive

places are identified in coordination with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, the State police and intelligence agencies.

Banki women gherao cops, Sub Collector

DEMAND ACTION FOR VILLAGE TO BE LIQUOR-FREE

PNS ■ ATHAGARH

Over 300 villagers, including women, men and children, of Kuspangi village under Banki police station area gheraoed the Banki police station and Sub-Collectorate on Sunday demanding making their village liquor-free.

As per their allegation, most of the male members of their village drink the liquor sold illegally in the nearby areas of their village with the knowledge of the Excise and police officials of the area and making the environment pol-

luted by losing their money and developing health hazards.

Earlier, the villagers protested before the concerned authorities regarding the same but it was futile.

Sarpanch Puspalata Jena has said that she had assured the electorates to make Kuspangi liquor-free at least two years ago but it has not been done so till now due to non-cooperation of the administration.

This time, the villagers, including the Sarpanch, have given the administration October 2 as the ultimatum to shut down these illegal liquor shops from their area failing which they would take to streets and block the Banki-Cuttack State Highway near their village.



BCJD holds blood donation camp



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The camp was inaugurated by BCJD president Amaresh Patri in which a total of 108 units of blood were collected

The Biju Chhatra Janata Dal (BCJD), under the leadership BCJD State general secretary Biswa Pratap Sahu, organised a voluntary blood donation camp under the Jiban Bindu programme at the party office here on Sunday.

The camp was inaugurated by BCJD president Amaresh Patri in which a total of 108 units of blood were collected. Bhubaneswar North MLA Priyadarshi Mishra, Bhubaneswar Central MLA Bijay Mohanty, BJD

Bhubaneswar district working president Babu Singh, BJD youth wing advisor Amaresh Jena and other party leaders visited the camp and motivated the donors. BCJD Bhubaneswar Central president Subham Kumar Panda and other members coordinated the camp.

Maa Ghara peace rally from B'swar on Sep 26

TO END AT BHUBANESWAR ON GANDHI JAYANTI



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Governor for making Odisha liquor-free, informed Maa Ghara Foundation Trust members at a Press meet here on Sunday.

"Violence is rising in Odisha due to unemployment and liquor consumption. Due to violence, women and children are being affected the most.

The peace rally has been planned in view of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma

Gandhi being held across the country," they said.

Over 500 women activists belonging to various youth organisations, women organisations and district units of the Maa Ghara would participate in the rally.

Various awareness campaigns would be undertaken to make people aware about the ill effects of liquor sale and consumption in destroying future of women and children.

Ashish wins Gurukul AITA-OTA series



BHUBANESWAR: Top seed Ashish Kumar Parida and second seed Simran Neha Ekka both from Odisha won the U16 singles title of boys and girls respectively in the Gurukul AITA-OTA Championship Series (CS3) U16 tennis tournament which concluded here on Sunday.

In Boys U16 Singles final Parida defeated Sangram Kumar Patra of Odisha by 6-4,6-0 and in Girls U16 Singles final Ekka defeated Aditi Pradhan of Jharkhand by 6-2,6-2.

The winner and runners up would get 15 and 10 AITA ranking points respectively. Tournament director Pradeep Pradhan felicitated the winners and runners up in presence referee Jatin Batsya and OTA manager Prakash Pattanaik. A total of 25 candidates participated from four States, i.e., West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and host Odisha.

AISF to hold disobedience stir on Sep 28

STATE COUNCIL CONVENTION HELD

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A convention of the All India Students' Federation (AISF), Odisha State council was held here on Sunday under leadership of Sanghamitra Jena, Jitendra Dasm and Jagdish Durga.

Federation State convenor Jagannath Patra presented the annual report of two years and said that on the birth anniversary of Bhagat Singh, i.e., on September 28, the federation would hold a civil disobedient movement in different parts of the State demanding free education and employment.

During the movement, the federation would urge the students of the State to make the Students' Union elections, which are going to be held in



October, free from communal violence and corruption.

On the occasion, 23 members for the federation State council and seven representatives were elected.

Sanghamitra Jena was elected as president, Saifulla

Khan and Sumant Nahak were elected as VPs, Jagannath Patra as secretary, Jhili Bag and Aparna Routray as joint secretaries and Arun Sardar as treasurer.

Among others, All India Youth Federation State presi-

dent Sadanand Sahu, AISF former State president Dr Prasant Mishra, N Narayan Reddy, former secretary Jayant Das, Abhijeet Sahu, Subash Mahapatra and former national president Ramkrusha Panda were present.

Cuttack trader...

Form page 1 "But Ajit had borrowed money from several people and gone underground when the lenders lined up in front of his house demanding to get back their money," the DCP said, adding that efforts were being made to arrest Ajit.

Family sources said Ajit, after reappearing in the public three days ago, had telephoned Dilip and asked him to come to his house on Sunday and take back his money. When Dilip reached Ajit's place, a heated argument between the duos ensued.

Ajit suddenly pulled out a gun and fired three rounds at Dilip before escaping from the spot. Dilip was immediately rushed to the SCB Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him "brought dead".

Modi rolls out Ayushman to serve 10 crore poor families

PNS ■ RANCHI

Not far away from the next general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the schemes launched by the incumbent NDA dispensation at the Centre for their role played in empowering the poor without any prejudice. He named some like Ujjawala, PMAY, Saubhagya, Swachch Bharat Mission while adding the latest Ayushman Bharat he launched on Sunday from Jharkhand.

The Prime Minister opening his address in local dialect Nagpuri and remembering the land of great sons of the soil remained critical of the previous regimes, particularly of the Congress while alleging those of discriminatory in



implementing welfare measures.

"All the schemes we have launched have been empowering to the poor. For the first time any Government is treating the poor not as vote bank based on their caste, religion and regional identity. For the last 40-50 years, the Governments have been using public funds to garner vote bank. We have shunned the path and I don't want the

country to return to that again," said the Prime Minister after inaugurating the universal health insurance scheme hailed critically as 'Modicare'.

With the rollout of the Centre's flagship scheme which has been renamed as PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), the Narendra Modi-led NDA Government aims to provide healthcare facilities to over 10 crore families covering urban and rural poor.

All NDA Chief Ministers launched the scheme from their respective States.

The scheme will become operational from September 25 on the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, Niti Aayog member VK Paul said.

Polythene-free Puri drive: Nalco to chip in



PNS ■ PURI

The Nalco has planned to hand over paper and cloth bags and aluminium foil packs as substitute to polythene to the Puri district administration, said Nalco CMD Dr TK Chand.

"This initiative would be a part of the Rs160 crore project being carried out by the company to develop and promote

Puri as a Swachh iconic shrine," informed Dr Chand. He said this while inaugurating a national symposium on 'Polythene Environment and Human Health,' organised by the socio-cultural organisation Nirmalya, in association with RSKS (DU) here.

A people's campaign to make Puri as a polythene-free iconic place was launched on the occasion.

Also, as the Chairman of CII, Odisha Dr Chand urged the industries to come forward to extend their support in this campaign.

Dr Chand expressed concern over the adverse impacts of the excessive usage of polythene and plastics.

The Nalco has imposed restriction on usage of plastic bags in its premises, informed Dr Chand.

Parrikar to remain CM, Goa Cabinet rejig soon, says Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to end political uncertainty in Goa, BJP president Amit Shah on Sunday announced that the ailing State Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar would continue in his office and that reshuffle of the State's Ministers would soon take place in Goa.

"It has been decided during a discussion with the Goa BJP core team that Parrikar will continue to lead the Goa Government. There will soon be a reshuffle of Ministers and their portfolios," Shah tweeted so following a discussion with the BJP's core group team from Goa.

Parrikar's poor health had sparked speculation over his continuation as the Chief Minister of the State. Shah had recently sent Central party leaders to speak to allies and take stock of political situation.

The Opposition Congress, which is the single largest party in the State, has also staked claim to form the Government. The BJP has asserted that its Government continues to have

the support of majority of MLAs. Currently, Parrikar is admitted at the AIIMS and undergoing treatment for a pancreas ailment.

Shah's announcement is seen as an attempt to prevent the Congress from fishing in troubled waters and destabilise the BJP Government which is deriving support from regional outfits.

In the last Assembly polls, Congress had emerged as the single largest party but BJP formed an alliance and managed the required support to form its Government in the State.

The BJP alliance partners have said they are committed to Parrikar and not the BJP, giving a clear message that a change of guard would not guarantee their backing to the BJP Government.

Parrikar, 62, was flown to the national Capital owing to his declining health. He had returned from the US in the first week of September, days after which he was admitted to a hospital at Candolim in north Goa.

Maoists gun down TDP MLA, ex-legislator in T

OMER FAROOQ ■ HYDERABAD

Maoists gunned down a ruling Teugu Desam MLA and his associate on Sunday afternoon when they were visiting interior village in tribal area of Araku in Visakhapatnam district in Telangana, police officials said.

More than 50 armed Maoists targeted MLA Kadiri Sarveswar Rao and former MLA Siveru Soma at around 1 pm at Nimittiputtu village under Dumbriguda mandal of Visakhapatnam district.

The place was just 15 kms from Odisha border and the assailants escaped across the border. Kadiri was elected to the State Assembly in 2014 from Araku constituency on the Opposition YSR Congress party ticket but later switched to the ruling TDP and became the Government whip in the Assembly. He was survived by wife and two sons.

"The Maoists opened fire from point blank range first at former MLA Soma and then at the MLA, killing both of them on the spot," DIG



Visakhapatnam range Ch Srikant told the reporters. Earlier, the Maoists overpowered the two gunmen, snatched their weapons and tied them to a tree. Initially, there was discussion between the Maoists and the MLA over his mining activities in the area. The Maoists said the mining activity was damaging the forests and the environment and demanded that it should be stopped forthwith.

According to the witnesses, the MLA told them that if there is any problem it could be sorted out through talks but he will not bow to any threats.

Soon after, the Maoists opened fire killing both the leaders on the spot. Later both the bodies were shifted to King George Hospital Visakhapatnam for post-mortem. Police have sounded a red alert in Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring Telangana. Authorities have asked Ministers and elected representatives not to travel in the rural areas without informing police.

"We have launched a combing operation to nab the culprits. A probe is underway into the circumstances in which the attack took place," Srikant said.

JONSON & JONSON FAULTY IMPLANT CASE

Govt mulls compensation for faulty device

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Waking up to the faulty implant case that left a many patients dead and disabled, the Centre is mulling to make the medical device manufacturers liable to compensate for injuries caused to consumers by their faulty medical gadgets. Presently companies pay compensation only in case of adverse events during a clinical trial.



existing law to introduce a compensation provision for approved drugs and medical devices that have an adverse impact on a patient.

An expert panel set up by the Union Health Ministry to probe into the complaints has found that there is no provision as such for compensation to patients for faulty medical devices in the Drug and Control Act, only fines and prosecution which can be initiated by the drug inspector or consumer associations, not

An expert panel set up by the Union Health Ministry to probe into the complaints has found that there is no provision as such for compensation to patients for faulty medical devices in the Drug and Control Act, only fines and prosecution which can be initiated by the drug inspector or consumer associations, not patients.

The key findings of the committee, constitute the first official indictment in India against J&J, which imported and sold ASR XL Acetabular Hip System and ASR Hip Resurfacing System in the country — these devices were globally recalled in 2010. The panel found that over 3,600 patients with the faulty implants remain untraceable, and that at least four patients with the implants have died.

of ₹20 lakh as compensation, and proposed mechanisms to identify eligible patients.

Victims are already making rounds of the court, seeking compensation and punishment against the giant pharma. Three patients — Vijay Vohra, Vinay Agarwal and Shailesh Bachate — has in their letter dated August 27 have urged Union Health Minister JP Nadda to keep them in loop in the matter. They said, "We believe that the investigation of Johnson & Johnson's faulty hip implants and the resulting governmental action should be done in a transparent manner so as to ensure that vested interests do not unduly influence the process."

The letter has also been signed by Jennifer Barucha and Praful Sardesai, the children of deceased patients who used these implants. "We also seek participation in any further deliberations by the Government on the action to be taken on the report," the letter stated.

BJP asks booth managers to be in 'regular touch' with RSS cadre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Get in touch with the heads and priests of mutts, temples and ashrams in the region, the party said in its directive to the booth managers, the sources said

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat may have emphasised that the organisation does not control the BJP, but the ruling party has directed its booth managers to be in "regular touch" with the Sangh Parivar, party sources revealed on Sunday.

In the 24-point action plan drafted for its booth managers, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has underlined that the booth workers should be in "regular touch" with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) cadre and its affiliates in their respective regions, they said.

Get in touch with the heads and priests of mutts, temples and ashrams in the region, the party said in its directive to the booth managers, the sources said.

The action plan was shared at the BJP's national executive organised earlier this month, they added.

This assumes importance as last week in his three-day

The impression is "absolutely wrong" that calls from Nagpur (where RSS is headquartered), are made and talks (between it and government functionaries) are held because the likes of President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have links with it, he noted.

Senior leaders in the BJP, clearly stated that booth management has been the focal point of the party's poll strategies in various states and it is important for booth workers to maintain coordination with the entire Sangh Parivar.

The party leaders said from time to time top leadership of the BJP and its ideological mentor the RSS meets and discusses the pertaining issues of national importance.

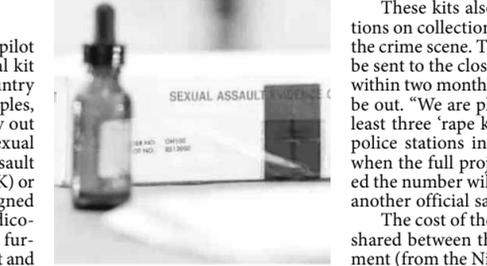
The party takes feedback from the Sangh to get a better idea about the ground realities, a leader said.

The BJP borrows its organisational secretary from Sangh both at the state and the central level.

Police stations to get special kits to probe sexual assault, rape cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Ministry in a pilot project will supply a special kit to police stations across the country to collect blood and semen samples, besides other evidence, to carry out immediate investigation into sexual assault cases. The Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits (SAECK) or 'rape investigation kits' are designed to carry out immediate medicolegal investigation and aid in furnishing evidence in sexual assault and rape cases.



Police and medical officers will be given training on how to use the kits in the event of any sexual assault and rape case happening in their area of jurisdiction. Each of these kits comprises essential items that will aid in furnishing evidence such as blood and semen samples in sexual assault and rape cases, the official said. The kit has a set of test tubes and bottles, which mention about contents and specifications.

These kits also contain instructions on collection of evidence from the crime scene. The SAECKs would be sent to the closest laboratory and within two months the results would be out. "We are planning to keep at least three 'rape kits' in each of the police stations in the country, and when the full project is implemented the number will go up gradually," another official said.

The cost of the project would be shared between the central government (from the Nirbhaya Fund) and respective states in the ratio of 60:40. The kits are expected to help the law enforcement agencies to ensure effective investigation in a timely manner for better prosecution and convictions in sexual assault cases. The first lot of such kits was procured by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) and it has already started imparting forensic training to some police officers, the official said.

Whatsapp appoints 'grievance officer' for India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Under pressure to clamp down on sinister messages, Whatsapp has appointed a "Grievance Officer" for India and detailed out the process for users to flag concerns and complaints, including those around fake news.

Meeting one of the key demands that India had put on Whatsapp to curb fake messages that triggered mob killings, the Facebook-owned company has updated its website to reflect the appointment of a "Grievance Officer" for India.

The update mentions that users can seek help through the mobile app, send an email or write in to 'Komal Lahiri', who is based out of the US. According to Lahiri's LinkedIn profile, she is senior director, global customer operations and localisation, WhatsApp.

When contacted, a WhatsApp spokesperson declined to comment on the matter but pointed to

the public FAQ on the company's website that contains these details.

According to sources, the appointment of the Grievance Officer was made at the end of August. They added that the Grievance Officer for India being based in the US is in tune with similar practices by other American tech giants.

According to the WhatsApp website, users can reach out to the company's support team directly from the app under 'Settings' tab and in case they wish to escalate the complaint, they can contact the Grievance Officer directly.

A section within FAQs read: "You (users) can contact the Grievance Officer with complaints or concerns, including the following: WhatsApp's Terms of Service; and Questions about your account".

The updated FAQs also detailed out the mechanism for law enforcement officials to reach out to WhatsApp. The government has been pressing WhatsApp

to develop tools to combat fake or false messages. One of the demands was to name a grievance officer to deal with issues in India.

India is WhatsApp's biggest market with more than 200 million users. It, in July, limited message forwards to five chats at a time and had also removed the quick forward button placed next to media messages to discourage mass forwarding. It has also introduced a 'forward' label to help users identify such messages.

The latest appointment is also significant as the Supreme Court, last month, had agreed to examine a petition alleging that WhatsApp does not comply with Indian laws, including the provision for appointing a grievance officer. The apex court had sought a reply on the matter within four weeks.

With general elections slated for next year in India, the government is taking a tough stance on use of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and

WhatsApp for spread of misinformation.

The Government had warned WhatsApp that it will treat the messaging platform as abettor of rumour propagation and legal consequences will follow, if adequate checks are not put in place. In a meeting held with WhatsApp Head Chris Daniels last month, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had asserted that the company will have to find a solution to track origin of messages on its platform, set up a local corporate entity that is subject to Indian laws within a defined time-frame as well as appoint a grievance officer.

WhatsApp, which has been slapped with two notices with a third one under consideration, has said it is in the process of establishing a local corporate entity.

It has, however, not accepted Government's demand for traceability of messages saying creating such a software will go against the idea of user privacy and end-to-end encryption.

EC to audit voters list, EVMs in poll bound States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to bring transparency in the electoral rolls after demands of Opposition parties, the Election Commission (EC) will conduct an audit of poll-related activities and its preparedness in five poll-bound States — Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Mizoram and Telangana.

The audit will also reveal whether EC's instructions and directions are being followed in these States. The Opposition parties in all these States have alleged that lakhs of bogus voters have been included in the voters list ahead of the assembly polls due this year.

Top sources in EC said that the audit will include voters lists, polling stations, storage of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and functioning of VVPAT, the systematic voters' education and electoral participation (SVEEP) training activities, training of booth level officers (BLOs), voters' awareness programmes, accuracy of votes list, voters guide, risk management, polling booths and arrangement for disabled friendly voters.

In a letter to Chief Electoral Officers of these States, the EC has directed officials concerned to provide any clarification or information, which the teams may require as part of the audit immediately on the same day. According to EC sources, audit teams will soon visit to these States.

"The commission will, through these audit teams, be monitoring compliance of EC instructions/statutory provisions for roll management and various other activities and also steps taken for improvement of quality of the rolls. The mandate of these audit teams is to detect specific instances of non-adherence of ECI guide-

lines or legal provisions and follow it up by remedial actions by field machinery. The audit teams during their visit will deeply look into all aspects of roll management, including but not restricted to carrying out test, checks of records and physical verification," the EC said.

According to agencies report, the Chief Electoral Officer of Madhya Pradesh has asked the EC to postpone the visit, saying the finalisation of electoral rolls in the State is due to end later this month and that they should visit after that.

It is noted that Madhya Pradesh Congress has filed a petition before the EC, alleging that a large number of fake voters were included in the voters' list in connivance with booth-level officers (BLOs) across the state. Earlier, MP Congress unit president Kamal Nath and State Congress election campaign committee head Jyotiraditya Scindia had lodged a complaint with the Election Commission in Delhi claiming that there were about 60 lakh fake voters in Madhya Pradesh. The election commission, however, had said it found no merit in the Congress's allegations. Last month, the Congress in Rajasthan alleged that there were over 42 lakh duplicate entries in the voter list in the State. In Chhattisgarh, the Congress alleged of inclusion of eight lakh fake voters in the electoral rolls. The Congress in Telangana also alleged for 70 lakh bogus voters in the State.

Besides, the Commission also decided to use latest model of M3-type EVMs which is "non-tamperable" and credible. The Commission also directed Returning Officers of States and Union Territories to distribute photo voter slips to the political parties.



Samajwadi party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav with party president Akhilesh Yadav during a cycle yatra to "Save the Democracy" at Jantar-Manantar in New Delhi on Sunday

Talks, terror can't go together: Rawat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Backing Government's decision to call off the meeting with Pakistan, Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat on Sunday asserted that talks and terror cannot go together.

The Army Chief said the infiltration from across the border persists despite the call for a ceasefire by Pakistan and stressed that this cannot be allowed to continue and appropriate action has to be taken to deter terrorists from disrupting the peace in the Valley.

He was talking at a commemoration ceremony of Haifa Day Centenary at the Teen Murti Haifa Memorial here.

Gen. Rawat backed the government's decision to call off the talks between External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and her Pakistani counterpart on sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The Government had on

Friday called off a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan in New York, citing the brutal killings of three policemen in Jammu & Kashmir and Islamabad releasing postage stamps "glorifying" Kashmiri militant Burhan Wani.

"The Government's policy is very clear cut... You (Pakistan) show us some initiatives so that we feel that you are not encouraging terrorism. But we see that terror activities are continuing and terrorists come from the other side of the border. "In such an atmosphere, whether talks can be initiated that the Government can only decide. I agree to the Government's decision that peace talks and terrorism cannot go together," he said.

A BSF patrolling party was fired upon by forces from across the Pakistan border on September 20, in which a jawan was killed. The head constable rank jawan was sus-

pected to have been hit by a fatal sniper shot from across the border. His body was recovered in a mutilated condition later.

Rawat further said they will provide security along with other agencies for the Panchayat polls in Jammu and Kashmir to be held in November.

"Today we are also looking at Panchayat elections, we want these elections to go through because with this the power will devolve to people.

"Our job is to ensure that the civil administration there and the election commission is able to carry out their tasks so that people can come out and cast their vote in a free and forthright manner without any fear of any kind of disruption," he said.

The dialogue process between the two countries had broken last after Pakistan-based terrorist struck at the Indian Airforce base at Pathankot in 2016.

India, Egypt to boost defence, security ties

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and Egypt have decided to ramp up their defence and security ties which will include boosting counter-terror cooperation and carrying out joint exercises by their militaries, officials said.

The decisions were taken during talks between Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her Egyptian counterpart General Mohamed Ahmed Zaki Mohamed in Cairo.

She was on a two-day visit to Egypt from September 20-22. Officials said Sitharaman and Mohamed also deliberated on expanding naval cooperation between the two countries and explored possibilities of joint production of defence equipment.

joint exercises between their militaries. "They reviewed ongoing bilateral cooperation activities and discussed potential opportunities to further deepen ties and exchanges in the defence sphere," the Defence Ministry said.

It said the Ministers decided to explore deeper cooperation in the fields of defence industry including joint production of military equipment.

"Both sides reaffirmed their intent to enhance cooperation in counter-terrorism. Naval cooperation, including cooperation in maritime domain awareness, was identified as an area of potential," it said.

Rafale deal the 'largest defence scam' in India: Prashant Bhushan

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Senior Supreme Court advocate Prashant Bhushan on Sunday said the Rafale deal was the "largest defence scam in India" and urged the Centre to initiate a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the matter.

Addressing reporters here, he questioned how Anil Ambani's Reliance Defence, the Indian offset partner of French firm Dassault Aviation, could be involved in the project as "most of his companies are in debt."

"This is not only the largest defence scam in India, but is one where national security has been severely compromised. While the IAF wanted 126 flights, it was reduced to 36," Bhushan said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the procurement of a batch of 36 Rafale jets after holding talks with then French president Francois Hollande on April 10, 2015 in Paris.

Opposition Congress has accused the government of choosing Reliance Defence over state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd to benefit the private firm though it did not have any experience in the aerospace sector. Lashing out at Modi and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Bhushan charged the Centre with making IAF officials "lie" about the deal.

CRPF jawan commits suicide in Assam

PTI ■ TEZPUR (ASSAM)

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan allegedly committed suicide on Sunday at the Jaimati Pathar camp in Sonitpur district, police said.

According to police, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan allegedly fired from his INSAS rifle inside the camp under Tezpur police station Sunday morning and died on the spot.

The jawan has been identified as Digambar Madhab (40), who hailed from Mumbai. Police said the reason behind his suicide was not immediately known and an investigation is on.

IPS officer's wife to contest as 'Independent' against Vasundhara Raje

Jaipur: A serving Indian Police Service officer's wife will contest the upcoming Rajasthan Assembly election as an Independent candidate from Jhalrapatan constituency, currently represented by Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje.

Mukul Choudhary, wife of 2009-batch Rajasthan-cadre IPS officer Pankaj Choudhary, said her decision to contest against Raje was the democratic way to fight the "injustice" being faced by the people under the BJP dispensation.

"I will contest the election from Jhalrapatan, which is my birth place, on the issue of corruption and misrule as an Independent candidate. The entire state is suffering under the rule of the chief minister. Corruption is rampant and crime rate is increasing. I have been working on the ground against these issues," she told PTI on Sunday.

Choudhary alleged that her husband was exploited and served chargesheets and faced frequent transfers for doing honest work. PTI

Alagiri to contest from Karuna's constituency

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

M K Alagiri, the estranged son of former Chief Minister and DMK president the late M Karunanidhi, declared on Sunday his decision to contest the by-poll from Thiruvavur Assembly constituency.

Thiruvavur has been represented by the late Karunanidhi since 2011 and is known as a stronghold of the Karunanidhi family.

Alagiri was expelled from the party in early 2014 for anti-party activities and has been keeping a low profile since then. Early this month, he had held a rally at Chennai to offer floral tributes to his late father and had drawn thousands of followers.

He has been demanding the DMK leadership to reinstate him and his followers in the party. But M K Stalin, his younger brother who is the new president of the party has been stonewalling his efforts to get back into the party.

Addressing his followers at Thiruvavur on Sunday, Alagiri said he would like to contest the bypoll on the Rising Sun symbol of the DMK. "I'll ask the DMK leadership to field me as a party candidate. If they refuse,



Alagiri was expelled from the party in early 2014 for anti-party activities and has been keeping a low profile since then

I'll contest the by-poll as the son of Karunanidhi," declared Alagiri.

The announcement is sure to rattle the DMK leadership because Alagiri is certain to eat into the DMK votes. "What is interesting is that Alagiri is a specialist in winning elections. Whenever he had stayed away from the DMK, the party had lost the elections," said Raveendran Thuraiwamy political commentator with specialisation in DMK politics.

He said Thiruvavur is a personal fiefdom of the

Karunanidhi clan and Alagiri has an upper hand in the region. "The DMK had lost the 2011 and 2016 assembly elections and the 2014 Lok Sabha election because of the absence of Alagiri. Stalin will find it difficult to lead the DMK to an electoral victory without Alagiri's cooperation," said Thuraiwamy. TN will soon have two by-polls- in Thiruparankundram and Thiruvavur assembly constituencies.

The Thiruparankundram seat was held by the AIADMK. Both the AIADMK and the DMK face the possibilities of rebel candidates in these constituencies as TTV Dhinakaran of the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam too would field his loyalists to take on the ruling AIADMK.

Priest, nun face action for taking part in protests against Mulakkal

PTI ■ WAYNAD/KOCHI

A Jacobite priest has been warned of disciplinary action and a Catholic nun restrained from church duties in a fallout of their participation in protests in Kochi demanding the arrest of rape accused Bishop Franco Mulakkal.

Sister Lucy Kalapura, who returned to her parish in Waynad Sunday morning from Kochi, claimed she was informed orally by the Mother Superior that she should keep away from holding catechism classes, conducting prayers and other activities related to the Syro Malabar Catholic church.

"No written orders were given to me. I was only informed orally by the Mother Superior not to participate in any church-related activities," the sister told PTI.

However, in a statement Father Stephen Kottakkal, vicar of the St Mary's church Karakkamala in Waynad, said Sister Lucy had been asked to keep away from duties in view of certain concerns expressed by the parishioners.

He denied the church had initiated any retaliatory measure against Sister Lucy for participating in the nuns protest in Kochi.

"The believers had informed us that they had

some difficulties in sister Lucy participating in the church activities relating to Holy mass and taking classes for their children," he said.

The vicar said he had only 'conveyed' the general feeling of the parishioners with regard to certain posts of sister Lucy in the social media which they felt were not in consonance with the church beliefs. Many of them had informed him the same, he said.

The Franciscan Clarist Congregation St Mary's province Mananthavady, to which sister Lucy belongs, said she faced disciplinary action for various other reasons.

However, no explanation had been sought or action taken so far against her in connection with the nun's issue. Sister Lucy, however, maintained the restraint order against her was only for participating in the protests at Kochi.

The priest, Bar Yuhanon Ramban, belonging to a dayara in Ernakulam district, said Sunday he had received a 'warning' letter from his church headquarters in Damascus in Syria for supporting the nuns' protest. The letter also said he had campaigned for the implementation of Church Act, he told PTI.

According to the letter, his involvement and public speeches supporting the

Catholic nuns were seemingly more than the envisaged living style of church priests.

It further said his activities had caused 'disgrace' to the status of Monasticism and warned that disciplinary measures would be taken if he continued with such deeds.

The priest alleged that some local bishops had conspired against him and sent wrong information to the church higher-ups in Syria and based on which they had issued the warning letter. He has written a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch, Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, the head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, explaining his stand.

Indulekha Joseph, one of the leaders of the Kerala Catholic Church Reformation movement, alleged the action against sister Lucy was an attempt to silence the voices of protest against any form of unjust activities within the church.

Social activist Swami Agnivesh condemned the action against sister Lucy and the Jacobite priest for supporting the five nuns. The nuns had protested for 13 days, demanding the arrest of the bishop who was accused of repeatedly raping a fellow nun.

The bishop, arrested on Friday after three days of intense grilling by Kerala police, is now in police custody.

Deendayal Upadhyaya's dream realised with Ayushman Bharat scheme, says Adityanath

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister has said BJP ideologue Deendayal Upadhyaya's dream to uplift the poor was realised on Sunday with the launch of a Central Government scheme that aims to provide health insurance cover to nearly 50 crore poor Indians.

He was praising the rolling out of the ambitious Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)-Ayushman Bharat programme by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Ranchi in Jharkhand.

The scheme aims to provide a coverage of ₹ 5 lakh per family annually and is likely to benefit more than 50 crore people for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation through a network of empanelled healthcare providers.

Speaking at Baba Raghav Das Medical College in Gorakhpur, Adityanath said, "Today the dream of Deendayal Upadhyaya Ji has come true as the man at the bottom of the social order will be able to get medical treatment under Ayushman Bharat scheme without any discrimination. Poor people won't die...Due to lack of money." The medical college was in news in August last year after more than 60 children, mostly



infants, died there within a week. There were allegations that the deaths happened due to disruption in oxygen supply over unpaid bills to the vendor. The state government has denied that shortage of oxygen led to the deaths.

On Sunday, Adityanath gave golden e-cards to five beneficiaries of the health scheme, including a 12-year-old boy.

"When a poor person becomes ill, the entire family goes through a lot of pain. I have seen the pain of the poor. They have to sell their farm, house and jewellery for medical treatment. But after this scheme, it will not happen and they will be able to get better treatment."

"Today, Rohan, son of Ram Milan, got Rs 1.10 lakh for his treatment and for a poor person Rs 1 lakh is a big amount," he said. Recalling the poor condition of the encephalitis ward at the medical college in 1998, when Adityanath became a member of Parliament from Gorakhpur for the first time, he said toilets were choked, no fan was functional and four-five children were given one bed.

Filmmaker Kalpana Lajmi dies at 64

IAN S ■ MUMBAI

Filmmaker and screenwriter Kalpana Lajmi, niece of the legendary Guru Dutt and acclaimed for making women-oriented films like 'Rudaali', 'Ek Pal', 'Daman' and 'Chingari', died here on Sunday following a multiple organ failure, said her spokesperson. She was 64.

"Extremely sorry to inform you that Kalpana Lajmi passed away this morning at 4.30 am," the filmmaker's spokesperson Parul Chawla told IANS.

Lajmi breathed her last at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital here, where she was admitted in the intensive care unit since Tuesday due to kidney-related issues, the spokesperson added.

The cremation will take place at 12.30 p.m. at the Oshiwara crematorium.

Lajmi had been undergoing dialysis for a couple of years, and true to her indomitable spirit, had said in an interview last year: "My kidneys have failed, but I haven't."

She had forayed into film-dom as an assistant director under renowned filmmaker Shyam Benegal, following which she made her director-



ial debut with a documentary film in 1978.

Her feature film debut came with "Chingari", the last directorial was "Chingari", based on the novel "The Prostitute and the Postman" by the late Bhupen Hazarika, her long-time companion.

Lajmi had also penned a book, "Bhupen Hazarika: As I Knew Him", on Hazarika. It was launched on September 8 by Benegal and Lajmi's mother, painter Lalita Lajmi.

The filmmaker, who was hospitalised at that time too, could not attend the event as her doctors had refused to allow her a long commute.

Known for fearless filmmaking with women in strong roles, Lajmi's 1993 Dimple Kapadia-starrer "Rudaali" was even chosen as India's official entry to the 66th Academy Awards.

Indian Navy aircraft locates vessel of injured naval officer

PTI ■ KOCHI

Indian Naval officer Abhilash Tomy, badly injured while participating in the Golden Globe Race, "rolling excessively," in the Indian Ocean, has been located and expected to be rescued by a French vessel Monday, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the Navy said Sunday.

Commander Tomy, whose vessel was located by an Indian Navy aircraft earlier, shall be picked up in the next 16 hours by French vessel Osiris, Sitharaman said in a tweet at 7 pm.

The Minister also said she had spoken to vice-chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar P regarding the condition of the injured navy officer.

"...The Rescue Mission is being coordinated with the Australian Navy. The injured officer shall be picked up in the next 16 hrs by a French vessel Osiris," Sitharaman said.

A defence spokesman said Tomy would be brought on board Australian Naval ship HMAS Ballarat, which has already left Perth to rescue him.

Indian Naval Defence Attache in Australia has been camping in the regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) monitoring the rescue mission, he said.

Earlier in the day, the spokesman said all efforts were being made to rescue vessel Commander Tomy who had suffered a back injury Friday after his yacht was hit by a vicious storm with 14-metre-high waves mid-way across south Indian Ocean. "INS Satpura and INS Jyoti are heading at top speed to reach Tomy," the spokesman said.

However, INS Satpura was expected to reach the location only by Friday. He said the situation was being monitored at Naval Headquarters in New Delhi, as well as by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre at Melbourne, Australia. The Indian Navy's P81 aircraft, which flew from Mauritius in the early hours Sunday, has located the "most broken boat rolling excessively," he said.

"Commander Tomy responded by ping on EPIRB as the aircraft was flying over him," the spokesman said here.

There is no alternative to Modi: Keshav Prasad Maurya

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday said there is no alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He was speaking at a meeting of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) OBC Morcha here. In the Opposition parties, everyone is claiming to be the next Prime Minister. But the alternative to Modi is Modi only," he said.

Maurya also hit out at Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and Congress chief Rahul Gandhi for using temples to win votes.

"Kanwar Yatra was not allowed during the regime of Akhilesh Yadav, the devotees of Lord Ram were sprayed with bullets and seers baton-charged."

Today Akhilesh Yadav is talking about constructing a temple for Lord Vishnu," the deputy Chief Minister said.

Attacking the Congress chief, he said, "Rahul Gandhi is moving from one temple to another for photo sessions. If he is asked to recite the 'Hanuman Chalisa', he will not be able to do it. Congress is a drain of corruption and a machine of lies".

Vibrant Gujarat 2019 delegation in London

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

In the second phase of the International roadshows for the promotion of Vibrant Gujarat 2019, the Gujarat delegation led by MK Das (IAS), Principal Secretary to Chief Minister and Principal Secretary of Industries visited London.

Das, accompanied by industry leaders and members of trade associations, held meetings with the business community in London and garnered strong support for the Gujarat Growth Story. In a bid to showcase the socio-economic growth, business-friendly environment, increasing opportunities and possibilities of collaboration with Gujarat, the delegation made a presentation in front of a packed house in London.

Presenting an overview, he mentioned about the rapid economic growth in Gujarat, higher than that of the country. Presenting a promising picture of Gujarat's potential growth in future, he invited the Indian-origin business leaders from U.K. for collaboration.

"Gujarat is growing a very fast pace, and we do not wish to stop here. We want your

inputs and grow it further," said Das adding that Indian-origin business leaders in U.K. can help in achieving Prime Minister's vision of a New India and Gujarat. The delegation leader also explained the value proposition that Vibrant Gujarat offers with the upcoming summit looking at trade and commerce as a leading theme. Das invited the business community to present their business case at Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2019 to be held in January next year.

During the visit Das also called upon leading U.K. industrialist LN Mittal, Chairman and CEO of Arcelor Mittal Group. He had a one-to-one discussion where he appraised Mittal of major projects such as Dholera & DMIC and about the growth potential of Gujarat, and invited him to be a part of Vibrant Gujarat 2019.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed by the delegation with Pentaq UK-India Innovation Fund to promote technology transfer for creating job opportunities in sectors like financial technology, Smart Cities and emerging technologies.

SC-ST Act amended to protect country, Hindu society: BJP leader

PTI ■ INDORE (MP)

BJP leader Babu Singh Raghuvanshi on Sunday said the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was amended to "protect the country and Hindu society".

"Our Government at the Centre was not under any pressure to amend the Act. We brought amendments to protect the country and Hindu society," said Raghuvanshi, chairman of Madhya Pradesh Small Scale Industry Corporation.

"Had the amendments not been brought, foreign forces would have fomented violence in the country," he told reporters. Asked about the claim that the Act is sometimes misused, he said, "Tell me which law is not misused. Should all laws be nullified then?"

"We respect the feelings of upper caste Hindus. That is why Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said the amended Act will not be allowed to be misused," Raghuvanshi said. The BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh has witnessed protests by upper caste organisations against recent amendments in the SC-ST Act.

Decibel levels go down, as Mumbaikars bid adieu to Lord Ganesh

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a welcome departure from the past, the decibel levels came down markedly on the streets of Mumbai on the last day of the Ganesh festivities on Sunday, as more than 250 leading Ganpati mandals took out processions to various waterfronts across the metropolis to immerse the idols of the elephant-head God without DJs and Dolby Music systems which would have in the normal course contributed to massive noise pollution.

In a direct fallout of a total Bombay High Court's order banning the on the use of DJs and Dolby sound systems during the Ganesh and Navratri festivals, the revellers had to make do traditional and less noisy dhols and tashas, as they added colour to the Ganesh immersion proceedings in the city and suburbs.

The Ganpati immersion proceedings proved to be a relatively quiet affair, with 250-odd major Ganesh Mandals deciding to obey the order passed on Friday by the Bombay High Court which had put a total ban on the use of DJs and Dolby sound systems for Ganeshutsav and Navratri festivals.

While rejecting a plea for interim relief filed by Professional Audio and Lighting Association (PALA), a



HC bench of Justices Shantanu Kemkar and Sarang Kotwal had said: "The police authorities have banned the use of DJ and Dolby sound systems. All these systems have to be operated strictly in adherence with Noise Pollution Rules 2000."

"We are not willing to accept the argument that ambient noise levels in many cities have exceeded permissible limits and, therefore, DJ systems should be permitted, which cause only a marginal increase in the decibel level over the prescribed norms. When laws are in place, they must be strictly followed," the judges had said in their interim order. However, the high court had allowed the use of traditional musical instruments like the dhol and tasha.

Amid rhythmic dhol beats and chants of "Ganpati bappa morya, pudhchya varshi lavkariya" (Hail Lord Ganesh, do come back early next year), several major Sarvajanic Ganesh idols - including Mumbai's prestigious Lalbaugcha Raja Ganapati idoli and "Mumbai Cha Raja" -made their way through their from Lalbaug in south central Mumbai quietly wended their way through the designated to the Girgaum Chowpaty where the immersion proceedings were expected to go on well past midnight.

Like every year, there was a massive turnout of people at various immersion sites across the city, including Girgaum Chowpaty, Dadar Chowpaty, Juhu Chowpaty, Marve beach,

Madh Island, Powai lake, Madh Island, Manori Beach, Gorai beach, Mahim beach, Aarey lake, the Mithi River, its branches and various artificial lakes. In all, there were more than 110-odd immersion spots across the city and its suburbs.

Like every year, as many as 12,000 huge idols installed by Sarvajanic Mandals, while at least 2,20,000 domestic idols were immersed at 69 natural and 41 artificial immersion spots on various significant days like the second day, fifth day, seventh and the last days during this year.

Under the watchful eyes of the 45,000-odd policemen, 12 companies of SRPF, one company of Rapid Action Force (RAF) and also personnel from

the "Force One", Quick Response Team (QRT) and anti-bomb squads of the Mumbai police, the Ganesh immersion proceedings were continuing till in the night.

Through drones and CCTV cameras deployed at various places along the Ganesh immersion procession routes in the city, the police monitored the situation from various control rooms. Several major roads in the city had been fully closed for traffic to facilitate the passage of Ganesh proceedings.

In an effort to ensure against any untoward incidents during the Ganesh immersion proceedings, The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) had deployed shallow water response team on board a hovercraft, an Air-Cushion Vehicle, off the Mumbai coast.

On their part, the Mumbai police had set up as many 58 control rooms set up at major waterfronts, including Girgaum and Dadar chowpaties to keep a close watch of the proceedings. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had kept in readiness at least 600 life guards and 81 motor boats to ensure against any mishap during the immersion proceedings. The BMC had also installed 1,999 flood lights and 1,301 street lights at various immersion venues.

The Railway Protection

Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) had also made elaborate arrangements along various suburban stations on the Central Railway (CR) and Western Railway (WR). As many as 8,000 BMC employees were present at various natural and artificial immersion venues.

Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis Fadnavis carried an eco-friendly Ganpati idol installed at his official residence "Varsha" at Malabar Hills and immersed it in an artificial lake.

Like every year, the Kapoor family members, including Rishi Kapoor, son Ranbir Kapoor and uncles Randhir and Rajiv, joined the immersion proceedings of Ganesh idol installed at the iconic RK Studios, where they broke a coconut each before the procession began.

This year's proceedings may perhaps the last of such a kind of Ganesh festivities witnessed at the RK Studio, especially in the light of an announcement made on behalf of the famous family by Rishi Kapoor that his family members had collectively decided to sell to the sprawling studio, built by his late legendary father Raj Kapoor, as they felt it was economically not viable to rebuild the place after a massive fire that broke there on September 16 last year.

Rupee falls due to black money leaving country: Swamy

PTI ■ PANAJI

BJP Member of Parliament Subramanian Swamy Sunday claimed that the value of the rupee was falling in comparison to the United States dollar because black money was "leaving" India.

Swamy was delivering a lecture titled "Indian Cultural Heritage and Its Importance," in Margao Sunday morning.

Stating that the fall in the value of the rupee had nothing to do with the US, Swamy said, "It has got to do with the fact that a large amount of black money is now leaving the country."

"When there is an oversupply of the rupee to the dollar, value is bound to go down," Swamy explained.

The rupee is the worst performing emerging market currency having lost almost 14 per cent since January this year. Between April and September the rupee has plummeted more than 7 to the dollar and has breached the psychological 73 mark last week.



The BJP leader, himself an economist, further claimed that the US dollar would con-

tinue to rule the global economy as long as that country remained the most developed nation in the world.

"The day it (USA) ceases to be most developed (nation), some other currency will take its place. But at the moment, there is no challenge to the dollar," he commented.

Speaking on the topic of the lecture, Swamy said that mythological king Ravana was born near Delhi and not in ancient Lanka as is widely believed.

"He was born in a village called Bisrakh near Delhi," Swamy claimed.

The MP told the gathering that Ravana, armed with a boon from Lord Shiva for a penance at Mansarovar, proceeded to defeat Kubera to become "Lanka Naresh" there.

Jaish-e-Muhammad militant gunned down in Tral

KHURSHED WANI ■ SRINAGAR

A suspected foreign militant of Jaish-e-Muhammad outfit was killed in a fierce gun-battle with security forces in Tral sub-district of south Kashmir on Sunday. A civilian was also injured in the area when a tear smoke canister exploded during clashes between protesters and riot police.

Police said the gunfight erupted in Dar Ganaigund village of Tral on Sunday morning when security forces cordoned off the area following input on presence of militants. The village is native place of Noor Muhammad Trali, a dwarf militant commander whose killing last year was described as one of the greatest achievements of the security forces in recent years. Tantray, who had served more than a decade in Delhi's Tihar Jail in connection with transporting arms to New Delhi, had single-handedly revived Jaish-e-Muhammad outfit in Kashmir Valley.

Sources said the security forces reached the suspected spot as the hiding militants opened fire that triggered a gunfight.



Security sources said that one militant was killed in the encounter. He was identified as Adnan Bhai, a resident of Pakistan. Sources said other aides of slain militant might have fled from the foothill area situated near Lam forests where militant hideouts have been reported earlier also.

Reports of intense stone pelting and clashes between civilian protesters and the security forces poured in from the area near gunfight site and other areas while as tension gripped the Tral belt after the killing of Jaish commander.

Meanwhile, the mobile internet services continued to remain snapped in several south Kashmir areas including Shopian, Tral and Pulwama. The internet blockade is seen as an attempt to curb an online spree of militants exposing policemen and officers on social media and threatening them to tender resignations

through social media. Sources said that over a hundred Special Police Officers (SPOs) have tendered resignations through social networking sites after three police personnel were killed by militants in Shopian district on Friday.

Another resignation by a woman SPO from south Kashmir's Kulgam district through social media networking sites has gone viral. In her video, message the woman SPO Rafiq Akhtar, a resident of Kulgam said that she was working with police for 15 years but was resigning "out of my own will".

The police authorities denied receipt of any formal resignations.

Meanwhile, a civilian abducted by unidentified gunmen in north Kashmir's Sopore area of Baramulla district late Saturday evening was untraced till last reports came in.

The family members of the abducted person have expressed grave concern over his well-being. Security sources said that 45-year Mushtaq Ahmad Mir, a labourer and resident of Harwan Sopore was picked up by unknown gunmen from his house.

Rahul hires Nitish's former confidant as poll strategist

FAIZAN AHMAD ■ PATNA

Days after JD(U) president Nitish Kumar enrolled poll strategist Prashant Kishor in his party, his once close confidant Shashwat Gautam has been hired by Congress president Rahul Gandhi. The two sons of Bihar are all set to help Nitish and Rahul in the upcoming crucial 2019 Lok Sabha election as key strategists. Interestingly, Kishor had also worked for Congress while Gautam had worked for JD(U). Both are young, dynamic and foreign educated.

Gautam, who hails from Chaita village in West Champaran, has been appointed as national coordinator in the Data Analytics Department of the AICC and is likely to play a key role in the party's mission 2019. This department of Congress gathers data from across the country and chart out electoral policies. He has been assigned the task of designing communicative narrative and booth level organisation. Gautam was quoted saying, "My sole objective would be to ensure Congress has strong booth presence in 250 Lok Sabha constituencies.

The focus would be to strengthen the party at the booth level across the country."

The role of Kishor in JD(U) is not publicly defined but it is strongly expected that he would work in close contact with Nitish and accomplish the mission assigned to him by the party chief. He already has started working and two days back when Nitish went to Delhi to have dialogue with BJP president Amit Shah on seat sharing, Kishor accompanied him and after Nitish returned he went ahead meeting Shah separately. Kishor worked as poll strategist of Nitish in 2015 Assembly election which saw Nitish returning to power in alliance with Lalu Prasad and the Congress by defeating the BJP-led NDA.

Gautam started working for Nitish in 2016-17 when he was heading the mahagathbandhan government and played his role in drawing up JD(U)'s strategy in Bihar and on the national level. But in the beginning of 2017 when some leaders of JD(U) started criticizing the RJD, Lalu and his sons, Gautam became uncomfortable and expressed his displeasure knowing little that

they were speaking at the instigation of Nitish who was making strategy to go back to the NDA. In this situation, he preferred to leave Nitish's company. Currently Gautam was working as director at the Centre for Economic Policy and Public Finance at the Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI).

The induction of Kishor in the JD(U) has alarmed many in the party amid speculations that he would emerge as the person as main adviser and the conscience keeper of Nitish while the stature and position of some other close confidants of party chief might be slighted. A similar apprehension was being expressed in the Congress circles too. Gautam, who would also be special invitee to the advisory committee of Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee in his capacity as an important office bearer of the AICC, might overshadow some main leaders including newly-appointed president Madan Mohan Jha and campaign committee chief Akhilesh Singh. The appointment of new Bihar PCC president has already ruffled many feathers.

Dry Gujarat to open 40 more liquor shops

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

The State prohibition authority, functioning under the Department of Home, is learnt to have initiated the process to issue permit shops, Of these 40 new permits, 19 will be given permission soon," said a senior official.

It is worth mentioning that till 2014, there were only 26 official liquor shops in the state, but within the span of just three years the number increased to more than double and now it would be almost four fold by the end of 2018.

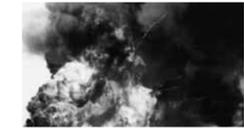
In the case of Gujarat's commercial capital Ahmedabad there were only five such shops till 2014, but now the liquor shops have increased to eleven.



Slain TDP MLA's supporters set two police stations on fire

OMER FAROOQ ■ HYDERABAD

Enraged by the killing of TDP MLA Sarveshwara Rao and his associate Soma by the CPI Maoist ultras, their supporters attacked two police stations and set them on fire.



Police officials said that the angry mob was shouting against the policemen and held them responsible for the incident. They alleged that negligence by the Dumbbriguda sub-inspector was responsible for the killings. Angry protesters also beat up two policemen while others escaped to save themselves.

It was after a gap of one and a half decades that the Maoists have targeted a big tribal leader in this belt. On March 18, 2004 they had killed Venkatraju, husband of State Tribal Welfare Minister M Manikumari.

Death of 2 students

Didi says no to Sep 26 bandh

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Engaged in a frontal battle with the BJP, which has fast come up as the main Opposition party in Bengal, the ruling Trinamool Congress has vowed to foil the general strike called by the saffron outfit protesting against the death of two students in firing at Darbhith village of Islampur block in North Dinajpur district.

The BJP has called a 12-hour shutdown in the State on September 26 to protest against the students' death.

The BJP has alleged that the two students died of police firing last week when the students of a local school were protesting against the appointment of Urdu and Sanskrit teachers keeping the more important departments like science, maths and history vacant.

"The deaths have been caused by the RSS-BJP who sent in their goons," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said adding the saffron groups were trying to politicise and communalise the issue.

"The RSS-BJP are responsible for the deaths as their masked goons and not the police fired at the students," Banerjee who was presently in Italy to attend a business meeting said, adding "there will be no bandh in Bengal. We will not allow any shutdown in our State. All the offices, educational and other institutions



CPI(M) members carrying an effigy of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during their protest rally against alleged police firing on the students in Kolkata, on Sunday

will remain open on Wednesday. No one will be allowed to hold the State to ransom."

Sources said the Chief Minister had instructed the police administration to take pro-active steps to stop BJP from forcing the bandh.

"I have told the police brass to take necessary action against who will try to create nuisance. There will be no bandh in Bengal," she said while State Education Minister Partho Chatterjee said Trinamool Congress cadres will also descend on the streets to assist the administration in ensuring peace.

"TMC workers will take

part in peaceful rallies in all parts of the State and help the administration to keep all institutions open," Chatterjee said.

Warning the saffron organisations "not to play with fire by doing politics on the issue", she appealed to the people of the state not to pay heed to the politics of the BJP and the RSS and foil the shutdown.

Comparing the BJP and RSS with vultures waiting for a death in order to gain political mileage Banerjee said "they have started playing holi with the blood of the people of Bengal, but we will allow that culture to come to this State."

"Saffron communalism is not acceptable in our State."

She said that the whole matter was pre-planned to give it a communal angle.

"When we appoint Sanskrit teacher there is no problem but when we appoint Urdu teacher they are creating problem by inciting the poor villagers."

North Dinajpur SP Sumit Kumar said the deaths were caused not on account of police firing. Meanwhile, the villagers refused to burn the corpse. Instead they buried the two bodies demanding repeated post-mortem and a CBI investigation into the killings.

The Left Front that had earlier called bandhs in local schools demanded judicial inquiry into the incident.

Filing of FIR against BJP leader upsets TN Hindus

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Hindu leaders are upset over the Dravidian and Tamil chauvinist outfits which attack the community and its Gods. The decision of the federation of employees of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment (HR&CE) Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu to file criminal cases against BJP leader H Raja has been cited by the community leaders as an attempt to stifle opposition to the high-handedness of the Dravidians.

The Federation of HR&CE Department Employees controlled by Left parties has filed a series of complaints against Raja in different police stations across the State for his "derogatory" comments against them. Raja, in a recent public speech, questioned the propriety behind the attitude of the HR&CE Department staff in avoiding the directives by the Madras High Court to submit details of the land owned by the temples administered by the Tamil Nadu Government and also the details of the ancient idols which were stolen/disappeared from the temples.

The Idol Wing of Tamil Nadu Police led by Pon Manickavel had arrested a couple of officials of the

HE&CE department including a top rung commissioner. Many senior officials of the HR&CE department are under the scanner of the police following allegations of their complicity in the crimes.

T R Ramesh, president, Temple Worshipers Society, a body involved in preparing the inventory of temple properties said that the HR&CE Department has become a cesspool of corruption. "Kapaleeswarar Temple management has purchased two brand new and fully loaded Toyota Innova cars. What is the purpose for squandering the wealth of temples on high end cars? This is not an isolated incident. Another nearby temple has purchased two similar cars for the use of the minister and his secretary," said Ramesh.

Raja, who is known for stirring controversies which embarrass the Dravidian parties as well as the followers of E V Ramasamy Naicker, a reformer who fought for the rights of the Backward Castes in the State, leaves no stones unturned while criticising the DMK, DK and other caste based organisations.

On Saturday, the Coimbatore Police registered another case against the BJP leader under sections 500 (punishment for defamation) and 501 (Printing and Engraving

matter known to be defamatory) of the Indian Penal Code. The case has to do with a social media message posted by Raja on April 18 in which he is reported to have described a Raja Sabha member from Tamil Nadu as the illegitimate daughter of a former chief minister.

What has shocked the religious leaders in the State is the step-motherly treatment the Hindus are getting from the Dravidians. "S V Sekhar, the theatre personality was hounded by Dravidian leaders and civil rights activists when he forwarded a social media post received by him to his friends. He is free only because of the bail granted to him. But Kovan, the Maoist activist who sang obscene songs about Jayalalitha and Lord Rama is walking freely and doing whatever he wants. Human rights and civil rights activists and the Dravidians are supporting him," said Arjun Sampath, president, Hindu Peoples Front. All these leaders are of the view that Hindus are being targeted by the Dravidians and Tamil chauvinistic outfits under the garb of attacking the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Let them attack the BJP and the Prime Minister. But they should leave the Hindus to live peacefully," said Ramesh and Arjun Sampath.

57-foot tall Ganesha leads the way in Hyderabad

OMER FAROOQ ■ HYDERABAD

Thousands of idols of Vinayaka or Ganesh were immersed in Hussain Sagar and other lakes in and around Hyderabad as the ten-day festival came to an end on Sunday.

With more than 20,000 policemen deployed all around the city, specially on the route of the main procession from Balapur to the Hussain Sagar lake, the event passed off smoothly without any untoward incident. Hundreds of people, including women and children thronged the route and the banks of the picturesque lakes as the colourful idols of various sizes and shapes were immersed in the water with the help of more than a dozen cranes.

In a bit departure from the past, the gigantic 57-foot tall Ganesha of Khairatabad mandap was first to start its journey towards the lake. The biggest idol in the entire state was taken in procession at 7 am and by noon it was immersed in the lake. Its laddu weighing 508 kg was distributed among the devotees.

As the massive idol used to take a lot of time in transport and create traffic jam on the roads if taken out late, Hyderabad city police commissioner Anjani Kumar had requested the Pandal committee to start the procession early



in the morning. Before the main procession started its 20 kms long journey from Balapur in the vicinity of Hyderabad, its laddu was auctioned for Rs 16.16 lakhs at the pandal. The laddu was fetched by Arya Vysya Sangham of the area. The money which was Rs one lakh more than last year, will be spent on the developmental works in Balapur. Starting from 1994 the auction price of the auspicious laddu kept increasing every year.

As the procession moved through the sensitive areas of old city including Charminar-Mecca Masjid complex and Pathagatti, policemen and the personnel of CRPF and Rapid Action Force kept a close

watch on the proceedings.

With more than 450 CCTV cameras installed to cover the entire route, the Commissioner and other officials watched its moment from the command and control room and issued directions to the force on the ground.

A large number of idols had gathered at the Moazzam Jahi Market junction where they moved towards the lake. The area around Hussain Sagar lake turned into a sea of humanity with massive crowds gathering to bid adieu to the Ganesha till next year.

Telangana DGP K Mahinder Reddy said that elaborate security arrangements were also made in other dis-

tricts and towns across Telangana by deploying 65000 personnel.

Three persons had a narrow escape in Karimnagar when the crane carrying them along with an idol fell down during the immersion.

Minor tension prevailed in Jagatij town when some miscreants threw stones at the police after an argument.

An assistant sub inspector Nimma Naik who was deployed in Hyderabad on special duty died on heart attack last night.

Naik who hails from Kazipet was posted at Siddipeta and had come to Hyderabad for Ganesh procession arrangements.

Central team probing death of 11 Asiatic lions in Gir



NAYAN DAVE ■ GANDHINAGAR

A Central Government team of wildlife experts has flown in to the last abode of endangered Asiatic Lions - Gir Forest - situated in western Gujarat to probe the deaths of 11 big cats in a span of just eight days.

Though the state forest department is claiming the death as natural, wildlife lovers and environmentalists are expressing doubts over the death of lions. According to top forest officials in the state, the lions died due to infighting and territorial war.

"The Central team belonging to the Union Ministry of Forest and

expert would make it clear the cause of death was due to poison, some diseases or because of infighting as claimed by the state forest officials.

It is worth mentioning that Gujarat is steadfastly dragging its feet even after a Supreme Court order to hand over a few lions to neighbouring Madhya Pradesh for an alternative home for this epidemic prone species.

Due to heavy inbreeding, the lions Gir forest and surrounding areas are very sus-

ceptible to infection at one end and epidemic at the other. So many deaths in such a short span of time rang alarm bells and needed to be thoroughly probed, opined a retired IFS official from Gujarat forest department. The state forest department carries out a lion census every five years. The 2005 survey counted 359 lions while the number grew to 411 in 2010. The latest census in 2015 found 523 lions, 109 of which were male, 201 female, 140 cubs and 73 sub-adults.

UJVN Limited (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)
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Government of Uttarakhand "e" procurement Tender Notice
For and on behalf of UJVN Limited, Executive Engineer, PCM (GV), UJVN Limited, Mayapur, Haridwar invites e-tender from interested contractors for details as given below-

T-15/2018-19: Providing & Laying Interlocking Tiles in Pathri Power House from Main Gate to Power House at Pathri.
Estimated value of Tender: Rs. 27,64,865.76 only Respectively.
Tender Cost: Rs. 2,360.00 only Respectively (Including tax)
Earnest Money: Rs. 69,500.00 only Respectively.

Date and Time of availability of bid documents in the portal: - 22.09.2018 at 3:00 pm
Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal: - 12.10.2018 upto 3:30 pm

Opening Date/Time of bids in the portal: - 15.10.2018 at 11.00 am
Detail of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://tendersuttarakhand.gov.in".

Note: All Bidders are requested to submit their bids complete in all respect with all required enclosure, failing which the bids shall be rejected outrightly.

Executive Engineer PCM (GV),
Mayapur, Haridwar
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"Avoid Wasteful use of Electricity"

COMMENT & ANALYSIS Selective amnesia on the killing of animals

Unlike India, where the Government's ban on sale/purchase of cattle evoked stiff opposition, the US has taken measures to respect its culture not only within its own confines but beyond as well

French gust of wind

Is the Congress hoping that constant allegations on the Rafale deal will make muck stick to Modi, or is there more to it?

The French name their fighter jets well, an illusion for the Mirage and a Gust for the Rafale. But the deal between India and France to purchase 36 Rafale fighters seems to now be stuck in a political quagmire. The main allegation, constantly repeated by the Congress and its leader, Rahul Gandhi, is that the deal to purchase the Rafales is a corrupt one because the deal involves offsets, and the choice of the partner to conduct those offsets, in this case the Anil Ambani headed Reliance-ADAG Group, was chosen arbitrarily. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been steadfast in denying these allegations, yet has not made public many aspects of the deal, with Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman saying that she refuses to engage the Opposition on this deal, Rahul Gandhi has accused her of being a "liar" and Arun Jaitley, the Finance Minister called Gandhi a "clown prince". The BJP believes that the Congress is desperate to make the Rafale a key electoral plank ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha poll and hopes to, by constantly repeating the allegations, make muck stick to Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself. The French have been dragged into this quagmire constantly, first with the current French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron and now with some apparently explosive revelations by former French President Francois Hollande on the choice of Reliance-ADAG, which have been denied by the current French administration and by the Rafale's manufacturer Dassault themselves.

On one thing there is no doubt, the Congress has managed to put the Rafale deal front and centre in the English-language media, although the deal has been ignored for the large part by regional media. And while all this is going on, the Indian Air Force has started sending its pilots to France to train on their aircraft. The earlier Congress allegations on the apparently inflated price have been answered by Defence journalists who have explained that the higher price is due to modifications made to the India specification aircraft. But the Congress seems determined to make the allegations stick, their leadership wants to do to Modi what the Opposition led by VP Singh at that time, did to Rajiv Gandhi around the Bofors scandal in 1989. But while the allegations raised by the Congress are being answered by private citizens, the seemingly stoic silence of the Government on the scandal is extremely surprising and supporters of the Prime Minister are surprised and even shocked. Is it because the BJP is confident that this will not become an electoral issue or is it because they want the Congress to make this the main plank for 2019 instead of other crucial issues, such as the lack of jobs, and then answer the allegations conclusively ahead of the hustings. Whatever the strategy, this issue has been going on for far too long and in these days of short attention spans a sort of fatigue is setting in despite a constant drip in allegations and counter-allegations. It would be smart of the Government to finally put the allegations to bed or for the Opposition to come out with a clinching evidence that proves that Modi himself is corrupt.



A recent event in far away America and complete silence on the part of 'Left liberal' pack to it, has exposed their double standards and has also underlined the tenacious relationship between the laws of a country and its culture and traditions. The US House of Representatives in the second week of September unanimously passed two resolutions in a voice vote that would affect the people's choice of 'what to eat'. The first one was banning Americans from slaughtering dogs and cats for human consumption — a rare practice but that is still legal in 44 states. The other one urged countries like China, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and India to follow suit. Known as the Dog and Cat Meat Trade Prohibition Act, 2018, it also imposes a fine of \$5,000 (over ₹3,50,000) for each violation. The bipartisan Bill by Florida Representatives

Vern Buchanan, a Republican, and Alice Hastings, a Democrat, makes it illegal to knowingly slaughter, transport, possess, buy, sell or donate dogs or cats or their parts for human consumption. Congresswoman Claudia Tenney said, "Dogs and cats are meant for companionship and recreation. Tragically, more than 10 million dogs are killed for human consumption every year in China." Meanwhile, Taiwan last year became the first Asian country to pass such a law. Sri Lanka is the first country in South Asia that banned the sale of cattle for meat, following a legislative measure. This ban united the two main ethnic groups on the island, Tamils and Sinhalese. In India, there is legislation against cow slaughter in almost all States except Kerala, West Bengal and certain parts of the North-East. These developments are obviously result of a long evolutionary process experienced by humanity over thousands of years. By mid-first millennium, all three major Indian religions — Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism — propagated non-violence as an ethical value, and something that impacted one's rebirth. By about 1000 CE, vegetarianism, along with a taboo against beef, became a well accepted mainstream Hindu tradition. God Krishna and his Yadav kinsmen and Hindus in general, are associated with cows, adding to its endearment. Animal sacrifices have been rare among the Hindus outside a few eastern States. To the majority of modern Indians, respect for cattle and



THOSE WHO OPPOSE BAN ON COW SLAUGHTER DO SO NOT TO UPHOLD SOMETHING OF GREAT VALUE BUT TO SHOW THEIR CONTEMPT FOR INDIAN ETHOS, SPITE ITS TRADITIONS, AND TO HUMILIATE HINDUS AND PERPETUATE THE DIVISIVE MINDSET OF THE BRITISH

disrespect for slaughter is a part of their ethos and there is no room without renunciation of meat consumption. Abhorrence for the meat of the bounteous cow as food was regarded as the first step to total vegetarianism. The reverence for cow was one of the reasons for the first Indian war of independence of 1857 against the British East India Company. Hindu and Muslim sepoy in the army of the Company believed that their paper cartridges, which held a measured amount of gunpowder, were greased with cow and pig fat. Loading the gun by soldiers required biting off the end of the paper cartridge. Muslims and Hindus strongly felt that through the use of these controversial cartridges, the British were conspiring to obliterate their religious identity. A violent revolt by sepoys followed, termed as the first war of independence by Indians against the British. When did the practice of slaughtering cows for food start in India? Till the arrival of the Europeans, first as traders and later as colonial power, cow was seldom killed for food in India, in spite of Muslims ruling large parts of the country. Reasons are not far to seek. Islam was born in the deserts of Arabia and it had no cows. Obviously, the Arabs, who fought relentlessly against 'non-believers' across the world (including India) had no tradition of eating cow. So the barbingers of Islam from the desert to India through repeated invasions, largely left the venerable cow alone.

After the Islamic rule was stabilised in India, the rulers realised the importance of cow in the social and religious life of the local populace. Cow slaughter was an avoidable irritant to their rule. So many of them (with few exceptions such as bigots like Aurangzeb) made cow slaughter a punishable offence in their regime. After the overthrow of the Company rule in Delhi in 1857, an aged Bahadur Shah Zafar was reinstalled as the King Emperor of India. A revolutionary council was constituted to assist and advise the octogenarian blind Emperor. The very first firm signed by Zafar at the instance of the Council, was to declare hurting or killing, cow or its progeny, a capital offence. Within few months, the British regained Delhi. Though the 1857 revolution failed, it had left the British badly shaken. But they were quick learners. To consolidate their rule, the colonial masters started working on the fault lines of Indian society under their policy of divide and rule. For Europeans, including the British, beef was a delicacy and a preferred choice for table. While it was not easy to get a Hindu supplier for beef, a Muslim had no compunction in doing so. The colonial power encouraged Muslims to slaughter cows with the twin objective of getting their preferred food and furthering a divide between Hindus and Muslims who had shared largely a hostile relationship between themselves, spanning over six centuries. It is against this background that the

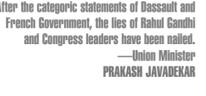
Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution call upon the state to take all measures to promote and protect cow and its progeny. Essentially, through, this directive, the Constitution is seeking to recognise and respect the unique status cow enjoys in the Indian psyche, tradition and culture. The US has gone ahead and taken measures to respect its culture, not only within its own confines, but beyond as well. There are no reports of 'votaries of freedom' taking to streets against this move to assert their 'right of choice of food' from anywhere. None has so far killed a cat or dog publicly anywhere in the world to protest against this "liberal" move on the part of the US, the way some Congressmen in India had done on May 27, 2017. They had slaughtered a calf on the roadside in Kerala, cooked and served it against the Modi Government's decision to ban sale and purchase of cattle from animal markets for slaughter, which was later rolled back. Why none is coming forward in India or the US to assert his/her choice of food 'a la Kerala in the wake of the American move to ban Dog and cat meat? The reason is simple. Those who oppose ban on cow slaughter, do not seem to uphold something of great value, but to show their contempt for Indian ethos, spite its traditions, and to humiliate Hindus and Muslims who had shared largely a hostile relationship between themselves, spanning over six centuries. (The writer is a political commentator and a former BJP Rajya Sabha MP)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

Modi negotiated the Rafale deal. Thanks to Hollande, we now know how the billion dollar deal was delivered to a bankrupt company. —Congress president RAHUL GANDHI



After the categorical statements of Dassault and French Government, the lies of Rahul Gandhi and Congress leaders have been nailed. —Union Minister PRAKASH JAWADEKAR



A doyen of Maithili literature

Lily Ray, one of the most celebrated contemporary Maithili writers, has produced some literary gems. Known for her work which reveals the voices and sentiments of the disadvantaged, she rightly deserves the Jnanpith Award



Apart from numerous short-stories spread over two different collections, she has written four novels — Patakshep, Marichika, Upanhar and Jivikha. Her first novel centred around the idea of a bloody revolution along the lines of Naxalbari movement in a specific village called Tulsipur of Purniya district. Even after attaining independence, equitable land distribution remained a distant reality and exploitation of the landless villagers a norm rather than an exception.

Such societal disparities were often said to be responsible for the emergence of naxalite leaders, like Shivnarayan, who helped spread awareness among the villagers about the concept of class struggle, never failed to emphasise the need for violent revolution which supposedly led to the victory of the people from the periphery and subsequent establishment of the rule of the sarvahara.

Young entusiastic intellectuals like Anil, Dilip and Sujet got engaged in a utopian and idealistically plan for a revolution. However, certain irreparable gaps and fissures in the organisational structures and ideological imprints led to the sudden extinction of the Sahitya Academy Award the very next year in 1982. It was one of the most moving moments for Maithili literature since a woman writer was chosen for this prestigious award for the first time.

It explicitly highlights the sorrow and suffering of women while exposing the insensitive, irresponsible and dystrophic nature of the male figure. It turned out to be the reach of the research findings percolate down to all hospitals, down to the district level in keeping with the philosophy of the country's National Health Policy 2017, which aims to make health care accessible, affordable and effective for all.

When Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan offered for a dialogue through the police department. The Government denied that the cops resigned to resume dialogue and give peace a chance. But history is replete, whenever India has joined hands with Pakistan, the move has been thwarted by terrorists. These outfits take every care to ensure that dialogue does not take place. This time, too, terrorists came in the way of resumption of dialogue. Terrorists abducted three cops and killed

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Harimohan Jha through those of Baidya Nath Mishra Yatri, Rajkamal Chaudhary, Jeevanti, Lalit to Lily Ray marks its modest beginning but phenomenal growth gradually. Its spectacular evolution exhibits the respective novelists' primary preoccupations with misery and misfortune of women, and the plight of peasants followed by nationalist upsurge of certain ideals and aspirations which were, however, accompanied by a deep sense of disillusionment with these ideals and aspirations. Lily Ray has always stayed entirely away from petty politicking and not so petty networking which is so entrenched in all kinds of literary spheres. And she has done wonders over the decades. Her literary gems cast a magical spell over the readers who get so charmed and indeed overwhelmed with her enchanting short-short stories and novels. She has already received both the Sahitya Academy Award and Prabodh Sahitya Samman for her tremendous contribution to the growth of Maithili novels and short-stories. And there is almost complete consensus about her invaluable output and literary worth among the Maithili literary practitioners who are otherwise deeply divided along caste and gender lines. Almost all are unanimous that this wonderful writer, who reached the pinnacle of literary success without much of for-postcolonial voice to contribute meaningfully to Hindi and Maithili literatures respectively. Maithili poetry has been quite noteworthy right from the days of Vidyapati, who wrote exhilarating love songs of Radha and Krishna during the late 14th and early 15th centuries. But novel writing in Maithili began rather late. Both Bangla and Hindi writers had already produced terribly good novels before Maithili novels began to dominate the literary horizon. Kanyadan by Harimohan Jha was the first major novel which caught the attention of almost the entire Maithil community. People from diverse walks of life began to read novels. He championed the cause of female education in this path breaking novel and readers seemed to approve the idea. The kind of trajectories which the genre of novel in Maithili has charted, for instance, from the days of the first major novelist,

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India's stroke epidemiology

Given India's high stroke burden, while significant advancements in treatment have been made the need is for an in-depth study of genetic and epidemiological factors to understand the root of the problem



India is undergoing epidemiological transition and is faced with a daunting dual challenge of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. Notably, while communicable diseases continue to pose intermittent challenges to the country's health care infrastructure with seasonal epidemics, cases of non-communicable diseases are mounting and constitute a major disease burden than communicable diseases.

This is largely explainable in terms of increasing life-expectancy, changing demography, rapid urbanisation, the pernicious impact of globalisation, changing lifestyle leading to sedentary work-nature, nuclearised families, rising stress and work-life imbalance.

An intriguing finding emerging from stroke incidence studies in our country is that Indians are more susceptible to stroke than their Western counterparts. The estimated incidence rate of stroke in India has recorded, in different studies, age-standardised incidence rate of 145 and 154 per 1,00,000 per year; whereas in the US, it is 107 per 1,00,000; in Europe 61 to 111 per 1,00,000 per year; and Australia 99 per 1,00,000 per year. A higher incidence of stroke in India, therefore, calls for an in-depth study of genetic and epidemiological factors, which are yet to be fathomed out and elucidated.

It is worthwhile to note and encouraging that for treatment of stroke, significant advances have taken place in terms of technology as well as drugs. Since 2015, a number of research studies have consistently demonstrated that blockade of major artery supplying blood to the brain can be removed with the use of devices which can either suck out or ensnare and pull out the blood clot.

This treatment can salvage the brain tissue at risk, which can be identified through neuro-imaging technology. These technological advances have brought significant changes in improving the patient's



Remarkably, as pointed out by an Australian study, simple interventions like control of fever, blood sugar and swelling can make more difference in patient outcome than clot-dissolving drugs in stroke, if used by well-trained medical and nursing personnel under well-defined protocols.

This requires effective organisation of stroke care in multi-disciplinary stroke care units (SCU) where patients are treated by coordinated efforts of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and other health-care workers as required.

This has tremendous potential to improve the quality of care and patient outcome even in remote hospitals at the district level, not only in medical college hospitals. This needs speedy integration with the Indian medical protocol so that the reach of the research findings percolate down to all hospitals, down to the district level in keeping with the philosophy of the country's National Health Policy 2017, which aims to make health care accessible, affordable and effective for all.

The writer is Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE

— This refers to the editorial, "Right note" (September 21). Although the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has been in existence for 93 years, it has been working silently to pursue its original mission to get the majoritarian Hindu society rid of major evils of untouchability, casteism, disunity, indiscipline, lack of moral values and patriotism. However, its pseudo-secular opponents like communists, painted it in worst colours of communalism, bigotry and anti-Muslim tendencies.

M Ratan Via mail

The editorial has rightly applauded Bhagwati's "message of moderation" and "successful outreach" that included condemnation of cow vigilantism, support for inter-caste marriages, acceptance of SC/ST quotas in the Constitution and Muslims and Christians as an essential part of the Indian society. "The day it is said that Muslims are unwanted here, the concept of Hindutva will cease to exist", the RSS chief asserted in his maiden speech at New Delhi's Vigyan Bhawan. He projected a contemporary and 'adaptive' image of Hinduism, a Sanatan

FLIP-FLOP ON PAKISTAN

— This refers to the report, "India calls off talks with Pakistan" (September 22). The Indian Government has no consistency in its Pakistan policy. Time and again it reiterates that terror and talk cannot go together but every time it backtracks from its stand by talking to Pakistani officials on foreign lands.

India rightly called off peace talks with Pakistan

When Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan offered for a dialogue through the police department. The Government denied that the cops resigned to resume dialogue and give peace a chance. But history is replete, whenever India has joined hands with Pakistan, the move has been thwarted by terrorists. These outfits take every care to ensure that dialogue does not take place. This time, too, terrorists came in the way of resumption of dialogue. Terrorists abducted three cops and killed



Kashmir may opt for resignation. Massive resignations set a bad precedent. Absence of police personnel will pave way for terrorists and criminals to make large inroads to create panic and shake the conscience of the common man. If Imran Khan is serious about a dialogue, he should not only trace those responsible for the abduction and killing of cops, but also ensure condign punishments for them. The kind of trajectories which the genre of novel in Maithili has charted, for instance, from the days of the first major novelist,

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Policy reset needed to curb fuel prices

All oil companies are rolling in profits though the country is reeling under high fuel prices. This calls for a much-needed shift in policy, globally

HER SKILFULL AND ENTERTAINING ENGAGEMENT DEFINES THE WAYS IN WHICH THE NUANCED SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE MITHILA REGION HAS BEEN WONDERFULLY RECORDED WITH A PROFOUND POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

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Policy reset needed to curb fuel prices

All oil companies are rolling in profits though the country is reeling under high fuel prices. This calls for a much-needed shift in policy, globally

High oil prices have put the Indian economy on flames. Rising inflation, though not reflective in statistics, is impacting the price of commodities. Urban voters are judging the Government's policies on the basis of rising market prices and petrol, particularly diesel, and are considering themselves the victims. Are rural voters not concerned? They are. Farm input and output costs have increased. Rural voters are often less vocal. So will this become a political issue? Possibly it will. But people are confused whether the Government's taking of fuel is prudent or whether it has an alternative. The Government is of the view that it is losing revenue. This is debatable because of the inclusion of the GST, and it has to be made up by continuous and multiple taxing of fuels. In fact, fuel taxing has many dimensions, including raising 'cess' for highways, expressways and rural road construction. Road cess is eight rupee per litre as against the previous two rupee per litre. This has raised the annual collection from around ₹33,000 crore to ₹1.13 lakh crore a year. (This is in addition to other taxes collected that was at ₹86,600 crore in 2013-14).

The argument in this year's Budget was that since excise collections would be lost due to GST, petro-products must be additionally taxed. It is difficult to say whether it is good economics or not. It raises the question that high taxes suffer in popularity and affect the well-being of society. Officially every Government remains stoic on inflation. It is even argued to be a common phenomenon. But it forgets the fact that any banker or economist considers inflation as undesirable as it hits the Government the most. Inflation makes budgetary projections awry. At such points, Governments often make stringent rules. It professes that to counter exigencies, people must cope up with difficulties — they should be prepared to pay higher taxes to rescue the Government. Various tax law and order machineries become oppressive. This adds to corrupt practices in the society. According to the Finance Ministry, the Government expects to mop up more than ₹2,579 lakh crore by levying taxes on petroleum products by the end of this fiscal. This is a massive jump. In the last fiscal, the collection was ₹2,016 lakh crore. These collections stabilised the fluctuating GST collection in the indirect tax kitty. Now when international prices remain at around \$80 per barrel, prices have crossed limits when it was around \$20 per barrel, four years back. Reasons are definitely higher taxes and cess. A CRII research said that owing to the falling value of the rupee, which has made buying oil of over seas costlier, India's import bill is likely to surge to \$26 billion more in 2019. This means trouble for the Government. It has to mop up far more money. As it is, it is saddled with the issue of the US sanctions on Iran. This means India has to look for about 12 per cent of its import from elsewhere.

A shift in policy, globally is needed. It may take time as Russia is also similarly being tormented through sanctions. It has been observed that the Indian currency has become a difficult performer since the world became unipolar. It is strange that many countries, smaller than the size of the small Indian State, have stronger currencies. India, now over a two trillion dollar economy, needs to look into this aspect. In the immediate context, the Government should bring down prices by rational pricing. Fuel should not be taxed heavily. Despite growth, it is a fledgling economy and high taxes apart from adding to the costs also create distances as it affects travel, transport and production. It makes even food grain production uneconomic, adding to farm distress. Ultimately, it is a tax on the country's growth.

Crisis study also says that excise duties have risen significantly since 2013-14, accounting for 25 to 25 per cent of the retail prices of petrol and diesel respectively, compared with 12 to 15 per cent earlier. There is a window and the Government can use it. The price of domestic oil production is linked to international prices. While that can have some sense, it is a skewed policy. The production cost of Indian crude is far less than international prices but production has been falling in the last seven years. It has slumped to 32 million metric tons in July 2018 from 38.1 million metric tons in 2011-12. The average cost of production is around \$40 a barrel, almost half of the international prices. But the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation and other oil companies make phenomenal profit selling it at international prices, which is unethical.

India imports 195.7 million ton crude. Approximately, domestic production is 20 per cent. The oil companies can create a new Indian price by putting Indian crude price at about two dollar more than production cost, that is at \$42 per barrel. This could reduce the actual oil price of the entire imports by about 20 per cent. But this has to be backed up by cut in taxes. If this methodology with some minor changes could be adopted it would be a great lubricant for the economy. Immediately without a price cap, prices of petrol can come down to around ₹60 a litre. It is not happening because somehow the budge word in Indian commerce is high profits. All oil companies are rolling in profits though the country is reeling under high petrol prices. India needs rational policy to reset the prices. If it is done, the politics would also change for the better.

MC Joshi Lucknow

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The writer is a senior journalist



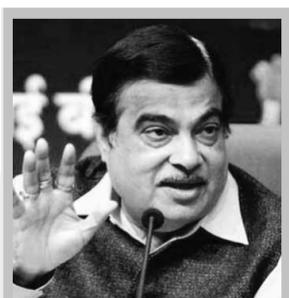
It is (health television channel) under active consideration. It will be exclusively dedicated to health and nutrition and it is a good idea. It will help in spreading the message of healthcare, create a Jan Andolan (people movement) around these very important issues

VK Paul, Member, NITI Aayog

BUZZ FROM GOVT

To make Ganga 'nirmal' and 'aviral', Government is making strides and as part of the drive is implementing 115 sewage treatment projects in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Haryana and Delhi at a cost of ₹17,876.69 crore

Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Water Resources



Curb on imports to bring rupee to 68-70: DEA Secy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government will "very soon" implement the second set of measures including curb on imports of non-essential items to shore up rupee to 68-70 level against the US dollar, Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said, terming the about 12 per cent slide in the currency as a temporary phenomenon.

The Government had earlier this month announced easing of overseas borrowing norms for manufacturing companies, removal of restrictions on foreign portfolio investors (FPI) investment in corporate bonds and tax benefits on Masala bonds to shore up rupee and check widening of current account deficit.

Now, the Centre has prepared a list of non-essential items whose imports can be curbed and also drawn up a separate list of goods whose exports can be boosted with a little policy intervention, Garg told in an interview.

On the rupee continuing to fall despite the first set of measures, he said "full components of the steps have not been implemented as yet, especially curb on import of non-essential items and boosting some of the exports etc. Those are still to come."

"These measures are at the final stage. Very soon, these should be announced," he said.

A group headed by the Commerce Secretary has "more or less" completed its task on finalising the list, the DEA secretary said.

"Once it gets the nod from higher-ups, it will be announced...It will happen very early," he said.

The rupee has been battered for over a month now amid sell-offs sweeping emerging markets following a rout in the currencies of Argentina and Turkey. The Indian currency has set a string of record lows, dampening some of the optimism about India's world-beating economic growth.

The rupee on last on Friday closed at 72.20 to the US dollar, higher than the record low of 72.91 it had hit earlier this month.

The Government, Garg said, is concerned about the rupee's slump and its adverse impact on the Current Account Deficit (CAD).

The CAD, difference between inflow and outflow of foreign exchange, widened to 2.4 per cent of GDP in the first quarter.

The fall in rupee has shot up oil import bill for the world's fastest-growing oil user by 76 per cent to \$10.2 billion in July.

Garg said the appropriate level for the rupee is 68-70 per dollar, with 72 being the reasonable outer limit for depreciation.

With first round of measures not having any desired impact, he said there is no question of government being helpless as there are more measures to be taken to rein in falling rupee.

Garg further said that in view of present circumstances, CAD and present capital flows, 68-70 range appears to be a reasonable level.

"When it suddenly went down from 69 to 72, the Government rightly got concerned that this kind of sudden depreciation is not justified," he said.

Garg added that the Indian economy recorded an excellent growth of 8.2 per cent in the first quarter, inflation is low, macroeconomic fundamentals are good, the Government is strictly maintaining fiscal deficit and expenditure programme is going on well.

"So why on earth should there be such a depreciation of 10-12 per cent in 6 months or 6-9 per cent in two months. That's why the Prime Minister took a meeting (on September 14). The Finance Minister got into the act and several decisions were taken and some of them are under implementation," he said.

Garg expressed confidence that with the measures announced and those in works, the rupee will regain comfortable levels. "I am sure this is temporary and this will come back (to the comfortable level)," he said.

Closely monitoring financial markets along with Sebi: RBI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Sunday said that it along with Sebi is "closely monitoring" recent developments in financial markets and "ready" to take actions, if necessary, as domestic bourses witnessed sudden mid-session plunge last Friday.

"The Reserve Bank of India and the Securities and Exchange Board of India are closely monitoring recent developments in financial markets and are ready to take appropriate actions, if necessary," the central bank said in a brief statement.

On Friday the BSE Sensex, which opened on a strong footing, suddenly tanked 1,127.58 points, or 3.03 per cent, to hit a low of 35,993.64 in afternoon trade, before staging an equally sharp recovery within minutes.

It finally closed at 36,841.60, down 279.62 points. It saw an intra-day swing of 1,495.60 points. The broader NSE Nifty shed 91.25 points to finish at 11,143.10.

The indices closed in the red for the fourth day in a row, during which investors lost a massive ₹5.6 lakh crore.

Overseas investors have pulled out a massive ₹15,365 crore (\$2.1 billion) from the capital markets so far in September, after putting in

"The RBI and the SEBI are closely monitoring recent developments in financial markets and are ready to take appropriate actions, if necessary"

funds during the previous two months, on widening current account deficit coupled with global trade tensions.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) remained net sellers and offloaded equities worth ₹2,184.55 crore while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) made purchases worth a net ₹1,201.30 crore Wednesday, provisional data showed.

The Indian currency has also witnessed a massive plunge in the recent past due to rising trade and current account deficits in the wake of rising crude oil prices.

However, the rupee was bullish on Friday for the second day, rising 17 paise to end at 72.20 against the US dollar.

RBI shortlists Infosys, TCS, 3 others to implement CIMS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank has short-listed five IT firms including Infosys and TCS for implementation of a centralised information and management system (CIMS) for seamless data collection and validations.

The central bank had invited expression of interest (EOI) in July for identification of solution provider for implementation of CIMS by overhauling the Data Warehouse (DW) of the apex bank.

After evaluation of the responses, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said "it has been decided to shortlist" five vendors for issuance of 'Request for Proposal' (RFP) for selection of vendor for CIMS development and implementation.

The vendors are: Capgemini Technology Services India, IBM India, Infosys, Larsen & Toubro Infotech and Tata Consultancy Services.

The RBI had proposed a CIMS comprising of DW and Data Lake (DL) which would include, seamless data collection from regulated entities by creating system-to-system interface; system driven data validation and data review; flexible and scalable data repository and providing data dissemination platform.

The CIMS would also include centralised analytics platform to facilitate creation of RBI Data Sciences Lab.



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The RBI, in April, had announced to gainfully harness the power of big data analytics by setting up a data sciences lab that will comprise experts and budding analysts, internal as well as lateral, who are trained inter alia in computer science, data analytics, statistics, econ-

nomics, econometrics and/or finance. One of the functional requirements for CIMS, as per the EOI, was establishing system-to-system interface for automated element based data collection from about 130 banks/entities.

Over 40% firms feel RBI may further hike rates: CII survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 40 per cent of Indian companies surveyed by industry chamber CII are expecting that the Reserve Bank will go in for a further hike in interest rates in the current fiscal.

The survey, conducted during July-September 2018, covered nearly 200 firms of varying sizes, the CII said while releasing its 104th edition of quarterly Business Confidence Index (BCI).

The BCI also shows that companies are more than just optimistic "about the return of good times" during the second quarter of the current fiscal, an indication of rising confidence about the future growth trajectory and business prospects.

After the 50 basis points interest rate hike by the RBI in the previous two monetary policy review meetings, the sentiment about further monetary policy action seems to have changed, the industry chamber said in a statement.

"In the current survey, about

42 per cent of the respondents felt that the RBI will engage in further interest rates hikes in 2018-19 as compared to the previous survey where a majority of the respondents anticipated a cut or no change in policy rates in 2018-19," it said.

RBI Governor Urjit Patel-headed Monetary Policy Committee will start deliberation on the fourth bi-monthly monetary policy for 2018-19 on October 3 and announce its decision on October 5.

As per the industry body, BCI has touched the series high of 64.9 as against 60.1 in the last quarter.

"The significant uptick in the index, for the fourth consecutive quarter, is an indicator that business sentiment is upbeat," it added.

Commenting on rise in business confidence, CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said there is a definite improvement in the tempo of business activity, powered by expectations of improved consumption and investment growth.

No concern on liquidity of NBFCs: SBI chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Assuring lending support to non-banking financial companies, SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar on Sunday said there was no concern on liquidity of such firms, amid ongoing debt crisis in IL&FS Group.

Shares of housing finance companies came under sudden heavy selling pressure on Friday as investors raised concerns over rising cost of borrowing for the companies amid crisis at IL&FS.

Experts attributed the fall in NBFCs' scrips to tightness in money market and a lack of clarity on IL&FS exposure.

"Some comments are being attributed to SBI about the Bank being wary of lending to NBFCs. The rumours are baseless. SBI lends support to NBFCs in private and public sector within the regulatory policy framework and will continue to do so," Kumar said in a statement.

In fact, the recent regulatory guidelines on the co-lending model opens up further opportunities for collabora-



tion between SBI and non-deposit taking NBFCs to increase lending to priority sectors, he added.

"There is no concern on liquidity of NBFCs in view of their liquid cash position and availability of committed lines," said the top official of the country's largest lender.

Shares of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL). The company lost nearly ₹10,000 crore worth in market cap. The scrip of DHFL plummeted 59.67 per cent to ₹246.25 — its 52-week low — on the BSE.

Earlier this month, it came to light that IL&FS group

defaulted on a short-term loan of ₹1,000 crore from Sidbi, while a subsidiary has also defaulted ₹500 crore dues to the development finance institution.

While IL&FS has nearly ₹35,000 crore consolidated debt, IL&FS Financial Services has ₹17,000 crore of debt, which sits as standard asset for most of the lenders, according to a Nomura India report.

The group has seen its various long-term and short-term borrowing programmes downgraded to 'default' or 'junk' grades by credit rating agencies, even as the regulators are also probing alleged delay in disclosure about certain loan defaults.

Among others, capital markets regulator Sebi, the Reserve Bank, the Corporate Affairs Ministry and the Finance Ministry have received complaints about alleged wrongdoings at Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd (IL&FS) and its various group entities, including the listed ones.

ONGC gets nod for development drilling of 72 wells in KG-Basin

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has given the green signal to State-owned ONGC limited for Additional Development Drilling of 72 wells in the Krishna-Godavari basin.

The oil and natural gas PSU submitted a proposal to the Environment Ministry for environmental clearance (EC) to the project, related to the additional Development Drilling of 72 wells in East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts of Andhra Pradesh, with an investment outlay of ₹792 crore.

"The EAC, after deliberations, recommended the project for grant of environmental clearance, subject to compliance of terms and conditions as under," the EAC said in the minutes of meeting held on August 30.

The standard Terms of Reference for the project was granted on January 29, 2016.

BSNL inks deal with Softbank, NTT to roll out 5G, IoT service

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-run telecom firm BSNL has inked a pact with Japan's Softbank and NTT Communications to roll out 5G and internet of things technology in India, a top official has said.

"We have signed agreement with Softbank and NTT Communications to roll out 5G and IoT products and services in India. Under the agreement, we will look at solution specially for the smart cities," BSNL chairman and managing director Anupam Shrivastava said in an interview.

He said most of the BSNL competitors are still looking at monetising their 4G services and hence leading companies have started looking at the state-run firm for 5G services roll out.

"We have benefitted by lead taken by our minister (Manoj Sinha). He has held various meetings at global level on 5G. We capitalised on those opportunities and signed agree-

ment for the next generation technology," Shrivastava said. Telecom minister Sinha has said that 5G service launch in India will happen at par with other leading nations.

"3G was launch in India after seven years the technology was available in other foreign markets and 4G services after four years lag but 5G will be launched in India in 2020 as soon the standards are freed by ITU," Shrivastava added.

He said that BSNL is working to finalise test cases where 5G can be used in India.

"We are in advance stages of starting 5G field trials. Government is in agreement to provide us 5G spectrum for trials. We expect to start field trials very soon," Shrivastava said.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has recommended auction of about 8,644 MHz of telecom frequencies at an estimated base price of ₹4.9 lakh crore. The Government is yet to finalise details of allocation of spectrum for 5G services.

Govt mulls ordinance to fast track settlement of commercial disputes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seeking to improve India's ranking on ease of doing business index, the Government is mulling an ordinance which provides for time-bound settlement of commercial disputes and make arbitrators accountable, a senior Government functionary has said.

The Government plans to bring the ordinance based on a bill cleared by Lok Sabha during the monsoon session.

As it is pending in Rajya Sabha and may get cleared in November or December during the winter session, the government has planned the ordinance as it feels that an early measure to settle commercial disputes at a faster pace will help improve India's ranking on ease of doing business index, the functionary explained.

The bill seeks to help India become a hub for domestic and global arbitration for set-

tlng commercial disputes. The draft law provides for a time-bound settlement of disputes as well as accountability of the arbitrator. The Government feels that there is a need for robust mechanism to deal with institutional disputes.

The amendments to the Arbitration Act will facilitate achieving the goal of improving institutional arbitration by establishing an independent body to lay down standards, make arbitration process more friendly, cost-effective and ensure timely disposal of arbitration cases.

It provides for setting up of an independent body — Arbitration Council of India (ACI), which will frame arbitral institution and accredit arbitrators by laying down norms.

The ACI will frame proper rules as to how institutions would be graded, norms to be followed, monitoring of quality and performance, and

encourage training of arbitrators.

Experts have time again suggested that unless India has a strong regulatory mechanism, judges, lawyers and arbitrators, the arbitration process will not gain speed.

The bill, which amends the 1996 Act, is part of the government's efforts to encourage institutional arbitration for settlement of disputes and make India a centre of robust Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism.

A large number of arbitration cases are conducted outside India in locations such as Singapore, London and Paris and around 30 million cases are pending before the courts here.

Due to globalisation, industrialisation and liberalisation, the disputes have increased manifold even bilateral investment trade related issues are also referred to the Hague, London and Paris.

Porsche first German carmaker to abandon diesel engines

AFP ■ BERLIN

Sports car maker Porsche said Sunday it would become the first German auto giant to abandon the diesel engine, reacting to parent company Volkswagen's emissions cheating scandal and resulting urban driving bans.

"There won't be any Porsche diesels in the future," CEO Oliver Blume told the newspaper Bild am Sonntag. Instead, the company would concentrate on what he called its core strength, "powerful petrol, hybrid and, from 2019, purely electric vehicles".

The Porsche chief conceded the step was a result of the three-year-old "dieselgate" scandal at auto giant Volkswagen, the group to which the luxury sports car brand belongs.

VW in 2015 admitted to US regulators to having installed so-called "defeat devices" in 11 million cars worldwide to dupe emissions

tests. It has so far paid out more than 27 billion euros in fines, vehicle buybacks, recalls and legal costs and remains mired in legal woes at home and abroad.

Diesel car sales have dropped sharply as several German cities have banned them to bring down air pollution — a trend that Chancellor Angela Merkel was due to discuss with car company chiefs in Berlin later on Sunday.

Stuttgart-based Porsche in February stopped taking orders for diesel models, which it had sold for nearly a decade. Blume said Porsche had "never developed and produced diesel engines", having used Audi motors, yet the image of the brand had suffered.

"The diesel crisis has caused us a lot of trouble," he said, months after Germany's Federal Transport Authority ordered the recall of nearly 60,000 Porsche SUVs in Europe.

Govt now begins consolidation of regional rural banks, to bring down tally to 36

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has also initiated consolidation of regional rural banks along with the public sector lenders and intends to bring down their number to 36 from the existing 56.

In this regard, the Centre has begun consultations with states as they are one of the sponsors of the regional rural banks (RRBs) in the country, a senior Finance Ministry official has said.

Besides, sponsor banks are also preparing road map for the amalgamation of RRBs within a state, the official said. The development assumes significance in the light of Government earlier this month announcing decision to merge Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank to create another global size bank.

The proposed consolidation of RRBs and bringing down their tally from the exist-

ing 56 to 36 will usher in better scale-efficiency, higher productivity, robust financial health of such banks, improved financial inclusion and greater credit flow to rural areas, the official said.

Besides, the move will enable RRBs to minimise their overhead expenses, optimise the use of technology, enhance the capital base and area of operation, the official added.

These banks were formed under the RRB Act, 1976, with an objective to provide credit and other facilities to small farmers, agricultural labourers and artisans in rural areas.

The Act was amended in 2015 whereby such banks were permitted to raise capital from sources other than the Centre, states and sponsor banks. Currently, the Centre holds 50 per cent in RRBs, while 35 per cent and 15 per cent are with the concerned sponsor banks and State Governments, respectively.

Even after stake dilution, the shareholding of the Centre and the sponsor public sector banks together cannot fall below 51 per cent, according to the amended Act.

As a result, the ownership and control would remain with the government. In order to improve the financial health of RRBs, the government initiated consolidation of RRBs in a phased manner in 2005. The number of RRBs came down to 133 in 2006 from 196 at the end of March 2005. It further came down to 105 and subsequently to 82 at the end of March 2012. Further consolidation brought down number of such banks to 56.

RRBs operating through about 21,200 branches witnessed a 17 per cent rise in net profit to ₹2,950 crore in 2016-17. Their loans and advances outstanding under various schemes rose 15 per cent to ₹3.5 lakh crore as of March 2017.

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	328.7901
Index FundSensex Plan (FV Rs 32.161)	325.2401

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	34.124
Bluechip Fund - Dividend - Direct	37.11
Bluechip Fund - Growth	227.168
Bluechip Fund - Growth - Direct	241.164
Emerging Equity Scheme - Dividend	23.015
Emerging Equity Scheme - Dividend - Direct	26.627
Emerging Equity Scheme - Growth	37.507
Emerging Equity Scheme - Growth - Direct	40
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Bimonthly	20.1305
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Bimonthly Direct	20.3377
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Dividend	10.7282
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Dividend - Direct	11.03
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Fortnightly - Regular	23.0868
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Growth	25.5588
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Growth - Direct	26.2872
Equity Arbitrage Fund - Fortnightly - Direct	23.5614
Equity Opportunities Fund - Dividend	24.605
Equity Opportunities Fund - Dividend - Direct	26.441
Equity Opportunities Fund - Growth	113.54
Equity Opportunities Fund - Growth - Direct	120.607
Equity Savings Fund - Direct - Growth	14.1402
Equity Savings Fund - Direct - Monthly Dividend	11.6028
Equity Savings Fund - Direct - Quarterly Dividend	11.4164
Equity Savings Fund - Regular - Growth	13.7672
Equity Savings Fund - Regular - Monthly Dividend	11.3368
Equity Savings Fund - Regular - Quarterly Dividend	11.3014
Global Emerging Market Fund - Dividend	16.312
Global Emerging Market Fund - Dividend - Direct	17.14
Global Emerging Market Fund - Growth	16.313
Global Emerging Market Fund - Growth - Direct	17.064
India EQ Contra Fund - Dividend	20.919
India EQ Contra Fund - Dividend - Direct	23.168
India EQ Contra Fund - Growth	51.319
India EQ Contra Fund - Growth - Direct	55.166
Infrastructure & Economic Reform Fund - Standard Plan-Div	17.506
Infrastructure & Economic Reform Fund - Standard Plan-Growth	19.214
Infrastructure & Economic Reform Fund-Direct Plan-Div Option	20.468
Infrastructure & Economic Reform Fund-Direct - Growth Option	20.704
Small Cap Fund - Dividend	37.281
Small Cap Fund - Dividend - Direct	40.248
Small Cap Fund - Growth	72.196
Small Cap Fund - Growth - Direct	77.423
Standard Multicap Fund - Dividend	24.002
Standard Multicap Fund - Dividend - Direct	25.56
Standard Multicap Fund - Growth	33.656
Standard Multicap Fund - Growth - Direct	35.584

SAHARA MUTUAL FUND

BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES FUND- GROWTH - Direct	65.8992
BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES FUND- GROWTH OPTION	62.2264
BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES FUND-DIVIDEND - Direct	22.4037
BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES FUND-DIVIDEND OPTION	21.9981
Growth Fund-Dividend	40.5495
Growth Fund-Dividend- Direct	41.2869
Growth Fund-Growth	139.6437
Growth Fund-Growth- Direct	155.6321
Infrastructure Fund FIXED PRICING -Direct-Dividend	20.328
Infrastructure Fund FIXED PRICING OPTION-Direct-Growth	27.1139
Infrastructure Fund FIXED PRICING OPTION-Dividend Option	18.4117
Infrastructure Fund FIXED PRICING OPTION-Growth Option	25.2132
Infrastructure Fund VARIABLE PRICING OPTION-Direct-Dividend	22.3093
Infrastructure Fund VARIABLE PRICING OPTION-Direct-Growth	29.8532
Infrastructure Fund VARIABLE PRICING OPTION-Dividend Option	21.4714
Infrastructure Fund VARIABLE PRICING OPTION-Growth Option	29.1877
Midcap Fund-Auto Payout	76.7074
Midcap Fund-Auto Payout- Direct	81.8225
Midcap Fund-Bonus	76.7074
Midcap Fund-Bonus- Direct	81.8225
Midcap Fund-Dividend-Direct	34.3297
Midcap Fund-Dividend Plan	33.8305
Midcap Fund-Growth Option - Direct	81.8225
Midcap Fund-Growth Plan	76.7074
Power & Natural Resources Fund - Dividend Option	17.8433
Power & Natural resources Fund- Growth - Direct	22.4913
Power & Natural Resources Fund- Growth Option	20.9203
Power & Natural Resources Fund-Dividend - Direct	16.0357
REAL Fund - Dividend Option	20.7585
REAL Fund - Dividend Option-Direct	21.1697
REAL Fund - Growth Fund	20.7551
REAL Fund - Growth Fund- Direct	22.8313

Star Value Fund-Dividend - Direct	18.1176
Star Value Fund-Dividend Option	17.8273
Star Value Fund-Growth - Direct	24.7646
Star Value Fund-Growth Option	23.0488
Super 20 Fund - Dividend - Direct	16.3573
Super 20 Fund - Dividend Option	20.1943
Super 20 Fund - Growth - Direct	21.9284
Super 20 Fund - Growth Option	20.2139
Wealth Plus Fund-Fixed Pricing Option-Direct-Dividend Option	31.7262
Wealth Plus Fund-Fixed Pricing Option-Direct-Growth	44.7475
Wealth Plus Fund-Fixed Pricing Option-Dividend Option	31.2211
Wealth Plus Fund-Fixed Pricing Option-Growth Option	43.8377
Wealth Plus Fund-Variable Pricing Option-Direct -Dividend	37.4666
Wealth Plus Fund-Variable Pricing Option-Direct-Growth	52.2178
Wealth Plus Fund-Variable Pricing Option-Dividend Option	36.9478
Wealth Plus Fund-Variable Pricing Option-Growth Option	50.9627

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 - Quarterly Interval Plan I - Retail Dividend	13.4637
Interval Fund - Quarterly Interval Plan I - Retail Growth	10.0025
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan I - 1 Retail Quarterly Div Payout	21.9999
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan I - Direct Plan - Growth	10.0022
Interval Fund Quarterly Interval Plan 1 - Direct Plan - Dividend	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 - Qlty 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 Qlty 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 - Dividend	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 - Dividend	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 - Quarterly Interval Plan A - Direct Plan - Qlty 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 Qlty 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 I Quarterly Interval Plan B - Quarterly Dividend 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 Plan - Qlty 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 Qlty 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 - Qlty 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 Plan - Qlty 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 I Quarterly Interval Plan F Retail Qlty Div 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 - Direct Plan - Qlty Div Payout	10.2094
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 Qlty 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

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	39.8882
Banking and PSU Debt - Monthly Dividend	10.7472
Banking and PSU Debt Direct - Annual Dividend	17.1427
Banking and PSU Debt Direct - Growth	40.4892
Banking and PSU Debt Direct - Monthly Dividend	10.5738
Bond - Annual Dividend - Direct	21.9813
Bond - Growth - Direct	49.9255
Bond - Quarterly Dividend - Direct	13.5115
Bond Regular Plan Annual Dividend	29.2652
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	47.767
Bond Regular Plan Quarterly Dividend	10.6818
Bond-Deposit-Dividend	13.6554
Bond-Deposit-Growth	42.9354
Bond Short Term Plan - Direct Plan - Normal Dividend	10.2254
Bond Short Term Plan-(Dividend)	10.0914
Bond Short Term Plan-(Dividend) - Direct	10.9025
Bond Short Term Plan-(Growth)	33.0327
Bond Short Term Plan-(Growth) - Direct	34.4357
Bond Short Term Plan-(Half Yearly Dividend)	12.0475
Bond Short Term Plan-(Half Yearly Dividend) - Direct	12.2356
Corporate Bond Fund- Retail Plan-Growth Option	2034.9063
Corporate Bond Fund- Direct Plan- Growth Option	2398.1366
Corporate Bond Fund- Direct Plan- Monthly Dividend Option	1101.3322
Corporate Bond Fund- Institutional Plan-Growth Option	2090.4924
Corporate Bond Fund- Regular Plan-Growth Option	2347.9097
Corporate Bond Fund- Regular Plan-Monthly Dividend Option	1047.7639
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 Option	1052.7994
Corporate Bond Fund- Standard Plan-Weekly Dividend Option	1202.9939
Credit Risk Fund - Annual Dividend	10.4931
Credit Risk Fund - Annual Dividend - Direct	15.413
Credit Risk Fund - Growth	19.4771
Credit Risk Fund - Growth - Direct	20.5195
Credit Risk Fund - Monthly Dividend	10.3053
Credit Risk Fund - Monthly Dividend - Direct	10.5305
Credit Risk Fund - Quarterly Dividend	10.8944
Credit Risk Fund - Quarterly Direct Dividend - Direct	10.2868
Credit Risk Fund - Weekly Dividend	9.9847
Credit Risk Fund - Weekly Dividend - Direct	10.4117
Debt Hybrid - Growth	29.4623
Debt Hybrid - Growth - Direct	31.2438
Debt Hybrid - Monthly Dividend	11.8902
Debt Hybrid - Monthly Dividend - Direct	12.3322
Debt Hybrid - Quarterly Dividend	13.4233
Debt Hybrid - Quarterly Dividend - Direct	14.0496
Dynamic Bond Fund - Daily Dividend - Direct	10.1362

US may deny green cards to beneficiaries

Will affect hundreds of thousands of Indians living in US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Trump administration may deny green cards to immigrants who have availed or may avail Government benefits, including food and cash assistance under new rules which could negatively affect hundreds of thousands of Indians living in the US.



The proposed rule signed by the Homeland Security Secretary on September 21 and posted on the website of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was slammed by the Silicon Valley-based tech industry and political leaders.

According to the rule, foreign immigrants who "seek adjustment of status or a visa, or who are applicants for admission, must establish that they are not likely at any time to become a public charge" unless determined by Congress. Public charge means receiving Government benefits.

The latest move to crack down on immigration comes days after the Trump administration told a federal court that its decision to revoke work permits to H-4 visa users, a significant majority of whom are Indian-Americans, is expected within the next three months, a move which will have a major impact on Indian women as they are the major beneficiary of the Obama-era rule.

The DHS proposes to require all immigrants seeking an extension of stay or change of status to demonstrate that they have not received, are not currently receiving, nor are likely to receive public benefits as defined in the proposed rule.

"Under long-standing federal law, those seeking to immigrate to the United States must show they can support themselves financially," said Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. "The department takes seriously its responsibility to be transparent in its rulemaking and is welcoming public comment on the proposed rule."

"This proposed rule will implement a law passed by Congress intended to promote immigrant self-sufficiency and protect finite resources by ensuring that they are not likely to become burdens on American taxpayers," she said. Expressing its opposition to the proposed rule, FWD.US, which represents companies like Facebook, Microsoft, Dropbox, Yahoo and Google, said it "is a backdoor" administrative end-run to substan-

tially reduce legal immigration that, if implemented, will hurt the entire country. "This policy will cost the United States in the long run by limiting the contributions of hardworking immigrants who could become legal residents, and no one is better off because of it," FWD.US president Todd Schulte said.

It would create a subjective criteria and overly-bureaucratic process when making a public charge determination. It is "another underhanded attempt to force cuts to legal immigration, ultimately hurting our communities and country," Schulte said.

As of April, there were 632,219 Indian immigrants and their spouses and minor children waiting for green cards. According to US Citizenship and Immigration Services, in all 306,400 primary Indian applicants are waiting for their green cards. Clubbed with their spouses and children numbering 325,819; as many as 632,219 Indians in all are waiting for their green cards.

Iran points finger at US allies over deadly attack

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's President on Sunday accused an unnamed US-allied country in the Persian Gulf of being behind a terror attack on a military parade that killed 25 people and wounded 60, further raising regional tensions.

Hassan Rouhani's comments came as Iran's Foreign Ministry also summoned Western diplomats over them allegedly providing havens for the Arab separatists who claimed Saturday's attacks in the southwestern city of Ahvaz.

The Iranian moves, as well as promises of revenge by Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard, come as the country already faces turmoil in the wake of the

American withdrawal from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers. The attack in Ahvaz, which saw women and children flee with uniformed soldiers bloodied, has further shaken the country.

Rouhani's remarks could refer to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates or Bahrain — close U.S. military allies that view Iran as a regional menace over its support for militant groups across the Middle East.

"All of those small mercenary countries that we see in this region are backed by America. It is Americans who instigate them and provide them with necessary means to commit these crimes," Rouhani

said before leaving for the UN General Assembly in New York.

Iran meanwhile summoned diplomats from Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands early Sunday for allegedly harboring "members of the terrorist group" that launched the attack. Danish Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen condemned the attack and stressed that



there would be "consequences" if it turns out that those respon-

sible have connections to Denmark.

The ministry later summoned the UAE's envoy as well over what it called the "irresponsible and insulting statements" of an Emirati adviser, according to the semi-official ISNA news agency. The UAE did not immediately acknowledge the summons.

US condemns attack but says 'needs to look at own base'

New York: The United States on Sunday condemned the deadly attack on a military parade in Iran but said the country's clerical rulers needed to look at reasons for unrest.

"The United States condemns any terrorist attack anywhere, period. We've always stood by that," Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the United Nations, told CNN.

But she said of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani: "He has oppressed his people for a long time." "He needs to look at his own base to figure out where that's coming from. I think the Iranian people have had enough and that's where all of this is coming from."

At least 29 people were killed when suspected Arab separatists in southwestern Iran opened fire Saturday on a parade commemorating the start of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Iran pinned the blame on an unnamed US-backed Gulf state for allegedly supporting the militants.

Iran sees threats from abroad after parade attack

Dubai: On the same day Arab separatists killed at least 25 people in an attack targeting a military parade in southwest-

ern Iran, President Donald Trump's lawyer mounted a stage in New York to declare that the Government would be toppled.

"I don't know when we're going to overthrow them. It could be in a few days, months or a couple of years, but it's going to happen," former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani said Saturday. "They are going to be overthrown. The people of Iran obviously have had enough."

For Iran's Shiite theocracy, comments like these only fuel fears that America and its Gulf Arab allies are plotting to tear the Islamic Republic apart. Those threats so far haven't

led to a military confrontation or violence, but the risk is rising.

"Undoubtedly the Islamic Republic of Iran will not ignore this crime. It is absolutely clear for us who did that, what group they are and with whom they are affiliated," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani warned before leaving for New York for the United Nations General Assembly.

"All of those small mercenary countries that we see in this region are backed by America. It is Americans who instigate them and provide them with necessary means to commit these crimes."

Rouhani is a relative moderate who was elected twice on promises to improve relations with West, and who signed the 2015 nuclear agreement. AP

Thursday hearing for Kavanaugh accuser stuck on last details

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Plans to hold a high-stakes hearing next week with testimony from Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh's accuser, Christine Blasey Ford, teetered with uncertainty on Sunday as a Senate panel scrambled to resolve potentially make-or-break details, such as potential witnesses who could corroborate her decades-old sexual assault claim.

Sen Lindsey Graham, a Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said lawyers for Ford are contesting two GOP conditions of the proposed 10 am on Thursday hearing — that Ford and

Kavanaugh will be the only witnesses and that an independent counsel will ask the questions.

"If they continue to contest those two things, there won't be a hearing," Graham said. "We're not going to let her determine how many people we call" and on outside counsel. "I hope she comes."

A final accord could bring a close days of brinkmanship that have roiled Washington ahead of midterm elections and threatened to jeopardise Kavanaugh's confirmation to the court, even as some Republicans say the additional hearings may do little to change their support for him.

Russia blames Israel for downing of plane by Syrian forces

Moscow: The Russian Defence Ministry on Sunday again blamed Israel for the downing of a Russian plane by Syrian Government forces and said Israel appeared "ungrateful" for Moscow's efforts to rein in Iran-backed fighters in Syria.

Syrian Government forces mistook the Russian Il-20 reconnaissance plane for an Israeli jet and shot it down on Monday, killing all 15 people aboard. While the Russian military initially blamed the plane's loss on Israel, President Vladimir Putin later attributed it to "a chain of tragic, fatal circumstances." The Russian Defence Ministry on Sunday presented its latest findings on the Il-20's downing, laying the blame squarely on Israel.

Air Force and those who were making decisions about these actions are fully to blame for the tragedy that happened to the Russian Il-20 plane," Maj Gen Igor Konashenkov said in a statement.

For several years, Israel and Russia have maintained a special hotline to prevent their air forces from clashing in the skies over Syria. Russia has provided key air support to President Bashar Assad's forces since 2015, while Israel has carried out dozens of strikes against Iran-linked forces. Israeli military officials have previously praised the hotline's effectiveness.

But Konashenkov on Sunday accused Israel of using the hotline to mislead Russia about its plans.

At UN, unrepentant Trump set to rattle foes, friends alike

AP ■ BRIDGEWATER, NJ

President Donald Trump is poised to redouble his commitment to "America First" on the most global of stages this week.

In the sequel to his stormy UN debut, Trump will stress his dedication to the primacy of US interests while competing with Western allies for an advantage on trade and shining a spotlight on the threat that he says Iran poses to the Middle East and beyond.

One year after Trump stood at the rostrum of the UN General Assembly and derided North Korea's Kim Jong Un as "Rocket Man," the push to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula is a work in progress, although fears of war have given way to hopes for rap-

prochement. Scores of world leaders, even those representing America's closest friends, remain wary of Trump. In the 12 months since his last visit to the UN, the president has jolted the global status quo by pulling out of the Iran nuclear deal, starting trade conflicts with China and the West and embracing Russia's Vladimir Putin even as the investigation into the US President's ties to Moscow moves closer to the Oval Office.

Long critical of the United Nations, Trump delivered a warning shot ahead of his arrival by declaring that the world body had "not lived up to" its potential.

"It's always been surprising to me that more things aren't resolved," Trump said in a



weekend video message, "because you have all of these countries getting together in

the still-evolving Trump doctrine on foreign policy, it is that the president will not subordinate American interests on the world stage, whether for economic, military or political gain.

Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters in a preview of Trump's visit, that the president's focus "will be very much on the United States," its role and the relations it wants to build.

"He is looking forward to talking about foreign policy successes the United States has had over the past year and where we're going to go from here," she said. "He wants to talk about protecting U.S. sovereignty," while building relationships with nations that "share those values."

NC river swirls with gray muck near flooded coal ash dump

AP ■ WILMINGTON, NC

Gray muck is flowing into the Cape Fear River from the site of a dam breach at a Wilmington power plant where an old coal ash dump had been covered over by Florence's floodwaters.



Forecasters predicted the water will continue to rise through the weekend at the LV Sutton Power Station. Duke Energy spokeswoman Paige Sheehan said the utility doesn't believe the breach poses a significant threat of increased flooding to nearby communities.

Inspectors with the state Department of Environmental

Quality travelled to the plant by boat on Sunday to collect water quality samples. Environmental Secretary Mike Regan said aerial video of the site show "potential coal ash" flowing into the river.

"When the environment is conducive, we will put people on the ground to verify the amount of potential coal ash that could have been left and entered those flood waters," Regan said.

Burqa ban: Swiss region overwhelmingly votes

Geneva: A second Swiss canton will introduce a regional "burqa ban", after voters in St Gallen on Sunday emphatically backed prohibiting all face-covering garments in public spaces.

At the same time, voters across Switzerland resoundingly rejected initiatives aimed at boosting local farming and promoting more ethical and environmental standards in food production, amid fears of cost hikes and reduced consumer choice.

In the northeastern canton of St Gallen, nearly 67 per cent of voters came out in favour of introducing the implicit "burqa ban", according to official results, which showed turnout was 36 per cent.

That paves the way for the canton to follow the example of the southern region of Ticino,



where a law was introduced two years ago that appeared to be aimed at burqas and other Muslim veils. Three other cantons — Zurich, Solothurn and Glarus — have rejected introducing such bans in recent years. A text stipulating that "any person who renders themselves unrecognisable by covering their face in a public space, and thus endangers public security or social and religious peace will be fined" was adopted by lawmakers in St Gallen late last year.

Maldives strongman Yameen seeks second term amid rigging fears

AFF ■ COLOMBO

Voting was extended in the Maldives presidential election on Sunday amid technical glitches, after police raided the Opposition's campaign headquarters, fueling fears of rigging in favour of China-friendly incumbent President Abdulla Yameen.

The Elections Commission said balloting was extended by three hours until 7pm (local time) because of technical glitches with tablet computers containing electoral rolls, and officials had to use manual systems to verify voters.

Many voters said they stood in line for over five hours to vote in many parts of the Indian Ocean archipelago, as well as in neighbouring Sri Lanka and India where expa-



triates Maldivians voted. "Eight hours & counting. Waiting to exercise my democratic right! Let's do this, Insha Allah!" former foreign minister Dunya Maumoon said on Twitter. Maumoon, who is also the estranged niece of Yameen and daughter of former President Maumoon Abdul

Gayoom, voted at a polling booth in the Maldivian embassy in Colombo.

Yameen, who is expected to retain power, has imprisoned or forced into exile almost all his main rivals in a crackdown. Critics say he is returning the honeymoon island nation to authoritarian rule.

New robot may help in harvesting crops

IAN ■ NEW YORK

Researchers have developed an advanced sweet pepper harvesting robot that is designed to operate in a single stem row cropping system, with non-clustered fruits and little leaf occlusion.

by using a commercially available crop modified to mimic the required conditions, the robot harvests ripe fruits in 24 seconds with a success rate of 62 per cent.

The robot, named "Sweeper", picks methodically and accurately, said co-author Polina Kurtser from the Ben-

Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba, Israel.

"When it is fully developed, it will enable harvesting 24/7, drastically reduce spoilage, cut labour costs and shield farmers from market fluctuations," Kurtser added.

Based upon these latest results, the "Sweeper" consortium expects that a commercial sweet pepper harvesting robot will be available within four to five years, and that the technology could be adapted for harvesting other crops, the researchers said.

The robot was introduced last week at the Research Station for Vegetable

Production at St. Katalijne Waver in Belgium.

Robotic harvesting will revolutionise the economics of the agriculture industry and dramatically reduce food waste, the researchers said.

The team spearheaded efforts to improve the robot's ability to detect ripe produce using computer vision, and has played a role in defining the specifications of the robot's hardware and software interfaces, focusing on supervisory control activities. The team says that additional research is needed to increase the robot's work speed to reach a higher harvest success rate.

Combining multiple CCTV images can help catch suspects

PTI ■ LONDON



Combining multiple poor quality CCTV images into a single, computer-enhanced composite could improve the accuracy of facial recognition systems used to identify criminal suspects, a study has found.

Researchers from the University of New South Wales in Australia and University of York in the UK created a series of pictures using a 'face averaging' technique — a method which digitally combines multiple images into a single enhanced image, removing variants such as head angles or lighting so that only features that indicate the identity of the

person remain. They compared how effectively humans and computer facial recognition systems could identify people from high quality images, pixelated images, and face averages.

The results showed that both people and computer systems were better at identifying a face when viewing an average image that combined multiple pixelated images, compared to the original poor-quality images. Computer systems benefited from averaging together multiple images that were already high in quality, and in some cases reached 100 per cent accurate face recognition. The results have implications

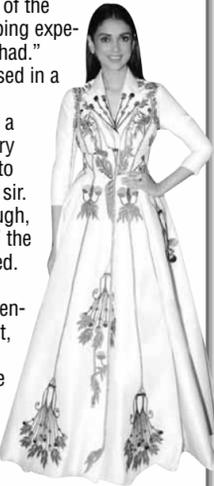
for law enforcement and security agencies, where low quality, pixelated images are often the only pictures of suspects available to use in investigations.

The image averaging method offers a standardised way of using images captured from multiple CCTV cameras to create a digital snapshot which can be better recognised by both people and computer software systems. "We know that not all CCTV systems have the luxury of high quality cameras, meaning that face identifications are often being made from poor quality images," said Kay Ritchie, from the University of Lincoln in the UK.

Trend Glazer

'Being Bhoomi was a torture'

Actress **ADITI RAO HYDARI** had a harrowing time playing a rape victim in the film, *Bhoomi*, and says that it was disturbing to be a part of such a movie. "Being #Bhoomi was torture. One of the most disturbing experiences I've had." Aditi expressed in a Twitter post. "But I found a rainbow every day, thanks to **Sanjay Dutt** sir. This was tough, but special," the actress added. The film explored a sensitive subject, but failed to appeal to the critics and the audience.



'I came to know that **Ekta (Kaul)** is the one for me with the time that I spent with her. For me, it is basically the core value that a person has. I wanted to be with someone who is not filmy, with someone with no multiple layers as to how they react to situations.'

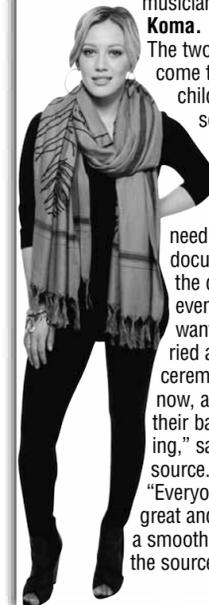
—Sumeet Vyas

Actress **MANISHA KOIRALA** says it's perfectly fine to be a bit selfish and look after oneself. "I have redefined the term 'selfish.' Looking after oneself is important and this includes both physical and emotional aspects. "It is okay to be sad. We are multi-dimensional beings. The emotional aspect matters a great deal to me. It pulls me down and manifests itself in my body. So, I now emphasise that it is perfectly fine to prioritise yourself," said she on social media.



Hilary in no rush to marry boyfriend

Singer-actress **HILARY DUFF** is reportedly fast approaching the last leg of her pregnancy, but is in 'no rush' to marry her boyfriend, musician **Matthew Koma**. The two will welcome their first child together soon. "The pair already feel married and don't feel they need a signed document to seal the deal. They eventually do want to get married and have a ceremony but for now, are focused on their baby girl coming," said the source. "Everyone gets along great and it has been a smooth transition," the source added.



NEW AVATAR

Designer **RITU BERI** unveils a new Khadi collection showcasing how it can be anything from pret to couture. By **ASMITA SARKAR**



Coarse, utilitarian, rough, fabric of freedom – words that the Khadi fabric had been associated for long. Till some designers came along and turned the descriptions over their head. All-weather fabric, natural, modern, comfortable and stylish is what Khadi looks like, increasingly. Today, the silhouettes that can be made with the fabric have been reinvented. The straight kurtas and pajamas have been replaced with imaginative asymmetrical and modern silhouettes.

The fabric, popularised prior to Independence by Mahatma Gandhi, was once a symbol of self-reliance of the Indian people as opposed to depending on British products. But now there are persistent efforts to revive the pride associated with it. One such effort was when fashion designer Ritu Beri became associated with Khadi India in 2016. In her latest collection, the Khadi couture show at a fashion week in Delhi she presented floral motifs, gold and bronze embroidery on white, purples, reds, yellows and more.

The show began with a young child dressed like the Mahatma walking down the ramp while the screens behind showed the original icon with the Charkha, which was popularly used to make the fabric.

The ramp soon saw a series in white followed by colourful kurtas and dhoti pants, which then progressed from pret to couture and had something for everyone as it covered a wide range. The collection focussed on women and children rather than men.

Beri said, "This collection shows Khadi can be couture as well. These clothes can be worn during festivals and weddings. It is an all-weather fabric, keeps us warm in winters and cool in summers."

Young children also walked the ramp in her colourful cre-



ations of ruffled jackets, long jackets, lehengas and dresses. One model walking with two children showed a family dressed in Khadi – as an example of its everydayness.

Contemporary Western silhouettes could be seen along with the traditional Indian. There were long jackets with embroidered patches, images of sneakers in sequins and of Frida Kahlo with floor length kurtas that gave a modern twist to the traditional attire.

In a modern take on the lehenga-choli, the latter was bunched up in pleats below the bustier on one side while the rest of the midriff was bare. Three backless gowns in red and black took Khadi to another level of innovation.

Italian ambassador to India Lorenzo Angeloni, MLA Meenakshi Lekhi, politician Najma Heptulla also walked the ramp in clothes designed by Beri.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar



Thugs of Hindostan trailer to be launched

Aditya Chopra will be launching the trailer of YRF's biggest film on late Yash Chopra's birth anniversary

Aditya Chopra has already pulled off a once-in-a-generation casting coup by bringing together two of the biggest legends of Indian cinema Amitabh Bachchan and Aamir Khan on screen for the first time. He has also started YRF's VFX division to make this action adventure, *Thugs of Hindostan*, a visual extravaganza. This will be Yash Raj Films' biggest film ever produced.

Directed by Vijay Krishna Acharya, the film will be a visual treat for audiences across age groups. With jaw-dropping action and edge-of-the-seat thrills the film is set to light up this Diwali as it releases on November 8. It also stars India's heartthrob Katrina Kaif in her hottest *desi* avatar and Fatima Sana Shaikh.

The innovative motion poster strategy by YRF that saw each important character in the film being introduced one after the other, took the anticipation for the trailer sky high. And now its official trailer is set to release on September 27, the birth anniversary of legendary filmmaker and founder of YRF, Yash Chopra.

"*Thugs of Hindostan* is an incredibly special film for Adi. It is not only YRF's biggest production, it is also the biggest film of the Indian film industry. *Thugs* is a visionary project. It is going to be a stand out product in terms of scale and imagination. It will match the visual scale of any big ticket Hollywood film that audiences have seen. Yash Chopra is a legend whose films and imagination shaped Bollywood as it stands today. He was a path-breaker, content disruptor and a true innovator. So, Adi and Aamir discussed and decided to release the trailer on the birth anniversary of the iconic film-maker Yash Chopra. It is a salute to his genius vision," reveals a source close to the development.

WEBBED

Sacred Games to return

Actor Saif Ali Khan will be back as police officer Sartaj Singh in the second season of crime drama series *Sacred Games* on Netflix.

"The worst is yet to come. *Sacred Games* will be back for Season 2," read a post from the official Netflix India Twitter account.

Based on author Vikram Chandra's best-selling novel, the first season of the series – produced by the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Entertainment's Phantom Films joint venture – received viewer appreciation and critical acclaim worldwide for its gritty plot and power-packed performances.

The series, available in local languages in different markets, tells the tale of Sartaj, a seasoned and cynical Mumbai police officer who is summoned one morning by an anonymous tip which promises him an opportunity to capture the powerful Ganesh Gaitonde, criminal overlord of the G-Company.

The season two will be back with a new trail of betrayal, crime, passion, and a thrilling chase through Mumbai's underbelly.

The second season picks up from Sartaj pursuing his relentless battle of saving the city and Ganesh Gaitonde (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) facing bigger challenges to retain his position as the legendary kingpin of Mumbai.



The intriguing Guruji (Pankaj Tripathi), introduced in season one as Gaitonde's 'third father', plays a pivotal role in unfolding a chain of events that shape the next season, which is scheduled to film in India and locations overseas this fall.

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap will continue directing Gaitonde's track, while Neeraj Ghaywan will take over Sartaj's plot. Vikramaditya Motwane and Varun Grover will continue their roles of being the showrunner and the lead writer respectively.

Erik Barmack, vice president, International Originals at Netflix, said, "We've been thrilled to see the response to *Sacred Games* from fans worldwide, and especially in India, to this high quality production. It's incredibly exciting for us to take the story forward and open a new chapter in the series with its second season."

—IANS

The Third Eye

Starring Jessica Mila, Denny Sumargo, Citra Prima, the show, directed by Rocky Soraya, is set to bring in yet another horror fantasy. When her little sister claims she sees the dead, Alia consults a psychic, who opens her own eyes to the vengeful ghosts haunting their childhood home. The web series is slated to release on Netflix on September 28.



Retrograde on the iPhone

Does the hefty price tag of the latest iPhone make sense when there are older models available at a lesser cost in the market?

The \$1,100 price tag on Apple's latest iPhone turned heads when the company announced it last week. But for less than half as much, you can still get a good camera, a decent-sized screen and other popular features.

Just buy a two-year-old iPhone 7.

That phone was Apple's first to come with water resistance and its first to lose the standard headphone jack. Its 4.7-inch screen is adequate and on par with other smartphones, even though its resolution falls short of high definition. And the phone still has a fingerprint sensor and a home button, both of which have vanished in the latest iPhones.

Or, if you want to pay more for wireless charging, there's the iPhone 8. An edge-to-edge screen? You'll need the upcoming budget iPhone XR or one of its more expensive siblings. And if you want a supersized display, that's where the \$1,100 iPhone XS Max comes in. That model and a smaller version start selling in the U.S. and several other countries on Friday.

If you're shopping for a new phone, it pays to think hard about what you really want and what you're willing to pay for it. Improvements over the previous generation tend to be incremental, but can add up over time – and so do the sums you'll pay for them.

Here's what to consider if you're thinking of bargain-hunting in the iPhone history bin.

iPhone 7 (\$449)

The big jump in iPhone cameras came a generation earlier with the iPhone 6S, when Apple went from 8 megapixels to 12 megapixels in resolution. With the iPhone 7, the front camera goes from 5 megapixels to 7 megapixels, so selfies don't feel as inferior. Headphones go into its Lightning port, which is used for both charging and data transfer. It's a pain when you want to listen to music while recharging the phone. For that,



you need \$159 wireless earphones called AirPods. Apple no longer includes an adapter for standard headphones; one will set you back \$9 if you need it.

iPhone 7 PLUS (\$569)

This larger version of the iPhone 7 has a second camera lens in the back, allowing for twice the magnification without any degradation in image quality. It also lets the camera gauge depth and blur backgrounds in portrait shots, something once limited to full-featured SLR cameras. The dual-lens camera alone is a good reason to go for a Plus, though the larger size isn't a good fit for those with small hands or small pockets.

iPhone 8 (\$599)

New color filters in the camera produce truer and richer colors, while a new flash technique tries to light the foreground and background more evenly. Differences are subtle, though. The year-old model, similar in size to the iPhone 7, restores a glass back found in the earliest

iPhones. That's done so you can charge it on a wireless-charging mat, which also solves the problem of listening to music while charging. But with more glass, it's even more important to get a case and perhaps a service plan.

iPhone 8 PLUS (\$699)

Again, the Plus version has a larger screen and a second lens. For those shots with blurred backgrounds, a new feature lets you add filters to mimic studio and other lighting conditions.

iPhone XS (\$999)

As with the iPhone X it replaces, the new XS has a display that largely runs from edge to edge, getting rid of the surrounding bezel along with the home button. Many tasks now require swipes rather than presses. The fingerprint ID sensor is replaced with facial recognition to unlock the phone. The display has about the same surface area as the iPhone 7 Plus and 8 Plus, while the phone itself is only slightly larger than the regular

iPhone 7 and 8. Improved display technology means vivid colors and better contrasts, including black that is black rather than simply dark. You also get a dual-lens camera and software improvements for regular shots.

iPhone XS MAX (\$1,099)

This is essentially the "Plus" version of the iPhone XS. The phone itself is about the size of the Plus, but with more room for the display. This phone won't feel big for existing Plus users, but think twice if you have small hands or small pockets.

Coming soon

Consider waiting a month for the iPhone XR. Its display lacks the vivid colors, contrast quality and resolution of the XS, but the price tag is nicer at \$749. As with the XS models, you'll get an edge-to-edge screen to minimize wasted space. There's more display than the regular XS, but the phone itself is also larger – just not as large as the Max. The XR won't have the dual-lens camera, though Apple says it can offer the blurred-background effect with software.

While supplies last

Apple quietly discontinued the iPhone SE, which is essentially a three-year-old iPhone 6S, packed in a body that's smaller but thicker than the iPhone 7 and 8. Though the trend in phones has been to go bigger, some people preferred the smaller size – and the \$350 price tag. Apple no longer sells it, though you can get it from some wireless carriers and other retailers, at least for now.

All in the memory

If you get an SE, 7 or 7 Plus, consider spending another \$100 to quadruple the storage. Those phones come with a paltry 32 gigabytes, just half of what's standard these days. If you don't upgrade, you risk filling up your phone quickly with photos, video, songs and podcasts.

INCLUSIVITY IS THE CALL OF THE HOUR

Many organisations, which require a declaration of 'spouse' to provide medical or insurance coverage, are now altering it to 'partners.' This is a minor change but has set the ball rolling for the LGBTQ communities, says

SANJAY LAKHOTIA

India is currently going through a phase of historic inclusivity propelled by Supreme Court's verdict on Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code that now decriminalises homosexuality. Sexual orientation has been lawfully accepted as a natural phenomenon and thus any discrimination on these lines is deemed unconstitutional.

However, non-inclusivity of LGBTQ community in the public sphere has affected the economic statistics of the country to a great extent.

According to the Indian LGBT Workplace Climate Survey 2016, 48 per cent of LGBT Indians said they could be legally fired from their jobs for belonging to the community. Around 87 per cent do not have access to formal LGBT Employee Resource Groups within their organisation. The World Bank has further estimated that homophobia has cost India 31 billion dollars a year because of lower educational achievements and loss of labour productivity.

The law has been rightfully liberal in its outlook of treating the LGBTQ community with equality. Indian society has, in general, not been very accepting of or welcoming to people who are different in any manner. It is time for a change in the status quo and for us to begin respecting the right of an individual irrespective of any difference. One of the most important areas for this change is the workplace and creating an indiscriminately-inclusive work environment where equal work opportunities, promotions, insurance, wages, benefits and leaves are extended to the LGBTQ community as well — in short, inclusivity in everything from hiring to firing.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

In 2018, Accenture conducted a study of more than 22,000 men and women in 34 countries to identify the factors deemed necessary to thrive and advance at work. The survey identified 40 such factors including the freedom to be innovative and creative, employees never being asked to change their appearance to conform



to company culture and feeling comfortable reporting sex discrimination/sexual harassment(s) to the company. Employees are more likely to advance to a senior management position in organisations where these 40 factors are most common, irrespective of their orientation or any other differences. Such employees are also more satisfied with their careers and have greater career aspirations. Change can happen only when the mindset of people deviates from ignorance and narrow thoughts. A sense of understanding must be weaved into organisations to create a welcoming environment for the community — in fact, an environment where they are not treated as a separate community at all. Indian government and corporate entities are grad-

AROUND 80 PER CENT OF INDIA'S WORKFORCE FROM LGBTQ COMMUNITY HAVE REPORTED HOMOPHOBIC COMMENTS, GESTURES, OR EVEN PHYSICAL THREATS OF VIOLENCE

ually maturing in terms of moulding their HR policies to create such engaging environments.

For instance, most organisations require a declaration of 'spouse' to provide medical or insurance coverage. However, this terminology has been altered to 'partners' by some companies such as Microsoft, Citibank, Godrej, and Royal Bank of Scotland among others, transferring the benefits to same sex partners as well. Companies like Deutsche Bank and Bank of America Merrill Lynch are also determined to follow suit. Though this is a minor change but has set the ball rolling. Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction can make a world of difference rather than a big step in the wrong direction.

Organisations would do well to

implement clear anti-discrimination policies to ensure that all employees feel safe and comfortable. Research indicates that when clear instructions are given against stereotyping, it is effective in reducing even unconscious bias. It is prudent to include an equality statement in the company's mission and train staff on diversity and inclusion.

However, it is imperative to not become over-enthusiastic or arbitrary about the matter as the whole point of inclusivity can get lost in the grand scheme of things. For example, there should not be a cap on the number of people to be employed based on sexual orientation, caste, disabilities, color, etc. This then becomes akin to reservation and may start creating margins. The slate of recruitment and work environment must be plain and open to all with only one line of division — merit and skills.

THE COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

Justice Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud, during the judgment, rightly said, "It is difficult to right a wrong by history. But we can set the course for the future. This case involves much more than decriminalising homosexuality. It is about people wanting to live with dignity." It therefore becomes the responsibility of everybody involved in the workplace to create an atmosphere where people can live and breathe with dignity and respect in the air. A staggering 80 per cent of India's workforce belonging to the LGBTQ community have reported domination, homophobic comments, gestures, actions or even physical threats of violence, according to various surveys. These numbers reveal the true inequalities that the community has faced in the workplace alone.

Every individual in an organisation has a role to play in contributing to a welcoming and harmonious environment of equality and respect. It is our moral duty as human beings to make changes, whether big or small, towards the welfare of humanity and peace.

(The writer is the co-founder of Noble House Consulting Pte.)

Sow seeds of kindness

By sharing and using our inner virtues for others, we learn to value ourselves without comparing our contribution to that of others, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI



Mark Twain once said, "Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see." As dictionaries define, kindness is the virtue of showing love as well as having the qualities of a sympathetic, affectionate, warm-hearted and considerate nature. For many of us kindness may be a simple thing like saying 'please', 'thank you', 'excuse me', or 'I am sorry'. It could also be offering a helping hand, patiently waiting for your turn, returning a phone call or a favour, or even cheerfully responding to someone with a smile. As the Greek philosopher Sophocles said, kindness gives birth to kindness. Within each and every human is a mine of wonderful virtues and qualities, but they lie dormant in many of us. Valuing and using these virtues is the key to a fulfilled life. By reconnecting with and valuing these parts within us, we learn to see ourselves in the same way that divinity does. When we start sharing and using our inner virtues for others, we learn to value ourselves, without comparing our contribution to that of others.

Dalai Lama has said, "My religion is kindness." If anybody has ever felt a deep sense of satisfaction while being unconditionally kind to another person, then the person would know what the spiritual leader means by that phrase. If you are compassionate to others and also, most importantly, to yourselves, you plant kindness in the atmosphere as well. There is a difference between sharing joy and providing materialistic satisfaction. One must understand that donating money is valuable, but it is limited in terms of the benefit it might bring to our hearts and to that of others. On the other hand, by sharing what is good and true — love, joy and a sense of lightness — even with those in our immediate vicinity, the feeling that our life is valuable to the world, begins to grow. Kindness is a well of sustenance worth diving into each day. The nectar of kindness is a sanctuary for the heart and a refuge for peace of mind no matter how large or small the gift is.

Time teaches us to view ourselves with harshness. But unlike family, we can choose our teachers. We could either listen to the stories of our past or to our precious, often silenced voice and with love we could rekindle that inner sparkle which was lost due to confusion and lack of self-worth. But how can we reconnect with the voice inside without retreating to an isolated mountain-top escaping the noise of the madding crowd? It is very simple indeed. By gathering strength in silence, while meditating, we could learn to forgive the pebbles and express the jewels within, choose to live honestly with confidence rather than out of duty and become liberated from the sorrow which comes with our old thinking and self-restricting behaviours.

Dedicating a few minutes to meditation every day is a meaningful expression of caring for yourself that can help you move through the quagmire of feeling unworthy. Meditation enables a person to discover or re-discover the self and to have a channel for heart-to-heart communication with the Almighty. It enables a person to penetrate deeply and progressively into deeper levels of the mind and peep into the hidden world of reality. It involves the turning of a person's mind and the flow of their love in the direction of Almighty, giving them the hot-line to communicate with him.

Thus, it is a technique of self-exploration, leading to the experience of heightened and expanded awareness, reaching god and bringing him into the focus of the soul's awareness. The principal object of meditation is to bring the self in consciousness touch with Almighty, making it increasingly aware of its divine origin, destiny and peaceful nature. This practice of awareness opens greater orbits of being. One does not only get first-hand vision and experience of the ultimate truth and the reality behind all realities but also that one is not merely the creature but also creator of his environment.



As a 15-year-old, she convinced her parents not to marry her off so she could fulfill a childhood dream of becoming a doctor and treating the poor. Now, two years later, Priyanka Bauri strives to make other girls and their parents conscious of the perils of child marriage.

"I had stopped my own marriage by convincing my parents that I want to study and become a doctor. I would like to treat the downtrodden and neglected people. I told my mother that marrying early and conceiving early can be detrimental to our health," Bauri, now 17, confidently said.

Bauri, a resident of Neturia block in Parbatpur village of West Bengal's backward Purulia district, said her parents wanted her to get married at the age of 15 to fight against poverty. She made them understand that she wanted to study, which would enable her to look after the needs of the family.

"Now I make other girls understand," Bauri said.

She is not alone. Other brave girls, aided by UNICEF, have fought off marital atrocities to return to the world of

Journey of a rebel

As a 15-year-old from Bengal's Purulia, PRIYANKA BAURI stood fiercely against child marriage convincing her parents to not get her married off. Today she strives to make other girls and their parents conscious as well

books and lead by example in Purulia, where almost 38.3 per cent of young females get married before the age of 18. The female literacy rate in the district is an abysmal 50.52 per cent, a figure much lower than the state average of 70.54 per cent.

Nabami Besra and Renuka Majhi from the interiors of Purulia were forced to quit their studies and marry at tender ages. But neither of them tolerated the misbehaviour of their in-laws. They are now back with their parents and studying further.

"I want to be independent and join the police force," said Besra.

UNICEF, with the support



of the district administration, initiated the Adolescent Empowerment Program (AEP) to carry out various activities in 10 blocks and three municipalities of Purulia in 2015. These

programmes include empowerment through life skill education, promoting sports and self-defence, et al.

"I am amazed to see the awareness level among young

girls in Purulia. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 of the year 2015-16, shows the rate of child marriage in Purulia as 38.3 per cent, but I am sure the present data will show a decline as various government schemes are being implemented very effectively," said Mohammad Mohiuddin, chief of UNICEF's West Bengal unit.

Talking about proper execution of existing government policies, Swapnadeepa Biswas, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF, said, "There are lots of empowerment programmes, but what was needed was a holistic approach that took into account all factors — health, nutrition awareness,

the safety of oneself, education, earning a livelihood and maintaining of hygiene."

"There are initiatives for both boys and girls, but girls are given a little more support due to their social conditions," Biswas added.

For instance, the Kanyashree Football Tournament (KFT) initiated in 2015 helped in mobilising 5,400 Kanyashree girls from 183 Clubs.

"Through our Kanyashree Swabalambi project (Kanyashree self-dependence project) inaugurated in July 2017, we are providing training in tailoring, nursing, handicrafts, etc. We are coming up with buildings in each block headquarters named 'Kanyashree' where there will be books, computers with high-speed internet — and a training centre for vocational skills," District Magistrate Alokesh Prasad Roy said.

There will be dormitories for the ones who want to stay back if they get late, Roy added.

Kanyashree is a flagship scheme of West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee government aimed at improving the life and status of girls.

—IANS

“ Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land among the stars. — Les Brown ”

BREAST MILK BOOSTS BRAIN GROWTH

Premature babies fed with breast milk are more likely to have better brain development than those fed on formula milk, a new study has found. According to studies, pre-term birth is associated with changes in the part of the brain's structure that helps brain cells to communicate with one another, known as white matter. However, this research showed that pre-term babies who exclusively received breast milk for at least three-quarters of the days spent in hospital showed improved brain connectivity, compared to babies who consumed less. "Our findings suggest that brain development in the weeks after pre-term birth is improved in babies who receive greater amounts of breast milk," said James Boardman, director of the Jennifer Brown research laboratory at the University of Edinburgh.

NEW BATTERY MAY HELP CUT CO2 EMISSIONS

Researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have developed a new battery made partly from carbon dioxide captured from power plants. While still based on early-stage research and far from commercial deployment, this battery could continuously convert carbon dioxide into a solid mineral carbonate as it discharges, said the study published in the journal Joule. The researchers believe that the new battery formulation could open up new avenues for tailoring electrochemical carbon dioxide conversion reactions, which may ultimately help reduce the emission of the greenhouse gas into the atmosphere. The battery is made from lithium metal, carbon, and an electrolyte that the researchers designed.

NOVEL BLOOD TEST TO PREDICT AUTISM IN BABIES

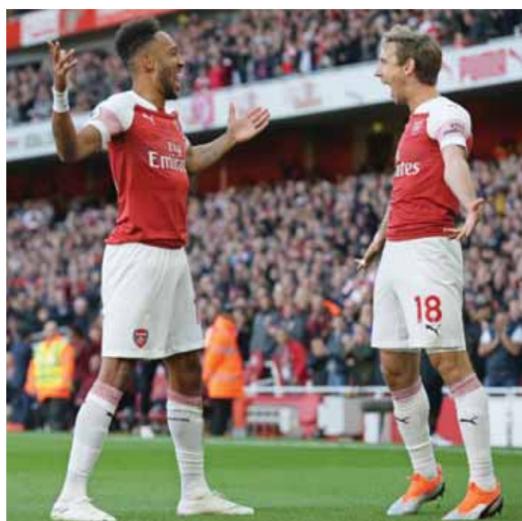
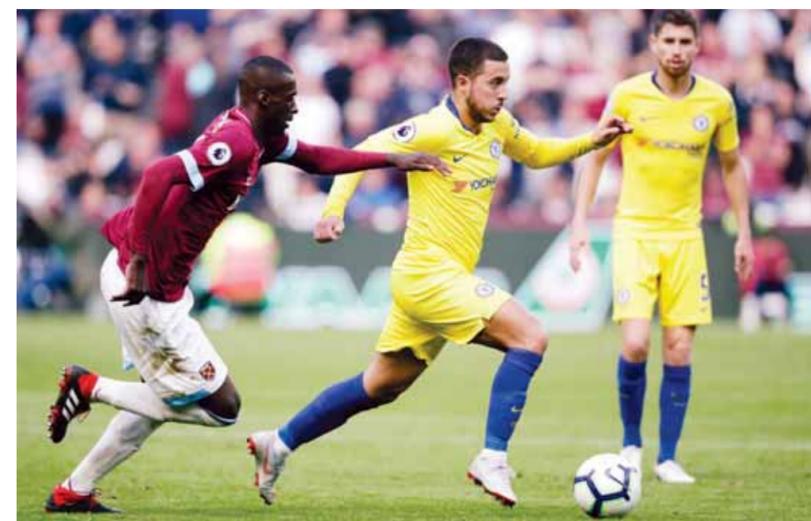
Researchers have developed a novel blood test for pregnant mothers that can, with nearly 90 per cent accuracy rate, predict the probability of having a child that will be diagnosed with autism. According to studies, if a mother has previously had a child with autism, the risk of having a second child with the developmental disorder is approximately 18.7 per cent, whereas the risk in the general population is approximately 1.7 per cent. In the study, led by Juergen Hahn, professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, pregnant mothers were measured to determine whether or not the risk of having a child with autism could be predicted by her metabolic profile. The results in the Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders showed that while it isn't possible to determine if a child will be diagnosed with autism by the age of 3, the differences in the plasma metabolites are indicative of the relative risk.

GENETIC DISORDER SPOT IN HUMANS

US researchers have identified a new genetic disorder, which was previously described in animal models, in a human patient. Researchers from the Michigan State University found that the disorder is caused by mutations in a gene known as ornithine decarboxylase 1 (ODC1). It is defined by a number of clinical features including large birth weight, enlarged head size, hair loss, reduced muscle strength, skin lesions, hearing loss and developmental delays. "This remarkable case represents the first human example of a disorder that was described by researchers in a transgenic mouse model more than 20 years ago," said Andre Bachmann, professor at the varsity. The disorder was first identified on an 11-month-old baby girl in Michigan.

INSULIN TREATS BOWEL INFLAMMATION

Insulin, which plays a key role in managing blood sugar, also has potential against colitis — a chronic bowel inflammation, finds a study. The study, conducted on mice, showed that chronic bowel inflammation can be treated effectively by injecting insulin into the rectum. Insulin works because it activates a gene inside the bowel cells, which has an antioxidant effect and thus may be able to protect the bowel cells from inflammation. "Existing treatments attack the bowel's immune system, dampening it, instead our method strengthens the bowel cells' own defence. It appears to work equally well, and it can probably be used in combination with existing treatments," said Jorgen Olsen, professor at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.



Good day for Madrid

AFP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid moved top of La Liga after Raul Garcia's goal proved the difference in a scrappy 1-0 win over Espanyol.

Their victory at the Santiago Bernabeu may only give Madrid 24 hours above Barcelona, who play Girona with their perfect record still intact.

More pressing for Julen Lopetegui will be the defensive slackness that made this arguably the least assured of the six competitive games he has overseen so far, including last weekend's draw away to Athletic Bilbao.

There were changes, with Gareth Bale, Marcelo and Dani Carvajal all rested, the latter not even included on the bench, following Real's win over Roma in the Champions League on Wednesday.

But if they gift Atletico Madrid the same chances in the city derby next weekend, they may not find their opponents so generous. Atletico had earlier ground out a 2-0 win away to Getafe.

"The game was nervous and in the last 15 minutes we lacked control," Lopetegui said.

"These post-Champions League games are always really dangerous and we know it."

Carvajal's absence meant a debut for Alvaro Odriozola, who joined from Real Sociedad in the summer, while Thibaut Courtois replaced Keylor Navas to continue Lopetegui's rotation strategy in goal.

Espanyol twice could have scored on the counter-attack. The first sprung from a poor header from Raphael Varane but Pablo Piatti dragged his finish wide.

Soon after they were in again, as Hernan Perez's shot had to be parried by Courtois and Didac Vila's rebound blocked by Casemiro.

The hosts were more impressive going forward and in the 41st minute, they took the lead.

Luka Modric's scuffed shot landed kindly at the feet of Asensio and he did brilliantly to harpoon the ball into the far corner.

Referee Mateu Lahoz ruled the goal out for offside but Real were saved by VAR and then later the crossbar, as Borja Iglesias' scooped finish was denied late on.

"We are not going to win 5-0 every game," Varane said.

LEMAR LIFTS ATLETICO

Atletico's victory was more comfortable and they had Thomas Lemar



Marco Asensio, left, celebrates next to Javi Lopez after scoring his side's first goal against Espanyol

to thank after the Frenchman scored his first goal for the club and instigated another against Getafe.

The result was all but secure when Getafe's Ivan Alejo was sent off shortly after the hour for a dangerous tackle on Saul Niguez.

Atleti had not lost to Getafe, or even conceded a single goal, in 13 previous meetings but victory meant more to Diego Simeone's side after just one win from their opening four league games.

This was also the first time Lemar looked like the player Atletico must have hoped they bought when they spent 72 million euros (\$84 million) on him in the summer.

"It's something big, I will never forget it," Lemar said.

"The coach trusts me and it's the least I can do to repay his faith."

The first goal was almost a cracker as Lemar collected the ball off Antoine Griezmann 30 yards out and let rip with his left foot. Soria was beaten but the crossbar was not, and it needed an unfortunate deflection of the goalkeeper to find the net.

There was no doubt about the second after half-time. A sweeping move saw Atletico move the ball from right to left, with Koke applying the final pass in behind. Lemar touched it around Soria and made no mistake.



LaLiga

ARSENAL CRUISE, CHELSEA STUMBLE

Lacazette, Aubameyang score for Gunners in 2-0 win against Everton, Chelsea play draw

AFP ■ LONDON

Alexandre Lacazette fired Arsenal to a fourth successive Premier League win as the French forward's superb strike inspired a hard-fought 2-0 success against Everton on Sunday.

Unai Emery's side rode their luck in the first half at the Emirates Stadium as Everton wasted a host of chances to punish a sloppy opening from the Gunners.

But Lacazette ensured that lethargic spell wouldn't prove costly when he smashed a sublime opener in the second half.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang doubled Arsenal's lead moments later when the Gabon forward was allowed to slot home despite being clearly offside.

That controversial effort shattered Everton's resolve as Arsenal celebrated a flattering victory that lifted them to sixth place in the Premier League.

The north Londoners have now won their last five games in all competitions, yet, not for the first time, this was a far from convincing display.

A first clean sheet of the Emery era was

a welcome sight for the Arsenal manager, but he will know there is still plenty of room for improvement in all areas.

Everton, without a win in their last 25 visits to Arsenal, could consider themselves unlucky, but their first half profligacy proved decisive.

Marco Silva's team have lost their last two matches and have won only one of their six league games this season.

WEST HAM HOLD CHELSEA

Chelsea dropped their first points of the season on Sunday as West Ham held Maurizio Sarri's team to a 0-0 draw at the London Stadium.

Chelsea had won all five of their Premier League matches before the weekend, going toe to toe with Liverpool, who won again on Saturday to make it six wins out of six.

The visitors dominated possession at the home of their London rivals but failed to create many clear-cut chances and had to deal with West Ham's constant threat on the break.

Olivier Giroud won his battle with

Alvaro Morata for a starting spot up front for Chelsea, keeping his place for the second Premier League match in succession.

But Marko Arnautovic, West Ham's leading goalscorer this season, missed out after failing to recover from an injury he sustained against Everton last week.

Chelsea enjoyed more than 70 percent of possession in the first half but West Ham were dangerous when they were able to break out, Michail Antonio proving a real handful.

After a cagey opening spell, Chelsea established control but the home side could have taken a lead against the run of play just before the half hour.

Felipe Anderson was quick to seize on a loose ball and played in Antonio, who blasted over with his left foot.

That chance breathed new life into the home crowd and the players and Antonio drew a smart save from Kepa Arrizabalaga in the West Ham goal just two minutes later after a fine run from Andriy Yarmolenko.

As the sun came out at the London Stadium, Chelsea again established control and nearly took the lead when N'Golo

Kante headed wide.

The match fell into a similar pattern in the second half, Chelsea searching for openings around the West Ham box but Felipe Anderson and Yarmolenko looked dangerous when the home side broke forward.

The home side dealt well with the threat of Willian and Eden Hazard and Giroud -- picked for his more physical threat -- struggled to make a big impression on the game.

The Frenchman was replaced 20 minutes into the second half by Morata, who went close to breaking the deadlock moments after coming on only to see Lukasz Fabianski pull off a stunning stop from close range.

But with about 13 minutes to go West Ham had a wonderful chance to win the match, when the unmarked Yarmolenko headed just wide at the far post after a cross by Robert Snodgrass.

Fabianski pulled off another fine save as the clock ticked into injury time, diving to his left to deny substitute Ross Barkley and Willian blazed wide as Chelsea applied intense late pressure.



Premier League

SINGLES

FRUSTRATED IBRA COY ON GALAXY FUTURE

LOS ANGELES: Zlatan Ibrahimovic plans to discuss his future with Los Angeles Galaxy chiefs after a frustrating first season in Major League Soccer. Swedish star Ibrahimovic has made a prolific start to his MLS career, scoring 17 goals in 22 games since joining the Galaxy from Manchester United in March. However the 36-year-old striker's efforts have not been enough to transform the Galaxy's fortunes, with the club languishing in the bottom half of the Western Conference and struggling to make the playoffs. Ibrahimovic, who has a contract through the 2019 season, was reluctant to confirm his plans for next year, according to comments in the Los Angeles Times. "I don't know. This I have to discuss," Ibrahimovic said when asked about 2019. "This is not the moment to talk about that. It's something I'll discuss with the club. What they want, what I want. So let's see."

JAMES STARS IN 2-0 WIN OVER SCHALKE

BERLIN: The Colombian James Rodriguez scored the first goal for Bayern and provoked the penalty that led to the second, scored by Robert Lewandowski, in a 2-0 home stadium victory over Schalke that put the Bavarians on top of the Bundesliga. Coach Niko Kovac showed once more how much he believes in rotating his players and made four changes in the starting lineup on Saturday from the one that downed home-team Benfica in the Champions League. James was first on the scoreboard in the eighth minute with a header that turned a right-side corner kick by Joshua Kimmich into a goal. And then in the second half Bayern slightly outpaced its rival, and at 63rd minute the Colombian player was knocked down inside the box by Alexander Schopf, after which Lewandowski converted the penalty kick into the final score of the game that ended with a 2-0 victory of Bayern over Schalke.

MARADONA SUFFERS FIRST DEFEAT

OAXACA: The Oaxaca Alebrijes edged the Sinaloa Dorados 1-0 in Mexican Second-Division football action, handing the squad its first loss under Argentine legend Diego Armando Maradona. Emilio Sanchez scored the match's lone goal for Oaxaca in the 27th minute on Saturday, taking advantage of a Dorados squad that seemed to be out of synch. Manager Ricardo Rayas's Alebrijes dominated the middle of the field in the first half, controlling the ball against the Dorados. Sanchez scored off a pass from Edgar Alafitta, catching the Sinaloa goalkeeper out of position. On Wednesday, Sinaloa will play Queretaro in the Copa MX round of 16 and will take on the Leones Negros on September 29. On September 17, Ecuadorian Vinicio Angulo scored three goals in Sinaloa's 4-1 blowout of Tapachula, making the club's debut under Maradona a success.

WOODS TAKES 3-SHOT LEAD AT TOUR C'SHIP

ATLANTA: Tiger Woods is one round away from ending his five-year victory drought after storming into a three-shot lead on day three of the Tour Championship here Saturday. Woods, 42 looked in a class of his own as he carded a five-under-par 65 to leave himself on 12 under for the tournament at Atlanta's East Lake Golf Club. After an opening birdie on the par-four first, Woods went surging clear of the field with a run of five straight birdies from the third hole. The run came with a mix of superb iron play and rock-solid putting, including a 21-foot birdie putt on the fourth. There was also a moment of magic from the former world number one on the seventh, when he drilled a 172-yard approach shot to five feet and then tapped in for birdie. He was denied a bigger lead after bogeys on the ninth and 16th holes. "I got off to a nice start and made some nice putts. Good Lord," Woods said afterwards. A Woods victory would be an 80th PGA Tour triumph and take him to within two wins of Sam Snead's all-time 82 Tour victories.

Agencies

Insigne bags brace, setback for Roma

AFP ■ MILAN

Lorenzo Insigne bagged a brace to inspire Napoli to a 3-1 win over Torino and join Juventus at the top of Serie A on Sunday, as Roma plunged further into crisis with a 2-0 loss at Bologna.

Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli have 12 points from five games, equal with champions Juventus who can pull ahead again when they travel to promoted Frosinone.

But Roma coach Eusebio Di Francesco is under increasing pressure after a fourth league game without a win sees last year's third-placed team slump to 12th with five points from as many games.

Federico Mattiello and Federico Santander scored in either half to give Bologna, who occupy the first relegation spot of 18th position, their first goals and win of the season.

"I'm not the type to look for excuses, I need solutions and I can not find them," said Di Francesco.

"The facts condemn us, they condemn me."

In Turin, Ancelotti switched things around following Napoli's uninspiring goalless draw at Red Star Belgrade in the Champions League midweek.

Insigne played a more central role along with Dries Mertens as defender Sebastiano Luperto got his first start for the Serie A runners-up.

"I'm satisfied, we dominated in Belgrade but we couldn't finish things off like we did today," said Ancelotti.

"Insigne was decisive, but everyone put in a strong performance."

The Italian international got the first after just four minutes when poor Torino defending saw Emiliano Moretti clear to Nicolas N'Koulou with the rebound favouring Insigne, who finished off under the crossbar.

Simone Verdi added the second with a half-volley on 20 minutes, with Torino pulling one back



after the break when Andrea Belotti slotted in a penalty.

But Insigne restored Napoli's two-goal lead after 59 minutes when a Jose Callejon shot bounced off the inside of the far post and into the path of the Italian forward. It gives Napoli a boost ahead

of next week's trip to reigning seven-time champions Juventus.

"We won there last season and still finished second," said Insigne.

"If we don't win the midweek game with Parma, then the result with Juve is irrelevant, so we have to take it one at a time."

Torino are in 13th position with five points from as many games.

'NO INNER FIRE'

In Bologna, Roma plunged further into crisis after a summer which saw Di Francesco's side lose

goalkeeper Alisson to Liverpool with midfielders Radja Nainggolan and Kevin Strootman also exiting the Italian capital.

Mattiello curled in Bologna's first goal of the season after 36 minutes with Paraguayan Santander adding the second after 59 minutes.

Roma — last year's Champions League semi-finalists — also fell 3-0 at Real Madrid midweek, and have not won a league game since their first game against Torino. "There's no inner fire," lamented the Roma coach. "Something is wrong."

Next weekend Roma face bitter city rivals Lazio, who saw off Genoa 4-1 on Sunday with Ciro Immobile scoring a double, to move up to fifth place.

Before the derby Roma will try to boost morale against Frosinone midweek with Lazio heading to Udinese, who won 2-0 at Chievo.

Inter Milan snatched a late 1-0 win against Sampdoria in Genoa on Saturday to move up to ninth.

Match against China kind of game we need: Constantine

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India football team head coach Stephen Constantine is upbeat about his side's international friendly against China next month, saying a match against a strong side would help them prepare well for next year's Asian Cup.

India are scheduled to clash with China in an international friendly on October 13 at the Suzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium at Suzhou City, Jiangsu province.

"China are a strong team and the match will be a tough test for us. But we need to play these sort of games right now. Getting to play under pressure is important and an away fixture in China is exactly the kind of game we need," Constantine said.

"Hopefully, everyone stays free from injury as it's going to be an important game for the build-up to the AFC Asian Cup in January," he added.

This is the first time ever that an Indian senior national team will be travelling to China. The two nations have till now faced 17 times, all on Indian soil — the last being 21 years ago for the Nehru Cup in Kochi in 1997.



Stephen Constantine speaks during press conference

India are yet to win a match against China. Out of the past 17 matches, 12 have gone in favour of China while the remaining five were drawn.

All India Football Federation (AIFF) General Secretary Kunal Das said that the fixture will give an idea of their preparations to the team.

"Playing against China in China is a perfect way to gear up for the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019. China are a supremely talented side and it will provide us an opportunity to further gauge ourselves where we stand prior to the Continental Championships."

Neymar gets PSG back on track

AFP ■ PARIS

From a deeper than usual playmaker role Brazil's Neymar pulled the strings as Paris Saint-Germain came from behind to beat Rennes 3-1 in Ligue 1 on Sunday helping to dispel midweek memories of a European flop at Liverpool.

Hosts Rennes took a surprise 11th minute lead when PSG midfielder Adrien Rabiot nodded past his own 'keeper Gianluigi Buffon from a corner before goals from Angel di Maria, Thomas Meunier and Eric Maxim Chupot-Moting gave them a hard-fought sixth straight Ligue 1 win.

PSG critics had suggested the French giants had overspent on strikers and forgotten about the midfield after a tame 3-2 defeat in the Champions League at Anfield this week.

With superstar striker Kylian Mbappe banned after his red card there was room for both Di Maria and



Neymar, right, and Rame Bensebaini vie for the ball during their Ligue 1 match. AP

German winger Julian Draxler in the starting line up with Neymar pulled into the No 10 position, where his passes were a sight to behold, behind Edinson Cavani.

A young fan ran onto the pitch as Neymar was leav-

ing as a late sub and the youngster crumpled in tears as his hero hugged him and gave him his shirt in touching scenes bound to glorify the former Barcelona striker when they go viral on social media.

DI MARIA CRACKER

After Rabiot's earlier upset Neymar seemed to be at the origin of almost everything the visitors threw at Rennes including when Cavani hit the post from a sumptuous set up.

On the stroke of half time Draxler cut back from the by-line and Cavani dummied setting up di Maria to crack a precise jab into the bottom right-hand corner from a good 25 metres out.

The 26-year-old Neymar was at the origin of both Meunier's go ahead goal on 61 and for Chupo-Moting's first goal for the Parisians since joining from Stoke.

Buffon had his work cut out in the second half as Rennes playmaker Clement Grenier fed the speedy Senegalese striker M'Baye Niang and the 20-year-old Ismaila Sarr.

Rennes coach Sabri Lamouchi threw on ex-PSG midfielder Hatem Ben Arfa for one last roll of the dice but PSG went home with all three points and ideas about a new format for coach Thomas Tuchel.

PTI ■ DUBAI

MALIK TAKES PAK TO 237

Shoaib-Sarfraz add 107 runs for 4th wicket to help Pakistan post fighting total against India in super four clash

Pakistan produced an improved batting performance, led by India's nemesis Shoaib Malik, scoring 237 for 7 in a 'Super Four' encounter of the Asia Cup here on Sunday.

Chasing the target of 238 runs set by Pakistan to win super four game and seal final spot of the Asia Cup tournament, Indian openers started with a bang once again adding 85 runs without loss in 17 overs.

Skipper Rohiti Sharma is batting 39 of 49 deliveries, while his opening partner and deputy Shikhar Dhawan was hammering Pakistani bowlers by scoring 45 of 53 balls.

Unlike the previous time the two sides face each other, on this occasion Dhawan, who had a forgetful outing in England Test series dominated the possession with his beautiful stroke play and didn't allow Pakistan's bowlers to take early breakthroughs and gain command.

Dhawan smashed 6 fours during his innings, while his destructive partner and skipper Rohit after a slow start picked up momentum and has smashed four boundaries and a six to Shaheen Afridi in his third over.

At the end of 17 overs, India look pretty comfortable in their run chase while Pakistan bowler seems to struggle to get breakthroughs.

At the end of one third of India's inning, India still need 153 runs to win the match in remaining 33 overs and the way the side is cruising it looks a no difficult task.

Also the credit for this scoreline goes to Pakistan's poor display of fielding, who dropped three chances to dismiss the opening pair. Had anyone of the three utilised the situation could have been different.

Pakistan's Mohammed Amir once again failed to pick early wickets that could have helped his side to get momentum but not just he but the other two pacers Hasan Ali and Shaheen Afridi also were unable to leave any special impression.

Earlier, Veteran Malik scored 78 off 90 balls and added an invaluable 107 runs for the fourth wicket with skipper Sarfraz Ahmed (44 off 66 balls) to enable Pakistan post a fighting total.

The Pakistan innings could be segregated into three distinct parts. A slow start where India made inroads followed by solid middle-overs batting before failing to utilise the launch pad fully with Jasprit Bumrah

(2/29 in 10 overs) being brilliant at the death.

India once again started well with Mahendra Singh Dhoni's penchant for getting DRS reviews right after Yuzvendra Chahal (2/46 in 9 overs) got his first wicket by trapping Imam ul Haq (10) in front of the stumps.

Fakhar Zaman (31) was set but lost his footing trying to sweep Kuldeep Yadav (2/41 in 10 overs) to get leg before. The replays showed that the ball hit his gloves first but Pakistan didn't take a review.

Babar Azam was run-out when his skipper got a call for single wrong as Pakistan were reduced to 58 for three.

However it was the Malik-Sarfraz combination that provided the launch pad with their sensible approach during the middle overs.

The seasoned duo kept on rotating the strike, hitting the boundaries and sixes whenever given an opportunity.

Malik, who is a master player of spin bowling, hit Yuzvendra Chahal for a slog sweep and also played Kedar Jadhav (0/20 in 3 overs) well. Jadhav was hit for a couple of boundaries in a single over as he dropped short.

Without trying to defend, Malik-Sarfraz got singles at will against Jadhav, prompting Rohit to take him off attack after only three overs.

Ravinda Jadeja (0/50 in 9 overs) after a good match against Bangladesh was flat and Malik used his feet to perfection lofting him straight into the VIP stands for a six.

Sarfraz, who played second fiddle to perfection was finally dismissed when he



Kuldeep Yadav, third right, celebrates with teammates after dismissing Fakhar Zaman

tried to hit Kuldeep over cover only to be snapped by Rohit Sharma.

Malik was joined by Asif Ali (30 off 21 balls), who teed off by smashing Bhuvneshwar Kumar for two sixes and a boundary in the 42nd over, that fetched Pakistan 22 runs.

However, there was another twist left as Jasprit Bumrah, coming back for his final spell got an inside edge off Malik's bat to get him caught behind. His innings had four boundaries and two sixes.

Asif, who looked like cutting loose, missed a googly from Chahal to get bowled

as Pakistan lost the momentum.

Bumrah was phenomenal at the death, bowling block-hole deliveries at will. In all he bowled 39 dot balls in his 10 overs and Pakistan could score only 38 runs in their last seven overs.

BRIEF SCORES

Pakistan 237/7 in 50 overs (Shoaib Malik 78, Sarfraz Ahmed 44; Yuzvendra Chahal 2/46, Kuldeep Yadav 2/41, Jasprit Bumrah 2/29).

India 85 for no loss in 17 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 45, Rohit Sharma 39).



Pakistan's captain Sarfraz Ahmed, left, hugs to congratulate teammate Shoaib Malik on scoring fifty runs during the Asia Cup super four match against India on Sunday

B'desh manage 249/7 after poor start

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Afghanistan bowlers could not capitalise on a dominant start upfront and allowed Bangladesh to score a competitive 249 for seven with Mahmudullah and Imrul Kayes repairing the innings with fighting half-centuries in an Asia Cup Super Four match, here on Sunday.

Mahmudullah (74) and Kayes (72 not out), playing his first ODI in almost a year, shared a 128-run stand for the fifth wicket to lift their side from a precarious 87 for five after electing to bat.

The inexperience of Afghan bowlers showed yet again as they allowed the rivals to free themselves from their clutches.

Mahmudullah played aggressive after completing his 20th ODI, twice lofting star Afghan spinner Rashid Khan over the ropes.

Rashid was well handled by the two batsmen. He could get only one wicket today and gave away 46 runs in his 10 overs. It was key in Bangladesh's revival.

Mahmudullah's knock came off 81 balls with three fours and two sixes while left-hander Kayes consumed 89 balls for his calculative unbeaten knock, which had six shots to the fence.

The partnership broke towards the end of the innings when pacer Aftab Alam had Mahmudullah



Mahmudullah bats during his 74 runs innings against Afghanistan on Sunday

caught by Rashid.

At the top, only Liton Das could make his presence felt with a 41-run innings whiler Mushfiqur Rahim (33) frittered away a good start by running himself out.

The pace trio of Aftab Alam, Mubeen ur Rahamn and Gulbadin Naib had succeeded in straight-jacketing Bangladesh batsmen, keeping them under a tight leash with disciplined line and length.

Alam got the better of Nazmul Hossain (6) while Mohammad

Mithun (1) was done in by Mubeen ur Rahman.

Boundaries were far and few. Making it tougher for the Bangladesh was some terrific fielding by the gritty Afghans.

After the top-order was removed, run outs of Shakib ul Hasan (0) and Rahim only added to their woes.

However, Mahmudullah and Kayes ensured that the minnows do not take advantage of a brilliant start.

Shreyas, Shaw derail Railways

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Shreyas Iyer and Prithvi Shaw hit blistering hundreds to help Mumbai pile on 400 for five in fifty overs and defeat Railways by 173 runs on Sunday to record a third successive win in the Vijay Hazare Trophy here.

After opting to bat, it was a dominant show from Mumbai. Iyer (144 in 118 balls) and Shaw (129 in 81 balls) brutally punished a listless Railways attack.

After that they bundled out the opposition for 227 in 42.4 overs, with Shams Mulani returning with figures of 3-26.

Mumbai is only the second side in domestic cricket to record 400 or plus score after Madhya Pradesh's 412/6 versus Railways in 2010.

After Mumbai skipper Ajinkya Rahane (3) departed early, it was the Iyer-Shaw duo who stole the limelight at the famed M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

While Iyer smashed eight fours and ten sixes, teen-sensation Shaw had 14 fours and six other hits over the fence. The two conjured a 161-run stand for the second wicket to lay foundation for a big total.

18-year-old Shaw, who missed a hundred by a whisker in the first game, completed his maiden List-A century for Mumbai. And it just took 61 balls for the right-handed Shaw to complete his breath-taking hundred.

After Shaw departed, Iyer continued the onslaught before being caught by Harsh Tyagi off Anupreet Singh. Experienced Surya Kumar Yadav (67) and Siddesh Lad (30 not out) helped Mumbai reach the 400-run mark.



Shreyas Iyer and Prithvi Shaw during DD practice session

It was an uphill task for Railways and they were never in the fray. They kept losing wickets at regular intervals before being bundled out for 227.

Railways skipper Saurabh Wakaskar (48), Prashant Awasthi (41) and Ankit Yadav (35 not out) showed some resistance, but that wasn't enough to take their side home. In the first two games, Mumbai had defeated Baroda by

SAURASHTRA, KERALA WIN RAIN-HIT MATCHES

NEW DELHI: Saurashtra defeated Hyderabad by seven wickets via VJD method in a rain-hit Group B match of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Sunday.

Pacer Jaydev Unadkat picked up four wickets helping Saurashtra limit to 196 for nine in 45 overs. Bavanaka Sandeep top-scored for Hyderabad with 76 and Kolla Sumanth contributed with 47.

Set a revised target of 110 runs in 20 overs due to rain, Saurashtra had little difficulty in getting home. They completed the task in 18.5 overs with opener Robin Uthappa scoring 35.

In another rain-hit Group B match, Kerala beat Chattisgarh by six wickets via VJD method at the Ferozshah Kotla.

All-rounder Jalaj Saxena picked up four wickets with his off-spin as Kerala skittled out Chattisgarh for 138 in 39.5 overs. Set a revised target of 133 from 45 overs, Kerala eased to victory in 40 overs with the loss of four wickets. Saxena also starred with the bat, scoring an unbeaten 58 off 120 balls.

nine wickets and Karnataka by 88 runs, respectively.

In the other two Elite Group A matches, Himachal Pradesh put on a splendid performance to outclass Goa by four wickets in a low-scoring match at Alur.

Riding on Ankit Bawne's unbeaten hundred and Satyajeet Bachchav's five-wicket-haul, Maharashtra defeated Punjab by 94 runs in Bengaluru.

Pliskova upsets Osaka to win Tokyo crown

AFP ■ TOKYO

Naomi Osaka's dominant run came to an end on Sunday in a 6-4, 6-4 loss to fourth-seeded Karolina Pliskova in the final of the Pan Pacific Open.

Playing in her first tournament since upsetting Serena Williams to win the US Open on Sept 8, third-seeded Osaka hadn't dropped a set previous to Sunday's final but was frustrated from the outset by the big-serving Czech player.

Pliskova came into Sunday's final having won her last four dating to the Brisbane International in January 2017 - and kept that streak alive while putting an end to Osaka's 10-match winning streak.

Pliskova needed three dramatic sets in each of her matches to reach her second final of the season.

Osaka started well with a pair of aces to win the opening game but Pliskova won her first break point of the match and took a 3-2 lead.

The 20-year-old local favorite was barely tested in her first three matches of the tournament but faced a much sterner challenge against Pliskova.

The frustration boiled over when Osaka double faulted in the ninth game of the second set to set up Pliskova's second break. The 20-year-old tossed her racket to the ground before collecting her composure, but it was too



Pliskova and Osaka holding trophies.

Despite being encouraged by the sold-out crowd at Tachikawa Arena, Osaka wasn't able to stage a comeback. She finished with 26 unforced errors and admitted to being exhausted after the match.

"I've literally never felt more tired in my entire life," Osaka said. "To play the final of the US Open and then to come here, I think I did pretty well. So if there is anything I can take from this it is that I am proud of myself."

Federer, Zverev put Europe on top

AFP ■ CHICAGO

Kevin Anderson avenged a Wimbledon finals loss to Novak Djokovic as Team World dominated the night session Saturday to climb back into contention at the 2018 Laver Cup.

Anderson's surprise win, combined with a doubles victory by World's Jack Sock and Nick Kyrgios over Grigor Dimitrov and David Goffin, slashed Europe's overall lead to 7-5 heading into Sunday's third and final day of the exhibition tournament.

Earlier Saturday, Roger Federer and Alexander Zverev powered Europe into a commanding 7-1 lead by winning their singles matches to set a daunting task for the underdog World team in Chicago.

South Africa's Anderson got the fight back started by upsetting reigning Wimbledon and US Open champ Djokovic 7-6, 5-7, 10-6 to earn two points for Team World at the United Center arena.

"We've had some really close matches that haven't gone our way and I really wanted to put us back in there," said Anderson.

"It's not easy playing one of the best players of all time, but what an amazing atmosphere."

"It's just fantastic, for so many reasons. I felt I played a great match - beating Novak on any stage



Roger Federer in action on the tennis court.

is great and here in Chicago makes it extra special."

Under the scoring system for the Laver Cup, victories on day two are worth two points each, with victories on day three rising to three points.

Djokovic, who was making his Laver Cup singles debut, partnered with Roger Federer in doubles on Friday night where they lost to Anderson and Sock.

Heading into Saturday's match, 14-time grand slam winner Djokovic held a 6-1 career advantage, including a 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/3) win over Anderson in July at Wimbledon. This was Anderson's first singles win over Djokovic in a decade.

On Saturday, they played the fourth 10 point tiebreaker of the tournament and it was the first win for Team World. Under the format being used for the tournament, a tiebreak is used instead of a decisive third set.

FEDERER ON FIRE

World number two Roger Federer was barely ruffled as he cruised to a 6-3, 6-2 win over Kyrgios.

"I felt good from the beginning of the match and that's not usual," said Federer. "Usually you need matches to get going and play your best in the third round or quarters of a tournament."

Earlier, Zverev saved a match point to defeat John Isner in day two's opening singles rubber.

Zverev, 21, dug deep to hold off the big-serving Isner to win 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 10-7.

Ginting, Marin finish best in China

AFP ■ CHANGZHOU

Japan's Kento Momota suffered a shock loss in China on Sunday as he was bested by Indonesia's Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in just two sets.

The third seed, who took the Japan Open title on home ground last week, was beaten by world number 13 Ginting 23-21, 21-19.

In a closely fought final, Momota had been leading in early moments but Ginting persisted to bring the score to 21-all.

The first game ended in an epic rally that saw Momota diving to save a shot right at the net — but Ginting placed his return at the back of the court.

The 22-year-old went on to comfortably take the second game, collapsing in joy when a miss by Momota sealed his win.

Ginting last beat Momota at the Asian Games in Jakarta last month. His spirited takedown of reigning Olympic champion Chen Long also gave the Games some of its most riveting badminton.

Indonesia's newest poster boy has already gained a reputation as a giant slayer — en route to the final, he beat top seed Viktor Axelsen, number six Chen Long and number five Chou Tien Chen.

The men's doubles was won by



Ginting and Marin holding trophies.

the Danish duo of Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen, who beat Chinese duo Han Chengkai and Zhou Haodong in a three-game match, 21-13, 17-21, 21-14.

Spain's Carolina Marin beat China's Chen Yufei 21-18, 21-13 in 47 minutes to take the women's singles title.

An all-Japanese women's doubles final saw Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi defeat newly-crowned world champions Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara.

The badminton fraternity has also been reacting to Saturday's revelation that one of its biggest stars, Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei, has early-stage nose cancer and is being treated in Taiwan.