



କୁନ୍ତ ଏନର୍ ସେସ ବାବଦରେ ୫୦,୦୦୦ କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କା ନେଲା କେନ୍ଦ୍ରର ବିଜେପି ସରକାର

ସେବିକିରେ ପାଇଥାନେ

ସବୁ ପିଲା ମାଗଣା ଶିକ୍ଷା

ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ମିଳିଥାନ୍ତା ‘ଆହାର’

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଉପକୂଳରେ

କରାଯାଇ ପାରିଥାନ୍ତା ୧୦ଟି ନୂଆ ବନ୍ଦର

ହଟିଯାଇଥାନ୍ତା ବେରୋଜଗାରୀ

ମିଳିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ ଖାଲି

ପ୍ରତାରଣା, ଧୂଆଁ ଆଉ ପ୍ରଦୂଷଣ



‘ଶେଷ ନିଶ୍ଚାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମୋର ଲଢ଼େଇ ଜାରି ରହିବ ।’

ନବ୍ନିଧି ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକୀ



‘ଶଙ୍କା’ ଚିହ୍ନରେ ଭୋଟ ଦେବା । ଦୁଇଥର ।
ଥରେ ଏମ୍.ପି. ପାଇଁ । ଥରେ ଏମ୍.଎ଲ୍.ଏ ପାଇଁ ।

Faulty EVMs at many booths delay polling

Voters boycott polls at 2 booths in Loisinga

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Voting was delayed at several booths in the State due to technical glitches marked in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMS) during the second phase of polls held on Thursday.

While voters turned to booths and stood in queues with all eagerness to exercise franchise in Sundargarh district, it was reported that EVMs were not functioning at booths at Talsara, Bonai, Kendudihi, Fakirmunda, Chhidakud,



Usukujula and Khalasaghat.

The glitches in EVMs caused delay in voting at Booth No. 204 and 205 in Sargarpalli of Subarnapur district, Booth No. 113 and 101 in Phullbani,

two booths in Buguda and Booth No. 196 in Hinjili.

Similarly, the EVMs were found non-functional in Booth

No. 65 and 68 in Balangir, Booth No. 158 in Aska and Booth No. 179 in G Udayagiri and Booth No. 54 in Baliguda Mahasingh.

Voters boycotted polling in two booths of the Loisinga Assembly constituency alleging that the booths were located far from their villages.

₹30L aid for slain poll official's kin

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Surendra Kumar on Thursday announced a compensation of ₹30 lakh for the family of Sanjukta Digal, a poll official who was shot dead by Maoists on Wednesday. Digal, a Gram Rojgar Sevak and appointed as a polling supervisor, was shot in the head near Barahala village under the Gochhapada police limits in Kandhamal district by Maoists.

The incident took place when the poll official was standing on road after the vehicle, in which she and other election officials were traveling, was parked following a



landmine blast by the extremists.

She sustained bullet injuries and was rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead.

IN DHENKANAL

₹4L seized from BJP candidate



PNS ■ DHENKANAL

Dhenkanal Town police limits.

The special squad while carrying out patrolling detained the four-wheeler of Nayak, who is contesting from the Hindol Assembly constituency.

The official seized the cash

after Nayak failed to give a satisfactory explanation regarding the source of the cash and could not produce documents pertaining to the same.

Police said that the candidate was interrogated and the matter was under investigation.

Jogesh's two brothers injured in knife attack

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH



In yet another incident of poll violence in the State, two brothers of BJD Sundargarh MLA candidate Jogesh Singh sustained critical injuries after being attacked by some miscreants in Sargipali of the district late on Wednesday night.

According to reports, six to seven persons attacked Naresh Singh and Ritesh Singh with knives at around 1.45 am when the duo had gone to a hamlet in Sargipali.

They were grievously injured and admitted to the Sargipali hospital. Police have started investigation into the incident.

Jogesh Singh alleged that the

attack was orchestrated by BJP Sundargarh MLA nominee Kusum Tete and her husband. Tete, however, refuted the allegations levelled against her.

CASH-TO-VOTERS VIDEO

Subarnapur BJD dist secretary in soup BJP lodges FIR

PNS ■ SONEPUR

A video went viral on Wednesday evening in social media showing cash distribution to voters at Jurabandh village under Tarava block under Sonepur Assembly constituency.

As per reports, the person concerned distributing cash in video is allegedly BJD district secretary Manabhanjan Mishra.

The video shows cash being distributed as per a voters list and the act of money being given and received by a voter has been captured.

Asked about the cash distribution video, Mishra however denied the charges and said that



he gave the money to a BJD agent who later paid it to a milkman.

"The charges are baseless. The person sitting beside me, as shown in the video, is a polling agent who is handing over money to a milkman. The place where we were sitting is the milkman's house," said Mishra.

When asked why the voters' list was kept there, Mishra failed to give any satisfactory answer.

Later some BJD workers lodged an FIR against Mishra in Tarbha Police station.

As till now no action has been taken against the BJD functionary, although money distribution is seen clearly in the video, the role of police and the administration is under scanner.

95-yr-old dies outside polling booth in Ganjam

PNS ■ ASKA

A 95-year-old man died while waiting in a queue to cast his vote in the second phase polls at Kansamari under Sanakhamundi block of Ganjam district on Thursday.



The deceased was identified as Natabara Behera. Sources said Natabara had gone to a polling station at Kansamari for voting along with his family members in the morning. While standing in the queue outside the polling booth, he fell on the ground fainting. His family members rushed him to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

It was suspected that the old man died due to sunstroke.

MLA PSO attacked at polling booth



Jharsuguda district on Thursday during the second-phase elections.

Radhe Kisan, the PSO, had gone with the MLA to booth nos. 182 and 183 in Ganganagar of the Brarajnagar assembly constituency when he was attacked at around 12.30 pm. Kisan sustained injuries on his head.

MLA Panda, who is the BJD MLA candidate for seat this time too, alleged involvement of BJD workers in the attack. Till last reports came in, no police complaint had been lodged in this regard.

Cong candidates hold huge bike rally in Puri

Nayak and Mishra requested people to vote for them and bring the Congress to power at both the Centre and in the State

PNS ■ PURI

With the third phase polls, scheduled on April 23, Congress Puri Lok Sabha candidate Satya Prakash Nayak and Assembly seat nominee Er Aro Prasad Mishra moved in a huge motorcycle rally in the nook and corner of the town on Thursday.

They slammed sitting MLA and BJD Assembly candidate Maheswar Mohanty for Nabakalebar scams and sitting MP and BJD LS candidate Pinaki Misra visiting voters during elections only.

Nayak and Mishra requested people to vote for them and bring the Congress to power at both the Centre and in the State. "I mark a changing mood in the people. They are revolting against scams in the pilgrim city," said Mishra.

Notably, Nayak and Mishra are new to Puri. However, people prefer them as both are youths and educated.

While Nayak will face BJD's three-time MP Mishra and BJD national spokesperson Dr Sambit Patra, Aro will face five-time BJD MLA Mohanty and the BJP's Jayant Sarangi.

As per pre-poll scenario, a close fight is expected to take place between the BJP and the BJD in both the LS and Assembly elections.

'Reject corrupt leaders, press NOTA' | Activist urges voters

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

National convenor of Netaji Subhas Birth Soil Yatra, president Uttala Bikash Juba Parisada and a prominent leader of Social Justice Movement Debiprasad Prusti has appealed the voters and particularly the voters of the three Assembly segments of Bhubaneswar like North, Central and Ekamra to vote for NOTA (None of the Above) in order to reject all mainstream party candidates.

Leaders of three parties are remote controlled by mining mafias and there is unholy nexus between the leaders with such kind of people, said Prusti. He stated that all leaders are silent on Rs 2 lakh-crore mega mining loot and Rs 50,000 crore penalty waiver for the mining mafias.

Each voter should ask himself or herself why Odisha is poor and why our State is backward during 40 years of two family rules in Odisha and also during last five years of BJP rule in Centre, said Prusti.

Expressing his disappoint-

ment over the selection of candidates, Prusti said the three major political parties have not given importance to good leaders.

Parties in Odisha are encouraging dynastic politics and defection. Party hopping for narrow political gains is a common trend in all parties and it is more dangerous than AIDS and cancer, Prusti said.

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Hence, at this juncture, NOTA is the right decision," said Prusti.

Number of liquor shop is fifty times more than that of

Modi to visit again on Apr 23 Other central BJP leaders' visit scheduled too

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

BJP stalwarts have been on whirlwind tours of Odisha to woo the electorate in the party's favour.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his back-to-back visits to the State's various assembly segments in the State, is again slated to campaign in Odisha for a fifth time.

He would address public

rallies in Kendrapada and Baleswar on April 23, informed BJP State spokesperson Golak Mohapatra on Thursday.

Besides, Union Home

Minister Rajnath Singh is

scheduled to hit the campaign trail on Friday in Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh and Cuttack Sadar.

Union Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi would tour Salipur, Bhadrak and Kendrapada for poll campaigning on April 20.

The Personal Security Officer (PSO) of Brarajnagar BJD MLA Radharani Panda was reportedly attacked by a group of people at a polling booth in

Jharsuguda district on Thursday during the second-phase elections.

Radhe Kisan, the PSO, had gone with the MLA to booth nos. 182 and 183 in Ganganagar of the Brarajnagar assembly constituency when he was attacked at around 12.30 pm. Kisan sustained injuries on his head.

MLA Panda, who is the BJD MLA candidate for seat this time too, alleged involvement of BJD workers in the attack. Till last reports came in, no police complaint had been lodged in this regard.

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3 trains to be replaced with MEMU

On introduction of new MEMU trains, the services of the passenger trains would be discontinued and run with new numbers

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The East Coast Railway (ECR) has decided to run MEMU trains by replacing earlier conventional coaches of Bhubaneswar-Bhadrapur-Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar-Brahmapur-Bhubaneswar and Bhubaneswar-Palasa-Bhubaneswar passenger trains from fourth week of April.

On introduction of new MEMU trains, the services of the passenger trains would be discontinued and run with new numbers.

The Bhubaneswar-Bhadrapur MEMU would run from April 21 from both the directions and the Bhubaneswar-Palasa MEMU from Bhubaneswar from April 21 and from Palasa from April 21.

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On the days of maintenance of the MEMU coaches, the earlier conventional coach will provide journey facilities for the daily commuters. The timings and stoppage of the above MEMU trains will be as per the timings of earlier conventional coaches.

The Resource Centre under Student Management System of this college has been operating here for some years for conducting enrollment of both male and female students into different streams of +2 and +3 wings of the colleges of Odisha.

'Stop Resource Centre at Shailabala College'

Petitions filed with CM, other authorities

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Functioning of a Resource Centre attached to Student Academic Management System (SAMS) in the campus of Shailabala (SB) Women's Autonomous College, Cuttack causes academic disruption and poses a threat to the safety of its girl students.

The students of this century-old institution, hailing from across State and from neighbouring provinces, have filed their representation to the Principal, SB Women's College, the Collector, Cuttack, the OIC, SPTC, the Higher Education Secretary, the Chief Secretary and the Chief Minister, recounting their woes and seeking shifting of the Resource Centre from its campus to other co-education colleges located in the city from 2019-20 session.

The Resource Centre under Student Management System of this college has been operating here for some years for conducting enrollment of both male and female students into different streams of +2 and +3 wings of the colleges of Odisha.

It warrants the service of a team of

twenty teachers and ten non-teaching staff for long five months, that the college is mandated to provide. It causes severe academic dislocation with day-to-day routine being frequently suspended in this institution where several posts of faculties falling vacant for years.

The institution catering to a roll strength of more than five thousand students pursuing +2,+3, PG, MPhil, BEd courses here and having five hostels in its small campus is heavily burdened with works during admission season.

More than eight thousand students, their parents, guardians turn up in its premises with their vehicles lining the walls and paths, creating a scene of disarray.

Meanwhile, eve-teasers and anti-social youths have their field days in passing their rash tongs and filthy languages to the girls students, and breaking discipline in the institution.

The miscreants and rogues use the huge crowd as camouflage to enter the campus and indulge in sexual harassment.

The students opposing them are often intimidated and attacked when they go outside of the campus.

Intellectuals of the city, parents and guardians strongly demand shifting of the centre to other avenues readily available at other co-education colleges like Stewart, Christ and such other colleges nearby.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday alleged that BJD workers are being killed as they are opposing the ruling BJD politically and said people would give a befitting reply in ballots during the ongoing elections.

The attack on BJD workers and supporters across the State is a reflection of BJD's scare of defeat. BJD workers are being killed for opposing the BJD politically. The Home Department and two-three non-Odia officers in the Chief Minister's office are trying to stop democratic voice in the State," alleged Pradhan in a statement

He lamented saying that cases under Section 307 are being lodged against those who are merely showing democratic protests against the CM or his Ministers but no action is being taken against the culprits who are killing BJD workers.

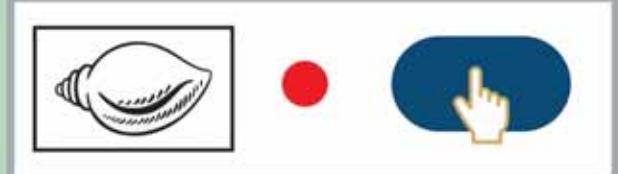


NOT SCARED
OF FAILURE:
VARUN DHAWAN
13 VIVACITY

ମହିଳାମାନେ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ସମାଜ ଓ ଦେଶର ଶକ୍ତି, ବିକାଶର ପ୍ରକୃତ ଉବଳ ଝଙ୍ଜିନ୍ ।



ଏଥର ଏଇ
ଝଙ୍ଜିନ୍ର ଶକ୍ତି
ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ
କାନ୍ ଅତତା
ପକେଇଦବ ।



୨୧ରୁ ୨୧ରେ 'ଦିଜେଟି'କୁ ଜିତାଇବା
ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ହଳ ପାଇଁ ଲାଜିବା ।

Phase-II turnout 1.3% less than 2014

67.84 polling registered; sporadic violence in Bengal, C'garh, Manipur; EVM snag at some places

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The turnout for the second phase of polling on Thursday interestingly turned out to be an exact contrast to that of the first phase. According to the Election Commission, the second phase turnout at 67.84 per cent was 1.28 per cent lower than 69.12 per cent registered in 2014. Sporadic violence was reported from West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Manipur even as EVM glitches were reported from some places.

The second phase of Lok Sabha elections was held for 95 seats across 11 States and Union Territory of Puducherry. With this, the poll process has been completed in 14 States and Union Territories. In all, polling has been completed in 186 Lok Sabha constituencies.

Tamil Nadu went to polls for 38 of 39 constituencies with DMK's A Raja and Kanimozhi being the prominent candidates in the fray. BJP's Hema Malini and Congress leader Raj Babbar among others were among the notables who contested on the eight seats that went to polls in Uttar Pradesh. Former Prime Minister and JD(S) patriarch HD Deve Gowda from Karnataka and National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah in Jammu & Kashmir too tested the ballot power.

Union Ministers Jitendra Singh, Jual Oram, Sadananda Gowda and Pon



Voters await their turn at a polling booth in Bulandshahr on Thursday

Karnataka, 10 in Maharashtra, eight in Uttar Pradesh, five each in Assam, Bihar and Odisha, three each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, two in Jammu & Kashmir and one seat each in Manipur and Puducherry. Elections were also held in 35 Assembly constituencies of Odisha and in 18 Assembly seats in Tamil Nadu.

A total of 1,600 candidates were in the electoral battle for 95 seats which would be crucial for the BJP as for the Opposition to keep the tempo of the fight for the New Delhi which has still 357 Lok Sabha seats to go to poll before the final verdict is announced on May 23.

The AIADMK holds the maximum of 36 seats of the 95 seats which witnessed polling in 2nd phase, followed by the BJP with 27 seats. The Congress had won 12 of these seats in 2014, the Shiv Sena and the BJD 4 each, the JD(S) and the AIUDF, the NCP, the JD(U), the PDP, the AINRC, the PMK, the CPM and the TMC one seat each.

Electorally key State of Uttar Pradesh with 80 LS seats has completed polling in 16 seats of western UP.

Polling was conducted in Srinagar Parliamentary constituency of Jammu & Kashmir to decide the fate of 10 candidates, including NC president Farooq Abdullah who is seeking a re-election.

Security personnel have

been deployed in strength in and around polling stations in all three districts — Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal — of the constituency, officials said. The polling for Udhampur-Doda and Srinagar seats recorded 43.3 per cent at 5 pm.

Polling in Chhattisgarh witnessed violence with an ITBP jawan suffering minor injuries after Naxals triggered an IED blast in Rajnandgaon district.

Long queues were seen at polling booths in Tamil Nadu, with Chief Minister K Palaniswami and DMK chief MK Stalin among the early voters.

Sporadic incidents of violence were reported in some areas of Bengal. A reporter and a camera person of a local news channel were allegedly manhandled when they went to cover polling at Kataphulbari in the Raiganj constituency, they said.

Voters in Uttar Dinajpur district's Chopra under the Raiganj constituency reportedly put up a road blockade, complaining about the absence of Central forces at the polling stations, the sources said.

Police fired in the air and lobbed tear gas shells to control a mob, after stones were pelted at them and bombs were hurled by unknown persons in Chopra, a senior EC official in the district said. At least three persons were detained by police in this connection, he said.

CAPSULE

2 NAXALS INVOLVED IN MLA'S MURDER KILLED

Raipur: Two Naxals, involved in the killing of a BJP MLA and four security personnel in Dantewada, were gunned down in a fierce encounter with police on Thursday in Dantewada, officials said. The killed Maoist cadres, identified as Vargese and Linga, were involved in the ambush in which BJP MLA Bhima Mandvi and his four security personnel were killed on April 9.

MICHEL BAIL PLEA FOR EASTER REJECTED

New Delhi: A Delhi Court on Thursday dismissed the plea of AgustaWestland chopper scam middleman Christian Michel, who sought 7-day interim bail to celebrate Easter with family, noting that he may tamper with evidence and abscond if released. The court refused to grant the relief to Michel and said there are serious allegations against him of grave economic offence.

₹3 CR EXPIRED BEER DESTROYED IN NOIDA

Noida: Over 1.24 lakh litres of beer worth ₹3 crore kept at a Government godown in Gautam Buddha Nagar was destroyed on Thursday after it reached its expiry date, officials said. The beer worth an estimate ₹3 crore belonged to three companies — United Breweries, IndoSpirit and Jasmeet Chaddha — an excise department official said.

4 OF FAMILY DIE IN ROAD ACCIDENT IN UP

Muzaffarnagar: Four of a family, including a woman and her two children, were crushed to death by a vehicle here on Thursday under Shahpur Police Station in the district, said police.

TECHNICAL GLITCH Re-polling to be conducted in six booths

BHUBANESWAR: The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) recommended re-polling at six booths in Sundargarh, Nayagarh and Bargarh districts following technical glitches during voting in the second phase of elections in the State on Thursday.

"Two polling booths in Sundargarh, two in Nayagarh and another two in Bargarh will be re-polled," said CEO Surendra Kumar.

The glitches were reported at booth no 129 in Bonai and 213 in Sundargarh. Similar incident took place at booth no 210 and 222 in Dasapalla of Nayagarh and booth no 68 and 235 in Bargarh. The voters were disappointed and had to return without casting their votes after long hours of wait for polling to elect their representatives.

The CEO clarified that it was not technical glitches in the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), rather a 'human error' in VVPATs for which the polling was suspended at these four booths. "The EVMs and VVPATs have been cross paired in these four polling stations. This is the human error as the dereliction of duties by the concerned polling officers for which actions are to be initiated against them," Kumar said.

Detailed EVM glitches story on Page 2

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Fates of Naveen, Narasingha, KV sealed in EVMs

Jual, Prasanna, Achyuta, Kharabela too will wait till May 23



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

About 64 per cent of the electorate exercised their franchise in the second phase of polls conducted in five Parliamentary constituencies and 35 Assembly segments under them in Odisha on Thursday.

Chief Election Officer Surendra Kumar informed to the media that the overall polling percentage was recorded by 5 pm and the percentage might increase as voters already in queues were giving votes.

Notably, the first phase of polls held on April 11 in four Lok Sabha constituencies and 28 Assembly segments under them in the State had witnessed 73.76 per cent voting.

The CEO said re-polling would be held in six booths for lapses on part of the polling officials during replacement of EVMs and VVPAT machines. A total of 76.93 lakh voters were expected to cast votes in 9,117 polling stations to select five MPs from Bargapur, Sundargarh, Balangir, Kandhamal and Aska Lok Sabha seats and 35 MLAs from equal number of seats under the five LS seats.

The fate of a total of 35 Lok Sabha and 244 Assembly candidates were sealed with completion of the second phase polls.

Among notable leaders, BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik con-

tested from two Assembly seats, one from his old Hinjili constituency in Ganjam district and another from Bijepur in Bargarh district. Similarly, Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly Narasingha Mishra, Ministers Sushant Singh and Snehangini Chhuria, sitting MLA Naba Kishore Das and BJD Legislative Party Leader KV Singh Deo were in the five LS seats.

Senior MP candidates like BJD's Jual Oram and Congress' George Tirkey (Sundargarh LS seat), BJD's Prasanna Acharya (Bargarh), BJD's Kalikesh Singh Deo and BJD's Singita Singh Deo (Balangir) and BJD's Achyuta Samanta and BJD's Kharabela Swain fought polls in the phase.

The fate of a total of 35 Lok Sabha and 244 Assembly candidates were sealed with completion of the second phase polls. Among notable leaders, BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik con-

'BJP's main engine in Delhi will derail' Naveen asks why party suffered defeat in 5 States

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Coming down heavily on the BJP leadership over its 'double-engine' theory, BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday questioned why the saffron party suffered huge losses in the Assembly polls in five major States despite having the so-called success formula.

Addressing a public meeting at Banki in Cuttack district, Patnaik said the BJP's double engine has already derailed in five States and its 'main engine' is going to meet the same fate on May 23 when results of the general elections would be declared.

He questioning that why people of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Punjab ousted the BJP in the Assembly elections in the recent past.

"There was double engine Government of BJP in these five States. What development the party made in these States," he asked.

Patnaik said, "Many BJP leaders are talking about forming double-engine Government in Centre and Odisha. But the people here want to know from the party as to who is the engine in the State."

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On the day, Patnaik addressed public meetings in Dhenkanal, Angul and in Cuttack. Patnaik also held a road show from Begunia to Bhubaneswar.

AAP tie-up hope dim, Cong may list candidates today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid continuing "flip-flop" over the pre-poll alliance for the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress on Thursday said there is almost no prospects of any tie-up with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

However, sources said the party may wait for any fresh move by the AAP till the announcement of the list of its Lok Sabha candidates in Delhi.

As the alliance talks headed nowhere, AAP's candidate from West Delhi Balbir Singh Jakhar filed his nomination papers.

"They (AAP) had agreed for an alliance with us in Delhi alone on Wednesday night. On Thursday morning, they raised the full Statehood issue. I told them we are ready, full Statehood was in our manifesto for 2015 (Assembly) election. But, later I received Sanjay Singh's message that Kejriwal had said the alliance was not possible unless it covers Haryana also," said PC Chacko, the All India Congress Committee in-charge of Delhi.

Singh, AAP's Rajya Sabha MP, was authorised by Kejriwal to take the alliance talks with the Congress forward.

After Singh's message, Chacko met Congress president Rahul Gandhi and apprised him of the development.



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BJD sure to form next Govt in State: Naveen

Hits out at Union Mins at Pallahara rally

BISHNU P BEHERA ■
PALLAHARA

No one can block BJD to form the next Government in the Odisha, said Chief Minister and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik during campaigning at Khamar College ground in Pallahara on Thursday.

The BJD Government thinks always for the development of Odisha people. But during election period the Central leaders are coming here to campaign against BJD

and beg for vote in favour of their party, told Patnaik to a gathering.

The BJP is trying to scuttle our attempts to initiate welfare of the poor by discontinuing many Central schemes and reducing share in others, alleged Patnaik.

Targetting BJP leaders Dharendra Pradhan and Jual Oram without taking their names, Patnaik said that the two Union Ministers hailing from Odisha are not striving at the Centre for the development of the State.

Among others, BJD leaders like MLA Mahesh Sahu, Mukesh Pal, State secretary Manoj Sahu, Sudarsan Behera, Kanika and Pallahara Block presidents Kailash Sahu, Jogesh Bhukta were present.

There was a congregation of around more than 5,000 people.

Two minor girls raped in Nayagarh, Bhadrak

Accused thrashed in Nayagarh incident



PNS ■ NAYAGARH/ BHADRAK

A few days after the rape of a minor girl in Jatni of Khordha district, two minor girls were allegedly raped in Nayagarh and Bhadrak districts on Thursday.

In the first incident, a minor girl was allegedly raped by a youth in a village under Fatehgarh police station of Nayagarh. The youth reportedly took the minor to an isolated spot on pretext of giving her lift to home and allegedly raped her.

The accused was nabbed by the villagers and thrashed

black and blue before being handed over to police. The victim, on the other hand, was rescued in an unconscious state and rushed to a hospital.

In another incident, a minor girl was sexually assaulted by a youth under the Sadar police station of Bhadrak district. The girl was rescued in a critical condition with injuries on her head.

It was alleged that the accused attempted to kill the victim after raping her.

While police have detained a person in connection with the incident, the girl was admitted to Bhadrak hospital.

Unveiled in haste, Janibila water project a nonstarter

Book CM, PHED, L&T authorities: B'pur forums

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■ BRAHMAPUR

Dakshin Odisha Unnayana Parishad convenor Rabi Rath and social activist and Manav Adhikar Surakshya Manch (MASM) convenor Abani Kumar Gaya, an independent candidate who was in fray for the Brahmapur Assembly seat, demanded criminal proceedings against CM Naveen Patnaik, engineers of PHED and officials of contract firm L&T for failure to supply drinking water to the city from the Janibila piped water project.

The project was inaugurated in haste on March 3 just ahead of the first phase of polling only to take political mileage, they alleged.

In most parts of the city, there is no improvement in the domestic supply of piped water even after the project was inau-

gurated, they contended.

They said that some of the residents of Gandhinagar 3rd Lane (West), Chanchada Pathara Street, Hill Patna, Golilundi and Gate Bazar are not getting sufficient water. On the other hand, after inau-

gurating the project, the situation has become worse, they added.

Notably, the first integrated mega water supply project which was started in the year 2014 was supposed to be completed by 2018. However, the delay in completion of the project has raised doubts among the residents.

The work of laying pipelines by digging the roads meanwhile has been stopped on the pretext of Maa Thakurani Yatra and the first phase of polling. Besides, the work has resulted in narrowing of roads leading to traffic congestion, sources said.

On the other hand, the newly-constructed roads have been damaged by the contractor in many places of the city due to the digging and laying of the pipes and cementing the portions already dug.

Even the contractor who is supposed to fill and level the

digging portions and repair the road by cement failed to do so reportedly under the protection of the babus of the PHED in most part of the city, thereby making the roads ugly, muddy, with heap of soils. There is no one, either in PHED (Engineering) or in BMC to supervise the work.

Meanwhile, some residents alleged that the PHED authorities are identifying the streets/lanes for laying pipelines arbitrarily and at their whims. For instance, though pipeline has been laid in some parts of Gandhinagar, but Gandhinagar 3rd Lane Extension (West) area which is suffering from acute scarcity since last two decades has been skipped.

Similarly, 400 families of Chanchada Sahi who remain water-stressed had recently threatened to boycott election if their grievances for supply of water are not addressed.

Even a request to the Superintendent Engineer PHED three months to dig a tube well in the street (at the dead end of the Gandhinagar 3rd Lane Extension) surprisingly goes unheeded.

2 held for possessing guns in JSpur

According to reports, the accused staff and student were found roaming with guns tucked to their waists inside the college premises

PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

Police on Thursday detained an official of the Jagatsinghpur SVM College along with a student for possessing guns in the college premises.

According to reports, the accused staff and student were found roaming with guns tucked to their waists inside the college premises.

Acting on the allegation, police reached the spot and detained them as vote counting is scheduled to be held in the concerned college. But it is yet to be ascertained for what purpose they carried the guns.

While an interrogation of the accused is underway, police have launched a probe to ascertain if they are involved with any political party.

INBRIEF

ELECTION CONTROL ROOM OPENED IN K'JHAR

Champua: Keonjhar Collector-cum-Election Officer Ashish Thakre on Thursday inaugurated a Election Control Room in-charge and directed the officials to take prompt action on any complain related to election brought to their notice. The control room would remain open for 24 hours and can be contacted on 06766- 255495 and 06766- 255497. Thakre also requested the people to inform the control room immediately if there is any violation of the code of conduct.

'BADAKHANA' CELEBRATED WITH UNDERPRIVILEGED KIDS



Champua: Keonjhar SP JN Pankaj celebrated the 'Badakhana' with unprivileged children here on April 1. As part of the police-public partnership the 'Badakhana' is an age old practice of organising different programmes in the police headquarters in which locals and mediapersons are invited to share the same with police personnel and their family members. But this year it was celebrated in a different way with the unprivileged.

MANAV SEVA KENDRA OPENS AT PURI



Puri: A Manav Seva Kendra was inaugurated by the Puri Sub-Collector in presence of Puri Municipality Chairman Ramesh Satapathy, FEDO CEO Samarjeet Mohanty and NEPL MD DN Samal here on Wednesday.

Dahi Sarbat, cooked food and cold water and first-aid (in case of heatstroke) would be provided to pilgrims till May 31. The cooked food would be provided only on Sundays. Doctors and pharmacists would remain present in the kiosk.

SPORTS TALENTS' SEARCH HELD IN GAJAPATI

Paralakhemundi: A two-day district-level sports talents' search was held at the Gajapati Stadium here on Tuesday and Wednesday. As many as 30 budding sportsmen were selected. They would take part in State-level sports meet. Different sports activities along with skill tests were conducted. Gajapati DSO Pravakar Panda informed that a total of 90 participants in the age group of 9-12 years joined and 30 were selected from among them.

MCL WOMAN WING OPENS WATER KIOSK AT BURLA



Sambalpur: The Jagriti Mahila Mandir of the Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) opened a water kiosk at Burla link road connecting the National Highway on Thursday. Mandal president Anita Mishra, VPs Padamja Singh, Padmuni Vasudevan, Paranjit Kaur and Madhoo Mishra and members distributed water and watermelons to travellers.

Amway brings out traditional herbal products

Holds series of talks

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The Amway India wing conducted a series of seminars on healthcare based on Indian traditional wisdom on herbs and modern research.

Renowned Ayurvedic expert Gautham Vatsayan shared valuable insights on the significance and role of Indian traditional herbs for maintaining optimal health.

We take immense pride that our range offers assured levels of purity, safety, and potency of herbs backed by Nutrilite's strong legacy of scientific research and is based on Indian traditional wisdom.

The seminars began with Dr Vatsayan providing an overview of the benefits of herbs in maintaining good health throughout one's lifespan. He shared his views on the traditional Indian herbs such as Ashwagandha, Tulsi, Brahmi and Triphala Amalaki, Vibhakti and Haritaki among others, that are widely used to address day-to-day physiological challenges owing to radical changes in lifestyle and eating habits. Commenting on the initiative, Ajay Khanna, Category Head - Nutrition and Wellness, Amway India, said,

"The certified organic herbs are sourced from certified organic farms conforming to the standards set by the National Programme on Organic Production (NPOP), a Government of India initiative towards development of organic agriculture, established in the year 2000."

Experts from the field spoke.

"The certified organic herbs are sourced from certified organic farms conforming to the standards set by the National Programme on Organic Production (NPOP), a Government of India initiative towards development of organic agriculture, established in the year 2000," he further said.

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Bar Pragya from poll: Malegaon victim's father to EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Father of a victim in Malegaon blast case and Congress leader Tehseen Poonawala wrote to the poll body seeking to debar the candidature of Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur from contesting the Lok Sabha polls as she was facing terror charges. Sadhvi Pragya is contesting against Congress leader Digvijay Singh from Bhopal on BJP ticket.

Sadhvi Pragya faces charges in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, but charges against her under Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) have been dropped by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). She was granted bail in 2017 on health grounds. She spent nearly nine years in jail and is currently out on bail. Malegaon blast accused Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur joined the BJP on April 18, 2019.

The Opposition leaders are criticising the saffron party for giving ticket to Sadhvi Pragya. Meanwhile taking a strong exception to the BJP fielding her from Bhopal, National Conference (NC)'s Omar Abdullah on Thursday said the BJP has given ticket to a candidate who is not only an accused in a terror case but is

also out on bail on health grounds. Dubbing Thakur as an innocent person, BJP spokesperson GVL Narasimha Rao said she was tortured and its fight against the Congress conspiracy to defame Hindu religion by linking it to the terrorism. He alleged that Congress president Rahul Gandhi had "masterminded" this conspiracy, claiming that it was meant to appease a minority community.

In a letter to the poll body, Poonawala said the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) had found Thakur to be the "principal conspirator" in the 2008 Malegaon blast in which six people were killed. Her name has also cropped up in the Ajmer Dargah blast case, he said.

"I would humbly request the Election Commission of India to take further necessary steps to uphold the Model Code of Conduct 2019 and take appropriate action against Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur and debar her from contesting elections," the letter read.

Poonawala further wrote in the letter, "Thakur is currently facing charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and also stands accused of murder,



BJP candidate Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur addresses party workers meeting for Lok Sabha polls in Bhopal on Thursday PTI

attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy, and of promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion. That the court had observed that Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur had planned the conspiracy with the aim to spread

terror and cause communal crack in the society. The BJP is fielding a terror accused as a candidate in Bhopal."

Her (Pragya's) medical reports which were submitted in Court exhibited said that she is suffering from breast cancer

and is infirm, that she cannot walk without support. Nonetheless, she is now contesting elections.

This is clearly indicated misrepresentation and forged ground of her bail, (sic)" his complaint reads.

Poonawala said on Twitter that Pragya should not be allowed to contest polls on the same grounds applicable to Hardik Patel, who is an accused in a rioting and arson case during the 2015 Patidar agitation. "If Hardik Patel can be barred, even Sadhvi Pragya must be prevented from contesting. This is the duty of the Election Commission. We cannot have two rules. Moreover, by stating this is a dharam yudh, Sadhvi Pragya has violated the MCC. She was granted bail because she was unwell," Poonawala tweeted.

Another application against the Lok Sabha ticket given to Pragya was filed by the father of a Malegaon blast victim. In the application filed by the victim's father, he has questioned Sadhvi Pragya's candidature before the NIA court as she was given bail on health grounds. Sadhvi Pragya faces charges in the Malegaon blast case although charges under MCOCA have been dropped by NIA.

Saffron-clad Thakur (48), with her trademark short hair and sporting a rudraksh mala, became the face of right wing extremism after being arrested by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) in the 2008 Malegaon blast case.

CEO for action against Pillai for anti-Islam remarks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kerala Chief Electoral Officer has recommended "appropriate action" against BJP State chief PS Sreedharan Pillai for allegedly making anti-Islam remarks during an election campaign meeting in Attingal Lok Sabha constituency on April 14.

In his report to the Election Commission, Kerala Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Teeka Ram Meena said Pillai made the remarks while countering the comments of Congress president Rahul Gandhi, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on the number of people killed during the Balakot air strike.

"Our Rahul Gandhi, Yechury, Pinarayi and all are saying that, after getting there... The dead bodies... Which caste, which religion... If they are Islam then there will be a few signs... If only you remove the dresses only then it can be found out... So after doing all that, we should come back is what they say," Pillai had said, according to Meena's report to the poll body.

Pillai made these remarks during the poll campaign meeting organised for BJP candidate Sobha Surendran.

The CEO, in his report dated April 16, said no permission was taken for the BJP meeting and a complaint has been registered in the Attingal police station in Thiruvananthapuram district.

"It appears prima facie a case of violation of Section 123(3A) and Section 125 of the



In his report to the Election Commission, Kerala Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Teeka Ram Meena said Pillai made the remarks while countering the comments of Congress president Rahul Gandhi, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on the number of people killed during the Balakot air strike

Representations of People Act, 1951. Accordingly, appropriate action may be taken in the matter," Meena said in his report sent to Deputy Election Commissioner Sudeep Jain.

On Wednesday, the CEO had informed the High Court that strong action would be taken against Pillai in the case.

A petition seeking a directive to the Election Commission to take action against Pillai was filed by CPI(M) leader V Sivankutty.

The court disposed of the petition in the light of the submissions made by the Election Commission.

IN SHORT

CBI TAKES OVER PROBE IN JAIPUR DRUGS CASE

New Delhi: The CBI has taken over the investigation into alleged drug peddling by a Jaipur-based interior designer and his two friends on the directions of the Rajasthan High Court officials said Wednesday. The agency has re-registered the FIR by the Rajasthan Police, which had arrested one Harshita Garg along with her friends — Nishat and Rajat Morya — on the alleged drug trafficking charges on October 19, 2016 from Pink Square Mall in Jaipur, they said.

CPI REFUSES TO WITHDRAW PART OF ITS DD SPEECH

New Delhi: The CPI has refused to withdraw parts of a speech of the party for election campaign which Doordarshan claimed was violative of the Model Code of Conduct, its MP Binoy Viswanath said. The Prasar Bharati, in a statement, said the vetting team of Doordarshan observed a paragraph of speech of the CPI that was to be broadcast on the channel. The speech hits out at the "racial supremacy preached by the RSS".

JAIDEEP APPOINTED AS NEW ENVOY FOR S AFRICA

New Delhi: Seasoned diplomat Jaideep Sarkar has been appointed as India's next High Commissioner to South Africa. "He is expected to take up the assignment shortly," the External Affairs Ministry said, making the announcement. Sarkar, a 1987-batch Indian Foreign Service official, is currently serving as India's ambassador in Bhutan.

Kanpur man flung shoes at BJP leaders during presser

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



In this still video is seen BJP leader GVL Narsimha Rao as he reacts after a shoe hurts him, during a Press conference at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday PTI

tor from Kanpur.

The man was immediately bundled out by security guards at the party office and handed over to police.

At the time of the incident, BJP leaders Bhupendra Yadav and GVL Narsimha Rao were addressing the media with Rao attacking the media for defaming Hindus by foisting "false cases" on Hindutva activists, including Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur who has been nominated as party Lok Sabha candidate from Bhopal.

US President George Bush too was attacked with a shoe when he was in Iraq. In fact, the attacker threw two shoes on Bush but both missed their marks.

ED seizes ₹82.11 cr gold from Hyderabad

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday seized 145.89 kg of gold jewellery worth ₹82.11 crore after searches conducted at multiple locations including office-cum-residence of Kailash Gupta, promoters of Musaddil Jewellers Pvt Ltd (MJPL) at Hyderabad, the firm's showroom at Vijaywada and other locations.

Besides MJPL, the agency also searched the residential and business premises of Pavan Agarwal (Partner Balaji Gold), residence of Neel Sunder Tharad (Proprietor of Ashta Lakshmi Gold), office of Chartered Accountant, Sanjay Sarda in ongoing investigation under the provisions of

Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) in a demonetisation case.

ED initiated investigation under PMLA on the basis of FIR registered by Telangana Police on the basis of complaint filed by Income Tax Department against Kailash Gupta, his sons and their companies MJPL and Vaishnavi Bullion Ltd. for conspiring with certain bullion dealers, chartered accountants and close relatives by blatantly misusing the scheme of demonetisation by illegally depositing huge amounts of unaccounted demonetised cash in their accounts, the ED said.

For this purpose they fraudulently created around 5,200 back dated fabricated advance sale receipts dated November, 2016, each for an amount less than ₹2 lakh to avoid furnishing PAN details.

During the course of investigation, it was revealed that immediately after announcement of demonetisation scheme, the accused had illegally deposited ₹110.85 crores in their bank accounts falsely claiming that within a few hours they had received advances of less than ₹2 lakh each from more than 5,200 customers, on the night of November 8, 2016, for purchase of gold/jewellery from their firms.

All these invoices were found to be bogus. Further, analysis of CCTV footages of their offices and that of the neighbourhood revealed that

no such activity of purchase of gold was carried out during that period.

It is further revealed that those more than 5,200 invoices dated November 8, 2016 were fraudulently raised on a later date.

Investigation under PMLA revealed that illegally deposited unaccounted cash to the tune of ₹110.85 crores in the bank accounts of the accused and their companies and subsequently ₹80 crores (approx) was transferred to the bank accounts of various Gold Bullion dealers like Ashta Lakshmi Gold, Shri Balaji Gold among others in the guise of purchase of gold. The accused have admitted that they had created fake sale invoices.

Individuals' health information is maintained.

The WHO guideline also emphasised on the importance of reaching vulnerable populations, and ensuring that digital health does not endanger them in any way.

India, on its part has come with a draft legislation, the Digital Information Security in Healthcare Act (DISHA) which intends to ensure the confidentiality and reliability of digital health data by regulating how they are collected, stored, transmitted, and used.

Rohit MA, co-founder and Managing Director, Cloudnine Group of Hospitals too have a word of caution. As per a report, he opined that while Data protection and patient privacy have been spoken and been discussed at several forums, India's blooming healthcare sector could become a victim of its own success, if it fails to ensure Data protection to its patients.

Despite all challenges, the technology is all set to grow in healthcare sector. "With India as a market demanding better healthcare facilities, the telemedicine industry, considered to be a niche, is expected to grow over 20 per cent and cross \$32 million by 2020," says the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

The use of digital technologies offers new opportunities to improve people's health," added Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist at WHO. However, there is a word of caution. "But the evidence also highlights chal-

Mental illness of death row convicts ground to spare them from gallows: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

the verdict owing to his mental condition.

He was given death penalty in a barbaric rape and murder of two minor cousins in Maharashtra in 1999.

It, however, took note of "barbaric and brutal manner of commission of the crime" and awarded the jail term to the convict for "remainder of his life" with the direction to the government to ensure proper mental health care to him.

The Bench, also comprising Justices MM Shantanagoudar and Indira Banerjee, was faced with "complex questions" concerning relationship between mental illness and crime and as to how "culpability" of a convict can be

assessed if he develops mental condition after the court finds him guilty.

Delineating directions to be followed by appellate courts on sentencing mentally ill accused, the bench said: "The post-conviction severe mental illness will be a mitigating factor that the appellate Court, in appropriate cases, needs to consider while sentencing an accused to death penality."

"The assessment of such disability should be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of qualified professionals (experienced medical practitioners, criminologists etc), including professional with expertise in accused person's particular mental illness."

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Medicine selling outlets to be known as pharmacy soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soon, outlets selling medicines will be called as "Pharmacy" instead of "Chemists and Druggists". The Union Health Ministry is mulling such a proposal which is in keeping with the international practice and provides a sense of identity to the practicing pharmacists in these outlets.

In contrast, the term 'Chemists and Druggists' was coined in 1945 and is quite old and has lost relevance and also, at present the word 'drug' is looked upon as more clandestine and as addiction for chemicals, hence does not suit to refer a professional pharmacist, said a senior official from the Ministry.

"In order to give retail trade a better professional recognition, the Union health ministry will soon amend Rule 65(15)(b) and Rule 65(15)(c) of Drugs and Cosmetics (D&C) Rules, to replace 'Chemists & Druggists' with 'Pharmacy'. Once the amendment is done, all the medical shops in the country will be called as Pharmacy," said a senior official from the Ministry.

The issue was deliberated in the 55th Drug Consultative Committee (DCC) meeting

WHO releases first guideline on digital health interventions

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI



duce recommendations on some key ways such tools may be used for maximum impact on health systems and people's health.

The WHO noted that one digital intervention already having positive effects in some areas is sending reminders to pregnant women to attend antenatal care appointments and having children return for vaccinations. Other digital approaches reviewed include decision-support tools to guide health workers as they provide care; and enabling individuals and health workers to communicate and consult on health issues from across different locations.

"The use of digital technologies offers new opportunities to improve people's health," added Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist at WHO. However, there is a word of caution. "But the evidence also highlights chal-

Plea in SC seeks to declare misquoting judicial orders by candidates a corrupt practice

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

another recent statement given by BSP supremo Mayawati in which she had allegedly asked Muslim voters to vote for candidates of alliance partners — SP, BSP and RLD — in Uttar Pradesh.

The plea said that under the Representation of the People Act, appeal made on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language between different classes constitute corrupt practice but it can be questioned only by way of election petition and the ECI cannot order investigation even when the Model Code of Conduct is in force.

"Direct and declare the Election Commission of India has the power to reject the nomination of contesting candidates and de-register the political parties for seeking vote on the basis of religion, race, caste, community or language to appropriate investigation agencies."

"Direct and declare the Election Commission of India has the power to reject the nomination of contesting candidates and de-register the political



Dar's journey: From 'human shield' to poll duty

PTI ■ UTLIGAM

Nearly two years ago, when Srinagar voted in a Lok Sabha bypoll, Farooq Ahmed Dar was used as a 'human shield' to ensure safe passage for Army jawans as they came under intense stone-pelting, but now he finds himself posted on election duty.

"Farooq Ahmad Dar is working on consolidated terms as sweeper in the Health Department. He has been posted on election duty," said Budgam Chief Medical Officer Nazir Ahmad.

In 2017, a picture of Dar tied to the bonnet of an army jeep splashed across the front

pages of newspaper, invoking sharp but divided reactions.

Investigations later found he was on his way to his sister's place for a condolence meet after casting his vote in the bypoll on April 9, 2017, when the army picked him up and tied him with ropes, parading him through nearly 28 villages.

"What was my mistake? Going to the polling booth and casting my ballot?" Dar had told PTI in a video interview last year. At this village, nearly 40 kms from the Srinagar city, where Dar was tied to the army jeep, the incident is still fresh in the minds of the locals.

After the polls opened at the Utligam polling station,



only two of the registered 1,016 voters had cast the ballots in the first 100 minutes. The residents allege the stone-pelting was in response to the "unprovoked harassment" of the locals by the Army officer and the "vandalism" by the troops.

"It was the Army personnel who went berserk and started

beating up people and broke window panes of many houses that day. The youngsters were infuriated and retaliated by pelting them with stones," Nazir Ahmad, a local resident said.

Ahmad admits the stone-pelting was very intense, which probably forced Major Leetul Gogoi to catch hold of Dar and use him as a human shield.

"He is not even from our village. He is from Cheill-Brass village, 15 kilometres from here. That incident has brought only unwanted attention from all sides to our village. If we vote, it is a problem and if we do not vote, it is a problem," he said. Mohammad Aslam, another villager, said the police

picked up 22 youths from the village over the past couple of days without any charge.

"Most of them are labourers and students. We are least bothered about if any one comes to vote or not. We have formed a committee to ensure there is law and order problem in our village this time because we are concerned about our boys," he said.

There is a sense of déjà vu among some residents here. A young woman died on Thursday morning due to brain hemorrhage. "You would not have been able to come here had it not been for the death of the woman this morning. The scenes here would have been

different," said a youth, who wished not to be named, indicating that disturbance in the area was planned.

As this PTI reporter travelled to Cheill-Brass, a remote village just at the foot of the mighty mountain, Dar was not at his home. "He has gone for election duty," his mother Fazi Begum told PTI.

She said Dar was appointed as a daily wage employee in the State Health Department and has been on election duty since Wednesday. Asked if the eligible members of her family had cast their votes, Fazi Begum said, "I almost lost my son due to voting two years ago. Do you think we will go to vote again?"

In a first, over 150 inmates of mental health centre cast votes



Inmates of the Institute of Mental Health cast their votes at a polling booth in Chennai on Thursday

PTI

Chennai: They lined up patiently to cast their votes in the blazing sun, 156 inmates of a mental health centre here, eager to participate in the electoral process as polling was held in 38 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu on Thursday.

Kameela Nasser from Makkal Needhi Maiam floated by actor Kamal Haasan.

After casting his vote, a 37-year-old man, battling schizophrenia for the last seven years, said when he stood near the electronic voting machine, he reminisced about the 2001 assembly elections, the last time he voted.

"I felt special. I am very happy to vote," he said. He was all praise for students of a local city college (Loyola College) and Election Commission officials

for conducting awareness programmes and mock polls on the hospital premises ahead of elections. IMH Director P Poorna Chandrika was elated over the exercise being conducted in the hospital.

PTI

J&K HITS LOW AT 43% POLLING IN PHASE II

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday saw 43.4 per cent turnout — lowest in the second phase of Lok Sabha polls.

Despite witnessing peaceful electioneering in the run up to the second phase of polling across Srinagar Parliamentary seat, from where National Conference Chief, Farooq Abdullah, was seeking re-election, less than 15 per cent voters turned up at the polling booths amid tight security arrangements on Thursday.

Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah accompanied his father Farooq to the polling booth in Srinagar and appealed to the voters to come out in large numbers to exercise their right to franchise.

Out of three districts, falling



National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah leave after casting vote in Srinagar on Thursday PTI

while Billawar and Hiranagar Assembly constituencies recorded over 73 and 76 per cent voter turnout respectively. Udhampur district also recorded over 72 per cent polling.

BJP's sitting MP, Dr Jitendra Singh is locked in a

close contest with Vikramaditya Singh, the joint candidate of Congress and National Conference from the seat. The three landlocked districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban too recorded over 60 per cent polling.

70 per cent polling recorded in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In an ominous sign a State that traditionally witnesses 80-plus percentage polling saw little above 70 per cent voters exercising their voting rights indicating the remaining vast majority of the electorate must have stayed back home on account of pre-electoral threats or simply out of disgust, psephologists said.

Otherwise the polling on Thursday was less violent compared to what it happens on normal times in Bengal with only one MP candidate being attacked and his car shattered by miscreants and "only in a few places" voters were stopped

from voting in the initial hours leading to skirmishes leading several persons including a Bangla television journalist injured.

Chopra a place in Raiganj constituency adjoining Bihar witnessed sporadic violence bombing by alleged Trinamool Congress miscreants who reportedly stopped voters from going to the booth.

Subsequent it needed a road blockade by them for the Election Commission to wake up and rush central forces to the spot — after four long hours — by which time several persons including a tele journalist was badly clubbed.

VIOLENCE IN TWO MANIPUR BOOTHS

Imphal: Voting was stalled in two polling booths of Inner Manipur Lok Sabha constituency. In one of the booths at Kiyamgei Muslim Makha locality in Imphal East, unidentified men stormed into a polling station around 11.30 am and broke EVMs and VVPATs, claiming "proxy voting" was being carried out. In another booth in same area, scuffle broke out for derailing the voting process.

Migrant Kashmiri Pandits protest over missing names from electoral roll

Jammu: Several migrant Kashmiri Pandits could not exercise their franchise as their names were found missing from the electoral roll at the special polling stations set up for Srinagar constituency in Jammu during the second phase of Lok Sabha elections.

Miffed at it, they raised slogans against the administration and the EC at several polling stations. "We came to the polling station to cast our vote but found our names missing from the electoral roll. It is a denial of our right to vote," said Radha Krishna Bhat, a migrant Kashmiri Pandit from the Chadoora segment of Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency.

Bhat said four members of his family could not vote and alleged that there was a conspiracy to deny the migrants their right. Similarly, Mintoo Mawa and four of his family members, who hail from Amira Kadal segment, had to return without exercising their franchise.

"The objective of all-

Close to 400 booths in K'taka's 1st phase of polling staffed by women

IANS ■ BENGALURU

Close to 400 of the 30,164

polling stations in the 14

Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka

where voting was held on

Thursday were staffed exclusively by women, an official said on Thursday.

The 393 'sakhi' (women's) booths were staffed by 10 women, including 4 polling personnel, 3 assistants and 3 constables, with two outside and one inside the booth," Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer Sanjiv Kumar told IANS here.

The maximum number of sakhi booths — 130 — were in Bangalore's 3 parliamentary seats, followed by 46 in Bangalore Rural, 45 in Udupi-Chikmagalur, 34 in Mysore, 30 in Chikkaballapur, 28 in Mandya, 22 in Tumkur, 20 in Dakshina Kannada, 14 in Hassan and 12 each in Chitradurga and Kolar.

"The objective of all-

When donkeys lent a helping hand to TN poll officials

Chennai: While GPS-fitted vehicles are deployed to transport poll materials like EVMs in the State, such technology of vehicles do not always help; especially when it comes to hilly terrains of Tamil Nadu to send across election paraphernalia.

Particularly, where there are no roads to reach hamlets on hill tops — leave alone motorable ones — the challenge is more pronounced and

carrying EVMs, and control units within the stipulated time frame is no mean task.

A slew of such remote villages are spread across Tamil Nadu including those atop hills in the districts of Dharmapuri, Dindigul, Erode, Namakkal, and Theni with voters ranging between 300 and 1,100 in a given polling station.

Several booths in remote locations like Kottur in the Pennagaram region of

Dharmapuri and hamlets on Bothmalai in Namakkal pose the challenge of rocky terrain too.

To surmount the challenge, poll officials loaded election materials — neatly packed in gunny bags — on donkeys and ponies and they carried some of the luggage on their heads to reach the designated polling stations and the arduous journey was in the range of 9 to 11 kilometers on the hills.

Vellakkevi and

Pallathukadu in the Kodaikanal hill ranges (Dindigul), Kathiripatti (Erode) and Kedamalai (Namakkal) were among the hilly villages officials reached overcoming the challenges with the help of donkeys and ponies.

Also, some villages like Vellakkevi are located amid dense forests and poll officials were assisted by the anti-naxal police personnel to reach the hamlets.

PTI

Maha voter smashes EVM

AKOLA: A voter on Thursday smashed the electronic voting machine (EVM) while casting his vote in Akola Lok Sabha constituency in Maharashtra.

The incident occurred at around 1 p.m. at the Balapur polling station no. 29 where polling was underway for the second phase of elections in 10 Lok Sabha seats in the state, said an Election Commission official.

The voter, Shrikrishna Ghare, was taken into custody. The motive behind the action was not immediately known, police said.

On the fate of the votes already cast, the EC official explained that the Ghare had only broken the balloting unit (BU). The control unit (CU) or the VVPAT which were stationed a feet away with the election officials were safe.

"We have the complete record of the votes cast earlier in that EVM. There is no problem on that count," an EC official explained. The authorities arranged for an alternative BU which was attached to the existing CU and VVPAT, and the voting was resumed shortly thereafter.

105-year-old votes in Maharashtra

IANS ■ LATUR

Heads turned when 105-year-old Kabaibai Ganpati Kamble on Thursday reached a polling station to cast her vote in the Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra.

Seated on a wheelchair, Kabaibai was accompanied by her grown up children and other fourth-generation relatives to the polling station in Harangul New Colony in Latur. She was cheered by other voters who clapped for her.

Just Married' couple votes in Udhampur

Udhampur: A newly married couple, in wedding attire, reached a polling booth of Udhampur parliamentary constituency here on Thursday, underlining the importance of exercising one's franchise.

The couple reached the polling booth in a flower-decked sedan with groom Sourav Sharma sporting a headgear and a cream 'achkan' over red churidars with his bride Manisha, attired in a red 'salwar-kameez' and donning gold jewellery.

Accompanied by friends and family members, the couple stepped into the booth hand-in-hand, surprising many standing in the queue and exercised their franchise. They instantly became a hit at the polling booth with dozens of people and visiting journalists clicking their pictures.

PTI

"The objective of all-

Voter's Selfie Point

लोक सभा आम निर्वाचन - 2019

वोट देने पर मुझे गर्व है

आप भी वोट करें।





Modi mocks Cong-JD(S) Govt

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

In his first leg of election tour to northern Karnataka (which will go to polls in the second leg on April 23) Prime Minister Modi mocked the Congress-JD(S) coalition Government in Karnataka. In his election rallies at Bagalakote and Chikkodi on Thursday, Modi blasted Congress and said vote for *majboor sarkaar* not for *majboor sarkaar*. Fourteen North Karnataka constituencies will go to polls on April 23 and the BJP is anticipating Modi wave will increase their seats taking head on the coalition partners.

Hitting out at the Congress over its promise to "remove" Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), he said, it wants those pelting stones to file false cases on soldiers and they roam in courts.

"The Congress also wants

to give free hand to those indulging in *desh droh* (anti-national activities). By announcing it will end sedition law. The Congress has made it clear what its intentions are. Will you support such dangerous intentions? Will you support those committing such sins? Will you teach a lesson to the Congress?

"These *mahamilavat*'s are neither for jawans nor kisans (farmers)," he said. During the Congress and *mahamilavat* Government, three types of development can take place – development (*vikas*) of a few families, development of middle men and development of price hike, Modi said.

He asked the crowd, "Are you happy with the firmness I have worked? Are you happy? We entered inside Pakistan and hit (terrorists) are you happy? Do we have to take revenge for the killing of our jawans or not? Do you trust Army on their bravery? The Congress don't believe our brave and believe in Pakistan's evidences."

Modi mocked the "never ending drama" marked by revenge and emotion that characterised the Congress-JD(S) coalition Government headed by HD Kumaraswamy. "If you want to see *majboor sarkaar* look towards Delhi, and if you want to see *majboor*



Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds up a bow-arrow as Karnataka BJP chief BS Yeddyurappa and other leaders look on during an election campaign in Bagalkot on Thursday

If Cong voted to power, indebted farmers won't be sent to jails: Rahul



Congress president Rahul Gandhi, party general secretary Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia and party leaders during an election rally in Budauli on Thursday

sarkaar look towards Bengaluru," Modi said.

"After every few days, weeks, at any rally or press conference emotion is flowing. Do you think of Karnataka like this?" Modi asked the crowd, apparently taking a dig at Kumaraswamy who has shed tears publicly quite often – once about being helpless as head of the Congress-JDS coalition.

Modi took on Kumaraswamy for saying that the matter of airstrike on terror camps in Pakistan in Balakot should not be overpublicised "fearing that the vote bank bank would get angry."

citizens were involved in the Mumbai terror attack was a major achievement. But Pakistan despite agreeing that the perpetrators were its citizens still carried out bomb explosions and even threatened India about nuclear bomb.

Modi took on Kumaraswamy for saying that the matter of airstrike on terror camps in Pakistan in Balakot should not be overpublicised "fearing that the vote bank bank would get angry."

Budauli: In a veiled attack on the BJP, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said if his party is voted to power, indebted farmers will not be sent to jails.

Addressing an election rally at Dataganj under Aonla parliamentary constituency here, he said, "Businessmen who took loans amounting to thousands of crores were allowed to flee the country instead of sending them to jail. While the farmers who took loans of Rs 20,000 and were

unable to pay, were sent to jail.

"Now, this will not happen, until and unless the big defaulters are sent to jail, not a single farmer will be sent to jail. As soon as our Government is formed, the farmers will not be sent to jail for non-payment of loans," Rahul asserted.

He said the Congress after forming Government in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan fulfilled its promise of farm loan waivers. "We will not allow two 'Hindustans' to come up in the country," he said.

Attacking the SP and the BSP, the Congress leader said, "Did the SP and BSP ever say *chowkidar chor hai*? No, because their keys are with Modi." Rahul also hit out at the Modi-led Central Government for its poor showing in generating employment in the country.

He claimed that unemployment ratio, under the Modi dispensation, was the highest in the last 45 years.

"By demonetisation, Modi took away people's money. Now, Congress will snatch the same money and deposit it in the accounts of poor people," he said. Referring to the minimum income guarantee scheme 'NYAY' proposed by the Congress, Gandhi said, "Once the Congress government is formed, it will ensure an annual income of Rs 72,000." PTI

Farmers' budget will declare MSP in advance, says RaGa

Vanthli: Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said Minimum Support Prices (MSP) would also be announced in the separate farmers' budget which his party's manifesto has promised.

Addressing a campaign rally at Vanthli in Junagadh district, he also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of applying different rules to the rich and the poor.

"If the Congress comes to power, the country will have two budgets. One will be national budget and another farmers' budget. "In the farm-

ers' budget we will announce MSP for various crops in advance so that farmers know what they will get. We will (also) announce the amount of insurance (premium) payable (by farmers) and what the would farmers get," he said.

The Modi Government was ready to waive loans of rich industrialists but not those of farmers, he said. "We will not allow formation of two Indias. If we have one flag, then we should have one nation. If Ambani gets justice, farmers should also get justice," Rahul said. PTI

Mukesh Ambani, Kotak endorse Milind Deora for Mumbai South

Mumbai: Industrialist Mukesh Ambani and billionaire banker Uday Kotak have endorsed the candidature of Congress leader Milind Deora from the Mumbai South Lok Sabha constituency, where polling is slated on April 29.

The backing of Ambani, Reliance Industries Limited chairman, to the Congress leader comes at a time when the party has been unrelenting in attack on his industrialist-brother Anil Ambani over the Rafale deal.

In a video shared by Deora, former Union Minister, on his Twitter page, Ambani says "Milind is the man for South Mumbai", while Kotak eulogises the Mumbai Congress chief for "truly representing the Mumbai connection".

Deora said he was "humbled" by the support from Ambani, Kotak and also other small businessmen and traders.

"I'm very proud. I'm equally proud that I'm being endorsed by paanwalas, small traders, Deora said. "Milind is the man for south Mumbai...Having represented

South Bombay for 10 years, I believe Milind has in depth knowledge of social, economic and cultural eco-system of the south Bombay constituency," says Ambani in the video.

Kotak said he "genuinely" felt that Deora is able to relate to Mumbaiites. "And his family has been associated with Mumbai for a long time...Milind truly represents Mumbai ka connection," Kotak says.

The video also features small entrepreneurs and traders, who are seen praising and backing Deora. A statement issued by Deora's office said he is being supported by "all quarters" of trade and business in Mumbai South constituency. Deora thanked the industrialists and traders' bodies for their "overwhelming" support to him.

"In the last five years, industry and trade, an integral part of the spirit of Mumbai, lost its voice in the Parliament. I am humbled by the support given by stalwarts like Shri Ambani and Shri Kotak," the statement quoted Deora as saying. PTI

Akhilesh, wife Dimple declare assets worth ₹37 cr

Azamgarh: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav owns assets worth over Rs 37 crore together with his wife Dimple, according to his poll affidavit filed on Thursday.

The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister has declared moveable property worth Rs 7.9 crore and immovable assets worth Rs 16.90 crore, in the affidavit submitted with the nomination paper.

His wife Dimple has declared Rs 3.68 crore worth movable properties and immovable assets of Rs 9.30 crore. Akhilesh's income has decreased to Rs 84.83 lakh in financial year 2017-2018, when compared to Rs 1.25 crore in 2013-14. His wife Dimple Yadav's income, however, has increased. While in the 2013-14 financial year, her annual income was Rs 28,31,838, in 2017-18 it increased to Rs

61,16,108. As per the affidavit, Akhilesh has Rs 3.91 lakh cash in hand while Dimple has Rs 4,03,743 cash in hand. Akhilesh owns a cellular phone worth Rs 76,000, furniture of Rs 17,085 and exercise equipment worth over Rs 5,34 lakh, while wife Dimple has jewellery items including gold, diamond, pearl worth Rs 59.76 lakh and computer of Rs 1.25 lakh. PTI



A child takes selfie with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav during an election rally for the Lok Sabha polls in Azamgarh on Thursday

DON'T VOTE FOR CONG, BJP: MAMATA

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday asked the voters not to vote for the CPI(M) or the Congress as neither of them would be able to form Government in the Centre.

"Don't waste your votes by giving them to the CPI(M) which is almost invisible in Bengal and the Congress which will not be able to form the Government on its own in the Centre," Banerjee told a crowd at Sami in North Malda constituency.

She said the Congress should not be the natural choice of the secular Bengalis because

"this party is now being backed by the RSS. They are taking the help from the RSS to win elections in Bengal. So they should be rejected by you."

Besides, "Congress will not be able to form Government in Centre. It is the regional parties that will form the Government in Bengal and if you want Bengal and the Trinamool Congress to take the lead in the national scene then I will ask you not to vote for the TMC so that we can send 42 MPs from this State to form the Government with other regional parties," Banerjee said.

Attacking the Narendra Modi Government for peddling lies Banerjee said "this Chowkidar (Modi) used to call

himself Chaiwalla (tea vendor) earlier on. Then he promised Rs 15 lakh in every bank account and 10 crore jobs in five years. But now having failed to do so he has changed his garb and has reappeared as Chowkidar (watchman)," Banerjee said adding "many people call him a thief (Chor) but I call him a liar who lies to the people to win votes."

On National Register for Citizens (NRC), Banerjee said, "they are invoking NRC in Assam to drive away 22 lakh Hindu Bengalis and 23 lakh Muslims but now we will invoke NBC or 'national bidayde' (farewell) certificate for the BJP after this election."

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo), **Name:** Laxmi D/o Suresh R/o D-85, Aman Puri, Nihal Vihar, Delhi, has been missing/ kidnapped since 04.04.2019 from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 236/19 u/s 363 IPC dated 05.04.2019 has been registered at Police Station Nihal Vihar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

Age : 16 Years, **Height :** 5', **Complexion :** Fair, **Face :** Round, **Identification :** A tattoo mark name laxmi & star on left hand, **Wearing :** Purple frock - green pajama & black colour chappal in feet.

Any person is having any information/Clue about this missing/kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, Nihal Vihar West, Delhi at E-mail Id – cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax No: 011-24368639

DP/2136/OD/19 **Ph. No:** 011-25946700, 25946710

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P. C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Ms. Nirmala Devi W/o Dayanand** R/o C-48 and also at A-114, Jhuggi Chuna Bhati, Kirti Nagar New Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under case **FIR No. 20/19 u/s 498A 304B/34 IPC** has been registered at P.S. **Kirti Nagar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said **Nirmala Devi W/o Dayanand** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **Nirmala Devi W/o Dayanand** has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Nirmala Devi W/o Dayanand** accused of **FIR No. 20/19 u/s 498 A 304B/34 IPC** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint.

By Order
Sh. Ajay Shekharawat
Chief MM, West Distt,
Room No.146, First Floor,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

**DP/8213/WD/19-
(Court Matter)**

TEMPORARY CANCELLATION / REGULATION / RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS DUE TO MAINTENANCE WORK

In order to upgrade the safety standards, Northern Railway will undertake the work of periodic maintenance and renewal of assets between Hapur-Moradabad, Moradabad-Bareilly, Bareilly-Roza, Roza-Hardoi, Hardoi-Balamau, Balamau-Kakori and Laksar-Moradabad sections. To execute the work, a Mega Traffic block for the duration of 04:00 hours will be taken on 19.04.2019. Consequently, the following trains will temporarily be affected as under :-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

| Train No. & Name | Date of Cancellation from originating stn. |
|---|--|
| 54056/54055 Delhi - Moradabad - Delhi Passenger | 19.04.2019 |

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

| Train No. & Train Name | Train Cancelled Between Stations | Date from Originating Station |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 55308 Ramnagar - Moradabad Passenger | Pipalsana - Moradabad - Pipalsana | 19.04.2019 |
| 55311 Moradabad - Kashipur Passenger | Pipalsana - Moradabad - Pipalsana | 19.04.2019 |

REGULATION OF TRAINS

12318 Amritsar Jn - Kolkata Alaktak Express, 12392 New Delhi - Rajbir Shramjeevi Express & 15044 Kathgodam - Lucknow Express Trains will be regulated suitably en-route on above mentioned date.

RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS

| Train No. & Name | Scheduled Dep. Time & Date | Rescheduled Dep. Time & Date |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 14258 New Delhi - Varanasi Jn Kashi Vishwanath Express | 11:35 hrs. on 19.04.2019 | 12:35 hrs. on 19.04.2019 |
| 55301 Moradabad-Kathgodam Pass. | 14:40 hrs. on 19.04.2019 | 15:55 hrs. on 19.04.2019 |

Note:- For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

Security Helpline No. 182 and Passengers



Head-to-head in Bhopal

Digvijaya Singh now has to deal with a strident hitback for his 'saffron terror' comment in a polarised context



Battleground Bhopal is now a matter-anti-matter confrontation without any pretence of electoral grace, propriety or even issues. The BJP has fielded its newly-inducted member Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, facing trial in the Malegaon blast case and the new flame of extreme hate politics, against Congress heavyweight and the author of the term "saffron terror," Digvijaya Singh. It is a blatant battle between hardline Hindutva and secular Congressism. It is the NDA's reaction to the UPA's action. It is also about muscularity over protocol, about the accused taking on the accuser. Thakur, one of those charged in the Malegaon blasts, is still out on bail though the National Investigative Agency (NIA) has claimed the evidence against her was insufficient and exonerated her. However, a special court in Mumbai says there's evidence to prosecute her. But for the BJP, the shroud of doubt, the burden of crimes or law don't matter in choosing a Lok Sabha candidate no less. The same law, of course, denies Opposition candidates similar privileges. It is about ideology rather than grammar. As BJP president Amit Shah said, since Digvijaya Singh had defamed India by coining terms like "saffron terror", the party had decided to take the matter to the people's court by fielding the Sadhvi against him in a sort of reckoning. Digvijaya has also been a bitter critic of the RSS, the ideological guide of the BJP, and the party has, therefore, taken him on with stridency. In the process, the extremist fringe that had so far been treated like disruptive outliers in the Modied NDA-1 has now been mainstreamed in the political narrative. And while murmurs were raised about the virulent Yogi Adityanath when he was made Chief Minister, looks like his kind will now find a greater voice. The kind that doesn't carry the baggage of history and can give a fresh spin to the legacy of identity politics. Besides, with Uma Bharti refusing to contest against Digvijaya in Bhopal, whom she had dislodged once in the Assembly, the BJP has been only too happy to find her younger version. With her saffron robes and self-proclaimed fight for dharma, the BJP has found a way to strike an emotive chord in the heartland and win back old faithfuls bred on the Ayodhya plank. It is also an overture to the RSS, whose network needs to be fully activated to secure a victory. And if Bhopal, being the State Capital and a high-profile seat, sets off a tide, then the BJP could recover some lost ground from the Assembly elections last year.

Bhopal is a tough fight for the Congress, the party having plummeted there since 1984 and the seat sending BJP MPs since 1989, that too with convincing margins. Yet the newly-elected Chief Minister Kamal Nath has taken on the challenge of wresting some seats that have eluded the party for 30 years and has, therefore, deployed former Chief Minister and colleague in arms Digvijaya. Thakur has the advantage of not just being a flag-bearer of Hindutva but the legacy of the party's former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, whose personal stock works with the masses. Little wonder then that the Sadhvi claimed his support immediately after emerging out of the BJP office. However, Digvijaya is no pushover. His huge following across the State cannot be denied and having been a two-term Chief Minister, he has a grip on Bhopal and Indore. Compared to him, his peers, be it Kamal Nath and tribal leader Kantilal Bhuria, or even junior colleague Jyotiraditya Scindia just command their own pocket boroughs. In the halcyon days, Digvijaya would not only pilot his own chopper and drive to the hinterland to meet his constituents, he knew their names and had the statistics, down to the block level, at the back of his hand. Digital India may be common speak now but back then, he introduced e-governance and e-Chaupal modules in Dhar district. But that vision is not under review anymore, his rabid support to conspiracy theories about the 26/11 Mumbai attacks and Hindu extremists is. And in a polarised polity, that myopia is rampant. That also helps Sadhvi Thakur. Her vote count will decide her guilt or innocence.

Rebuild France's soul

The conflagration at the Notre Dame broke millions of hearts but assurances of it being rebuilt are calming



Paris is the most visited city in France, the most popular destination for tourists across the world. So while the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe are the most popular icons of this city, there is also the Notre Dame Cathedral on a small island on the Seine river, which is an example of the Gothic architecture of the medieval ages and a sign of how the Frankish people started to assert their identity as French. It is visited by millions annually, the famous stained glass and gargoyles

on the structure becoming iconic in their own right. It has been at the centre of French life for centuries, having played a role during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era. The great general was coronated there. Few Western capitals with the exception of London are so closely identified with their religious centres.

Even though religion and religious adherence are on the downside across France let alone its wild Capital, home to shows like *Moulin Rouge* which are hardly something the Catholic Church would approve of, the sight of the church's spire collapsing in an inferno must have been deeply disheartening. It is a miracle that the main stone structure of the Cathedral itself managed to be saved. And President Macron, who held an extraordinary national address dressed in black, assured that the Cathedral would be rebuilt. The religious allegory was not lost on many with the fire occurring days before Good Friday, the day the Christians believe that Christ was crucified. And with several French billionaires and entrepreneurs putting their hands up and opening their wallets, donating millions to the rebuilding of the structure, it is heartening to see that the French are willing to rebuild what was lost. And many of the millions of global citizens who have visited Paris over the years are also contributing small sums towards the rebuild. Several crowd-funding initiatives have been started.

This fire should also come as a warning sign in a country like India where several monuments of archaeological note are in an awful state of disrepair and may not survive a fire like the one Notre Dame suffered. A fire at the Meenakshi Temple last year was almost fatal for the heritage site. India's cultural heritage is also part of the world's cultural heritage and this fire should be a wake-up sign. The French firefighters followed a proper procedure in saving the Cathedral. One wonders if such procedures exist at the Taj or other monuments, many of which are surrounded by small illegal shops and narrow streets where fire engines cannot pass. We should make contingency plans straightaway lest our heritage burn away.

Advertising ad nauseam

The BJP machinery, which has spent time and money managing the image of one man, must keep in mind that even the best marketing campaigns can't fix a flawed product



AJOY KUMAR

In 1989, there was a huge anticipation and excitement about a new way to play video games. All this excitement and anticipation was the result of the marketing campaign behind the "Power Glove", a wearable glove that would serve as a controller in video game consoles. The "Power Glove" was featured and referred to in feature films, found on billboards and plastered almost everywhere. Ask about it today though and you are likely to get blank, confused stares. This because, while the marketing campaign was admirable, the product was completely disconnected from what the consumers wanted. Overall, it was just not a great product.

Fast forward to 2019 and you have the Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy encouraging his followers to buy T-shirts with the slogan "Main Bhi Chowkidar". Not just that, this election season has seen Prime Minister Modi repeatedly post, comment, retweet and actively promote the sale of products with either his name written on them or with the latest consumer-friendly slogan of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). How did we get here?

In an era of social media, more attention is being given to the cover of the book than the book itself and there is greater focus on selling; nowhere is this more exemplified than in the case of the BJP. Today, we have Prime Minister Modi's name on T-shirts, mugs and even notebooks. Even in the BJP's own manifesto, the Prime Minister's face can be seen with HD clarity while the everyday people whom he is meant to serve are merely a low-quality backdrop. It will be apt to give a summary of the past five years, where the Prime Minister and the BJP's machinery spent all the time managing the image of a single man and forgot about the millions of people who elected him to serve them.

Now, we have a channel with no licence that is focussed on him and a movie where the actor, who plays the Prime Minister, will also, unsurprisingly, be one of the chief campaigners of the BJP. Currently, the movie is not allowed to be released in theatres due to a directive by the Election Commission. However, there is no denying that we have all been handed a ticket to this theatre of the absurd.

It's hard to get around without having seen a photo of Modi staring back at you. While it is important for India to maintain the right of every person, including the Prime Minister, to engage in marketing to the extent permitted under the law and to not restrict the freedom of expression of any individual, this megalomaniacal approach towards any personality is worrisome. Even North Korea, whose obsession with its leaders is often a subject of parody, doesn't have a dedicated channel for its supreme leader.

The reason why this trend should be checked is because a large amount of money is spent by the BJP on advertising and



promoting the Prime Minister. The practice of asking for votes in the name of Modi rather than the BJP undermines our parliamentary system.

In 2014, for example, when this tactic was initially employed, most voters did not even know the individuals who were contesting the Lok Sabha elections in their constituency. Instead, all that the voters were sold was the image of one man who would solve all their problems. Unfortunately, this story unravelled dramatically over the past five years.

India is a parliamentary democracy, which means that in the Centre and States, the party with the greatest representation in India's Parliament forms the Government and picks one person as the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister. The reason this system particularly makes sense for India is that we are a vibrant country. This vibrancy is not only in terms of all that is good in our country like the different cuisines, cultures and the people but also vibrant in the sense that each region has different needs and different requirements, depending on the constituents of a particular constituency.

I have heard certain people say that they want Modi at the Centre even if they don't believe their MP is capable of representing

their constituency effectively. Such an approach goes against the entire ethos of parliamentary democracy. Prime Minister Modi may promise the moon and the stars (and he often does). However, at the end of the day, it is the local parliamentarian who is required to raise local issues that can be discussed and debated in Parliament.

The MUGS, THE T-SHIRTS, THE MOVIE AND THE RADIO SHOWS AMONG OTHERS —

THEY ARE ALL THE HALLMARKS OF A MAN WHO HAS MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THE ONLY THING HE HAS ON HIS MIND IS HIMSELF

“

that goes wrong — corruption, unemployment, demonetisation, loss of lives due to terror attacks. And at the same time, he is the quickest to take credit when there's a whiff of success.

The mugs, the T-shirts, the movie and the radio shows among others — they are all the hallmarks of a man who has made it quite clear that the only thing he has on his mind is himself. Therefore, if India wants to truly progress and move forward, it needs to reject this idea that any one man can be a panacea for all that ails our country.

We must remember that the parliamentary form of Government works for India because it helps highlight the varying nature of issues our very diverse country faces. While there is no denying that a Prime Minister fulfills a crucial role in this system, he must also remember that he is the first among equals. If Prime Minister Modi does not grasp this fundamental rule of democracy, it is likely his tenure, too, like the "Power Glove", will serve as a lesson for future generations: Even the best marketing campaigns can't fix a flawed product.

Instead, Prime Minister Modi has ensured that he deflects blame for everything

(The writer is Jharkhand PCC president, former MP and IPS officer. Views are personal)

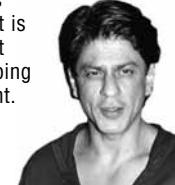
Narendra Modiji is a fake backward. From birth till 55 years, he was upper class. Suddenly, he became backward.

RJD leader
Tejaswi Yadav



Technology, exports and imports, all that is going to happen but cinema is always going to be at the forefront.

Actor
Shah Rukh Khan



If we have a problem in the region today, its roots are either with Zionism or America's arrogance.

Iran's President
Hassan Rouhani



SPG protectees can't be frisked personally. Why suspend an officer for checking PM's chopper? What message is being sent? Law is special for some.

Senior Congress leader
Ahmed Patel



SOUND BITE

Minting money

Sir — The cancellation of the Vellore Lok Sabha election after huge amounts of cash were recovered from a godown in the parliamentary constituency is not a new poll time malfunction. Nor is it the first time that the Election Commission (EC) has countermanded polls in Tamil Nadu. The RK Nagar bypoll was postponed not long ago for the same reason. Looks like politics has become a channel to mint money. A culture of corruption and bribery has taken deep roots in the State. This is not fair for a democracy. Perhaps the EC could have taken a decision earlier in the month when the first evidence of rampant cash distribution surfaced. It can't be leaden-footed.

Sravana Ramachandran
Chennai

Courting controversy

Sir — After being pulled up by the Supreme Court for not taking action against politicians spreading communal and hate speeches during the Lok Sabha campaigning,

Commission (EC) has regained its teeth. For now, it has barred Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati from campaigning because of their remarks with a decidedly communal connotation. Specifically, it was Adityanath's "Ali and Bajrangbali" remark at a Meerut rally and Mayawati's appeal to Muslim voters, asking them to vote for the SP-BSP alliance and not the Congress in Saharanpur and Bareilly, that irked the top court.

In the aftermath of the apex court's warning, the EC invoked its extraordinary powers to temporarily ban four political leaders from campaigning — Adityanath, SP leader Azam Khan, (both barred for 72 hours) Union Minister Maneka Gandhi and Mayawati (both barred for 48 hours). The top

A matter of worship



court rightly observed: "Seems like the Election Commission has woken up and found its powers." Citizens have generally welcomed the decision but will a ban for two to three days stop other leaders from making provocative speeches? Already, Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu has stoked controversy by urging Muslim voters of a Lok Sabha constituency in Bihar to vote en masse.

bloc and defeat (Prime Minister Narendra Modi).

Further, even after the ban, Adityanath iterated the "green virus" comment, which is a reference to the Muslims. Unmistakable is the communal polarisation, the wider phenomenon that transcends the uncharitable remarks.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee
Faridabad

Performance matters

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "A winning team?" (April 17). However strong a team is, it all depends upon how it performs on the D-day. Since one-day cricket is such an unpredictable game that anything can happen at the last few overs, one cannot indulge in guessing. A favourite team can turn otherwise in a matter of few overs. While one can hope that the Indian team will perform better, victory or defeat depends on the way the game turns out on the day of the play.

VS Jayaraman
Chennai

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Time for 'digital first' upgrade

To continue thriving amid changing tides in the business world, organisations must establish an open and honest line of communication between their firms and IT functions



AMIT MEHTA

We live in an era where technology is changing rapidly. With new innovations marking the technological landscape and an unprecedented race for 'digital transformation' by enterprises, it has become almost imperative for organisations and their IT teams to upgrade their existing infrastructure, adopt emerging technologies and deploy 'digital first' strategies. It has now become common to see companies go all-out on the 'digital' part of transformation projects — IT upgrades, optimisation of digital channels, investments in technology talent and much more. Often neglected, however, is the change in management, socialisation and communication elements that are essential for the ultimate success of this new focus on IT.

Currently, the business landscape in India is rife with disruption. Much of it is driven by organisations using technology in new or innovative ways to keep the digital ecosystem circulating around businesses. According to a study conducted by ESG's *IT Transformation Maturity Curve India Report*, 90 per cent of the Indian respondents believed that to succeed and stay ahead of the competition, their organisations' IT department needed to adopt IT transformation. This indicates the extent to which the IT department needs to be an integrated element for the success of an organisation. Another salient finding of the study states that transformed companies in India are 6.5 times more likely to be involved in business-strategy development compared to their counterparts.

Therefore, technology-enabled change can only work wonders when there is a clearly-defined and broadly understood vision of both — how that transformation will unfold in reality and its end-to-end goals. Hence, alignment between IT and business is essential to create a common ground that can facilitate and encourage all-encompassing change. This can be achieved through a mix of conversation, education and empowerment among a full range of key stakeholders:

Demystify change via education and transparency: Despite buzz of positive sentiments around business transformation trends, there remains a general state of apprehension about disruption within the C-suite. Simply put, in the corporate world, change is necessary but rarely a straightforward business. In that context, business functions about to fire the starting-gun on transformation projects need to be facilitating advance-conversations around the need for change and what it will entail for all parties concerned, with a focus on IT — a crucial engine for innovation and growth.

To continue thriving amid changing tides in the business world, organisations must establish an open and honest line of communication between their firms and IT functions to facilitate the ongoing education of new business needs and technologies required to support them.

Mutual empowerment for a long-term symbiosis: Despite their close association, IT and digital transformation projects cannot rest in the hands of IT teams alone. The two need to go hand-in-hand and change must come from the business itself. There must be a collaboration where feedback, insights and iteration come together to form a robust view as to where the business is lacking and what its future should be. Such two-way conversations will surface valuable information: Bring hidden complexities and inefficiencies to light and allow the IT team to get to the heart of the issue and identify the right problem and reach for a solution. CIOs can fast-track this goal by implementing clear processes to ease internal transitions — with a focus on enabling end-users to quickly gauge and evaluate the effectiveness of new solutions — as well as associated metrics.

Faced with challenges, including fast pace technological advancement and ever-changing consumer behaviour, it is essential that all stakeholders within an organisation work in collaboration to understand the imperatives for change and how one can adapt to the change in a well-structured manner, designed and enacted as smartly as possible. This is the key to thriving in the whirlwind of constant evolution and progress that defines today's ever-evolving business landscape.

(The writer is director, Modern Data Centre, Dell Technologies)

analysis

09

POINT COUNTER POINT

IT'S MY DUTY AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY TO SUPPORT MY FAMILY. I WILL CAMPAIGN FOR MY WIFE BUT NOT FOR ANY OTHER NON-CONGRESS CANDIDATE.

—CONGRESS LEADER SHATRUGHAN SINHA



HE (SHATRUGHAN SINHA) FULFILLED A HUSBAND'S DUTY BUT HE SHOULD NOW CAMPAIGN FOR ME AND FULFILL THE PARTY'S DUTY.

—CONGRESS CANDIDATE FROM LUCKNOW PRAMOD KRISHNAN

A new Mexican wave

With the election of Lopez Obrador as the President, a new era of politics has begun. He must remain true to the grandiose promises made during the campaign



GIRISH KUMAR

Amid the surge of demagogues and rabble-rousers of far-right across the globe in the recent past, the coming of Senor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador as the newly-elected President of Mexico has broken new ground in the Western hemisphere. Elected as the leader of the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA), which was founded by Lopez Obrador following two failed attempts in 2006 and 2012 elections as a candidate of broad Left coalitions, he had earlier headed the federal district Government of Mexico city. Like the US presidential election, Mexico, too, elects its President in July every six years and the President-elect assumes office on the first of December. Obrador was sworn in as Mexican President in December 2018.

Having taken charge of the Government and in pursuance of his campaign promises, Obrador has not moved to the presidential palace, has halved his own salary in the proposed Budget and also declared that he won't allow anyone else to get more than him. Change can be brought about — during his campaigns, he promised to "combat corruption" and maintain an "austere Government." Other assurances include more students' scholarship and pension to senior citizens, which can be financed by "cutting grafts." He flies in commercial airlines and put the presidential plane on sale. As the district Government head earlier, he had adopted several policies that benefitted vulnerable sections, infirm, poor women and aged population.

Instead of occupying luxurious presidential palace, he has started working from nearly a century-old national palace — the official seat of power — and has continued living at his private home. He strongly believes that neo-liberal policies have benefited a "minority of the population" while "impoverishing a great majority." Significantly, a century after the 1910 revolution — the first landmark in the political history of Mexico after it gained independence from Spanish colonial rule in 1822 — Obrador has become the first one who had begun as a protest leader but within the folds of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), Spanish Partido Revolucionario Institucional, which had controlled all levers of power for seven long decades since its formation in 1929.

Paradoxically, the Mexican political system was bizarre as it didn't permit the incumbent to have a second term, but he was empowered to select his successor who would be the ruling party's nominee in the ensuing election. Once in power, the new President would nominate his candidates for the next gubernatorial election and likewise, new Mayors would be hand-picked nominees of incumbent Governors. Everything was fine-tuned with ground support of consensus manufactured through local branches of cross-sectional wings of the ruling PRI.

The first crack in this electoral machine appeared during the 1988 election when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas challenged this nomination process. Echoing the feelings of the growing middle class, Cárdenas — a former Governor and also the son of a former but revered President who had nationalised petroleum sector way back in 1934 and redistributed land to the poor peasants — asserted that the PRI-managed system was no longer in sync with a modern country of urban professionals. Although PRI-sponsored candidates won the election, the then President Carlos Salinas de Gortari

HAVING TAKEN CHARGE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND IN PURSUANCE OF HIS CAMPAIGN PROMISES, OBRADOR HAS NOT MOVED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, HAS HALVED HIS OWN SALARY IN THE PROPOSED BUDGET AND ALSO DECLARED THAT HE WON'T ALLOW ANYONE ELSE TO GET MORE THAN HIM. DURING HIS CAMPAIGNS, HE PROMISED TO 'COMBAT CORRUPTION' AND MAINTAIN AN 'AUSTERE GOVERNMENT'



read the writing on the wall and initiated measures to cleanse the system, including setting up of an autonomous Election Commission and ensuring proportional representation of parties in Parliament. Measures were also taken to withdraw discretionary powers of bureaucracy, mediated by the party, which resulted in the ruling party's loosening grip over the patronage network.

The beneficiary of these reforms was the main Opposition party, National Action Party (PAN), which had started gaining foothold in the northern States bordering the US. For quite long, people from these States would enter the American market as illegal immigrants to work and upon their return, would start grumbling over the dysfunctional drainage, primary health care, schools and broken roads among others. No wonder, simmering discontent led to the defeat of PRI in these States. The influence of PAN gradually spread from winning a few seats in the lower house of Parliament to capturing seven of total 31 States by the late 1990s. The disenchantment with the PRI was also deepened with the coming of the North American Free Trade Treaty (NAFTA) between Mexico, the US and Canada in 1991, which saw the coming of a large number of maquiladora (assembling plants owned mostly by Americans where goods are assembled and exported back to the US) in the border Mexican States. It was a win-win situation for both: US manufacturers would gain by cheap Mexican labour and later would be happy with the availability of jobs nearer home and it would further expand the volume of Mexican exports to the US. In the bargain, however, more than a million formal jobs were lost

under the new economic policies that culminated in a near financial collapse in the mid-1990s.

Eventually, all this led to the defeat of the longest ruling party in the 2000 presidential election. Incidentally, the year 2000 also turned out to be watershed for President Obrador Manuel when he broke away from the PRI. He was earlier the head of PRI in his home State of Tabasco. First, he, along with Cárdenas, the rebel hero of 1988, joined the Left-oriented democratic revolutionary party (PRD) but subsequently switched over to a protest movement MRM, which he founded to mobilise students and youths against "political corruption" and "electoral fraud" and won the district election.

MORENA became a political party in 2014 only and is now in control of both the Houses.

Vicente Fox, a former boss of Coca-Cola empire in Mexico, was the biggest beneficiary of the changing contours of economics and social matrix triggered by NAFTA. During his six-year rule, he realised that reforming the system was not straight as was winning the 2000 presidential election. Most of his reform-oriented legislations couldn't pass through both the Houses of Parliament that remained under control of the old guards of PRI and the PAN; though Fox won with its support but remained at loggerheads with this party. In a country where the President has always been seen as the most powerful force, people got frustrated with a perfume lame duck incumbent, who sought to follow procedural niceties aimed at bringing durable change. As a result, Fox lost and the main Opposition, PAN, won the next election in 2006. But PRI returned to power again in 2012.

During the last six years, the linger-

ing crises over dealings with drug endemic violence and pervasive corruption, where the last PRI President Enrique Peña Nieto himself was seen involved thoroughly, disillusioned the voters. Above all, President Peña couldn't manage Central American refugee crises. Interestingly, erecting a huge border wall and that, too, financed by the Mexican Government to prevent the influx of Mexican and Central American immigrants to the US was a persistent campaign theme of Donald Trump. Prospects of deportation of 10-12 million Mexican illegal immigrants are already looming large. The total population of Mexico is 140 million.

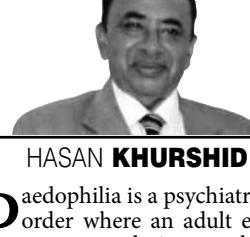
Perforce decades of civil war and leftist insurgency in Guatemala (Mexico's southern neighbour), El Salvador and Honduras and its disastrous economic fallout mismanaged by marauder regimes in these Central American countries, a caravan of refugees has recently marched through Mexico and is now lodged in tents at the US border. Paradoxically, its powerful northern neighbour has always remained a factor for Mexican patricians and plebeians alike as goes an old Mexican maxim: "We may be far from God but not from the US."

Meanwhile, Obrador has signed agreements with these countries to chalk out a long term "development plan", creating jobs and has also allocated \$2 billion in his first budget for this purpose. The outcome of any long term plan takes years, so it would mean nothing to the impatient American President. Nevertheless, it does indicate a lot to both Mexicans and its impoverished southern neighbours.

(The writer is former faculty member of Indian Institute of Public Administration)

When paedophiles get recognition

The Wahabi/Salafi school, which provides impetus to militant Islamists in Pakistan, is at the root of the exploitation of minorities. This agony will stay unless Muslim clerics across the globe come forward and end a destructive ideology



HASAN KHURSHID

Paedophilia is a psychiatric disorder where an adult experiences an exclusive sexual attraction to pre-pubescent children. Being a mental disorder, those suffering from paedophilia need mental health support. The brains of paedophiles aren't 'wired' correctly, causing them to get sexually attracted towards children. They have a brain malfunction that can hardly be corrected, though there are therapies that can reduce the recurrence of a sick person committing child sexual abuse.

Recently, two minor Hindu girls from Sindh were abducted and transported to Rahim Yar Khan from Ghotki in south-east Pakistan. The two minors were then forceful-

ly converted to (their version of) Islam before being married to Muslim men.

In the videos circulating on social media, the father and brother of the girls can be seen crying hoarse, saying that the girls were abducted and forced to change their religion. However, in another clip, the minor girls appeared to give their statements that they accepted Islam on their own free will. The Pakistani media, too, tried to defend the culprits, saying that the minor girls had embraced Islam out of free will and that they consented to their marriage with willingness and choice.

Due to the Indian Government's protests, the matter was referred to the court on April 2. The Islamabad High Court formed a five-member Commission to probe the alleged abduction, forced conversion and marriage of the girls. Its members included Pakistani Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari and Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women, Khawar Mumtaz.

It was reported that the girls and

their alleged spouses sought court protection. The girls also allegedly said that they belonged to a Hindu family of Ghotki, a small town in Sindh and converted willfully as they were impressed by Islamic teachings.

It is amply clear that the statement of the girls has been given under duress and no sane person can buy the theory that the minor girls, aged 13 and 15, have sufficient maturity and decision-making capacity to understand, comprehend or judge the teaching and traditions of the two religions. Can they make a comparative view of the two diverse religions without experiencing and studying the tenets and principles of the two faiths?

Moreover, according to Muslim practice, at the time of nikah, the father of the girl, minor or major, being the 'wali' (protector) is required to give his consent and stand witness to the ceremony, which was not the case here. On the contrary, the father and brother of the girls openly leveled allegations of abduction, forced conversion

and marriage of the minors.

The High Court miserably failed to understand that before Partition, during the British rule, the Indian Majority Act, 1875, was applicable on the whole of India, and the same is currently prevalent in India and Pakistan both. Legally and philosophically speaking, the forced marriage of the two girls below 15 years of age, amounts to rape. A person below the age of 18 years is a minor and is not mature enough to comprehend what is good or bad for him/her. The consent given by the girls, even if willingly, is meaningless, irrelevant and illegal. The court should have restored the girls to their parents. Whereas, the Islamabad court on April 11, vide its impugned order, directed the girls to stay with their husbands. The court's order was based on the five-member Commission's report, which stated that it held a meeting with the girls and their spouses and found no compulsion, though the statement of the minor girls, expressing consent for the entire episode, was not only irrelevant but null and void from the

principle of reasonableness. The (mock) Commission did not incorporate the statements of the girls' father, brother, neighbours and other respondents.

It is well-known that Pakistan is driven by the extremist ideology of Wahabism/Salafism. The civilian Government over there is a puppet of its Army. As such, all Muslim and non-Muslim minorities such as Shia Muslims, Hazaras, Ahmedias, Sufis, Barelyes and non-Muslims such as Hindus, Sikhs and Christians are targeted. The Wahabi/Salafi ideology justifies the rape and abduction of all non-Wahabi women, especially of those belonging to the Shia Muslims and Hindu minorities.

Dozens of terror groups are operating from Pakistan's soil, internally and externally. According to Human Rights Watch, during the past one decade, thousands of innocent people — Hindus, Shias, Sufis, Sikhs and Christians — have been killed mercilessly in Pakistan itself by these extremists under the patronage of the Inter-Services

Intelligence and the Army, which use them as a bargaining chip in the region. Again, on April 12, as many as 20 people, including two children, were killed and 70 injured in an (un) Islamic State blast, targeting Hazara Shia minority community in Baluchistan.

Pakistan's former Ambassador to the US recently admitted in Washington that Imran Khan's statements, promising the end of support to terrorist groups, are motivated by the fear of getting blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force and that there is no evidence that the Government or the military are dismantling terrorist support infrastructure.

One can imagine the nightmare of surviving persecuted minorities of Pakistan, who even after surviving criminal assaults, remain survived by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, without any remedy. This agony is most likely to stay, unless Muslim clerics across the globe come forward and bring an end to the pseudo-Islamic Wahabi/Salafi ideology.

(The author is a legal journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



CLIMATE CHANGE CAMPAIGNERS: WE NEED THEM ALL

Adaptation to rising temperatures is inevitable; accommodation with the forces fuelling them will be disastrous. Social movements exert pressure on internal processes of change, which are inherently incremental and cautious. That parts of the establishment are now pressing for action on climate change is critical. That others are pushing from the outside is at least equally so.

(The author is a legal journalist)

Passengers say they miss Jet flights

Cancellations inconvenience flyers

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Jet Airways was grounded for the time being after flying for almost 26 years when its last flight, a Boeing 737, touched down at the Mumbai airport early on Thursday after departing from Amritsar.

The country's oldest private airline took off nearly 26 years ago from the airport here to Ahmedabad as an air taxi operator.

The aircraft VT-SJI (flight no. S2 3502), belonging to the erstwhile Sahara Airlines, departed from Amritsar at 10.24 pm on Wednesday and touched down at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport here at 12.22 am on Thursday, ending the "Joy of Flying" for its millions of customers.

Sahara Airlines was acquired by Jet in 2007 to kill competition triggered by the emergence of low-cost airlines like IndiGo, SpiceJet and GoAir, and the competition is said to have contributed in its downfall.

"I generally fly Jet Airways. But when I boarded it from Amritsar on Wednesday night, we were told this is the last flight the airline is operating as it is shutting down for the time

being," said Amarjit Singh, who hails from Ludhiana.

Singh, a transporter by profession who frequently visits Mumbai for business, said he is hopeful of the airline "resuming" operations soon.

Set up by Naresh Goyal on April 1, 1992, Jet Airways' first flight took off from Mumbai for Ahmedabad on May 5, 1993, as an air-charter operator, which does not require a published schedule.

However, more than a year later, it was granted the scheduled operator permit on January 14, 1995.

Another passenger, Shareef Abdullah, who runs a hotel chain and is a frequent flyer with the carrier, said it was painful to know that the airline is shutting down.

"They announced it both on departure from Amritsar and after landing here that this was the last flight. It is really painful," he said.

The abrupt cancellation of the airline's services for the time being have left thousands of passengers stranded.

"I, along with my wife and children, had to travel to Ahmedabad early this morning. I had booked five tickets a month in advance. But when I reached the airport here, I was informed they have cancelled the operations," said Madan Lal



Imali, who was travelling to his native place Pali Killa in Rajasthan for a family function.

He said his wife and children were very disappointed as it was to be their maiden flight.

"I had also booked train tickets in an AC coach and paid ₹2,500 each for five seats to travel to Pali from Ahmedabad. Now, I have been forced to cancel that journey as well, besides losing money," said Imali, who was to board the airline's flight W9299 for Ahmedabad from here post-mid night.

Struggling for months, Jet Airways chief executive Vinay Dube last evening announced the carrier was shuttering operations as his last-ditch attempt to get ₹400 crore was rejected by lenders.

The decision leaves 20,000 jobs at stake and over ₹8,500 crore of public funds, that the banks lent to the once-leading airline, at the risk of going down the drain.

The airline also owes lakhs of rupees to passengers and its vendors.

Jio, BSNL drive telecom subscriber growth to 120.5 crore in Feb

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's telecom subscriber base grew marginally to 120.5 crore on account of a net addition of customers by Reliance Jio and state-owned BSNL, according to data published by telecom regulator Trai on Thursday.

Both Reliance Jio and BSNL jointly added a net of 86.39 lakh mobile subscribers but the rest of the telecom operators jointly lost a net of 69.93 lakh wireless customers with Vodafone Idea losing the biggest chunk of mobile connections, as per the data.

The number of telecom subscribers in India increased to 120.54 crore at the end of February from 120.37 crore in January, according to the Telecom Monthly Subscriber Report released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai).

The sector, dominated by wireless connection, recorded an increase in the mobile services subscriber base to 118.36 crore in February from 118.19 crore in January.

Reliance Jio alone added 77.93 lakh customers, taking its total subscriber base to 29.7 crore at the end of February.

According to a television commercial of the company, it has crossed 30 crore customer base now.

BSNL added around 9 lakh new mobile customers, taking its total subscriber base to

11.62 crore in February.

"BSNL is the only operator other than Jio that has gained customers. Our performance shows that customers have faith in BSNL. We are able to compete and gain customers with our much-improved 3G networks. In our endeavour to provide service, all our officers and employees are together," BSNL Chairman and Managing Director Anupam Shrivastava said.

The state-run firm is competing in the market with 3G network, while all other operators are loaded with spectrum for 4G services. It has requested the government for the allocation of spectrum for 4G services through an equity infusion in 2017. The government is yet to take final decision.

The country's biggest telecom operator Vodafone Idea lost 57.87 lakh mobile subscribers, reducing its total customer base to 49.93 crore in February. It was followed by Tata Teleservices that lost 11.47 lakh mobile customers. Airtel lost 49,896 subscribers, MTNL 4,652 and Reliance Communication 3,611 subscribers.

Fixed-line connections in the country declined marginally with BSNL losing about one lakh connections. Private operators Bharti Airtel and Vodafone gained 42,456 and 17,563 fixed-line customers, respectively, in February.

The airbag inflator casing might rupture which may result in injury or safety risk to the vehicle occupants, it added.

Millions of vehicles globally have been recalled due to defective safety airbag manufactured by Japan's Takata Corp.

Honda recalls 3,669 units of Accord to fix faulty airbags

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Japanese auto major Honda Thursday said it is recalling 3,669 units of its Accord sedan in India as part of a global exercise to rectify faulty airbags.

The company, which is present in India through a wholly-owned arm Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL), is voluntarily recalling the units manufactured between 2003-2006 to fix faulty front airbag inflators supplied by Takata Corp.

The replacement will be carried out free of cost at Honda dealerships across India from Thursday, HCIL said in a statement.

As part of the Takata airbag inflator recalls which have impacted several car makers globally, the company said it continues to urge owners of vehicles affected by the recall to get their vehicles repaired at authorised dealers as soon as possible.

"HCIL reiterates the importance of replacing the affected Takata front airbag inflators urgently as they may deploy with excessive internal pressure when activated," it said.

The airbag inflator casing might rupture which may result in injury or safety risk to the vehicle occupants, it added.

Millions of vehicles globally have been recalled due to defective safety airbag manufactured by Japan's Takata Corp.

Business Corner



S Vijaya Kumar, General Manager, Syndicate Bank has joined Zonal Office, Delhi. He has been transferred from ZO: Hyderabad, Regional Office, Chandigarh, Faridabad, Jaipur, Udaipur, Ludhiana, Panipat, Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad and all three regions of Delhi are covered under Delhi Zone



Gajanan Mallya, General Manager, South Central Railway holds meeting with bulk freight customers of the Zone, discusses plans to take forward the co-operation towards optimising freight traffic movement



The MoU was signed by professor Devang V Khakhar, Director, IIT Bombay and Surina Rajan, Director General, BIS at the IIT Bombay campus. The premier institution aims to provide IT-based technological solutions regarding various activities of the Bureau. IIT Bombay will develop infrastructure support for R&D projects of relevance to standardisation and BIS will provide financial assistance for such initiatives

SpiceJet shares trim early gains; end 3% higher

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

SpiceJet stock trimmed most of its sharp early gains and ended nearly 3 per cent higher Thursday on profit-booking after rising for five consecutive days.

The scrip had climbed 14.99 per cent to ₹152.60 — its 52-week high — on the BSE during the day. Later, it closed at ₹136.25, up 2.68 per cent.

On the traded volume front, 211.25 lakh shares were traded on the BSE during the day. SpiceJet Thursday said it will induct six more Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft on dry lease.

"These six aircraft are in addition to the 16 B737s and 5 Q400s that the airline will soon induct. The total number of planes to be inducted in the immediate future now stands at 27," the company said in a BSE filing Thursday.

The airline has applied to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation for a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to import the planes. Subject to regulatory approvals, the aircraft would

Japan's Suzuki in domestic recall of 2 mln vehicles

AFP ■ TOKYO

Japanese small car manufacturer Suzuki announced Thursday it was recalling two million vehicles shipped domestically, citing improper inspections

and a series of other faults including false fuel efficiency data.

The recall affects vehicles running for four years or less that have not yet received a routine check-up.

Last week, Suzuki admitted that an internal review had uncovered a host of problems at its factories, including faulty brake checks, falsified fuel-efficiency data, and uncertified staff carrying out final inspections.

The problem "raises doubts about the firm's regards for compliance and it is extremely regrettable," Ishii told reporters on Tuesday.



The recall is expected to cost the firm around 80 billion yen (\$715 million) and also affects parts made by Suzuki for vehicles produced for Nissan, Mazda and Mitsubishi.

Transport minister Keiichi Ishii has said the company needs some "serious soul-searching" over the scandal.

The problem "raises doubts about the firm's regards for compliance and it is extremely regrettable," Ishii told reporters on Tuesday.

Air India offers special fares to Jet stranded int'l passengers

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Coming to the rescue of the stranded international passengers hit by the abrupt grounding of Jet Airways, Government-run Air India Thursday offered special fares to such passengers.

The "special stranded" fares have been offered to passengers at overseas airports such as Paris, London Heathrow, Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong, Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Dammam, and Muscat, among others, Air India said in a statement.

"As a gesture of goodwill and to mitigate the hardship of the 9W (Jet Airways flight code) at international stations, Air India will be offering special fares to such passengers," it said.

Passengers holding confirmed RT tickets on Jet Airways will be allowed to avail special stranded passenger fares from the destinations common with Air India, it said.

Air India has appealed the decision, arguing that the EU's accusations were unfounded, but Thursday's

Google offers Android users choice to satisfy EU

AFP ■ BRUSSELS

Google on Thursday said users of its hugely popular Android devices would be offered a choice of five browsers and search engines as part of the company's effort to meet EU competition concerns.

The European Commission last July hit Google with its biggest-ever fine, imposing a 4.34 billion euro (\$5 billion) penalty, one of three major EU decisions against the company.

Brussels accused Google of using the Android system's dominance of smartphones and tablets to promote the use of its own Google search engine and Chrome browser and shut out rivals.

Google has appealed the decision, arguing that the EU's accusations were unfounded, but Thursday's

changes were part of the firm's effort to avoid further fines.

Users of Android devices in Europe who open the Google Play app store will now be shown screens with options to download different search apps and browsers, Paul Gennai, Google product management director, said in a blog.

"These new screens will be displayed the first time a user opens Google Play after receiving an upcoming update," the executive wrote.

With the change, "two screens will surface: one for search apps and another for browsers, each containing a total of five apps, including any that are already installed," he said.

They were also made to set Google Search as the default, as a condition of licensing other Google apps, the EU said.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

begin joining SpiceJet's fleet in the next ten days, it added.

"We are taking all possible proactive measures to deal with the sudden reduction of aviation capacity in the Indian market. SpiceJet continues to work closely with the government and regulatory authorities to help minimise passenger inconvenience," Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet said.

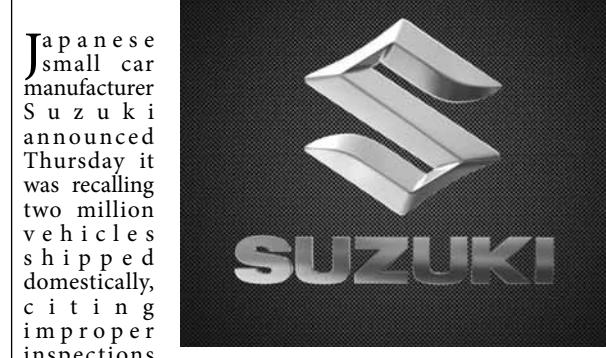
The airline will induct as many as 27 planes in a record time of less than two weeks and is hopeful that these inductions will help considerably ease the pressure situation, he added.

The shares had climbed 8.5

per cent Friday after the airline announced it will induct 16 Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft, a move that will help in bringing down flight cancellations.

On Monday, the stock zoomed nearly 9 per cent as the company announced launch of direct flights from Mumbai to seven international destinations, including Colombo, Jeddah, Dhaka, Riyadh and Hong Kong.

MISSING/KIDNAPED



Khushnaj

General public is hereby informed that one girl, Namely: Khushnaj, D/o: Sajjad, R/o: F-2/417, Shiv Ram Park, Nihal Vihar, Delhi has been missing/ kidnaped since 26.11.2018 from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. In this regard, a Case Vide DD No. 19-A, Dated 27.11.2018, has been lodged at P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. Investigations has been carried out but despite best efforts, the girl could not be traced. The description of the missing/kidnaped girl is as under:

Name: Khushnaj, D/o: Sajjad, R/o: F-2/417, Shiv Ram Park, Nihal Vihar, Delhi, Age: 20 years, Height: 5'3" Feet, Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: White Kamiz, White Pant and Black Chappal in feet. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnaped girl, then please inform P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi.

email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641

DP/2108/OD/19.

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a boy namely Neeraj @ Bhola, S/o Sh. Manoj Kumar, R/o H.no. 410, Village-Dariyapur, Bawana, Delhi. The boy has been missing since 29.03.2019 from the area of P.S. Bawana, Delhi.

In this regard FIR No. 141/19 dated 31.03.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Bawana, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing boy but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing man is as under:

Name: Neeraj @ Bhola, Age: 15 Years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Wearing: Blue Colour T-Shirt, Black Colour Pajama, Sports Shoes in feet.

If anyone has any information regarding this missing boy, kindly inform SHO/P.S. Bawana, Delhi.

Email: cic@cbi.gov.in, Website: http://cbi.nic.in
Ph.: 011-23015229, 23015218
Fax: 011-23011334

SHO P.S. Bawana, Delhi
Ph. No. 011-27751949, 07065036321

DP/191/ON/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a man namely Vijay Nagpal, S/o Late Sh. Krishan Lal Nagpal, R/o H.no. 69 Amit Nagar, 2nd Floor South Extension Part-1, New Delhi has been missing since 03.01.2019 from shop no. 27-28, Happy Dry Clean, New Municipal Double Story Meher Chand Market, Lodhi Colony, New Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 29A, dated 16.02.2019, has been lodged at P.S. Lodhi Colony, New Delhi.

Markets slip from lifetime highs on profit booking, Jet woes

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks retreated from lifetime highs on Thursday as investors took money off the table ahead of an extended weekend, while the grounding of Jet Airways stoked fears among banks and other lenders.

After rallying to an intra-day record of 39,487.45 points, the 30-share BSE Sensex turned negative to settle 135.36 points, or 0.34%, lower at 39,440.28.

The broader NSE Nifty slipped 34.35 points, or 0.29%, to 11,752.80 after setting an intra-day record of 11,856.

The benchmark indices had closed at record highs on Tuesday on earnings optimism and forecast of a near-normal monsoon.

Markets will be closed Friday on account of Good Friday.

During the holiday-truncated week, the Sensex rose 373.17 points, or 0.96%, while the Nifty gained 109.35 points, or 0.93%.

"After a period of significant momentum ahead of the general elections, the market may take a pause in some kind of an interim profit-booking," said Joseph Thomas, head of research at Emkay Wealth Management.

"The accelerating scenario of a slowdown in global growth as also the definitive prospects of higher fuel prices and a weaker currency may also be working on the minds of the market participants at this juncture," he added.

Shares of Jet Airways continued to fall for the second day in a row, plummeting over 32 per cent on Thursday, a day after the ailing airline shuttered its operations temporarily.

"The hunt for new bid-

ers/suitors is getting tough. This event led to cascading negative effect on lenders to Jet and other banks," said Deepak Jasani, head of retail research at HDFC Securities.

Top losers in the Sensex pack included Yes Bank, Vedanta, IndusInd Bank, Tata Steel, I&T, SBI, NTPC, Kotak Bank, HDFC, PowerGrid, Infosys and ITC, falling up to 4.18%. On the other hand, RIL was the biggest gainer on the index, spurring 2.79% ahead of its Q4 results.

Tata Motors, Asian Paints, TCS, Coal India, Hero MotoCorp, Axis Bank and HUL also ended in the green, rising up to 2.32%.

Apart from energy and oil and gas, all BSE sectoral indices ended in the red, led by realty, power, metal, telecom, capital goods and banking, shedding up to 2.33%.

The broader markets fell in tandem with the benchmarks. The BSE smallcap index lost 0.99%, while the midcap gauge tripped 0.89%.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased equity worth a net ₹1,038.58 crore on Tuesday, and domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought shares to the tune of ₹37.22 crore, provisional data available with stock exchanges showed.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Japan, China and Korea ended in the red. In Europe, bourses in Germany, France and the UK were trading on a mixed note in early deals. Global crude oil benchmark Brent futures fell 0.17% to USD 71.50 per barrel.

Meanwhile, the Indian rupee appreciated 5 paise to 69.55 against the US dollar intra-day.

RCom promoters' shareholding declined to 22% in Jan-Mar this year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Communications promoters' stake has come down to 22 per cent in January-March 2019 quarter, with family and group firms jointly losing more than half of the equities, the telecom firm said on Thursday.

In the October-December 2018 quarter, the promoters and promoter group of debt-ridden RCom had 53.08% stake in the company.

In the third quarter of 2018-19, Ambani family members jointly held 145.48 crore equity shares, which came down to 59.79 crore in last quarter of the same fiscal, according to shareholding pattern disclosure made by the firm.

Shares held by promoter group firm Reliance Communications Enterprises Private Limited dropped by almost half to 36.56 crore from 72.31 crore.

The disclosure shows that equity holding of Reliance Ornatus Enterprise and Ventures and Reliance Wind Turbine Installations Industries came down to 9.2 crore and 85 lakh, respectively, from 30 crore shares held by each of them in the third quarter.

According to records, most of the pledged shares were sold by lenders in January-March 2019 quarter.

The company, which is reeling under debt burden of around ₹45,000 crore, has approached the National Company Law Tribunal to invoke insolvency against it as the firm has been unable to sell assets and pay back to lenders.

Lenders hopeful of successful bids for grounded Jet Airways

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ations".

"Tuesday night, we were informed by SBI, on behalf of the consortium of Indian lenders, that they are unable to consider our request for interim funding. Since no emergency funding from the lenders or any other source of funding was forthcoming, it would therefore not have been possible for us to pay for fuel or other critical services to keep the operations going," he wrote.

He said the airline had over the last several weeks and months tried "every means possible" to seek funding, both interim as well as long term funding, to keep our operations going. "Unfortunately, despite the very best of our efforts, we have been left with no other choice today."

"A decision like this is never easy to make, but without the interim funding, which we have been repeatedly requesting for, we are simply unable to conduct flight operations in a manner that delivers to the very reasonable expectations of our guests, employees, partners and service providers," he wrote.

"After 25 years of sharing the Joy of Flying with Indian and international guests, Jet Airways and its Board of Directors have been forced to take this extreme measure, as prolonged and sustained efforts with lenders and authorities to ensure the sustainability of the airline did not yield the desired results."

He, however, said the future provides new hope and opportunity as India is better off with a flying Jet Airways. "We will now await the bid finalisation process by SBI and the consortium of Indian lenders and will continue to support the bid process initiated by the lenders," he added.

Passengers who had booked on Jet for travel on future dates will get a refund.

14 products from different states received GI tag this year

New Delhi (PTI): Himachali Kala Zeera, Jeeraphool from Chhattisgarh and Kandhamal Haldi from Odisha are among the 14 products that have received Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the government so far this year.

According to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the other products which received

this tag include Coorg Arabica coffee from Karnataka, Wayanad Robusta coffee from Kerala, Araku Valley Arabica from Andhra Pradesh, Sirisi Supari from Karnataka and Himachali Chilli oil.

Darjeeling Tea, Tirupathi Laddu, Kangra Paintings, Nagpur Orange and Kashmiri Pashmina are among the registered GIs in India.

The tag helps growers of these products get premium price as no other producer can misuse the name to market similar goods.

A geographical indication tag is used for an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicraft and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.

NIFTY 50

| SCRIPT | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | LTP | CHANGE |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|
| NIFTY 50 | 11856.15 | 11865.15 | 11738.50 | 11752.80 | -34.35 |

Muller report: No proof of Russian meddling in polls

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The nearly two-year investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller found "no evidence" of a "collusion" between the Trump campaign and the Russian government during the 2016 US elections, Attorney General William Barr Thursday announced.

Thursday, in a major relief to President Donald Trump.

Addressing the media at the Department of Justice here on the release of Mueller's redacted report on the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

Mueller was chosen to head the investigation in 2017 following concerns from US intelligence agencies that Russia had tried to tip the election in Trump's favour. The businessman-turned-politician defeated former secretary of state Hillary Clinton in the 2016

presidential election.

Barr said Mueller investigated a number of links or contacts between Trump Campaign officials and individuals connected with the Russian government.

"After reviewing those contacts, the special counsel did not find any conspiracy to violate US law involving Russia-linked persons and any persons associated with the Trump campaign," Barr said on the 400-page report.

He, however, said the Russian government sought to interfere in US election process.

Barr emphasised that the primary purpose of the Special Counsel's investigation was to determine whether members of the presidential campaign of Trump, or any individuals associated with that campaign, conspired or coordinated with the Russian government to interfere in the 2016 election.

The Special Counsel's

report states that his "investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities."

"I am sure that all Americans share my concerns about the efforts of the Russian government to interfere in our presidential election.

As the Special Counsel's report makes clear, the Russian government sought to interfere in our election.

"But thanks to the Special Counsel's thorough investigation, we now know that the Russian operatives who perpetrated these schemes did not have the cooperation of President Trump or the Trump campaign — or the knowing assistance of any other Americans for that matter," he said. "That is something that all Americans can and should be grateful to have confirmed," Barr said.

29 German tourists killed in Portuguese bus crash

AP ■ LISBON

Twenty-nine German tourists were killed on Wednesday when a bus crashed on the Portuguese island of Madeira.

Television images showed the bus had spun off the road, apparently having flipped several times, before crashing into a house at the bottom of a slope.

"Horrible news comes to us from Madeira," a German government spokesman tweeted after the deadly crash.

"Our deep sorrow goes to all those who lost their lives in the bus accident, our thoughts are with the injured," he added.

Filipe Sousa, mayor of Santa Cruz where the accident happened, said 17 women and 11 men were killed in the crash, with another 21 injured.

ment to salvage the high-stakes nuclear diplomacy.

Both the demand for Pompeo's removal from the talks and the weapon test point to North Korea's displeasure with the deadlocked negotiations. In a statement issued under the name of Kwon Jong Gun, director general of the American Affairs Department at the Foreign Ministry, North Korea accused Pompeo of "talking nonsense" and misrepresenting Kim's comments.

During a speech at Texas A&M on Monday, Pompeo said Kim promised to denounce during his first summit with President Donald Trump and that U.S. Officials were working with the North Koreans to "chart a path forward so we can get there."

"He (Kim) said he wanted it done by the end of the year," Pompeo said. "I'd love to see that done sooner." The North Korean statement said Pompeo was "misrepresenting the meaning of our requirement" for the

negotiations to be finalized by the year's end, and referred to his "talented skill of fabricating stories."

It said Pompeo's continued participation in the negotiations would ensure that the talks become "entangled" and called for a different counterpart who is "more careful and mature in communicating with us." In a speech at his rubber-stamp parliament last week, Kim said he is open to a third summit with Trump, but only if the United States changes its stance on sanctions enforcement and pressure by the end of the year.

Kim observed the unspecified weapon being fired Wednesday by the Academy of Defense Science, the North's state-run Korean Central News Agency said. Kim was reportedly to have said "the development of the weapon system serves as an event of very weighty significance in increasing the combat power of the People's Army."

GLOBE TROTTING

FACEBOOK BANS UK FAR-RIGHT GROUPS

London: Social media giant Facebook on Thursday banned various far-right British groups including the English Defence League from its network for promoting hate and violence.

US TRADE AGREEMENT NOT YET SETTLED: CHINA

Beijing: China said on Thursday there is "still much work to finish" on the text of a trade agreement with the United States. US President Donald Trump on Wednesday held out hope the current trade talks with China will be a success, and said an announcement on the status was due "shortly".

LONDON CLIMATE PROTESTS ENTER 4TH DAY

London: London commuters faced further disruption on Thursday as climate change protests continued to bring parts of the British capital to a standstill, leading to over 300 arrests.

Kim will visit Russia this month: Kremlin

AP ■ MOSCOW

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will visit Russia later this month, the Kremlin said Thursday, in a meeting that offers President Vladimir Putin an opportunity to emerge as a broker in the long-running nuclear standoff and raise Russia's profile in regional affairs.

The Kremlin said in a brief statement Thursday that Kim will visit Russia "in the second half of April" on Putin's invitation, but gave no further details. Russian media have been abuzz in recent days with rumors about the rare meeting between the leaders.

Putin is set to visit China later this month, and some media speculated that he could meet with Kim in Vladivostok, the far eastern port city near the border with North Korea.

Kim said last week that he

Pak Finance Minister Asad Umar steps down

AP ■ ISLAMABAD



not take any cabinet position."

Prime Minister Khan-led government and Finance Minister Umar in particular have faced mounting criticism by opposition parties, members of the business community and citizens over the handling of the economic crisis. On Monday, the Pakistani media reported that a major reshuffle was on the cards in the Finance Ministry.

However, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry denied the reports of the

reshuffle. "There is no truth in reports regarding changes in posts of federal ministers. The prime minister has the power to change ministers and the media should play a responsible role on this subject," he tweeted.

Cash-strapped Pakistan is seeking USD 8 billion from the IMF to bail itself out from a severe balance-of-payments crisis that threatens to cripple the country's economy. Pakistan has so far received a total of USD 9.1 billion in financial aid packages from friendly countries like China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE during the current fiscal year.

Finance Minister Umar said earlier this month that a mission of the IMF would visit Islamabad soon after the spring meetings of the World Bank Group, which includes the IMF, and an agreement should be signed by the end of this month.

"Though a humble beginning, with the launching of NepaliSat-1 Nepal has entered

Nepal launches its first satellite from US

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal Thursday successfully launched its first satellite into space from the US to gather detailed geographical information of the Himalayan nation, evoking unbridled excitement among the people and scientists.

Developed by the Nepalese scientists, NepaliSat-1 satellite was launched at 2.31 am (Nepal time) from Virginia in United States, according to Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST).

Two Nepali scientists, Abhaya Maskay and Hariram Shrestha who are currently studying at Japanese Kyushu Institute of Technology, developed the satellite under the BIRDS project of their institute.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli congratulated all the scientists and institutions involved in the development of the satellite. He said it was a matter of prestige for the country to have its own satellite.

"Though a humble beginning, with the launching of NepaliSat-1 Nepal has entered

'Though a humble beginning, with the launching of NepaliSat-1 Nepal has entered the Space-Era. I wish to congratulate all those scientists and institutions that were involved right from the development to its launching thereby enhancing the prestige of our country'

the Space-Era. I wish to congratulate all those scientists and institutions that were involved in the making of the satellite.

The satellite will take photographs on a regular basis to gather geographical information of the country.

The satellite has a Nepali flag and the NAST logo. It also has the name of the scientists involved in the making of the satellite.

Nepal Academy of Science and Technology has invested nearly Rs 20 million for the satellite that weighs 1.3 kilograms, a small satellite with limited capability.

Nepal's first entry into space has brought huge excitement among people and scientists.

NAST initiated the launch of the country's own satellite under the BIRDS project of the Japanese Kyushu Institute of Technology.

The BIRDS project has been designed in association with the United Nations and aims at helping countries launch their first satellite.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Simranjeet Kaur, D/O Balbir Singh, R/O RZR-218, Nihal vihar, Delhi. The girl has been missing/kidnapped since 01.04.2019 from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi.

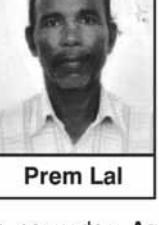
In this regard FIR No. 224/19 u/s 363 IPC dated 01.04.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the missing/kidnapped girl is as under: Name: Simranjeet Kaur, Age: 17 Years, Height: 4'9", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Wearing: Orange Suit, Salwar, Dupatta and White Colour Jutti in Feet.

If anyone has any information regarding this missing girl, kindly inform SHO/P. S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi.

Email: cic@cbi.gov.in, Website: http://cbi.nic.in
Ph. : 011-23015229, 23015218
SHO
Fax: 011-23011334
P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi
DP/2139/OD/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one person Namely: Prem Lal, S/o: Sita Ram, R/o: H.No. D-21, Laxmi Park, Nihal Vihar, Nangloi, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 15.12.2018 from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 33-A dated 16.12.2018 has been registered at P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. The description of the missing/kidnapped person is as under: Age: 54 years, Height: 5'7", Face: Long, Complexion: Sallow, Wearing: Green Jacket-Black Pant and Hawai Chappal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person kindly inform to the following.

Website: http://cbi.nic.in
E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/2129/OD/19

Form No. INC-26
Before the Central Government, Delhi Region
In the matter of Aryan Knowledge Square Private Limited having its registered office at GH/9/162, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110087, Petitioner
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the CG under section '3' of the Companies Act, 2013 the company is changing its Registered Office from "State of Delhi" to "State of Haryana".
Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the Regional Director at the address B-2, Wing, 2nd Floor, Parivar Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110003 within fourteen days of the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:
For and on behalf of the Applicant
Aryan Knowledge Private Limited
Krishan Kumar
Director
Dates: 16th April, 2019
Place: New Delhi

KAVYAM

Corrigendum to Advertisement dated 23.12.2018, 3012.2018 and 05.04.2019.

This is with reference to the above dated advertisement issued related to project named "Kavyam" proposed to be developed by Mis Agrante Realty Limited made in Pioneer News Paper (both Hindi and English edition), Navoya Times and Dainik Jagran. That the inadvertent mistake occurred in the said advertisement relates to the price calculated, shown and printed for Category-1 & flats as 21,15,000/- Now, giving effect to its correction and notifying to the general public that the price for the said Category Flats shall be Rs. 21,00,000/- for all purposes & for all the buyers and applicants who have already applied for allotment for said category flats. That the initial booking amount collected by the company is Rs.1,05,75/- for the said category flats mistakenly and pursuant to the mistaken calculation and an extra amount of Rs.758 has been collected from the applicants who have opted for such category flats. This extra amount shall be adjusted in future payments or refunded in case of unsuccessful applicants.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON (SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person Sanju Singh @ Bitto, S/o Sh. Ganga Sharan, R/o H.B. RZA-227, Nihal Vihar, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case F.I.R. No. 59/16, punishable u/s 380/411 IPC, P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Sanju Singh @ Bitto can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Sanju Singh @ Bitto has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person Sanju Singh @ Bitto of F.I.R. No. 59/16, punishable u/s 380/411 IPC, P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated 07.06.2019.

By Order,
Sh. Manoj Kumar
Metropolitan Magistrate
DP/2142/OD/19 Room No. 292, 2nd Floor, Tis Hazari Courts, New Delhi

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED MAN



General public is hereby informed that a Boy namely Karan, S/o Gangadeep, R/o H. No. B-691, Madras Jhuggi, Parwana Road, Pitampura, Mongol puri, Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 1091/18 u/s 363 IPC, dated 05.11.2018 has been registered at P.S.

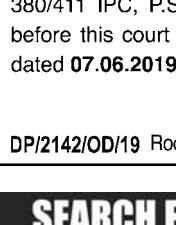
Mongol puri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out this missing Boy but no clue has come to light so far. The description of missing Boy is as under:

Name: Karan, Age: 17 Years, Height: 5'5", Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Black T-Shirt-Black Pant and Black Spots Shoes in Feet.

If anyone have any information about this missing Boy please inform P.S. Mongol Puri, Delhi.

Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Fax: 011-24368639
Police Station, Mongol Puri, Delhi
Tel.: 011-24368638/24368641 Ph: 011-27921168, 27922186 DP/214/OD/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Jai Dass D/o Ranjan Dass, R/o Village Bhebia, Block & PS. Hasnabad, Distt. North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, Age : 19 yrs., Height: 5'3", Complexion : Wheatish, Face : Round, Wearing : Red Colour Suit-Salwar, Purple Colour Sweater and Hawai Chappal in Feet, has been missing / kidnapped since 09.02.2019 from the area of PS. Paschim Vihar West. In this regard a case vide DD No. 50-A dated 01.04.2019 has been lodged at PS. Paschim Vihar West, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far.

If anyone have any information about this missing / kidnapped girl please inform undersigned Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in, Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax: 011-24368639, 24368641 PS Naraina, New Delhi

SHO
PS. Naraina, New Delhi
Ph.: 011-25891181, 25892010
8750871122
DP/2143/OD/19

General public is hereby informed that one Girl Namely: Aishwarya D/o: Chandu Lal, R/o: W-53/34, Sonia Gandhi Camp, Naraina, New Delhi has been missing from her residence since 21.01.2019 at about 07.30 PM in the area of P.S. Naraina, New Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 119/19 u/s 363 IPC dated 04.04.2019 has been registered at P.S. Naraina, New Delhi. The description of the missing/kidnapped girl is as under: Age: 16 yrs, Height: 4

Trend Blazer

I am not scared of failure: Varun

Actor VARUN DHAWAN is expanding his horizon with each of his projects — be it *Badrinath Ki Dulhania*, *October* and the recent release *Kalank*, which has become the highest opener of 2019 so far. The actor says he treats each project as a challenge, and pushes himself to improve his craft. "I am not scared of failure, but each movie is a challenge. I work harder with each project and try and improve my work constantly. Failure and success come with every occupation and the film industry is no different. I believe that what goes around comes around. Bad things happen, followed by better things," Varun said.



'Fairy Folk is the most fun experience I have had in a while. There was no written dialogue. I think improvised dialogue is so crazy and beautifully illogical — a quality which very few and extremely skilled writers are able to achieve with scripted lines. Also, it was a delight to play off actors who have an appetite for improvisation. I had to simply turn up on set and be open to having some fun.'

—Rasika Dugal

Actor RAJKUMMAR RAO has praised his girlfriend and actress Patralekhaa. He says the *Citylight* actress makes him proud. Rajkummar shared a poster of Patralekhaa's next film titled *Badnaam Gal* along with a poster of his forthcoming film *Mental Hai Kya*. In the image, Patralekhaa can be seen with a blooming baby bump and actor Divyendu Sharma in a shocked expression.

Cheering for the actress, Rajkummar captioned, "It doesn't happen quite often that both our posters come out on the same day. You wonder girl Patralekhaa. You make me proud."



Rose has no sense of smell

Actress ROSE MCGOWAN says she has no sense of smell but "extraordinary" powers of taste.

"I did a series of tests at Harvard because I lost my sense of smell in a freak accident. They were studying me because I could still taste which is normally interrelated. I got hit in the head with a car door in a freak accident," McGowan said.

"Not being able to smell, I've had to get gas monitors for my house and things like that because I accidentally left the gas on one night and didn't know because I couldn't smell it. There are some inherent dangers that come with not smelling. I can only use bath products I have always used," she said.



BEYOND BERLIN

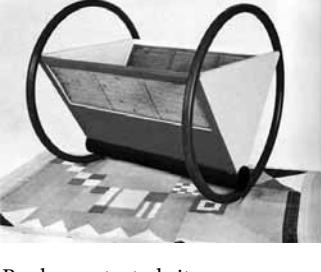
Ideas from Germany's Bauhaus movement continue to be prevalent across the globe without our realisation even after a century, says CHAHAK MITTAL

This year, many streets and towns in Germany are celebrating Bauhaus' centennial, an arthouse movement that gave us clean, minimalist lines in architecture, the kind that defines the look of new-age buildings across the world. The movement represented a break from ceremonial grandeur and opulence. It radically simplified forms, combined rationality with functionality and lent credence to the idea that mass production was reconcilable with the individual artistic spirit. It also used basic materials.

From Weimar to Berlin and Dessau, it would be a celebration across the nation through exhibitions, awareness programmes, performances and workshops. However, if Romit Theophilus, director for India, the German National Tourist Office, is to be believed then its accents have also percolated to India, particularly in Kolkata, where Rabindranath Tagore internalised it in 1922. The Indian Society of Oriental Art introduced the concept.

The movement didn't initially include other cultures and was not prevalent worldwide except in Germany and a few European nations. However, Theophilus says that it is prevalent everywhere now. "It's just that we don't notice how it is deeply embedded in our very cultures and everyday lifestyles." He believes that the generations after the movement dissipated never learnt much about it to understand its value and presence in our lives. "When

'What was made 100 years ago could also be used today. Sometimes we don't even realise where these things are coming from even though they are a part of our everyday lifestyles'



Bauhaus started, it was a movement that was changing European ideologies at that time. And by the time, the movement ended, due to certain issues like funding, management, war, and more, its masters travelled across the world and went to places like the US and London. They continued the movement in traces. They took it along with themselves," he says, which is how it manifested itself from the biggest structures to the smallest things.

From 1919 to 1933, it was only in 14 years that the Bauhaus movement brought in a surge of

transformation in the modern thinking about arts and culture, fashion, urban trends and the public realm. However, why is it that it holds so much importance even today? Theophilus explains that there are things we have for our everyday utilities which were birthed from the revolution. However, we do not realise their origin. "This is the unique thing about their products. What was made 100 years ago could also be used today. For instance, its definitive lamp shades have a very simplistic design and are used even today. Also, the baby cradle is still relevant."

He explains that the whole idea of Bauhaus is "simplicity, not just in architecture but goes into various fields. Sometimes we don't even know where it is coming from but we see it everyday."

And though people may believe that the movement died, it actually kept evolving constantly. "We might not even realise what all aspects have changed everyday. Even about the German Embassy in India, we were told by the Deputy Ambassador that he could see Bauhaus everytime he drives across the city. So, it did survive well actually. Even today it has been embracing new things to survive and change," he says.

India recently witnessed 100 years of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919. The event was a watershed in the history of Indian nationalism and continues to reverberate even today. Well, there are always certain events in history which stay important even after years of their occurrence but

need to be revived with time. Bauhaus is one such. Theophilus says, "To bring such things back into focus, we need to remember the old masters. Because even if we are using it everyday in references and common day examples, we might not know that it was first inspired by the school. And hence, on its 100th anniversary, all across Germany, institutions and Gothic schools, Max Mueller Bhawans here, and even the tourism industry, we are focussing on reviving ideas of Bauhaus. With this, we aim to bring it to India on a large scale as well. We also invite culturally-minded travellers to explore this birthplace of modernism."

It was seen on the screens from China to the US recently, how the massive fire at the Notre Dame Cathedral became a horrifying scene against the Parisian sky. He says, "It's important to preserve such monuments as they are a symbol of ancient heritage. They need to be revived and reminded of with time. The same is the case with the Bauhaus movement. We need to be very careful and mindful. And not just from fire or other man-made disasters, but even from pollution."

He tells us that history has always been the primary focus of German tourism. "The previous year, we had culinary revolution in Germany, this year is the Bauhaus and the next year, it would be the 150th anniversary of Beethoven," he says.



A competitive Venue

Hyundai's new compact SUV is really going to heat up the segment even though carmakers are pessimistic about growth prospects this year



As the Angriya cruise boat headed out to sea from Mumbai, past the Gateway of India, Hyundai India used the opportunity to unveil its new compact SUV, the Venue. While the standing joke among automotive journalists was about the 'unique venue', the car was itself quite interesting. This segment was birthed by the Indian government's ridiculous excise rules that gave concessions to cars below four metres in length and with smaller engines, instead of a progressive level of taxation based on emissions. The Ford EcoSport was the first SUV to take advantage of this rule, but now carmakers are developing products specifically targeting this segment, and making adjustments for this market.

You had the Maruti-Suzuki Vitara Brezza, developed for India by an Indian team and Mahindra's engineers recently re-engineered the Ssangyong Tivoli, reducing length to adhere to Indian norms as the XUV300. And now the Hyundai Venue does that too. This model is a global product as India has been on the top of the mind for the Korean carmaker. Indeed, the Indian unveil took place an hour before the car was showcased at the New York auto show.

The Venue's unveiling was also an opportunity to meet Hyundai India's new Managing Director, SS Kim, and his understanding of the Indian market. While he is still new to India, Kim did mention that Hyundai will be going all guns out with the Venue. However, with Hyundai about to launch the electric Kona in India in a couple of months, he did say that we still have to work on the Venue's unveiling.

There is a global market for compact Sports Utility Vehicles, and the Indian market is no different. But Hyundai had no product in this segment other than the hastily put together i20 Active, which was an i20 that has a bit of extra plastic cladding and a raised suspension. And if

we still have to work on improving electric vehicle infrastructure as well as increasing Indian consumer acceptance of the higher prices of electric cars. Well, on Angriya, things were pretty electric already.



Remembering Haku Shah

The artiste mainstreamed rural, tribal, folk art and craft by bridging the chasm between the elite and the sub-altern tribal forms. By SUJATA PRASAD

and the tribal areas of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka was the seedbed of a series

of revelatory and beautifully curated exhibitions, beginning with a modest display in Sevagram in 1955. His travelling terracotta exhibition, *Forms of Mother Clay*, was first curated for the Crafts Museum in Delhi. It pioneered some of the best curatorial practices. Another precious exhibition, *Unknown India*, on tribal ritual art, curated with art historian Dr Stella Kramrisch for the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1968, took the art world by storm. He also contributed to the richness of the Festival of India exhibitions in UK, USA and Japan, challenging rigid binaries by drawing attention to powerful artistic imaginations at work.

Several interesting stories unravelled at Haku Shah's remembrance meet at NGMA. His son Parthiv's story of a Vaghri woman hawker who would visit their home in Paldi, Ahmedabad with a basket full of clay toys day after day, encouraged by his father to create new art forms. Some of her work are part of the permanent exhibits at the Philadelphia Museum. Professor Parul Dave's story of Saroja, the impoverished wife of a locked out textile mill worker who was encouraged to make figurative appliqués that was later celebrated worldwide, was an eye-opener. Manu Parekh's story of Gopal Jogi, an itinerant ballad singer from a drought-hit area in Rajasthan, who was working as a stone breaker at a construction site when Shah spotted him and encouraged him to draw, uncovered his potential as an artist. Shah's visceral engagement with rural, tribal art for more than half a century and his cru-



sade-like zeal in promoting artisans was remembered with great affection by Rajeev Sethi.

As a teacher, Shah mentored generations of students at the National Institute of Design, taught at the School of Architecture and joined the University of California in the spring of 1991 to teach a studio course in Textiles and Design as a distinguished Regents' professor. He was a conscientious researcher and authored several books and monographs on folk and tribal art, deconstructing the semiotics of rites and rituals embedded in nature and earth with eminent scholars like Eberhard Fischer, Stella Kramrisch, Joan Erikson and Charles and Ray Eames. His book on Votive Terracottas of Gujarat has acquired a cult status. Jyotindra Jain, who partnered with him to research on *Temple Tents for the Mother Goddesses in Gujarat*, a 225-page monograph with 460 plates, spoke about their shared passion for research that would often keep them awake till 2 at night as they roamed the streets of the old city of Ahmedabad to study the nocturnal rituals of Matani Pachedi artisans.

One of Shah's most seminal contributions was establishing an ethnographic Tribal Museum at the Gujarat Vidyapith and a crafts village in Udaipur. His own body of work resonates at many levels, from the tender, visual rendering of *nirguna* poetry and imagery derived from folklore to potent expressions of Gandhi's *satyagraha* in a 2015 exhibition evocatively titled *Nitya Gandhi*. Glimpses of his work on the beautiful memory wall created by the NGMA team, Vidya Shah's exquisite rendering of Kabir's songs, *Jhini Chadariya* and *Naiharwa Humka Na Bhave*, Antara's luminous weavers' song taught by her grandfather and Anant's poignant tribute to his *dada* who would not have liked all this fuss was what made the evening at NGMA so special.

(The author is a former civil servant and currently the adviser to the Crafts Museum).

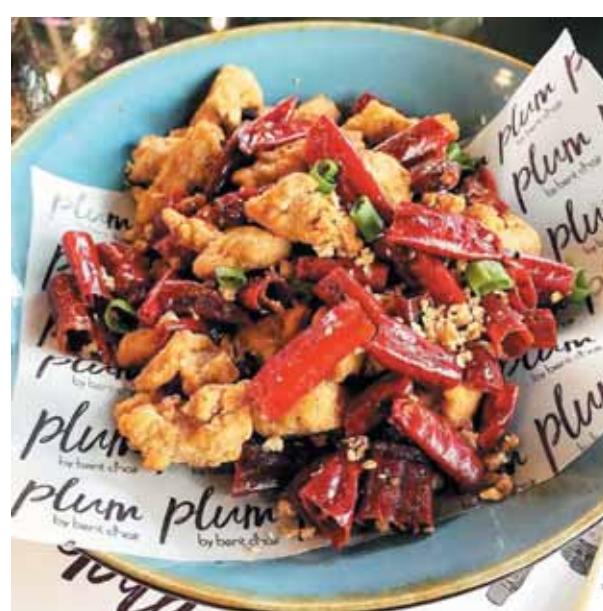
AN OPERATIC SPREAD

PLUM by Bent Chair has been making waves for the unique concept of combining retail with food. And on both counts, it does not disappoint, says SAIMI SATTAR



I could hear the laughter much before I reached the place. And it seemed to be drifting out wave upon frequent wave. It was a Sunday afternoon and I was standing outside Plum by Bent Chair, Aerocity, which I had been hearing about frequently in the past few months. Described variously as the most "Instagrammable restaurant" and "one where you can buy everything that you see including the furniture," it was indeed a surprise that no one had spoken about the happy, infectious vibe that seems to pervade the place. And if one was to mistakenly think that it was a place for the young to hang out at, I could see several tables where three generations of a family were happily congregating over what seemed to be an extended lunch.

Now, coming back to what the restaurant has been making waves for. A joint effort by restaurateur Priyank Sukhija along with partner Natasha Jain (the lady behind Bent Chair), it started with a unique concept of combining retail with eating out. So while you eat, if you happen to admire anything from the comfortable furniture that you are sitting on or the plates that you are served in or even the lamps that light up the place or any of the paintings, vases or wall décor and wish to cart them back home, all you have to do



is order. Not surprisingly, the idea has caught the fancy of Delhiites.

The place is a splash of colour with an abundance of bright pinks and magentas, vivid greens, happy yellows, exuberant purples and more. They feature as paint on the walls, upholstery on the furniture and the various accessories that dot the place. Kitsch is the word that can describe the ambience but then, that cannot fully convey the smorgasbord that it offers.

Whether a restaurant works or not boils down to not just the way it looks but the way its food tastes. Here too, it does not disappoint. Mostly. We had a range of dimsums starting with *Fern Verdures*, which had mock duck meat. Its filling, which was combined with fresh corn, carrots, garlic

flakes and spicy chilli Plum oil, made me look forward to what was to follow. While you could taste each element separately, at the same time, they came together beautifully as a whole, which made for a dish that was satisfying and at the same time left me craving for more.

The *Crystal Dumplings*, which had a filling of chestnuts, carrots and mushroom, were elevated by the taste of sea salt that stood out for the crunch of its vegetables. The spices were not overpowering and the flavours that came through were clean and those

of various vegetables.

We also had the *Hanging Globe Vegetation Bao* and I can say, without much of a doubt, that it was the best that I have tasted, ever. The covering was soft, so much so that the only equivalent I could think of is 1 bit into it was that of a cloud. The insides, stuffed with fresh tofu and spinach, were delicately flavoured with five spices. My mouth watered at its very thought even a few days after I ate it.

Next up was *Flying Cupid*, which is listed as 'Plum-azing' or rather the must-have at the

restaurant. This consists of turnip cut into cubes and flavoured with Cantonese spice pepper, scallions and golden garlic. I guess, my version of the vegetable got the better of me and while I did eat it, I would not really order it if I go back to the place.

We also ordered the *Planter Broccoli Bird Eye*, which Chef Sagar Bajaj told us, was made by reducing milk that gave it a slightly sweet taste. The tempura broccoli was crunchy and the bird-eye chilli gave it a slight heat. The chef told us that as compared to Mumbai, where they opened the first outlet, the chilli quotient was 30 per cent higher as Delhi loves it hot.

Another favourite among the clientele is the *Dried Chilli chicken*, where the meat is rubbed with Szechuan pepper-infused oil and kept overnight before being cooked. Served with finely-chopped red chilli, which is de-seeded, boiled and then lightly tossed in a wok to give it a crunch, the dish is a hot favourite even though it is poles apart from the image that the mind conjures up when we say "chilli chicken."

We ended the meal with *Plum tropical fruit citrus cheesecake*, which was again a surprise, served as it was with a cocktail of diced apple and pomegranate. A fresh end to a soul-satisfying meal.

♦ How different do you find the Kayastha cuisine from others?

Kayastha cuisine is an adapted cuisine, not a regional one. Kayasthas brought the royal Mughal cuisine to the locals, hence creating their own adapted version of these dishes. It doesn't belong to any particular region of India as the Kayasthas are spread all over the country. These factors probably make it one of the most unique cuisines of the country.

♦ How do you think such traditional cuisines should be encouraged to bring them to the level of other global cuisines?

India being the country which is vast in culture, always has space for all. I do believe a global exposure through social media showcasing the beauty of this cuisine will be helpful.

Whether through food enthusiasts writing more about this or food critics giving their valuable feedback on these dishes. Through chef tables that I organise, my prime goal is to bring forth this cuisine to as many as I can, making sure the legacy of my ancestors is carried forward respectfully.

♦ How have you customised your dishes to suit other preferences which are not familiar with the Kayastha cuisine?

Since it's an adapted cuisine from Mughals, people

CHEF TALK

Chef SUGANDHA SAXENA

tells AYUSHI SHARMA that one cannot experiment a lot with the ingredients and flavours of traditional cuisine, but can master the old techniques and present them to the world in one's own signature style



Preserving legacies

cuisine has taken a great step forward and is being appreciated by a number of people.

♦ What is it that could be the greatest cause of failure in a chef's dish?

Unbalanced flavours, intuitive cooking and compromising with the quality of ingredients. I recently did an event in Kolkata where unfortunately due to some reasons I had to compromise the quality of the ingredient which made my dish zero in terms of flavours. One has to make sure the availability of the quality of ingredients wherever and whenever one is cooking.

♦ How has your cooking evolved over the years in terms of keeping track of the latest trends?

In the world of fusion and latest gastronomical style of cooking, I believe one still looks back to that bygone era which used to fill our hearts and not just the tummy. With traditional cuisines one can't experiment much with ingredients and style, but can only master the old techniques and present it to the new world in their own signature style.

♦ What are some of the most successful food experiments that you have mastered?

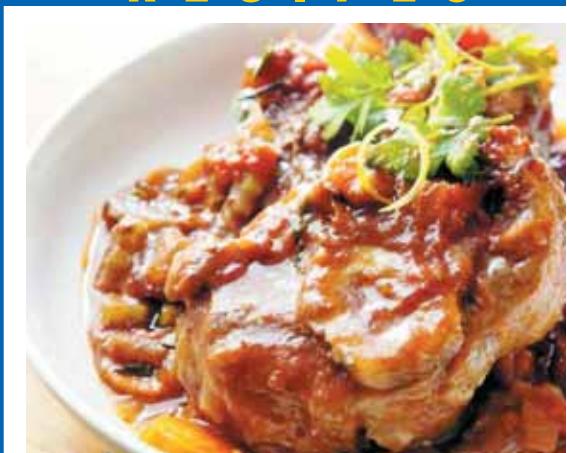
I have worked mostly upon meaty dishes and Indian desserts, with a bit of Western fusion as well as traditional. I have experimented with *Sabudana Kheer* giving it the flavour of blueberries and lavender.

♦ How do you think the Indian foodie is accepting global food trends?

Indians are very open to new concepts lately and are ready when it comes to experimenting with their taste buds. For instance, modern Indian

With all due respect, people will always have opinions. No one can ever deny that fact. And food is very subjective. The sooner one understands that, the sooner negative criticism won't seem like censure anymore.

R E C I P E S



LAMB OSO BUCCO

WHAT YOU NEED

- Lamb slices: 450 gm
- Flour: 150 gm
- Salt: 5 gm
- Pepper: 5 gm
- Olive oil: 15 ml
- Onion: 50 gm
- Celery: 50 gm
- Carrot: 50 gm
- Garlic cloves: 20 gm
- Bay leaves: 5 gm
- Dry red wine: 100 ml
- Lamb stock: 100 ml
- Tomatoes: 20 gm

carrots and celery with the bay leaves. When the vegetables become tender, add garlic. Cook for one minute more.

• Raise the flame and pour the red wine into the vegetables, stir gently to de-glaze.

• When the wine evaporates, add the meat and the tomatoes.

• Now you can either finish the cooking in the skillet, if it's oven-proof, or place the meat and vegetables in a baking dish.

• Stir everything and then add the lamb stock.

• Place the skillet or baking dish in the oven. Cover it. Bake for 50 minutes or until the irresistible aroma drives you to fork a piece right out of the oven.

• Serve it by scattering with fava beans or steamed green vegetables.

Courtesy: Naresh Chinani, executive chef, The Drunken Botanist.

Devour a delectable Easter Champagne Brunch at Pluck that includes pan-Indian and global cuisines, cocktails and unlimited pour of champagne. Kids can have a gala time with Easter special games. **Price:** Brunch: ₹2,950 plus taxes per person; with wine: ₹3,950 plus taxes per person; with champagne: ₹4,450 plus taxes per person; For kids: ₹1,475 plus taxes per person **Date:** April 21 **Time:** 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm **Venue:** Pluck, Pullman, Aerocity.



SPICED CHICKEN, CHEESE AND EGG MELT

WHAT YOU NEED

- Chicken leg boneless: 100 gm
- Ginger garlic paste: 10 gm
- Red chilli powder: 1 tsp
- Salt to taste
- Crushed black pepper: 1 tsp
- Roasted cumin powder: 1 tsp
- Lemon: 1
- Hung curd: 30 gm
- Fresh coriander: 20 gm
- Olive oil: 50 ml
- Turmeric: 10 gm
- Eggs: 4
- Butter: 20 gm
- Cream: 20 gm
- Emmental cheese: 50 gm
- English cheddar cheese: 50 gm
- Multi-grain bread: 1



QLA, a European diner, is geared up to host its patrons this Easter Sunday through its special menu that features *Poached red snapper with Buerre noisette capers* and vegetable panache or chicken. Desserts will have apple tarts. There will be one complementary Easter egg for every kid. **Date:** Easter Sunday, April 21 **Time:** 12 pm to 4 pm **Venue:** QLA, Mehrauli.

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Win doesn't ensure triumph

Manchester City crash out of Champions League despite 4-3 win in second leg as Spurs march through on basis of away goal

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola insisted VAR does produce "fair football" despite a cruel Champions League quarter-final exit on away goals to Tottenham after a pulsating tie ended 4-4 on aggregate.

City were 4-3 victors in Wednesday's second leg, but for the third straight season failed to reach the last four under Guardiola as two big VAR reviews went in Spurs' favour.

Firstly, Fernando Llorente's decisive goal 17 minutes from time stood despite the ball appearing to clip the Spaniard's hand on its way into the net.

Then deep into stoppage time, Raheem Sterling had the strike that would have sealed his hat-trick and seen City through ruled out after Sergio Aguero was shown to be offside in the build-up.

Elimination ended City's quest for a quadruple and Guardiola lamented a series of costly errors across both games, after Aguero also missed a penalty in the first leg, that saw his side bow out to a side 16 points behind them in the Premier League.

Unlike Guardiola, Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino has previously been a critic of VAR, but believes the decisions to award City a penalty in the first leg and not punish Fernandinho for a clash with Harry Kane balanced themselves out over the tie.

And the Argentine labelled his players as "heroes" for reaching the semi-finals of the European Cup for just the second time in their history after a season in which they have not signed a single player and played the majority of the campaign at a temporary home in Wembley.

SON SUSPENDED
Guardiola's decision to not start Kevin de Bruyne in the first leg will be further questioned as the Belgian bagged a hat-trick of assists to take City to the brink of the last four.

The first set up the first of four goals in



11 minutes as Sterling opened the scoring.

However, Spurs struck back twice in three minutes as Son Heung-min's double took his tally for the season to 20.

Yet, with Kane expected to be sidelined for the rest of the season, Pochettino has another selection headache with Son suspended for the first leg of Spurs' semi-final against Ajax.

A kamikaze opening had another twist as Bernardo Silva's effort deflected off Danny Rose and wrong-footed Hugo Lloris at his near post to bring City level on the night.

By the midway point of the first-half, the hosts were back in front as Bernardo and De

Bruyne played creators once more and Sterling finished off a low cross at the back post.

Spurs' hopes of holding on to their advantage on away goals suffered another blow when Moussa Sissoko was forced off with an injury.

Pochettino chose attack as the best form of defence by replacing the midfielder with Llorente in what proved to be a decisive change.

Do Bruyne had his third assist on the hour mark as he surged through midfield before timing his pass for Aguero to perfection and the Argentine rifled past Lloris.

Having gone ahead for the first time in

the tie, Guardiola soon sent on Fernandinho to restore some sense of control, but City were pegged back again as an incredible tie swung back in Tottenham's favour.

Kieran Trippier's corner was bundled in by Llorente, but there was controversy as the ball seemed to hit the striker's arm on its way in.

After a VAR check, though, Turkish referee Cuneyt Cakir stood by his original decision and the goal stood.

And VAR went against City again deep into stoppage time as delirium soon turned to disbelief inside the Etihad when what would have been a hat-trick for Sterling was ruled out.

Already in control of this tie after a 2-0 win at Anfield in the first leg, Liverpool had effectively killed off Porto there and then, but Mohamed Salah, substitute Roberto Firmino and Virgil van Dijk added further goals after the break.

Eder Militao scored a consolation for the hosts 21 minutes from time, but this was another miserable night for them after they lost 5-0 to the same opponents on this ground a year ago.

Liverpool now march on to a clash with Lionel Messi's Barca, the first meeting of the clubs since a last-16 encounter in 2006/07 that the Reds won on away goals.

"I'm looking forward to it. The news that there is a proper football game between Barcelona and Liverpool is great," said Klopp as his side move a step closer to matching their run to the final a year ago.

"To be in the semi-finals for the second year running is a big statement. I am really proud of the boys for what they did."

On the night Manchester City's quadruple bid died, the dream of a Champions League and Premier League double remains alive for Liverpool and their supporters, whose spirits were not dampened by the dreary weather by the banks of the River Douro.

This was their 17th game without defeat and their eighth straight victory, although Barcelona will offer a far

Bring on Barca

AFP ■ PORTO

tougher test than Porto.

Jurgen Klopp admitted he cannot wait to lead Liverpool into a Champions League semi-final against Barcelona after watching his side crush Porto 4-1 in Portugal on Wednesday to complete a 6-1 aggregate victory in their last-eight tie.

They were replaced by Georginio Wijnaldum, James Milner and Divock Origi, with the latter making his first Champions League start for the club. However, the Belgian only played the first half before making way for Firmino.

EARLY ONSLAUGHT

Porto had 13 attempts on goal in the first 25 minutes, but would regret not scoring while on top.

Porto needed an early goal tonight and didn't score it. I'm completely happy. It's only important to go through, and we went through," Klopp said.

Their opening goal came when Salah — his every touch jeered by the Porto support who felt he should have been sent off in the first leg — rolled the ball into the six-yard area for Mane to get his 22nd of the campaign.

The offside flag came up but Dutch referee Danny Makkelie conferred with his video assistants before awarding the goal.

Porto knew their chance was gone, with their fans cursing Mane again — he scored a hat-trick in Liverpool's win here in the last 16 last season.

Trent Alexander-Arnold released Salah to run through and beat Iker Casillas on 65 minutes to make it 2-0, before Porto got their consolation shortly after when Militao headed in from an Alex Telles corner.

However, Mane missed the target after rounding Casillas, before Henderson set up fellow substitute Firmino to head in Liverpool's third on 77 minutes and Van Dijk nodded in from a corner to complete the scoring."

Mbappe-less PSG fail to clinch French title

AFP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain failed to seal the Ligue 1 title for the third match running on Wednesday after a second-string line-up without dropped Kylian Mbappe took the champions to their second defeat in a matter of days, 3-2 at Nantes.

A Diego Carlos brace and Majeed Waris' tap-in inflicted a third league loss on Thomas Tuchel's side, who were hammered 5-1 at second-placed Lille on Sunday and drew with Strasbourg the previous week, despite Dani Alves' stunning opener and substitute Metehan Guclu pulling one back late on.

However PSG, who were also missing a host of other first-team players through injuries and suspension, remain 17 points clear with six games left.

The runaway leaders will win their sixth title in seven years on Sunday if Lille fail to win at Toulouse and they then beat struggling Monaco.



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der strike.

There looked to be little on when the Brazilian collected Leandro Paredes' simple pass, but he quickly lashed an unstoppable dipping drive past Maxime Dupe to score his first Ligue 1 goal this season.

However just three minutes after the opener Diego Carlos was allowed too much space to nod home Valentin Roniger in swinging corner.

PSG continued to struggle

despite the odd flash from Moussa Diaby, and the hosts grabbed a deserved second just before the break.

Nantes turned the screw seven minutes after the break from another corner, this one met by a Nicolas Pallois flick-on that crept through a sea of legs to Carlos, who unwittingly knocked in the third.

Without Mbappe to pressure them, Nantes kept coming forward, and were almost gifted a fourth in the 68th minute when Paredes passed the ball straight to Coulibaly with Buffon way out of his goal, only for the Malian to hit his shoot too hard and over the bar.

Djokovic turned in a steady performance with a dozen each of winners and unforced errors, while his opponent committed nearly 30 unforced errors in 68 minutes.

Defending champion Rafael Nadal was to play his second match of the pre-Roland Garros campaign when he faced Grigor Dimitrov in a third-round encounter.

Sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas earlier lost 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 as Daniil Medvedev continued his run of form.

The Russian winner will next line up against Djokovic after losing to the seed in January in the Australian Open fourth round.

I AM NOT THE NEW RIBERY: COMAN

AFP ■ BERLIN

Bayern Munich winger Kingsley Coman has said that he hopes to step out of Franck Ribery's shadow when his veteran compatriot leaves Bayern.

Coman, 22, has long been touted as the natural successor to Ribery, who is expected to end a glistening 12-year spell

at Bayern this summer.

Yet in an interview with Kicker magazine on Thursday, Coman insisted that he is not a carbon copy of his fellow French winger.

"Franck has his career and I have mine. I am not the new Ribery, I am myself," he said.

Having missed the first half of the season with injury, Coman has established himself



as a regular starter under coach Niko Kovac.

A key part of Bayern's generational shift under Kovac, the 22-year-old has been first-choice left-winger in recent weeks.

He scored twice in Bayern's 4-1 win over Duesseldorf last Sunday, but told Kicker that he still needs to improve.

"As a winger I should be scoring more goals," he said.

"I bring a lot of good qualities, but I am still a long way away from being world class."

Coman, whose contract runs until 2023, said that he could match Ribery's longevity in a Bayern shirt.

"I can really imagine staying here for a long time," he said.

Djokovic sails into quarters, Tsitsipas topples

AFP ■ FRANCE

Top seed Novak Djokovic continued his win streak against US players as he reached the quarter-finals of the Monte Carlo Masters with a 6-3, 6-0 victory over Taylor Fritz on Thursday.

Two-time tournament champion Djokovic has now won nine in a row over US players since losing at Wimbledon 2016 to Sam Querrey.

The world number one will be playing his ninth quarter-final here from 13 appearances at his home event; the win came a round after he claimed his 850th career victory against Philipp Kohlschreiber this week.

Fritz came to the court after defeating Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Diego Schwartzman.

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Djokovic increased his leading total of ATP season match wins to 20 as a result of his success as he beat Tsitsipas for the fourth time without a defeat in the



Tsitsipas was caught on the back foot facing three match points as he trailed 0-40 on his serve late in the second set.

After saving the first two, the Greek mismanaged the third to seal his exit after an hour and three-quarters.

Medvedev increased his leading total of ATP season match wins to 20 as a result of his success as he beat Tsitsipas for the fourth time without a defeat in the

series.

"This was a great achievement for me," Medvedev said. "Everything was perfect today."

"Some wind came up in the second set and I could not get used to it. But in the third, I just worked to put every ball in the court."

The player who stands a career-high 14th credits his rising form to a renewed

dedication to the sport.

The Russia reached his first quarter-final at the Masters 1000 level after winning his second match against a Top 10 opponent.

Tsitsipas, runner-up last season to Nadal in Toronto, suffered his eighth defeat of the season against 18 wins and will try and lift his game next week on the clay of Barcelona.

LEADERBOARD

| | | |
|---------|-----|---|
| RUNS | 450 | David Warner (SRH) |
| WICKETS | 19 | Kagiso Rabada (DC) |
| 6S | 411 | We didn't put up a decent score on the board and kept losing wickets, that's why it cost us the game. |
| 4S | 946 | SURESH RAINA |

IPL 2019



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to be continued ...

Up Next

RCB eye win against KKR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

To make the playoffs, KKR need to win at least four of their remaining six matches, of which three are at home. However, even KKR will fancy their chances and seek to get back on track against a lowly RCB facing a do-or-die situation.

RCB's star duo of Kohli and AB de Villiers have been in sublime form but the team has not clicked as a whole with their pace bowling being a major let-down. While youngster Navdeep Saini has been impressive, senior pro Umesh Yadav has turned out to be a big flop, bagging two wickets at an expensive economy of 9.26.

With South African veteran pacer Dale Steyn ready to take charge as an injury replacement for Nathan Coulter-Nile midway into the IPL, the pace department will hope to get their sting back. Kohli and de Villiers will look to fire in unison against a team whose bowling has failed to click collectively.

The KKR pace department has looked mediocre, while their famed spinners have struggled to get wickets on the bat-friendly Eden conditions here. Meanwhile, all eyes will also be on KKR skipper Dinesh Karthik who has grabbed a surprise World Cup berth ahead of young wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant. Karthik has only one half-century and an average of 18.50 so far this season.

KKR FRET OVER RUSSELL'S FITNESS

KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders' impact player Andre Russell was forced to skip the practice session on Thursday, owing to a shoulder injury sustained while batting in the nets on Wednesday. Russell's possible absence could pave the way for Carlos Brathwaite's inclusion in the playing XI.

The Barbados all-rounder, who is KKR's costliest pick of ₹5 crore at the auctions, played only one match for KKR, against Delhi Capitals here that they lost by seven wickets.

Fretting over Russell's fitness, KKR skipper Karthik however did not rule out the Jamaican who has been a revelation with six explosive 40-plus scores on the trot. "He's got a preliminary X-ray yesterday and it's not even 24 hours. By tomorrow, we will a get much better idea as to how he feels," Karthik said of Russell.

It was during the fag end of the practice on Wednesday that Russell failed to negotiate a rising delivery from net bowler Minad Manjrekar and fell on the ground, writhing in pain.

It was the same left shoulder where Russell was hit by a Harshal Patel delivery during KKR's match against Delhi Capitals at the Kotla.

Pandya brothers lift MI

Hardik and Krunal add 50 runs in last three overs to help Mumbai post 168 for 5 against Capitals

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

Dashing all-rounder duo of Pandya brothers hard hitting in the slog overs helped Mumbai Indians to post 168 for five wickets against Delhi Capitals during an Indian Premier League clash here at Feroz Shah Kotla stadium on Thursday.

Batting first after winning toss, three time champion Mumbai Indians lost the momentum in between the innings after openers Rohit and Quinton de Kock gave them a flying start but it was Hardik and Krunal Pandya's superb striking in the last three overs that helped Mumbai reach past 150 runs mark and post a match winning total at slow turning wicket in Delhi.

Hardik who smashed Pawan Negi for 21 runs in the 19th over during Mumbai Indians 172 run chase in the last game against Royal Challengers Bangalore continues his rich form here at Kotla too and scored 32 runs in just 15 balls with three sixes and two fours.

He was dismissed in the third ball of last over bowled by this season's leading wicket taker Kagiso Rabada but even his dismissal couldn't stop the



run flow as his elder sibling make the most of the remaining three balls by scoring 10 vital runs.

The opening duo started slow initially scoring just 16 runs in the first three overs but changed gear when Chris Morris was introduced in the fourth over

welcomed him with a four and then his countrymen de Kock hits him for a four and a six.

And then in the last over before powerplay, last game hero Keemo Paul was smashed for two sixes, one each by Sharma and de Kock. He also yielded 16 runs.

Mumbai completed its first fifty in 35 balls. However after that the twist happened, Amit Mishra removed Rohit in the very ball of his spell. After dismissing Rohit for sixth time, he also completed his 150 IPL career wickets.

And in the next over Axar Patel got rid of Ben Cutting (2 runs in 4 balls). He was out leg before. But the big jolt came in the fifth ball of tenth over when de Kock was sent back to pavilion after a misunderstanding with his strike partner Suryakumar Yadav.

Earlier, Rohit Sharma (30) and Quinton de Kock (35) give Mumbai a flying start by scoring 57 runs in the first powerplay.

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He added 54 runs for the fifth wicket in just 4.2 overs with his younger brother Hardik.

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At that midpoint, Mumbai scorecard was reading 74 for 3.

And in the next seven overs Mumbai could only add 43 runs scoring just 3 fours and losing Suryakumar for 26 runs.

But it was the Pandya brothers combined effort that lifted Mumbai as the duo added 50 runs in last three overs to take Mumbai to 168 for 5.

It remains to be seen if the Jamaican recovers in time. His absence would be a big void for KKR, who are looking to return to winning ways and reignite their campaign.

We need bigger World Cup, says Lamichhane

AFP ■ NEW DELHI

Nepalese sensation Nサンdeep Lamichhane has called for the World Cup to be expanded to up to 16 teams, saying limiting it to 10 hurts players from emerging cricket nations.

The 18-year-old leg-spinner, who last year became the first Nepalese player to land an Indian Premier League contract, said he was frustrated to be missing out on the tournament in England and Wales starting in May.

"Sorry to say but a 10-team World Cup will hurt a lot of players like me who will not be a part of it," the Delhi Capitals player said.

"I think there

should be 14-16 teams in the World Cup."

Lamichhane added: "World Cup comes after every four years and teams can achieve their biggest dreams there. We are an emerging nation and this is something we would love to play for our country."

"Even in 2023 there are (again) only 10 teams so it will be a while before we can even think of playing in the 50-over event."

Cricket's showpiece tournament had 16 teams in 2007, but the field was reduced to 14 in 2011 and 2015 as the International Cricket Council sought to avoid one-sided matches.

It has been slashed to just 10 teams for 2019 and 2023, featuring the top eight sides in the one-day rankings and another two coming through qualifying.

Lamichhane, who will be watching the World Cup from afar, said he was hoping for some upsets by the smaller teams, who include Afghanistan.

"I am going to watch the World Cup on TV and love to see any team that is under-rated perform well against the big nations," said Lamichhane.

"It will be an inspiration for us who are just beginning their journey right now."

PAKISTAN LEAVE OUT AAMIR FROM WC SQUAD

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan on Thursday left out experienced but out-of-form pacer Muhammad Aamir from its 15-member World Cup squad while including batsman Abid Ali in the line-up.

Chief Selector Inzamam-ul-Haq, announcing the World Cup squad and two reserve players, said the 11 from the 2017 Champions Trophy had been retained in the selection process.

"We are hopeful and confident that Pakistan will give a good account of itself in the World Cup," Inzamam said.

The selectors, while not showing faith with left-arm Aamir who has taken just five wickets in his last 14 ODIs since the Champions Trophy two years back, reposed confidence in seniors Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Hafeez.

Inzamam said that Hafeez's final inclusion in World Cup was subject to him being 100 per cent fit before the tournament as he is still recovering from a thumb injury.

"Doctors have advised him not to bowl or bat now but when his rehab is over he will be back in action in two weeks time," he added.

Inzamam said hard-hitting batsman Asif Ali and Aamir were in the reserves for the one-day series against England and the side matches before the World Cup.



Muhammad Aamir in a file picture

He said that if both performed exceptionally well in the ODI series and T20 they will be considered as cover for the World Cup incase of injuries to any of the selected players.

"If they are not needed they will return home after the ODI series," he said.

Pakistan's World Cup squad is a combination of three openers, four middle-order batsmen, wicketkeeper/batsman in Sarfraz Ahmed, two spinners and five fast bowlers.

The chief selector said the side had been picked according to the conditions and included reliable batters, trusted wicket-taking bowlers and dynamic fielders.

When an astute brain meets a

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli hasn't forgotten the times when Mahendra Singh Dhoni firmly stood by him as a captain and now that the roles have reversed, he is not going to back down from supporting the veteran despite the "unfortunate criticism" that the former skipper is coping.

The Indian captain also expressed his happiness with the composition of the 15-strong Indian squad for the World Cup in an interview to India Today.

"It's unfortunate to see so many people going after him. For me, loyalty matters the most," Kohli's words showed his reverence for his first international captain.

"When I walked into the team he had the option of trying someone else after few games, although I grabbed my chances but for me to get that kind of backing, it was very crucial for me.

"Also, he gave me an opportunity to bat at No 3 because not many youngsters get to play at No 3," the skipper recalled his formative days in international cricket.

"He is one person, who literally

knows the game inside out. He understands the game from Ball 1 to Ball 300



(50 overs) on the field. I won't say its a luxury to have him but I am fortunate to have a mind like that from behind the stumps," Kohli said.

It is Dhoni's presence behind stumps that has ensured that Kohli with one of the strongest arms can afford to field in the deep.

"At the end of the day, I want to be involved in strategy with the team management with Mahi bhai and Rohit. In the death overs, I know that I have to be on the outfield to try and make something work for the team because that's my nature that I want to do something for the team rather than just be there."

"After 30-35 overs, he knows that he will be in the outfield and its on the auto mode," he explained.

While he didn't elaborate about his take on the debate on the World Cup squad, he didn't forget to give it his stamp of approval. "We are very happy with 15 that we have. This is the most balanced side we could have thought of because everyone is in a good space," the skipper said without getting into the debate about the much talked about omissions of Rishabh Pant and Ambati Rayudu.

Pooja assured of a medal in Asian Boxing C'ship

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Two-time continental medalist Pooja Rani confirmed India's first medal in the women's 81 kg category after making it to the semi-finals in a field of five as the Asian Elite Boxing Championship's draw was released on Thursday.

Asian Games Gold medalist Amit Panghal, set to make his debut in the 52 kg category in all likelihood will face the reigning Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov of Uzbekistan in the quarter-finals.

Former world junior champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) will start her campaign against Srey Pov Nao of Cambodia but she will

Sri Lanka announce WC squad

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sacked as skipper, pacer Lasith Malinga was on Thursday named in Sri Lanka's 15-strong World Cup squad and the country's embattled cricket board hoped that the veteran will put behind the disappointment to show up for the team.

The 35-year-old Malinga was replaced as captain Dimuth Karunaratne, who leads the Test team but hasn't played an ODI since the 2015 World Cup. The surprising move continued the ongoing turmoil in Sri Lankan cricket, which is also being investigated for large-scale corruption by the ICC.

"We hope he would play for the country," Sri Lanka Cricket



Sri Lanka team players in a file picture

chief Shammi Silva said while announcing the squad amid speculation that Malinga, who is cur-

phone and explained to him the reasons," added Asantha de Mel, the Chairman of selectors.

The team was most recently hammered by South Africa in an away limited-overs series. Sri Lanka start their World Cup campaign on June 1 at Cardiff against New Zealand. They are due to play two warm-up games against South Africa and Australia before that.

De Mel said captaincy was not working out for Malinga and he struggled to make the team a cohesive unit.

"He was performing alright, but was not able to lead the others," de Mel explained.

Sri Lanka's World Cup squad features quite a few comeback players, led by Karunaratne.