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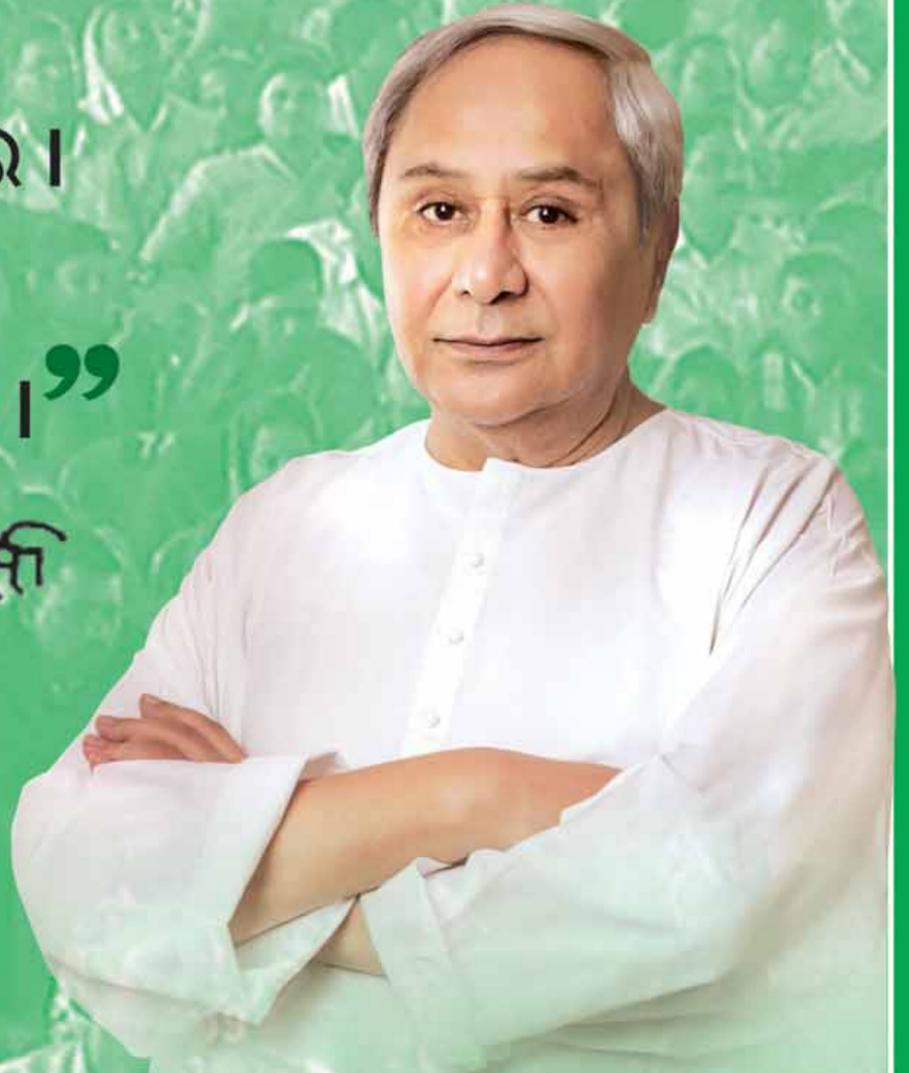
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ନବୀନ ମୋର ପରିବାର 'ଶଙ୍ଖ' ମୋର ଚିହ୍ନ

“ ସାତେ ଚାରି କୋଟି
ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ମୋର ପରିବାର ।
ଶେଷ ନିଶ୍ଚାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମୁଁ
ତାଙ୍କରି ସେବା କରିଗୁଲିଥିବି । ”

- ନବୀନ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାୟକ



‘ଶଙ୍ଖ’ ଚିହ୍ନରେ ଭୋଟ୍ ଦେବା । ଦୁଇଥର ।
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Why 1,262-acre land given to Essar not restored yet?

As company has failed to comply with allocation terms

The Paradip land's present cost is ₹2,000 cr

And when State faces problem in finding land for new investors

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even as Odisha has emerged as an investment destination, especially in the metals and mining space, it is increasingly finding difficult to allocate land to prospective investors interested to set up their ventures in the State.

Thus, purposeful use of land needs to be ensured by firms and in case of delay in utilisation it is inevitable that allocated lands are brought back to the Government fold for re-allocation to some other investors. According to experts, Odisha has emerged as an attractive investment destination, especially in the metals and mining space. The coastal town of Paradip is a strategically located industrial hub because of its accessibility to domestic and overseas markets through the Paradip Port.

However, the State is increasingly finding it difficult to allocate land to prospective investors who want to set up their ventures in the State. Commercial land is in great demand and there are several entities who want to buy the land to set up their ventures. The State Government stands to earn handsome returns from the land value, and thereafter

MANY COMPANIES WHO SIGNED MOUS WITH THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND WERE ALLOCATED LAND FOR SETTING UP THEIR BUSINESSES HAVE YET TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THEIR COMMITMENT

benefit from the investments, tax revenues and employment that would be generated.

Many companies who signed MoUs with the State Government and were allocated land for setting up their businesses have yet to follow through on their commitment.

Essar, for instance, in its MoU committed to set up a 6 MTPA integrated steel plant at an estimated cost of ₹15,000 crore. Accordingly, The company requested the Government

for land allocation. Based on this, in January 2015, the Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (Idco) acquired 1,262 acres of land. Of this, close to 1,123 acres of land was private and the remaining 100 acres was Government leased land. Both land parcels were allocated to the Essar Steel Limited on a 90-year lease under the condition that no part of it could be sublet. As per the terms of allocation, the company was required

to start the civil work on the allocated land within six months, with commercial production slated to begin within three years from taking possession of the land. Failing this, it was stipulated that the land would revert to Idco, free from all encumbrances.

Essar Steel paid Rs 200 crore for the land at an average rate of ₹15 lakh per acre. However, it failed to comply with the condition of setting up the steel plant within three years from the date of allotment, i.e. January 2015. To compound the problem, the Essar Steel ran into financial difficulties after it expanded steelmaking capacity to 10 million tonne but could not meet its financial commitments to lenders.

In 2017, the RBI directed lenders to refer the Essar Steel to the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). The company is currently entangled in the insolvency

and bankruptcy proceedings.

The Arceclor Mittal has emerged as the largest bidder for the asset and has submitted a resolution plan, which has been approved by the Committee of Creditors (CoC).

However, the Standard Chartered Bank, the foremost among the unsecured creditors, has contested the CoC's decision in the NCLAT.

Neither have Essar Steel promoters set up a plant in Odisha, nor have they been successful in retaining their existing steel business. Despite this, the Essar continues to be in possession of the land. The present value of this land is ₹2 crore per acre, which means the land parcel is worth over ₹2,000 crore. The Government should therefore direct Essar to surrender the land for failing to comply with the terms of land allocation. This will help the Odisha Government earn revenue of ₹2,000 crore.

₹15L seized from two bikers in Puri

PNS ■ PURI

The Static Flying Squad, formed for the elections to curb flow of illegal money and liquor, seized unaccounted cash of ₹15 lakh from two motorcyclists at Brahmagiri of poll-bound Puri district on Sunday.

According to sources, the enforcement squad was on a motor vehicle inspection when it intercepted the two motorcyclists. During the search, officials recovered the cash.

The unexplained cash amount was seized and two persons were detained for questioning after they could not give satisfactory reasons. Further investigation into the matter is underway, police sources said.

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Sabha and Assembly elections, documents are required for carrying cash of more than ₹50,000, as per the rule of the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Niranjan urges CEO for fair polls

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

PCC president Niranjan Patnaik on Sunday urged the State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to ensure that voters don't exercise franchise under anybody's pressure in the third-phase polls to be held in six Lok Sabha and 42 Assembly constituencies on April 23.

Patnaik alleged that the BJD and the BJP are trying to threaten voters not to go against them. Incidents of bombing and murder are examples of poll-related violence.

Stating that free and fair elections help worthy candidates win elections, the PCC



chief called upon voters not to get biased by false promises of the BJP and the BJD.

Besides, Patnaik urged police officers to ensure that no booth rigging takes place during the third phase polls.

Polling official dies in Keonjhar

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

A polling official posted at Anandapur in the district died on Sunday after falling ill. The deceased was identified as Abhay Kumar Sethi, a staff of the Champua High School in the district.

Sources said Sethi, who was posted at Booth No-149 under the Anandapur Assembly constituency, suddenly felt uneasy inside the despatch room in the afternoon.

He was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital where the doctors declared him brought dead, said Keonjhar Sub-Collector Rabintra Sahu.

The exact cause of death would be ascertained after receiving the autopsy report, Sahu said.

Manisha gets Chevening Fellowship

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Dr Manisha Acharya has bagged the prestigious British Chevening Fellowship to study Science Research and Innovation Leadership (CRISP) at the University Of Oxford, UK during April to June 2019.

Currently, Acharya is working as CEO of the Indigram Labs Foundation (ILF), a technology business incubator and accelerator focusing on agriculture, agri-tech, agri-IOT, food processing etc to revolutionise agriculture and food processing sectors.

Earlier she had studied in the Silicon Valley, USA in 2018 and participated in the Conference of Technology



Incubators from Asia - Pacific held at Taipei, Taiwan during 2012.

Several research papers and articles of Acharya have been published in national and international journals. She did her Post-Graduation in Life Sciences from the Utkal University and PhD from Lucknow University.

NKS opposes polling officials in Keonjhar

KEONJHAR: Over a hundred farmers under the banner of the Navnirman Krushak Sangathan (NKS) staged a dharna and opposed entry of polling officials to a booth in the district on Sunday.

The farmers took out a rally and sat on dharna in front of the Keonjhar Mining Engineering College, where the EVM distribution centre has been set up by the district administration. The agitators said as the farmers were prevented from entering cities during their agitation demanding 'Price, Pension and Prestige', so, the farmers' body decided not to let polling officials enter villages.

"We are opposing polling parties to bring ballot boxes to our village as our demands of pension for farmers, irrigation facilities, employment for our children are yet to be fulfilled," said a NKS member. Later, many protesters were detained by police.

GST collection on rise in State

₹12,063.71 crore collected in 2018-19

BHUBANESWAR: The Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection has improved in Odisha in 2018-19 in comparison to previous years.

While during 2017-18, the GST collection was ₹6,609.27 crore, it rose to ₹12,063.71 crore in 2018-19, said sources in the Finance Department.

It was revealed at a review meeting held on GST by Finance Secretary Ashok Kumar Meena on April 18. Commercial Tax Commissioner Bishnupada Sethi was present.

It was revealed that the OGSST collection in 2018-19 was ₹6,687.81 crore against ₹3,749.94 crore in 2017-18.

Monthly average of the IGST collection during 2018-19 was around ₹1,005.31 crore with a 21.68-per cent growth

over the preceding year. Monthly average collection of the OGSST during 2018-19 was ₹557.32 crore with 18.90-per cent growth.

In 2017-18, the IGST monthly collection was Rs 826.16 crore and OGSST monthly collection was ₹468.74 crore.

Due to Indian Oil's lump sum deferred payment of ₹2,934.80 crore during 2017-18, the State received a boost in GST collection and got ₹19,599.47 crore.

Odisha is getting compensation of ₹4,000 Crore every year from Union Government, which will continue till 2022.

Value Added Tax (VAT) collection during 2017-18 was ₹8275.73 crore and in 2018-19 it went down to ₹7,279.04 crore.

Collection of Profession Tax was ₹190.01 crore in 2018-19 against ₹187.83 crore in 2017-18.

'Am rather a trans-woman than a transgender'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik has appointed transgender social activist Meera Parida as vice-president of the Biju Mahila Janata Dal. In what is the first case of its kind in Odisha, a member of the LGBTQ community has been appointed in such a prestigious post of the women's wing of a political party.

"We must not ignore the ground reality where transgenders are clubbed with women. This is a small step in the right direction that may well lead to a LGBTQ wing in a political party sometime in the future. In any case, I like to identify myself as a trans-

woman rather than a transgender," Meera said.

Meera's appointment, however, does not just have to do with her transgender status but a recognition of the path-breaking work she has done as an activist fighting for the rights of her community, HIV/AIDS victims and sundry other activities. She is the chairperson of All Odisha Transgender Welfare Trust, president and co-founder of 'Sakha', the first community-based organisation working for the LGBTQ community in the State, and was also the president of the Odisha Kinnar Mahasangha for seven long years from 2009 to 2016. She is also a UNDP-approved 'master



trainer' in HIV/AIDS and has conducted numerous training programmes for activists working in the field. Her crowning

glory came when she represented India in a delegation of members of the transgender community on a visit to the

White House, Washington. She was the first from the community from Odisha to get the honour.

The journey from a non-descript village in the Begunia area of Khordha district to the White House, however, did not come easy. Coming as she did from an extremely poor family, her childhood and early adulthood was a period of extremely hard struggle. For a brief while, she even had to beg on the streets.

Like all members of her community, she faced the barbs of all and sundry as she made her transition from Mayadhar Parida to Meera Parida, having a sex change operation along the way.

Asked if she would be accepted by the women in the BJD as an equal, Meera said she has no apprehensions on this score. "I have worked for the BJD for over a decade now; and I have never once felt unwelcome in my interactions with Naveen Patnaik or other leaders of the party, whether men or women. My work has fetched me this post, not my gender. I am sure I will be accepted by the women of the party without any reservations," she said.

Meera strongly refutes the suggestion that the post of vice-president of the women's wing was a 'consolation prize' for being denied a party ticket to contest elections.

BJP city candidate's car attacked

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Bombs were hurled at BJP Bhubaneswar Central MLA candidate Jagannath Pradhan's vehicle at Delta Square in Unit-8 under the Khandagiri police station here on Sunday evening.

Sources said that Pradhan, who was alighting from the vehicle, had a narrow escape

Sources said that Pradhan, who was alighting from the vehicle, had a narrow escape when one of the bombs hit his vehicle and exploded

when one of the bombs hit his vehicle and exploded. The car was badly damaged in the incident.

--MOTHER EARTH DAY--

Climate challenges: Role of environ edu crucial



MAYARANI PRAHARAJ

The International Mother Earth Day is celebrated on April 22 to remind us that the earth and its ecosystems provide us with life and sustenance. The day provides an opportunity to raise public awareness around the world to the challenges regarding the well-being of the planet and all the life it supports. The theme for this year is Mother Earth: Education and Climate

Change.

Climate change is one of the largest threats to sustainable development globally and is just one of many imbalances caused by the unsustainable actions of humankind, with direct implications for our future generations. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change encourages international cooperation among parties on climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information. This year's Mother Earth Day, has a special focus on education and climate change, and is an opportunity to look at what UN Climate Change and others are doing on the issue.

Education and training are crucial to enable citizens to contribute to local and global efforts to meet the climate change challenge and the challenge of sustainable develop-

ment. Increased knowledge and learning about the causes and impacts of climate change improves and protects lives. A better education can help people fully deploy clean energy and prepare for more extreme weather resulting from climate change such as droughts and floods.

Odisha is prone to natural and human-made disasters. Heat waves, cyclones and floods are annual occurrences in the coastal districts of Odisha, especially causing damages to lives, households and livelihood assets, and community development.

In Odisha, the Super Cyclone of October 1999 devastated 14 prosperous coastal districts. To promote environmental awareness amongst school and college level students environment education was made compulsory in formal education in schools through a Supreme Court

judgement in 2003.

The judgement has resulted in over 300 million students in 1.3 million schools receiving some environmental education training, according to a UNESCO study. Besides, in 2016, the UGC introduced a six-month compulsory course on environment studies for undergraduates from all disciplines. Some colleges are offering courses on environment studies. At the higher education level in India a beginning has been made by the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune, which is developing pedagogy for climate change education in undergraduate education as well as in skill development.

Role of energy technologies to address greenhouse gas mitigation and integration of climate change related studies are some of the areas included in the research.

Environment Education,

Awareness and Training (EAT) is a Central sector Scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate. The scheme aims to create awareness on various aspects of environment and climate change. The Centre for Environment Education (CEE) was founded in 1984 as a Centre of Excellence in Environmental Education in the Indian Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. CEE strives to improve public awareness and understanding of the environment and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. CEE works with partners and various stakeholders to connect people and share experiences on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at a local, national and global level. CEE develops innovative programmes and builds capacity in the field of

education and communication for sustainable development. Presently, CEE is associated with 3,000 schools across India and further reaching to millions of school children and youths through their various programmes. CEE is the nodal agency for implementation of UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) activities in India under the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development.

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) is a public interest research and advocacy organisation based in New Delhi.

CSE's Environmental Education programme takes environment issues into the classroom by organising practical workshops and talks about sustainability issues for school-students, youth and school teachers. CSE also runs an ecological footprint project, which con-

sists of eco-tours, lectures and poster competitions where children learn about the ecological dimensions of their city. CSE is also running a Green School Programme in which both school students and teachers are trained on assessing the environmental practices of their schools using a guidebook prepared by them. The students go on an exploratory journey and find out what's happening to the water, energy, land, air and waste in their school campus. Centre for Environmental Studies (CES) is an autonomous organization under the Department of Forest and Environment, Government of Odisha. CES undertakes activities to promote environmental awareness in the State.

Odisha is endowed with rich biodiversity and natural resources. It is one of the first States in the country to address the impact of climate change

and develop a sector-wise action plan to tackle its impacts. We have experienced growth and development, but it has mostly been unsustainable. Environmental education is vital because uncontrolled urbanisation and industrialisation have badly disturbed our ecological balance. From drought to devastating floods, heat waves etc. are some of the greatest challenges we face, which come in the form of climate change.

New insights into how climate change will alter the patterns and frequencies of storms and other extreme events will enable better analyses and predictions. For that, environment education is very important in our life and this can save our planet.

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

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ମହିଳାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ନବୀନ ତ୍ୱେଷା

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On Easter, violence resurrects in Lanka

215 killed in 8 blasts; 3 Indians, 30 other foreigners among dead

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A string of eight devastating blasts, including suicide attacks, struck churches and luxury hotels frequented by foreigners in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, killing 215 people, including three Indians, an American, and shattering a decade of peace in the island nation since the end of the brutal civil war with the LTTE.

The blasts — one of the deadliest attacks in the country's history — targeted St Anthony's Church in Colombo, St Sebastian's Church in the western coastal town of Negombo and Zion Church in the eastern town of Batticaloa around 8.45 am (local time) as the Easter Sunday mass were in progress, police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said.

Explosions were reported from three five-star hotels — the Shangri-La, the Cinnamon Grand and the Kingsbury in Colombo.

Gunasekera confirmed 207 deaths. However, the News 1st channel said that 215 people have died in the blasts.

Chairman of Sri Lanka Tourism Kishu Gomes said 33 foreign nationals have been killed in the coordinated attacks believed to be carried out by a single group. Director of the National Hospital Dr Anil Jasinghe identified 12 of the 33 foreign nationals, which include three Indians, two Chinese and one each from Poland, Denmark, Japan, Pakistan, America, Morocco and Bangladesh.

Around 500 people, including Indians, were injured in the attacks.

No group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attacks. However, most of the deadly attacks in the past in Sri Lanka were carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which ran a military campaign for a separate Tamil homeland in the north-



Dead bodies of victims lie inside St Sebastian's Church damaged in blast in Negombo, north of Colombo, on Sunday

ern and eastern provinces of the island nation for nearly 30 years before its collapse in 2009 after the Sri Lankan Army killed its supreme leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. Briefing reporters, Gunasekera said the police was not able to confirm at the moment if they were all suicide attacks. He, however, said that one of the blasts at the Katuwapitiya (Negombo) church has signs of being what

looked like a suicide attack. An unnamed official said a suicide bomber blew himself up at the restaurant of the Cinnamon Grand hotel. Gunasekera said that 66 bodies were kept at the National Hospital while 260 injured were receiving treatment there and 104 bodies were placed at the Negombo Hospital and 100 injured were receiving treatment at the Hospital.

Later in the day, a powerful blast in the capital's southern suburb near the Colombo Zoo killed two persons, Gunasekera said. When a police team entered a house in the Colombo north suburb of Orugodawatta to conduct a search, a suicide bomber blew himself up causing a concrete floor of a two-storey building to crash on them, killing three policemen in the eighth blast,

police said. Soon after the eighth blast, the Government imposed curfew with immediate effect. The curfew will be in force indefinitely until further notice, officials said. State Minister of Defence Ruwan Wijewardene said seven persons had been arrested in connection with the blasts. "We believe these were coordinated attacks, and one group was behind them," he

said. President Maithripala Sirisena has appealed for calm. "I have been shocked by this totally unexpected incidents. The security forces have been asked to take all action necessary," Sirisena said. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe termed the blasts as "cowardly attacks" and said his Government is working to "contain the situation."

Modi condemns attack, offers help; Sushma in touch

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Condemning the "cold-blooded and pre-planned barbaric acts" in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesingh and offered the southern neighbour all possible help and assistance to deal with the situation.

"Strongly condemn the horrific blasts in Sri Lanka. There is no place for such barbarism in our region," Modi tweeted.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said, "Indian High Commission in Colombo has conveyed that National Hospital has informed them about the death of three Indians."

Their names are Lakshmi, Narayan Chandrashekhar and Ramesh, Sushma said adding details are being ascertained. Sushma tweeted, "I conveyed to the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka that India is ready to provide all humanitarian assistance. We are ready to despatch medical teams." Sushma said, "In all eight bomb blasts have taken place — one more in a guest house in Dehiwela near Colombo and another in a housing colony in Dematagoda in Colombo."

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said there can be no justification for any act of terror and called for concerted global action to effectively deal with the menace, including cross-border terrorism.

Lanka blocks FB, Instagram to curb canards

Colombo: The Sri Lankan Government on Sunday blocked social media platforms like the Facebook and Instagram to prevent the spread of false news reports after a series of blasts killed 215 people. The Presidential Secretariat said the decision to block social media was taken in reaction to false news reports spreading on social media. Meanwhile, Facebook has activated its Crisis Response tool for the blasts, CNN reported. PTI

Trump goofs up, tweets 138 million dead

Washington: US President Donald Trump yet again committed a faux pas on Sunday as he erroneously tweeted "138 million people" were killed in a string of blasts in Sri Lanka. "Heartfelt condolences from the people of the US to the people of Sri Lanka on the horrible terrorist attacks on churches and hotels that have killed at least 138 million people. We stand ready to help!" Trump said in a tweet which was taken down after more than 20 minutes. PTI

Regional parties to be kingmaker at Centre: Navin

As no national party to get majority, says Odisha CM

PNS ■ KUCHINDA (SAMBALPUR)

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik seems sure that his party Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will play a key role in formation of the new Government at the Centre this time as he on Sunday again predicted that not a single national party would get an absolute mandate in the elections 2019.

"No national party will get majority and the regional parties will be the kingmaker. This is a great opportunity for both Odisha and the BJD," said Patnaik while addressing a huge election meeting at Kuchinda in Sambalpur district. He reiterated his allegation



that the BJP-led Central Government is conspiring to stop his Government's KALIA scheme, under which around 40 lakh farmers have been benefited so far. He assured that the State's most popular KALIA scheme would continue till he is alive. Besides, he repeated his firm promise to disburse the pending monetary assistance of two instalments at a row on the very first day his party forms next Govt.

Patnaik also spoke on the success of the Mission Shakti that empowers women in the State both economically and socially. He targeted BJP leaders for their frequent visits to the State during elections. "Where were the central leaders when Odisha was facing a series of nature's fury? Now this is election season; so, they keep visiting the State," he said. He also questioned the Centre, "Why the scholarships to SC and ST students were discontinued? Why has the Koshali language not been included to the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution?"

Patkura Assembly election cancelled

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Election to the Patkura Assembly constituency in the district was officially declared as countermanded on Sunday following the death of incumbent MLA and BJD candidate Bed Prakash Agarwalla. Patkura was scheduled to go to polls on April 29. "Given that the election process in the constituency is already underway and a candidate of a recognised party has died, the election date has been adjourned until further orders as per Section 52 (1) (c) of the Representation of People's Act, 1951," stated Patkura Assembly constituency Returning Officer Sanjay Kumar Mishra in an order.

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Surendra Kumar had earlier written to the Election Commission of India (ECI) in the connection seeking a fresh date to conduct the election for the seat.

PCC chief Niranjana Patnaik 'attacked' in Keonjhar

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Niranjana Patnaik was injured after his vehicle was attacked by some miscreants during an election rally in the Keonjhar district on Sunday. The incident took place at Bhandaripoda Chhak under the Ghasipura Assembly constituency in the afternoon. Incidentally, Patnaik is contesting the polls from the seat.

Besides Patnaik, five to seven Congress workers were also injured in the attack. Three of them were shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack.

Later, Patnaik filed a complaint at the Ramchandrapur police station alleging that BJD cadres were involved in the incident. Keonjhar SP Jay Narayan

Campaign for 3rd phase ends in State

Voting to take place tomorrow

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

There was frenzy among major political parties to reach out to voters before the campaigning for the third-phase elections in the State ended on Sunday evening. Six Lok Sabha constituencies, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, Sambalpur, Keonjhar and Dhenkanal, will go to the polls along with the 42 Assembly segments in their jurisdictions on Tuesday. Star campaigners of the BJD, the Congress and the BJP held public meetings at different parts of the State on the day.

BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik hit the campaign trail for party

candidates by addressing an election meeting at Kuchinda in Sambalpur district. Later, Patnaik addressed a series of meetings at Bhubaneswar, Athagarh, Rajnagar and in Kakatpur Assembly segments. Union Minister Piyush Goyal attended a BJP Vijay Sankalp Samabesh at Satyabadi in Puri district, addressed a meeting in Athagarh and attended a road show at Marshaghai in Kendrapada district. Congress leaders also addressed public meetings at different places. DG (in-charge) BK Sharma had on Saturday reviewed the preparedness for the third-phase polls and directed police officials to ensure a free, fair, transparent and incident-free election.

BESIDES PATNAIK, FIVE TO SEVEN CONGRESS WORKERS WERE ALSO INJURED IN THE ATTACK. THREE OF THEM WERE SHIFTED TO THE SCB MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL IN CUTTACK

Pankaj said, "The matter is being investigated and stringent action will be taken against the culprits". Keonjhar will go to the polls in the third phase slated for April 23.

Chances for BJD's Brajkishore bright

Even as BJP throws tough challenge

DHIRAMOHAN RAY ■ TALCHER



On the other hand, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan is trying his level best for Kalandi Samal, his own choice candidate, for Talcher contesting for third time under the banner of BJP. The BJP is here attracting voters by various slogans and highlighting various popular schemes implemented by the Narendra Modi Government. Rallies and road shows are also organised by Dharmendra with Kalandi, MP candidate Rudra Pany and other



party fellows. However, according to poll observers, Samal is not acceptable to the common mass due to his lack of grassroots link. Ever since he was elevated to the rank of State secretary of the BJP, he has been spending most of his time in Bhubaneswar. On Saturday, Naveen Patnaik held a large meeting at the Ghantapada school ground, canvassing for Brajkishore, where thousands of common people



and ground-level workers joined. Brajkishore and MP candidate Mahesh Sahoo were present. Regarding Congress candidate Suresh Chandra Behera, he is a new face and never before did he come to the common people or engage with any social activities. MP candidate KP Singh Deo is campaigning for himself at Talcher without the presence of the MLA candidate Behera, giving an indication of lack of sync.

--CHAMPUA POLLS-- Sana-Jitu duel likely to affect BJD nominees

PNS ■ CHAMPUA

Sitting Champua MLA Sanatan Mahakud's statement of taking credit for developmental workers and BJD leader Jitu Patnaik disputing it seem to affect winning prospects of ruling party Lok Sabha and Assembly candidates in the coming election.

"Because of his muscles and money power, Mahakud doesn't hesitate to speak ill against senior IAS officers and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Now, I am nowhere," lamented Patnaik in response to a controversial speech of Mahakud during election campaigns held at Champua on Saturday.

Sources revealed that Mahakud addressed large election gatherings at five different places in the Champua constituency. Mahakud said because of his own personal initiatives a medical college at Keonjhar and university status top the DD College and Rs 15 crore rupees could be availed. Besides, an Agricultural University in Keonjhar



has been proposed during the last five years. He vociferously said more developmental work would have been done if the local Minister and MLAs had not hatched conspiracy against him but extended cooperation to him. Mahakud also said that Jitu, who had won the seat in 2019, did nothing for the constituency during his period. Stating that he could not contest the election this year due to some pressure, Mahakud said he would serve the people of Keonjhar till his last. He appealed to voters to elect BJD MP candidate Chandrayani Murmu and Champua MLA nominee Meenakshi Mahanta.

INBRIEF

B'PUR NATARAJ NIWAS ASSN ELECTS NEW OFFICE-BEARERS
The annual general body meeting of the Nataraj Niwas Apartment Owners' Association at Kalinga Vihar here was held on Sunday under the chairmanship of advocate and scribe Prof KC Panda.

SOCIAL ACTIVIST MAHARANA FELICITATED IN B'PUR
The Baristha Nagarka Manch, Brahmapur felicitated social activist Trinath Maharana for his participation in various developmental works in Brahmapur.

BUS RAMS INTO ROADSIDE SHOP IN BALANGIR; PASSENGERS SAFE
It was a close shave for passengers after their bus ramed into a roadside shop near Kandhabahal village under the Kantabanji police limits in Balangir district on Sunday morning. The private bus was en route to Khariar from Bhubaneswar. Irrate locals staged a road blockade demanding speed-breaker.

--POST-POLL VIOLENCE-- Youth killed in bomb attack in Ganjam

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

Post-poll violence rocked Bada Gumula village under the Gopalpur police station in Ganjam district on Saturday in which a youth was killed in a bomb attack.

The deceased was identified as Susanta Sahu (37). After the incident tension prevailed in the village. ASP Pravat Chandra Routray, Sadar SDPO Jayanta Kumar Mohapatra rushed to the spot with police force and controlled the situation.

Later, Brahmapur SP Pinak Mishra visited the village and took stock of the situation. ASP Routray said it is suspected that old enmity led to the bombing. Sources said at around 8.30 pm, Susanta was sitting outside a house and was watching a cricket match on his mobile phone when some masked miscreants arrived at the spot on motorcycles and hurled two bombs.

While one bomb hit him, another fell near him and exploded. Susant, who suffered

Later, Brahmapur SP Pinak Mishra visited the village and took stock of the situation. ASP Routray said it is suspected that old enmity led to the bombing

multiple injuries on his body, died at the spot. Getting information police arrived and sent the dead body to a hospital for post-mortem.

Police said the deceased youth had a number of criminal cases pending against him. A few days ago, he had a fight with some youths of his village. It is suspected that the incident might have led to the attack. Police are investigating into all the angles to get more clues, sources said.

U'kote pond encroached; officials turn blind eye



MONOHAR MOHANTY ■ UMARKOTE

Repeated requests to check encroachment on water bodies in the Umarkote Municipality seem to have had little effect on the administrative machinery here.

According to reports, an old pond at Dargaguda, under the administrative control of the local municipality, is used as a site for idol immersion. Encroachment on pond continues to shrink the area as the municipality has turned a blind

eye to the violations, alleged a local denizen.

It is said that a local business man who is having good influence in the locality has grabbed the pond's land by placing debris on its corners. Perturbed over the inaction of the local administration, some local denizens have tried to restrict the illegal move of the encroacher and informed the civic body authorities.

Meanwhile, the Executive Officer of the Municipality has visited the site and assured the local denizens of taking neces-

sary action.

The illegal work has been going on since long in connivance with the local municipal authority, but due to the public outcry, the authority has only shown a measure of promptness to stop the construction work.

But after lapse of some days, taking the advantage of officials being busy during the elections, the encroachers once again started the construction work and encroached major part of the pond, alleged a local denizen.

OEW makes new voters aware of their rights

PNS ■ BALASORE

An awareness programme for the first-time and young voters was organised by the 'Odisha Election Watch' here on Friday.

The meeting presided by OEW Baleswar district coordinator Ubachak Mohanty was attended by district Collector Ramesh Chandra Rout, ADM Sambit Nayak, Sub Collector Sadar Nilu Mohapatra, Election Watch State head and former Chief Secretary Sahadev Sahoo and State convener Ranjan

Mohanty and Anuradha Mohanty.

The guests stressed that each voter should exercise franchise. They asked the new voters that they should vote for candidates of their choice. They can vote in NOTA (None of the above) if they find anyone worthy of being their MLA or MP. "Voters must exercise their rights as citizen of the country," they said.

They said the NOTA option is a powerful tool that can alert political parties against fielding unworthy and

criminal-background candidates.

New voters were taught to check their names in their lists of their booths and remedial measures if their names are not found. They were also given hints to inform election monitoring and enforcement agencies regarding illegalities if they mark in their areas through SMS and other electronics medium.

On the occasion, audiovisual programmes were held to create awareness for a free and fair election.



'D'nal royal family have in their blood 'Namak' of people'



KP commits himself to serve till last breath

PNS ■ DHENKANAL

Addressing a public meeting here on Saturday, Congress MP nominee for Dhenkanal and former Union Minister KP Singh Deo said that the royal family he belongs to is indebted to the people of Dhenkanal as they have for the last 18th generations have in their blood the Namak (salt) of people of the undivided district.

He committed himself and his progeny to serve the people till the end of their lives.

Appealing to the mothers, he told them not to be biased by five rupees meal and other populist programmes, while casting their votes. He appealed them to think about the future of their children, before voting.

Singh Deo told that the loan burden of Odisha was only Rs 18,000 crore during last Congress Government of JB Patnaik. However, at present the loan burden of State has gone up to over Rs 1 lakh crore. Who will repay it, he asked. Slamming the Modi

Government, former Irrigation Minister Sk Mutlub Ali alleged that the Prime Minister alone is discharging the duties of Defence Minister and Foreign Ministers. Modi never have felt the necessity of presence other two Ministers during his foreign tours or signing of agreement on policy matters with foreign countries, Ali alleged.

Even Modi did not took to confidence the Finance Minister and RBI Governor while announcing demonetisation, which consumed the job of at least 50 lakh youths. Marriage ceremony of many to be held during the period were postponed.

He cautioned that if given chance for a second time, Modi may prove a big danger to the nation. Ali appealed to the people to vote for MP and MLA nominees of Congress, remembering the good works done by Singh Deo for Dhenkanal parliamentary constituency.

Among others, Congress MLA nominee for Dhenkanal Nabin Nanda, District Congress coordinator Rabi Narayan Mohanty, former State Minister Nabin Chandra Narayandas spoke.

Ganjam Chamber of Commerce holds golden jubilee celebration

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

The Ganjam Chamber of Commerce (GCC) celebrated its golden jubilee here on Sunday. State Chief Information Commissioner Sunil Kumar Mishra was chief guest, Confederation of All India Traders president BC Bhartiya guest of honour, confederation secretary general Praveen Khandelwal chief speaker and Odisha Byabasayee Mahasangh general secretary Sudhakara Panda was another guest.

GCC president VVR N Rao presided over the meeting. GCC chairman K Shiva Prasad Subudhi and secretary Santosh Kumar Sahu and Jamula were present.

A commemoration silver coin was released followed by unveiling of Business Planner 2019-20 and Golden Jubilee Souvenir. The chamber distributed aid to various schools under the programme Mo

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The speakers at the meeting hailed the GCC for the fame and popularity it has earned among the traders' community in the country and its contribution to the State's

economy. The chamber also felicitated its past presidents and secretaries and accorded recognition to associate and patron members.

Notably, the GCC was established in the year 1967 and it is one of largest and richest chambers in the State.

Two-symbol theory: Voters confused

PNS ■ PURI

A new narrative, hatched by dissidents of both the BJP and the BJD, is now spreading a message among people to vote for two separate symbols, one lotus for selection of MP candidate and another conch for selection of MLAs, in some villages under Puri Sadar and Brahmagiri Assembly constituencies.

The narrative, being spread through lips, has now put BJD and BJP candidates and flexible voters in confusion while a day is left for election.

Even in many villages, it is known that the dissidents of both BJD and

BJP are working on two-symbol theory to make their supported candidate win the election.

The dissidents are believed to have spread the two-symbol narrative.

Jeypore artists' music video earns kudos

NISHAN PATTANAIK ■ KORAPUT

An epic music video 'Subharambha' was launched on 'Panaa Sankranti' which is also the Odia New Year to mark a whole new beginning of Odia identity and content creation.

And true to its spirit, within no time, the video has taken the social media by storm. Besides normal viewers, eminent writers, poets and movie critics of Odisha are appreciating the video as it truly glorifies Odia culture and heritage.

It is the maiden music video of 'UttisthataJagrata' campaign named 'Subharambha', based on Pandit Godabarisha Mahapatra's timeless classic 'UthaKankala'. It was released on Youtube on April 14.

Produced by PanchabatiSrujanalaya in association with Jeypore Film Company the music video has been conceived by Toshi Nanda and directed by Vishal Patnaik (State award winning director for film 'Chondalo') with award-winning film production company 'BnR Films' being the official publicity partner.

Nanda, the convener of 'UttisthataJagrata' campaign, who is also the music com-

poser, singer, editor and project designer said, "The sole objective of 'UttisthataJagrata' campaign and PanchabatiSrujanalaya is to rejuvenate the lost sense of pride in every Odia's heart for their culture and roots using the medium of cinema. We intend to make more such Odia classics into music videos and cinema to preserve it for the generations to come."

30 distinctive artists, cultural activists and 'Swabhimani' Odias from all over Jeypore have worked hard for 'Subharambha' irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The audience has unanimously embraced 'Subharambha' as a very positive sign for music and film industries alike. Critics have thoroughly appreciated the concept, acting, direction, music, cinematography, editing, VFX, production and design.

The team has achieved technical brilliance by their awe-inspiring dedication. Eminent singer Krishna Burea said, "When I watched the video, I was just speechless. I congratulate the entire team and want more timeless poetries to be converted into musical videos so that people of Odisha can realise its worth and proudly say we are Odia."

FPI releases 5-point poll agenda

Bats for electoral reforms

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Freethought Party of India (FPI) held a Press conference-cum-seminar here on the theme of humanism. The party also disclosed its five-point agenda for ushering in electoral reforms in India.

The function was presided over by party president Dr Bijayananda Kar.

Party Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha constituency candidate Biswanath Ramchandra and three MLA candidates Swapna Bijayini (Ekamra) Bijay Kumar Swain (Begunia) and Nilamadhab Behera



(Bhubaneswar Central) were present.

Dr Kar said individual dignity, equal voting right, mixed PR (Proportional Representation), priest-less love marriage, one-child family, prayer-less quality English medium education, freedom of

speech and expression, toleration of opposite views and world Government are the cardinal principles of humanism and scientific outlook.

The whole world should be "one", having only the flag of humanism. All other flags are of no use

to mankind at large. We must march into a civilised form of Government that is there in true spirit of the term in Switzerland and we should build the world Government on the principles of Swiss democracy, he maintained.

Political injustice so cruelly intertwined with FPTP system of election should no longer be tolerated, observed Dr Kar.

Party general secretary Biswanath Ramchandra said each gram panchayat should have a free registration of love marriage office, a free family planning centre, quality English medium school to remove all blind beliefs.

Swapna Bijayini was all against road shows, rallies and illegal funding in elections.



Surgical strikes Commander slams Pragma

Congress makes public its report on national security

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant General DS Hooda (retired), who oversaw the cross-border surgical strikes in September 2016 as the former Northern Command chief of the Army, has condemned the Malegaon blast case accused Pragma Thakur's comments that 26/11 hero Hemant Karkare had died at the hands of terrorists after she "cursed" him.

"Yes, it hurts. Any martyr, police or Army, he must get all respect. These utterances are not good," Lt General Hooda said at an event where he released a report that he had prepared on the country's national security.

Pragma has filed her nominations as a BJP candidate to contest Bhopal Lok Sabha seat against the Congress heavy-weight Digvijay Singh. For the past few days she has raised a political storm with a string of controversial comments.

"I had told him (Hemant Karkare) you will be finished, and he was killed by terrorists in less than two months," Pragma Thakur said. The Election Commission has issued a second notice to her over another controversial



Lieutenant General (retired) DS Hooda, Congress leaders P Chidambaram and Jairam Ramesh release Congress plan on national security during a Press conference at AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Sunday

comment on the demolition of Arabi Masjid in Ayodhya.

Hooda has been tasked by Congress to prepare a report of country's security aspect which he released on Sunday in the presence of senior Congress leaders P Chidambaram and Jairam Ramesh. On the occasion Hooda said the issue of national security was important but it would be "completely wrong" to say that it was dom-

inating the poll narrative.

"As far as politics or raising questions over cross-border strikes are concerned, I think when senior military officers come and say you know this operation has been done, I think that should be the end of it. Unfortunately, the whole debate keeps dragging on and it comes up in various forums, and that's why the military tends to get drawn into politi-

cal debates. I think that's not correct," said Hooda.

Explaining the significance of the report prepared by him, Hooda said, "India is doing well diplomatically but there should be a permanent seat in the UNSC (United Nations Security Council)."

"As an Army chap I always remain apolitical. I don't want to get dragged into a political debate," he said, adding he will

only answer on the national security document.

Congress said the top three issues affecting the people were unemployment, farm distress and the security of people. "The number one issue remains unemployment. The number two issue is farm distress and the number three issue is security of various sections of the people, women, Dalits, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, forest dwellers, journalists, academicians, NGOs," Chidambaram said briefing the media.

Asked whether this report, which has been made public during the Lok Sabha elections, is meant to change the narrative on national security, he said, "National security is an important aspect of the narrative. But to say that it is dominating the narrative is completely wrong."

He said the Congress and its president Rahul Gandhi has been speaking about jobs, farm, distress and security of different sections of people every day during campaigning. Chidambaram said the report is a broad outline of how to approach the issue of national security.

"We have taken several

features of Lt Gen DS Hooda's plan (in the manifesto). These ideas will be implemented when we form our government. Our approach is not ad hoc, our approach is not impulsive. It is after a careful study and deliberation and necessary measures will be taken. Our interest is to protect India's national security," Chidambaram who was Home Minister in UPA-II said.

Hooda, while presenting the report, said there are five pillars of national security in the report. Assuring India its "rightful place" in global affairs, securing India's neighbourhood, peaceful resolution of internal conflicts like Jammu & Kashmir issue and ensuring "Jan Suraksha", the main goal of national security of protecting the people, he said.

"The fifth and final pillar of national security is strengthening our capabilities. We have drafted the report based on a roadmap for enhancing our hard power. Keeping in view the nature of future war fighting, there is a need to build up capabilities and ensure adequate budgetary support is available to the three services," said Hooda.

It's time to stand up with judiciary: Jaitley



BY ARUN JAITLEY

The pivotal position of the Chief Justice of India

The incident of a junior ex-lady employee of the Supreme Court making harassment charges against the Chief Justice of India has acquired a disproportionate magnitude. Such complaints, when they are made in the ordinary course of any administrative functioning, are referred to the appropriate Committee. However, when the complainant distributes copies of her representation to other Judges of the Supreme Court and the media in order to sensationalise her allegations, it ceases to be routine. When four digital media organisations with an unparalleled track record of 'institutional disruption' send similar questionnaires to the Chief Justice of India, there is obviously something more than what meets the eye.

India has always taken pride in its independent judiciary. Judges decide cases which deal with life of the common man as also the most powerful commercial and political interests. A judge is not in a popularity race. He owes his commitment only to law, justice and fairness. A judge is neither to follow the ballot box nor is he to be swayed by the times. His judgement pleases us at times and leaves us unhappy on many occasions. But that is the reality of the system which we have learned to live with. The Chief Justice of India is the first amongst the equals in the Supreme Court. He is the head of the judicial institutions. He is both the 'Master of the Roster' and the 'Head of the Collegium' which makes binding recommendations for the appointment of judges. His integrity, ethics, scholarship and fairness reflect the image of India's judiciary. He lives by example. For both the Chief Justice and the judicial institutions, credibility and respect are essential. Once the 'Iqbal' of judiciary is destroyed, the institution itself will crumble.

The assault on the institution

It was in the decade of 1970s that we witnessed suppression of judges, intimidation of courts and transfer of High Court Judges. This was coupled with appointment of politically and ideologically inclined judges in courts. Post the 1982 judgement in the first judges case, the appointment of politically affiliated judges continued in several High Courts. This process substantially stopped after the 1993 judgement in the second judges case.

The last few years have witnessed the consolidation of 'institution destabilizers' in a major way. Many of these destabilizers represent Left or ultra-Left views. They have no electoral base or popular support. However, they still have a disproportionate presence in the media and the academia. When ousted for mainstream media, they have taken refuge in the digital and social media. They continue to believe in the old Marxian philosophy of 'wrecking the system from within.' They use free speech to destroy the judicial institution.

This section has found a convenient ally in a small but vocal section of the Bar. This section exploits the judicial refrain of excessively using the power of contempt. However, they themselves have no hesitation in contemptuous behaviour towards themselves. They go public against individual judges, including the Chief Justice, when they fail to get a favourable order. They carry on social media campaigns against judges who write judgements adverse to them. They have little regard for truth but masquerade as protectors of public interest. Their behaviour in courts is offensive both to the Bench and their opponents. They threaten walkouts if judges are in disagreement.

Even though most of them subscribe to fringe ideologies and ideas, it is regrettable that

a section of the Members of the Bar affiliated to the Congress Party tend to join them. Frequent attempts are made to get some Parliamentarians to sign Motion of Impeachment against Judges and even the Chief Justice on unsustainable grounds. What has always puzzled me is the Congress lending support to such fringe campaigns.

The power of contempt
The power of contempt is intended to protect the dignity of the Court. However, the power of contempt is rarely and sparingly used. Ordinarily, courts tend to ignore contemptuous criticism. Courts are willing to accept a criticism of judgements because that aids the process of legal evolution. The liberal attitude of the Courts has emboldened the 'institution disruptors.' At the end of the day, they get away because of the magnanimity and the compassion of judges.

Independent judiciary and free media are both essential for a vibrant democracy. Both have to live with each other. In order to co-exist, both must respect the respective rights of each of these institutions. One cannot take upon itself the task of destroying the other. Ever since 1950, every judgement of the Supreme Court relating to Article 19(1)(a) has favoured the strengthening of free speech. The reverse is not true. Mainstream print media conventionally had greater editorial control. The ability to dissect facts and take a balanced view was much higher. But of late, the rat race for grabbing eyeballs or viewership has begun. For the 'institutional disruptors' there are no red lines.

The history of the last several year shows that cases after cases have witnessed facts being manufactured and twisted. This falsehood found support in a section in the media. Upon deeper analysis most of them were found to be factually incorrect. Facts were manufactured. The same 'gang' was behind this campaign.

The present case
A Judge is continuously judged every day by the Bar and the stakeholders in the course of his personal and judicial conduct. Every time he makes a comment or writes a judgement, every word is scrutinised. In terms of personal decency, values, ethics and integrity, the present Chief Justice of India is extremely well regarded. Even when critics disagree with his judicial view, his value system has never been questioned. Lending shoulder to completely unverified allegations coming from a disgruntled person with a not-so-glorious track record is aiding the process of destabilisation of the institution of the Chief Justice of India.

India has witnessed a series of attacks by the 'institution disruptors' against judges who are unwilling to agree with them. It may not be an exaggeration to say that today both in Court and by creating an environment outside, a mass-intimidation of Judges is on. Some lawyers have used intimidatory behaviour as a tactic to expand their practise. Intimidation and discrediting are important weapons in the hands of these people. Reputation is an integral part of a person's fundamental right to live with dignity. An intimidated judge can fear consequences of a possible view that he is taking. It is, therefore, essential that all well-meaning persons stand with the judicial institution when destabilizers get ready for an assault.

Since the case relating to this is pending in judicial side before the Bench of a Court, we should leave it to the wisdom of the Court as to how they intend to deal with it. But let it be remembered that this is not the first case of the 'institutional destabilizers' nor will it be the last. If those who peddle falsehood to destroy the institution are not dealt with in an exemplary manner, this trend will only accelerate.

Top Navy Commanders to review preparedness in maritime domain

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of heightened tension between India and Pakistan post Pulwama incident in February this year, the Navy commanders will take stock of the operational preparedness of the force during the three-day conference here starting on Tuesday next. The top echelon will also review progress made on various issues discussed during the last such meeting held six months back. The commanders meet every six months for brainstorming and discussing matters pertaining to the service.

Giving details of the issues likely to come up during the forthcoming meeting, officials said here on Sunday the conference assumes greater significance in the backdrop of Pulwama associated events that have brought country's defence under sharper focus and will provide the higher naval leadership a forum to discuss the emerging challenges in the maritime domain and fine tune the strategies for responding to the evolving geo-strategic environment.

The conference is the apex forum within the Service for interaction between the Naval Commanders. The Navy Chief with the Commanders-in-Chief, will review major operational, materiel, logistics, human resources, training and administrative activities undertaken during the previous six months and deliberate upon

the course to be steered in the ensuing six months.

The Navy is operationally deployed as per its doctrine of mission based deployment and has further increased vigil in the strategically important Indian Ocean region besides Arabian Sea after the Pulwama incident. Forty Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed in a suicide attack on February 16. India retaliated by launching air strikes on February 26 destroying Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) training centre in Balakot, Pakistan.

The Pakistan Air Force hit back the next day and tried to target military installations in Rajouri sector. In the ensuing aerial battle, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman flying a MIG-21 downed a Pakistan F-16.

However, the Indian pilot's plane was hit by Pakistan air defence and he was captured by Pakistan Army after his parachute landed in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).

He returned to India two days later. Since then the IAF has increased vigil all along the western sector facing Pakistan while the Army is alert along the Line of Control (LOC) in Jammu and Kashmir and the international borders.

Meanwhile, navy officials also said Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to address the Naval Commanders on the opening day and interact with them. The conference also serves as

a platform for institutionalised interaction of Naval Commanders with senior government officials.

Interaction with Chiefs of Indian Army and Indian Air Force during the conference would be utilised to analyse the operational environment, deliberate on Tri-Service synergy and readiness to deter and neutralise threats aimed at the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The themes of 'Functional Reorganisation of Indian Navy towards improving Operational Efficiency' and 'Optimal Manning' will form the core of discussions towards finalising long term road map for the service.

Discussions are planned on acquisition of new capabilities, harnessing niche technologies like 'Big Data Analytics' and 'Artificial Intelligence' for solutions in the domains of naval combat, convergence of networks and information, logistics, administration and equipment health monitoring for sustained operations.

In keeping with the expectation of the Indian Navy being the net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and first responder to any crisis, the forum will also deliberate upon the lessons learnt from the recently concluded humanitarian and disaster response operations by the Navy and various other maritime security initiatives, they said.

Richest, poorest candidates in Lok Sabha elections 2019

With assets worth ₹9, Shrivenkateshwar is poorest candidate contesting from Bijapur in Karnataka

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Shrivenkateshwar Mahaswami who is contesting from Bijapur in Karnataka on a Hindustan Janata Party ticket has assets worth ₹9 and his immovable assets are nil. He is followed by Sreejith PR, an independent from Wayanad, has assets worth ₹12. Johnson Vasant Kolhapure contesting as an independent from the Pune seat is third on the list. He has declared assets worth ₹207. There are 11 candidates who have declared zero assets in their poll affidavits.

Vasanthakumar H, a Congress candidate from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu is the richest among all the candidates contesting in the second phase of Lok Sabha elections. His total assets are more than ₹417 crore. He is followed by Uday Singh of the Congress from Purnia in Bihar at ₹341 crore and DK Suresh from the same party from Bengaluru South in Karnataka at ₹338 crore.

According to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), JP Ladakbhai of Bahujan Mukti Party, B Vansabhai Khulaf of Bhartiya Tribal Party, HR Bhanabhai of Navsarjan Bharat Party, Shankar Jadhav of Bharatiya Peoples Party, DS Khatarabhai, MS Khanagoudar, Suresh Kumar, Tawar Vijay Jagan, NS

Vasanthakumar H, a Congress candidate from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu is the richest among all the candidates contesting in the second phase of Lok Sabha elections. His total assets are more than ₹417 crore

Ramjan, AR Shaikh and RB Mahapure (all Independent) have declared zero assets in their affidavits. All of them have neither movable nor immovable assets in their name or in their spouse name.

ADR report also says Suhas Popat Gajarmal, who is contesting from Pune on the Rashtriya Janasakti Party, has assets worth ₹771. RK Mishra who is contesting from Puri, on a ticket of CPI(ML) Red Star, has assets ₹1,000. Sharad Bhamre, a candidate from Jalgaon has assets worth ₹1,500. An independent candidate Aswathi Rajappan of Ernakulam, has declared assets worth ₹2,026.

ADR also says the richest candidate is Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Kunwar Devendra Singh Yadav with assets worth ₹204 crore in the second phase of the Lok Sabha polls. Yadav is contesting the elections from Etah in Uttar Pradesh. He is followed by Bhonsle Shrimant Chhatrapati Udayanraje Pratapsinh Maharaj contesting on an Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) ticket from Satara

is second on the list. He has assets worth ₹199 crore. Praveen Singh Aron, with assets worth ₹147 crore is third on the list. He is contesting on a Congress ticket from Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh.

The ADR report says that there are 392 candidates in the fray with assets worth more than Rs one crore. There are 392 (25 per cent) candidates who have assets worth ₹1 crore and more. Among the major parties 81 (84 per cent) out of 97 candidates from BJP, 74 (82 per cent) out of 90 candidates from INC, 9 (90 per cent) out of 10 candidates from SP, 10 (53 per cent) candidates from CPI(M), 12 (13 per cent) candidates from BSP, 9 (41 per cent) candidates from SHS and 7 (70 per cent) out of 10 candidates from NCP have declared assets worth more than ₹1 crore.

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Protections sought for otters as online trade booms

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Worried over the booming online illegal trade of two species of otters — the Asian small-clawed otter and the smooth-coated otter — India along with Bangladesh, Nepal and Philippines are seeking complete ban on all international commercial trade in the water loving mammals for their protection.

The four Asian nations have moved a proposal in this regard at the forthcoming 18th Conference of the Parties (COP18) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to be held in Sri Lanka in May, 2019.

Currently, both the species are listed on Appendix II of CITES, which allows regulated international trade. If the CITES members approve the proposal, these carnivores, whose number is dwindling owing to habitat loss and increasing online trade for pets in various countries, would be transferred to Appendix I, banning all global commercial trade.

More than two-thirds of all the CITES Parties in attendance must vote to adopt the pro-

posals for the ban to take effect. CITES is an international agreement between governments that sets regulations on the trade in wild animals and plants.

Both species of the otters are currently listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List but wildlife activists warn that growing online demand will put further pressure on the species in the wild.

In fact, recent investigations by TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, has revealed that their populations have declined by more than 30 percent largely due to destruction of their habitat and exploitation for the global trade in otter skins and pet trade.

Nobody knows exactly how many Asian small-clawed otters or smooth-coated otters are left in India and Southeast Asia, but the general consensus is that numbers are declining.

Overall, there are 13 species of otter, all listed in the IUCN Red List which live in Europe, Asia, Africa, North Central and South America: Eurasian otters, smooth-coated otters, Asian small-clawed otters, hairy-nosed otters, sea otters, North American river otters, neotropical otters, giant

ILLEGAL OTTER TRADE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SOUTHEAST ASIA IS HOME TO FOUR SPECIES OF OTTERS



otters, Southern river otters, marine otters, African clawless otters, Congo clawless otters and spotted-necked otters.

In the past 35 years, seizure records reveal that otters are traded in around 15 Asian countries, the majority being in China, India, and Nepal. However, in recent years, there have been a growing number of seizures of "live otters" in Southeast Asia which suggest-

ed an emerging trend of otters being caught for the commercial pet trade in this region.

A TRAFFIC report released last year revealed all. Researchers found 560 advertisements for up to 1,189 otters over a four-month period in 2018. In addition, the report found that 59 live otters, most of which were juveniles, were seized by officials from 2015-2017. From 2015 to 2017, four

Southeast Asian countries confiscated 59 otters in 13 seizures, most of them in Thailand and Indonesia where commercial breeding may be taking place, the group said, with at least 32 seized en route from Thailand to Japan.

According to the International Otter Survival Fund, the mother otter is often killed by poachers so they can capture the cubs.

"Chances of survival for newborn otters in the trade appear to be low; this is reflected from the juvenile otters which that offered at a higher price as a result of increased survival chance.

However, the much higher volume of newborn pups supplied in the trade indicates that otters are indiscriminately extracted from the wild, even as a newborn, despite the risk of death.

"While each trader individually sells a small number of otters each time, the overall volume of the trade itself is significant, raising concerns for the wild populations of smooth-coated otter and Asian small-clawed otter" noted a report titled "Illegal pet trade on social media as an emerging impediment to the conservation of Asian otters species," published in the December 2018 edition of Journal of Asia-Pacific Biodiversity.

"Weak national laws hinder enforcement action and widespread trade in otters online throws the survival of remaining wild populations in Southeast Asia into question," said a regional TRAFFIC official, Kanitha Krishnasamy in the report.

STATES/UTs	CONSTITUENCY
Assam (4 seats)	Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Barpeta, Gauhati
Bihar (5 seats)	Jhanjharpur, Supaul, Araria, Madhepura, Khagaria
Chhattisgarh (7 seats)	Sarguja, Raigarh, Janjgir-Champa, Korba, Bilaspur, Durg, Raipur
Dadra & Nagar Haveli (1 seat)	Dadra & Nagar Haveli
Daman & Diu (1 seat)	Daman & Diu
Gujarat (26 seats)	Kachchh, Banaskantha, Patan, Mahesana, Sabarkantha, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad East, Ahmedabad West, Surendranagar, Rajkot, Porbandar, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Anand, Kheda, Panchmahal, Dahod, Vadodara, Chhota Udaipur, Bharuch, Bardoli, Surat, Navsari, Valsad
Goa (2)	North Goa, South Goa
Jammu & Kashmir (1 seat)	Anantnag
Karnataka (14 seats)	Chikkodi, Belgaum, Bagalkot, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Bidar, Koppal, Bellary, Haveri, Dharwad, Uttara Kannada, Davanagere, Shimoga
Kerala (20 seats)	Kasaragod, Kannur, Vadaqara, Wayanad, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Ponnani, Palakkad, Alathur, Thrissur, Chalakudy, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kottayam, Alappuzha, Mavelikkara, Pathanamthitta, Kollam, Attingal, Thiruvananthapuram
Maharashtra (14 seats)	Jalgaon, Raver, Jalna, Aurangabad, Raigad, Pune, Baramati, Ahmednagar, Madha, Sangli, Satara, Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Hatkanangle
Odisha (6 seats)	Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Puri, Bhubaneswar
Tripura (2 seat)	Tripura East
Uttar Pradesh (10 seats)	Moradabad, Rampur, Sambhal, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Badaun, Aonla, Bareilly, Pilibhit
West Bengal (5 seats)	Balurghat, Maldaha Uttar, Maldaha Dakshin, Jangipur, Murshidabad

QUOTE-UNQUOTE



I've not come here as a politician who is going to tell you what to do or what I think. I'm not here to tell you my 'Mann ki baat', I'm here to understand what is inside your heart
RAHUL GANDHI IN WAYANAD



Pak troops were in our custody. A big area of Pakistan was also captured by Indian forces during 1971 war but the Congress Government lost it on table in Shimla agreement and they were released
NARENDRA MODI

CAMPAIGNING FOR LARGEST PHASE ENDS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Campaigning for the third phase of polling in 116 parliamentary constituencies on April 23 ended on Sunday with top leaders making a last-gasp effort to sway voters in favour of their respective parties. Polling will be held in the 116 seats, spread across 15 States and Union Territories. All seats in Gujarat (26), Kerala (20), Goa (2), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (1) and Daman and Diu (1) go to polls in the third of the seven-phase election. Besides, polling will be held

in four seats in Assam, five in Bihar, seven in Chhattisgarh, one in Jammu & Kashmir, 14 in Karnataka, 14 in Maharashtra, six in Odisha, 10 in Uttar Pradesh, five in West Bengal and one in Tripura. Election to Tripura, East Lok Sabha constituency — which was deferred due to security reasons — will be held in this phase. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP chief Amit Shah, Congress president Rahul Gandhi and a host of Union ministers among others canvassed for their party candidates in the past few days,

undertaking whirlwind tours of constituencies. Among the key contestants in the fray are BJP chief Amit Shah (Gandhinagar, Gujarat), Congress president Rahul Gandhi (Wayanad, Kerala), and Samajwadi Party patron Mulayam Singh Yadav (Mainpuri, UP). In Pathanamthitta, the key candidates are BJP's K Surendran, CPM's Veena George and Congress' Anto Anthony. During campaigning in Gujarat, the two principal parties — the BJP and the

Congress exchanged acrimonious barbs, with leaders from both groups exuding confidence of a good showing. The BJP had swept all 26 seats in the State in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. In Maharashtra, the prominent seats in the third phase include Jalna, where State BJP president Raosaheb Danveis in the fray against Vilas Autade of the Congress, and Baramati, where Supriya Sule, the daughter of NCP chief Sharad Pawar, is contesting against BJP's Kanchan Kul. Another keenly watched

seat will be Ahmednagar where Sujay Vikhe Patil is the BJP's nominee. He is the son of Congress veteran and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil. Sujay Vikhe Patil joined the BJP in the run-up to the polls, after the NCP refused to vacate the Ahmednagar seat for the Congress. He is now pitted against NCP's Sangram Jagtap. Key constituencies in Karnataka to be watched out for during the polls include Gulbarga, where Mallikarjun Kharge is pitted against Umesh Jadhav, who ahead of polls

joined the BJP quitting Congress and as MLA; and Shimoga, where former chief Minister Yeddyurappa's son BY Raghavendra is pitted against another former Chief Minister S Bangarappa's son Madhu Bangarappa. In 14 constituencies that will go to the polls in the second phase on April 23, the BJP is contesting all the seats. The Congress and JD(S) that are facing the polls in alliance have fielded their candidates in 12 and two constituencies respectively. The BJP has a huge stake in this phase in

Uttar Pradesh with the party having won seven out of the ten seats in the region in 2014, leaving three for the Samajwadi Party, but facing a tough challenge from SP-BSP-RLD combine here. The campaigning for the phase witnessed a new low with SP leader Azam Khan making an "indecent" remark, targeting his opponent Jaya Prada in Rampur by allegedly speculating on the colour of her underwear and attracting the saffron party's wrath, besides that of the National Commission for Women. Khan, who also faced

a 72-hour ban by the Election Commission of India on his campaigning after making the underwear jibe, was among the three other leaders, including Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and BSP supremo Mayawati, who faced the poll panel's wrath for making "provocative" speeches. The political heavyweights, whose fate will be decided in the third phase of elections here, include Mulayam Singh Yadav, Union Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar, who is fighting from Bareilly and BJP's Varun Gandhi from Pilibhit.

2 sons of ex-CMs fight in Shivamogga

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

In the second phase of Karnataka elections on April 23 Shivamogga lok sabha constituency is in the news as two sons of former Chief Ministers are fighting their crucial battle. BY Raghavendra — son of BJP's lingayat strong man BS Yeddyurappa — and Madhu Bangarappa — son of former Chief Minister S Bangarappa from the JDS — are in the fray. Madhu Bangarappa who was defeated in the bypoll held few months back by a small margin is the united candidate of the Congress and the JDS in this constituency. It was in 2014 BS Yeddyurappa won against Manjunath Bhandari of the Congress by a very big margin of over 3,50,000 votes. In 2018 Assembly polls BJP won seven of the eight segments. Shivamogga Lok Sabha constituency, one of the high-profile constituencies in the State, is likely to witness a high-voltage electoral battle BY Raghavendra and Madhu Bangarappa — in a gap of just six months. It is also the fight between AHINDA (Minorities and Backward classes) of Siddaramaiah and the dominant community of Lingayat of

Yeddyurappa. This Malnad constituency has been the stronghold of BJP and also the home town of Yeddyurappa since 2004. JDS candidate Madhu Bangarappa had lost to Raghavendra in the November 2018 by-election by a margin of 52,148 votes in a constituency comprising over 14.3 lakh electorates. It's a neck-to-neck fight and the JDs-Congress combines leaving no stone untouched to trounce the BJP. But Yeddyurappa and BJP is also betting big on to take on Madhu Bangarappa. RSS and BJP are working hard to keep the seat to defeat Madhu Bangarappa. The caste and polarisation is the key factor in deciding the fate of these heavy weights. With the help of the politically dominant Lingayat community, to which Yeddyurappa and Raghavendra belong, the BJP hopes to outsmart Madhu, who belongs to the backward Idiga (toddy tapper) community. Experts say the coming together of the Congress and the JDS will lead to the consolidation of secular, backward and minority votes against the BJP. It's not about any ideology but in a way direct fight between Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi.



BJP Guwahati Lok Sabha candidate Queen Ojha and party Batadrava legislator Angoorilata Dekar ride a scooter during an election campaign for the Lok Sabha polls, in Guwahati, on Sunday



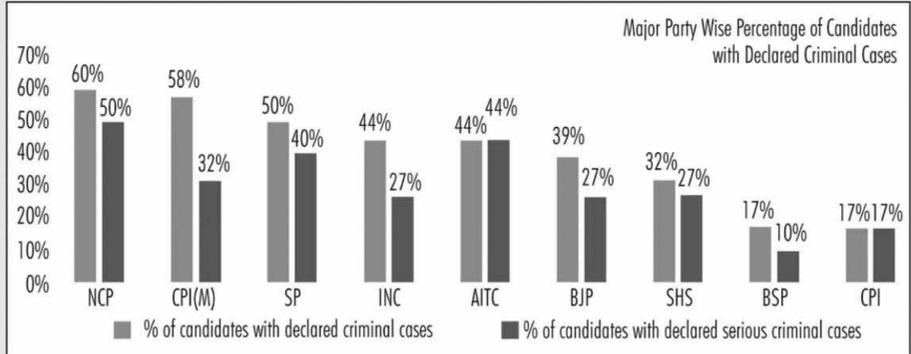
National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah interacts with party supporters during an election rally for the Lok Sabha polls, in Anantnag on Sunday

PHASE-III: MAJOR PARTY WISE CANDIDATES WITH DECLARED CRIMINAL CASES

Party wise Candidates with Criminal Cases:
Among the major parties-
■ INC-40(44%) out of 90 candidates
■ BJP-38(39%) out of 97 candidates
■ BSP-16(17%) out of 92 candidates
■ CPI (M)-11(58%) out of 19 candidates
■ SHS-7(32%) out of 22 candidates
■ SP-5(50%) out of 10 candidates
■ NCP-6(60%) out of 10 candidates

Party wise Candidates with Serious Criminal Cases:
Among the major parties-
■ BJP-26(27%) out of 97 candidates
■ NCP-24(27%) out of 90 candidates
■ BSP-9(10%) out of 92 candidates
■ SHS-6(27%) out of 22 candidates
■ CPI (M)-6(32%) out of 19 candidates

Red Alert Constituencies*:
63 out of 115 constituencies are red alert constituencies. Red alert constituencies are those constituencies where 3 or more contesting candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves.



* Analysis of self-sworn affidavits of 1594 out of 1612 candidates

(SOURCE: ADR) IANS GRAPHICS



POLL BATTLE ENTERS YADAV LAND

Lucknow: As the Lok Sabha election enters its third phase in Uttar Pradesh, the battle is now taking place in Yadav land with the prestige and stature of the Mulayam Singh Yadav clan on test. The phase will also decide the course that the battle in the Yadav family will take in future. The Samajwadi Party had contested only three out of the 16 seats that went to polls in the first two phases in the state, but in the third phase, is contesting nine out of the 10 seats that will see voting on April 23. The Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance looks rather formidable in this phase, given the caste equations and the Bharatiya Janata Party may face an uphill

task on many of these seats. The seats in this phase include Samajwadi Party strongholds like Badaun, Sambhal, Mainpuri, Ferozabad, and Rampur as well as Aonla, Bareilly, Pilibhit, Etah and Moradabad. One of the safest seats for the SP is Mainpuri where party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav is the candidate. It was in Mainpuri two days ago that Mulayam Singh shared the stage with BSP President Mayawati, burying the hostilities of the past two and a half decades. There are no guesses for the result in Mainpuri where Mulayam Singh remains the tallest and most popular leader. He was elected from Mainpuri in 2014 as well as Azamgarh but

had chose to retain the latter. In Badaun, Samajwadi Party's Dharmendra Yadav is locked in a straight fight with Salim Iqbal Shervani of the Congress. The four lakh Muslim and nine lakh OBC votes in this constituency could tilt the scales in favour of the SP. BJP's Sanghmitra Maurya is, meanwhile, embroiled in a controversy after her video asking her supporters to cast fake votes went viral. In Ferozabad, the war is between uncle Shivalp Yadav and nephew Akshay Yadav and there is certainly no camaraderie in the air. This is a real battle between Yadav leaders and Shivalp Yadav



enjoys an advantage because he is familiar with the organization at the ground level. The SP is also hopeful of winning the Sambhal seat where the party has again fielded Shafiqur Rehman Barq who had lost the seat by just 5,000-odd votes in 2014. Rampur, meanwhile, is witnessing its worst-ever election campaign with BJP's Jaya Prada and SP's M o h a m m a d Azam Khan calling each other unprintable names. Jaya Prada, with tears flowing down

her cheeks, is trying to earn the sympathy votes from the people while Azam Khan is playing the victim card to make it to the winning post. In Pilibhit, BJP MP Varun Gandhi is pitted against SP's Hemraj Varma and in Moradabad, BJP's Sarvesh Singh is being challenged by young poet Imran Pratagarhi. The BJP appears strong in both the constituencies. In Bareilly, veteran BJP MP Santosh Gangwar is seeking his eighth term and his challenger is Praveen Aron of Congress. In Etah, Rajvir Singh, son of Rajasthan Governor and former Uttar Pradesh CM Kalyan Singh, is seeking a second term. He is pitted against SP's Devendra Yadav. IANS

Lok Sabha Polls 2019 Phase-III

Profile of Candidates

- Seats in Phase-III: 115*
- Total candidates: 1,612
- Candidates analysed: 1,594
- Date of poll: April 23

Educational Background

- Illiterate: 23
- Literate: 57
- 5th Pass: 74
- 8th Pass: 172
- 10th Pass: 297
- 12th Pass: 245
- Graduate: 279
- Graduate Professional: 164
- Postgraduate: 213
- Doctorate: 25
- Others: 42
- Not given: 3

Age Group

- 25-30 years: 137
- 31-40 years: 425
- 41-50 years: 431
- 51-60 years: 329
- 61-70 years: 225
- 71-80 years: 40
- 81-100 years: 3
- Not given: 4

*Does not include Tripura East seat, polling for which was deferred from April 18 to April 23

Source: Association for Democratic Reforms **KBK Poligraphics**

BAREILLY बरेली

GST, note ban hit popular trades, but not poll issues

PTI ■ BAREILLY
It has been very confusing. It was billed on the theme of 'one nation, one tax' but now there are different slab rates," he told PTI outside his shop in Sahukara market. "In the run-up to GST's implementation, workshops were conducted here for traders in which jewellers were assured that corruption would end and it would benefit the community. The benefits that the ordinary traders should have got are yet to be seen, GST has only increased our return filings and paper work," Agarwal, also the Mahamantri of the regional traders association, Bareilly, said. However, Agarwal asserted that "we are traditional backers of the BJP". Bareilly is home to one of the finest "surma" manufacturers in the country but some marginal operators shut shop in the after-effect of the note ban, as did some cane traders in the city also referred to as "Baans Bareilly".

Warned Pak before pilot's return: PM

PTI ■ PATAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said he had warned Pakistan of consequences if it did not return Indian Air Force pilot Abhinandan Varthaman.

Addressing a poll rally at Patan in Gujarat, he asserted his government's commitment towards national security and said whether the Prime Minister's chair remains or not, he has decided that either he will be alive or the terrorists.

He also took a jibe at NCP leader Sharad Pawar, saying if he is unaware of his next move, then how can Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan gauge what he will do.

Modi urged the people of Gujarat to help the BJP win all 26 Lok Sabha seats in his home state, where polling will be held on Tuesday, and said if it does not happen, then there will be discussions on TV over it on the day of vote counting.

Following the air strike at Balakot terror camp in Pakistan, there was a dogfight between Indian and Pakistani fighter planes on February 27 in which the IAF wing commander was captured by the neighbouring country and released on the night of March 1.

He said after Abhinandan was caught, opposition started seeking a reply from him. "We held a press conference and warned Pakistan that if anything happened to our pilot, you will keep telling the world what Modi did to you."

"A senior American official said on the second day that Modi has kept 12 missiles ready and might attack and the situation will deteriorate. Pakistan announced return of the pilot, or else it was going to be a qatal ki raat," he said.

"This was said by America, I have nothing to say about this now, I will speak about it when the time will come," he said.

"The (PM's) chair remains or goes, I have decided that either I be alive or terrorists will remain alive," he said.

He said the air strike at terror camps in Pakistan was something people expected from him. "When Pulwama happened, what did the country expect Modi to do? Would you, would the country have pardoned me had I done what the Manmohan Singh Government did after 26/11," he asked.

The country wanted something to be done, he said, adding that he had announced giving a



free hand to the military. "They (Pakistan) made tight arrangements, but being the disciple of Lord Hanuman, our people conducted air strike and their story was over," he said.

Hitting out at the Opposition parties, he said the Balakot strike made them uncomfortable. "Pakistan was

repeatedly saying India bombed us, but people here were questioning if this was India's Balakot. They were proved false," he said.

Accusing the Congress of questioning the bravery of India's military force and doubting its action, he said, "Does any Congress leader ask

"A senior American official said on the second day that Modi has kept 12 missiles ready and might attack and the situation will deteriorate. Pakistan announced return of the pilot, or else it was going to be a qatal ki raat

"When Pulwama happened, what did the country expect Modi to do? Would you, would the country have pardoned me had I done what the Manmohan Singh Government did after 26/11

"Pakistan made tight arrangements, but being the disciple of Lord Hanuman, our people conducted air strike and their story was over

for air strike proof? They have got the message to stop asking because people are getting angry. After the first and second phases of polls, they have forgotten to ask."

He also took a swipe at Pawar, who on Saturday said he was "terribly afraid" as to what Modi, who once called the NCP chief his mentor in politics, would do next. "Sharad Pawar says I don't know what will Modi do. If he is unaware of what Modi will do tomorrow, how will Imran Khan know?" he said.

He also attacked the Congress for not providing howitzers to the Army since 1985 and said his government has arranged for artillery manufacturing at three factories in the country, one being at Hazira in Gujarat which manufactures K-9 Vajra Howitzer.

Vote for saving country from narrow-minded ideology: Priyanka

Kalpetta (Wayanad): Terming the ongoing Lok Sabha elections as no ordinary polls, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Sunday asked people to vote for saving the country from "narrow minded ideology" as she accused the NDA Government of undermining democracy and suppressing dissent.

In an interaction with media here after visiting the family of CRPF jawan VV Vasanthkumar martyred in the Pulwama terror attack, she said Congress was not contesting the polls for power but for the larger idea of the country and to strengthen the forces of democracy.

"This election is to save the country that we all love, the country that we all believe in. The country in which all of us are equal, in which all of us are free to express ourselves, our religion, our ways of eating, our ways of living," she said.

Priyanka Gandhi, who has been campaigning for her brother and Congress president Rahul Gandhi contesting the polls from Wayanad constituency in Kerala besides in his traditional Amethi seat, appealed to the electorate in the state to vote for Congress for the bigger cause.

"I appeal to you to vote for our alliance as we are fighting for a much greater thing. We are not fighting just to gain power. We are fighting for a much bigger thing in this election," the AICC general secretary in-charge of Eastern Uttar



Pradesh said.

She claimed that suddenly people were not free to express themselves. "Suddenly people are afraid. The institutions that are to protect the rights of the people are undermined. Democracy is being undermined and we must all realise that this is no ordinary election," Priyanka said.

The Congress leader, who did not name either the BJP or the NDA or Prime Minister Narendra Modi throughout her interaction, asked the people to save the country from a government which she said feared criticism.

"Save the country in which rules are being imposed on us by a narrow minded ideology, where only one kind of thinking prevails. Save the country in which there is a government that is afraid of criticism, which wants to suppress you when you raise your voice. So when you cast your vote you must think of this. A larger idea of our country," she added.

Priyanka spent about half-an-hour at Vasanthkumar's house and consoled the grieving family. PTI

India's nuclear weapons not for 'Diwali', asserts PM

Barmer: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India is no longer afraid of Pakistan's nuclear threats as today it is among world powers with capability to carry out nuclear attacks across land, water, and air. He said, "The NDA Government has instilled fear in the minds and hearts of terrorists. We hit terrorists getting right into their homes. Now India is no more afraid of Pakistan threats."

"There was a time when Pakistan used to threaten India every second day saying 'We have the nuclear button, we have the nuclear button, which was also reported by our media. "Then what do we have? Is it (India's nuclear arsenal) for Diwali?" he asked as the crowd applauded and started chanting his name.

Attacking the Congress and other Opposition parties, he said, "We forced Pakistan to beg around the world. You

think that I did what was right, but Congress and its allies think it was not right. "They think terrorism and national security is just not issue to discuss. They think that Modi should not talk of Indian honour and valour. Why? Am I here to attend a Bhajan Mandali (hymn singing session)?"

Citing his Government's record on terrorism, particularly the Balakot air strike following the Pulwama attack on February 14 that left 40 CRPF men dead, he mocked the Opposition's response.

"We went into their (terrorists) homes to attack them and they (Congress) are asking for proof. As we hit terrorists, pains were felt in their hearts." Modi also accused the Congress of losing the upper hand after the 1971 war with Pakistan by surrendering the opportunity at the Shimla Round Table Conference and

giving back the land it had won as well returning 90,000 captured Pakistanis soldiers.

"At that time, the Kashmir problem could have been discussed and resolved. However, the Congress government bowed to the world pressure and did not discuss anything significant. Had Modi been there, he would never have lost this opportunity," he said.

"There is one more reason why Congress doesn't want to talk on national security," he added. He also accused of Congress of indulging in the AgustaWestland VIP helicopter scam.

"With Michael mama (alleged middleman Christian Michael), they looted honest people's income. However, as you had elected a 'mazboot' Government, we contacted France for Rafale (fighter jets), leaving aside Congress agents. These aircraft will soon be seen in Indian skies," he said. IANS

Chunaavi memes take social media by storm

New Delhi: With an aim to strike a chord with young voters, political parties, candidates and the public relations firms have gone into a frenzy, sharing memes and dubsmashes, including in regional languages, across social media platforms. From Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "achche din" and "Mai Bhi Chawkidar" campaign and his reverse archery skills to Rahul Gandhi's "Aaloo Daalo Sona niklega" — everything new and old is being refreshed, recycled and reused as memes and dubsmashes on social media in the election season.

For example, a dubsmash "Jai Hind" explains how Prime Minister Narendra Modi has to keep going the right path despite people mocking his decisions.

Another hilarious pro-Congress video sells "Bhakt ka Chashma," which shows development while there is none, covering issues such as unemployment, farmer distress, housing and health.

A pro-BJP video comes up with an answer to this, saying forget "Bhakt ka Chashma" video and give vote to the BJP and it has fulfilled all the promises made.

Since Game Of Thrones (GoT) Season 8 has been trending, the Congress party shared and circulated a creative replacing the villain "Night King" of the epic fantasy by Modi. The Election Commission also used the millennial-favourite "Winter is coming" phrase from Game of Thrones to raise voter aware-



ness on Twitter.

"Election Commission using various memes from popular series and movies is really creative and young voters must get up and vote," tweeted a user. While political memes are comical or satirical representation of social issues, the app Dubsmash that was very popular in 2014-16 lets users choose audio recordings and record a video of themselves dubbing over that piece of audio.

Earlier this week, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) President and former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav shared an old 17-second Dubsmash video of himself mouthing Modi's catch phrase from his 2014 election campaign promising "achche din".

The dubsmash video is captioned: "Muft mein lelo 15 lakh, acche din aur jumla". The video gathered over 1,800 comments, 2,700 re-tweets as well as 14,000 likes on Twitter.

Yadav's clip surfaced old tweets with #Dubsmash on the

micro-blogging site which trended for a while. "What so you call when Rahul Gandhi make dubsmash video? Dumb-smash," read a tweet from a user.

After the trailer release of the "PM Narendra Modi" biopic, memes and clips surrounding Modi narrating "Ma mai sanyasi bab na chahta hu (mother, I want to become a monk)" became one of the most enacted monologue on social media.

Dubbed clippings of chunavi parodies and rap battles have also been doing the rounds on social media. Catch phrases and dialogues from popular TV series are also being reworked as fun and catchy election content for party campaigns and promotions.

The controversial Chinese app TikTok which has now been blocked in the country is full of memes and dubsmashes. "TikTok is banned, not Rahul Gandhi; the show must go on, so also the entertainment. #TikTok," a tweet read. IANS

AI, social media regulation find prominence in poll manifestos

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Going by the poll manifestos published by major political parties, the use of digital technology is likely to get a boost under the new Government that will come to power after the Lok Sabha election results on May 23.

While most political parties have promised greater implementation of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data and Blockchain technologies to drive the growth of the economy, some have also assured punishment for those who misuse digital and social media.

The BJP, which pushed digital transactions in a major way during its five-year rule ending this year, said it would further increase the ongoing incentives to expand digital transactions if voted to power again.

The BJP said it would create a new data-sharing framework that builds on the success of 'Jan Dhan' and Aadhaar platforms while ensuring data privacy and security. "With this scheme, we will ensure that every Indian has access to banking facilities within a radius of 5 km," the BJP manifesto said.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government led by the BJP faced severe criticism from the Opposition for the use of Aadhaar biometric identification system in distribution of benefits to the people. They followed up the criticism in their manifestos as well.

While the Congress promised an amendment to the Aadhaar Act in order to restrict its use, the Communist Party of

India (Marxist) said it would push for scrapping of the use of Aadhaar and biometrics for all social welfare measures if voted to power.

The Congress manifesto even devoted a section on 'Digital Rights of Every Citizen' to affirm "its belief that every Indian shall enjoy digital rights and freely access the digital world." From promising access to all persons to high-quality Internet at affordable rates, to passing a law to protect the personal data of all persons and uphold the right to privacy, the Congress is promising the common man quite a lot of digital benefits.

"We will establish a National Mission focused on sunrise technologies such as Big Data, Machine Learning, Internet of Things, 3-D Printing and Manufacturing, and Knowledge Networks," read the Congress manifesto.

The BJP manifesto promises a "Science Mission" with two submissions, focused on Artificial Intelligence and robotic research. The BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' also puts a lot of emphasis on using technology for helping farmers and improving agricultural output.

"We will enable development of young agri-scientists to take advantage of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Blockchain technology, Big Data analytics etc. for more predictive and profitable precision agriculture," the BJP said.

While adoption of digital technologies has increased dramatically over the years, the poll manifestos of the political parties also suggest that stricter regulations for social media could be in the offing.

The Congress, which was earlier linked to hundreds of fake Facebook pages and accounts, said it would pass regulations to stop the spread of fake news and hate speech and punish those who misuse digital and social media.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) went a step ahead and stated that if voted to power, it will urge the Union government to bring in a law to prevent all types of social media from publishing any kind of obscene content.

The poll manifestos suggest that irrespective of the parties that could come to power for the next five year, there will be no halt in the digital journey that the country has embarked on.



Congress candidate from Patna Sahib Shatrughan Sinha addresses a party meeting at State party office, in Patna, on Sunday PTI



POLICE CASE AGAINST DEORA FOR POLL CODE VIOLATION
A case was filed against the Congress' Mumbai South Lok Sabha candidate Milind Deora at Lokmanya Tilak Marg police station here on the direction of the Election Commission for violation of the model code of conduct, an official said on Sunday. Deora, while campaigning in Zaveri Bazar area on April 4, had made an appeal to the Jain community to not vote for the Shiv Sena as it had hurt their religious sentiments earlier.

TAHSILDAR SUSPENDED FOR ENTERING RECORDS ROOM
The election authorities on Sunday ordered the suspension of a woman Tahsildar here for violating the election code by entering a storage room, where polling records were kept. The suspension order was issued by the Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral officer Satyabrata Sahoo after a detailed inquiry was conducted into the incident. The enquiry was ordered following a complaint given by the CPI(M) candidate in Madurai Lok Sabha seat, S Venkatesan Saturday, alleging that an unidentified person had entered the strong room, where EVMs had been stored and taken a copy of some documents.

REPOLLS RECOMMENDED IN 10 TN POLLING STATIONS: CEO
Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo on Sunday said he has recommended to the Election Commission to conduct repolling in 10 polling stations in the State. The top election official told reporters here that after a perusal of reports of authorities including those from the general observers and presiding officers, repoll has been recommended for the consideration of the EC.

BJP WANTS TO POISON LALU, ALLEGES RABRI DEVI
Former Bihar Chief Minister and RJD national vice-president Rabri Devi has accused the BJP of hatching a conspiracy to poison her husband and party supremo Lalu Prasad, a charge dismissed by the saffron party as "baseless". Prasad, who has been serving jail term in a Ranchi prison following his conviction in fodder scam cases, is currently undergoing treatment for multiple ailments at the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences in Jharkhand capital.

UDDHAV ASKS OPP TO DECLARE PM CANDIDATE
Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday challenged the Opposition to announce their Prime Minister nominee. Addressing a rally at Satara in western Maharashtra, Thackeray also took a dig at the sitting NCP MP Udayanraje Bhosale who is in the fray against Sena's Narendra Patil. "Before challenging the BJP-Sena alliance, the Opposition should decide their candidate for the post of prime minister," the Sena chief said.



Gujarati film actor Pranjal Bhatt campaigns for Bharatiya Janata Party during an election campaign rally in Surat on Sunday PTI

It's uncle vs nephew in UP's 'Suhagnagari'

PTI ■ FIROZABAD

Rajveer.

Firozabad earned the sobriquet 'Suhagnagari' as its bangles bound families in matrimonial alliances, but this election season the Uttar Pradesh town is witnessing a prestige battle between two members of a family — Samajwadi Party's Akshay Yadav and his estranged uncle Shivalp Singh Yadav.

As the protracted family feud plays out in the open, the voters in this industrial town, however, seem glued to the national political narrative rather than local issues.

Sensing division of core voters of the Samajwadi Party, the BJP has smelled victory and trusted an ayurvedic doctor, Chandra Sen Jadon, with a ticket from here.

There are over 17.85 lakh voters who will be decide the fate of six candidates — sitting MP Akshay Yadav from SP, his uncle Shivalp Singh Yadav from Pragatishil Samajwadi Party (Lohia), Jadon from BJP, Upendra Singh Rajput from Bhartiya Kisan Parivartan Party and Independents Chaudhary Basheer and

The constituency votes on April 23. In the last Assembly elections in 2017, the BJP had recorded victory in four of the five constituencies under the Firozabad parliamentary seat dominated by voters of other backward classes. The SP-BSP-RLD alliance gives an edge to Akshay Yadav, the son of SP Rajya Sabha MP Ram Gopal Yadav, with core voters of Samajwadi Party and BSP joining hands making him a potent force. Other backward classes, scheduled castes and Muslim reportedly constitute over 70 per cent of total voters.

But the road is not likely to be easy as his estranged uncle Shivalp Singh Yadav, known for his organisation skills, who had quit Samajwadi Party and launched his own outfit, is likely to make a substantial dent in the SP base because of his appeal among ground-level workers.



A Mulayam transition

The SP and BSP chiefs shared a dais in Mainpuri making for a historic moment but can they stall national parties?



One may call it opportunistic but when is politics anything but? One may have doubted the possibilities of the *maha-gathbandhan* but this is one alliance in Uttar Pradesh (UP) that has subsumed the hostilities, rivalries and egos of its partners to wage a counter *dharm yudh*, that of the oppressed, the backwards and Dalits, against the ruling *raj* of the privileged Thakurs. Or their representative arrogance in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). So it is that Samajwadi Party (SP) founder Mulayam Singh Yadav finally shared

the stage with Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati in his bastion of Mainpuri at a joint election rally to appeal to their loyal voters to cast their ballot en bloc, end the rule of the BJP at the Centre and secure their say in the 17th Lok Sabha. You could also call it a revival of a proven formula, whereby Mulayam Singh Yadav and BSP founder Kanshi Ram had held back the BJP's temple surge almost 26 years ago. And the bypolls at Gorakhpur and Phulpur have also proved that vote transference to each other could work on the ground.

In fact, it was Mayawati's idea to go to Yadav strongholds and seek the Dalit votes for the combine. She even went so far as to justify the SP-BSP pact by quoting the backdrop of mutual alienation that caused the collapse of the alliance government in the State and led to SP legislators attacking her in a guest house on June 2, 1995. She plucked the thorn out of the flesh once and for all, saying she had forgiven that episode simply because "hard decisions" needed to be taken in the interest of the people and the party's movement, given the present situation. She couldn't have been further from the truth. Without an MP and just a handful of MLAs in the Assembly, her prized Dalit-Muslim formula is in shreds, the minority vote being completely appropriated by the SP and to some extent the Congress. Even her Dalit vote pie is drifting to other parties depending on their ability to negotiate on the community's behalf. More so, the Dalit component itself is split between the achievers or the creamy layer and those that are languishing below every known index. Her past tie-up with BJP has only helped the bigger party appear as an umbrella deliverer than the BSP's own inclusion attempts of all castes. So overlooking a past hurt by a known frenemy is a little price to pay if Mayawati wants to be relevant both nationally and at the State level. Hence, she certified Mulayam as the bonafide leader of the OBCs and attacked both the BJP and Congress. As for the SP, now being helmed by the younger Akhilesh Yadav, it realises that with a resurgent Congress focussing more on the UP Assembly elections of 2022 than the national polls, it cannot sit easy on existing loyalties of the MY (Muslim-Yadav) factor. Particularly given Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi's aggressive outreach to the Most Backward Classes (MBCs) and Dalits, too. It has to hold the State if it wants to negotiate nationally. And so it is imperative for both SP and BSP to make a difference through the 80 seats in UP. Nobody understands this better than Mulayam himself, who despite criticising the alliance earlier, made amends by publicly acknowledging Mayawati. He even expressed gratitude towards the BSP chief for supporting him in his political journey and asked his constituents to "respect her", clearly an appeal to SP voters to unquestionably support the BSP wherever its candidates have been fielded in the Yadav strongholds, elections for which are due in the next phase. By coming out, he also settled the debate on which side he is on, his son Akhilesh and not his brother Shivpal. He even asked an SP leader, who had bent to touch his feet, to accord the same respect to Mayawati seated next to him. But the final masterstroke was his announcement that this would be his last electoral outing, thereby setting off a sympathy wave of sorts that could seal the SP-BSP votebank. Historic it was. But can they make history again?

No belt but tighter ties

Bilateral relations will not be derailed by India's refusal to be part of BRI. China needs India's market



In China's Foreign Ministry offices in Beijing's Chaoyang District, there are many departments, including a few that deal with Chinese history, looking at historical treaties that predecessor states of the People's Republic of China signed, whether it was the Qing dynasty or in Tibet. From historical border treaties and surrendering of land to demands for restitution from nations like Japan that colonised it, everything China does today has some sort of historical context. Few other foreign affairs ministries in any other nation

have similarly dedicated units. And after China successfully enforced the treaty that the Qing dynasty had with the British over Hong Kong, they have become even more aggressive on this front under President Xi Jinping. The modern People's Republic of China wants to return being the Middle Kingdom, a land between heaven and earth which has dominion over the rest of the planet. And while the ancient Middle Kingdom was built by conquest, the new one will be built on replicating history and by spending money. Thus the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a massive series of infrastructure projects, including building ports, high-speed railways and airports across the world, is funded by China and built by the Chinese. Huge, expensive projects such as Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka and the Lahore Metro have led to massive public debts in both nations. The BRI may not state this explicitly, but the subtext is one of Chinese economic conquest of nations and their resources aided by corrupt politicians.

But China has always had one painful neighbour, one from whom it has been separated by a massive Himalayan barrier. A neighbour with whom it has had cultural exchanges — after all Buddhism and martial arts were gifts from it — but geography has always meant that population exchanges and war, other than in modern times, have been limited. This has meant that there has always been an underlying distrust of each other in Beijing and New Delhi. But is the Indian government's disapproval of the BRI just one of a jealous neighbour? That's untrue. India knows that it has lost out to China economically over the past decade and it sees China's BRI for what it is, an unbridled attempt at colonisation by economic means. Yet, India realises it has to live with China considering its investments here are extensive and we have become a major market for Chinese products. Our eastern neighbour's interests are best served by a economically rising India in the medium-term because it will be forced to buy more Chinese products. Hence all talk of another Wuhan and sharing bilateral concerns. Yet, India's next government should continue to be wary of China, which like a dragon has a forked tongue. It wants to keep India militarily weak and will continue to fund global terrorism through Pakistan. While the new Indian government should engage with China from a new perspective, it should remember that the latter considers everybody below it, including people beyond the mountains.

Goodbye Jet Airways?

As the airline unravels, it has begun to emerge that several aspects of the business were rotten to the core. These are the reminiscences of a frequent flyer



KUSHAN MITRA

Many of us have been watching the Jet Airways bankruptcy saga with a lot of sorrow. Do not get me wrong — Jet Airways was bled dry by its promoters and management with all sorts of sweetheart deals and, thus, at a level deserved its fate because as the skeletons tumble out of the closet, it has become apparent that some aspects of the airline were a ponzi scheme. But when 22,000 people lose their jobs, you can't help but feel a tinge of helplessness. Many of Jet's more experienced pilots, cabin crew and engineers will find jobs in India's growing aviation industry. But the collapse of two airlines in the space of five years with boatloads of debt, as well as the life-support that Air India is on, makes one wonder just how sustainable the Indian aviation sector is.

This is an issue that the next Government will have to debate upon. While the collapse of Jet and the subsequent reduction of capacity will ironically make things better for many airlines, allowing them some amount of pricing power, it will make things pricier for the consumer. Successive Governments have long milked the Indian aviation sector with high fuel taxes, landing charges and airport fees while not allowing Indian carriers to operate on more lucrative foreign routes. At the same time, it opened up India to foreign start-up airlines to feed off the riches of the Indian market, something particularly apparent with Arabian and South-East Asian carriers being given a free run in India. The Indian Government should realise that a healthy aviation sector generates and promotes domestic and inbound tourism. This leads to an overall boost of the entire economy.

Jet Airways' promoters and management, even with their sweetheart deals, were, however, keen on keeping the good times going, quite unlike the erstwhile King of Good Times, whom they had seen off. At the start of Jet Airways' silver jubilee year, the fact that the airline would not even survive 12 months was the last thing on everyone's mind. But the signs of trouble were apparent for anyone willing to open their blinkers and see: The airline was in deep financial turmoil, unable to clear salaries of pilots and cabin crew. Now, it is almost certain that the story is over, leaving several banks, led by the State-owned State Bank of India holding the can, which means ultimately, the Indian taxpayer will pick up a large part of the bill.

The fact is that until Jet Airways' lenders can quickly find a resolution, its revival is almost certainly off the cards. Other airlines are already buzzing around the airline's body as it lies comatose with some aircraft and assets like slots still in its possession. But the slots will not stay



forever as airports have a "use it or lose it" system and aircraft have to be regularly maintained. Most of Jet Airways' aircraft belong to leasing companies and they also won't hang around forever with their assets gathering dust. Many aircraft are, in fact, being taken away or being offered to other airlines. Until a rescue happens soon, and soon pretty much means before the end of this month, the plug would effectively have been pulled. As one airline executive muttered, "It would be easier to put a billion dollars in starting a new airline rather than buying Jet Airways."

But I will always have some fond memories of the airline. I distinctly remember my first flight on Jet Airways, I was in Class XI and was travelling to Mumbai with a theatre production band in 1996. It was a then brand-new Boeing 737-300 aircraft. Many other airlines that had started in the aftermath of the Government opening up the aviation sector to private carriers, were using older, often much older aircraft, such as first-generation jet aircraft like the Boeing 707. Many used second and third-hand Boeing 737-200 aircraft. Jet used rel-

“ THE SIGNS OF TROUBLE WERE APPARENT: THE AIRLINE WAS IN DEEP FINANCIAL TURMOIL, UNABLE TO CLEAR SALARIES. BUT NOW, IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THE STORY IS OVER, LEAVING SEVERAL BANKS, LED BY STATE-OWNED SBI HOLDING THE CAN, WHICH MEANS ULTIMATELY, THE INDIAN TAXPAYER WILL PICK UP A SUBSTANTIAL BILL ”

atively new and modern planes like the 300 and 400 series of the Boeing 737. Their air-hostesses spoke well and the entire experience was like a breath of fresh air after decades of Indian Airlines' domination of the domestic aviation space. Over the years, I must have flown with Jet Airways hundreds of times on the Delhi-Mumbai sector itself. I was a loyal frequent-flyer and often went out of my way to fly with Jet, and yes, like with every other airline, service standards did drop over the years. There have been several times that service standards on the ground and in the air have been wanting. I have also had cabin crew who have had a "I am better than you" attitude and I have had cabin crew that have gone out of their way to help. When you fly hundreds of times with an airline over the years, there will be some bad experiences along with some superb ones but most of the time, Jet was good. May be that is why, as a frequent flyer, you start getting the first hints that things are not all great, as service standards, including in-flight service, started to drop. Jet clearly could not compete with the likes of low-cost carriers like

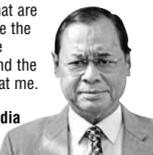
IndiGo which run a very tight ship and cost controls. And with huge amounts of debt thanks to an ill-advised acquisition of Air Sahara, Jet had swallowed the poison pill to keep Vijay Mallya's Kingfisher from operating lucrative international routes. This in turn forced Mallya to spend an incredible amount of money to buy Air Deccan, which was quick-acting poison for Kingfisher. But the debt and the complex nature of the Air Sahara acquisition without an unified operating certificate has cost Jet to this day.

I did not believe that a flight I took on February 25 between Lucknow and Delhi onboard a ATR-72 aircraft would be my last with the airline. One can still hold out some hope for the airline's revival but having seen similar 'temporary suspensions' becoming permanent, I would like to thank the airline for all the memories. While I am upset about losing my miles, I do wish all the employees of Jet Airways well and believe that most of them will find jobs even in this difficult economic environment. It was a good quarter-century long ride!

(The writer is Managing Editor, The Pioneer)

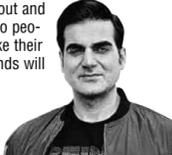
SOUNDBITE

There are forces that are trying to destabilise the judiciary. There are bigger forces behind the allegations hurled at me.



Chief Justice of India —Ranjan Gogoi

Things don't work out and it's only fair that two people who want to take their life in their own hands will take that decision.



Actor —Arbaaz Khan

The Indian side has its concerns. We understand that and that is why we have stated that the BRI is only an economic initiative and does not target any third country.



China's Foreign Minister —Wang Yi

I am not a patch on Indira Gandhi. The sense of public service that she had, I also have the same and my brother also has it.



Congress leader —Priyanka Gandhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Save aviation sector

Sir — The suspension of operations of the cash-starved Jet Airways is disheartening and a big setback for the Indian aviation industry at a time when it has emerged as one of the fastest growing globally. Further, the aviation sector largely remains untapped with huge growth opportunities, considering that air transport is still expensive for a majority of the country's population. It is against this backdrop of capacity-reduction that Jet's decision to stop all operations, at least temporarily, may see airfares spiral further in the short term.

If indeed Jet is able to survive and gets a credible investor, it will be in the interest of thousands of employees and travellers, who will otherwise see a massive capacity shortage, leading to a tremendous increase in airfares. Jet's story has also raised serious questions as to why the domestic airline industry is proving to be so perilous for enterprises. The Government needs to do some re-thinking as to why over half-a-dozen of airlines have fallen by the wayside in the last decade or so. The airlines, too, must take a comprehensive

Why no bar on tainted candidates?

Setting the stage for an epic battle in Bhopal. Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, the woman facing trial in the Malegaon blast case, was fielded by the BJP to defeat the Congress' candidate Digvijaya Singh in the Lok Sabha elections. Sadhvi joined the BJP only hours before the party announced her name as its candidate from Bhopal. This makes it clear that the BJP is hell-bent to create an electoral candidate out of a key terror suspect. Agreed, Sadhvi is not the first person to contest in an election despite facing serious charges. Nor will she be the last one. But it appears that the BJP's sole aim is to strengthen its Hindutva narrative.

There is no denying the fact that India has always been a secular country and it is the vibrant and dynamic aspect of being secular that has always won it a unique position in the entire world. Our country is revered and respected for that. But it is ironical that Indian laws do not bar those facing criminal charges from contesting the elections. Only those who have been



convicted or those who entail a sentence of at least two years are not allowed to contest the polls. Ideally, the candidates should themselves not contest. Many Union Ministers have quit their posts when charges against them have been framed. This should be the case with the selection of candidates, too.

TK Nandanam Chennai

look at their plight.

Ramesh G Jethwani Bengaluru

Stoking controversy

Sir — Literally cocking a snook at the law and the judicial process, the BJP has set an unhealthy precedent in not only inducting Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur into

the party but also making her its candidate in Bhopal against Congress leader Digvijaya Singh. Out on bail for the past two years, Pragya Singh Thakur was discharged by a court of charges under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime (MCOCA) in the 2008 Malegaon blast case.

Still, even if she is innocent, given the magnitude of the charges, the BJP could have

avoided making her its candidate in Bhopal. Interestingly, BJP leader Subramanian Swamy has gone to the extent of saying that the charges against the candidate are in the "final stages of being dismissed," as if her acquittal is a foregone conclusion.

Having picked a controversial nominee, the BJP can no longer take the moral high ground. So sharp is the polari-

sation in Indian society today that communities will vote for alleged terrorists — as long as they believe that terrorism is being committed on behalf of their own.

JS Acharya Hyderabad

Influencing voters

Sir — As the national election is in progress, it is disappointing that political leaders have been playing religious and caste cards to attract voters. A common misconception among them is that they have absolute freedom over the content of their speeches. Despite laws that prohibit speeches of certain kinds and the procedure thereof, they have been unmindful and have been gleefully violating the Model Code of Conduct.

Spreading hate speeches and intruding privacy of others will in no way strengthen society. It is a travesty that with such a mindset, the issues faced by the citizens get overlooked.

Ramachandran Nair Malappuram

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Bottlenecks in better healthcare

Timely training of primary-level doctors can help face the scourge of non-communicable disease that threatens the country and its citizens today



SAVITHA KUTTAN

As India aspires to achieve the status of an economic superpower, the country needs to maintain good health of its vast population. In addition, when the health aspect comes into play, the role of doctors becomes all the more important. The ailing primary healthcare set-up in India has failed to keep pace with latest developments, thereby increasing the load on tertiary centre. Initially, the primary healthcare system was seen as a guard against preventing the burden of diseases to an advanced stage and to get preventive and cost-effective treatment. However, gradually, that role became redundant with the lack of trained and qualified physicians. Hence, the entire burden fell on hospitals in cities and urban areas.

According to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) 2018 data, non-communicable diseases kill 41 million people each year globally. The WHO statistics further revealed that 15 million people aged between 30 and 69 years die due to non-communicable diseases every year. And most of these premature deaths occur in low and middle income countries, who focus more on treating infectious diseases and remain ignorant of non-communicable diseases. A major hurdle in tackling them is the lack of trained physicians at the primary healthcare level where diseases can be prevented and detected early and patients can be given timely treatment. Major kinds of non-communicable diseases responsible for early deaths include heart attacks and stroke, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, asthma and diabetes.

Upgrade knowledge of primary healthcare doctors: Rural physicians play a key role in the initial emergency situations. It has been repeatedly suggested that primary healthcare doctors should receive basic training in providing emergency care in communities who reside far away from regional support services. Also, with diseases evolving constantly, doctors in the rural health set-up are unable to cope with the patients' expectations as they remain unequipped to treat new diseases due to insufficient knowledge or training. There is a dire need to train rural physicians. Further, early detection of diseases causing epidemics, especially non-communicable diseases including diabetes, hypertension, will be of help. Timely re-education and training of doctors will also help in reducing the burden of patients on Tier-I and Tier-II hospitals.

Online doctor training: As technology advances in the medical field, a lot of other options can be explored to train physicians in remote and rural areas. For doctors having little time to venture out, if information is made available to them on their fingertips, it can help train them. This apart, organising regular seminars and workshops can be useful.

With technology touching the sky, upgradation of knowledge has become a reality for doctors through cloud-based technology where specialists share their know-how about latest developments in medical research and drugs invention. Most of these tutorials provide free access to content where doctors can grasp content either through their smartphones or other internet-linked devices. This online exercise is beneficial in a way that it helps doctors hone their skills to provide better healthcare. The process of training doctors online serves the purpose of improved healthcare across the country.

Incentivise primary healthcare doctors: Most doctors, both private and Government, avoid working in non-urban centres citing lack of medical infrastructure, safety and sanitation issues. Though the Government has made several efforts to ensure doctors work in rural areas, there has been little success. Instead of adopting coercive measures, focus should be on recruiting doctors and incentivising them with both monetary benefits and improved working conditions. Such measures will go a long way in encouraging them to work in rural areas and retrain themselves to better serve the rural communities.

Primary-level doctors: In the Government's flagship health insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat, stress was laid on primary health centres. The Government plans to upgrade Primary Health Centres (PHC) into Health and Wellness Centers (HWC). However, the lack of sufficient health-related infrastructure at PHCs may not drive the Government's well-thought programme. For this mammoth insurance scheme to succeed, the Government must make efforts to re-educate and upskill doctors at the primary level. For this purpose, the Government can tie up with private players who may be willing to help retrain physicians. It is now time for the Government to rope in private players so that our doctors can provide quality and affordable healthcare to our vast population.

(The writer is CEO of a leading healthcare organisation)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

MULAYAM SINGH// IS NOT A FAKE SERVANT LIKE PRIME MINISTER MODI. HE IS A POLITICIAN WHO HAS SWORN THAT HE WILL CONTINUE WORKING FOR THE PEOPLE.

—BSP LEADER
MAYAWATI



PEOPLE OF UTTAR PRADESH HAVE REJECTED CASTE-BASED POLITICS. SP AND BSP ARE WORKING AGAINST EACH OTHER'S INTERESTS.

—UNION MINISTER
PIYUSH GOYAL

Life after elections

Regardless of which party forms the Government at the Centre, there should be no room for complacency. It will have to hit the ground running and focus on the economy's growth



BINDU DALMIA

By the end of May, a newly-elected Government, constituting the 17th Lok Sabha, will firmly be in place. While it's a challenge to predict the electoral outcomes of India's heterogeneous democracy, taking an average of the recently-declared, pre-electoral opinion polls makes it clear that the BJP still retains some momentum. The most significant takeaway from Phase-I of the elections was the absence of anti-incumbency undercurrents, which is what differentiated 2019 from 2004.

According to survey projections, Prime Minister Modi appears to be the front-runner for a next term with an average of 272 seats for the NDA versus 141 for the Congress +. The only speculation is about the margin of victory. The pro-incumbency calculus is broadly based on expectations of a less than anticipated loss for the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, despite the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party's (SP-BSP) overwhelming arithmetic; a pro-Modi popularity ratings bias in the recently lost Hindi heartland States of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan as also in Bihar, Delhi and the stronghold of Gujarat. The BJP is also expected to increase its footprint a bit in the eastern bastions of Mamata Banerjee's West Bengal and Naveen Patnaik's Odisha.

As momentum for the elections picks pace, what is increasingly evident is that of the 31 per cent of the middle class, who were disillusioned due to demonetisation and who voted for the BJP in 2014, a sizeable section of the aspirational and burgeoning lot seems to be coming back to the incumbent yet again — a pattern discernible across caste barriers. Perhaps because of a lack of a leadership alternative. Further, the BJP has strategised on energising three key demographics it hopes to gain from: First-time voters, the start-up universe and women. Although women do not vote *en bloc*, on-ground delivery of the Government's welfare schemes has found resounding resonance among them.

Regardless of which dispensation comes to power, for the first 100 days, the next Government will not have the luxury of the fabled "honeymoon period" and will have to hit the ground running. This because of the World Economic Outlook's forecast of a slowdown in economic activity in 2019 for 70 per cent of the world economy, which includes India. Consequently, the global slowdown as also the revival of growth within the country needs recalibration in order to expand the economy and use the resources sustainably for poverty alleviation.

So what would a new government prioritise? Some of the big themes include continuing the impetus for infrastructure and housing, both of which are the biggest job aggregators; facilitating an entrepreneurial workforce that fosters self-employment and is a proxy for formal job creation; and ensuring targeted delivery of social sector schemes like Ayushman Bharat and the farm income support scheme, PM-KISAN, by funding in a fiscally responsible manner, without burdening the middle classes with high taxes.

A quasi-universal income support scheme necessitates setting aside one per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for a few years. This will also speed up rural consumer



demand as 60 per cent of the households account for over 25 per cent of the consumption. As 12 crore farmer families are expected to benefit from the expanded coverage of the PM-KISAN scheme — which in the next phase will include tenant farmers — it requires the creation of a database to identify the beneficiaries as also better digital mapping and titling of land records.

Essentially, India needs economic growth which is "organic", one that can only happen by enlarging the economic pie, as compared to interim measures that artificially boost incomes at the bottom of the social pyramid through expansive welfareism. Organic growth can happen broadly through:

- Maintaining fiscal prudence.
- Continuing efforts at increasing the taxpayer base, which will yield revenue for nation-building, yet lowering corporate tax to facilitate Capex spend and job creation.
- Boosting the share of the manufacturing sector in the economy to 25 per cent by 2022 from the current 17 per cent.
- Improving access to reasonably priced capital in order to service the credit requirements of MSMEs.
- Continuing with the ambitious investment target of ₹100 lakh crore to expand the highways, railways and airports. This is expected to create 25-30 lakh crore jobs.
- Accentuating the pace of structural and market-based reforms, including trade liberalisation, digitisation of land records, lowering the cost of land acquisition to hasten infrastructural development.
- Hastening the process of privatisation, especially of Air India and MTNL.
- Reducing the debt load of 34 power plants amounting to ₹1,80,000 crore as 40 per cent of their output is not paid for. This has increased State utility losses and has become part of the banks' bad loan portfolio.
- Streamlining bureaucracy, reinforcing the

Reserve Bank of India's autonomy.

Restoring the credibility of Central institutions like the Economic Offences Wing, the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate should be another priority. Investigative efficiency of economic offences by Central agencies is vital for higher conviction rate to punish wilful offenders.

Further, in the next leg of the "Housing for all by 2022" scheme, there is a need to ease funding for low-cost housing for both builders and buyers. This will allow for greater access to institutional finance and relax the eligibility criteria for loans to consumers on lines of the proposed "rental-cum-ownership basis." This because as the Government targets to build 29 million housing units in rural areas and 12 million units in urban areas, most buyers lack collateral. The construction sector needs acceleration as it holds the potential of the highest job-creating coefficient after the unremunerative agricultural sector.

There's little room for complacency despite the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank certifying that India is the fastest growing economy, averaging at 7.5 per cent. We need a "job-full" growth of 10 per cent year-on-year successively in order to avert a demographic disaster. In order to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of bridging inequality and mainstreaming the disadvantaged communities by 2030, the Government as well as the private sector will have to work closely to infuse resources on projects that pose the biggest investment opportunities to modernise India and accelerate the growth of human development.

"Jobs are human capital" and the creation of better paying jobs is the only way to avert a demographic disaster. The self-employed are a fall-back segment of job seekers, those who mostly opt to begin their career by running small street stalls as a second-option to earn

a livelihood. Entrepreneurs and self-employed are now a sizeable base who have grown since the last three years to 48 million. Promoting mass entrepreneurship needs policy improvement to ease seed capital funding, providing collateral-free loans and erasing regulatory requirements.

Further, as improved human capital stems from higher literacy, there is an urgent need to double outlays in education and improve the human capital quotient if India has to grow in double digits. India's mobile data is the cheapest in the world and had an estimated 566 million internet users as of December 2018, out of which rural users comprised 250 million. Here in lies the biggest opportunity for transformation in education through distant-learning and e-commerce job-creation. Another avenue for job-creation that has lagged behind is the export sector. India has an opportunity to plug the vacuum created by relocation of production sites outside China by eliminating superfluous regulations that lower competitiveness and make India a more attractive investment destination for producing goods for exports.

India is currently a \$2.5 trillion economy and by 2030, it is anticipated that its national income will touch \$7 trillion. As a key driver of growth and jobs, urbanisation holds another vital key for expanding the economy. "Given India's commitment to the 2030 development agenda, we will need to build 700 to 900 million square metres of urban space annually. This will mean 70 per cent new jobs will be created in and around cities."

While Modi has firmly laid the groundwork on strong foundations for an anticipated re-run of office, huge challenges lies ahead. If handled with surgical precision, a prosperous India @75 could be well within striking range.

(The writer is an author, columnist and Chairperson for the National Committee of Financial Inclusion at Niti Aayog)

Secure development with conservation

Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district, where forest officials have been running a centre to train tribal youth for livelihood, is one example that needs to be replicated across the country. The Government should rope in the forest department for tribal development



VK BAHUGUNA

Bureaucracy is a tool for governance and implementation of decisions as per the law and conventions set by the rulers. It functions in a systematic manner and if it performs its duty honestly and efficiently, it can become an agent of change for the welfare of the people. However, the bureaucracy is severely criticised all over the world for creating logjam, being insensitive to public feelings, breeding red-tapism, setting up a roadblock for innovation and running after those who dare innovate. In a country as diverse as India, where challenges faced by its people are immense, the success of any Government programme depends on the commitment and efficiency of its administration.

But as always, there are some change-mongers, whose enterprise, zeal and innovation bring resilience, long-term credibility and, hence, faith in the system. In the midst of failed Government schemes, there are people who, with their sheer perseverance and hard work, have rewritten laws of governance. In this column, this writer will discuss one such example of forest conservation and tribal development reviewed by him recently when he visited some tribal areas in the hinterland of Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district.

This area is home to dry teak forests and many tribal communities live in and around the forests. The Kol, Korku, Sahariya and Baiga tribals have registered the highest population. A large number of forest villages were created during the British period for the execution of forestry works and people over here were deprived of even basic civic amenities. However, the situation changed after the Forest Rights Act, 2006. This writer visited the Chattu-Pattu and Bangda villages, inhabited by the Korku and Gond tribals, around 70 km away from Khandwa last month and got a chance

to speak to the tribals, who are beneficiaries of the various income-generation activities launched by the forest department here so that they can lead a decent livelihood. It was reassuring to see that irrigation facilities had promoted wheat and vegetable cultivation but sadly, millets were fast vanishing.

The most noteworthy aspect was the creation of a skill development centre at Anwlia in 2010, for which funds were generated from the tribal-sub plan of the State and the Union Government pitched in as well. It was the innovative thinking of former Divisional Forest Officer SS Rawat, currently overseeing this centre as the Chief Conservator of Khandwa circle, and the staff that led to the establishment of this centre. The skill development centre was created through a public-private partnership with help from an NGO, Self Employment Education Society (SEES) and with bare minimum investment. The centre focussed on the advantage of the location of the Khandwa town on the main railway track from where all trains going to major South Indian cities like Bengaluru passed. The centre had

trained over a thousand youths belonging to Korku and other tribes till June 2016. Around 600 boys were trained for security guards, data entry jobs and driving vehicles.

Further, 450 girls were skilled in cloth stitching, tribal art and beauty parlor jobs. Training happens for a duration of three months for each trade in a batch of 35 and covers personality development, too. After the completion of the training, placement services are activated by the centre. SEES was paid ₹8,000 per candidate for training.

It was heartening to learn that out of the 450 trained girls, 176 are working at a textile company in Bengaluru and others have taken up independent work in nearby places. One of the girls, who had come home from Bengaluru for Holi, was present with her baby during my visit and she informed me that they are provided safe accommodation, dining, crèche facilities and a good salary of more than ₹8,500 during their initial appointment. Another textile producer in Mandideep near Bhopal recruited 450 boys as security guards. Those, who were trained in driving, are on their own and self-employed.

This innovative example of the use of forest department to train the tribal youth for livelihood was executed through the NGO. However, the infrastructure for training, including the building, was arranged separately by the forest department. A cost-benefit analysis will make for a nice model that can be replicated for not only employment generation for the tribals but also for reducing their dependence on the forest and land-based resources. Success has come very silently, without blowing the trumpet, but the district administration of Khandwa must take cue from this and help this centre grow as a model for employment-generation by adding up more trade and providing financial support. It should focus more on animal resources and horticulture development and the creation of infrastructure for primary sector. The centre needs fresh infusion of funds.

Equally, the forest department must submit a comprehensive project before the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Tribal Affairs, that covers the entire State with site-specific mod-

ules. CAMPA funds can also be tied up.

In a nutshell, the implementation of such modules sends out a larger message to our planners to reshape developmental programmes by inter-linking conservation of forests with income-generation and growth of primary sector activities through infusion of technology. Emphasis of forest management should be on conserving the forests, soil moisture and bio-diversity and making people less dependent on forests through such activities that ultimately not only lead to better livelihood but can help in climate change mitigation and adaptation on broader scale by covering the entire landscape.

It will also assimilate the tribal youth in the mainstream society where they will enrich it with their culture, language, art and music. It is in this light that the recommendations of the National Commission on Scheduled Tribes that the Indian Forest Service should be entrusted with tribal development must be seen. It's time that the Government takes a call considering the future of the country.

(The writer is a retired civil servant)



SMARTPHONE CAN WAIT

When the phone is not demanding that we pay attention to others performance, it seems to demand that we perform our own emotions rather than experience them. We must put our phone down and leave it there a while. Grab the world with both hands instead and get them dirty: garden, make something, or cook a meal; eat without photographing it first. Lose yourself in the present around you.

(The Guardian editorial)

Air India Express mulls leasing some Jet Airways' Boeing 737s

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Air India Express, the international budget arm of Air India, is examining the possibility of leasing some Boeing 737 aircraft of grounded carrier Jet Airways, which are parked at different airports due to non-payment, through a firm decision is yet to be taken, a top company official said Sunday.

Before halting operations temporarily mid-last week due to severe cash-drought, the private carrier was forced to ground 69 planes owing to non-payment of rentals to lessors.

Later, on April 16, it grounded the rest of the planes in its fleet, when it decided to temporarily suspend all its domestic and international services.

Air India Express parent, Air India, is already discussing a proposal to lease five of Jet Airways wide-body planes, Boeing 777s.

"We are looking at leasing (B737 of Jet Airways) aircraft but there is no firm decision on this issue so far. As a matter-of-fact, there are a lot of other things that have to be looked at, like slots, sectors and timings, among others," Air India Express chief executive officer Shyam K Sunder told PTI over phone from Kochi, the airline's headquarter.

When asked about the number of planes that his airline could induct from Jet Airways, he said, "We don't have a target number."

Air India Express, has its operations largely out of Kerala to the Gulf and South-east Asia. Besides, it also operates some flights to these regions from North and Western India as well as on some domestic routes.

It has a fleet of 25 Boeing 737 planes, of which 17 are owned and rest 18 are on lease. The now out-of-operations, Jet Airways also has B737s in the fleet.

Shyam Sunder also said the airline plans to recruit 50 commanders from Jet Airways, of which 20 have already been hired.

"We have already recruited a lot of pilots. We have about 20 of them already, all from Jet Airways as at present only Jet pilots are available in the market. Our intention is hire up to 50 pilots. So we will be inducting another 25-30 pilots going forward," he said.

The AIE official, however, ruled out hiring of first officers at this stage, adding that the airline may look at it if there was any requirement for them in the future.

Jet collapse: Privatisation not remedy, says AI union official

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Privatisation is not a remedy, which can make an airline profitable or efficient and shuttering of Jet Airways and Kingfisher is a case in point, a senior Air India employees union official said Sunday even as he urged the government to reconsider its plans to de-nationalise the flag carrier, which are currently on hold.

Supporting the 20,000 employees of the grounded Jet Airways, the union official said that the present policies of the government need to be relooked as they have only lead to a crisis in the industry and jobs of thousands of people are at stake.

Weighted down by huge debt, majorly from the public sector banks, Kingfisher went belly-up in 2012. Jet Airways, which has a debt of Rs 8,500 crore, mostly from the government-run banks, ceased operations last Wednesday due to paucity of cash.

The abrupt closure of Jet Airways opera-

tions for the time being has put jobs of its over 20,000 employees.

Moreover, as many as six airlines have closed down in the last five years.

"First it was Kingfisher which folded up, and now its Jet Airways, which has stopped operations, albeit for the time being. The votaries of the privatisation, both in the government and outside, need to understand that denationalisation alone can't bring profitability and efficiency. Had it been so, the two private airlines would not have gone bust," said an Air Corporation Employees Union (ACEU) senior official.

Stating that the foremost reason for the current crisis in the aviation industry is the government's "reliance" on the private sector in achieving its ambitious Vision 2040, which has projected the countrys air passenger traffic to grow to 1.1 billion per year by 2040, the union official said, "the industry is not doing well from the vision document point of view as the

growth is not sustainable, healthy and even".

Calling the government to reconsider its plans of privatising Air India, which are put on the backburner for the time-being, the ACEU official said even in the present crisis when Jet Airways passengers are stranded across airports globally, it is the national carrier which has come to the rescue of the passengers by announcing special fares for such passengers.

"The government can't expect such a gesture from private airlines," he said.

"If the present crisis is allowed to continue, it will lead to unprecedented crisis in the industry leading to more and more employees being thrown out of employment. A mere glance of problems indicate that there is something seriously wrong with the policy direction," he added.

There is also a need to put brakes on 'open sky policy' besides strict enforcement of bilateral to make the business of domestic companies, including of Air India, viable, he said.

Jet employees present 'value' hiring proposition for airlines but may get lower pay offers: Experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Thousands of employees at now-shuttered Jet Airways might be staring at an uncertain future but other airlines will see "value" in hiring such experienced people even though they might end up getting relatively lower pay packets, according to HR experts.

Demand continues to outstrip talent supply in the Indian aviation sector, which is one of the fastest growing in the world.

Cash-starved Jet Airways, which has been flying for nearly 26 years, has around 23,000 employees, including contractual staff. It announced a temporary suspension of operations on April 17.

Experts observed that employees would

have been under stress at the airline for a while, though quite a few would have been hopeful of a turnaround of the carrier. Under the current circumstances, they might have to either shift base to Tier-II or Tier-III cities or accept job offers having lower compensation, they opined.

Staffing firm TeamLease Services Co-Founder and Executive Vice President Rituparna Chakraborty said that the aviation sector in India has immense potential and if one goes by the current equation, the supply of ground staff, crew and pilots are still low in comparison to the demand that exists.

"In my mind, other airlines will definitely see value in hiring the experienced and highly well-trained staff that Jet has currently,"

Chakraborty told PTI.

She also noted that there is a significant demand for core staff while non-specialised staff should look at an alternative industry for suitable functional roles.

The country's oldest private carrier, Jet Airways has a substantial number of employees who have put in more than two decades at the airline.

Executive search company GlobalHunt's Managing Director Sunil Goel said there has been a huge expansion in terms of new airports and connectivity in Tier-II and Tier-III cities through air transportation. So, there is a consistent demand for talent in the aviation sector, he added.

India is not a tariff king: Experts

The country has the right to protect specific sectors under WTO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is not a 'tariff king' and it has all the right to take appropriate measures to protect the interest of specific sectors like agriculture, international trade experts have said.

Rejecting the US allegation that India's import duties are one of the highest in the world, experts said that several developed countries and regions including Japan, South Korea, European Union, and America maintain "extremely high" tariffs primarily on agriculture products.

The US President Donald Trump has repeatedly claimed that India is a "tariff king" and imposes "tremendously high" import duties on American goods.

Biswajit Dhar, a professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, said that the US allegations are completely unfounded.

"In fact, the US import duties on several of their products are quite high such as on tobacco it is about 350 per cent and 164 per cent on peanuts. They too maintain reasonably high duties," Dhar

said. Sharing similar views, Professor at Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) Rakesh Mohan Joshi said that the US allegations are not correct and in fact, they should rationalise their duty structure being a developed nation.

Trade Promotion Council of India Chairman Mohit Singla said that the assertion of the US is not factually correct.

He said that the allegation of Trump that India is a tariff king does not hold true and is unjustified.

"Like other nations, India has the right to take appropriate measures to protect its domestic interests in specific sectors as and when it is deemed fit. Moreover, there are many countries which have much higher tariff as compared to India. Being a signatory and member of WTO, India remains committed to free, fair, and predictable trade," Singla added.

Geneva-based 164-member World Trade Organisation (WTO) is a multilateral body which frames global trade norms.

Singla claimed that countries like Japan levy 736 per cent duty on certain products; while Korea imposes 807 per cent on some goods.

Federation of Indian Exports Organisation (FIEO) said that product-specific high tariffs, like 150 per cent on

alcoholic beverages, 100 per cent on coffee, and 60-75 per cent on automobiles have made India a villain in the eyes of the US President.

However, many countries in the world including Japan, South Korea, the EU, the US maintain an extremely high tariff primarily on agriculture products, FIEO Director General Ajay Sahai said.

"India's average WTO bound tariff is 48.5 per cent while average applied tariff is 13.4 per cent. The wide gap between the two clearly shows that India is not a tariff king else it would have pushed the applied tariff very close to the bound rates," Sahai said.

While bound tariffs or duties refer to the ceiling, the applied tariff is the duty which is currently in place.

Another expert, who did not wish to be named, said that the US should not level any allegation of discrimination at tariff front vis-a-vis developing countries like India as America has emerged as one of the richest nations in the world with per capita income of about \$60,000 per annum.

"Repeated mention of India as a tariff king with cherry-picked examples like motorbikes and whiskey is disingenuous, as it conveniently ignores the overall tariff structure of the country, apart from India's developing status," the expert said.

He added that India has complied with all tariff commitments under the WTO and has made sincere efforts to reduce applied duties sumo to 13.7 per cent today over a period of time.

Recently, the US decided to withdraw incentives being provided to Indian exporters under the Generalized System of Preference (GSP) programme. However, India has stated that it would not impact domestic exporters as the benefits were only about \$190 million annually.

Despite the fact that India and the US were working on a trade package, the US decided to go ahead with its decision.

The package was covering all concerns related to bilateral trade with the US on sectors including medical devices, dairy products and agricultural goods. America also wants a cut on duties on certain ICT products.

According to sources, India was ready to address the US concerns regarding these sectors.

The bilateral trade between India and the US has increased to \$74.5 billion in 2017-18 from \$64.5 billion in 2016-17.

Although India has a trade surplus with the US, India is a thriving market for US defence firms, e-commerce and technology companies.

Deposits in Jan Dhan accounts fast inching towards ₹1 lakh cr mark

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The total deposits in bank accounts opened under the Jan Dhan scheme, which was launched about five years ago by the Modi-Government, are set to cross ₹1 lakh crore soon.

The total balance in the Jan Dhan accounts, which has been steadily rising, was at ₹97,665.66 crore as on April 3, as per the latest government data.

The total number of Jan Dhan accounts have crossed 35.39 crore.

The deposits stood at ₹96,107.35 crore on March 27 and ₹95,382.14 crore in the week before.

More than 27.89 crore account holders have been issued the Rupay debit cards.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) was launched on August 28, 2014 with an aim to provide universal access to banking facilities to all households.

Enthusied by the success of the scheme, the Government enhanced the accident insurance cover to ₹2 lakh from ₹1 lakh for new accounts opened after August 28, 2018.

The overdraft limit was also doubled to ₹10,000. The Government also shifted the focus on accounts from 'every household' to 'every unbanked adult'.

India must complete reform process in next five years: Arvind Panagariya

PTI ■ NEW YORK

India must focus on growth of labour-intensive sectors to create decent jobs for the masses as well as give "serious thought" to privatising the public sector banks (PSBs), eminent economist Arvind Panagariya has said, emphasising that the reform process must be completed in the coming five years.

Panagariya, who had served as the first Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog from January 2015 to August 2017, was responding to a question on what the priorities should be of the Government that comes into power when India's mammoth and crucial general elections end next month.

"My personal view is that India must complete its reform process in the coming five years," Panagariya, Director at the Raj Center on Indian Economic Policies at Columbia University, told PTI here.

The Deepak and Neera Raj Centre in The School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University provides research and expertise necessary to inform policy decisions, deliver increased prosperity, and define India's future role in the global economy.

Highlighting the priority areas, Panagariya said that India needs a clear focus on the growth of labour-intensive sec-

Jet crisis: Lenders keen on non-IBC resolution in case bidding process fails

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As they explore ways to recover debt, lenders of Jet Airways are in favour of a resolution outside the insolvency law framework in case the ongoing bidding process fails to take off, sources said.

Running into debt of more than Rs 8,500 crore, Jet Airways has shut down operations temporarily after lenders decided against extending emergency funds for its survival.

SBI, the lead lender of the seven-member consortium of domestic banks that have extended loans to the airline, has started the bidding process for stake sale in the carrier and clarity about potential bidders would emerge next month.

While lenders are "reasonably hopeful" of a successful bidding process, sources said banks are working on a plan B in case things don't progress as expected.

If the bidding process fails, lenders would favour a resolution for the debt-ridden Jet Airways outside the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) framework, sources said. Recovery on the basis of existing security and tangible assets would be a preferred option, they added.

Under the Code, the National Company Law

Tribunal's (NCLT) approval is required for initiating the process, wherein the resolution would be market-linked and time-bound.

Outside the NCLT would be a better option as far as plan B is concerned, sources said, adding that then banks would realise better value from the aircraft and other tangible assets owned by Jet Airways.

Four entities — Etihad Airways, TPG Capital, Indigo Partners and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) — are learnt to have shown interest in picking up stake in Jet Airways. The details of initial bidders are expected to be known on May 10.

As they wait for completion of the bidding process, the lenders are also looking at options to raise funds from the carrier's available assets, including utilising Jet Airways' 16 own planes.

On Friday, sources said that lenders have been proactive and cannot be blamed for the current situation at the airline. "They (lenders) have been actively engaging with the company for almost nine months ever since the airline started incurring cash losses and have been urging the management to come forward with a definite plan for resolution."

US Cranberries partners with SheShines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US Cranberries recently partnered with SheShines, to celebrate womenhood and discuss latest wellness trends for women. Over 200 participants of the event were educated about the benefits of Cranberries, ranging from taste, health and wellbeing. The event hosted discussions around women's careers, life choices and wellness.

Fibre-rich, and free of both fat and cholesterol, Cranberries are fast emerging as one of India's favourite superfruits.

In Delhi alone, US Cranberries has registered a good growth in sales in 2018, majority of buyers being women.

"We are happy to witness great growth in consumption in Delhi and are grateful to be helping many residents in staying healthy" said, Michelle, Cranberry marketing committee.

FPIs pour in ₹11,012 crore in April so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Overseas investors have pumped in a net sum of ₹11,012 crore into the Indian capital markets in April so far amid easing liquidity conditions globally.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) were net buyers for the previous two months as well, infusing a net amount of ₹11,182 crore in February and ₹45,981 crore in March 2019.

Prior to that, FPIs had pulled out a net ₹5,360 crore from the capital markets (both equity and debt) in January.

FPIs invested a net amount of ₹14,300.22 crore in equities during April 1-16, while pulling out a net ₹3,288.12 crore from the debt market, taking the total net investment to ₹11,012.10

crore for this month so far, depositories data showed.

Foreign investors have been on a buying spree in the Indian markets since February due to improvement in global liquidity which was triggered by a shift in stance on monetary policy outlook by various central banks globally, experts said.

On the domestic front, "the investors are looking bullish on the Indian markets, given the positive prospects of a stable Government" post elections, said Harsh Jain, COO at Groww.

"So, this year has witnessed foreign money flowing into the emerging markets and India is getting its share of the same. These factors continue to drive the flows into the Indian equity markets," he added.

Hyundai mulls options for sourcing EV components in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

South Korean auto major Hyundai is looking at various options for sourcing electric vehicle (EV) components in India, including local manufacturing of battery parts, a top company official said.

The automaker, which is present in India through its wholly-owned subsidiary Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL), said it is also looking for further clarity in Government policy to drive in hybrid models in the country.

"We are studying various options, not only us (HMIL) in India, but even Hyundai Motor Company (HMC) procurement division is looking at it," HMIL MD and CEO SS Kim told PTI when asked if the company plans to locally manufacture batteries for EVs.

The company's parent HMC is even contacting suppliers in India for battery components, he added.

Hyundai plans to drive in its first EV in a complete knock-down (CKD) form in the country this year. The vehicle would be assembled at Hyundai's Chennai-based manufacturing plant. With the Government pushing for local sourcing of EV components, Suzuki Motor Corp along with its partners is already in the process of constructing an automotive lithium-ion battery manufacturing plant at Hansalpur in Gujarat.

Tata Motors and Mahindra are also actively pursuing EV segment in the country.

Kim said Government support is critical to support growth of EVs in the personal mobility space.

"In many countries where the EVs are sold to private customers, they are supported by the Government in terms of subsidies... If OEMs need to push EV mobility, Government push is critical, so we are expecting some

more support," he added.

Under the FAME-II scheme with an outlay of Rs 10,000 crore, the government is primarily focusing on electrification of public transport.

When asked about launching hybrid vehicles in the country, Kim said the company will take a decision after further policy clarity on the segment from the Government.

"Once the hybrid policy and its framework is readied by the Government we will also plan our activity accordingly," he said.

On establishing a new factory, Kim said the installed capacity at the company's Chennai plant is currently enough to take care of the demand.

The company has added an additional capacity of 50,000 units, taking the total installed capacity at the plant to 7.5 lakh units per annum, he added.

205 railway projects report cost overrun of ₹2.21 lakh cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National transporter Indian Railways account for nearly three-fifths of 344 central sector projects that are facing huge cost overrun due to delay in implementation for various reasons.

Total cost overrun of 205 delayed railway projects is whopping ₹2.21 lakh crore, the latest flash report of the Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry (MOSPI) for December 2018 showed.

The MOSPI monitors central sector projects involving an expenditure of ₹150 crore and above.

According to the report, the total original cost of these 205 projects was ₹1,68,116.34 crore up to December 2018. The total anticipated cost of these projects is estimated at ₹3,89,745.97 crore, which indicates overall cost escalation by 131.83 per cent.

The Ministry monitored 367 projects of Indian Railways in December 2018. The report stated that 94 of these projects reported time overrun or delay of one month to 324 months.

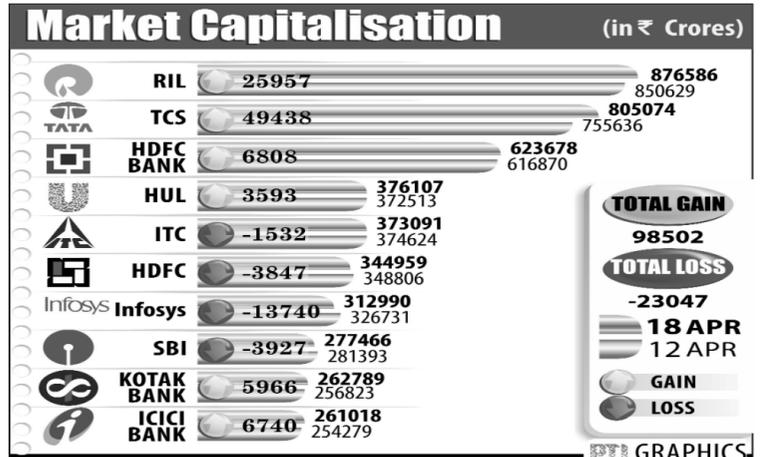
After the railways, the power sector reported the second highest incidence of overall cost overrun. Of the 95 projects monitored by the Ministry in the power sector, 40 reported cost overrun of ₹63,334.88 crore.

The total original cost of these 40 projects was ₹1,72,830.59 crore, which escalated to an anticipated cost of ₹2,36,165.47 crore.

The report stated that of the 95 power sector projects, 56 reported time overrun (delay) of two months to 147 months.

The third largest cost escalation was recorded in the road transport and highways sector where out of the 605 monitored projects, as many as 49 reported cost overrun.

Scheme	NAV	1Yr %											
Reliance US Equity Opp Fund(G)	15.24	21.87	Reliance Banking Fund(G)	284.87	7.80	Principal Dividend Yield Fund(G)	54.06	2.93	Principal Personal Tax saver Fund	197.86	-1.80	Fund-Reg(G)	
Tata Digital India Fund-Reg(G)	15.09	18.95	Mirae Asset Emerging Bluechip-Reg(G)	53.62	7.73	Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	13.74	2.93	ICICI Pru Value Fund-4(G)	21.52	-5.86	ICICI Pru Midcap Fund(G)	96.63
ICICI Pru US Bluechip Equity Fund(G)	27.69	18.54	ICICI Pru Multicap Fund(G)	297.04	7.65	DSP Global Allocation Fund-Reg(G)	12.14	2.87	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	62.89	-1.91	DSP India T.I.G.E.R	91.57
DHFL Pramerica Global Equity Opp Fund(G)	18.41	17.34	Sundaram Fin Serv Opp Fund(G)	41.24	7.54	HDFC TaxSaver(G)	529.03	2.83	Reliance Consumption Fund(G)	65.60	-2.07	HDFC Focused 30 Fund(G)	78.43
SBI Technology Opp Fund-Reg(G)	65.32	17.09	Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	14.64	7.33	Tata Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	202.57	2.73	HDFC Focused 30 Fund(G)	78.43	-2.13	Templeton India Value Fund(G)	260.66
SBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	18.00	15.63	ICICI Pru LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)(G)	382.52	7.27	SBI Magnum	145.77	2.69	ICICI Pru Infrastructure Fund(G)	51.65	-2.34	ICICI Pru Infrastructure Fund(G)	51.65
Franklin India Feeder - Franklin U.S. Opportunities Fund(G)	31.02	14.96	Kotak India EQ Contra Fund(G)	53.08	7.26	TaxGain'93-Reg(G)			Principal Tax Savings Fund	211.11	-2.35	BNP Paribas Multi Cap Fund(G)	46.72
Tata Index Fund-Sensex Plan(G)	96.04	14.88	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	43.00	7.25	Edelweiss Gr China Equity Off-Shore Fund-Reg(G)	28.40	2.68	SBI Consumption Opp Fund-Reg(G)	119.14	-2.57	SBI Consumption Opp Fund-Reg(G)	
HDFC Index Fund-Sensex(G)	345.96	14.85	UTI Equity Fund-Reg(G)	144.59	7.19	Axis Focused 25 Fund(G)	302.14	2.67	IDFC Focused Equity	36.92	-7.31	IDFC Focused Equity	36.92
Reliance Index Fund - Sensex Plan(G)	19.22	13.98	ICICI Pru Focused Equity Fund(G)	30.68	7.16	HDFC Capital Builder Value Fund(G)							
Franklin India Technology Fund(G)	164.41	13.58	ICICI Pru FMCG Fund(G)	244.28	6.82	ICICI Pru Value Discovery Fund(G)	147.04	2.65					
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	15.27	13.51	UTI Mastershare-Reg(G)	123.78	6.77	SBI Magnum Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	48.89	2.56					
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	15.45	13.45	Franklin India Bluechip Fund(G)	474.63	6.71	Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)	21.78	2.52					
ICICI Pru Technology Fund(G)	58.78	13.43	DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund-2-Reg(G)	12.68	6.62	DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)	23.26	2.52					
HDFC Top 100 Fund(G)	501.47	12.94	ICICI Pru Value Fund-15(G)	11.00	6.59	Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	14.77	2.50					
UTI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	76.47	12.78	Edelweiss Large Cap Fund(G)	35.76	6.49	JM Tax Gain Fund(G)	17.06	2.49					
IDFC Nifty Fund-Reg(G)	24.21	12.67	Kotak Bluechip Fund(G)	236.43	6.38	JM Multicap Fund(G)	31.32	2.47					
HDFC Index Fund-NIFTY 50 Plan(G)	106.58	12.63	Principal Focused Multicap Fund(G)	64.41	6.37	DHFL Pramerica LT Equity Fund-Reg(G)	14.42	2.41					
Tata Index Fund-Nifty Plan(G)	70.76	12.58	Reliance Multi Cap Fund(G)	99.29	6.27	Aditya Birla SL Equity Fund(G)	733.74	2.38					
SBI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	100.66	12.24	HDFC Growth Opp Fund-Reg(G)	114.95	6.26	ICICI Pru Bharat	10.33	2.38					
Reliance Index Fund - Nifty Plan(G)	19.62	11.96	ICICI Pru Global Stable Equity Fund(G)	14.90	6.20	Consumption Fund-1-(G)							
ICICI Pru Nifty Index Fund(G)	113.15	11.93	Aditya Birla SL Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	29.35	6.11	UTI Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	86.24	2.36					
Aditya Birla SL Index Fund-Reg(G)	114.90	11.75	Canara Rob Consumer Trends Fund-Reg(G)	39.21	5.94	Sundaram Value Fund-II-Reg(G)	16.14	2.32					
ICICI Pru Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	66.01	11.71	Mirae Asset Great Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	34.98	5.93	ICICI Pru Value Fund-8(D)	10.71	2.29					
Franklin India Index Fund-NSE Nifty(G)	92.82	11.70	ICICI Pru Bluechip Fund(G)	42.57	5.90	Aditya Birla SL MNC Fund(G)	776.42	2.28					
Aditya Birla SL Digital India Fund(G)	53.12	11.64	Tata India Pharma & Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	9.18	5.65	Reliance Quant Fund(G)	25.92	2.26					
IDBI Nifty Index Fund(G)	21.63	11.59	Reliance Capital Builder Fund-II-B(G)	13.23	5.54	DHFL Pramerica Tax Plan(G)	31.28	2.02					
Baroda Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	23.16	11.51	Aditya Birla SL Focused Equity Fund(G)	59.75	5.46	SBI BlueChip Fund-Reg(G)	39.50	2.01					
			Tata Large Cap Fund(G)	219.32	5.44	SBI Tax advantage Fund-II(G)	35.56	2.00					
			IDFC Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	32.56	5.42	Tata India Tax Savings Fund-Reg(G)	18.10	1.96					
			UTI Banking and Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	101.62	5.40	ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	12.54	1.95					
						Aditya Birla SL CEF-Global Agri-Reg(G)	23.52	1.92					
						Franklin India Opportunities Fund(G)	75.15	1.89					
						ICICI Pru Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	326.85	1.88					
						BNP Paribas Long Term Equity Fund(G)	38.09	1.81					
						Reliance Focused Equity Fund(G)	47.92	1.75					
						UTI LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)-Reg(G)	88.14	1.74					
						Invesco India Contra Fund(G)	48.36	1.53					
						JM Value Fund(G)	32.59	1.44					
						DSP Equity Opportunities Fund-Reg(G)	222.08	1.42					
						ICICI Pru R.I.G.H.T Fund(G)	43.43	1.21					
						Franklin Asian Equity Fund(G)	22.77	1.17					
						Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-B(G)	18.62	1.11					
						Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	12.92	1.06					
						Reliance Value Fund(G)	74.60	0.96					
						Principal Nifty 100 Equal Weight Fund(G)	73.51	0.89					
						Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	80.45	0.84					
						SBI Healthcare Opp Fund-Reg(G)	121.47	0.83					
						Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(G)	32.00	0.82					
						IDBI India Top 100 Equity Fund(G)	23.98	0.76					
						Edelweiss Multi-Cap Fund-Reg(G)	14.63	0.67					
						Sundaram Global Advt(G)	17.21	0.49					
						DHFL Pramerica Diversified Equity Fund-Reg(G)	13.38	0.45					
						Reliance Japan Equity Fund(G)	12.72	0.40					
						JM Large Cap Fund(G)	66.76	0.73					
						Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)	120.80	4.60					
						Franklin India Taxshield(G)	574.00	4.54					
						DSP World Agriculture Fund-Reg(G)	16.37	4.42					
						Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	34.74	4.37					
						Edelweiss Emerging Markets Opp Eq. Offshore Fund-Reg(G)	13.00	4.35					
						Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)	82.77	4.34					
						SBI Large & Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	224.00	3.92					
						DSP Top 100 Equity Fund-Reg(G)	208.94	3.82					
						Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)	44.29	3.78					
						Invesco India Tax Plan(G)	51.16	3.67					
						Reliance Close Ended Equity Fund-II-A(G)	18.69	3.29					
						Invesco India Growth Opp Fund(G)	34.52	3.26					
						SBI Tax Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	24.33	3.21					
						Axis Midcap Fund(G)	36.30	3.12					
						DSP Equity Fund-Reg(G)	39.29	3.03					



Fund(G)		Invesco India Largecap Fund(G)	28.94	5.24
Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-A(G)	21.08	11.32	DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund(G)	168.38
Reliance Large Cap Fund(G)	35.65	11.06	BNP Paribas Large Cap Fund(G)	88.09
Mirae Asset India Equity Fund-Reg(G)	51.52	10.73	Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity Fund(G)	227.12
Axis Bluechip Fund(G)	28.55	10.02	SBI Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)	143.02
DSP US Flexible Equity Fund-Reg(G)	24.94	10.01	L&T India Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	27.35
SBI Magnum Equity ESG Fund-Reg(G)	105.53	9.92	UTI Dividend Yield Fund-Reg(G)	65.95
Tata Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	18.73	9.77	UTI Value Opp Fund-Reg(G)	62.02
HDFC Equity Fund(G)	676.28	9.69	Franklin India Equity Fund(G)	605.91
Franklin India Focused Equity Fund(G)	41.87	9.45	DSP Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	48.47
Kotak US Equity Fund(G)	16.63	9.36	JM Large Cap Fund(G)	66.76
Aditya Birla SL Global Real Estate Fund(G)	19.10	9.27	Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)	120.80
Parag Parikh Long Term Equity Fund-Reg(G)	25.31	9.18	Franklin India Taxshield(G)	574.00
Mirae Asset Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	17.76	9.07	DSP World Agriculture Fund-Reg(G)	16.37
Reliance Pharma Fund(G)	153.25	8.97	Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	34.74
Invesco India Financial Services Fund(G)	57.01	8.96	Edelweiss Emerging Markets Opp Eq. Offshore Fund-Reg(G)	13.00
Canara Rob Equity Diver Fund-Reg(G)	134.88	8.87	Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)	82.77
Sundaram Select Focus(G)	180.31	8.52	SBI Large & Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	224.00
Canara Rob Bluechip Equity Fund-Reg(G)	24.85	8.47	DSP Top 100 Equity Fund-Reg(G)	208.94
ICICI Pru Growth Fund-1(DP)	11.31	8.33	Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)	44.29
Kotak Tax Saver Scheme(G)	44.40	8.16	Invesco India Tax Plan(G)	51.16
Axis Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	11.41	8.15	Reliance Close Ended Equity Fund-II-A(G)	18.69
Kotak Standard Multicap Fund(G)	35.71	8.15	Invesco India Growth Opp Fund(G)	34.52
ICICI Pru Growth Fund-2(DP)	12.03	7.99	SBI Tax Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	24.33
JM Core 11 Fund(G)	9.37	7.97	Axis Midcap Fund(G)	36.30
			DSP Equity Fund-Reg(G)	39.29

Pope denounces Easter slaughter in Lanka attack

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis denounced the "cruel violence" of the Easter Sunday slaughter of Christians and foreigners in Sri Lanka as he celebrated the most joyful moment on the Christian liturgical calendar by lamenting the bloodshed and political violence afflicting many parts of the world.

Francis skipped his homily during Easter Mass but delivered his traditional "Urbi et Orbi" (To the city and the world) speech highlighting conflicts in the Mideast, Africa and the Americas and demanding that political leaders put aside their differences and work instead for peace.

"May the one who gives us his peace end the roar of arms, both in areas of conflict and in our cities, and inspire the leaders of nations to work for an end to the arms race and the troubling spread of weaponry, especially in the economically more advanced countries," Francis said from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica overlooking the flower-decked square below.

In a special appeal at the



Pope Francis holds a candle as he presides over a solemn Easter vigil ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Saturday

end, Francis lamented the "grave attacks" on Sri Lankan hotels and churches, which occurred just as the Christian faithful were celebrating Easter Mass that marks the resurrection of Christ following his crucifixion.

"I want to express my loving closeness to the Christian community, targeted while they were gathered in prayer, and all the victims of such cruel violence," Francis said. "I entrust to the Lord all those who were tragically killed and pray for the injured and all those who are suffering as a result of this dra-

matic event."

More than 130 people were killed and hundreds wounded following near-simultaneous blasts at three Sri Lankan churches and three hotels frequented by foreigners.

In his roundup of global conflicts, Francis warned that the world was increasingly becoming resigned to the ongoing conflict in Syria. He called for a "renewed commitment for a political solution" that would respond to Syrians' need for freedom, peace and justice and allow for millions of refugees to return home.

Egypt's Al-Azhar condemns 'terrorist' attacks

AFP ■ CAIRO

Egypt's Al-Azhar, the Sunni Muslim world's foremost religious institution, on Sunday condemned "terrorist" attacks in Sri Lanka against hotels and churches celebrating Easter that killed more than 200 people. "I cannot imagine a human being could target the peaceful on their celebration day," said Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, the institution's grand imam. "Those terrorists' perverted disposition goes against the teachings of all religions," he said in comments published on Al-Azhar's Twitter account.

At least 207 people were killed Sunday in a series of eight devastating bomb blasts, which ripped through hotels and churches where Christians were celebrating Easter. "I pray that God grants patience to the families of the casualties and recovery to the injured," added Sheikh Tayeb. Al-Azhar frequently denounces jihadist movements and regularly reaches out to the Christian faith.

In February, Pope Francis and Sheikh Tayeb signed a document on "human fraternity for world peace," hailed by the Vatican as an "important step forward in the dialogue between Christians and Muslims".

Pak condemns explosions in churches, hotels

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan condemned terror attacks on churches and hotels in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday that killed 160 people and injured over 450.

The blasts targeted St Anthony's Church in Colombo, St Sebastian's Church in the western coastal town of Negombo and another church in the eastern town of Batticaloa around 8.45 am. (local time) as the Easter Sunday mass were in progress.

Three explosions were reported from the five-star hotels — the Shangri-La, the Cinnamon Grand and the Kingsbury.

Foreigners and locals who were injured in hotel blasts were admitted to the Colombo General Hospital.

Foreign Office spokesman Dr Mohammad Faisal said on

social media that Pakistan stands with the people of Sri Lanka.

"Pakistan condemns explosions and terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka at Churches & Hotels, that have led to numerous casualties and immense loss. People and Government of Pakistan stand by people and Government of Sri Lanka at this moment of tragedy and against terror," he said in a tweet.

Prime Minister Imran Khan also strongly condemned the barbaric attacks.

"Strongly condemn the horrific terrorist attack in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday resulting in precious lives lost & hundreds injured. My profound condolences go to our Sri Lankan brethren. Pakistan stands in complete solidarity with Sri Lanka in their hour of grief," he tweeted.

Putin condemns bombings

AP ■ COLOMBO

Russian President Vladimir Putin has denounced a series of attacks on churches and hotels in Sri Lanka as "cruel and cynical."

In a telegram of condolences sent to his Sri Lankan counterpart, the Russian leader said Moscow remains a "reliable partner of Sri Lanka in the fight against international terrorism."

He added that the Russians "share the grief of the relatives of those killed and wish a quick recovery to all those who were wounded" after the Easter Sunday blasts that killed at least 138 people.

Putin voiced confidence that "the perpetrators and the masterminds of such a cruel and cynical crime committed amid the Easter festivities will take the punishment they deserve."

GLOBE TROTTER

KING RESTORES CITIZENSHIP OF 551 BAHRAINIS

Dubai: King Hamad has ordered that the citizenship of 551 Bahrainis revoked by courts be restored, official media said Sunday, days after a senior UN official expressed concern about the punishment.

2 INDIANS ARRESTED IN NEPAL FOR SMUGGLING

Kathmandu: Two Indian nationals were arrested in Nepal on Sunday for allegedly trying to smuggle over 50 kilograms of cannabis to India, police said.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II TURNS 93 ON EASTER SUNDAY

London: Queen Elizabeth II is celebrating her 93rd birthday, which this year coincides with Easter Sunday. The queen is marking Easter by attending a service with other senior royals at St. George's Chapel on the grounds of Windsor Castle.

Theresa May condemns 'appalling' church attacks

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May Sunday condemned the "truly appalling" multiple blasts at churches and hotels in Sri Lanka on Easter, killing over 160 people, including at least nine foreigners.

Six near-simultaneous and coordinated explosions rocked three churches and three five-star hotels frequented by tourists as the Easter Sunday mass were in progress.



"The acts of violence against churches and hotels in Sri Lanka are truly appalling, and my deepest sympathies go out to all of those affected at this

tragic time," prime minister May said in a statement on Twitter.

"We must stand together to make sure that no one should ever have to practise their faith in fear," she said.

The statement came soon after she called for the UK to stand up for religious freedom in her annual message to mark Easter.

No group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attacks.

However, most of the deadly attacks in the past in Sri Lanka were carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which ran a military campaign for a separate Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern provinces of the island nation for nearly 30 years before its collapse in 2009 after the Sri Lankan Army killed its supreme leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. No group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attacks.



Sri Lankan Army soldiers secure the area around St. Anthony Shrine after a blast in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Sunday

Iraq condemns to death 4 IS members repatriated from Syria

AFP ■ BAGHDAD

Iraq's judiciary condemned to death four Islamic State group members on Sunday, the first known sentence for hundreds of Iraqi jihadists repatriated in recent months from neighbouring Syria.

In early April, Iraq's specialised terrorism courts began preparing cases against nearly 900 Iraqis accused of joining IS.

They had been caught in Syria by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters, and transferred to Iraqi authorities. On Sunday, the judiciary said it had tried four Iraqis "accused of belonging to Daesh (IS) and carrying out crimes against innocent civilians in order to destabilise Iraq and Syria."

US special envoy for Afghan peace visits Kabul

AP ■ KABUL

US special envoy for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad visited the Afghan capital and exchanged views with the country's leadership, the media reported on Tuesday. As part of his multi-nation trip to facilitate intra-Afghan peace talks, Khalilzad arrived in Kabul on Monday and immediately started meeting Afghan officials, Daily Outlook Afghanistan reported.

Khalilzad, the Afghanistan-born US veteran diplomat, met President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah and several other politicians. Afghan Presidential Palace in a short statement released here on Tuesday said that President Ghani and Khalilzad exchanged views on the situation in Afghanistan and the ongoing



peace process and added that the outcome of the peace talks would be shared with the people. The Taliban has so far rejected to sit on negotiating table with the Afghan government, saying the militant group won't talk to Kabul administration in the presence of foreign military forces in the country.

Khalilzad, who ended his fifth round of marathon talks with the Taliban representatives in Doha a couple of weeks ago and resumed his peace mission on March 25 with visit to London and Brussels, is expected to visit Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Jordan and Qatar after ending his meetings with Afghan leaders.

ISIS claims deadly attack on Afghan ministry

AFP ■ BEIRUT

The Islamic State group Sunday claimed responsibility for an attack that killed 10 people and trapped around 2,000 for hours inside the communications ministry in the Afghan capital the previous day.

Four IS jihadists detonated explosives near the ministry, then entered and "battled Afghan security forces with machine guns and hand grenades for numerous hours," the group said in a statement on its social media channels.

The attack in central Kabul killed seven civilians and three members of the security forces, the interior ministry said on Sunday, in a new toll after three people died of their wounds.

AFP journalists heard one big blast around 11:40 am (07:10 GMT), followed by sporadic gunfire for hours afterwards.

By about 5:00 pm (12:30 GMT), the interior ministry declared the assault over.

Sudan protest leaders to unveil civilian ruling body

AFP ■ KHARTOUM

Sudanese protest leaders were preparing Sunday to unveil a civilian council that they want to take power from military rulers, who have resisted calls to step down despite mass demonstrations.

Thousands of protesters gathered outside the army headquarters in central Khartoum ahead of the announcement, an AFP correspondent reported, a day after the two sides pledged to hold more talks.

On Friday the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), which was at the forefront of the protest campaign that toppled longtime president Omar al-Bashir this month, said it would announce the civilian council at 1700 GMT.

It has invited foreign diplomats and journalists to attend the event at the rally site.

"We are waiting for the announcement today," Romaysaa Omar, one of the protesters at the sit-in area, told

AFP. "All Sudanese people are in favour of the council to be announced by the SPA."

Whistling and waving Sudanese flags, dozens of demonstrators were sitting on a bridge at the site, rhythmically banging stones against metal.

"We will stay at the site until all our demands are met," said Al-Baraa Yousef, another demonstrator.

On Saturday, protest leaders and the military rulers held talks about a power handover and agreed to continue discussions.

"We clarified our main demand, which is the transfer of power to civilian authorities," Siddiq Yousef, a senior member of the Alliance for Freedom and Change, the umbrella group leading the protest movement, told state television after Saturday's talks.

"We agreed to continue negotiations to reach a solution that satisfies both the sides, so that the transfer of power will happen in a peaceful way."

On Saturday Ahmed al-Rabia, a senior member of SPA, said it was possible that the unveiling of the council could be delayed.

"If (the military council) are willing to negotiate, then there is a chance that tomorrow's announcement could be postponed," he said.

But on Sunday he confirmed that it would go ahead as planned.

"There will be a press conference today at the said time at the protest site," he told AFP, without offering details.

Since Bashir was ousted on April 11 by the army in response to months of mass street protests, the military rulers have resisted calls to transfer power to a civilian body.

"What we want from them is a timetable to hand over power, so things don't drag on," said Rabia.

He said mounting pressure from the street and from the international community was expected to make the military council cede power in "two to three weeks".

Comic poised to take over Presidency in Ukraine vote

AFP ■ KIEV

Ukrainians went to polls Sunday in the second round of an extraordinary election with a comedian who plays a president on TV expected to win in a stunning rebuke to the political establishment.

Forty-one-year-old Volodymyr Zelensky's bid to lead the country of 45 million people was initially dismissed as a joke when he announced his candidacy on New Year's Eve.

But now all opinion polls suggest incumbent President Petro Poroshenko is heading for defeat amid widespread anger over poverty, corruption and war.

Zelensky's victory is expected to open a new chapter in the history of a country that has gone through two popular uprisings in two decades and is mired in a five-year conflict with sepa-

ratists in the east.

Polling stations opened at 0500 GMT as voters from Ukrainian-speaking regions in the west to Russian-speaking regions in the war-torn east went to cast their ballots.

Speaking outside a polling booth in the capital Kiev, Galyna, 81, said she voted for Zelensky.

"Because I am against Poroshenko," said the pensioner who refused to give her last name.

Zelensky has tapped into widespread frustration over graft, poverty and a conflict with separatists that has claimed some 13,000 lives.

But others doubted whether the consummate showman would be able to take on the country's vested interests, negotiate with the likes of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and stand up to Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Afghan SC extends Ghani's term until delayed elections

AFP ■ KABUL

Afghanistan's supreme court has extended the term of President Ashraf Ghani until delayed elections take place, an official said Sunday, resolving for now the question of what would happen after his term expires on May 22.

Presidential elections were initially slated for April 20, but Afghan poll officials were unprepared for a new nationwide vote so soon after October parliamentary elections.

With some final results from that election still pending, the presidential poll was delayed until July 20, then pushed back again until September 28.

Ariana News published a statement from the court saying it "has extended the service term of President Ghani until the re-election of a new president."

"The supreme court understands the financial, secu-

'THE SUPREME COURT UNDERSTANDS THE FINANCIAL, SECURITY AND LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ELECTION COMMISSION'

urity and logistical challenges faced by the election commission."

While the court did not make the statement public, Faraidoon Khwazoon, the deputy spokesman to Afghan chief executive Abdullah Abdullah, confirmed the document to AFP, noting that Abdullah's term had also been extended.

"Yes, the supreme court has made its decision, based on the constitution, on the extension

of the service term of the president," Khwazoon said, adding the extension would last "until the re-election of the new president". Ghani's office could not immediately be reached for comment.

The delayed elections come as the United States tries to negotiate a peace deal with the Taliban, and some had speculated the polls were being deliberately stalled to create more space for those talks.

Opposition politicians and presidential contenders had called for an interim Government to fill the gap between Ghani's mandate expiring and the presidential elections.

The supreme court said it was asking "presidential candidates to respect the delay in the presidential elections".

Ghani was elected in 2014 in a closely contested poll that was mired by allegations of fraud and that saw him lead a power-sharing Government.

US withdrawal from Afghanistan focus of next talks: Taliban

AFP ■ DOHA

Upcoming talks between the Taliban and the United States will focus on the timetable for pulling all foreign forces from Afghanistan, according to a senior Taliban member.

In an interview with AFP, the Taliban's political spokesman Suhail Shaheen said previous negotiations with Washington saw the two sides agree to a total withdrawal, with only the details needing to be fleshed out.

"In our last round of talks with the US side, we agreed with them on withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan," Shaheen said late Saturday in Doha.

In return for a withdrawal, he said the Taliban have committed to preventing terror

groups using Afghanistan as a safe haven or for launching attacks on other countries.

"But still there are some details to be discussed, and this discussion will take place in our next round of talks and that is about (the) timetable of the withdrawal of forces from the country and other details," Shaheen said.

The next round of talks is expected to take place in Doha in the coming weeks, but no dates have been formally announced.

US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who is leading the talks for Washington, said after the latest round ended that "real strides" had been made, but he insisted no agreement was reached on when the US and other countries might leave Afghanistan.

Harris' campaign focuses on black colleges for support

AP ■ ORANGEBURG (US)

California Sen Kamala Harris has described her experience as a student at a historically black college as "one of the most important aspects" of her life. Now, her Democratic presidential campaign is using that experience to connect with voters.

Not only is she one of only two black candidates in a field that's expected to grow to more than 20 candidates, she's also the only candidate who attended a historically black college or university, commonly called an HBCU.

And she's the first major-party candidate to have graduated from an HBCU — Washington's Howard University — since Jesse Jackson ran for president in the 1980s.

To be sure, she is not the only candidate focusing on such institutions. Massachusetts Sen Elizabeth Warren, New York Sen Kirsten Gillibrand and former Texas Rep Beto O'Rourke have campaigned at historically black colleges. So has the other black candidate in the 2020 race, New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker.

At a CNN town hall last month in Orangeburg, home to two of South Carolina's HBCUs, Booker noted that his parents and grandparents were educated at historically black institutions and that "the majority of black doctors, black lawyers, black generals are produced by HBCUs."

But Harris' campaign has visited more historically black colleges than any candidate, and she is burnishing her personal ties to this community, and not just to current students.

"Presidential candidates are recognizing HBCUs as a political and cultural center for the broader black community," said Aimee Allison, the founder

of the political network She The People, which plans a candidate forum Wednesday at Texas Southern University, a historically black college.

Allison said that holding events at these schools is an "essential part of a long-term strategy to build trust and relationships" with black voters.

Harris' focus on historically black colleges could be particularly important in South Carolina, home to eight HBCUs. Black voters are vital to success for Democratic primary candidates anxious to win the South's first primary.

In Orangeburg, Harris' town hall Saturday night was moderated by Bakari Sellers, a former South Carolina state representative who recently endorsed her campaign.

Turning to a group of South Carolina State students seated on bleachers, Harris talked briefly about the value of attending a historically black institution.

Trend Glazer

'First film is always special'

Actor **AYUSHMANN KHURRANA** on the seventh anniversary of the release of his maiden film *Vicky Donor*, says that the success of the film on sperm donation allowed an "outsider" like him in the film industry to dream big.



"First film is always your most special one. *Vicky Donor* has given me so much love that I will be forever indebted to the film and my director Shoojit Sircar. It was the start of my cinematic journey and it made me learn a lot and shaped me as an artiste," Ayushmann said.

"The film made me express myself as an actor and a singer and the success empowered me to explore and experiment as an artiste," he added.

'There's a great deal of presence for all kinds of films, writers and director and it's a great time for actors. Audience are more demanding and that's what is exciting for me personally as I am certain this new system of audience awareness will bring a lot of positive change to the business. Now is the time for me to try newer things, do things out of my comfort zone.'



—Yami Gautam

Cricketer **KAPIL DEV** has come out with a coffee book titled *We The Sikhs*, with Dubai-based entrepreneur Ajay Sethi.

Kapil said, "I feel that the Sikh community has done a great job across the world. They are a great example for the world to follow."



We The Sikhs celebrates Sikhism and features photographs and original paintings of 100 Gurudwaras across the globe. "One can learn how to live, be helpful and be a good human being from them. Sikhism is the best path of life," added Kapil, who is currently touring the US with the book. Kapil is currently training actor Ranveer Singh for the forthcoming sports film *83*.

Adele separates from husband

Singer **ADELE** has parted ways with her husband, **Simon Konecki**, according to a statement.

"Adele and her partner have separated," the statement said.

"They are committed to raising their son together lovingly. As always they ask for privacy. There will be no further comment," it added.

Adele and Konecki share a son together, Angelo, who was born in 2012.

Adele is known for her songs like *Someone Like You* and *Rolling in the Deep*.



The term 'morally objectionable' could have a variety of definitions for different individuals, say psychologists. By **TEAM VIVA**

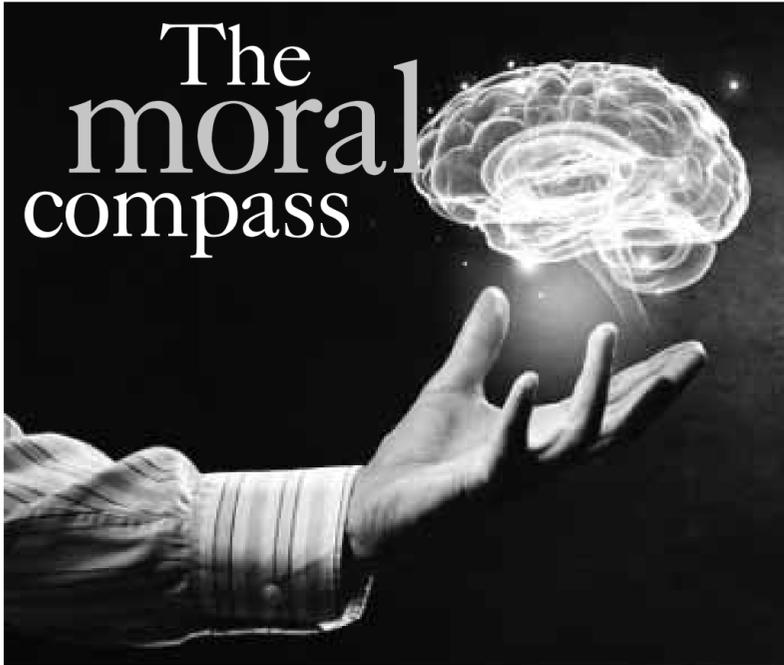
Who decides whether our actions or decisions are morally acceptable or objectionable? A new study reveals that it is the brain activity which is responsible for the differences in our moral behaviour.

The study showed that when it comes to moral behaviour, people may not always stick to the "golden rule." While some people would have genuine concern for others, some others might not and rather demonstrate, what is called in psychological terminology, 'moral opportunism.' Here, humans want to appear morally justified but are also seeking to maximise their own benefits.

For the study, which was published in *Nature Communications* journal by the lead author Jeroen Van Baar, a postdoctoral research associate at Brown University, US, a computational strategy model was developed to examine the brain activity patterns and how they are linked to moral aspects and strategies.

Talking about how moral behaviour varies from person to person, Dr Sandeep Vohra, senior consultant, Psychiatry, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi, said, "Whatever we do, all our actions are powered through certain chemical signalling through the brain. And morality as a concept could be based on subjective variations, there could be different definitions of morality for different individuals."

The researchers of the study also tried to determine which type of moral strategy the participant was using under certain circumstances — inequity aversion, where people reciprocate because they want to seek fairness in their outcomes) and secondly, guilt aversion, where people reciprocate because they want to avoid feeling guilty. The third would be greed or moral opportunism, where people switch between inequity aversion and guilt aversion



depending on what serves their interests best.

Dr Samir Parikh, director, Mental Health and Behavioural Sciences, Fortis Healthcare, believed that the first and foremost things that the society needs to do is to take the "psychosocial" aspects out of morality. "A lot of morality is also something that we learn from observing. One such is being honest and following transparency. When we talk to children, we encourage them to be honest and as they start growing, they only realise through our interactions that we are ourselves sometimes use personal discretion in the fear of transparency and truth. We start accepting it as a norm and an acceptable thing. This results in a lot of dilution. And morality cannot be seen in a generic way because at various levels, we use our morality compass to define certain aspects of wisdom."

He explained giving examples, "crossing the traffic lights; somebody teasing someone in a public transport and you decide to stay quiet; witnessing a road accident and walking past it; a friend doing something wrong and you letting them do it. It could even be something financially unjustified."

The study showed that people used different moral principles to make their decisions and also changed their moral behaviour

depending on the situation. "In everyday life, we may not notice that our morals are context-dependent since our contexts tend to stay the same daily. However, under new circumstances, we may find that the moral rules we thought we'd always follow are actually quite malleable," said study co-author Luke J. Chang, assistant professor at Dartmouth College, US.

The study revealed that "unique patterns" of brain activity underlie the inequity aversion and guilt aversion strategies. "Our results demonstrate that people may use different moral principles to make their decisions, and that some people are much more flexible and will apply different principles depending on the situation," said Chang.

Dr Vohra explained that while some people may follow very rigid morality principles, it would be flexible for some others due to the given circumstances. "For an instance, when someone says that 'I'll never bribe, it's morally incorrect'; there could be two cases. Case 1: When s/he breaks a traffic signal, the person bribes the policeman and gets away with it at the time of the situation — flexible morality. Case 2: When s/he actually pays the penalty for disobeying the traffic law — rigid morality," he explained. Such behaviours are completely dependent on how the person is moral-

ly nurtured and brought up. "This is based on personal thought processes as well as circumstances," he added.

While flexible morality and moral opportunism would look like two overlapping concepts, he differentiated, "Moral opportunism is when the person is always seeking for or trying to create an opportunity for himself/herself while being morally justified. It's again subjective to people's personal experiences and thoughts."

The aspect of various principles explain why people that we like and respect, occasionally do things that we may find morally objectionable. However, Dr Vohra argued that it is because we tend to "idealise" people and put them on a higher pedestal. "We start searching in them some God-like characteristics, however forget that they have the usual human tendencies. They are bound to make certain decisions as per their comfort zones. Also, it varies from person to person on how they would morally react to certain situations," said he.

Making a similar point, Dr Parikh added that "morally objectionable is a term subjective to people's interpretations and understanding. It could be their upbringing, the societal narrative, their schooling and observations, personal feedbacks and background that shifts its definition."



Read between lines

Filmmaker **TIGMANSHU DHULIA** says that actors do not really have a role to play in the success of a film. By **AYUSHI SHARMA**

Filmmaker Tigmanshu Dhulia stirred up a hornet's nest when he suggested that actors really do not have any role to play in the success of a film. "Everything is done for them in advance, the schedule is made, the location is set, everyone reaches on time and they have the privilege of coming late on the sets, all they have to do is put their make up and sign autographs," he said. But when countered, he chuckled, retracted his statement and conceded that without good actors there cannot be a quality film... while adding the caveat that it is an amalgamation of everything that makes any film, exceptional.

However, he did say that film making has become easier in today's time. "Those were the dark ages and didn't have much advancement, even in terms of stories," he said.

Tigmanshu recalled that while making *Bandit Queen* he chanced upon the story of Paan Singh Tomar, a soldier in the Indian Army, who won a gold medal at the Indian National Games, but unfortunately was forced to become a bandit. The director said, "I was sure since that time that I had to make this film. But I couldn't find any information anywhere on him. I just had a single magazine with me in which it was written about him but the details were not sufficient to make a film."

He further apprises us that in the olden days there was no such concept of research while making

films. This trend has started now. "I discussed the story with one of my friends, so he told me write it but I said *yeh koi fiction thodi hai kuch bhi likh du*. It's a story of someone's life. How can I make it up and show it to the audience? Then after some days a channel came to me, they told me to research more, I did so and eventually *Paan Singh Tomar* happened. So that's how this research *funda* kicked off. And none other than Irrfan (Khan) could have done justice to this role. He is my *jiggar* (heart)."

Talking of another change he said, "People have stopped going to theatres unless and until there is a film like *Baahubali* or *Tamasha*. I must say cinema is going to be dead in no time."

He expounded that theatre is on the verge of coming to end, and the history has been a witness. There has been a lot of encouragement in the past to keep it alive, believed Dhulia. However, he is not ready to give up. Just yet. He is back to making a film with Irrfan again. "Probably it will be on a life of a journalist," he said.

Tigmanshu, who was the guest at the Cineaste International Film Festival, said, "Achieving success in life is not a huge thing. You just have to be honest with your work as well as with your family members and that is enough to lead a peaceful life."

(The film festival was held at the Delhi Metropolitan Education.) Photo: Harjeet Singh Kukreja, Nabeel Ahmed

WEBBED

BONDING: SEASON 1



In this new short-form dark comedy series, two former high school BFFs, Pete and Tiff, reconnect years later in New York City only to discover that Pete is gay and that Tiff (who attends grad school by day) is secretly one of the city's top dominatrices, introducing Pete to a whole new underground world of sexual secrecy and BDSM.

Starring Zoe Levin, Brendan Scannell and Micah Stock, the show is set to release on Netflix on April 24.

DEAD TO ME



A hot-headed widow searching for the hit-and-run driver who mowed down her husband befriends an eccentric optimist who isn't quite what she seems.

Starring Emmy winner Christina Applegate with Linda Cardellini and James Marsden. Created by Liz Feldman, season one releases on Netflix on May 3.

THE PROTECTOR: SEASON 2



Discovering his ties to a secret ancient order, a young man living in modern Istanbul embarks on a quest to save the city from an immortal enemy.

Starring Çağatay Ulusoy, Ayça Aysin Turan and Hazar Ergüçlü, the season 2 is slated to release on April 26 on Netflix.

TECH TALK

A fight against floods

Drones, supercomputers and sonar that scan deep under water are helping to maintain rainfall control projects



An arsenal of new technology is being put to the test fighting floods this year as rivers inundate towns and farm fields across the central United States. Drones, supercomputers and sonar that scan deep under water are helping to maintain flood control projects and predict just where rivers will roar out of their banks.

Together, these tools are putting detailed information to use in real time, enabling emergency managers and people at risk to make decisions that can save lives and property, said Kristie Franz, associate professor of geological and atmospheric sciences at Iowa State University.

The cost of this technology is coming down even as disaster recovery becomes more expensive, so "anything we can do to reduce the costs of these floods and natural hazards is worth it," she said. "Of course, loss of life, which you can't put a dollar amount on, is certainly worth that as well."

U.S. scientists said in their spring weather outlook that 13 million people are at risk of major inundation, with more than 200 river gauges this week showing some level of flooding in the Mississippi River basin, which drains the vast middle of the United States. Major flooding continues in places from the Red River in North Dakota to near the mouth of the Mississippi in Louisiana, a map from the National Weather Service shows.

Advanced computer modeling is helping predict when and where floodwaters will inundate parts of the United States this spring.

"There are over 200 million people that are under some elevated threat risk," said Ed Clark, director of the National Water Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, a flood forecasting hub.

Much of the technology, such as the National Water Model, didn't exist until recently. Fueled by supercomputers in Virginia and Florida, it came online about three years ago and expanded streamflow data by 700-fold, assembling data from five million river miles (eight million kilometers) of rivers and streams nationwide, including many smaller ones in remote areas.

"Our models simulate exactly what happens when the rain falls on the Earth and whether it runs off or infiltrates," Clark said, adding, "And so the current conditions, whether that be snow pack or the soil moisture in the snow pack, well that's something we can measure and monitor and know."

Emergency managers and dam safety officials can see simulations of the consequences of flood waters washing away a levee or crashing through a dam using technology developed at the University of Mississippi — a web-based system known as DSS-WISE. The software went online in 2017 and quickly provided simulations that informed the response to heavy rains that damaged spill-

ways at the nation's tallest dam in northern California. The program also helped forecast the flooding after Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Louisiana that year.

Engineers monitoring levees along the Mississippi River have been collecting and checking data using a geographic information system produced by Esri, said Nick Bidlack, levee safety program manager for the Memphis district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The company produces mapping tools such as an interactive site showing the nation's largest rivers and their average monthly flow.

On the Mississippi River, flood inspectors use smartphones or tablets in the field to input data into map-driven forms for water levels and the locations of inoperable flood gates, seepages, sand boils or levee slides, which are cracks or ditches in the slopes of an earthen levee. Photos, videos and other data are sent to an emergency flood operation center in real time, allowing Corps officials to visualise any problems and their exact location, instantly informing the response, Bidlack said.

"If people in the field have concerns about something, they can let us know to go out there and look at it," Bidlack said. "There's a picture associated with it, a description of it, and it helps us take care of it."

Corps engineers are increasingly flying drones to get their own aerial photography and video of flooded areas they can't oth-

erwise get to because of high water or rough terrain, said Edward Dean, a Corps engineer.

"We can reach areas that are unreachable," Dean said.

The Corps also now uses high-definition sonar in its daily operations to survey the riverbed, pinpointing where maintenance work needs to be done, said Corps engineer Andy Simmerman. The Memphis district uses a 26-foot survey boat called the Tiger Shark, with a sonar head that looks like an old-fashioned vacuum cleaner and collects millions of points per square inch of data, Simmerman said.

The technology has helped them find cars and trucks that have been dumped into the river, along with weak spots in the levees. "These areas are 20 to 80 feet underwater, we'd never get to see them without sonar," Simmerman said. "The water never gets low enough for us to see a lot of these failures."

During recent flooding near Cairo, Illinois, a culvert that should have been closed was sending water onto the dry side of a levee. The sonar pointed engineers to the precise location of a log that was stuck 20 feet deep in murky water, keeping the culvert open. Plastic sheathing and sandbags were brought in to stop the flow and save the land below.

"The sonar definitely made a difference," said Simmerman. "A big success."

A LOOK AT SUSTAINABLE FARMING

With aquaponics, the agricultural sector can not only increase the yield but also reduce water usage by around 90 per cent, says ANUBHAV DAS

For a country that is predominantly agrarian — and directly and indirectly employing — over 60 per cent of its active working population, the lack of a comprehensive vision and innovation in the sector is unfortunate. Our farm output growth rate has been fluctuating between 0.2-4.2 per cent in the last five years. While in quantities of produce, we may be in the top few producers across the world, but our yields per hectare are amongst the lowest.

Take the example of tomatoes. In 2017, India was the second largest producer of tomatoes in the world after China. China produced 56.8 million tones of tomatoes on about 110,000 hectares of land. India produced 18.7 million tones on about 10 percent less land. The productivity per hectare is incomparable. And this fact is applicable on multiple crops.

With large-scale interventions, huge subsidies on fertilisers and inputs and a supportive government policy framework, India's agricultural output is lacklustre. Given the current performance, there are hard questions that need to be asked — Will farm output keep up with the demands of the growing population? Will our farm produce offer the quality that is essential for healthy living? Will farming ever modernise? And will our farms help protect the planet by saving valuable and scarce resources?

What will it take for India's farm sector to change? And therein lays the solution. Change is absolutely essential. Status quo will get us nowhere. For a nation that employed a majority of its population and indeed got a large part of its



GDP from agriculture at Independence — the focus of development right from the start missed the bullseye. After 70 years, our farm holdings are smaller than before, and 65 percent of our farmlands are dependent on monsoons for crop growth.

Left to vagaries of nature, we cannot seek progress. As social innovators; we wanted to bring out a change. We realised that we needed to provide a different and new approach to the sector. It was not only a question of increasing yields - but also how to remove the farms from the dependence on rainfall. Additionally, we need-

IT IS A METHOD OF FOOD PRODUCTION THAT COMBINES RAISING FISH WITH SOIL-LESS GROWING OF PLANTS BY CREATING A SYMBIOTIC ECOSYSTEM

ed to move away from the excessive use of chemical pesticides, insecticides and fertilisers.

THE FUTURE OF FARMING

We need a game-changer. And we believe aquaponics offers us just that opportunity. Aquaponics is a method of food production that combines raising fish (aquaculture) with soil-less growing of plants (hydroponics) by creating a symbiotic ecosystem. The water in an aquaponics system is re-circulated on a continuous basis with zero-discharge. The aquaponics cycle therefore reduces the requirement of

water for growing crops by over 90 per cent as compared to conventional soil-based agriculture. Established in a controlled environment, it is a completely chemical-free mode of farming making it one of the best forms of farming known today. It very possibly is the 'future of farming.'

We believe aquaponics has great potential. Since it is not dependent on land, it can be moved to inhospitable terrains and even urban locations; it's resource-smart, saving vast quantities of water; and it is chemical-free. Yields are 10-12 times greater and the quality is far better. In one line,

aquaponics is a responsible and sustainable farming system.

Internationally, aquaponics has attained some maturity as a farming alternative, especially in the USA and in Australia. Many out-of-the-box solutions are now available and it is comparatively simpler to set up a farm. In India, aquaponics is in a nascent stage as yet. The supply side is very slow in the uptake and most set-up projects require that equipment is custom created. This is a challenge for high speed scale-ups for aquaponics. Additionally, of course is the factor of finance. Initial capital required for a set-up is on the higher side.

Over time, with increasing demands to reduce pressures on land-based farming, aquaponics will be a leader. We expect the ancillary and inputs to improve and become cost effective sooner rather than later. If these challenges are addressed, then the potential to market the products and the services can thrive. The focus thereafter will shift back to the processes of production. It is at this point that aquaponics can be considered a viable alternative to traditional farming systems.

Aquaponics has the potential to drastically change our production patterns and indeed make us competitive internationally in yields per hectares. With higher productivity, the enhancement of food security would improve across India while reducing the burden on land and limiting the resource wastage prevalent currently. With the ability to grow nearly all crops in aquaponics, it could be the leverage the agriculture sector requires in future.

(The writer is the founder of Red Otter Farms.)



Let's be part of a great transformation

The rise of terrorism is proof that it can't be contained by arms. To win over violence, we need to make peace, tolerance, respect and compassion our weapons, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

People are taking keen interest in spiritual matters these days. They are asking questions about soul, god, karma and values. Seeing the suffering and moral degradation in the world, they often wonder as to why there is so much negativity in and around us despite the surge in spiritual awareness in recent times. Many people say that unrighteous people are quickly prospering these days, then why should one do good as per the law of karma? We all know that good always begets good and bad always begets bad and the law of karma is infallible. However, due to the dominance of negative forces in the world, the effect of the positive gets clouded but, just as the sun keeps shining behind a thick veil of clouds and comes out when the clouds pass, the good deeds can never go unrewarded even though it might take some time. It is said that when evil goes to extreme, it comes to an end and paves the way for a new beginning. Another question that follows is that why do good people suffer from painful and deadly diseases like cancer? Well, we must understand that we are living at the end of Iron Age that is, the Kaliyuga when the old karmic accounts of all souls are being settled before they can become pure and get liberation and enjoy complete happiness in the new world. So, we are in a period of transition now when the new world is being established but a lot of suffering is also visible as the old world is moving towards its end. Good people are also settling their old accounts but they do not suffer so much pain as they have the blessings earned by their good deeds.

In a world that is rife with violence, crime, fear and insecurity use of force and violent means is seen as the best way to ensure safety and security. But is it right to use violence to get justice or to succeed in a good cause, people ask. We all know that violence begets more violence. The rise in terrorism is a proof that terror cannot be contained by arms. It is the law of karma that if we use hatred or violence for any end it will rebound and reflect in our lives in one way or another. A good cause is good only if it is achieved through good means and noble values. In practical sense, this may sound to be impossible. But as said earlier, that as much as possible one should try to find the root cause of any problem and try to solve it with compassion, forgiveness, wisdom and patience. So, to win over violence, we need to make peace, tolerance, respect and compassion our strong weapons. It does take time and effort but we must not forget a fact that even hard stones are cut by a gentle stream over a



period of time. Amidst all this chaos and confusion, people often wonder if god is up there, then what is he doing to set things right? Some faithful ones look up to god as a formidable figure whose job is to punish humans for their misdeeds and hence, we are witnessing so much suffering. But should we fear god or love him? He is truth and he is love. Loving him is our natural birthright because as souls we are his children. He is merciful and benevolent. He will never wish his children to suffer, but we all are suffering today because we do not love him, we do not honour our eternal relationship with him and we have been even unjustifiably and ungratefully blaming god for all our misery. Yet he loves us unconditionally and guides us lovingly to purify ourselves and liberate ourselves from all suffering. But, when we say that god is incorporeal, without any bodily form, then why do we celebrate a festival like Shivratri as his birthday?

Shivratri means the 'Night of Shiva' which signifies the darkness of spiritual ignorance in Kaliyuga. Shiva is the incorporeal Supreme Soul who is the Father of all souls. He imparts the truth about soul, god and the creation and inspires humans to purify themselves by linking their heart and mind with him and by doing pure deeds. He does not live, eat, or indulge in sensual experiences like human souls do. He is the one who never comes in the bondage of actions and their fruits. The Supreme Soul is remembered in all faiths as Shiva, God, Allah, Jehovah, Ishwar and by many other names. He is praised as the almighty, omnipotent, omniscient being who can liberate human beings from the cycle of sin and suffering.

The best thing to realise is that humans can now experience god's wisdom and blessings as never before because the time has come for him to guide the process of the transformation of the world from Kaliyuga to Satyuga. So what are you waiting for? Let's join him and be a part of great transformation of old world into new world.

Effective parenting requires a lot of sacrifice, dedication and time.

However, for working parents, time is always short. Since working parents spend a major chunk of their day away from their children, raising happy, healthy and well-adjusted children might seem like a major challenge. However, with dual-income households on the rise in India, numerous parents are proving that it is not impossible to balance work and family, and that kids of working parents are able to thrive as well. If yours is a family where both parents work, here are some tips that will help you strike that balance and lead a blissful family life as well:

Communicate with your children

Since working parents spend little time with their kids, it is important to set aside time and communicate with them every day. Parents need to speak to their children about their feelings to ensure they are not feeling neglected or lonely without them. Furthermore, it is important for parents to speak to children about how their studies, friends and activities they did throughout the day. Communicating regularly is the best way to connect with children even if you don't spend a lot of time with them.

Don't bring work home

It is not conducive for parents to complete work tasks at home as it might make children feel neglected and resentful. The best approach to avoiding this situation is to complete work at the office and switch off your work-mode before entering your home. Make sure that your focus is on spending maximum quality time with

Work is not for home

Effective parenting requires a lot of sacrifice, dedication and time. MEENAL ARORA shares some tips for working parents on how they could manage work and their children together

your children. Eating dinner together, reading and then tucking them into bed is a great way to end the day.

Look for flexible workplaces

Many workplaces offer flexible working hours and work from home options. Such jobs will allow you to spend some time with your children in case the need arises. Doctor's visit, school functions and sick days can all be taken care of without the slightest of guilt if the workplace understands that parents sometimes require certain concessions.

Seek help and support

It is important for parents to discern who will take care of their child while they are away. It is best to leave the child with grandparents or a relative whom you trust to take good care and focus on the child's needs. For younger kids or toddlers, you can also look for a daycare center where children can be looked after by professionals. Here, children can also spend their day in a productive manner while learning new things. For older, school-going kids, you can opt for schools that offer full-day programs. Such schools facilitate conducive after-school curriculums focussing on co-curricular activities and homework. Parents can conveniently pick up children from school



after work and head home for quality time.

Look on the bright side

As working parents, you will have more disposable income at hand. You will be able to create additional opportunities for your children such as lavish summer trips, professional activity classes and better schools. As children of working parents spend a lot of time in different social settings such as daycare or co-curricular classes, research shows that they grow up to be more confident individuals with a high degree of emotional and social intelligence. Looking at these positive aspects of being working parents will help you feel great about your family-set up. Again, it is also a good idea to communicate about these upsides so that children understand it too.

Children are flexible individuals and can adjust well in any set-up. All they require is a little time and unconditional love. Whether it is after work or over the weekends, allot some time to do things that your children love. Play games, read stories or go out together to let them know that mother and father will always prioritise family time over work.

(The writer is the Founding Director, Shemford Futuristic Schools.)

If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.

—Albert Einstein

PEOPLE WHO SMOKE MARIJUANA WEIGH LESS

People who smoke marijuana or cannabis weigh less as compared to adults who don't, a new study suggests.

The findings are contrary to the belief that marijuana users who have a serious case of the munchies that will ultimately lead to weight gain.

"Over a three-year period, all participants showed a weight increase, but interestingly, those who used marijuana had less of an increase compared to those that never used," said lead author Omayma Alshaarawy from the Michigan State University.

For the study, published in the International Journal of Epidemiology, the research team looked at the Body Mass Index (BMI) of 33,000 participants, aged 18 and older, then compared the numbers.

While the actual weight difference among users and non-users was modest, around two pounds for a 5-foot-7-inch participant weighing about 200 pounds at the start of the study, the variance was prevalent among the entire sample size. The researcher cautions that marijuana should not be considered a diet aid.

ADHESIVE PATCH TO REDUCE HEART ATTACK

Researchers have developed a new adhesive patch that could reduce the stretching of cardiac muscle following a heart attack.

Developed by a team of researchers from Brown University, US; Fudan University, and Soochow University, China, the patch is made from a water-based hydrogel material and can be placed directly on the heart to prevent left ventricular remodeling, a stretching of the heart muscle. A heart attack puts the cardiac muscle at a risk of stretching out that can reduce the functioning of the heart's main pumping chamber.

"Part of the reason that it's hard for the heart to recover after a heart attack is that it has to keep pumping. The idea here is to provide mechanical support for damaged tissue, which hopefully gives it a chance to heal," said co-author Huajian Gao, a professor at Brown University.

The researchers said the patch, which costs "less than a penny," has been optimised using a computer model of the heart to perfectly match the material's mechanical properties.



VIOLENT AFFAIR AFFECTS MENTAL HEALTH IN WOMEN

Women, please take note. If you are in a violent relationship you may be at an increased risk of suffering from mental disorders, suggests a new study.

The study, published in Primary Care Companion for CNS Disorders journal, indicates that the unpredictable violence not only causes physical injuries to women but also leaves the victims at a higher risk of suffering from mental disorders.

"We expect severity and frequency to be the major driver to patient outcomes, but in some cases it isn't," said David Katerndahl, Professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center, US. "The nonlinearity, or unpredictability, of the violence is much more of a driver," he added.

However, a certain amount of unpredictability was actually healthier for women, noted researchers. "Women who have, what we call, 'optimal nonlinearity,' which means they have some nonlinearity but it's not extreme, actually did better in the study in general," said Katerndahl.

For the study, the researchers included 120 women participants, who were assessed concerning the abusive behaviour they faced and the violent environment around them.



SKIPPING BREAKFAST MAY UP DEATH RISK

Do you skip your morning meal and eat dinner late at night? If so, it may increase the risk of death and other heart-related problems, researchers have warned.

The findings, published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology, suggest that people with such an unhealthy lifestyle had a four to five times higher likelihood of early death.

"Our research shows that the two eating behaviours are independently linked with poorer outcomes after a heart attack but having a cluster of bad habits will only make things worse. We also think that the inflammatory response, oxidative stress and endothelial function could be involved in the association between unhealthy eating behaviours and cardiovascular outcomes," said co-author Marcos Miniucucci, from Sao Paulo State University in Brazil.

"A good breakfast is usually composed of dairy products (fat-free or low fat milk, yogurt and cheese), a carbohydrate (whole wheat bread, bagels, cereals) and whole fruits," the team said.



BP DRUG FOR TREATING PARKINSON'S

Felodipine, a prescribed drug to treat high blood pressure, has shown promise against Parkinson's, Huntington's and forms of dementia in studies carried out in mice and zebrafish at the University of Cambridge.

In a study published in the journal Nature Communications, scientists have shown in mice that felodipine may be a candidate for re-purposing. A common feature of neurodegenerative diseases is the build-up of misfolded proteins. These proteins, such as huntingtin in Huntington's disease and tau in some dementias, form "aggregates" that can cause irreversible damage to nerve cells in the brain.

A team led by Professor David Rubinstein used mice that had been genetically modified to express mutations that cause Huntington's disease or a form of Parkinson's disease, and zebrafish that model a form of dementia.

Felodipine was effective at reducing the build-up of "aggregates" in mice with the Huntington's and Parkinson's disease mutations and in the zebrafish dementia model.



Fantastic 4 for Everton

Toffees humiliate Solskjaer's men as Utd lose 5 successive away games for first time since 1981

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Olle Gunnar Solskjaer's problems since taking over as permanent Manchester United manager intensified with a humiliating 4-0 loss away to Everton on Sunday.

Defeat at Goodison Park — United's sixth in eight games — also dealt a huge blow to the Red Devils' hopes of playing in the Champions League next season.

Goals from Richarlison, Gylfi Sigurdsson, Lucas Digne and Theo Walcott inflicted the largest defeat on United since they lost by the same scoreline at Chelsea three years ago.

But, after starting his reign with eight consecutive victories, the best start ever made by a manager at the club, former United striker Solskjaer is now collecting some other, very unwanted, statistics.

This latest loss means United have now leaked 48 league goals, the most they've conceded in a season, since letting in 63 back in the 42-game 1978/79 campaign.

Sunday's loss also means United have conceded in 12 consecutive games for the first time since December 1998 while, under Solskjaer, the Reds have lost five consecutive away games for the first time in 38 years.

SECOND BEST

United looked second best even before the hosts scored twice inside the opening half-hour, conceding a succession of corners from which Everton threatened.

It was another type of set-piece, a long throw-in by Digne, from which Everton took the lead after 12 minutes when the full-back launched the ball deep into the United area.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin helped the ball on with the flick of his head and Richarlison sent a spectacular scissor-kick finish flying past David de Gea.

After a humbling 3-0 Champions League exit at Barcelona in midweek, it was not the start



Solskjaer had been looking for. Everton soon made the situation worse for the visitors.

After 27 minutes, Everton cleared a United corner and immediately broke on the counter-attack, with winger Bernard playing a delightful ball inside to Idrissa Gueye.

He, in turn, released Sigurdsson who, with Nemanja Matic backing off, unleashed a magnificent 25-yard shot which bounced just in front of the diving de Gea on its way into the bottom corner.

Richarlison might have given Everton the lead even earlier. His 10th minute shot drew an amazing

reaction save from de Gea. From the rebound the Brazilian hurried his follow-up effort wide.

BRILLIANTLY TIMED

With the recalled Romelu Lukaku booed every time he touched the ball by his former fans at Everton, United had little response to an impressive effort from the home side.

In between the goals, United star Paul Pogba's long diagonal pass freed Marcus Rashford who could only poke his effort over from a tight angle.

Everton effectively killed the



game in the 56th minute. De Gea punched clear a Sigurdsson corner to the unmarked Digne who sent a superb, first-time volley flying back past the United keeper from 20 yards.

Three minutes later, and from the same left wing, another Sigurdsson corner almost crept in at de Gea's near post before the Spaniard stuck out a boot to clear off his line.

Even though Richarlison had limped off through injury, the agony was not over for United with the Brazilian's replacement Walcott continuing the rout in the 64th

minute. Sigurdsson again carved out the opening with a brilliantly-timed through ball which allowed the former England international the space to sprint into the area and beat the advancing de Gea.

Not until the 86th minute, and a comfortably saved Anthony Martial strike, did United have a shot on target.

Meanwhile Everton, who had not beaten a 'big six' rival in 25 attempts before last month, have now won consecutive home matches against Chelsea, Arsenal and United while keeping three clean sheets in the process.

Ronaldo '1,000 percent' committed to Juventus



AFP ■ TURIN

Cristiano Ronaldo said he is "1,000 percent committed to staying" with Juventus next season as he claimed his first Serie A title and Juventus their eighth in a row on Saturday.

Massimiliano Allegri's side had needed just one more point for a 35th Scudetto and their latest title triumph helped ease some of the pain of their shock Champions League exit at the Juventus Stadium to Ajax on Tuesday.

A come-from-behind 2-1 win over Fiorentina was enough to give them a 20-point lead on nearest rivals Napoli with five games to play.

Serbian defender Nikola Milenkovic put Fiorentina ahead after less than six minutes.

But Alex Sandro's diving header on 37 minutes and an own goal from Fiorentina defender German Pezzella after a Ronaldo cross in the 53rd minute sealed another title to ease their European disappointment.

"It was a great season and I adapted well. We won the Scudetto and the Italian Super Cup, which is not easy to achieve," said Ronaldo.

"It didn't go well in the

Champions League but next year is a new page, the fans all want it and so do we.

"I'm staying at Juve, 1,000 percent."

It was the 34-year-old's sixth domestic league title, having won three with Manchester United and two with Real Madrid, as he becomes the first player to win the Premier League, La Liga and Serie A.

Their eight straight title sees them overtake French club Lyon for the record of consecutive victories in the top five European leagues.

The day was a double celebration as Juventus' women's team won their second straight league title since being founded in 2017.

"I'm very happy because we've achieved an important goal," said Allegri, who becomes the first coach to win five consecutive Serie A titles.

He has six in total, having also won with AC Milan, one behind Giovanni Trapattoni, who has seven.

Juventus also equalled the record for the earliest the Italian title has been won, with five games to spare, achieved by Torino in 1948, Fiorentina in 1956 and Inter Milan in 2007.

SINGLES

SANCHES WANTS TO LEAVE BAYERN

MUNICH: One-time wonderkid Renato Sanches has repeated his desire to leave Bayern Munich after another year in which he has struggled to break into the first team. "I have to play more, five minutes are not enough," said Sanches, 21, after he was substituted onto the field in the 87th minute during Bayern's 1-0 win over Werder Bremen. "A loan would be an option. I just want to play, whether in England, Spain or Portugal," he said. Sanches joined Bayern as a teenager in 2016 and after a loan spell with Swansea City last year he has made only six starts in all competitions this term, and is now openly angling for a move away. "I am not happy here, I am working hard but not playing," he told Kicker magazine last month.

SHADAB RULED OUT OF ENGLAND SERIES

KARACHI: Pakistan's fast-rising leg-spinner Shadab Khan has been ruled out of next month's series against England with a virus, leaving him in doubt for the World Cup. The 20-year-old is a key wicket-taking option for Pakistan in the ten-team World Cup. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said the spinner will receive treatment in the UK. "Shadab's blood tests have revealed (a) virus and doctors have advised him a four week rest," it said in a statement. "Shadab is out of the five-match one-day series against England and a Twenty20 match (also against England)," it added. PCB announced another leg-spinner Yasir Shah as a replacement for Shadab in the one-day series. "Yasir has been named as replacement for upcoming one-day series and a Twenty20 international against England," said PCB.

NO TEAM FAVOURITE TO WIN WC: MALIK

LAHORE: Senior Pakistan all-rounder Shoab Malik believes no team is favourite to win the upcoming World Cup. "All the teams at the World Cup are strong and no team is favourite. Everyone has to struggle under the English conditions, where rainy weather may create problems for any team on a given day," the Dawn quoted Malik as saying on Saturday. The veteran cricketer has not been in great touch in the past one year. Since the start of 2018, his performances with the bat have seen a dip. He has averaged 29.21 and scored at a strike rate of just 77.62. His overall record in England too is not good with an average of 13.63 from 23 innings with just one fifty-plus score.

HALES TAKES BREAK FOR PERSONAL REASONS

LONDON: England batsman Alex Hales has gone on an indefinite break due to personal reasons, thus putting a question mark over his availability in the World Cup slated to begin from May 30. Hales, who has a white-ball only contract with Nottinghamshire, missed the club's opening Royal London Cup match against Lancashire. The club said that "no timetable has been set for his return". "Alex Hales has made himself unavailable for selection for personal reasons and no timetable has been set for his return to action," BBC quoted Nottinghamshire as saying in a statement. England players are set to meet up for a World Cup training camp next week, ahead of ODIs against Ireland and Pakistan.

VIKAS, NEERAJ WINS IN PRO CIRCUIT

NEW YORK: Vikas Krishan remained unbeaten, while his close friend Neeraj Goyal also notched up a victory, rounding off a fine outing for Indian boxers in the professional circuit. Vikas claimed a unanimous verdict against American Noah Kidd in a six-round super welterweight bout at the iconic Madison Square Garden in New York. In Toronto, WBC Asia welterweight titleholder Neeraj also defeated Mexico's Carlos Lopez Marmolejo via a unanimous decision in a six-round contest at the Danforth Music Hall. Both the boxers have trained together in the past and are close to each other in the circuit. While Vikas is signed up with the legendary Bob Arum's Top Rank Promotions, Neeraj is handled by Lee Baxter Promotions.

Benzema nets hat-trick against Bilbao



AFP ■ MADRID

Karim Benzema made it 30 goals for the season on Sunday as he led the way again for struggling Real Madrid with a hat-trick that shot his side to a 3-0 win over Athletic Bilbao.

Benzema has been one of the few bright sparks in an otherwise dreary campaign for the European champions and it was his second-half treble that proved the difference at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Victory moves Madrid four points behind Atletico in second, while Bilbao stay seventh, with their chances of sealing a spot in the Europa League dented. However Zinedine Zidane's side stay 13 points behind La Liga leaders Barcelona, who beat Real Sociedad 2-1 on Saturday.

Benzema's advance in the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo and surge since the reappointment of Zidane comes in stark contrast to Gareth Bale, who was whistled when introduced as a substitute here and frequently during his 20 minutes on the pitch.

For all the impatience of the home crowd, it was Bale who won the corner for Benzema's second and then teed up his team-mate's third in injury-time.

The 31-year-old has now claimed all of Madrid's last eight goals in La Liga, a run that includes five matches, while in his last seven games, he has scored 10.

It was from the counter-attack that Madrid scored as Toni Kroos was allowed to stroll forward unattended and feed Marco Asensio out wide. Asensio crossed for Benzema to head home.

The game was reduced to almost a walking pace around the hour, with the Madrid fans roused only to jeer the introduction of Bale, who came on with Isco, with 20 minutes left.

But it was his run in behind that won the corner for Benzema's second, another header, this time at the back post, before a comical mix-up in the Bilbao defence gifted him his hat-trick.

Iago Herrerin rushed out to intercept a speculative ball over the top but made a mess of his headed clearance, the ball falling to Bale to tee up Benzema, 30 yards out but with the goal open.

Dortmund keep heat on Bayern

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Captain Marco Reus played through the pain barrier to inspire Borussia Dortmund to a 4-0 win over Freiburg on Sunday and keep them hot on the heels of Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich.

Reus picked up a knock to his knee under a heavy challenge from Freiburg's Janik Haberer in the second half, but fired Dortmund to victory with a goal and two assists to keep them a point behind Bayern.

Dortmund was under pressure to pick up three points after title rivals Bayern beat Werder Bremen 1-0 on Saturday.

Far from buckling under the pressure, however, Dortmund delivered one of their most confident performances in recent weeks to fight their way past Freiburg in a nail-biting title



race. A silky move in the box saw Dortmund take the lead 12 minutes in, with Raphael Guerreiro and Marco Reus linking up to provide Jadon Sancho with a tap-in.

Guerreiro, returning to action after two weeks out injured, then set up Reus for Dortmund's second eight minutes after half-time.

Lucien Favre's side then survived a handful of chances for Freiburg before a brutal counter-attack saw Reus set up Mario Goetze to make it 3-0.

Paco Alcacer completed a perfect afternoon for Dortmund, converting a late penalty after a Pascal Stenzel handball.

Dortmund face local rivals Schalke in the Ruhr derby next Saturday, before Bayern travel to take on Nuremberg the following day.

PSG win sixth French title

AFP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain won the French Ligue 1 title for a sixth time in seven seasons on Sunday after second-placed Lille could only draw 0-0 at Toulouse.

Qatar-backed PSG are now 16 points ahead of Lille who have five games to play after a campaign which saw them only lose on three occasions in another dominant league campaign.

PSG now have eight French championships since their maiden victory in 1986 although they squandered



three earlier chances to secure this season's trophy by failing to beat Strasbourg, rivals Lille and Nantes in the

space of 10 days. Tuchel, in his first year as boss, has complained about not having enough players as

the world's most expensive footballer Neymar, Angel di Maria and Marquinhos have missed large parts of the season through injuries.

The German has had to call on youngsters Colin Dagba, Moussa Diaby and Christopher Nkunku to fill gaps but Kylian Mbappe has proved his 180 million-euro pricetag with 27 goals in 26 league appearances.

The Parisians host Monaco, later on Sunday with Neymar set to return from a foot problem which has kept him sidelined since January.

Fognini- the master of Monte Carlo

AFP ■ MONTE CARLO

Italy's Fabio Fognini thrilled a crowd composed mainly of his countrymen as he defeated Dusan Lajovic 6-3, 6-4 to win the Monte Carlo Masters on Sunday.

The 13th seed based just 20 kilometres over the border in San Remo, became the first from Italy to lift a trophy here in 51 years, following on from Nicola Pietrangeli, who watched his record fall from the royal box at the Monte Carlo Country Club.

Pietrangeli won the trophy in the principality in 1961, 1967 and 1968. He came to the court after the trophy ceremony to pose for pictures with his new tennis heir, who was following up his shock semi-final win over 11-time Monte Carlo champion Rafael Nadal.

"I started the season rather badly, so this is unbelievable. I'm very content with this victory, especially with all of the Italians here today," Fognini, 31, said. The 48th-ranked Serb Lajovic was playing in the first ATP final of his career and got to the title match without the loss of a set.



Aus enter first Fed Cup final since 1993

AFP ■ BRISBANE

Australia powered into its first Fed Cup final since 1993 on Sunday with Ashleigh Barty and Samantha Stosur clinching the deciding fifth rubber in Brisbane against Belarusian pair Victoria Azarenka and Aryna Sabalenka.

Their battling 7-5, 3-6, 6-2 win set up a title match against either France or Romania in November.

The tie was sent into the crucial doubles match after Azarenka crushed Stosur 6-1, 6-1 in the reverse singles, following Barty sweeping past Sabalenka 6-2, 6-2.

Belarus, a losing finalist in 2017, was scheduled to pit Lidziya Marozava and Vera Lapko against the Australian duo, who were playing together for the first time. But with so much on the line team captain Tatiana Poutchek opted instead



for the more accomplished pairing. But they fell short to give seven-time champions Australia a crack at their first title since last winning in 1974.

Elsewhere, World number two Simona Halep battled back from a set down to defeat France's Caroline Garcia 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 6-4 and put Romania within touching distance of a first final appearance since 1973.

LEADERBOARD	
RUNS	517 David Warner (SRH)
WICKETS	21 Kagiso Rabada (DC)
6S	485 IPL IS ALL ABOUT STRINGING WINS TOGETHER AND WE NEED TO CATCH THE MOMENTUM NOW
4S	1084



9 WICKET THUMPING

Bairstow and Warner's 4th 100 run opening stand help SRH beat KKR in just 15 overs



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Jonny Bairstow and David Warner continued their stellar run at the top as they powered Sunrisers Hyderabad to a nine-wicket win over struggling Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL encounter here on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 160, Warner struck 67 off 38 balls hitting three fours and five sixes while Englishman Bairstow punished the hapless KKR attack with seven boundaries and four maximums in his unbeaten knock of 80 off 43 balls.

The openers looked in command as the target was achieved in 15 overs largely due to their 131-run stand. This was KKR's fifth successive loss in the tournament.

This is the fourth time that the opening partnership

of Warner and Bairstow paved the way for a Sunrisers victory this season. The duo had guided SRH to victories against Rajasthan Royals, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Capitals in similar fashion.

KKR were sloppy in the field and ended up paying heavily for their mistakes. Bairstow was dropped twice, once on 5 by Priyush Chawla off debutant Prithviraj's delivery in the second over and then again on 58 by Piyush Chawla off Sunil Narine.

The trio of spinners were the reason for KKR's downfall as Sunil Narine (0/34 in 4 overs), KC Cariappa (0/34 in 2 overs) and Piyush Chawla (0/38 in 3 overs) gave away 106 runs in nine overs.

Prithvi (1/29) got the only breakthrough for KKR dismissing the threatening



Australian but it was a little too late as the hosts needed just 29 runs off 40 balls.

With Warner gone, Kane Williamson (8 off 9 balls) walked in but the captain had little to do with Bairstow hitting a four and two sixes to seal the victory.

With the win, Sunrisers Hyderabad jumped to the fourth spot with 10 points

KULDEEP DROPPED DUE TO POOR FORM: DK

HYDERABAD: He is expected to play a vital role in India's World Cup campaign but chinaman Kuldeep Yadav's slump prompted Kolkata Knight Riders team management to drop him from the playing XI against Sunrisers Hyderabad barely six weeks before the big event.

The wrist spinner has only got four wickets in nine games at an economy rate of 8.66 and KKR dropped him in their 10th game even though his replacement, K C Cariappa, fared worse, giving away 34 runs in two overs.

When asked about Kuldeep's absence from the playing XI, KKR skipper Dinesh Karthik made it clear that he was dropped owing to poor form. "A form issue with (Kuldeep) — as he couldn't stand up for us in the last game. We had to give him a break and get him back fresh."

However, despite his poor form, KKR's other spinners went for plenty and gave away a cumulative 106 runs in nine



overs.

"Our bowling has been off colour in the tournament. Our fielding needs a lot of improvement too," said skipper Karthik, who is also under scanner due to his poor form and a controversial berth in the World Cup bound squad. "I think 160 was a par score on this wicket if we'd bowled well. I think they (Warner and Bairstow) batted really well but our fielding cost us. And after that dropped catch (off Prithviraj), he (Bairstow) came at us all guns blazing. A wicket of Bairstow would have felt better, feel for the guy (Yarra Prithviraj). We have been outplayed in this game," Karthik said.

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Up Next DC look to continue momentum against Royals

A win at home finally achieved after multiple losses, a confident Delhi Capitals will hope to keep the juggernaut rolling when they take on Rajasthan Royals in an away IPL encounter here on Monday.

Delhi have been doing better at away games rather than at their home ground but on Saturday night they managed to reverse that at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground with a five-wicket win over Kings XI Punjab, helping them remain on third spot in the points table.

Rajasthan Royals also won their match here on Saturday by the same margin against a formidable Mumbai Indians as Steve Smith celebrated his return at the helm with a captain's innings.

With both teams rejuvenated after their respective victories, it will be an interesting battle for one-upmanship come on Monday.

However, Rajasthan would be a bit more desperate than Delhi as they are languishing at the second last position in the points table with just three wins from nine outings.

Rajasthan would look to continue to capitalise on their home advantage under new captain Smith. But they would certainly miss their prolific opener Jos Buttler.



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RR VS DC

JAIPUR

MONDAY 8:00 PM

HEAD TO HEAD

M 18

RR 11

DC 7

off 49 balls to win their last game.

With Dhawan and Prithvi Shaw at the top and the likes of Rishabh Pant, Iyer and Colin Ingram to follow, Delhi would start as a confident batting unit.

Down the order, even Axar Patel is capable of accelerating the run-rate.

As far as bowling is concerned, Delhi Capitals heavily depend on Kagiso Rabada although they have variety in medium pacers Ishant Sharma, Sandeep Lamichhane and spinners Amit Mishra and Axar Patel.

Another victory for Delhi will brighten their chances of making the play-offs and they would leave no stone unturned to achieve a win against the home side.

PTI ■ BANGALORE

Parthiv, Moeen help RCB to 161

Parthiv Patel's attacking half-century and Moeen Ali's final flourish wasn't enough as Royal Challengers Bangalore put up a sub-par 161 for 7 against Chennai Super Kings in an IPL encounter on Sunday.

Parthiv smashed 53 off 37 balls but didn't get a lot of support from the other end until Moeen Ali used the long handle to hit 26 off 16 balls even as AB de Villiers (25 off 19 balls) and Akshdeep Nath (24 off 20 balls) delivered little after promising a lot.

Deepak Chahar (2/25 in 4 overs) was impressive as usual while Ravindra Jadeja's (2/29 in 4

overs) twin breakthrough during partnership was also important in the context of the innings.

Dwayne Bravo (2/34 in 4 overs) also chipped in with a couple of wickets in the end.

Virat Kohli (9) hit a couple of boundaries before a thick edge off a Chahar outswinger brought about his downfall. Mahendra Singh Dhoni took a nice catch behind the stumps.

However Parthiv and AB de Villiers (25 off 19 balls) added 47 runs in only 4.2 overs with the former South African skipper look-



ing in fine touch.

De Villiers smashed Chahar over square leg while Parthiv also flicked Shardul Thakur (0/40 in 4 overs) for a couple of sixes.

Having picked 16 runs off the final Powerplay over, RCB looked in control before Jadeja induced De Villiers to go for a big shot only to be holed by Faf du Plessis at Long-off.

Parthiv was joined by the burly Akshdeep Nath (24, 20 balls), who hit a six off Jadeja, added 41 runs with his senior partner before being caught by Du

Plessis at long-off Jadeja's bowling at the stroke of team's 100-run mark.

The baby-faced Parthiv, whose form has been inconsistent during the tournament so far, was ready to punish the loose balls on the day as he sent a Jadeja half-tracker soaring into the stands for his third six and hit Imran Tahir for a fourth one.

He reached his half-century by pulling Bravo in front of square but was out off the very next ball. Parthiv's innings had two fours and four sixes.

Just when 150 was looking a bit dicey, Moeen hit five boundaries to take RCB past 160-run mark.



Annu, Parul open India's medal account

PTI ■ DOHA

Javelin thrower Annu Rani and 5000m runner Parul Choudhary won a Silver and a Bronze respectively as India opened its medal account on the opening day of the Asian Athletics Championships here on Sunday.

On a day which saw sprint sensation Hima Das suffer a lower back spasm while runner her quartermile event, Dutee Chand smashed her own national record in 100m dash to qualify for the semifinals.

The 26-year-old Annu, who had won a Bronze in the 2017 edition in Bhubaneswar, hurled the spear to a best distance of 60.22m to grab the Silver. China's Lyu Huihui won the Gold with an effort of 65.83m at the Khalifa Stadium.

Annu's performance was, however, more than 2m short of her national record shattering effort of 62.34m during the Federation Cup at Patiala last month which gave her a berth in the World Championships to be held at the same venue in September-October.

The other Indian in the fray, Sharmila Kumari finished seventh with a best throw of 54.48m.

The 24-year-old Parul gave India the second medal as she finished third in women's 5000m race, clocking a personal best of 15 minutes 36.03 seconds. She bettered her earlier personal best of 15:58.35 which she had clocked during the Federation Cup last month.



The other Indian in the fray, Sanjivani Jadhav finished fourth with a time of 15:41.12.

Bahrain took both the Gold and Silver through Mutile Winfred Yavi (15:28.87) and Bontu Rebitu (15:29.60).

Saritaben Gayakwad (58.17s) and M Arpitha (58.20s) qualified for women's 400m hurdles finals from their respective heats while M P Jabir (50.17s) did the same in men's 400m hurdles.

Earlier in the morning session, 23-year-old Dutee clocked 11.28 seconds to set a national record while winning her heat in the women's 100m race. She has qualified for the semifinals.

Dutee bettered her earlier national record of 11.29 seconds which she set last year in Guwahati.

The Odisha runner, however, could not touch the 11.24 second qualification mark for the World Championships.

The Indian contingent suffered a jolt as Hima failed to finish her 400m heat due to a lower back spasm.

MIRABAI MISSES BRONZE, JEREMY SMASHES YOUTH WR

PTI ■ NINGBO

Former world champion Mirabai Chanu produced her personal best but missed out on podium by a whisker, while Youth Olympics Gold medallist Jeremy Lalrinnunga went on a record-smashing spree at the Asian Weightlifting Championship here on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Mirabai lifted 86kg in snatch and a personal best of 113kg in clean and jerk for a total of 199kg in the women's 49kg event to finish on fourth position. Her earlier personal best total in 49kg was 192kg in the EGAT Cup in Thailand in February.

In a remarkable performance, 16-year-old Jeremy secured second place in group B of the 67kg men's event. During his record-smashing spree, he claimed three world marks.

Earlier in the day, Jhili Dalabehera opened India's medal account, claiming a Silver medal in the women's 45kg category. However, 45kg is not a Olympic weight category.

The points gathered from this event will come in handy when the final rankings for 2020 Tokyo Olympics are made



while she was fourth in snatch. In World Championships and continental championships, medals are awarded separately for snatch, clean and jerk, and total lift. But in the Olympics, medals are awarded only for total lift.

This was Mirabai's second international competition in this category after the International Weightlifting Federation re-jigged the weight categories last year. She was earlier competing in 48kg.

Jeremy gave a power-packed performance, smashing the Youth World and Asian records in snatch, clean and jerk and total lift with an effort of 297kg (134kg+163kg) to be placed second in his group behind Pakistan's Talha

Talib, who lifted 304kg (140kg+164kg).

The final standings for the men's 67kg event will be known after group A competition on Monday.

Jeremy, in fact, broke 15 records in total, combining national and international marks. He smashed six international records — three youth world and three youth Asian — and nine national records — three youth national, three junior national and three senior national.

The Mizoram weightlifter pulled off clean lifts in two of his three attempts in snatch (130kg, 134kg) to set a new youth world record. The earlier youth world record was also in Jeremy's name when he had lifted 131kg in the EGAT Cup in Thailand in February.

Jeremy then lifted more than double his body weight (157kg, 163kg) in two successful attempts in the clean and jerk, and in the process obliterated Kazakhstan weightlifter Saikhhan Taisuyev's youth world record of 161kg.

It was Jeremy's personal best and 9kg more than his 288kg youth world record effort in the EGAT cup, where he won the Silver medal.

5 pugilists enter Asian C'ship q/f

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shiva Thapa placed himself just one win away from securing a record fourth medal by entering the 60kg quarterfinals, along with four other Indians, on the third day of the Asian Championships in Bangkok on Sunday.

Shiva was at his destructive best as he out-punched Kyrgyzstan's Seitbek Uulu 4-1 to march into the quarter-finals.

Four-time Asian Championships Gold medallist Sarita Devi began her hunt for a staggering sixth medal from this elite event in impressive fashion.

The 37-year-old Indian blanked Korea's Gwon Sujin to storm into the quarter-finals after a RSC (Referee Stop Contest) decision in Round 3 as she was too dominant for her opponent.

Agile and sharp as ever, Amit Panghal opened his campaign and made it to the last-eight with a 5-0 decimation of Taipei's Tu Po-Wei in his first continental competitive bout in the 52kg.

Panghal continued his sublime form after starting the season with a glittering Gold from the Strandja Cup and will hope to record his second consecutive victory over reigning Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov in a highly-anticipated quarter-final showdown.

Former world junior champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) was at her imperious best in her opening bout against Cambodia's Srey Pov Nao. The Telangana pugilist advanced to the quarterfinals by RSC in Round 2 as her rival could not contain the flurry of punches.

In the men's 69kg, Ashish continued his scintillating run of form with a strong 4-1 win over Abdurakhman Abdurakhmanov of Kyrgyzstan in a split verdict to book his quarter-final berth.