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NOT SCARED
OF FAILURE:
VARUN DHAWAN
14 VIVACITY

Phase-II turnout 1.3% less than 2014

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The turnout for the second phase of Lok Sabha election on Thursday was about 1.5 per cent less than that of the first phase which saw 69.43 per cent polling. According to the Election Commission, the second phase turnout at 67.84 per cent was 1.28 per cent lower than 69.12 per cent registered in 2014. Sporadic violence was reported from West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Manipur even as EVM glitches were reported from some places.

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

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

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



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

Radhakrishnan were in the fray in the second of the seven-phased Lok Sabha poll which would conclude on May 19.

Voting picked up in the second phase by afternoon which was marred by an IED blast by Naxals in Chhattisgarh, police firing in West Bengal on

stone pelters and EVM glitches at some places. CPI(M) candidate from Raiganj Md Salim claimed that his car was attacked by unknown persons when he went to a polling booth at Islampur in Uttar Dinajpur in West Bengal.

According to EC, UP reg-

istered 62.3 per cent polling, Assam 78.27 per cent, Bihar 62.52 per cent, Chhattisgarh 71 per cent, Karnataka 61.80 per cent, Maharashtra 62 per cent, Manipur 74.69 per cent, Odisha 64 per cent, Puducherry 78 per cent, Tamil Nadu 72 per cent and West

Bengal 76 per cent.

The first phase of polling on April 11 included 91 constituencies, registering 69.43 per cent of polling, three per cent more than recorded in 2014 general elections.

Besides Tamil Nadu, voting took place in 14 seats in

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

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

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

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

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

Security personnel have

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAPSULE

2 NAXALS INVOLVED IN MLA'S MURDER KILLED

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

MICHEL BAIL PLEA FOR EASTER REJECTED

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

₹3 CR EXPIRED BEER DESTROYED IN NOIDA

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

4 OF FAMILY DIE IN UP ROAD ACCIDENT

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

Off runway, Jet shares sink 32%; staff seek Govt's help

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

Shares of Jet Airways continued to fall for the second day in a row, plummeting over 32 per cent on Thursday, a day after the ailing airline shuttered its operations temporarily. The scrip tanked 32.23 per cent to close at ₹163.90 on the BSE. Intra-day, it plunged 34.62 per cent to ₹158.10 that is 52-week low. On the National Stock Exchange, shares sank 31 per cent to close at ₹165.75 apiece.

With lenders deciding not to extend any emergency funds, Jet Airways on Wednesday announced temporary suspension of operations. In a statement early on Thursday, Jet Airways' lenders said they were reasonably hopeful of a successful bidding process for stake sale.

Meanwhile the officers and employees union of the grounded Jet Airways on Thursday sought Government intervention to avert a Kingfisher-like collapse of the carrier, which could not take off



Jet Airways employees hold placards as they gather to make an appeal to save the airline in New Delhi on Thursday

after halting operations temporarily in October 2012.

Alleging some "motives" behind the series of developments at the carrier, which eventually forced it to shutter services temporarily from Wednesday night, Jet Airways Officers & Staff Association president Kiran Pawaskar also demanded a probe, preferably by the national investigation agency CBI.

"The situation is very bad for employees. As many as 16,000 permanent employees don't have work today. I told the management that efforts should be made to resume operations as early as possible," Pawaskar, who is also an NCP lawmaker, said asking why the airline did not clear employees dues before suspending services.

Continued on Page 7

New Delhi suspends cross LoC trade as 'Pak misusing route'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday decided to suspend bilateral trade across the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan after NIA and Intelligence agencies found the routes were being "misused" to smuggle illegal weapons, drugs and take currency.

The Union Home Ministry's order issued on Thursday said a stricter regulatory and enforcement mechanism is being worked out and the issue of the reopening the trade routes will be revisited once they are implemented.

The Ministry order further stated that the action was taken on the basis of reports that the trade routes were being "misused by the Pakistan-based elements for funneling illegal weapons, narcotics and fake currency, among others."

The LoC trade, at present, is conducted through two trade facilitation centres located at



Salamabad in Uri of Baramulla district, and Chakkan-da-Bagh in Poonch district. This trade takes place four days a week and is based on barter system and zero-duty.

"Meanwhile, a stricter regulatory and enforcement mechanism is being worked out and will be put in place in consultation with various agencies. The issue of reopening of LoC trade will be revisited thereafter," the Home Ministry said in the statement.



Samajwadi Party candidate from Lucknow Poonam Sinha, with Patna Sahib Congress candidate and her husband Shatrughan Sinha and SP MP Dimple Yadav, during a roadshow on way to filing her nomination papers in Lucknow on Thursday

Opp questions EC for suspending officer for checking PM's copter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A major controversy has erupted after the Election Commission (EC) ordered suspension of a high-ranking poll official deputed to Odisha for checking Prime Minister Narendra Modi chopper in Sambalpur.

As per the EC guidelines, SPG protectees are exempted from such inspection. However, the Congress and the AAP on Thursday said what Modi was carrying in his helicopter that he did not want India to see. "The poll body's rules 'do not exempt' PM's vehicle from being checked," the Congress said.

According to the EC, a 1996 batch Karnataka cadre IAS officer Mohammed Mohsin didn't follow protocol

for checking SPG protectees. Modi had visited Sambalpur to address an election rally on April 16.

Recently, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's helicopter was inspected by EC flying squad in Rourkela. Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's chopper was checked at Sambalpur.

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel took strong objection to the EC action against poll official. "SPG protectees can't be frisked personally. Why suspend an officer for checking PM's chopper? What message is being sent? Law is special for some," he tweeted.

The party said in a tweet that an official was suspended by ECI for doing his job of inspecting vehicles.

Continued on Page 7

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

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid continuing "flip-flop" over the pre-poll alliance for the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress on Thursday said there is almost no prospects of any tie-up with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). However, sources said the party may wait for any fresh move by the AAP till the announcement of the list of its Lok Sabha candidates in Delhi.

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

"They (AAP) had agreed for an alliance with us in Delhi alone on Wednesday night. On Thursday morning, they raised the full Statehood issue. I told them we are ready, full Statehood was in our manifesto for 2015 (Assembly) election. But, later I received Sanjay



AAP's West Delhi candidate Balbir Singh Jakhar on way to file his nomination papers in New Delhi on Thursday

Singh's message that Kejriwal had said the alliance was not possible unless it covers Haryana also," said PC Chacko, the All India Congress Committee in-charge of Delhi.

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

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

"I told him about the flip-flop of the AAP leaders. Now, we will give a final touch to the list of our candidates in Delhi. It could be announced on Friday," he said.

In the evening, Chacko met Delhi Congress president Sheila Dikshit and other leaders to take a final call on the list of party candidates.

The Congress had proposed a 4-3 formula for an alliance in Delhi, offering four seats to the AAP. It had opted for the Chandni Chowk, North West Delhi and the New Delhi seats for itself.

The AAP, however, said if the alliance was limited only to Delhi, the Congress would have to contest in just two seats.

Another B'deshi actor asked to leave India for flouting visa rules

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bangladeshi actor Ghazi Abdul Noor, who had attended a Trinamool Congress (TMC) rally in West Bengal in the alleged contravention of visa rules, has been asked to leave India immediately. Noor is the second Bangladeshi actor after Ferdous Ahmed to be served a "Leave India" notice.

Noor was staying in India despite expiry of his visa.

"Appropriate action is also being taken regarding his overstay in contravention of visa rules," a Home Ministry official said. Reports suggest that Noor campaigned for TMC's Dum Dum candidate Saugata Roy. The Centre on Tuesday had issued a "Leave India" notice to Ahmed and cancelled the business visa given to him for campaigning for a political party against the visa

norms. Ahmed had attended a rally in support of the TMC candidate in Raiganj in West Bengal.

The Home Ministry action came after it received a report from the Bureau of Immigration regarding visa violations committed by Noor. The BJP on Wednesday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission after a video surfaced showing Noor purportedly campaigning for Roy in the Dum Dum constituency in alleged violation of the election model code of conduct.

"This act is in violation of the terms of visa and yet another case of a foreigner actively influencing the electoral process. This is a gross violation of the basics of democratic structure," BJP's West Bengal vice-president Jay Prakash Majumdar said after filing a complaint with the EC.

EC lets off Naqvi with warning for 'Modiji ki sena'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday let off Minority Affairs Minister and BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi with a light rap for his "Modiji ki sena" remark and "warned" him against using the armed forces for political propaganda. It also asked him to be "careful in the future".

Addressing a rally in Rampur on April 3, Naqvi had used the phrase "Modiji ki sena". State election authorities had issued him a showcause notice, to which Naqvi had accepted the charge.

The EC reminded the BJP leader of its March 19 instruction asking politicians "to desist from using any reference to defence forces in their political campaign/propaganda". Earlier, the EC had let Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath off hook with a warning for "Modi ki Sena" remarks.

Yogi to address 4 rallies today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After being restrained from canvassing for 72 hours by the Election Commission for violation of Model Code of Conduct, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will start campaigning by addressing four rallies in central Uttar Pradesh from Friday.

Bharatiya Janata Party spokesman Manish Dixit said that Yogi would address Vijay Sankalp rallies in Sambhal, Firozabad, Mishrikh and Etawah.

The Election Commission had barred Yogi from addressing rallies or taking part in poll campaign for 72 hours starting April 16 for violation of Model Code of Conduct. He was penalised for his 'Ali' and 'Bajrangbali' statement in Meerut.

During this period, Yogi visited temples in Lucknow, Ayodhya and Varanasi and also had lunch at the house of a Dalit in Ayodhya, inviting sharp reaction from the opposition parties.

Dixit said that Yogi's first rally would be at Kaila Devi Temple grounds in Asmauli



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visits Sankat Mochan Hanuman Temple in Varanasi on Thursday

PTI

area of Sambhal district at 11 am. This will be followed by a rally at JL Inter College grounds at Sirsaganj in Firozabad.

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party-Lohia president Shivpal Singh Yadav and son of senior

Samajwadi Party leader Ram Gopal Yadav are locked in a keen contest in this constituency from where the BJP has fielded Dr Chandrasen Jadaun.

The third rally will be at Ramliha Grounds in Etawah

where the BJP has fielded National Scheduled Castes Commission chairman Ramshankar Katheria.

The fourth rally on Friday will be at Junior High School grounds in Mishrikh.

337 nominations filed for fifth phase poll

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A total of 337 candidates have filed their nomination papers in the 14 Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttar Pradesh going to polls in the fifth phase of election on May 6.

On the last day of filing of nominations on Thursday, 158 candidates filed their papers, Election Commission officials said. The scrutiny of the papers will be done on Saturday and April 22 is the last date for withdrawing nominations.

The highest number of 51 candidates have filed their nominations from Lucknow followed by 36 in Amethi, 34 in Rae Bareilly, 31 in Faizabad, 25 in Mohanlalaganj, 24 in Banda 22 each in Dhaurahra and Kausambi, 20 in Sitapur, 17 each in Fatehpur and Barabanki, 16 in Gonda, 12 in Kaiserganj and the lowest 10 in Bahraich.

Meanwhile, 28 candidates filed their nominations for the sixth phase on Thursday, taking the total to 30. April 23 is the last date for filing nominations for sixth phase polls.

Modi, BJP nervous about their poll prospects: Maya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After undergoing the 48-hour campaigning ban imposed on her by the Election Commission, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, on Thursday, hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party, saying that the ruling party and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were nervous and jittery about their poll prospects as they had performed badly in the first two phases of polls.

"The condition of the BJP and the Prime Minister is similar to that of the Congress in the last Lok Sabha polls. The reason for this is their negative stance against backwards, Dalits, Muslims, farmers, traders, workers and upper caste poor," Mayawati tweeted on Thursday.

Later, in two more tweets, Mayawati slammed the Election Commission for taking no action against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for getting media hype during the 72-hour ban imposed on him

for canvassing by visiting temples and the house of a Dalit.

"If the Election Commission continues its leniency (meharbaani) and turns a blind eye, then it will be impossible to have this elections free and fair... The BJP leadership is hell bent on forcing itself (manmaani), as it had been doing till now," she said.

The BSP chief further said, "By blatantly violating the ban imposed by the Election Commission, UP Chief Minister Yogi is visiting cities, temples and doing the drama of having lunch at the house of a Dalit. Why is the Election Commission silent on the Chief Minister's acts when he is violating the curbs and gaining political mileage during his ban?"

After the two-day ban, Mayawati on Thursday embarked on electioneering and addressed a poll meeting at Gopalganj in Bihar. The BSP is contesting all seats in Bihar on its own.

Meanwhile, Mayawati also accused the official machinery



and Election Commission officials of working with a 'biased' approach and supporting the ruling party.

In Bulandshahr, BJP candidate Bhola Singh entered the polling centre during voting on Thursday to influence voters but was only detained later on.

"The District Magistrate of Bulandshahr, who facilitated the entry of the BJP candidate and later detained him after opposition raised the issue, was not removed from his post as the Election Commission seems to be biased in their approach", Mayawati alleged, demanding immediate removal of the Bulandshahr District Magistrate.

Strengthen Modi's hands for development: Maneka

Files nomination papers from Sultanpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Union minister and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Maneka Gandhi filed her nomination papers from Sultanpur Lok Sabha seat of UP after holding a massive roadshow on Thursday. Sultanpur goes to polls in the sixth phase on May 12.

It was Maneka Gandhi's first public appearance after she was barred by the Election Commission from campaigning for 48 hours. She was penalised for her statement asking Muslims to vote for her else she would not entertain them once she got elected as MP.

The roadshow, which started from Shastri Nagar, took almost two hours to reach the Sultanpur collectorate and all the city roads were chock-a-block with people carrying saffron flags and raising pro-Narendra Modi slogans.

UP minister Moti Singh and Nishad Party chief Sanjay Nishad also accompanied Maneka Gandhi in the roadshow.

Addressing an election meeting at Deen Dayal Park, Maneka Gandhi said the pride of the nation had gone high under the leadership of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi and the country had made all-round progress in the last five years that was unparalleled in the history of India.

"Every vote of yours will help in strengthening the hands of Prime Minister Modi," she said, asking people to vote en bloc in favour of the BJP.

Moti Singh and Sanjay Nishad also addressed the gathering.

A seven-time MP, animal rights activist and environmentalist, Maneka Gandhi has been a minister in four Union governments and has also authored a number of books in the fields of etymology, law and animal welfare.

Maneka Gandhi was first elected to Parliament on Janata Dal ticket from Pilibhit in 1989 and got re-elected on Janata Dal ticket in 1996. In 1998 and 1999, she contested as Independent and won.

In 2004, she joined the BJP and won the Pilibhit seat. But in 2009, she shifted to nearby Aonla constituency leaving Pilibhit seat for her son Varun Feroz Gandhi. However, in 2014, she returned to Pilibhit while Varun moved to Sultanpur and in 2019 both mother and son swapped their seats.

Shivpal seeks votes for Mulayam

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party-Lohia president Shivpal Singh Yadav has appealed to the people of Mainpuri to vote for Mulayam Singh Yadav and ensure his victory by a record margin.

Addressing a meeting at Public Memorial School grounds in Safai, Shivpal said that people should vote for Netaji (Mulayam Singh Yadav) as he had always fought for their rights.

Mulayam Singh Yadav is contesting election from Mainpuri on SP ticket and Shivpal has not fielded his party's candidate against him.

Speaking about discrimination faced by old and grassroots leaders in Samajwadi Party, Shivpal said that he had never demanded any post. "I have always respected my elders. Netaji has always been by my side and has stood by me," he said.

The PSP chief said: "I never wanted to form a new party but due to compelling circumstances, I was forced to do so. The new party is based on progressive socialist principles and every day we will work to make it stronger."

Earlier in the day, Shivpal addressed several public meetings in Firozabad and spoke on local issues, assuring the people of his constituency that his party was always with them and would always work for their welfare.

Shivpal is contesting election from Firozabad. "Our party will win at least 10 seats and without our support the government will not be formed at the Centre," Shivpal declared.



Mulayam, Mayawati to share stage at Mainpuri rally

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

History will be created in Uttar Pradesh politics on Friday when Samajwadi Party patron Mulayam Singh Yadav shares the dais with Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati in Mainpuri, forgetting the 24-year-old acrimony when both missed no opportunity to throw barbs at each other.

Though there are reports that Mulayam Singh Yadav is adamant on not taking part in the joint rally of the SP-BSP-RLD alliance in Mainpuri, SP spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary said that Netaji would address the rally as he was himself an alliance candidate from Mainpuri constituency.

Chaudhary said that the SP founder may have opposed the alliance with BSP but he could succumb to the pressure of his son and SP president Akhilesh Yadav.

"History will be created on Friday as it will send out a message of opposition unity against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the country," Chaudhary said.

Mayawati sharing stage with Mulayam Singh Yadav could be seen as a game changer in converting the caste arithmetic into votes and enthusing party workers to work collectively.

Mayawati along with Akhilesh Yadav and Rashtriya Lok Dal president Ajit Singh will address a joint rally at Christian College ground s in Mainpuri around 1 pm on Friday.

However, reports from Mainpuri suggest confusion about Mulayam's participation in the rally. Recently, SP state chief Naresh Uttam had appealed to the people to join the rally in large numbers. His letter said that the rally would be addressed by Mayawati, Akhilesh Yadav and Ajit Singh. The name of Mulayam Singh Yadav was, however, missing in the letter.

Earlier, the SP patriarch had refused to address a public meeting after filing his

nomination papers and has not campaigned in his constituency even for a day. Polling in Mainpuri constituency will be held in the third phase on April 23 and campaigning for the seat will end on April 21.

Mayawati sharing stage with Mulayam Singh Yadav could be seen as a game changer in converting the caste arithmetic into votes and enthusing party workers to work collectively.

In 1993, the SP-BSP had forged an alliance to stop Bharatiya Janata Party's growing influence after the Ram temple movement gained momentum. The then SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav and BSP founder Kanshi Ram had

joined hands and were able to outflank the BJP.

However, the alliance did not last long and ended in 1995 after the infamous Meera Bai Marg Guest House incident in which SP workers attacked and tried to abduct Mayawati.

This triggered an intense rivalry between Mayawati and Mulayam Singh Yadav which has continued for more than two decades.

However, in the run-up to the 2019 polls, Akhilesh, Mayawati and Ajit Singh forged an alliance and the trio launched their joint poll campaign by addressing a rally in Deoband in west UP on April 7.

After Deoband, back to back joint rallies were planned for Akhilesh and Mayawati in Meerut, Bijnor, Bulandshahr, Budaun, Aligarh, Agra, Amroha, Mainpuri and other important constituencies.

However, due to the Election Commission's 48-hour ban on canvassing by Mayawati, the BSP chief could not attend the alliance joint rally in Agra on Tuesday.

Huge crowd greets Ravi Kishan in Gorakhpur roadshow

Gorakhpur (PTI): Bhojpuri actor Ravi Kishan, contesting the Gorakhpur Lok Sabha seat on BJP ticket, on Thursday began his campaign, claiming he will win the poll with Baba Gorakhnath's blessings. Kishan launched his campaign with a roadshow which he started from Gorakhnath Temple after paying his obeisance there with a huge crowd cheering him. "Ee Modi ji ke tsunami ba" (It's a Modi wave). We will win more than 73 seats. With the blessings of Baba Gorakhnath, I will win from Gorakhpur with a record margin," he told reporters on the sidelines of his roadshow. The actor also took a jibe at opposition parties with his trademark Bhojpuri dialogue. "Virodhiyan ke jindagi jhand ba, phir bhi ghamand ba (the life of opposition is at peril, still they have ego)," he said.

CLASSIFIEDS

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I Neeta Singh presently owner of H.No. E-2/738, Vivek Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow have lost my original paper of Lucknow Development Authority allotment letter House No. E-2/738 Vivek Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow. The name of first allottee is Rekha Singh. If found, Please sent it above address. And use of it by any one else will be illegal.

NOTICE

This is to inform everyone that the original allotment letter of my plot no. 1/144, Vipul Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, which was in the name of Smt. Satiyawati Singh D/o Late Durga Prasad Singh & Anila Singh D/o Smt. Satiyawati Singh has got lost somewhere. If anyone gets it, kindly contact our Lawyer Mr. Amit Chaudhary, Mob: 9839265630 within seven days of publication of this notice. Applicant - Indu Bhatt Gomti Nagar, Lucknow

Woman's body found hanging from tree

Muzaffarnagar (PTI): The body of a woman was found hanging from a tree at Harsauli village in the district. SHO of Budhana police station Yashpal Singh identified the deceased as Rakhi. According to a complaint lodged by Rakhi's parents, she was allegedly killed by her in-laws and then hanged from the tree. The body was sent for post-mortem and investigation is going on.

Meanwhile, a 25-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing the mother of a woman he was in a relationship with, police said on Thursday. Aman allegedly killed Huma on April 10 at the Amba Vihar Colony area here as she was opposed to her daughter's relationship with him, Superintendent of Police Satpal Ankit said. The accused was arrested Wednesday. During interrogation, he confessed to strangulating the victim and looting her jewellery, the SP said.

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Poonam Sinha files nomination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) nominee Poonam Sinha, wife of actor-turned-politician Shatrughan Sinha who had rebelled against the BJP leadership, filed her nomination papers for the Lucknow seat from where Union Minister Rajnath Singh is seeking re-election.

Accompanied by SP MP Dimple Yadav and Shatrughan Sinha, Poonam filed her papers at the Collectorate as the candidate for the SP-BSP-RLD alliance in the seat, which goes to polls on May 6.

Clad in a green saree, the SP nominee, who had joined the party two days ago, arrived at the Collectorate in the afternoon after a road show. Thursday is the last date for filing of nominations for the seat. Her husband, Shatrughan Sinha, was present during the filing of the nomination as well as the road show, which was taken out from the party office. The roadshow up till the Collectorate passed through the main market of the state capital where Dimple Yadav was seen waving at the crowd carrying flags of the SP and the BSP. Sinha, who had recently quit the BJP, has joined the Congress and is contesting from the Patna Sahib seat in Bihar. The SP had on Wednesday announced the candidature of Poonam Sinha from the prestigious seat.

Earlier in the day, accompanied by SP leaders, Poonam Sinha had filed another set of



SP candidate Poonam Sinha with her husband Shatrughan Sinha and Dimple Yadav during her roadshow in Lucknow on Thursday

papers at the Collectorate. While BJP candidate Rajnath Singh is seeking re-election from Lucknow, Congress has named Pramod Krishnam, a veteran seer-turned-politician, as its candidate for the seat. Krishnam also filed his nomination on Thursday.

In the poll affidavit which she filed to declare her assets, Poonam's total movable assets

are worth Rs 18,67,25,965 while her husband's total movable assets are worth Rs 8,60,43,051. Her immovable assets are worth Rs 62,65,14,140 while those of her husband Rs 1,03,61,76,600.

She has projected her last five years' income in terms of I-T returns. Her income was Rs 1,23,24,390 in 2017-18, Rs 82,90,410 in 2015-16, Rs

53,94,830 in 2014-15 and Rs 59,86,320 in 2013-14.

She has Rs 5,95,366 cash in hand while her husband has Rs 4,58,232 cash in hand. Poonam has Rs 10,68,69,994 in bank accounts while her husband has Rs 2,74,41,492. Poonam has shares worth Rs 2,96,49,995 while her husband Rs 29,10,814. She owns an LIC policy worth Rs 70,95,555 and

jewellery worth Rs 1,15,14,381 while her husband has jewellery worth Rs 1,03,67,807.

Poonam has liabilities worth Rs 17,81,59,359 while her husband Rs 10,67,04,403. Poonam has done Intermediate from Kamla Nehru Girls College (Madhya Pradesh) and BA from Shreemati Nathi Bhai Damodar Thackeray Women's University (Mumbai).

Yogi lookalike also in fray

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's lookalike Abhinandan Pathak, it was the turn of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's lookalike to file papers from Lucknow constituency on the last day of nominations on Thursday.

Suresh Thakur Yadha, a former LDA employee who has an astonishing resemblance with Yogi, sported a saffron kurta with kundals in his ears. A member of Maulik Adhikar Party, he said environment was the main issue which he was fighting for.

Asked about his resemblance with Yogi, he said: "I remember when Yogi Adityanath first won elections, I was informed through a message that there was a lookalike of mine"

"It is important that we are able to breathe pure air. There are other issues like unemployment which I will take up during canvassing," he said.

Asked about his resemblance with Yogi, he said: "I remember when Yogi Adityanath first won elections, I was informed through a message that there was a lookalike of mine."

He said he had gheraoed the LDA premises with over



5,000 others when they were about to lose their job as employees of monuments. "While others got reinstated, I lost my job. I was fine with it considering the fact that so many people managed to save their jobs," he pointed out.

Acharya says will consider Lko soil as his 'tilak'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Congress candidate Acharya Pramod Krishna filed his nomination papers at Collectorate for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency on Thursday. Leading a peaceful procession from the Salempur House of over 2,000 people, which consisted of more than 1,500 sadhus from the Kalki Dham Akhara of Sambhal and sages from all over the country, the Acharya came in a red Innova to file his nomination.

Alleging that the seeds of hatred were sown in Lucknow, which is known as a city of tehzeeb, Krishna, while interacting with mediapersons, said he wanted to revive the beautiful Avadhi evenings which the state capital was famous for.

"I will serve the people of Lucknow and will consider its soil as the 'tilak' of my forehead.

I am grateful to Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi for giving me the chance to be a part of the 'Mahabharata' being fought here," he said. Calling Lucknow a land of tehzeeb, peace and a symbol of composite culture, he said: "This janta of Lucknow stands for love and amity and I will raise my voice against hatred which is being sown here and bring back the beautiful evenings of Avadh on the banks of the Gomti river. This message will go across the entire world that love wins and hatred loses."

The Acharya said he met Shatrughan Sinha and his wife Poonam Sinha in the nomination room of the Collectorate and he had a conversation with them. "I told Shatrughan Sinha that he and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had to decide whether



Congress candidate Acharya Pramod Krishna and his supporters show victory sign on Thursday

Narendra Modi would become the Prime Minister, or Rahul Gandhi.

The Acharya said that that

he wanted to request Shatrughan Sinha to follow his party dharma and support him as he was following his

'patni' dharma by supporting his wife. "I will, in return, support him in the Patna elections," the Acharya said. He said he was confident of his victory and that Lucknow would support him immensely. "Only the Congress will win," he said.

Earlier in the day, Krishna first visited Mankameshwar and Hanuman Setu temples all alone and then went to Salempur House where he met the members of his party. The gathering also saw the presence of famous poet Manzar Bhopali, who recited a verse in his favour and supported his cause.

Krishnam's nomination procession witnessed Congress members donning caps, t-shirts and gamchhas and carrying the famous party symbol. They also carried the Congress flags. The gathering had over 150 advocates from the legal cell of

the Congress. His supporters said that they took out a quiet procession because he did not want the people to face any traffic jam.

In the assets that he has declared, his total movable property is worth Rs 20,00,000 and the immovable property worth Rs 3,00,00,000. He has 400 grams of gold worth Rs 12,00,000. His wife owns 500 grams of gold worth Rs 15,00,000. He has a rifle worth Rs 60,000 and a pistol worth Rs 85,000. Krishna has done High School from Kisan Inter College (Moradabad) in 1979, Intermediate from MMHV Inter College (Ghaziabad) in 1981, BA from Chaudhary Charan Singh University in 2000 and MA in Political Science from Chaudhary Charan Singh University (Pilkhuva) in the year 2002.

Akhilesh assets worth ₹24,80 cr

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has declared assets worth over Rs 24.80 crore in his affidavit filed along with the nomination papers in Azamgarh on Thursday. The SP chief has also disclosed assets worth Rs 12.98 crore of his wife and Kannauj MP Dimple Yadav. Akhilesh Yadav has cash and other savings amounting to Rs 7.90 crore and immovable property worth Rs 16.90 crore. Dimple Yadav has Rs 3.68 crore as cash and other savings Rs 9.30 crore worth immovable property. Akhilesh Yadav disclosed that as per the income tax returns filed in 2017-18, his income was Rs 84,83,063 and that of his wife Rs 61,45,073. Akhilesh has claimed that there is no criminal case pending against him. The SP president has disclosed that he has a loan of Rs 14,26,500 taken from banks and financial institutions while his wife also has the same amount as loan. Akhilesh has also disclosed that he is an environmental engineer from Mysore University.

Last day of nominations sees chaos, tense moments, traffic snarls

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

The last day of nominations on Thursday had its share of brisk activity and chaotic moments as large number of candidates thronged Collectorate. There was no dearth of independent candidates, including fashion designers and engineer filing their nomination papers.

Other interesting candidates included a Lucknow University's Law professor and an Indian National League member. The candidates kept pouring in till the last moments. After ADM (East) Vaibhav Mishra announced that no candidates would be allowed and the nomination area would be locked after 3 pm, two aspirants were left outside. Aan Shikhar Srivastava, a graduate and medical store owner had arrived at 2.30 but as he went out to bring his proposers, he was not allowed in. One of his proposers said that Srivastava should be allowed to file papers.

Saurabh Shukla, a proposer for Mohammed Sharif from Kisan Mazdoor Party, said Shukla went out to get some document but was not allowed in.

District Magistrate and district election officer Kaushal Raj Sharma, while responding to these complaints, said there were clear directions that all candidates must enter the nomination area by 3 pm. "This was repeatedly announced and a video recording was also made for the same and by 3 pm, we had over 12 candidates within the nomination room. They were allowed to file nomination papers till 5:50 pm," he said. Rashtriya Matdara Party's candidate Dr Sheikh Siraj Baba, of who filed nominations for Lucknow constituency, said he was contesting elections for the first time. A farmer from Malihabad, his assets declared were worth Rs one crore.

LU's Prof DNS Yadav, who also filed his nomination papers from



Vehicles stuck in a traffic grid-lock near Divisional Commissioner's office in Lucknow on Thursday

Lucknow, said he had never fought elections before. "If I win, I will try to implement the socialistic pattern of governance. In the vast majority of people, only the capitalists gain whereas precious little is done for people living below poverty line. Therefore, I have decided to work for these people," he said.

Indian National League's candidate Haji Mohammed Fahim Siddiqui had earlier filed papers in 2014 and 2017 but the same were cancelled. "I am contesting to root out corruption and unemployment, and will work for all the communities," he said. Ishu Shukla, a 33-year-old fashion designer, filed her nomination papers from Lucknow constituency. A former student of La

Martiniere, she said she wanted to see more and more women in and around Lucknow employed.

The maximum number of nominations (27) were filed for Lucknow parliamentary seat on Thursday. The total number of nominations filed from April 10 to April 18 was 51. There are a total of six women who have filed nomination papers for Lucknow constituency and three of them turned up on the last day.

As for Mohanlalganj, eight nominations were filed on the last day. The total number of nominations filed for Mohanlalganj was 27. Meanwhile, commuters had to face traffic snarls due to the nomination processions taken out on the last day on Thursday.

Form No. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL AT LUCKNOW
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007
(Jurisdiction - Part of Uttar Pradesh)
SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION
O.A. NO. 1445 of 2018
(Summons to defendant under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts due to the Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal Procedure Rules, 1993)
Union Bank of India, Hariharpur Branch, Lucknow,Applicant
Versus
Amit Krishna Yadav And AnotherDefendants
To,
Defendants:
1. Amit Krishna Yadav S/o Late Shambhoo Prasad R/o 4/208, Jankipuram Extension, Lucknow-226201.
Also at: Amit Krishna Yadav S/o Late Shambhoo R/o House No. 11/40, Bahar, Sahara Estate, Jankipuram, Lucknow.
2. Anoop Mishra S/o Sri Bhagwati Prasad Mishra, R/o House No. 41, Malpur Colony, Ring Road, Dubagga, Lucknow.
Also at: Anoop Mishra S/o Sri Bhagwati Prasad Mishra, M/S Mar On Power System, 19, Keshav Nagar, Sitapur Road, Lucknow.
In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in Paper Book Form in two sets along with documents and affidavits, (if any) personally or through your duly Authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on **23.07.2019 at 10.30 A.M.** failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Given under my hands and seal of this Tribunal on 9th day of April, 2019.
SEAL
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

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POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Allahabad Bank under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rules 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued a demand notice on the dates noted against each account as mentioned hereinafter, calling them to repay given to the under-noted borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said act read with rules 8 of the said rules on the dated mentioned against each account. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Allahabad Bank for the amounts and interest thereon mentioned against each account herein below. The borrower attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secure assets.
Sl. No. Name of the Account/Borrower Description of Mortgaged property (all the part & parcel of the property consisting of) Dt. of Demand Notice Dt. of Possession Notice Amt. outstanding
Branch: Alambagh, Lucknow
1. Sri Rajendra Prasad Jaiswal S/o Lt. Kailash Chandra Jaiswal R/o 356/218/353, Shivajipuram, Lucknow-226017 All The Part & Parcel of House No. 356/218/353, Plot No- 21, Khasra No.141,Shekhpur, Habibpur, Near Dhania Maharipool, Lucknow, Area- 83.643 Sq.mtr. Boundary: East: 15 ft wide Road, West: House Digar, North: House Sanjeev Srivastava South: House Ram Asarey Gupta 04.01.2019 16.04.2019 Rs. 1,50,554.00 and interest thereon
Place: Lucknow Date: 19.04.2019 Authorised Officer

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया **Bank of India** **BOI** **POSSESSION NOTICE**
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, calling them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section 13 (4) of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules,2002 on the dates mentioned hereunder. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India for an amount and interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.
S. No. Name & Address of the Borrowers & Guarantors Description of Immovable property mortgaged / Owner of the property Amount o/s (as mentioned in the Notice u/s 13 (8) Date of Demand & Possession Notice
BRANCH : 5-D, Sarojini Nagar Coop. Housing Society Ltd., Lucknow-226008
1 **Borrower: Mrs. Neelam Singh W/o Shri Devendra Pratap Singh** Equitable Mortgage of property standing in the name of Smt. Neelam Singh W/o Shri Devendra Pratap Singh, situated at House No. 66, Khasra No.-960 (Part), Jai Rajpuri (Hydle) Ward-Sarajiniagar, Lucknow, Area : 2280 Sq. Ft. Boundary: East: 12 ft. wide Road, West: Boundary of Hydyl, North: House of Gokaran Tiwari, South: House of S.P. Shah ₹ 15,90,940.00 + Interest & other charges w.e.f. 30.06.2016 01.09.2016 18.04.2019
2 **Borrower: M/s Zoya Enterprises, Prop. Mrs. Rahmana Fatema W/o Md. Zafar** 1/5th Share of Khasra No. 559/1 & 559/2 situated at Village-Farrukhabad Chhillawan, Pargana-Bijnor, Tehsil & Distt.-Lucknow Boundary: East: Others Land, West: Rasta/Open Plot, North: Plot of Babu Lal Yadav, South: Plot of R.S. Yadav ₹ 41,19,008.48 + Interest & other charges w.e.f. 27.07.2018 27.07.2018 18.04.2019
Date : 19.04.2019, Place : Lucknow Authorised Officer, Bank of India

S-I thrashed by property dealer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

In a brazen display of muscle power, a property dealer and his men on Wednesday attacked a Dalit sub-inspector who was investigating a case of fraud against them in Krishnanagar. Interestingly, police initially batted for the accused to hush up the case. However, as mediapersons got a whiff of the incident and they raised questions, the police registered a case in this connection. The accused was yet to be arrested.

As per reports, two constables, identified as Vivek and Raghendra, had lodged a case accusing property dealer Sriram Yadav of having

defrauded them of cash on the pretext of selling a plot of land.

After a case was registered on April 14, sub-inspector Arvind Babu, who is posted at Phoenix Mall outpost, was assigned the probe. On Wednesday afternoon, the S-I reached Sriram's office in Sky Hilton Apartment for investigation. "One Ashish Yadav was present in the office and he told me that Sriram had gone somewhere. When I tried to go inside, Ashish tried to stop me but I forcibly entered the office. After searching the office, I returned to the police outpost. Later, I got a call from one Anuj Yadav who yelled at me and threatened me with dire consequences," the S-I said.

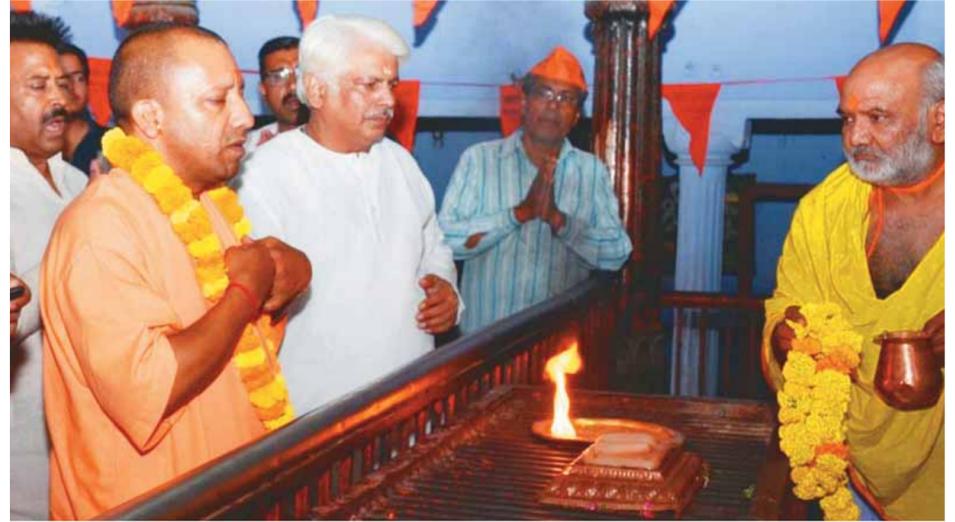
Police initially batted for the accused to hush up the case. However, as mediapersons got a whiff of the incident and they raised questions, the police registered an FIR

He added that he was busy manning traffic near Phoenix Mall when he got another call from one Deepak Yadav, who said he wanted to meet me. "I returned to the police outpost and was discussing some issue with my colleagues when Sriram Yadav reached there

and slapped me. Later, more than 10 of his aides also started thrashing me. Somehow, I managed to nab Sriram Yadav. I then called security incharge of the mall (a retired CO) and asked him to keep Sriram in custody while I got busy in nabbing others. "After a while, I was told that Sriram had fled," the S-I said.

Police spokesman AK Dwivedi said a case was registered against Sriram and his men for rioting, attacking a police officer on duty, hindering the official work and on other counts. "We have also booked the accused under SC/ST Act and a manhunt has been launched for them," he added.

Silenced by EC, Yogi visits Kashi



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Sankatmochan temple in Varanasi on Thursday

Pioneer

PNS ■ VARANASI

Silenced by the Election Commission of India for his 'Ali-Bajrangbali' remarks, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath seems to be indulging in indirect electioneering. After visiting Hanuman temple in Lucknow and lunching at a Dalit's home in Ayodhya, Adityanath landed in Varanasi on Thursday and paid obeisance to the deity at the famous Sankatmochan temple. The Chief Minister later visited Garhwa Ghat Ashram and

also met ailing former UP minister Amarnath Yadav in Jaipur.

Yogi's visit to Kashi is a bid to send a strong political message among the masses, especially in the Lok Sabha constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Yogi visited the Sankatmochan temple, which was set up about four centuries ago by Goswami Tulsidas when he was penning down Ramcharitmanas. Yogi landed at the BHU helipad around 11 am and then proceeded to the Hanuman temple.

He was welcomed by Prof Vishambhar Nath Mishra, his younger brother Prof Vijay Nath Mishra and others. Yogi was accompanied by senior BJP leaders, including UP minister Neelkanth Tiwari.

Yogi offered prayers at the temple and then performed *parikrama*. Later, he held a meeting with the Mahant and others and was informed about forthcoming Sanget Mahotsav scheduled to begin on April 23. Before that, several religious programme will kickstart on Friday, on the occasion of

Hanuman Jyanti.

Without making any political statement, Yogi said that he had been willing to come here for a long time. Later, the Chief Minister reached Garhwa Ghat Ashram and offered *gur* and bananas to cows. It is the same ashram which was visited during the poll campaigning by Modi in 2017. Garhwaghat has a strong religious influence among Yadavs of the region and ironically, it was also the day when Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav filed his nomination for Azamgarh.

RERA seeks action taken report from LDA, Housing Board

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has asked Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) and Housing Development Board to apprise it of action taken against those who violated UP Urban Housing Development Act, 1973, and the land use bylaws.

The violation came to light when the RERA enforcement squad recently carried out a survey of housing schemes and other projects to know how LDA and UP Housing Board were taking the initiative to check the arbitrary approach of builders.

The RERA administration asked the LDA officials to explain the action they were planning to take against the multi-storied apartments being developed on Deva Road. The apartments are being developed with the help of private participation. The developers have only stated the status of the land and failed to furnish further details. Besides, they have mentioned that the project will be completed by the year 2022.

The RERA administration was surprised how the developer has started registering the flats in the apartment

when it is still incomplete and without completing the other formalities. In accordance with the Act the registration of those names applying for the flats is done once the project is completed and also after completing the necessary formalities.

The private developer has not submitted the blueprints to the mapping department of LDA for approval in the case of the housing project coming up at Mohanlalganj. The developer has only registered the project with the LDA administration without seeking a no objection certificate (NOC) from the gram sabha. It is said that the land is under the jurisdiction of the LDA but it belongs to the gram sabha.

Similarly, the developer has initiated the housing project in Chinhat area only by registering it with RERA administration without stating any other details and the deadline of its completion.

LDA Vice-Chairman PN Singh said action had already been initiated against these builders by serving legal notices and warning them of stringent action if they failed to give a reply within a fortnight. The RERA administra-

tion has pulled up the Housing Development Board authorities for gross violation of land use in Indira Nagar and for the shopping complexes being developed by it in the residential areas without seeking permission from the competent authorities. The RERA officials criticised the Housing Development Board authorities for allowing the multiple shopping complexes which were being developed near the main sabzi mandi and in its Sector 17. With this the residents are facing a really tough time throughout the day due to traffic congestion.

The residents submitted several memoranda to RERA chairman Rajiv Kumar, highlighting their problems. Besides, about a dozen shopping complexes have sprung up at different places there.

The Housing Board authorities have been asked to explain what measures they were planning to take to tackle this serious problem which was becoming a vexatious one. In fact the Housing Board has no planning in this regard. Housing commissioner AK Chauhan was not available for his comments as he was pre-occupied in other official assignments.

Handbag stolen from car outside restaurant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Unidentified miscreants stole a handbag containing Rs 12,000 in cash and other documents after breaking the window panes of a car parked outside a restaurant in Hasanganj on Wednesday night. As per reports, Rinki Kumari Singh of Kalyanpur in Jankipuram, along with husband Praveen Singh, went for dinner at Mahesh Mansarovar restaurant on Wednesday. The party was hosted by their family friend Harish Gupta on the occasion of his birthday.

The couple reached the restaurant and parked the car outside around 8 pm. The party concluded at 11:30 pm after which the couple came out only to find a window pane broken. When Rinki checked her car, she came to know that her handbag had been stolen.

Police spokesman AK Dwivedi said a case had been registered and the police were investigating the case. He said the police team was scanning the CCTV footages to locate the suspects.

Student leader's murder: One accused lands in police net

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Coloneganj police, in association with intelligence wing incharge Dharmendra Singh Yadav and SWAT incharge Vrindavan Rai, along with other sub-inspectors, claimed to have arrested one of the accused involved in murder of former student leader of Allahabad University, Rohit Shukla.

Talking to mediapersons on Thursday evening, SSP Atul Sharma said that on being tipped off by an informer that accused Prashant Upadhyaya, a resident of Pandeypur Khajuri Gola under the Cantonment police station (Varanasi), was present at the Prayag station and planning to escape from the city, the intelligence wing incharge, along with Coloneganj SHO Anoop Singh and his team, cordoned off the area and arrested him. During interrogation, Prashant confessed to his involvement in the murder of Rohit Shukla, an inmate of the PCB Hostel. The police also recovered a pistol

and two live cartridges from his possession.

The accused further said that the deceased was at loggerheads with Adarsh Tripathi, Himanshu Singh, Hariom Tripathi, Navneet Yadav alias Abhishek Yadav, Saurabh Vishwakarma and with him over a monetary dispute related to a contract of the under-construction building, students' activity centre. On the night of April 15, the matter took an ugly turn as a result of which all the accused shot Rohit Shukla. On Thursday, Prashant was planning to escape to Varanasi but was caught by the police, the SSP added. A cash reward of ₹25,000 had also been declared on the arrest of Prashant Upadhyaya, the SSP added. Earlier, at least six persons had been detained for questioning and raids were carried out at several places to arrest the accused involved in the murder of Rohit Shukla. After registering an FIR against six persons, teams had also been sent to their native places for nabbing them. The police

were also going through the footages of CCTV cameras to identify the routes via which the accused managed to escape. It was also investigating the connection of the accused with some students' leaders lodged in Naini Jail.

Earlier a conspiracy had also not been ruled out in the case as tension was brewing between the two groups over construction tenders at the hostel for the past few weeks. While Adarsh and his aides were supporting the contractor who was carrying out construction work at the hostel, Rohit Shukla and his aides had threatened him to stop the work, claimed the people familiar with the issue. They further claimed that the accused might have fled to their political patrons in the state capital and might try to surrender in the court to evade their arrest. Circle Officer Coloneganj Shresh Chandra had said there was enmity between the two groups. Police teams had been sent to different areas to arrest Adarsh and his associates.

CRIMELINE

ARRESTED

A man was arrested for attempting to rape a minor girl, who was attending a wedding along with her parents in Sarojini Nagar on Wednesday. The accused, identified as Mohit Kumar of Shanti Nagar locality, spotted the girl standing in a corner all alone. He lured the girl by offering her candies and took her to a secluded place. In the meantime, the girl's parents started searching for her and found Mohit trying to undress the girl. The miscreant managed to flee while the girl's family called the police.

SUICIDE

A 36-year-old man ended his life at his house in Jankipuram on Wednesday night. As per reports, the man, identified as Pawan Tiwari of Hardoi, was living along with his wife and children in Jankipuram. His wife Preeti Tiwari told police that Pawan worked as a private driver. He was depressed due to his poor financial condition. "On Wednesday night, he went to sleep in a room. Around 1 am, I woke up and found him hanging from the ceiling with a *dupatta* tied around his neck," she told the police. The body was sent for autopsy and further investigations were started.

JE THRASHED

A junior engineer of GSI sub-power station in Madaion accused a consumer of abusing and thrashing him on Thursday. The JE, identified as Vivek Patel, was in his office when Rohit Mishra of the locality reached there for correction of his electricity bill. "Rohit started abusing me when I told him to come some other day and later thrashed me," he alleged. The consumer said he was given an inflated bill of Rs 35,000 and had given an application to get it corrected. "The JE was playing delaying tactics and demanding Rs 20,000 as bribe," he said. He also denied the charges that he abused and attacked the JE.

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड सूचना सर्व संचालन के सुलभ संदर्भ हेतु सूचित किया जाता है कि निर्माणधीन 220के0वी0 राजा का तालाब-सावली लाइन के लोकेशन संख्या-83 /0 से 84/0 के बीच विद्युत कार्य हेतु 11 के0वी0 समनगर पोपक दिनांक 19.04.19 को शटडाउन में रहेगा। उक्त के दृष्टिगत विद्युत आपूर्ति दिनांक 19.04.19 को प्रातः 08:00 बजे से 16:00 बजे तक समनगर फीडर से जुड़े क्षेत्रों की विद्युत आपूर्ति बाधित रहेगी। (इन्द्रमान सिंह) अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत प्रेषण खाण्ड-प्रथम 132 के0वी0 विद्युत उपकेन्द्र कैम्प, छावनी परिचर कार्यालय के निरकट कैम्प, वाराणसी। संख्या-1127 दिनांक 18.04.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में विजली बचाये।"

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School girls at an exhibition on the occasion of World Heritage Day, at Chhattar Manzil in Lucknow on Thursday

Pioneer

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN TENDER NOTICE (E-TENDER)

DRM/Engineering acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites following E-Tenders closing date 10.05.2019 at 15:00 hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. **Manual offers are not allowed against this tender**, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money **only through online payment modes** available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

NIT No.	03202019 dated 16.04.2019
1. Name of Work	Hiring two no multi utility road vehicles (Tavera/ Scorpio/ Safari/ Innova or similar) ADEN/BSB & ADEN/JNU on monthly basis for 36 month of each vehicle for day to day inspection
2. Approximate Cost	Rs. 32,78,524.32
3. Earnest Money	Rs. 65,600.00
4. Completion Period	36 Months from the date of issue of acceptance letter
5. Bidding Start Date	26.04.2019
6. Tender Closing Date and Time	10.05.2019 at 15:00 hrs.
7. Website	www.ireps.gov.in
8. Cost of Tender document form	Rs. 3000/-

Note:- "No post tender correspondence for submission of additional documents shall be entertained after opening of the Technical & Commercial offers. Even upto moto post letters of the tenders shall be treated as NULL & Void." (Authority N.R.Ry HQ letter No 74-W/O/PL.XXV/MAIL/Loase Dated 07-04-2015) 1167/19

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SCHOOLSCAN

CMS STUDENT GETS ABACUS CONTEST CHAMPIONSHIP

Nolita Medhwani, a class V student of City Montessori School, Indira Nagar, won the championship of district-level Regional Abacus Competition, organized under the aegis of educational institute Brain-o-Brain. Students of several schools participated in the contest to showcase their analytical skills. Nolita opted for various abacus tricks to solve mathematical problems and ended up as the winner. All praise for her skills, the organisers awarded her with a certificate and other prizes.



The 168 musicians of 17 countries opened in one voice that music has the capability to string the whole world into unity because everyone understands the language of music be it classical, national or regional. The musicians met mediapersons at City Montessori School, Kanpur Road auditorium on Thursday. They will perform at the Gomi Nagar (Campus II) auditorium on April 20 to mark the diamond jubilee function of the school on the completion of 60 years.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CEO for action against Pillai for anti-Islam remarks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

IN SHORT

CBI TAKES OVER PROBE IN JAIPUR DRUGS CASE

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

CPI REFUSES TO WITHDRAW PART OF ITS DD SPEECH

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

JAIDEEP APPOINTED AS NEW ENVOY FOR S AFRICA

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

Kanpur man flung shoes at BJP leaders during presser

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A man flung a shoe at BJP leaders addressing a Press conference at the party's headquarters here on Thursday with Rajya Sabha member GVL Narasimha Rao narrowly missing the hit.

The intention of the man for throwing the shoe could not be ascertained initially but the police, which let him go later in the evening after sustained interrogation, said it was to gain media attention. The attacker was identified as a doc-



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

tor from Kanpur.

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

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

Several important political leaders domestically and internationally have been targeted with the shoe like former Finance Minister P Chidambaram who was attacked by a journalist Jarnail Singh who accused the Congress of playing a biased role in Sikh riot cases.

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

ED seizes ₹82.11 cr gold from Hyderabad

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

For this purpose they fraudulently created around 5,200 back dated fabricated

advance sale receipts dated November, 2016, each for an amount less than ₹2 lakh to avoid furnishing PAN details.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a historic verdict, the Supreme Court has given a ray of hope to people on death row who develop "severe mental illness" post-conviction, saying their health condition would now be a "mitigating" factor for appellate courts for sparing them from the gallows.

An accused could till now take the plea of "legal insanity" under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to avoid criminal prosecution and the defence was "made relatable to the moment when the crime is committed".

A three-judge Bench headed by Justice NV Ramana spared a condemned prisoner, who has not been identified in

the verdict owing to his mental condition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Medicine selling outlets to be known as pharmacy soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

held in February 2019 and it was recommended to replace the words 'Chemists and Druggists' with 'Pharmacy' in Rule 65(15)(b) of the D&C Rules, 1945, he added.

Accordingly, the proposal was placed before the Drug Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), a highest decision making body on technical issues related to drugs for deliberation. "The DTAB discussed the matter and agreed to amend Rule 65(15) of the D&C Rules, 1945 to provide that all licensees in Form 20 and Form 21, they should display the word "Pharmacy," explained the official.

As per Rule 65(15)(b) of the D&C Rules, the description "Chemists and Druggists" shall be displayed by those licensees who employ the services of a registered pharmacist but who do not maintain a "Pharmacy" for compounding against prescriptions.

Similarly in Rule 65(15)(c) of the D&C Rules, the description "Pharmacy," "Pharmacist," "Dispensing Chemist" or "Pharmaceutical Chemist" shall be displayed by such licensees who employ the services of a registered pharmacist and maintain a "Pharmacy" for compounding against prescription.

WHO releases first guideline on digital health interventions

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Even as India is looking towards e-health as one of the health solutions for the people in the remote areas where medical care is yet to reach, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has cautioned that in such health setups, consultations should be conducted by qualified health workers and that the privacy of an individual's health information is maintained.

In its newly released 'first guideline on digital health interventions', the WHO has, nevertheless, recommended digital health technology, accessible via mobile phones, tablets and computers, to improve people's health and essential services, as an essential medium for achieving universal health coverage.

"Harnessing the power of digital technologies is essential for achieving universal health coverage," said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "Ultimately, digital technologies are not ends in themselves; they are vital tools to promote health, keep the world safe, and serve the vulnerable."

Over the past two years, WHO systematically reviewed evidence on digital technologies and consulted with experts from around the world to pro-



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

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

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

lenges in the impact of some interventions," she said while Dr Garrett Mehl, WHO scientist in digital innovations and research warned that digital interventions, depend heavily on the context and ensuring appropriate design.

The WHO also said that people also must be assured that they are not being put at risk because they have accessed information on sensitive health topics, such as sexual and reproductive health issues.

The guideline also recommends telemedicine, which allows people living in remote locations to obtain health services by using mobile phones, web portals, or other digital tools. WHO also pointed out that this is a valuable complement to face-to-face interactions, but it cannot replace them entirely. It is also important that consultations are conducted by qualified health workers and that the privacy of



individuals' health information is maintained.

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A petition in the Supreme Court has sought a direction that misquoting judicial orders for electoral gains by candidates and political office bearers be declared a corrupt practice under the Representation of the People Act. It has also sought a direction that the Election Commission of India (ECI) should have power to refer complaints against them for seeking vote on the basis of religion, race, caste, community or language to appropriate investigation agencies.

"Direct and declare the Election Commission of India has the power to reject the nomination of contesting candidates and de-register the political parties for seeking vote on the basis of religion, race, caste, community or language," said the plea, filed by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

Besides the Centre, the petition has arrayed the ECI as a party. Upadhyay has referred to a recent statement given by Congress President Rahul Gandhi on apex court's order in the Rafale fighter jets case. He has also referred to

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

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

"Ironically, these provisions will have application only during period of election. Moreover, there is no provision to challenge the corrupt practice of candidate, who has lost the election," it said.

It said that in January 2010, the ECI had proposed that the Act should be amended to curtail misuse of caste and religion for electoral gain but the government has done nothing in this regard till date.

The plea said the government has not taken steps to implement recommendations of the Law Commission's 267th report on hate speech.



Photos: PTI

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

PTI ■ UTLIGAM

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

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

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

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

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

After the polls opened at the Utligam polling station,



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

"It was the Army personnel who went berserk and started

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The inmates, including 56 women, exercised their franchise in a booth exclusively set up for them at the Institute of Mental Hospital (IMH), Kilpauk, probably the first time such patients are voting in the country.

The area comes under Central Chennai constituency where the main fight is between former Union Minister and DMK leader Dayanidhi Maran, Sam Paul of PMK under the AIADMK-BJP-PMK combine,

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

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

"I felt special. I am very happy to vote," he said. He was all praise for students of a local city college (Loyola College) and Election Commission officials for conducting awareness programmes and mock polls on the hospital premises ahead of elections. IMH Director P Poorna Chandrika was elated over the exercise being conducted in the hospital.

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

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

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

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

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

Out of three districts, falling

with in the high profile Lok Sabha constituency, Srinagar recorded the lowest voter turnout of 7.9 per cent till 6.00 pm while Budgam recorded 17.5 per cent polling and Ganderbal recorded highest voter turnout of 21.6 per cent voters.

Chief Electoral Officer, J&K Shailendra Kumar in Srinagar said, "The entire polling process passed off peacefully on two Lok Sabha seats with the participation of over 44 per cent electorate". He said, no major incident of violence was reported during the entire polling day in the state.

Over 70 per cent voters came out to cast their votes in Udhampur-Doda constituency in a peaceful manner. Out of five Assembly seats in Kathua district, Kathua Assembly seat recorded 80 per cent turnout



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

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

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

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

70 per cent polling recorded in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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

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

Migrant Kashmiri Pandits protest over missing names from electoral roll

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

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

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

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

IANS ■ BENGALURU

Close to 400 of the 30,164 polling stations in the 14 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka where voting was held on Thursday were staffed exclusively by women, an official said on Thursday.

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

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

"The objective of all-

women's booths is to empower them and demonstrate their capability to conduct free and fair polling as in the case of men," said Kumar.

Both men and women are allowed to vote in the all-women's booths.

When donkeys lent a helping hand to TN poll officials

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vellakkevi and

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

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

VIOLENCE IN TWO MANIPUR BOOTHS

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



Modi mocks Cong-JD(S) Govt

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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



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

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

He asked the crowd, "Are

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

Modi mocked the "never ending drama" marked by

revenge and emotion that characterised the Congress-JD(S) coalition Government headed by HD Kumaraswamy.

"If you want to see *majhoot sarkaar* look towards Delhi, and if you want to see *majboor sarkaar* look towards Bengaluru," Modi said.

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

He said Congress had claimed in its manifesto that making Pakistan agree that its citizens were involved in the Mumbai terror attack was a major achievement. But Pakistan despite agreeing that the perpetrators were its citizens still carried out bomb explosions and even threatened India about nuclear bomb.

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

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



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

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

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

took loans of Rs 20,000 and were unable to pay, were sent to jail.

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

He said the Congress after forming Government in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan

fulfilled its promise of farm loan waivers. "We will not allow two 'Hindustans' to come up in the country," he said.

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

the Modi dispensation, was the highest in the last 45 years. "By demonetisation, Modi took away people's money. Now, Congress will snatch the same money and deposit it in the accounts of poor people," he said. Referring to the minimum income guarantee scheme 'NAYAY' proposed by the Congress, Gandhi said, "Once the Congress government is formed, it will ensure an annual income of Rs 72,000. *PTI*

Terrorism confined to two-and-half J&K districts: Modi

IANS ■ AMRELI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday claimed that the NDA Government has restricted terrorist activities to only "two-and-a-half" districts in Jammu & Kashmir while not a single bomb blast was reported from anywhere else in the country in the last five years.

Addressing an election rally in farmer-stressed Amreli in Saurashtra region in Gujarat, the Prime Minister said: "No bomb blast took place anywhere in India in the last five years. We have been able to contain terrorism to just two-and-a-half districts in Jammu & Kashmir."

Referring to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent statement that Islamabad had tried to reach out to India after the Balakot air strike, Modi taunted him that he "had to make a public request to us to pick up the phone".

Modi said he had not come to Gujarat for an election rally but to thank the people of the state from whom he trained to take on the larger role of the Prime Minister. "My grooming in Gujarat helped me to deal with the long Doklam standoff with China" in 2017, the Prime Minister said.

He said the previous Congress Governments had deliberately delayed the Sardar Sarovar Project, and led to the suffering of the people in the perennially drought-prone regions of Gujarat. If the project had completed 40 years ago, the things would have been much better.

Mukesh Ambani, Kotak endorse Milind Deora for Mumbai South

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

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

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

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

"I'm very proud. I'm equally proud that I'm being endorsed by paanwalas, small traders, Deora said. "Milind is the man for south Mumbai...Having represented South Bombay for 10 years, I believe Milind has in depth knowledge of social, economic and cultural eco-system of the south Bombay constituency," says Ambani in the video.

Kotak said he "genuinely" felt that Deora is able to relate to Mumbaiers. "And his family has been associated with Mumbai for a long time...Milind

truly represents Mumbai ka connection", Kotak says.

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

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

DON'T VOTE FOR CONG, BJP: MAMATA

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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

(Modi) used to call himself Chaiwalla earlier on. Then he promised Rs 15 lakh in every bank account and 10 crore jobs in five years. But now having failed to do so he has changed his garb and has reappeared as Chowkidar (watchman)," Banerjee said adding "many people call him a thief (Chor) but I call him a liar who lies to the people to win votes". On National Register for Citizens (NRC), Banerjee said, "they are invoking NRC in Assam to drive away 22 lakh Hindu Bengalis and 23 lakh Muslims but now we will invoke NBC or 'national bidayi certificate for the BJP after this election."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

OPP QUESTIONS...

"The rule cited governs the use of official vehicles for campaigning. It does not exempt PM's vehicle from being searched," the party said in a tweet. "What is Modi carrying in the helicopter that he doesn't want India to see," it asked. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also took a jibe at Modi in a tweet. "Suspension of the officer who checked PM's helicopter. The chowkidar lives in his own protected shell! Is the Chowkidar trying to hide something," it asked. As per reports, the poll panel had asked for a report from the District Collector and the Deputy Inspector General of Police after the incident. The EC took the action against Mohsin, the general observer of Sambalpur, on the basis of a report submitted by the District Collector and the Deputy Inspector General of Police. Modi was learnt to have been held up at Sambalpur for nearly 15 minutes because of Mohsin's "actions". "Checking of the Prime Minister's chopper, undertaken at Sambalpur, was not in accordance with the EC guidelines as SPG protectees are exempt from such checking," said an EC official.

OFF RUNWAY, JET SHARES...

The bank consortium had rejected the airline's appeal for ₹83 crore lifeline, of which ₹240 alone were to be used to disburse the pending salaries, Pawaskar added. Some loaders of the airline have pledged ornaments of their wives, some engineers have sold vehicles and many have defaulted on their monthly payments. They are among the 22,000-odd employees of the now wingless Jet Airways. As hundreds of employees, highly-skilled as well as semi-skilled, assembled for a "silent appeal" in the national capital on Thursday afternoon, hope was in the air despite an uncertain tomorrow. From being clueless on how to find money for their children's school and college fees, to paying rent for their accommodations, staff are looking for answers and for most, the answers lie in immediate funding from lenders.

Michel's interim bail plea junked

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Court on Thursday dismissed the plea of Christian Michel, alleged middleman arrested in the AgustaWestland chopper scam who sought 7-day interim bail to celebrate Easter with family, noting that he may tamper with evidence and abscond if released.

Special Judge Arvind Kumar refused to grant the relief to Michel and said there are serious allegations against him of grave economic offence. "As per Enforcement Directorate, investigation on certain crucial aspects is still going on and the accused has close link to many influential persons and accused may tamper with evidence and may abscond."

"Thus, considering the overall facts and circumstances, I do not find new ground for admitting the accused to interim bail. The application is dismissed," the judge said. The court also noted the submission of the counsel appearing for Michel who told the court that there is no medical emergency and he is seeking interim bail for general medical check up of accused.

"There is dispensary inside the jail which takes care of the medical condition of the inmates and they are referred to different hospitals by jail authorities as and

when required. It is also noted that the jail authorities are admittedly allowing accused legal interview with his lawyers, as per jail rules," the court noted. Special Public Prosecutor DP Singh, appearing for the CBI and the ED, opposed Michel's plea saying that India is a country of many festivals and thousands of prisoners have faith in various religions.

The accused, therefore, can't be allowed to go out of jail to celebrate festivals. Singh said Michel can participate in Easter in the custody. He further argued that if Michel comes out on interim bail and makes some statement relating to the case, it would derail investigation.

Michel's lawyer argued that since the charge sheet has been filed, there is no point of tampering evidence. He said the accused is cooperating in the case.

"Being a Christian, he was not even allowed to offer a holy mass even during Christmas..." said the application moved by the accused. "It is submitted that the week commencing from 14th April to 21st April is a holy week for Christians and 21st April is Easter which will be celebrated universally. The petitioner wishes to attend the holy mass on Easter day and would like to make offerings

during the Easter day," Michel said in his plea.

The Enforcement Directorate filed a supplementary charge sheet against Michel and others on April 4. He was arrested by ED on December 22 after his extradition from Dubai. He is among the three alleged middlemen being probed in the chopper scam by ED and Central Bureau of Investigation. Guido Haschke and Carlo Gerosa are the two others.

The agency had told the court that Michel made 24.25 million euros and 1,60,96,245 pounds from the AgustaWestland deal. ED has told the court that it identified Michel's properties purchased with proceeds of the crime.

CBI has alleged that the deal signed in February 2010 to supply VVIP choppers, worth 556.262 million euros, caused an estimated loss of 398.21 million euros (about Rs 2,666 crore).

On January 1, 2014, India scrapped the contract with Italy-based Finmeccanica's British subsidiary AgustaWestland for supplying 12 AW-101 VVIP choppers to the IAF over alleged breach of contractual obligations and charges of paying kickbacks.

The CBI on September 1, 2017, had filed a charge sheet in the case in which Michel was named as one of the accused.

2 arrested for supplying illicit liquor

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A head of the general elections, the Delhi Police have intensified vigil to check supply of illicit liquor in the national capital. In two separate incidents, the police have seized a huge cache of liquor in North-East district and South-East district.

The police of South-East District seized a huge haul of liquor and arrested two bootleggers identified as, Shaktivel (42) and Annadarai (45) both resident of Madras Camp, said Chinmoy Biswal, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South-East district adding that prior to their arrested 413 cartons of liquor have been recovered and seized.

"Following a tip off raid was conducted at Madras Camp in Lajpat Nagar. When the team reached near abandoned railway quarters near railway line, four persons carrying sacks on their back were seen going towards Madras Camp. On seeing the police party, they all started running. However two of them were nabbed while the other two managed to flee away," said the DCP. While a 23-year-old bootlegger was arrested by the northeast district police.

North Central Railway, Allahabad					
E-Tendering Tender Notice					
Tender Notice No. ALD/Br/L/2019-20/01			Date: 12.04.2019		
Dy. Chief Engineer/Bridge/Line/North Central Railway/Allahabad acting for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-TENDERS on prescribed form for the following works up to 14.30 hrs. on 30.05.2019. The details of the Tender are as under-					
S. No.	Tender No.	Name of Work	Approx Cost of work (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)	Completion Period
1	2019-01	Provision of FOB at ACOI Station (Width 6.1M) of Allahabad division.	59710484.82	448600/-	09 Months
2	2019-02	Provision of FOB at CAR Station (Width 6.1M) of Allahabad division.	49671062.98	398400/-	09 Months
3	2019-03	Provision of new FOB (Width 6.1M) with 03 Nos. lifts at ETW Station of Allahabad division.	78955849.95	544800/-	12 Months
4	2019-04	Provision of new foot over bridge (width6.1M) at ALJN Station of Allahabad division.	87523225.46	587600/-	12 Months
5	2019-05	Replacement of existing FOB by new FOB (3.05M wide) at Karbigwan, Jaswant Nagar, Bhadan, Kaurara & Hiran Gaon Station (05Nos.) in Allahabad division.	108226208.44	691100/-	15 Months
6	2019-06	Provision of FOB at Kurastikan, Malwan, Kanspur, Gugauli, Aung, Prempr, Sirsaul, Rooma, Chakeri stations (08 Nos.) (3.05M wide) between FTP-CNB section in Allahabad division.	175366881.62	1026800/-	18 Months
7	2019-07	Construction of Bridge No. 1257/1 Between NYN-MKP at Km. 1257/20-1257/24.	7061155.44	141200/-	04 Months

Note: Date of Opening of each tender: 30.05.2019. Sr. No. 1 to 6 Cost of Tender Form: ₹ 10,000/- & Sr. No. 7 Cost of Tender Form: ₹ 5,000/-. Sr. No. 1 to 6 Eligibility Criteria For similar work: Fabrication and erection of steel structure or launching /de-launching of steel girder & Sr. No. 7 Construction of any type of bridge. Note: 1. The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website www.ireps.gov.in up to 14.30 hrs. on the due date of tender opening i.e. 30.05.2019. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 3. Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form / letter head if attached by vendors shall be straightway ignored and shall not be considered. 4. The tenderers shall submit a notarified affidavit on a non judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- as given in tender document in standard format, without which their tender may not be considered and shall be summarily rejected. 5. Document being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. 6. This tender notice has also been uploaded on www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in. 7. Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) & Tender Document Cost (TDC) in respect of e-tendering shall be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. 8. In case of any difficulty/helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. 9. Tender on line can be submitted up to 14.30 hrs. on 30.05.2019. 10. Supplier of goods and/or service would be subject to GST Act and Rules as applicable from time to time. 527/19 Ad

E-Tender No. ALD-Sig-05/2019-20					
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer / Coordination / North Central Railway/ Allahabad, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-TENDER on prescribed form for the following works up to 12.00 hrs. on 15.05.2019. The details of the Tender is as under:-					
Tender No.	Name of Work	Approx Cost of work (₹)	Earnest Money(₹)	Cost of Tender Form(₹)	Completion Period
ALD-Sig-05-2019-20	Kanpur-Ghaziabad: Provision of AFTC side connections replacement due to heavy sulphation of bonds and lead wires in section provided with AFTC.	21350576.70	256800/-	10000/-	06 Months

Date of Opening of tender : 15.05.2019. Availability of tender form: Tender forms shall be available on www.ireps.gov.in 21 days prior to date of opening of the tender. Time date & place of opening of tender: Tender will be opened through E-tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Allahabad on or after pre determined date 15.05.2019 at 12.30 hours. 525/19 Ad

E-Tender No. ALD-Sig-13 to 18, 20, 21-2019-20						
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer / Coordination / North Central Railway/ Allahabad, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-TENDER on prescribed form for the following works up to 12.00 hrs. on 13.05.2019. The details of the Tender is as under:-						
S.N.	Tender No.	Name of Work	Approx Cost of work (₹)	Earnest Money(₹)	Cost of Tender Form(₹)	Completion Period
1a	ALD-Sig-13-2019-20 dtd. 13.04.19	Provision of CCTV cameras at miscreant prone L.C gates, stations, mid station sections over Allahabad division.	98,26,300/-	1,96,500/-	5,000/-	03 months
1b	ALD-Sig-14-2019-20 dtd. 13.04.19	Provision of secured communication with recording facility between ASM and level crossing gate in Chunar-Chopan, Shikohabad-Farrukhabad, Aligarh-Herduagunj and Hathrus-Hathrus fort section.	1,10,26,099.23/-	205100/-	5,000/-	03 months
1c	ALD-Sig-15-2019-20 dtd. 13.04.19	Provision of secured communication with recording facility between ASM and level crossing gate in Kanpur-Naini-Manikpur section	1,64,24,457.46/-	2,32,100/-	5,000/-	03 months
1d	ALD-Sig-16-2019-20 dtd. 13.04.19	AMC of portable V-SAT for communication at ART, Allahabad for Five years.	24,63,300/-	49,300/-	3,000/-	60 months
1e	ALD-Sig-17-2019-20 dtd. 13.04.19	Extension of Railnet through Railway phone lines at Allahabad.	14,00,056.76/-	28,000/-	2,000/-	03 months
1f	ALD-Sig-18-2019-20 dtd. 13.04.19	AMC of datacom equipments of signalling and design cell at CSTE office, North Central Railway, Subedargunj for two years.	3,96,455.70/-	7,900/-	1,000/-	24 months
1g	ALD-Sig-20-2019-20 dtd. 11.04.19	Provision of 6 Quad cable laying in Dabhaura-Manikpur Jn. of Naini-Manikpur section.	27,99,197.58/-	56,000/-	3,000/-	08 months
1h	ALD-Sig-21-2019-20 dtd. 13.04.19	Provision of Wi-Fi System at Central hospital, Allahabad.	9,90,409.82/-	19,800/-	2,000/-	03 months

Date of each Closing tender : 13.05.2019. 2. Availability of tender form: Tender forms are available on www.ireps.gov.in 21 days prior to date of opening of the tender. 3. Time date & place of opening of tender: Tender will be opened through E-tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Allahabad on or after pre determined date at 12.30 hours. In case tender opening date happens to be holiday, Tenders will be opened on the next working day. 524/19 Ad

North Central Railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPONCR

Head-to-head in Bhopal

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



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

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

Rebuild France's soul

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



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

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

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

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

Advertising ad nauseam

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



AJOY KUMAR

In 1989, there was a huge anticipation and excitement about a new way to play video games. All this excitement and anticipation was the result of the marketing campaign behind the "Power Glove", a wearable glove that would serve as a controller in video game consoles. The "Power Glove" was featured and referred to in feature films, found on billboards and plastered almost everywhere. Ask about it today though and you are likely to get blank, confused stares. This because, while the marketing campaign was admirable, the product was completely disconnected from what the consumers wanted. Overall, it was just not a great product. Fast forward to 2019 and you have the Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy encouraging his followers to buy T-shirts with the slogan "Main Bhi Chowkidar." Not just that, this election season has seen Prime Minister Modi repeatedly post, comment, retweet and actively promote the sale of products with either his name written on them or with the latest consumer-friendly slogan of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). How did we get here?

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Take the example of getting a new hospital built or the opening of a new Central university. It is not as if the Prime Minister will help get your hospital built. As the Prime Minister, Modi is required to ensure that the parliamentarians whom he leads, serve their constituents by raising the issues of each constituency in Parliament. Ideally, he should also give credit to such parliamentarians for any work done so that they continue to serve their constituents and, therefore, as a whole, the nation moves forward. However, we hardly hear Prime Minister Modi talking about anyone other than himself. In fact, do you even remember a time when he complimented a particular parliamentarian during his speeches? You would be hard pressed to find an example.

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

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

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

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

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

“THE MUGS, THE T-SHIRTS, THE RADIO SHOWS AMONG OTHERS — THEY ARE ALL THE HALLMARKS OF A MAN WHO HAS MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THE ONLY THING HE HAS ON HIS MIND IS HIMSELF”

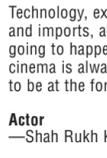
SOUNDBITE

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



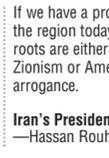
RJD leader —Tejashwi Yadav

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



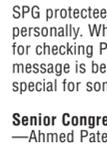
Actor —Shah Rukh Khan

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



Iran's President —Hassan Rouhani

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



Senior Congress leader —Ahmed Patel

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Minting money

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

Sravana Ramachandran
Chennai

Courting controversy

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

A matter of worship

This refers to the editorial, "Women's right to pray" (April 18). "Religion is the opium of the masses", said Karl Marx. On the other hand, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "Religion is to morality what water is to the seed that is sown in the soil." Thus, various views exist on the existence of religion, as also the usefulness of religion. However, as long as the State allows the presence of religion, it has no business to interfere in the religious practices such as how to pray or whom to worship unless it does not infringe on the social life of the country and the fundamental rights as granted to the citizens by the Constitution.

It is in this connection that matters purely connected with faith of a particular religion, and which neither place any burden on the State nor infringe on the social fabric of the country, cannot be decided by the parliamentarians or the judicial authorities, whose roles lie in the interpretation of the law of the land in an absolute manner. The matter connected with the women's right to pray in the mosques, that are purely places of faith, falls in this cat-



egory. It should be best left to the wisdom of the experts of that faith except if it impinges on the woman's right to practise her religion. In our anxiety to be seen as the champions of equality of gender, let us not equate this matter with that of the triple *talaq* but consider it for its specifics.

BP Srivastava
Noida

bloc and defeat (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi.

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

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee
Faridabad

Performance matters

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

VS Jayaraman
Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Time for 'digital first' upgrade

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



AMIT MEHTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



HE (SHATRUGHAN SINHA) FULFILLED A HUSBAND'S DUTY BUT HE SHOULD NOW CAMPAIGN FOR ME AND FULFILL THE PARTY'S DUTY.
 —CONGRESS CANDIDATE FROM LUCKNOW
 PRAMOD KRISHNAN

A new Mexican wave

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



GIRISH KUMAR

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Eventually, all this led to the defeat of the longest ruling party in the 2000 presidential election. Incidentally, the year 2000 also turned out to be watershed for President Obrador Manuel when he broke away from the PRI. He was earlier the head of PRI in his home State of Tabasco. First, he, along with Cárdenas, the rebel hero of 1988, joined the Left-oriented democratic revolutionary party (PRD) but subsequently switched over to a protest movement MRM, which he founded to mobilise students and youths against 'political corruption' and 'electoral fraud' and won the district election. MORENA became a political party in 2014 only and is now in control of both the Houses.

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

During the last six years, the linger-

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

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

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

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

When paedophiles get recognition

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



HASAN KHURSHID

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and marriage of the minors.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOREIGN EYE



CLIMATE CHANGE CAMPAIGNERS: WE NEED THEM ALL

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

Markets slip from lifetime highs on profit booking, Jet woes

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

After rallying to an intra-day record of 39,487.45 points, the 30-share BSE Sensex turned negative to settle 135.36 points, or 0.34%, lower at 39,140.28.

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

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

Markets will be closed Friday on account of Good Friday.

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

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

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

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

"The hunt for new bid-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lenders hopeful of successful bids for grounded Jet Airways

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Jet Airways suspended all its flights after running out of money, lenders to the carrier on Thursday said they were "reasonably hopeful" that bidding process for the airline would end successfully. Lenders led by the State Bank of India had declined to extend more funds to Jet, forcing it to suspend all its flights.

"The lenders after due deliberations decided that the best way forward for the survival of Jet Airways is to get the binding bids from potential investors who have expressed EOI (Expression of Interest) and have been issued bid documents on April 16," a statement by lenders said.

A consortium of 26 lenders led by the SBI, with 51 per cent stake in the debt-trapped airline, has invited bids from potential suitors.

"Lenders are reasonably hopeful that the bid process is likely to be successful in determining the fair value of the enterprise in a transparent manner," it said.

Banks on Wednesday rejected an immediate ₹400 crore demand of Jet Airways, compelling it to ground operations. Jet had been, over the last few months, on a decline as competition from budget airlines hurt its profitability and led to a debt pile. It reported losses for four straight quarters despite sales holding up.

At its peak, Jet operated 123 planes and over 600 daily flights. It was flying just seven planes on Tuesday. Its chief executive officer Vinay Dube on Wednesday wrote an email to airlines' passengers saying "with deep sadness and with a heavy heart that we would like to share with you that, effective immediately, Jet Airways will be suspending all its domestic and international oper-

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 products from different states received GI tag this year

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

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

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

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

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

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

NIFTY 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, High, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their performance.

BSE 500

Table with columns: Script, Open, High, Low, LTP. Lists 500 stocks and their performance.

Top Gainers

Table listing top performing stocks with their percentage gains.

Top Losers

Table listing stocks that have lost value with their percentage declines.

BSE Sensex



NSE Nifty

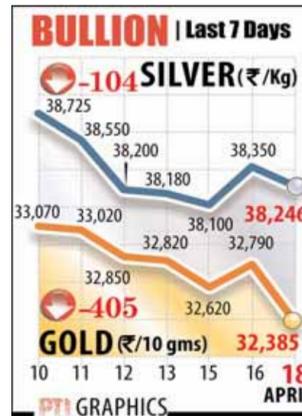


Table listing various stock prices and market data.

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N Korea says it tested new weapon ... demands Pompeo's removal from US N-talks

North Korea said Thursday that it had test-fired a new type of "tactical guided weapon," its first such test in nearly half a year, and demanded that Washington remove Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from nuclear negotiations. The test, which didn't appear to be of a banned mid- or long-range ballistic missile that could scuttle negotiations, allows North Korea to show its people it is pushing ahead with weapons development while also reassuring domestic military officials worried that diplomacy with Washington signals weakness. Separately, the North Korean Foreign Ministry accused Pompeo of playing down the significance of comments by leader Kim Jong Un, who said last week that Washington has until the end of the year to offer mutually acceptable terms for an agreement to salvage the high-stakes nuclear diplomacy. Both the demand for Pompeo's removal from the talks and the weapon test point to North Korea's displeasure with the deadlocked negotiations.



A mock North Korea's Scud-B missile, left, and South Korean missiles are displayed at Korea War Memorial Museum in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, April 18, 2019. North Korea said Thursday that it had test-fired a new type of "tactical guided weapon," its first such test in nearly half a year, and a possible sign of its displeasure with deadlocked nuclear talks with the United States.

In a statement issued under the name of Kwon Jong Gun, director general of the American Affairs Department at the Foreign Ministry, North Korea accused Pompeo of "talking nonsense" and misrepresenting Kim's comments. During a speech at Texas on Monday, Pompeo said Kim promised to denuclearize during his first summit with President Donald Trump and that U.S. officials were working with the North Koreans to "chart a path forward so we can get there." He (Kim) said he wanted it done by the end of the year, Pompeo said. "I'd love to see that done sooner." The North Korean statement said Pompeo was "misrepresenting the meaning of our requirement" for the negotiations to be finalized by the year's end, and referred to his "talented skill of fabricating stories."

Kim observed the unspecified weapon being fired Wednesday by the Academy of Defense Science, the North's state-run Korean Central News Agency said. Kim was reported to have said "the development of the weapon system serves as an event of very weighty significance in increasing the combat power of the People's Army." The Associated Press could not independently verify North Korea's claim, and it wasn't immediately clear what had been tested. A major ballistic missile test would jeopardize the diplomatic talks meant to provide the North with concessions in return for disarmament. A South Korean analyst said that details in the North's media report indicate it could have been a new type of cruise missile. Another possible clue: one of the lower level officials mentioned in the North's report on the test — Pak Jong Chon — is known as an artillery official.

Some in Seoul worry that the North will turn back to actions seen as provocative by outsiders as a way to force Washington to drop its hard-line negotiating stance and grant the North's demand for a removal of crushing international sanctions. A string of increasingly powerful weapons tests in 2017 and Trump's response of "fire and fury" had many fearing war before the North shifted to diplomacy. Russia announced Thursday that Kim will visit later this month for talks at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin, but gave no further details. Russian media have been abuzz in recent days with rumors about the rare meeting between the leaders. Putin is set to visit China later this month, and some media speculated that he could meet with Kim in Vladivostok, the far eastern port city near the border with North Korea.

Trump said last month that he "would be very disappointed if I saw testing." There have been fresh reports of new activity at a North Korean missile research center and long-range rocket site where the North is believed to build missiles targeting the U.S. mainland. North Korean media said Wednesday that Kim guided a flight drill of combat pilots from an air force and anti-aircraft unit tasked with defending the North from an attack. Kim Jong-un, an analyst from Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said North Korea's descriptions of the test show the weapon is possibly a newly developed cruise missile. The North's report said the "tactical guided weapon" successfully tested in a "peculiar mode of guiding flight" and demonstrated the ability to deliver a "powerful warhead." The analyst said the test could also be intended as a message to the North Korean people and military of a commitment to maintaining a strong level of defense even as it continues talks with Washington over nukes. Melissa Hanham, a non-proliferation expert and director of the Datayo Project at the One Earth Future Foundation, said the North Korean weapon could be anything from an anti-tank weapon to a cruise missile. The North said Thursday that Kim Jong Un mounted an observation post to learn about and guide the test-fire of the weapon.

Kremlin says Kim Jong Un will visit Russia this month

AP ■ MOSCOW

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will visit Russia later this month, the Kremlin said Thursday, in a meeting that offers President Vladimir Putin an opportunity to emerge as a broker in the long-running nuclear stand-off and raise Russia's profile in regional affairs. The Kremlin said in a brief statement Thursday that Kim will visit Russia "in the second half of April" on Putin's invitation, but gave no further details. Russian media have been abuzz in recent days with rumors about the rare meeting between the leaders.

Putin is set to visit China later this month, and some media speculated that he could meet with Kim in Vladivostok, the far eastern port city near the border with North Korea. Kim said last week that he is open to a third summit with U.S. President Donald Trump, but set the year's end as a deadline for Washington to offer mutually acceptable terms for a deal. The North Korean



leader blamed the collapse of his February summit with Trump on what he described as unilateral demands by the U.S. For Kim, the meeting may allow him to expand his options in talks with Trump and also balance the influence of China, the main ally and sponsor of the communist North. Moscow maintained close ties with Pyongyang during the Soviet era, building dozens of factories and key infrastructure, sending supplies and providing weapons for the North Korean military. Those ties withered after the 1991 Soviet collapse, when Moscow cold-shouldered former Soviet allies amid the nation's economic meltdown.

Ahead of Mueller report, Trump lashes 'greatest political hoax'

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Thursday complained of the "greatest political hoax of all time" hours before the special counsel's report on Russian meddling and contacts with the Trump campaign. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement Thursday that Attorney General William Barr's "partisan handling" of Mueller's report has "resulted in a crisis of confidence in his independence and impartiality."

Congress' top Democrats are calling for special counsel Robert Mueller to appear before Congress "as soon as possible" to testify about his report on Russia election meddling and contacts with the Trump campaign. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement Thursday that Attorney General William Barr's "partisan handling" of Mueller's report has "resulted in a crisis of confidence in his independence and impartiality."



Barr is scheduled to release a redacted version of Mueller's report Thursday after he holds a news conference about it. Pelosi and Schumer criticized Mueller's plan to "spin the report in a press conference" before allowing Congress and the public to see it. They said "the American people deserve to hear the truth." Attorney General William Barr's news conference Thursday will address the Justice Department's interactions with the White House over special counsel Robert Mueller's report. That's according to a Justice Department official who wasn't authorized to speak publicly on the matter. Barr has faced intense criticism from Democrats over his decision to hold a news conference before releasing Mueller's report to the American people and Congress. Barr is scheduled to release a redacted version of Mueller's report. Lawmakers have said they want to see the full report, without redactions.

Strong 6.7 magnitude quake hits Taiwan, injuring 17 people

AFP ■ TAIPEI

A 6.1-magnitude earthquake jolted Taiwan on Thursday, the US Geological Survey said, disrupting traffic and injuring 17 people. In the capital Taipei, highrises swayed while some panicked schoolchildren fled their classrooms in eastern Yilan county, according to reports. The quake was felt across the island and a highway connecting Yilan and Hualien was shut down, authorities said. An official at the Hualien county fire department told AFP that two people were injured by falling rocks.



People walk on a passageway of a building damaged by an earthquake in Taipei, Taiwan, Thursday.

The National Fire Agency said one, a Malaysian male tourist, had been rushed to hospital in a critical condition after suffering a cardiac arrest, a leg fracture and head injuries. The agency added that there were also 15 injuries reported around Taipei and that two buildings in the city were temporarily evacuated due to structural damages after the tremor. Taipei's metro system was closed for over an hour for safety checks following the quake, while the Taiwan Railway Administration also suspended some of its services in the east coast for several hours, officials said. The quake struck at 1:01 pm (05:01 GMT) at a depth of 19 kilometres (11.8 miles) in eastern Hualien county. The central weather bureau also put its magnitude at 6.1. The USGS had earlier measured it as a 6.0 quake, but later revised it to 6.1. "The tremor could be felt for 33 seconds, which is considered quite long... It could be felt all over Taiwan and it's the first quake above 6.0 magnitude this year," said Chen Kuo-chang, director of the bureau's seismological centre. Social media users posted photos of the glasses at a restaurant being shattered by the quake, and of the exterior tiles of a department store building falling. "I live on the 21st floor, the building swayed so much that I was almost scared to

death," one user posted. The Japan Meteorological Agency warned that people living near the coast could notice some effects on sea levels, but said there would be no tsunami, and "there is no concern about damage." Hualien, a scenic tourist hotspot, was struck by a 6.4-magnitude earthquake last year that killed 17 people and injured nearly 300 people. Taiwan lies near the junction of two tectonic plates and is regularly hit by quakes. The island's worst tremor in recent decades was a 7.6-magnitude quake in September 1999 that killed around 2,400 people.

NYPD arrest man carrying gasoline into St Patrick's Cathedral

New York (AFP):

A man was arrested Wednesday night after entering St Patrick's Cathedral in New York carrying two cans of gasoline, lighter fluid and butane lighters, police said, just days after a fire badly damaged the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. New York Police Department (NYPD) deputy commissioner John Miller said the arrested man claimed he was taking a shortcut through the cathedral after his car ran out of fuel, but his answers were "inconsistent and evasive." "We don't know what his mindset was, what his motive was," Miller told a press conference on the steps of the cathedral, a neo-Gothic structure in the heart of Manhattan. The man was confronted by a cathedral security officer and was told he cannot go inside carrying those items, according to the police. "At that point, some gasoline apparently spills out onto the floor as he's turned around," Miller said. After an alarm was raised, officers from the NYPD's counter-terrorism bureau caught up to the man and arrested him after questioning.

Paris honours firefighters for saving Notre-Dame

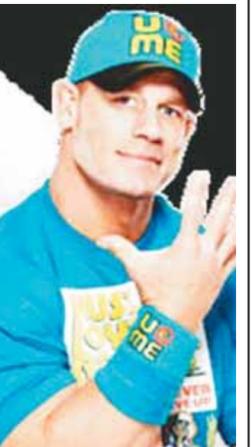
Paris (AFP)

French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday hailed as "exemplary" hundreds of firefighters who saved Notre-Dame in the devastating blaze, as efforts intensified to ensure there was no further damage to the still fragile cathedral. Some 600 firefighters worked throughout the night Monday to put out the fire at the Paris landmark and prevent an even worse disaster, in a blaze that felled the spire and destroyed two-thirds of its roof. Sixty firefighters are still keeping a vigil at Notre-Dame to ensure no further fire erupts while France's culture minister warned that two gables and figurines perched high up in the building were still at risk of collapse inside. Dressed in ceremonial uniform, the firefighters and other emergency workers filed into the Elysee Palace for the closed-door meeting with Macron. "The country and the entire world were watching us and you were exemplary," Macron said. "You were the perfect example of what we should be," he added. He said the firefighters would be awarded France's golden medal of honour in recognition of their "courage and devotion". Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo was also to pay tribute to the firefighters and others who helped save the 850-year-old gothic masterpiece, in a ceremony from 1430 GMT outside the city hall. The ceremony will see a reading of Victor Hugo's celebrated novel The Hunchback of Notre-Dame (called simply Notre-Dame de Paris in the original French) about the deformed Quasimodo that helped turn the building into a cultural, as well as religious icon. Culture Minister Franck Riester said on Thursday that even three days after the fire there remained concerns that parts of the building could collapse. He said one gable in the north transept and another between the two great bell towers were at risk. He also said that figures in the southern bell tower still risked falling and, if they did, this would damage the organs below. An operation will be undertaken to remove them. But he added that "thanks to the exceptional work of the fire brigade, their courage, the strategy for attacking the fire adopted by the two officers in charge, we can say that the worst was avoided".

Macron had on Tuesday in an address to the nation outlined an ambitious strategy to rebuild Notre Dame within just five years, hailing the French as a nation of "builders". The goal was warmly applauded by some but greeted with scepticism by some experts who warned of the painstaking work and expertise needed to make the cathedral anew.

GLOBE TROTTING John Cena in talks for 'Suicide Squad' sequel

Los Angeles: WWE wrestler-turned-actor John Cena is in early negotiations to board filmmaker James Gunn's upcoming "Suicide Squad" sequel. If things work out, Cena will be joining Idris Elba and Margot Robbie in Warner Bros' follow-up to 2016's "Suicide Squad". According to Variety, it's currently unknown who Cena and Elba will be playing. Robbie will be reprising her role of Harley Quinn and Jai Courtney is back as Captain Boomerang. Gunn is also writing the movie, which is expected to go into production later this year. The tentpole is scheduled to release on August 6, 2021. The film will mark Cena's first comic-book role.



Hannah Murray took acting break to focus on studies

London: Actor Hannah Murray says she decided to take break from the entertainment industry to focus on her education. The 29-year-old actor, who became famous courtesy her role in British teen comedy-drama television series "Skins", believes getting a degree in English literature will help her in becoming a better performer. "I just wanted to do it. I really loved literature and I wanted to take a bit of time out from the industry. I've got friends who are doctors and lawyers. I think an English degree really helps with acting," Murray said during an appearance on British TV show "Lorraine". The actor will now be seen in the final season of HBO fantasy drama "Game of Thrones" as Wildling girl Gilly. She is also part of "Charlie Says", the movie about the notorious cult leader Charles Manson.



First 50 retweets can tell if a tweet will go viral

PTI ■ BEIJING

Estimating how infectious a tweet is from the first 50 retweets is the key to predicting whether a post will go viral or not, a study has found. As online social networks and media continue to grow, so has the importance of understanding how they influence our thoughts and opinions, said researchers from Beihang

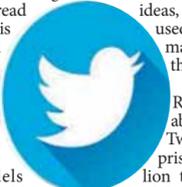
University in China. Being able to predict the spread of social contagions is considered a key goal for those social information networks, according to the study published in the journal PLOS ONE. Although models developed in the field of infectious diseases have been

used to describe the spread of ideas, studies have not used real data to estimate how infectious the information is. Researchers used about one month of Twitter data — comprising over 12 million tweets and more than 1.5 million retweets — and estimated each tweet's infec-

tivity based on the network dynamics of the first 50 retweets associated with it. They incorporated the infectivity estimates into a model with a decay constant that captures the gradual decline in interest as online information ages. Using real data and simulations, the researchers tested the ability of the infectivity-based model to predict the virality of retweet cascades.

They compared its performance to that of the standard community model, which incorporates other predictive factors — such as social reinforcement and trapping effects that act to keep tweet cascades within small communities of connected users. The researchers found that for both real Twitter data and simulated data, the infectivity model performed better than

the community model, indicating that infectivity is a larger driving force in determining whether a tweet goes viral. Combining the two models into a hybrid community infectivity model yielded the most accurate predictions, highlighting the complexity of the interacting forces that determine the life and death of social network information.



Madeira mourns after 29 tourists die in bus crash

AFP ■ CANICO

The Portuguese island of Madeira began three days of mourning on Thursday after 29 German tourists died when their bus spun off the road and tumbled down a slope before crashing into a house. Drone footage showed the mangled wreckage resting precariously on its side against a building on a hillside near the town of Canico, the vehicle's roof partially crushed and front window smashed. Rescue workers attended to injured passengers in the undergrowth where the bus came to a halt, some of them bearing bloodied head bandages and bloodstained clothes, others appearing to be more seriously hurt.

Local authorities said most of the dead were in their 40s and 50s. There were 11 men and 18 women among the victims and all of them were German. They were among the more than one million tourists who visit the Atlantic islands off the coast of Morocco each year, attracted by their subtropical climate and rugged volcanic terrain. "It is with sadness and dismay that I think of our compatriots and all the other people affected by the terrible bus accident in Madeira," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in a statement. "My sincere condolences

go above all to those families that have lost loved ones in this tragedy," she added, thanking the Portuguese emergency services for their efforts.

The 50-odd tourists had left their hotel and were on their way to the regional capital Funchal for dinner when the accident occurred on Wednesday.

Prosecutors have opened a probe and the vice-president of the regional government Pedro Calado said it was "premature" to attribute the cause of the accident.

He said the bus was five years old and had been recently inspected. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said he will travel to Madeira on Thursday with a team of doctors and psychologists to "speak personally with those affected." "It is shocking that an Easter holiday has become a tragedy for so many people," Maas said in a statement.

The injured were "in a state of shock, with memories of terrible images. An injured woman said she had lost her partner," Ilse Everlien Berardo, the pastor at the German Evangelical church in Madeira, told Germany's RTL network.

He said local authorities were trying to find people on the island who speak German. "Even though the doctors and nurses are tending to the

injured with great care and compassion, it's important for the injured to hear their mother tongue," he said. A makeshift morgue has been set up at the airport in Funchal, local media reports said. Medical teams will be flown in from Lisbon to carry out autopsies. German holidaymakers were the second largest group after British tourists to visit Madeira — known as the Pearl of the Atlantic and the Floating Garden — in 2017, according to Madeira's tourism office.

Madeira is home to just 270,000 inhabitants.

"I express the sorrow and solidarity of all the Portuguese people in this tragic moment, and especially for the families of the victims who I have been told were all German," President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa told Portuguese television.

Prime Minister Antonio Costa said he had contacted Merkel to convey his condolences. "It is with profound sadness that I heard of the accident on Madeira," he wrote on the government's Twitter page.

"I took the occasion to convey my sadness to Chancellor Angela Merkel at this difficult time." The last serious bus accident in Madeira occurred in December 2005, killing five Italian tourists in Sao Vicente.



Rescue officials attend the scene after a tour bus crashed in Canico on Portugal's Madeira Island, Wednesday.

14 shot dead after being offloaded from buses in Pakistan

Islamabad/Karachi (PTI): Unidentified gunmen donning uniforms of paramilitary soldiers Thursday massacred at least 14 passengers, including Pakistan Navy personnel, after forcing them to disembark from buses on a highway in the restive Balochistan province, in the latest targeted killing in the country.

Around 15 to 20 gunmen stopped five to six buses travelling between Karachi and Gwadar. They stopped the buses on the Makran Coastal Highway in Balochistan's Ormara area, checked some three dozen passengers' identity cards and offloaded 16 people before shooting them dead, police said. Balochistan Inspector General of Police Mohsin Hassan Butt said around 15 to 20 unidentified gunmen wearing uniforms of paramilitary Frontier Corps were involved in the attack carried out early morning at Buzi Top area.

"A total of 16 people were offloaded and 14 killed while 2 managed to escape," the officer said. Balochistan Home Minister Zia Langove told the media that the attackers used their fatigue as a disguise to carry out a routine check on the passengers.

"We have launched a probe to identify and arrest the attackers," he said, adding that the deceased have not been identified. "One navy and one coast guard personnel were among those killed," Langove said. A Pakistan Navy spokesperson said Navy personnel were among those killed in the attack.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has strongly condemned the killings in a statement from his office and sought a report on the incident. "The prime minister has sought a report into the incident," a PM Office statement said, according to APP news agency. "He directed the authorities concerned to make every possible effort to identify and bring the perpetrators of the barbaric act to justice. The prime minister also expressed his sympathies with the bereaved families of the victims," it said.

President Arif Alvi also condemned the "cowardly terrorist attack". Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal condemned the incident and offered his condolences to the victims' families. "These cowardly terrorists showed the extent of their barbarism by murdering innocent passengers," the chief minister said. He described the attack as a conspiracy to halt progress in Balochistan and tarnish the country's image, and assured that "progress will continue no matter what".

The motive behind the killings is yet to be ascertained and no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Balochistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, is Pakistan's largest and poorest province, rife with ethnic, sectarian and separatist insurgencies.



A man holds a banner calling for people who killed protesters to be punished, during a march by members of the Sudanese medical profession syndicate, at the sit-in inside the Armed Forces Square, in Khartoum, Sudan, Wednesday.

Sudan's military rulers arrest ousted President's brothers

Khartoum (AP): Sudan's new military rulers arrested ousted President Omar al-Bashir's two brothers for corruption, part of a broad sweep against officials and supporters of the former government, the country's official news agency reported Thursday. SUNA quoted the spokesman of the military council, Gen. Shams Eddin Kabashi, as saying that Abdullah and Abbas al-Bashir were taken into custody, without providing more details or saying when it happened.

The Sudanese military ousted Omar al-Bashir last week, after four months of street protests against his 30-year rule marred by conflict, civil war and corruption. Al-Bashir is also wanted for genocide and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court for atrocities committed in the western region of Darfur.

The military council, which took over after al-Bashir's ouster, said the former president was transferred on Tuesday to Koper Prison in the capital, Khartoum, a facility notorious for holding political prisoners under al-Bashir. The military has also arrested a number of al-Bashir's close associates and former government officials. Meanwhile, the Sudanese Professionals Association, which has been spearheading the anti-government street protests since mid-December, released Wednesday together with several opposition groups a proposed blue-

print for the transfer of power from the military to a civilian government. Though the street protesters were overjoyed at al-Bashir's ouster, they were not happy with the military taking over and have demanded a swift handover of power to civilian rule.

The military council has said it plans to rule for a maximum of two years as they country prepares for new elections. The protesters fear the army, dominated by al-Bashir appointees, will cling to power or select one of its own to succeed him. They have vowed to carry on with their protests, focused around a sit-in outside the military headquarters in Khartoum, until the transfer of power is complete. The two-page blueprint posted online envisages a civilian presidential council made up of "revolutionary figures" and a defense minister, the only representative from the military.

It also proposes the formation of a Cabinet of technocrats to run daily affairs of the state and a legislative council to draft laws and oversee the Cabinet until a new constitution is written. "We have to continue our sit-ins until a transitional civilian authority takes over," the document says. "We have faith that our people's victory is coming and that no power can stop our people from achieving all their goals." It's not clear what will happen next to al-Bashir, a pariah in any countries. The military has said it

would not extradite him to the ICC but has not ruled out that a future civilian government could someday hand him over to the tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands.

Meanwhile, South Sudan's President Salva Kiir offered to mediate in Sudan's political crisis. In a letter seen by The Associated Press, Kiir this week pledged his support for a transition where the rights of the Sudanese people are protected and offered to "mediate the ongoing negotiations" among various groups. Some in South Sudan are concerned that al-Bashir's departure will hurt their country's fragile peace deal, which al-Bashir helped broker. South Sudan declared independence from Sudan in 2011, following decades of civil war.

But they new country subsequently sank into its own civil war, which ended with an agreement signed in September.

The deal calls for opposition leader Riek Machar to return to South Sudan next month to once again become Kiir's deputy, though that looks increasingly unlikely as tensions continue. One political analyst called Kiir's offer of mediation over al-Bashir a "hypocritical public relations" stunt.

"It doesn't make sense. You cannot leave your house in a mess and claim to clean your neighbor's house," Jacob Chol, professor at the University of Juba, told the AP.

Pakistan's Finance Minister Asad Umar quits ahead of IMF deal

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Finance Minister Asad Umar abruptly quit the Cabinet on Thursday before securing a crucial multi-billion dollar IMF bailout package for the cash-strapped country, amid mounting criticism by the opposition and business community over the handling of the economic crisis. Umar, who recently returned from a trip to the US in which the details of Pakistan's next International Monetary Fund bailout were finalised, said he has obtained Prime Minister Imran Khan's consent "to not take any cabinet position". "As part of a cabinet reshuffle, prime minister desired that I take the energy



minister portfolio instead of finance," said Umar, one of the close aides of the prime minister. "However, I have obtained his consent to not take any cabinet position."

Later, addressing a press conference here, Umar said that it was time to make some "difficult decisions" to stabilise

the economy and that he hopes his replacement would be supported in their efforts. "I don't know if there has been a conspiracy or not (to remove me) but all I know is that my 'captain' (Imran Khan) wanted to see me in the role of the energy minister. I did not think that would be a great idea so I refused," a visibly upset Umar said.

Prime Minister Khan-led government and Finance Minister Umar in particular have faced mounting criticism by opposition parties, members of the business community and citizens over the handling of the economic crisis. Cash-strapped Pakistan is seeking USD 8 billion from the IMF to bail itself

out from a severe balance-of-payments crisis that threatens to cripple the country's economy.

Pakistan has so far received a total of USD 9.1 billion in financial aid packages from friendly countries like China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE during the current fiscal year. "We have finalised the IMF agreement on much better terms than before."

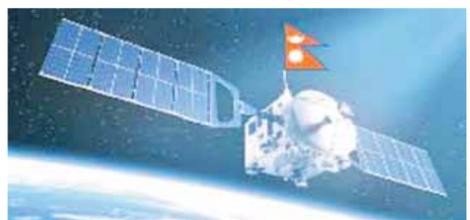
It is the time to take difficult decisions; I have made these decisions, I refused to take the decisions that would have crushed the nation," Umar said. Responding to a question, the finance minister defended his performance and said "Who says that I have failed in achieving what I wanted to achieve?"

Nepal launches its first satellite

Kathmandu (PTI): Nepal Thursday successfully launched its first satellite into space from the US to gather detailed geographical information of the Himalayan nation, evoking unbridled excitement among the people and scientists. Developed by the Nepalese scientists, NepaliSat-1 satellite was launched at 2:31 am (Nepal time) from Virginia in United States, according to Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST).

Two Nepali scientists, Aabhas Maskey and Hariram Shrestha who are currently studying at Japanese Kyushu Institute of Technology, developed the satellite under the BIRDS project of their institute. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli congratulated all the scientists and institutions involved in the development of the satellite. He said it was a matter of prestige for the country to have its own satellite.

"Though a humble beginning, with the launching of NepaliSat-1 Nepal has entered the Space-Era. I wish to congratulate all those scientists and institutions that were involved right from the devel-



opment to its launching thereby enhancing the prestige of our country," he said in a tweet. Spokesperson for NAST Suresh Kumar Dhungel said they invested in the satellite in a bid to open new paths for space engineering in the country.

He said with the help of NepaliSat-1, ground station located at NAST office will communicate and gather images of the geographical area of the country. NepaliSat-1 is a low orbit satellite which will be in the 400-km distance from the Earth's surface. It will be stationed at the International Space Station for a month and then it will be sent to orbit the earth, according to NAST. The satellite will take photographs on a regular basis to gather geographical infor-

mation of the country. The satellite has a Nepali flag and the NAST logo. It also has the name of the scientists involved in the making of the satellite. Nepal Academy of Science and Technology has invested nearly Rs 20 million for the satellite that weighs 1.3 kilograms, a small satellite with limited capability.

Nepal's first entry into space has brought huge excitement among people and scientists. NAST initiated the launch of the country's own satellite under the BIRDS project of the Japanese Kyushu Institute of Technology. The BIRDS project has been designed in association with the United Nations and aims at helping countries launch their first satellite.

Expelled Bangladeshi actor apologises for campaigning for Indian elections

Dhaka (PTI): Popular Bangladeshi actor Ferdous Ahmed, who was expelled by the Indian government, has apologised for campaigning for a candidate in West Bengal, terming it as an "inadvertent mistake" and a step taken out of love of the people of the state. The Indian government on Tuesday issued a 'Leave India' notice to Ahmed and cancelled the business visa given to him for allegedly campaigning for a Trinamool Congress candidate in the state.

The actor has also been "blacklisted" by the Union Home Ministry, jeopardising the chances of his future travel to India. "I apologise for my inadvertent mistake. I hope everyone will forgive me," he was quoted as saying by bdnews24 news portal.

Ferdous said he understood that it was a "mistake" to take part in election campaign of another country, he said in his statement to the news website on Wednesday after returning home the previous night. He said he had been "driven by emotion from the love of the people of West Bengal" when he had joined the campaign



along with his Indian co-actors. Ahmed, along with a few Indian actors, allegedly took part in campaigning for TMC's Raiganj candidate Kahaiyalal Agarwal.

The Bangladeshi film star was reportedly seen seeking votes for Aarwal at campaign rallies across Hemtabad and Karandighi near the Indo-Bangladesh border. Ahmed won Bangladesh National Film Award for best actor four times for his roles in the films Hothat Brishhi (1998), Gangajatra (2009), Kusum Kusum Prem (2011), Ek Cup Cha (2014). Another Bangladeshi actor Ghazi Abdul Noor was on Thursday asked to leave India immediately after he attended a political rally in West Bengal.



Incumbent Indonesian President Joko Widodo, center left, shares a light moment with his running mate Ma'ruf Amin, center right, during a press conference after a meeting with their coalition parties in Jakarta, Indonesia, Thursday. Widodo said Thursday he was won reelection after securing an estimated 54% of the vote, backtracking on an earlier vow to wait for official results after his challenger made improbable claims of victory.

AN OPERATIC SPREAD

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



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

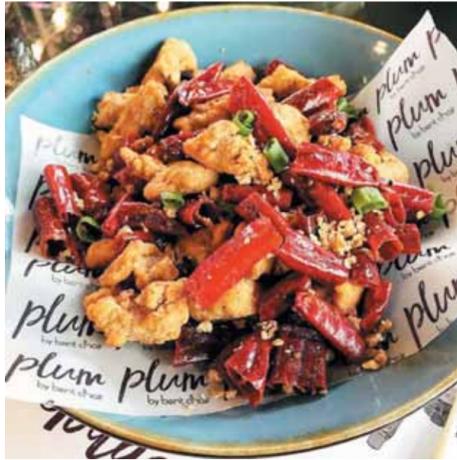
Now, coming back to what the restaurant has been making waves for. A joint effort by restaurateur Priyank Sakhija along with partner Natasha Jain (the lady behind Bent Chair), it started with a unique concept of combining retail with eating out. So while you eat, if you happen to admire anything from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



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

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

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



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

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

of various vegetables.

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

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

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

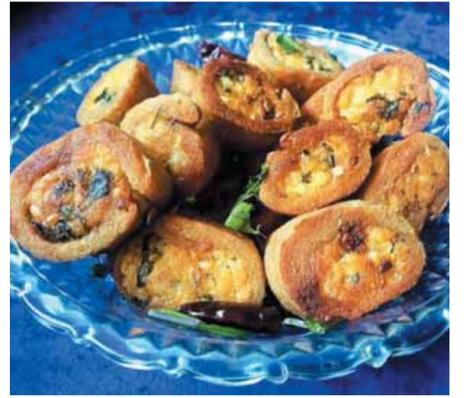
We also ordered the *Planter Broccoli Bird Eye*, which Chef Sagar Bajaj told us, was made by reducing milk that gave it a slightly sweet taste. The tempura broccoli was crunchy and the bird-eye chilli gave it a slight heat. The chef told us that as compared to Mumbai, where they opened the first outlet,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

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

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

CHEF TALK

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



Preserving legacies

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

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

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

India being the country which is vast in culture, always has space for all. I do believe a global exposure through social media showcasing the beauty of this cuisine will be helpful. Whether through food enthusiasts writing more about this or food critics giving their valuable feedback on these dishes. Through chef tables that I organise, my prime goal is to bring forth this cuisine to as many as I can, making sure the legacy of my ancestors is carried forward respectfully.

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

Since it's an adapted cuisine from Mughals, people



forward and is being appreciated by a number of people.

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

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

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

In the world of fusion and latest gastronomic style of cooking, I believe one still looks back to that bygone era which used to fill our hearts and not just the tummy. With traditional cuisines one can't experiment much with ingredients and style, but can only master the old techniques and present it to the new world in their own signature style. However, I don't follow the latest trend but I make sure I give the customer a complete experience of not just the food but the journey along with it.

◆ Food is subjective. Some may like a dish and some won't. How do you deal with negative criticism to your food?

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

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

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

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

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



gorge us

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



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

SPICED CHICKEN, CHEESE AND EGG MELT

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



METHOD

For spiced chicken:

- Cut the chicken in long strips.
- In a bowl, mix hung curd, salt, red chilli powder, turmeric powder, lemon juice, roasted cumin powder, ginger garlic paste and a bit of olive oil to make a marinade.
- Marinate the chicken strips in the mixture for 15-20 minutes and cook them in a thick bottom pan over medium heat till the chicken is tender.

For scrambled eggs:

- Scramble the eggs in small pan



Café Delhi Heights is turning itself into a stadium this IPL season, with a specially curated 'Cafedium menu' that offers Hummus, *Falafel*, Pizzas, Bruschetta, *Galauti Kebabs*, Bang Bang Chicken 65, *Shish Taouk*, Croquettes and more. **Price:** Meal for two: ₹1,200 plus taxes **Date:** Till May **Time:** 12 pm to 12 am **Venue:** All outlets of Cafe Delhi Heights (Cyber Hub, Rajouri Garden, DLF Promenade).



Artful Baker brings to you mouth-watering delicacies such as Easter pops, *Babka*, a Ukrainian Easter specialty, *Gianduja* and orange, a hazelnut and dark chocolate mousse, Raspberry and apple cake, and *Pecan* and Maple tea cake. **Price:** ₹500 plus taxes **Date:** April 21 **Venue:** The artful Baker, Khan Market.

Celebrate Easter at Hyatt Regency this Sunday as they offer a scrumptious brunch with a specially curated menu that has salads and meats with a selection of red, white and sparkling wines. There are special activities as well for kids to rejoice on the weekend. **Price:** Food and beverages: ₹2,550 plus taxes; With wines and beer: ₹3,550 plus taxes; Taittinger champagne: ₹5,250 plus taxes **Venue:** Cafe, Hyatt Regency.



Daniell's Tavern brings all Bengali flavours under one roof, offering *Mate chorchori*, *Potal chingri*, *Murgir jhol*, *Basanti pulao*, *Hilsa fish*, *Mishti doi* and many more delicacies specially curated by chef Prem K Pogakula. **Date:** Till April 20 **Time:** 6.30 pm to 11.45 pm **Price:** ₹5,000 for two (plus taxes; without alcohol) **Venue:** Daniell's Tavern, The Imperial.



MILK CHOCOLATE FRUIT AND NUT BAR

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Milk chocolate couverture: 100 gm
 - Candied orange slice: 40 gm
 - Dried apricot: 40 gm
 - Roasted almonds: 20 gm
 - Dried cranberries: 30 gm
 - Roasted cashew nuts: 40 gm

METHOD

- Melt the chocolate in a bowl by setting over a pan of barely simmering water. If you want to temper the chocolate. While the chocolate is melting, gather and prepare other ingredients for bar.
- Once the chocolate is melted, remove the bowl from the pan and wipe the moisture off the bottom of the bowl. Temper the chocolate.



- Pour a layer of chocolate into the bar molds. Tap them on the counter a few times to distribute the chocolate evenly and release any air bubbles, then quickly top with fruits and nuts. Press them slightly.
- Put the bars in the refrigerator for 5-10 minutes. De-mould the chocolate bars from the molds. Store in a cool dry place.

RECIPES



LAMB OSSO BUCCO

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

METHOD

- Put the flour in a large platter and season it with salt and pepper. Rub each slice of lamb in flour, coating each well.
- Use a large skillet. Heat the olive oil then wait till the lamb slices turn brown. Set them aside on another platter.
- Using the same skillet, add some olive oil, cook the chopped onion,

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

- Raise the flame and pour the red wine into the vegetables, stir gently to de-glaze.
- When the wine evaporates, add the meat and the tomatoes.
- Now you can either finish the cooking in the oven. Cover it. Bake for 50 minutes or until the irresistible aroma drives you to fork a piece right out of the oven.
- Serve it by scattering with fava beans or steamed green vegetables.

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

Trend Blazer

I am not scared of failure: Varun

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



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

—Rasika Dugal



Actor RAJKUMMAR RAO has praised his girlfriend and actress Patralekhaa. He says the *Citylight* actress makes him proud. Rajkumar shared a poster of Patralekhaa's next film titled *Badnaam Gali* along with a poster of his forthcoming film *Mental Hai Kya*. In the image, Patralekhaa can be seen with a blooming baby bump and actor Divyendu Sharma in a shocked expression. Cheering for the actress, Rajkumar captioned, "It doesn't happen quite often that both our posters come out on the same day. You wonder girl Patralekhaa. You make me proud."



Rose has no sense of smell

Actress ROSE MCGOWAN says she has no sense of smell but "extraordinary" powers of taste. "I did a series of tests at Harvard because I lost my sense of smell in a freak accident. They were studying me because I could still taste which is normally interrelated. I got hit in the head with a car door in a freak valet accident," McGowan said. "Not being able to smell, I've had to get gas monitors for my house and things like that because I accidentally left the gas on one night and didn't know because I couldn't smell it. There are some inherent dangers that come with not smelling. I can only use bath products I have always used," she said.



BEYOND BERLIN

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



A competitive Venue

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



As the Angriya cruise boat headed out to sea from Mumbai, past the Gateway of India, Hyundai India used the opportunity to unveil its new compact SUV, the Venue. While the standing joke among automotive journalists was about the unique 'venue', the car was itself quite interesting. This segment was birthed by the Indian government's ridiculous excise rules that gave concessions to cars below four metres in length and with smaller engines, instead of a progressive level of taxation based on emissions. The Ford EcoSport was the first SUV to take advantage of this rule, but now carmakers are developing products specifically targeting this segment, and making adjustments for this market. You had the Maruti-Suzuki Vitara Brezza, developed for India by an Indian team and Mahindra's engineers recently re-engineered the Ssangyong Tivoli, reducing length to adhere to Indian norms as the XUV300. And now the Hyundai Venue does that too. This model is a global product as India has been on the top of the mind for the Korean carmaker. Indeed, the Indian unveil took place an hour before the car was showcased at the New York auto show.

There is a global market for compact Sports Utility Vehicles, and the Indian market is no different. But Hyundai had no product in this segment other than the hastily put together i20 Active, which was an i20 that has a bit of extra plastic cladding and a raised suspension. And if you're thinking that the Venue is similar to the i20, far from it. It looks unique and the headlights and front indicators look similar to those on the Tata Harrier, although both cars were developed concurrently. It is a very unique looking product and with stand-out front design and a very nice rear-end, it is possibly one of the smartest vehicles to enter the market now. And all of this has been done without compromising on interior space. In fact, the interiors are where the Venue really shines. Hyundai India is actually launching its connectivity suite, Blue Link, with the Venue when it goes on sale from May 21. Connectivity and infotainment are huge selling points, or that is what carmakers think and the Venue has a Vodafone-Idea eSIM car that allows you to use Hyundai's concierge services and Here Maps with live traffic data sources from Ola. Personally, I'm happy if a car has an Apple CarPlay system which gives me all that minus a concierge service. Or Android Auto, both of which offer me music-streaming services. But Hyundai is ensuring that both services will still work on the Venue.

The Venue's unveiling was also an opportunity to meet Hyundai India's new Managing Director, SS Kim, and his understanding of the Indian market. While he is still new to India, Kim did mention that Hyundai will be going all guns out with the Venue. However, with Hyundai about to launch the electric Kona in India in a couple of months, he did say that we still have to work on improving electric vehicle infrastructure as well as increasing Indian consumer acceptance of the higher prices of electric cars. Well on things were pretty electric already.

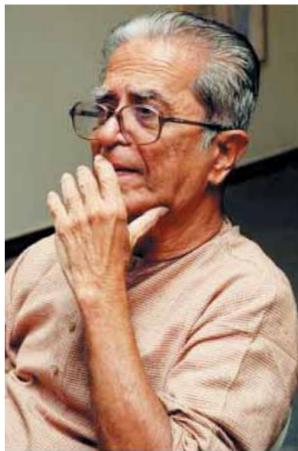


Remembering Haku Shah

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Win doesn't ensure triumph

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

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

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

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

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

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

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

"It's tough. We were close to go through, it's cruel, but we have to accept it," added Guardiola.

"The mistakes in this competition punish you a lot. Unfortunately it was a bad end for us."

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

"You have to trust the VAR when it is against or for you," said Pochettino. "The decision to include VAR in football is going to change the game."

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

"On this type of night, this type of victory, only I can feel proud. I feel they are heroes. With all the circumstances to be in the semi-finals of the Champions League they deserve a lot of praise."

SON SUSPENDED

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

The first set up the first of four goals in 11 minutes as Sterling opened the scoring. However, Spurs struck back twice in three minutes as Son Heung-min's double took his tally for the season to 20.

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

A kamikaze opening had another twist as Bernardo Silva's effort deflected off



(From top to bottom) Manchester City players in action during a match; Pep Guardiola reacts after losing a match; Son celebrates after scoring a goal



Danny Rose and wrong-footed Hugo Lloris at his near post to bring City level on the night.

By the midway point of the first-half, the hosts were back in front as Bernardo and De Bruyne played creators once more and

"It was unbelievable. My players are heroes."
—MAURICIO POCHETTINO

"It is cruel but it is what it is and we have to accept it."
—PEP GUARDIOLA

"I have never seen something like this. It was a very tough game, a very crazy game. It was madness."
—SON HEUNG-MIN

"I think I must be one of the luckiest guys on the planet today. With the last one they scored, I thought it was over. Thank God the ref gave offside."
—CHRISTIAN ERIKSEN

"Thoughts at this time are with all those that don't like football."
—GARY LINEKER

"Omggg! I love you boys!!!! #COYS #UCL."
—HARRY KANE

Sterling finished off a low cross at the back post.

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

Guardiola's frustrating exits from Europe's elite club competition:

2016-17: Eliminated by Monaco on away goals in last 16, won first leg at home 5-3, lost second leg away 3-1.

2017-18: Eliminated by Liverpool 5-1 on aggregate in quarter-finals, lost first leg away 3-0, lost second leg at home 2-1.

2018-19: Eliminated by Tottenham on away goals in quarter-finals, lost first leg away 1-0, won second leg at home 4-3.

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

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

Having gone ahead for the first time in the tie, Guardiola soon sent on Ferdinand to restore some sense of control, but City were pegged back again as an incredible tie swung back in Tottenham's favour.

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

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

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



Bring on Barca

AFP ■ PORTO

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

On a wet night at the Estadio do Dragao, Liverpool weathered an early storm against Porto before scoring from their first attempt just before the half-hour, Sadio Mane prodding home

for a goal given after a lengthy VAR review.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

tougher test than Porto.

With the matches coming thick and fast, he made three changes to his team here following Sunday's 2-0 win over Chelsea. Firmino and Naby Keita, who both scored in the first leg, dropped out along with Jordan Henderson.

They were replaced by Georginio Wijnaldum, James Milner and Divock Origi, with the latter making his first Champions League start for the club.

However, the Belgian only played the first half before making way for Firmino.

EARLY ONSLAUGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mbappe-less PSG fail to clinch French title

AFP ■ PARIS

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

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

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

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

"It's very easy to analyse, it was a very bad performance, we deserved to lose," said Tuchel. "We controlled the game at Lille but today there was no performance for 90 minutes."

"You can lose and you can make mistakes, and we will always defend the players if we feel that they've played with a great attitude and hunger. But today it is not possible."

TOOTHLESS PSG

Depleted PSG had to thank Gianluigi Buffon 12 minutes in when he managed to push away Kalifa Coulibaly's header from point-blank range, and seven minutes later Alves appeared to have calmed Parisian nerves with his won-



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

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

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

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

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

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

Guclu crashed home his first ever PSG goal on his debut in the final minute to give the away side hope that they could still clinch the title with six matches to spare, but despite pressing forward they couldn't find the breakthrough.

I AM NOT THE NEW RIBERY: COMAN

AFP ■ BERLIN

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

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

at Bayern this summer.

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

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

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



Kingsley Coman in a file picture

as a regular starter under coach Niko Kovac.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Djoker sails into quarters

AFP ■ FRANCE

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

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

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

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

Djokovic turned in a steady performance with a dozen each of winners and unforced errors, while his opponent committed nearly 30 unforced errors in 68 minutes. Defending champion Rafael Nadal was to play his second match of the pre-Roland Garros campaign when he faced Grigor Dimitrov in a third-round encounter. Sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas earlier lost 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 as Daniil Medvedev continued his run of form.

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

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

After saving the first two, the Greek mismanaged the third to seal his exit after an hour and three-quarters. Medvedev increased his leading total of ATP season match wins to 20 as a result of his success as he beat Tsitsipas for the fourth time without a defeat in the series.

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

"Some wind came up in the second set and I could not get used to it. But in the third, I just worked to put every ball in the court. The player who stands a career-high 14th credits his rising form to a renewed dedication to the sport. The Russia reached his first quarter-final at the Masters 1000 level after winning his second match against a Top 10 opponent.

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

LOCAL EVENTS



CHESS CAMP BEGINS

The chess coaching camp by the ace coach GB Joshi began at Delhi Public School, Eldeco branch on Thursday. On the first day, Joshi shared the end game tricks with the budding chess players. He also inaugurated the fully-equipped chess room of the school along with principal Deepti Dwivedi. Others present were HoD (sports) Pradeep Chand and chess coach Ravi Shankar.

Hasan 25/1)

Central Rangers: 102 (Yashveer Singh 23, Aditya Singh 21, Abhishek Roshan 14; Yash Sahni 19/3, Rahul Yadav 14/2, Himanshu Sharma 24/2)

ALIGANJ SPORTING WIN

Aliganj Sporting blanked Modern Academy 3-0 in a league match of RAjeshwari Thakur Memorial Football Tournament at Chowk Stadium on Thursday. Anubhav struck the brace while Aditya netted one goal.

HOCKEY TRIALS

Uttar Pradesh Hockey is organising the trials to select Uttar Pradesh's sub-junior men's team at Saifai on April 21. The selected team will take part in the 9th Hockey India Sub-Junior Men's National Championship at Raipur from May 11.

CENTRAL SUPER STARS WIN TOURNEY

Central Super Stars defeated Central Rangers by 44 runs to win the Central Cricket Championship at Pt Ras Behari Tiwari Stadium on Thursday.

BRIEF SCORES:

Central Super Stars: 146 (Rahul Yadav 64, Yash Sahni 42, Priyanshu Pandey 15; Nawab Ali 21/3,

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

IPL 2019



PANDYA BROTHERS SHINE ... as Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals

NEW DELHI: Mumbai Indians defeated Delhi Capitals by 40 runs in a second leg IPL clash here on Thursday.

Electing to bat, opener Quinton de Kock hit a 27-ball 35 at the top, while Pandya brothers -- Hardik (32) and Krunal (37) provided the late charge as MI posted 168 for five. The visitors then returned to restrict Delhi to 128 for nine, riding on a three-wicket haul by Rahul Chahar (3/19) and Jasprit Bumrah's 2 for 18.

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

Hardik who smashed Pawan Negi for 21 runs in the 19th over during Mumbai Indians 172 run chase in the last game against Royal Challengers Bangalore continues his rich form here at Kotla too and scored 32 runs in just 15 balls with three sixes and two fours.

He was dismissed in the third ball of last over bowled by this season's leading wicket taker Kagiso Rabada but even his dismissal couldn't stop the run flow as his elder sibling make the most of the remaining three balls by scoring 10 vital runs.

Krunal was guilty of wasting too many deliveries in the last game but here at Kotla he rectified that and his unbeaten 37 off 26 balls with five fours was the highest individual score by Mumbai batsman.

He added 54 runs for the fifth wicket in just 4.2 overs with his younger brother Hardik.

Earlier, Rohit Sharma (30) and Quinton de Kock (35) give Mumbai a flying start by scoring 57 runs in the first powerplay. The opening duo started slow initially scoring just 16



runs in the first three overs but changed gear when Chris Morris was introduced in the attack in the fourth over. Rohit welcomed him with a four and then his countrymen de Kock hits him for a four and a six.

And then in the last over before powerplay, last game hero Keemo Paul was smashed for two sixes, one each by Sharma and de Kock. He also

yielded 16 runs. Mumbai completed its first fifty in 35 balls. However after that the twist happened, Amit Mishra removed Rohit in the very ball of his spell. After dismissing Rohit for sixth time, he also completed his 150 IPL career wickets.

And in the next over Axar Patel got rid of Ben Cutting (2 runs in 4 balls). He was out leg before. But the big jolt came in

the fifth ball of tenth over when de Kock was sent back to pavilion after a misunderstanding with his strike partner Suryakumar Yadav.

At that midpoint, Mumbai scorecard was reading 74 for 3. And in the next seven overs Mumbai could only add 43 runs scoring just 3 fours and losing Suryakumar for 26 runs.

But it was the Pandya brothers combined effort that

lifted Mumbai as the duo added 50 runs in last three overs to take Mumbai to 168 for 5.

BRIEF SCORES: Mumbai Indians: 168 for 5 in 20 overs (Krunal Pandya 37, Quinton de Kock 35, Hardik Pandya 32; Kagiso Rabada 2/38)

Delhi Capitals: 128 for 9 in 20 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 35; Rahul Chahar 3/19).

Up Next

Royal Challengers eye win against KKR



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Their house in complete disorder after seven defeats from eight outings, the Virat Kohli-led Royal Challengers Bangalore will be desperate for a win to stay afloat in the IPL when they take on Kolkata Knight Riders here on Friday.

It would be a great opportunity for the Bangalore outfit to post a win against an opponent who are low on confidence having slipped from second to sixth position in the points table after suffering three straight defeats.

In fact, to make matters worse, Kolkata's dangerman Andre Russell has suffered an injury scare after being hit on his left shoulder by a bouncer during their practice.

Russell was already suffering from niggles ahead of their last match against Chennai Super Kings and had failed to fire for the first time, exposing KKR's over-reliance on the West Indies big hitter.

Russell had left the Royal Challengers in shambles in their first leg exchange, smashing seven sixes en route to his 13-ball 48 not out as KKR had chased down a huge 206.

It remains to be seen if the Jamaican recovers in time. His absence would be a big void for KKR, who are looking to return to winning ways and reignite their campaign.

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

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

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

The KKR pace department has looked mediocre, while their famed spinners have struggled to get wickets on the batting-friendly Eden conditions here.

Meanwhile, all eyes will also be on KKR skipper Dinesh Karthik who has grabbed a surprise World Cup berth ahead of young wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant. Karthik has only one half-century and an average of 18.50 so far this season.

KKR FRET OVER RUSSELL'S FITNESS

KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders' impact player Andre Russell was forced to skip the practice session on Thursday, owing to a shoulder injury sustained while batting in the nets on Wednesday.

Russell's possible absence could pave the way for Carlos Brathwaite's inclusion in the playing XI.

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

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

It was during the fog end of the practice on Wednesday that Russell failed to negotiate a rising delivery from net bowler Minad Manjrekar and fell on the ground, writhing in pain. It was the same left shoulder where Russell was hit by a Harshal Patel delivery during KKR's match against Delhi Capitals at the Kotla.

We need bigger World Cup, says Lamichhane

AFP ■ NEW DELHI

Nepalese sensation Nsandeep Lamichhane has called for the World Cup to be expanded to up to 16 teams, saying limiting it to 10 hurts players from emerging cricket nations.

The 18-year-old leg-spinner, who last year became the first Nepalese player to land an Indian Premier League contract, said he was frustrated to be missing out on the tournament in England and Wales starting in May.

"Sorry to say but a 10-team World Cup will hurt a lot of players like me who will not be a part of it," the Delhi Capitals player said.

"I think there should be 14-16 teams in the World Cup."

Lamichhane added: "World Cup comes after every four years and teams can achieve their biggest dreams there. We are an emerging nation and this is something we would love to play for our country."

"Even in 2023 there are (again) only 10 teams so it will be a while before we can even think of playing in the 50-over event."

Cricketer's showpiece tournament had 16 teams in 2007, but the field was reduced to 14 in 2011 and 2015 as the International Cricket Council sought to avoid one-sided matches.

It has been slashed to just 10 teams for 2019 and 2023, featuring the top eight sides in the one-day rankings and another two coming through qualifying.

Lamichhane, who will be watching the World Cup from afar, said he was hoping for some upsets by the smaller teams, who include Afghanistan.

"I am going to watch the World Cup on TV and love to see any team that is under-rated perform well against the big nations," said Lamichhane.

"It will be an inspiration for us who are just beginning their journey right now."



PAKISTAN LEAVE OUT AAMIR FROM WC SQUAD

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan on Thursday left out experienced but out-of-form pacer Muhammad Aamir from its 15-member World Cup squad while including batsman Abid Ali in the line-up.

Chief Selector Inzamam-ul-Haq, announcing the World Cup squad and two reserve players, said the 11 from the 2017 Champions Trophy had been retained in the selection process.

"We are hopeful and confident that Pakistan will give a good account of itself in the World Cup," Inzamam said.

The selectors, while not showing faith with left-arter Aamir who has taken just five wickets in his last 14 ODIs since the Champions Trophy two years back, reposed confidence in seniors Shoaib Malik and Muhammad Hafeez.

Inzamam said that Hafeez's final inclusion in World Cup was subject to him being 100 per cent fit before the tournament as he is still recovering from a thumb injury.

"Doctors have advised him not to bowl or bat now but when his rehab is over he will be back in action in two weeks time," he added.

Inzamam said hard-hitting batsman Asif Ali and Aamir were in the reserves for the one-day series against England and the side matches before the World Cup.



Muhammad Aamir in a file picture

ICC

He said that if both performed exceptionally well in the ODI series and T20 they will be considered as cover for the World Cup in case of injuries to any of the selected players.

"If they are not needed they will return home after the ODI series," he said.

Pakistan's World Cup squad is a combination of three openers, four middle-order batsmen, wicketkeeper/batsman in Sarfaraz Ahmed, two spinners and five fast bowlers.

The chief selector said the side had been picked according to the conditions and included reliable batters, trusted wicket-taking bowlers and dynamic fielders.

Loyalty matters most, says Kohli

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli hasn't forgotten the times when Mahendra Singh Dhoni firmly stood by him as a captain and now that the roles have reversed, he is not going to back down from supporting the veteran despite the "unfortunate criticism" that the former skipper is coping.

The Indian captain also expressed his happiness with the composition of the 15-strong Indian squad for the World Cup in an interview to India Today.

"It's unfortunate to see so many people going after him. For me, loyalty matters the most," Kohli's words showed his reverence for his first international captain.

"When I walked into the team he had the option of trying someone else after few games, although I grabbed my chances but for me to get that kind of backing, it was very crucial for me."

"Also, he gave me an opportunity to bat at No 3 because not many youngsters get to play at No 3," the skipper recalled his formative days in international cricket.

When an astute brain meets a



superlative performer, there is bound to be lot of mutual admiration and the Kohli-Dhoni relationship is no different. "It's just about the field placements and bowling changes and we say you know the angles, you know the pace of the pitch and that's why there is so much of trust and respect between the two of us," he said.

As he has said earlier, Kohli again reiterated that there are no peers to Dhoni when it comes to reading match situations.

"He is one person, who literally knows the game inside out. He understands the game from 'Ball 1 to Ball 300

(50 overs) on the field. I won't say it's a luxury to have him but I am fortunate to have a mind like that from behind the stumps," Kohli said.

It was Dhoni's presence behind stumps that has ensured that Kohli with one of the strongest arms can afford to field in the deep.

"At the end of the day, I want to be involved in strategy with the team management with Mahi bhai and Rohit." In the death overs, I know that I have to be on the outfield to try and make something work for the team because that's my nature that I want to do something for the team rather than just be there.

"After 30-35 overs, he knows that I will be in the outfield and its on the auto mode," he explained.

While he didn't elaborate about his take on the debate on the World Cup squad, he didn't forget to give it his stamp of approval. "We are very happy with 15 that we have. This is the most balanced side we could have thought of because everyone is in a good space," the skipper said without getting into the debate about the much talked about omissions of Rishabh Pant and Ambati Rayudu.

Sri Lanka announce WC squad

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sacked as skipper, pacer Lasith Malinga was on Thursday named in Sri Lanka's 15-strong World Cup squad and the country's embattled cricket board hoped that the veteran will put behind the disappointment to show up for the team.

The 35-year-old Malinga was replaced as captain Dimuth Karunaratne, who leads the Test team but hasn't played an ODI since the 2015 World Cup. The surprising move continued the ongoing turmoil in Sri Lankan cricket, which is also being investigated for large-scale corruption by the ICC.

"We hope he would play for the country," Sri Lanka Cricket



Sri Lanka team players in a file picture

ICC

chief Shammi Silva said while announcing the squad amid speculation that Malinga, who is currently

with IPL franchise Mumbai Indians, will quit. "I spoke to him on the tele-

Pooja assured of a medal in Asian Boxing C'ship

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Two-time continental medallist Pooja Rani confirmed India's first medal in the women's 81 kg category after making it to the semi-finals in a field of five as the Asian Elite Boxing Championship's draw was released on Thursday.

Asian Games Gold medallist Amit Panghal, set to make his debut in the 52 kg category in all likelihood will face the reigning Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov of Uzbekistan in the quarter-finals.

Former world junior champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) will start her campaign against Srey Pov Nao of Cambodia but she will run into two-

time world champion Nazym Kyzaibay in the quarter-finals. Lovlina Borgohain (64kg) could have a possible face-off with China's world champion Chen Nien-Chin in the quarters.

Amit, who started the season with a Gold medal will fight his first bout on April 21 after a first-round bye. Shiva Thapa, who will be going for a record-breaking fourth successive medal from this prestigious tournament meets Korea's Kim Wonho in the first round.

"Four of our boys will be in action tomorrow. We are quite confident about our prospects. The tricky journey will begin from quarters," said CA Kuttappa, head coach men's team.