

**OPINION 8**  
GOODBYE JET AIRWAYS?

**WORLD 12**  
SUDAN PROTEST LEADERS TO UNVEIL CIVILIAN RULING BODY

**SPORT 15**  
EVERTON BEAT MANCHESTER UNITED 4-0

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# On Easter, violence resurrects in Lanka

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

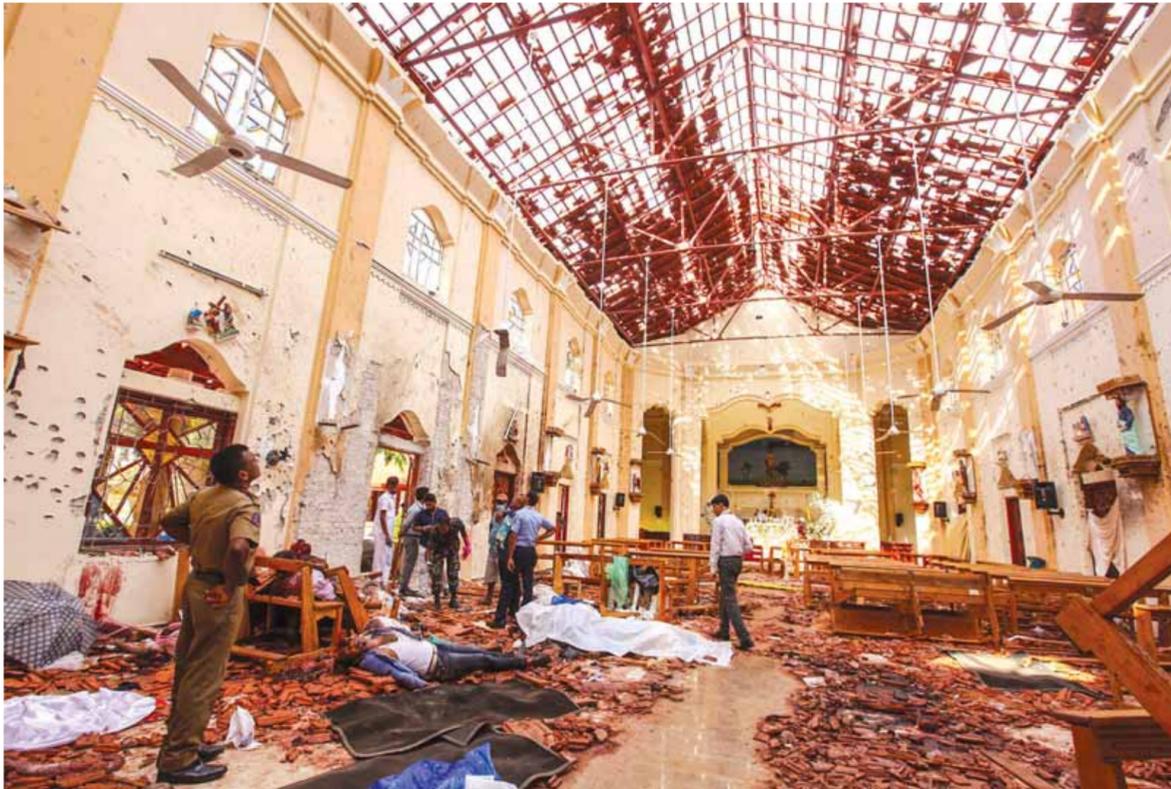
Explosions were reported from three five-star hotels — the Shangri-La, the Cinnamon Grand and the Kingsbury in Colombo.

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

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

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

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



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

AP

the island nation for nearly 30 years before its collapse in 2009 after the Sri Lankan Army killed its supreme leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Briefing reporters, Gunasekera said the police was not able to confirm at the moment if they were all suicide attacks. He, however, said that one of the blasts at the Katuwapitiya (Negombo) church has signs of being what looked like a suicide attack.

An unnamed official said a suicide bomber blew himself up at the restaurant of the Cinnamon Grand hotel.

Gunasekera said that 66 bodies were kept at the National Hospital while 260 injured were receiving treatment there and 104 bodies were placed at the Negombo Hospital and 100 injured were receiving treatment at the Hospital.

Later in the day, a power-

ful blast in the capital's southern suburb near the Colombo Zoo killed two persons, Gunasekera said.

When a police team entered a house in the Colombo north suburb of Orugodawatta to conduct a search, a suicide bomber blew himself up causing a concrete floor of a two-storey building to crash on them, killing three policemen in the eighth blast.

Continued on Page 4

## Modi condemns attack, offers help; Sushma in touch

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Their names are Lakshmi, Narayan Chandrashekar and Ramesh, Sushma said adding details are being ascertained.

Sushma tweeted, "I conveyed to the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka that India is ready to provide all humanitarian assistance. We are ready to despatch medical teams."

Sushma said, "In all eight bomb blasts have taken place — one more in a guest house in Dehiwela near Colombo and another in a housing colony in Dematagoda in Colombo."

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

## Lanka blocks FB, Instagram to curb canards

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

## Trump goofs up, tweets 138 million dead

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

## CAPSULE

**7 KILLED IN STAMPEDE IN TAMIL NADU TEMPLE**  
Tiruchirappalli: A stampede during a local temple festival killed seven devotees and injured ten others near Thuraiyur, about 45 km from here, on Sunday, police said.

**CAMPAIGNING FOR PH-3 OF LS POLLS ENDS**  
New Delhi: Campaigning for the third phase of polling scheduled for April 23 in 116 parliamentary constituencies ended on Sunday with top leaders making a last-ditch effort to sway voters in favour of their respective parties.

**7 KILLED IN MISHAP ON AGRA-LUCKNOW E-WAY**  
Mainpuri: A private bus on its way to Varanasi from Delhi rammed into a truck on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, killing seven passengers and injuring 34 others, police said Sunday.

## BJP picks 4 Delhi MPs on same seats

**Hardeep Puri named for Amritsar; Harsh Vardhan, Manoj Tiwari, Pravesh Verma, Ramesh Bidhuri from national Capital**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bureaucrat-turned-politician Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has been fielded from the Amritsar Lok Sabha seat by the BJP while it announced the candidature of Shankar Lalwani as its candidate from Indore in place of Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan. Lalwani is Chairman of Indore Development Authority and it is believed that Lalwani candidature is an indication of the end of the electoral politics for Mahajan.



The BJP also announced four of the seven candidates for the Lok Sabha election in Delhi and renominated its four sitting MPs. While Union Minister Harsh Vardhan will contest from his sitting seat of Chandni Chowk, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari will seek reelection from North-east Delhi, Pravesh



Verma from West Delhi and Ramesh Bidhuri from South Delhi. Delhi will go to polls on May 12. Puri's candidature came as a surprise amid the speculation that the BJP can decide to field Bollywood actor Sunny Deol from Amritsar who met BJP chief Amit Shah recently.

## Fidayeen queued at hotel buffet before 'going off'

Colombo: The suicide bomber waited patiently in a queue for the Easter Sunday breakfast buffet at Sri Lanka's Cinnamon Grand hotel before setting off explosives strapped to his back. Carrying a plate, the man, who had registered at the hotel

the night before as Mohamed Azzam Mohamed, was just about to be served when he set off his devastating strike in the packed restaurant, a manager at the Sri Lankan hotel said. Continued on Page 4

## Pragya gets 2nd EC notice in 24 hrs, now over Ayodhya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Sunday issued a showcase notice to BJP candidate from Bhopal Sadhvi Pragya Thakur for her controversial remarks about the Babri Masjid demolition, hours after she was censured for her remarks on 26/11 martyr Hemant Karkare.

She has been asked to reply by Monday. However, Pragya has sought time from District Election Officer to submit her reply on Babri Masjid.

In her reply on Karkare, Pragya on Sunday said, "I didn't say any defamatory word about the martyrdom of any martyr in my speech... I just made a mention of torture I



BJP candidate for Bhopal Lok Sabha seat Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur meets party national vice president Shivraj Singh Chouhan at BJP State headquarters, ahead of the Lok Sabha Polls in Bhopal on Sunday

was subjected to at the instance of the then Congress Government and this is my right to narrate the incident

before public. I myself withdrew the statement in view of public sentiments.

Continued on Page 4

## Want to take on Modi in Varanasi if Rahul allows, says Priyanka

PNS ■ KALPETA (WAYANAD) NEW DELHI

Amid speculation that she could be pitted against Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi in the Lok Sabha poll, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday said she will be happy to contest against the PM if asked by party president and brother Rahul Gandhi.

Party sources said that the Congress will announce the name of candidate for this prestigious seat in a couple of days. The Congress has already named candidates for neighbouring Chandauli and Ghazipur.

Priyanka is likely to fight from Varanasi as she and party



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra meets the family members of a Pulwama martyr at Vazhakandi Kurma Colony in Wayanad on Sunday

PTI

workers have been working on this line, AICC sources said.

"You will find out. If my Congress president tells me to contest, I will be happy to contest," Priyanka told the

media in Wayanad, while responding to a question whether she will contest the poll from Varanasi against the Prime Minister.

Continued on Page 4

## Refused ₹1.5 cr offer to frame CJI: Lawyer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a big twist to the controversy related to the allegation of sexual harassment levelled by an ex-Supreme Court woman staffer against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, an advocate who had represented the victims in the Asaram Babu case has claimed he was offered ₹1.5 crore to "frame" the CJI and conduct a Press conference against him.

Advocate Utsav Singh Bains said he had tried to alert the CJI by rushing to his home about the conspiracy. He said this ploy was a handiwork of "fixers" who wanted to force Gogoi to resign by tarnishing his image.

In his Facebook post, Bains said a person claiming to be a relative of the woman who has made allegations against the



CJI first offered him ₹50 lakh and then the offer went up to ₹1.5 crore to "frame the sexual harassment" case.

"I was offered bribe to help frame the CJI in the sexual harassment case by 'lawyering' and organising a Press Conference against the CJI for the ex-SC staffer who has accused the CJI of sexual

harassment just a few days back and also specifically asked to organise a Press conference only at the Press Club of India.

"When I refused the person who was initially praising my pro bono work in the Asaram rape case for the victim, etc, and interestingly claimed to be her relative but

on the other hand looked like a trained agent and he also couldn't satisfactorily reply as to what was his relationship with the ex-SC staffer and then suddenly offered me ₹50 lakh as my legal fees if I agreed to be lawyer and again he asked me specifically to organise a Press conference at the PCI after I refused as I found the story facts fishy and also he couldn't reply to any question about the many loopholes in the story he narrated. When I again refused he said ₹1.5 crore. I then asked him to leave my office," the advocate posted on FB.

The advocate further wrote that this fake case was created by the "fixers" who wanted resignation of the CJI. "I then enquired about this issue from reliable sources in Delhi for days. Every information pointed to a larger conspiracy to make the CJI resign. The kingpins are many Delhi-based SC fixers or those who engage in cash for judgments," said Bains. "I then finally went to CJI residence yesterday evening (Saturday) to inform him about the bribe offer and the conspiracy, around 7 pm. But his staff said he's not at his residence. My CDR tower location details can be checked. Later at night I then called a SC reporter with impeccable integrity to meet me today for an important subject and also asked him if he could arrange an urgent meeting or get a message sent to the CJI as soon as possible. I had also today morning planned to meet Prashant Bhushan Sir and Kamini Jaiswal maam about this. But then today morning my perception turned out to be true," he posted on FB.

# Alliances, family ties on test in third phase

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With two phases of polling over in Uttar Pradesh, all eyes are set on the third phase in which alliances and family ties will be put to test in the central part of the state that goes to polls on April 23.

The third phase election will witness polling in Moradabad, Rampur, Sambhal, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Budaun, Aonla, Bareilly and Pilibhit. Leaders like Mulayam Singh Yadav, Shivpal Singh Yadav, their nephew Akshay Yadav, Mohammad Azam Khan, cine star Jaya Prada and Varun Feroze Gandhi are in the fray in this phase. Barring Budaun and Mainpuri, the Bharatiya Janata Party had won the other seats of this phase in the 2014 elections.

The mother of all battles in this phase is in Firozabad where Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) president Shivpal Singh Yadav has challenged nephew Akshay Yadav, who is son of senior Samajwadi Party leader Ram Gopal Yadav. People believe that Akshay may scrape through because of Akhilesh Yadav but Shivpal Yadav will give him a tough fight.

Another interesting contest could be in Rampur where SP's Muslim mascot Azam Khan is pitted against Jaya Prada of the BJP. The last few days of campaign witnessed ugly exchange of words between Azam and Jaya forcing the Election Commission to bar the SP leader from taking part in any campaign for 72

hours.

As Congress candidate Sanjay Kapoor enjoys the support of the local Nawab family, it has made this contest triangular.

For BJP, its prestige will be at stake in Bareilly and Pilibhit from where Union minister Santosh Gangwar and Varun Feroze Gandhi are in the fray respectively. Bareilly is considered a BJP bastion. Santosh has won election from this constituency seven times and UP Finance Minister Rajesh Agarwal is also from this city. Santosh Gangwar is locked in a three-corner contest with Pravin Aron (Congress) and Bhagwat Saran Gangwar (SP). Incidentally, Aron had defeat Santosh Gangwar in the 2009 general election.

In the neighbouring Aonla constituency, the BJP has retained its sitting MP Dharmendra Kashyap. The SP-BSP-RLD alliance has fielded Ruchi Veera while Congress has given its ticket to Sarvraj Singh. Singh holds sway in this area as he had won election from here thrice. In 2014 he was runner-up when he contested on SP ticket but this time he switched sides and joined the Congress.

Budaun is the pocket borough of Samajwadi Party where Akhilesh's cousin Dharmendra Yadav is the MP. He is pitted against five-time MP and local heavyweight Saleem Shervani of the Congress. The Bharatiya Janata Party has fielded Sanghamitra Maurya, daughter of senior minister of Uttar Pradesh, Swami Prasad Maurya, from this constituency.



(Top) Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath campaigns for BJP candidate from Rampur, Jaya Prada in Rampur and, Congress leader Raj Babbar campaigning in support of party candidate Imran Pratapgarhi in Moradabad, on Sunday

# Fate of Rahul's nomination to be decided today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The fate of the nomination papers of Congress president Rahul Gandhi will be decided on Monday morning by the returning officer after four independent candidates from Amethi Lok Sabha seat challenged his educational qualification and his nationality.

Independent candidate Dhrubal along with Afzal, Suresh Chandra and Suresh Kumar raised the issue on Saturday during scrutiny of nomination papers by the officials. They demanded that the nomination papers of Rahul Gandhi be rejected.

Returning officer Ram Manohar Mishra said that counsel Rahul Kaushik representing the Congress president sought time to reply.

Mishra later issued an order fixing the hearing at 10:30 am on April 22.

Due to the dispute, the returning officer postponed the scrutiny of all the 36 candidates to Monday.

During the scrutiny, Dhrubal and others had raised the issue of nationality and educational qualification of Rahul Gandhi and even submitted the required documents in support of their contention.

But the Congress opposed the move, asking how could anyone question the nationality of the Gandhi family.

"Everyone in the country knows about the history of the Gandhi family and its role in

## RaGa known as 'Raul Vinci' in Britain, Italy: Yogi

**Lucknow (PTI):** Uttar Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday accused Congress president Rahul Gandhi of fooling the country with his "fake name" and said he is known as 'Raul Vinci' in Britain and Italy.

Addressing a poll meeting in Ghatampur of Kanpur Dehat, Adityanath said, "The 'naamdar' of Congress you know as Rahul Gandhi... In reality, he is not Rahul Gandhi. The country has been fooled with this name. His name is Raul Vinci. I am astonished that the Congress is committing this sin of fooling the nation. The real names of Rahul and Priyanka should come before people."

"In Britain and Italy he is Raul Vinci and in India becomes Rahul Gandhi with fake name," he alleged.

the freedom movement. Questioning the nationality of Rahul Gandhi shows the narrow mentality of some people," district Congress president Yogendra Mishra had said while reacting on the issue.

Congress spokesperson Anil Singh alleged that in order to cover up the discrepancy in the nomination papers of Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani, the BJP was raising such questions.

He in turn demanded probe into the educational record of BJP candidate Smriti Irani, who had earlier claimed to be graduate and now suddenly had become Class 12 pass.

Meanwhile, a similar embarrassing situation was averted in the adjoining Rae Bareilly constituency when Congress candidate Sonia Gandhi's representative and

Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Dinesh Pratap Singh's counsel raised objections against each other.

The Congress candidate contended that as the BJP candidate was still a Congress MLC, he could not file his nomination papers without resigning from the membership of the Legislative Council.

The BJP candidate claimed that the original name of Sonia Gandhi was Antonio Miano, which she had not written in her nomination papers.

After long discussions, late Saturday night returning officer Neha Sharma rejected all the objections raised by Congress and BJP candidates on each other.

In Rae Bareilly, 34 candidates had filed their nominations but 19 papers were rejected during scrutiny and now 15 candidates are left in the fray.

# Yadav land now stands divided

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yadav land, once an impregnable fort of Samajwadi Party, now stands divided because of the family feud which saw 'chacha' Shivpal Singh Yadav part ways with 'bhatija' Akhilesh Yadav and form his own Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) and field candidates against the official nominees of Samajwadi Party.

"This is unfortunate. The divided Samajwadi Party stands fragile. The problem with the people of this region is whom to vote because both Akhilesh and Shivpal are our family members. If we vote for one the other is antagonised," Dalbir Singh Yadav, a distant relative of Yadav family, said in Etawah.

The Yadav belt comprises Mainpuri, Auraiya, Etawah, Budaun, Kannauj, Firozabad and Etah districts where around 40 per cent of the population is Yadav. As per the 2011 Census, the Yadav population is 9 per cent of UP's total population — the highest among the backward classes.

In this belt, Mulayam Singh Yadav is a revered figure and almost every Yadav associates himself with Netaji (as the SP

patriarch is fondly called) and his family. Mulayam's one request is a command for the people of this area.

"No one can dare to disobey Netaji. It is not because of his terror but because of his respect he commands," Dalbir Singh said.

This was evident in the SP-BSP-RLD gathbandhan rally held in Mainpuri on Friday where Mulayam, who is a candidate, asked people whether they would ensure his victory by a record margin and the crowd shouted 'haan' (yes) in unison.

In this scenario, this is the first time that one of the members of this Yadav family is contesting election on a separate symbol of 'chaabi' (key). People are in a fix whether to support 'cycle' (SP symbol) or the 'chaabi'.

The most interesting battle is in Firozabad where Shivpal has challenged his nephew Akshay Yadav, who is the son of senior SP leader Ram Gopal Yadav. Shivpal is projecting himself as a victim of family feud and blaming Ram Gopal Yadav for his ouster from the Samajwadi Party.

"I have come to you to present my case before you as how

Professor Sahib (as Ram Gopal Yadav is called) connived against me and sidelined me in the Samajwadi Party. I never asked for any party post but I always promoted people like you," Yadav said in a rally in Odumpur village of his constituency.

He said time had come to teach Ram Gopal Yadav a lesson. Vote for 'chaabi' in the election.

Shivpal is drawing crowds wherever he goes. People are coming to listen to him and sympathies with him but it does not mean that all of them will vote for his party.

"The best part of Shivpal Singh Yadav is that he knows the people of this area very well. He calls them by their first name. This personal relationship is helping him to draw crowds. Thus, there is bound to be division of Yadav votes. Some will vote for Shivpal but majority will vote for Samajwadi Party," said Surendra Yadav, a trader having shop near Firozabad bus station.

Others join in and the discussion centres around Shivpal Singh Yadav.

"It is true that Akhilesh did not give Shivpal what he

deserved and Ram Gopal Yadav sided with him. We have full sympathy with Shivpal. But this is Lok Sabha election and people know that vote to Shivpal Yadav will not be of any use therefore they may vote for SP," Ghanshyam Yadav, another trader, said.

There is a feeling that Samajwadi Party might win this election and Shivpal may get sizeable number of votes. Firozabad had always been SP citadel. In the face of Modi wave in 2014, Akshay Yadav had won on SP ticket from this constituency.

In Mainpuri, Mulayam Singh Yadav is all set to win this election hands down. After he filed nomination on April 1, he did not visit his constituency and no one is complaining. The SP workers say that there is no need for Mulayam to come here as every karyakarta (worker) is himself a Mulayam.

In Budaun, sitting Samajwadi Party MP Dharmendra Yadav is getting a tough challenge from Congress' Saleem Shervani.

"This is a Yadav land. No one can defeat member of Yadav family from here," Naresh Yadav, owner of a tea stall in Bharthana, says.

# SP-BSP alliance 'a flop show', says Shivpal Yadav

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) chief Shivpal Singh Yadav has called the SP-BSP mahagathbandhan "a flop show".

"The SP-BSP alliance is a flop show. It has taken shape only for convenience as they knew their existence was threatened. Otherwise they have been sworn enemies for the past 25 years. Now, how come they have come together?" Shivpal said, addressing an election meeting in Firozabad on Sunday.

"This is opportunism at its best. In the last Lok Sabha election, the Bahujan Samaj Party won zero seats. Now if you multiply any number by zero, the result will always be a zero. This coalition will fall apart very soon," he said.

Shivpal, who is contesting Lok Sabha election from Firozabad constituency, said people of Firozabad invited him and based on their interest he decided to contest from



the seat.

Attacking the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre, Shivpal said no one had seen 'achhe din' as was promised by the saffron party.

"False promises were made and nothing was done or delivered at the ground-level. Till my last breath, I will serve the people and work for their welfare," he said and appealed to the voters to render their support by pressing the 'chaabi' (key) button on April 23, the day polling will be held in the constituency.

# People of UP ready to change PM, says Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati said on Sunday that the people of Uttar Pradesh who helped Narendra Modi become the prime minister were ready to remove him from the post in the ongoing Lok Sabha election.

She said the Bharatiya Janata Party, and Narendra Modi in particular, should realise that the common man of UP could also remove him from the post and preparation for this had begun.

"Narendra Modi's assertion that the people of UP made him the Prime Minister is correct. The same 22 crore people of Uttar Pradesh are now asking him why he betrayed them and failed to honour the promises he made during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections", Mayawati said in a statement issued here on Sunday.

The BSP chief alleged that



Modi had got his caste included in the Backward Class category for political and electoral gains.

She said the BSP-SP-RLD combine chose to hear the 'mann ki baat' of 22 crore people in the state to enter into an alliance which has brought happiness to the people across the country.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's frustration and fear of losing power are very evident and can be seen by all countrymen, she added.

# Stage set for crucial tests

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The battle of ballots has entered the Yadav land, the core area of the Samajwadi Party, in the third phase. Though the area is regarded as pocket borough of Samajwadi Party, for the first time in its history since 1992, Bahujan Samaj Party chief held a meeting in Mainpuri and sought support for SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav.

The third phase of the Lok Sabha polls will be a crucial test for the political chemistry between the support base of the SP and the BSP. All eyes will be on whether the votes of the BSP are transferred to the SP.

The Samajwadi Party had contested only three out of the 16 seats that went to polls in the first two phases in the state, but in the third phase, it is contesting from nine out of the 10 constituencies where polling will be held on April 23.

The Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance is confident

that it will not only retain its seats but will wrest some seats from the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The seats going to polls in this phase include SP strongholds like Budaun, Sambhal, Mainpuri, Firozabad and Rampur as well as Aonla, Bareilly, Pilibhit, Etah and Moradabad.

One of the safest seats for the SP is Mainpuri from party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav is in the fray. It was in Mainpuri on April 19 that Mulayam shared the stage with BSP president Mayawati, burying the over two-decade-old hatchet. There are no guesses for the result in Mainpuri where Mulayam remains the tallest and most popular leader. He was elected from Mainpuri in 2014 as well as from Azamgarh but chose to retain the latter seat.

In Budaun, SP's Dharmendra Yadav is locked in a triangular fight with Sanghamitra Maurya of the BJP and Saleem Iqbal Shervani of the Congress. The division of Muslim and the OBC votes

could make things difficult for sitting MP Dharmendra Yadav.

Rampur, meanwhile, witnessed its worst-ever election campaign with BJP's Jaya Prada and SP's Mohd Azam Khan calling each other by unprintable names. Jaya Prada, with tears flowing down her cheeks, is trying to earn sympathy votes from the people while Azam Khan is playing the victim card to make it to the winning post.

In Pilibhit, BJP MP Varun Feroze Gandhi is pitted against SP's Hemraj Varma and in Moradabad, BJP's sitting MP is locked in triangular contest with Imran Pratapgarhi of the Congress and ST Hasan of the SP. The BJP appears strong in both the constituencies. In Bareilly, veteran BJP MP Santosh Gangwar is seeking his eighth term and his challenger is Praveen Aron of Congress. In Etah, Rajvir Singh, son of Rajasthan Governor and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, is seeking a second term. He is pitted against SP's Devendra Yadav.

# Irani: Bid adieu to 'missing MP'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

**Amethi (PTI):** Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani, pitted against Congress president Rahul Gandhi at his home turf here, on Sunday appealed to voters to give farewell to their never-seen-nor-heard, "missing MP".

Addressing an election meeting in Dharai under Amethi assembly segment, Irani exhorted voters to bid adieu to their MP, saying give bidai (farewell) to the naamdar and send a kamal (lotus- BJP poll symbol) to New Delhi from Amethi this time.

Talking on development, Irani said despite Rahul Gandhi consistently "abusing" Prime Minister Narendra Modi and calling him a "chor" (thief), the prime minister had never discriminated against development of Amethi. She also sought to sweeten her appeal with a promise to Amethi voters on behalf of the Prime Minister to get sugar priced at ₹13 a kg on the BJP coming to power again in the Centre.

# 7 killed as bus rams into truck on expressway

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Seven persons were killed and 34 injured when a private bus they were traveling in ramed into a truck on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway on Saturday night.

The bus was carrying 41 passengers to Varanasi.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed profound grief at the death of the passengers.

In a tweet, the Chief Minister has asked the officials concerned to make all necessary arrangements for those who have sustained injuries in the accident.

The injured have been admitted to Saifai Hospital where the condition of 12 is stated to be serious.

Superintendent of Police Ajay Shanker Rai said the driver of the bus was among those injured. He said the identities of the deceased and the injured persons was being ascertained.



On-lookers gather near the accident site where a bus ramed into a truck on the Agra-Lucknow expressway, in Mainpuri on Sunday

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said in a tweet that he visited the injured in hospital. "I am saddened post my

visit to the bus accident survivors. Despite collecting tolls this government neglects its responsibility to ensure safe highways. They should focus

on monitoring & providing adequate policing/systems to protect travellers. Condolences to the aggrieved families," Akhilesh said in the tweet.

# Couple set themselves on fire during tiff, charred to death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A couple were charred to death under mysterious circumstances at their house in Nigoha on Sunday morning. The woman was found charred to death while her husband had serious burns when police reached the scene after being informed by the villagers.

The police claimed that the couple set themselves afire during a verbal spat. However, they were at the loss of words when asked about the reason for tiff between the couple.

As per reports, the woman, identified as Shanti (30), lived with her husband Dinesh (32) and their sons Vikas (5) and Vishal (3) in a rented accommodation in the locality. "Around 10 am on Sunday, the couple picked up a fight over some issue and Shanti poured kerosene on herself. Dinesh also got himself drenched in kerosene and both of them set themselves on fire," police spokesman AK Dwivedi said while explaining the sequence of events. He said the findings were based on preliminary investigation.

"In fact, the police did not find any eyewitness to the incident, except for the couple's sons who were playing outside. The kids told the investigators that their parents were quarrelling before they saw them on fire," Dwivedi said. He said investigating

## Abetment to suicide: Arrest warrant against three railway employees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

In the Alambagh incident in which a woman employee of DRM office (Lucknow Division), Soni Kumari, had committed suicide, the police have secured the arrest warrant for three of the accused who were charged with abetment to suicide. "The police had moved an application in court on Saturday, seeking arrest warrant for all the seven colleagues of the deceased booked in the case. However, the court allowed arrest warrant only against three accused. We will not disclose the names as it may help them go underground," police spokesman AK Dwivedi said.

He said the police were verifying the deceased's allegations that her colleagues used to play vulgar music to harass her. "Merely on the allegations, the police cannot slap charges on those named in the case," he clarified.

He said the police would conduct raids to arrest those against whom the arrest warrant had been secured. The police spokesman said the probing team was yet to talk to the railway employees of accounts section in which the woman worked.

"This is done through a procedure. We are yet to talk to the administrative officials the railways," he said. Soni Kumar of Bihar was working as account assistant at the accounts department of DRM office in Hazratganj. She was allotted a flat at VG Colony, a residential colony for railway employees. On April 14 morn-

ing, she was found lying dead in the open space between the blocks of the multi-storey building. During investigation, the police had recovered a suicide note (written on March 28) from the flat. The woman had stated official harassment as the reason to end her life.

The inmates of the colony had said that Soni Kumari was facing hostility at her workplace and was being harassed by her colleagues. In her suicide note, the woman had written that she was being mentally harassed in the office by SSO Aditya Shukla who used to send her here and there for no work. She had also stated that she was being humiliated in the office and that her colleagues used to play vulgar music when she was in the office.

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## EASTER CELEBRATIONS



Christians taking part in a procession on the occasion of Easter. Easter marks the end of three days of solemnity and is celebrated to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ after crucifixion

## Withdrawal of names, symbol allotment today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Withdrawal of names and final allotment of symbols to the candidates for Lucknow and Mohanlalganj constituencies will take place on Monday. The district administration officials carried out randomisation of the polling personnel for Lucknow and Mohanlalganj on Sunday.

Chief development officer Manish Bansal said that randomisation of the polling personnel was carried out with the help of a software. "There are over 15,000 polling personnel for which randomization was carried out," he said.

Bansal said that randomisation of the polling personnel for specific polling booths would be done a day before the two constituencies go to polls. "The polling personnel will be allotted booths and there will be four polling personnel at each booth — one presiding officer and three polling officers," he said. In the randomisation process, a total of 17,328 polling personnel from 1,250 departments were allotted duties. The polling personnel included 3,951 presiding officers, 3,951 polling officers, 31,169 extra polling officers and 355 micro observers.



Samajwadi Party candidate Poonam Sinha flagging off 'Run for Health' at Janeshwar Mishra Park on Sunday

Pioneer

## 'Waterman' urges people to vote for conserving rivers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

'Waterman' Rajendra Singh has released a manifesto for rivers urging the people to vote for the cause of pollution. Talking to *The Pioneer*, he said that his main aim was to save the Ganga and its tributaries which included Gomti in Lucknow.

In the manifesto he has put in the demand for helping in the conservation of rivers. "It is the need of the hour to prepare strict laws for protecting the environment and establishing an independent and empowered agency for their effective implementation," the manifesto states. He said that a policy should be made for conserving the biodiversity of the Himalayan range and Western Ghats and the people residing there should be a part of it so that the resources of their livelihood could be conserved.

The manifesto states that the falling of waste and sewage into the rivers should be completely stopped. "Abundant and adequate green cover, including trees as well as riparian zone

species, should be done in the regions situated on the banks of rivers. Rejuvenation of ponds and lakes should be made and new water conservation structures should be constructed. The livelihood options of the community of fishermen should be protected," he said.

Stringent laws should be made to stop illegal mining in the beds and basins of rivers and for that comprehensively-representative river basin organisations, which hear the voice of the politically-unrepresented people, are sensitive to the plight of the voiceless indigenous species of the river basin and also sensitive and responsible to the voiceless soil, water and air - which are under increasing stress of encroachment, exploitation and pollution - should be formed.

"To redefine the forest laws in India the conservation and protection rights of forests and their resources should be handed over to the local communities. India always had a rich culture of ponds and an independent agency should be

formed for protecting them which should be accountable for their restoration and conservation. The involvement of the people in taking back their role in responsible stewardship of traditional ponds and water tanks should be revived," he added. The manifesto states that all the five rivers- Mithi, Dahisar, Pahunsar, Ulhass, Waldhuni and other small rivers of the economic capital of India, Mumbai, have become like drains. "Ganga, the first identity of Kashi, the capital of knowledge, has become a victim of rampant corruption. It is revered as a mother but has turned into a sewage carrier today. He said that during the 2014 elections many promises were made for cleanliness and continuity of the Ganga, votes were garnered through these promises and they were voted to power but they remained unfulfilled and were soon forgotten. "During the Lok Sabha poll canvassing this time, no promises are being made for improving the health of Ganga because votes can't be secured now in its name.

## Three incidents of purse loot, chain-snatching in 24 hours

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Three incidents of purse loot and chain-snatching were reported from trans-Gomti areas on Saturday and Sunday. In Gomti Nagar, two bike-borne unidentified miscreants deprived a woman of her purse on Saturday evening. The woman, identified as Uma Mishra of Vinay Khand, said she was returning home from LDA market area when the miscreants came from behind and snatched her purse. Uma, who is a teacher in a private school, said the police registered her complaint a day after the incident.



Elsewhere, in Jankipuram, unidentified miscreants snatched the chain of a woman, identified as Saroj Devi, when she was returning home after seeing a doctor along with her two children at Ram Ram Bank crossing on Sunday afternoon.

"I left for my house after visiting a doctor around 2:30 PM in a rickshaw. When I reached Ram Ram Bank crossing, I got down to purchase sweets from a shop. In the meantime, the miscreants snatched my gold chain and sped off," said Saroj, who suffered injuries while fighting the miscreant. Meanwhile, in Vikasnagar, Sheelu Singh informed police that her gold chain was looted when she was returning home (Sector-3 crossing) in Vikasnagar.

## Domestic help accused of house theft, absconding

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A domestic help was accused of committing theft at the house of his employer in Gomti Nagar on Sunday. Police registered a case in this connection and launched a manhunt for the accused, who is absconding. Sunita Chaturvedi of Vipul Khand told the police that she had gone abroad on April 14 while her husband Rajeev was all alone in the house. "We had employed a domestic help

named Sunil two years back. He was in the house on April 19 after my husband left for his workplace in the morning. I returned on April 21 and found the bathroom's ventilator grill broken. When I checked the belongings, I came to know that cash and jewellery had been stolen," she stated in her complaint.

Meanwhile, a sub-inspector posted at Ambedkar Nagar police outpost was accused of harassing traders in Gomti

Nagar on the pretext of removing encroachment in the area and forcing them to cough up *hafta*. The accused, identified as Kushal Tiwari, found himself in controversy after he started an anti-encroachment drive in the area following the instructions of his seniors. As the news went viral on social media, the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) directed the Gomti Nagar circle officer to probe the allegations.

## Increase physical activity to check deaths due to NCDs, says doc

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

In the lead up to the World Asthma Day and World No Tobacco Day-2019, a Bangladesh delegation joined Lucknow's noted health experts to walk the talk on increasing physical activity in Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Park in Gomti Nagar on Sunday morning. Dr Surya Kant, head of the Respiratory Medicine department, King George's Medical University (KGMU), and president of National College of Chest Physicians Dr Pooja Ramakant, breast cancer expert and associate professor, department of Endocrine Surgery (KGMU), Rahul Dwivedi, health justice activist with Asha Parivar, Bangladesh Supreme Court lawyers, Barrister Mohammad Kamal Hossain and Barrister Kamruzzaman Mullah, were among those who walked with MP Patwary in the Lohia Park on Sunday.

"Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for more than 70 per cent of the deaths globally, including in Bangladesh and India. A significant disease burden of



cardiovascular diseases (heart diseases and stroke), cancers, diabetes, asthma, other chronic respiratory diseases etc are often preventable and untimely deaths can be averted. Common risk factors of NCDs are modifiable such as staying away from all forms of tobacco and alcohol use, eating a balanced and healthier diet, increasing daily physical activity, reducing harmful intake of salt, sugar and fast food are some of the gold standards we all have to embrace if we are to beat NCDs," said Dr Surya Kant.

KGMU's breast cancer expert Dr Pooja Ramakant said that "majority of the risk factors for breast cancer are

**A SIGNIFICANT BURDEN OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES, CANCERS, DIABETES, ASTHMA, OTHER CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASES ETC ARE OFTEN PREVENTABLE**

modifiable, such as obesity, an unhealthy diet and a sedentary lifestyle. Tobacco and alcohol in any amount are also responsible for carcinogenic mutations. Exercise can help improve our overall health and endurance and also in weight loss when coupled with a balanced diet."

Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary, MP from Bangladesh, said that every disease caused by modifiable risk factors such as tobacco, alcohol, a sedentary lifestyle, bad diet etc, was preventable. "There is no excuse for inaction to prevent avoidable diseases that are in epidemic proportions crippling our economies. As many as 133

countries in the world, including Bangladesh and India, have committed to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and over 180 have ratified the Global Tobacco Treaty (WHO, FCTC). To deliver the promise of SDGs we must implement all measures needed to prevent an epidemic of NCDs. Ending tobacco and alcohol pandemics, promoting healthier diet and increasing safe spaces for physical activity for everyone are some of the key urgent action points to reverse the tide of NCD epidemics," he said.

Both Dr Surya Kant and MP Patwary alerted the citizens that catastrophic health expenditure was a reality in our countries which not only was a barrier to care but also drove people to extreme poverty. Tobacco, alcohol, a bad diet and a sedentary lifestyle will dangerously increase risk of killer NCDs. Citizens should use their wisdom to adopt lifestyle changes without any further delay and reduce their own risk of an array of preventable diseases.

## UPSEE held at 138 centres in 21 cities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU) on Sunday conducted UPSEE-2019 at 138 centres in 21 cities. AKTU media spokesperson Asheesh Mishra said the exam was in 21 cities, of which ten were outside the state, including Delhi, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Patna, Ranchi, Roorkee and Bengaluru. He said that in the first shift, the entrance test for papers 4, 5, 7 & 8 was conducted in Lucknow and it witnessed the participation of over 88 per cent candidates. In the second shift, the entrance test for papers 1 & 2 were conducted with an attendance of 92.37 per cent. Mishra said it was the first time that the exam was conducted in three shifts and there was biometric attendance.

About the turnout of candidates in other districts, Mishra said the attendance was 91.81 per cent in Agra, 92.29 per cent in Bareilly, 95.02 per cent in Gorakhpur, 93.76 per cent in Varanasi, 89.56 per cent in Noida, and 94.53 per cent in Kanpur.



Candidates coming out of exam centres after appearing in UPSEE on Sunday

# Doc discusses management of renal nutrition in chronic kidney patients

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

On the second day of the renal nutritional programme being organised by SGPPI, Dr Anita Saxena from Nephrology department spoke on several issues regarding management of renal nutrition in chronic kidney patients.

She said a well-planned nutritional intake for renal patients could slow down deterioration of renal function. "While planning diet of a patient with compromised renal function, the most important constituents of diet which need to be monitored and controlled are energy, protein of high-biological-value, sodium, potassium, phosphorus and calcium for maintaining bone health and to prevent hyperparathyroidism, fluid management, saturated fat and cholesterol, vitamins and minerals for proper functioning of enzymes, taste and for preventing anaemia," she said.

She pointed out that the foods not permitted included green leafy vegetables like spinach, mustard leaves, bathua, chaulai, jackfruit, bitter-gourd, turnip, beetroot, sahan, lotus stem, cluster beans, French beans, broad



beans, tomato, cauliflower, sweet lime, lemon, carrots, radish, raw salad, mango, aonla, mushroom, water chestnut, dry fruits, fruit juice, vegetable soup, coconut water, melons, bajra etc.

She said that the other products which were not allowed included bakery products like cake, pastry, patties, biscuits, chocolate, coffee, baking soda, ajinomoto, eno salt, salted butter, jaggery, pickle, chutney, namkeen mixture, papad, processed cheese, canned foods, deep-fried food,

and popcorns. "Dietary phosphorus restriction should be advised to patients with phosphorus levels higher than the recommended range for CKD patients. Limit fast foods, soft drinks, and processed cheese and snacks. To reduce intestinal absorption, advise phosphorus binders with meals," she added.

Dr Saxena said it was important to counsel patients on the importance of food intake in order to avoid malnutrition. "In case the patients are unable to take natural food,

it is necessary to supplement protein and energy in the form of oral nutritional supplements, especially made for renal patients. However, if the patients are having recurrent vomiting, intravenous medication should be given to control vomiting," she said.

She further pointed out that intake of water and salt should be increased accordingly. "Nutrition through peripheral route should be administered depending upon volume overload. No matter what, the patients should not be made to starve as their bodies will be in a hypercatabolic state and the patients in this condition require more than usual intake of energy. Oral hygiene should be maintained. In case patients have oral ulcers, introduce soft diet in meal plan like bread slice soaked in milk or chapati soaked in milk. Advise patients to avoid spicy food and make a provision for supplementing it with Vitamin B complex," Dr Saxena said. She further pointed out that in obese children and adolescents, increased uric acid levels were associated with carotid atherosclerosis and dietary intervention could control uric acid levels.



Canvassing in full swing for BJP candidate for Lucknow and Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday

Pioneer

## SCHOOLSCAN

### CAREERS DAY

City Montessori School organised 'Careers Day' at Kanpur Road auditorium amidst the presence of thousands of students who were advised about their career choices under the guidance of various experts. They were also taught to prepare themselves for such choice and to plan for it. Earlier, the chief guest on the occasion was Pro-Chancellor of Noida International University Vikram Singh, who formally inaugurated the programme. Addressing the gathering, Singh gave useful tips to the students for their studies and



careers. "In this age of artificial intelligence, you are required to intensify your

efforts. You have to become fighters," he told the students.



### WORLD UNITY SATSANG

At the World Unity Satsang organised by City Montessori School at Gomti Nagar auditorium, school's founder-director Bharti Gandhi said children must be sensitised about the importance of being non-violent so that they were helpful for the welfare of world fraternity. Earlier, CMS music teachers presented melodious hymns while the students of Gomti Nagar Campus I presented educational-devotional items.

## CITYBRIEFS

### PROJECT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

A group of youths from Institute of Wildlife Studies, University of Lucknow, has submitted a project focusing on sustainable development goal (SDG). CEE project coordinator Preeti Kanaujia said they had taken up a Daliganj slum area and university campus for sensitisation about SDGs. "The team comprising five students is led by Asif Ahmed Siddiqui and Ruchira Nigam. The group is guided by Amita Kanaujia from LU and Preeti R Kanaujia of CEE (North). The students have developed communication strategy and have done initial survey of the slum area on water and sanitation issues. The project will be done from April to September and then the outcomes will be submitted for final evaluation," she said. The sustainable development goals, also known as global goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by the United Nations.

### WORLD EARTH DAY TODAY

The World Earth Day will be celebrated in the state capital on Monday. Several events will be organised to mark the occasion. CEE (North) will organise an event at Kendriya Vidyalaya in Cantonment to educate and raise awareness about the accelerating rate of extinction of millions of species. "We have planned to screen films on wildlife under threat, conduct interactive activities and nature trail to build understanding of students about the danger faced by animals and plants. Students will be guided to adopt eco-friendly actions and work towards conserving our biodiversity," CEE project coordinator Preeti Kanaujia said. Anuradha Gupta from Prithvi Innovations said that under Prithvi Utsav, as part of its 'Gomti Gaatha' programme, they were having month-long celebrations. "The celebrations have already begun. We are conducting 'WoW (Waste to Wealth)' Green Miracles workshop at Sri Ram Swaroop Memorial Public School in Gomti Nagar for more than 200 students and teachers. Through various workshops at schools, colleges and similar drives, we wish to bring all stakeholders together to care for the depleting resources like water, greenery and biodiversity," she said.

## CISH signs MoUs with farmers community-based organisations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) has signed MoUs with several community-based organisations, entrepreneurs and farmers for not only commercialisation of the institute's technology but also for horticulture development in the country.

CISH director Shailendra Rajan said it was a win-win situation as the institute was favouring working together with the community-based organisations with a good number of farmers as members and effectively disseminating its technology among stakeholders. The MoU with Indian Oil Corporation is for contract research on a new non-toxic product developed.

Earlier, the product was successfully tailor-made for its use against pests of grape. The technology is to be developed to check mango disease and pests by CISH using its products," he said.

The protocol is finalised

and signed by IOC and CISH for its testing on mango. The product is being experimented on mango trees to protect the crop from infection of disease causing agents and insect feeding on different parts.

"As expected, the developed technology will give relief to the farmers, presently compelled to use several pesticides for different insect-pests and diseases. It will not only reduce the cost of production but also bring down environmental pollution," he said.

The trials are planned to be conducted at five different locations — CISH, Rehmankhara, Saharanpur, Faizabad, Sitapur and Unnao. The selected orchards are managed by CISH scientists and eco-friendly management technology will be developed for efficient pest management with minimum number of sprays at most critical stages of crop.

Meanwhile, Dr Puneet Bhardwaj (dentist) from Mohanlalganj has entered into an MoU with CISH because he is interested in cultivation of

high value horticultural crops and off season production. He started producing strawberry and other vegetables early in the season in consultation with the scientists of the institute.

Sanjay Srivastava came to know about the ready-to-fruit mushroom bags and his thinking for developing entrepreneurship in this area motivated him to sign an MoU for guidance in this venture.

"Some youths want to establish entrepreneurship in hydroponics unit establishment in houses. They started developing prototypes of hydroponics for household purpose. High cost and availability of the nutrient solution was a major problem for them. When they came to know about the hydroponics facility available at the institute, they entered into an MoU forgetting low cost nutrient solution and hydroponics design refinement. They started this venture as Greencare Hydroponics Private Limited in Lucknow to make soil-less cultivation popular," Rajan pointed out.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### ON EASTER, VIOLENCE...

Soon after the eighth blast, the Government imposed curfew with immediate effect. The curfew will be in force indefinitely until further notice, officials said.

State Minister of Defence Ruwan Wijewardene said seven persons had been arrested in connection with the blasts. "We believe these were coordinated attacks, and one group was behind them," he said. President Maithripala Sirisena has appealed for calm. "I have been shocked by this totally unexpected incidents. The security forces have been asked to take all action necessary," Sirisena said. Prime Minister

Ranil Wickremesinghe termed the blasts as "cowardly attacks" and said his Government is working to "contain the situation." "I call upon all Sri Lankans during this tragic time to remain united and strong... The government is taking immediate steps to contain this situation," he tweeted. Security has been intensified around the religious places across the capital. The government has temporarily blocked all social media platforms.

"Horrible scenes. I saw many body parts strewn all over," said Harsha de Silva, Sri Lanka's Minister of Economic Reforms and Public Distribution.

The Indian High Commission in Colombo said that it was closely monitoring the situation in Sri Lanka. "We are closely monitoring the situation. Indian citizens in need of assistance or help and for seeking clarification may call the following numbers : +94777903082 +94112422788

+94112422789," the High Commission tweeted.

"In addition to the numbers given, Indian citizens in need of assistance or help and for seeking clarification may also call the following numbers +94777902082 +94772234176," it said.

The first blasts were reported at St Anthony's church in Colombo and St Sebastian's Church in Negombo just outside the capital. "A bomb attack to our church, please come and help if your family members are there," read a post in English on the Facebook page of the St Sebastian's Church.

Images circulated on social media showed severely damaged St Sebastian's church, with a shattered ceiling and blood on the pews.

The riot police and the Special Task Force, extra police security has been deployed around the Bandaranaik International Airport, state-run Daily News reported.

All state Universities have been closed until further notice. Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith said all Easter masses in the Colombo District have been cancelled. Former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, under whose leadership the Sri Lankan Army crushed the LTTE, termed the attack as "barbaric"

### FIDAYEEN...

"There was utter chaos," said the manager, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity as he is not allowed to speak for the company. The Taprobane restaurant at the hotel was having one of its busiest days of the year for the Easter holiday weekend. "It was 8:30 am and it was busy. It was families," the man-

ager told AFP. "He came up to the top of the queue and set off the blast," he added. "One of our managers who was welcoming guests was among those killed instantly." The bomber also died. Parts of his body were found intact by police and taken away.

Other hotel officials told how the bomber, a Sri Lankan, checked in giving an address that turned out to be false, saying he was in the city for business. Two other hotels, the Shangri-La and the Kingsbury, were hit at about the same time, along with three churches packed with worshippers attending Easter Sunday services. The blast at St Anthony's Shrine, an historic Catholic Church, was so powerful that it blew out much of the roof, leaving roof tiles, glass and splintered wood littering the floor that was strewn with bodies. Authorities have not said who staged the attacks. But all suffered major casualties and damage. Many of the 35 foreigners killed in the blasts were at the hotels, officials said.

"There was utter chaos, but we rushed all the injured to hospital in a very short time," the Cinnamon Grand manager said. "About 20 people were seriously wounded and we sent them to the National Hospital." The hotel is close to the Sri Lankan prime minister's official residence and Special Task Force commandos were quickly at the scene. At the Shangri-La, witnesses said they heard two loud blasts and that staff reported some people had been killed. But details of the toll were not immediately given.

An AFP photographer saw extensive damage in the second floor restaurant at the hotel, with windows blown out and electrical wires hanging from the ceiling. The Shangri-La said in

a statement that the bomb hit at approximately 9:00 am local time at its Table One restaurant.

"We are deeply saddened and shocked by the incident and our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the casualties and those who have been affected," it said.

"Our immediate priority is to look after the safety and wellbeing of all involved. A Shangri-La crisis management team has been activated to provide all necessary support." The Kingsbury is also one of Colombo's most expensive hotels, positioned near the city's World Trade Center.

The toll there was not known. In a statement on its Facebook page, the hotel said: "On behalf of the entire Kingsbury team we share in the shock, grief and mourning of our entire nation in the aftermath of the recent attack." "Medical evacuation and treatment of the injured guests and employees were handled immediately." The hotel said it had been "isolated" for further safety checks.

### PRAGYA...

Thakur was served the notice by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO-MP) for her remarks on the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition. In an interview to a TV channel, she had claimed that she was among those who had razed the disputed structure, which "was a blot on the country."

Thakur had earlier faced flak for claiming that former chief of Mumbai's Anti-Terrorist Squad Hemant Karkare, who had died in action during the 26/11 terror attacks, lost his life because she had "cursed him". Addressing party workers

in Bhopal, Thakur broke down while narrating the alleged custodial torture inflicted on her after she was arrested in connection with 2008 blast case, in which six persons had died and over 100 were injured.

She came down heavily on the late ATS chief, who was awarded the Ashok Chakra for his bravery in facing the Mumbai terror attack, and alleged that she was tortured and abused by him in ways that were "unbearable".

Thakur claimed he used to endlessly haunt her with his daunting questions, to which she had no answers as she was "innocent all along". She said she cursed Karkare for alleged threats, torture and miserable treatment in custody. "Maine kaha that tera sarvanash hoga (I cursed him that he would be finished)," she said. Referring to sutak, an auspicious period of one month and a half according to Hindu tradition which starts after death or birth of anyone in family, she said that the holy period started on the day she landed in jail and ended the day Karkare was slain by terrorists. "Inauspicious period started for Hemant Karkare when I was arrested. Exactly 45 days later he was killed and that was the end of inauspicious period," she said.

### WANT TO TAKE...

Termining the ongoing Lok Sabha elections as no ordinary polls, Priyanka asked people to vote for saving the country from "narrow minded ideology" as she accused the NDA Government of undermining democracy and suppressing dissent. Earlier Priyanka visited the family of CRPF jawan VV Vasanthkumar who was martyred in the Pulwama terror attack.

## 5 AU hostels raided in drive to evict illegal inmates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Continuing the action to evict illegal inmates from various hostels of the Allahabad University the district police along with the university officials raided five hostels on the fourth consecutive day on Saturday evening.

The hostels raided were S Radhakrishnan, Shatabdi (be) and GN Jha of Allahabad University, besides KP University College (KPUC) and Hindu Hostels. Accompanied by Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel the authorities broke open the locks and after conducting an intensive search took away the belongings from the rooms. Circle Officer (CO) Colonelganj Shrish Chandra said that they found around 70 empty tobacco tins from the hostel and suspected that they could have been kept there for making crude bombs.

So far the Allahabad University had administration sealed 176 rooms after conducting raids on these four hostels. Room No 72 of the KPUC Hostel had been sealed by the police, AU proctor Prof Ram Sevak Dubey said.

Meanwhile Allahabad University Students' Union president Uday Prakash Yadav expressed resentment over the harassment of genuine hostel inmates in the name of raids at a time when they were preparing for their final examinations. He also expressed his anger over the property of the inmates being damaged during the raids.

Meanwhile, the Naini police on Sunday arrested a



RAF and PAC jawans during the raids in Allahabad University hostels

youth while he was molesting a woman in an inebriated state at a deserted spot in a rural area. The pregnant woman was forced to consume liquor by some youths who then took her to a lonely spot. The woman would be questioned after she regained consciousness, the police said. According to a report, the residents of the area spotted some youths with a woman in a semi-conscious state and raised an alarm. The villagers also rushed to the spot and caught one of the youths while the others managed to escape. The Naini police also reached the spot and nabbed the youth while the woman was admitted to a hospital. The youth informed the police that he and his two accomplices had brought the woman in an auto-rickshaw there. The Superintendent of Police (trans-Yamuna), Deependra Chaudhary, said the youth and the woman were found near the bandh road in an inebriated state.

Meanwhile, the Pratapgarh

police registered a case against some unidentified workers of the Jansatta Party for allegedly attacking BJP workers during a public meeting in Khilanpur area on Saturday.

Station House Officer (SHO) Kunda police station, Rakesh Kumar, said that an FIR had been lodged against the unidentified workers of Jansatta Party for trying to assault the candidate and his supporters and threatening them with dire consequences besides stopping them from meeting the people there. Investigation was on to identify the miscreants, the SHO added. Meanwhile BJP MP from Kaushambi Vinod Sonkar alleged that persons wearing 'gamchas' (scarves) of the Jansatta Party also rammed their vehicles into those of the BJP workers while brandishing firearms. In his complaint to Kunda Kotwali police, the MP stated that he was meeting people with his supporters when half-a-dozen persons tried to stop them from canvassing.

# Surgical strikes Commander slams Pragma

## Congress makes public its report on national security

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

comment on the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya.

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

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

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

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

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

only answer on the national security document.

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

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

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

"We have taken several

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

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

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

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

The assault on the institution

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

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

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

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

# It's time to stand up with judiciary: Jaitley



BY ARUN JAITLEY

The pivotal position of the Chief Justice of India

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The present case

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

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

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

# Top Navy Commanders to review preparedness in maritime domain

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

the course to be steered in the ensuing six months.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Richest, poorest candidates in Lok Sabha elections 2019

## With assets worth ₹9, Shri Venkateshwar is poorest candidate contesting from Bijapur in Karnataka

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Protections sought for otters as online trade booms

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## ILLEGAL OTTER TRADE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

### SOUTHEAST ASIA IS HOME TO FOUR SPECIES OF OTTERS



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

QUOTE-UNQUOTE



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



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

# CAMPAIGNING FOR LARGEST PHASE ENDS

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Campaigning for the third phase of polling in 116 parliamentary constituencies on April 23 ended on Sunday with top leaders making a last-gasp effort to sway voters in favour of their respective parties.

Polling will be held in the 116 states, spread across 15 States and Union Territories. All seats in Gujarat (26), Kerala (20), Goa (2), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (1) and Daman and Diu (1) go to polls in the third of the seven-phase election.

Besides, polling will be held in four seats in Assam, five in Bihar, seven in Chhattisgarh, one in Jammu & Kashmir, 14 in Karnataka, 14 in Maharashtra, six in Odisha, 10 in Uttar Pradesh, five in West Bengal and one Tripura. Election to Tripura East Lok Sabha constituency — which was deferred due to security reasons — will be held in this phase.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP chief Amit Shah, Congress president Rahul Gandhi and a host of Union ministers among others canvassed for their party candidates in the past few days, undertaking whirlwind tours of constituencies.

Among the key contestants in the fray are BJP chief Amit Shah (Gandhinagar, Gujarat), Congress president Rahul Gandhi (Wayanad, Kerala), and Samajwadi Party patron Mulayam Singh Yadav (Mainpuri, UP).

In Pathanamthitta, the key candidates are BJP's K Surendran, CPM's Veena George and Congress' Anto Anthony.

During campaigning in Gujarat, the two principal parties — the BJP and the Congress exchanged acrimonious barbs, with leaders from both groups exuding confidence of a good showing.

The BJP had swept all 26 seats in the State in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. In Maharashtra, the prominent seats in the third phase include Jalna, where State BJP president Raosaheb Danveis in the fray against Vilas Autade of the Congress, and Baramati, where Supriya Sule, the daughter of NCP chief Sharad Pawar, is contesting against BJP's Kanchan Kul.

Another keenly watched seat will be Ahmednagar where Sujay Vikhe Patil is the BJP's nominee. He is the son of Congress veteran and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil. Sujay Vikhe Patil joined the BJP in the run-up to the polls, after the NCP refused to vacate the Ahmednagar seat for the Congress. He is now pitted against NCP's Sangram Jagtap.

Key constituencies in Karnataka to be watched out for during the polls include Gulbarga, where Mallikarjun Kharge is pitted against Umesh Jadhav, who ahead of polls joined the BJP quitting Congress and as MLA; and Shimoga, where former chief Minister Yeddyurappa's son BY Raghavendra is pitted against another former Chief Minister S Bangarappa's son Madhu Bangarappa.

In 14 constituencies that will go to the polls in the second phase on April 23, the BJP is contesting all the seats.

The Congress and JD(S) that are facing the polls in alliance have fielded their candidates in 12 and two constituencies respectively. The BJP has a huge stake in this phase in Uttar Pradesh with the party having won seven out of the ten seats in the region in 2014, leaving three for the Samajwadi Party, but facing a tough challenge from SP-BSP-RLD combine here.

The campaigning for the phase witnessed a new low with SP leader Azam Khan making an "indecent" remark, targeting his opponent Jaya Prada in Rampur by allegedly speculating on the colour of her underwear and attracting the saffron party's wrath, besides that of the National Commission for Women. Khan, who also faced a 72-hour ban by the Election Commission of India on his campaigning after making the underwear jibe, was among the three other leaders, including Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and BSP supremo Mayawati, who faced the poll panel's wrath for making "provocative" speeches.

The political heavyweights, whose fate will be decided in the third phase of elections here, include Mulayam Singh Yadav, Union Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar, who is fighting from Bareilly and BJP's Varun Gandhi from Pilibhit.

## 2 sons of ex-CMs fight in Shivamogga

**KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU**

Yeddyurappa.

This Malnad constituency has been the stronghold of BJP and also the home town of Yeddyurappa since 2004. JDS candidate Madhu Bangarappa had lost to Raghavendra in the November 2018 by-election by a margin of 52,148 votes in a constituency comprising over 14.3 lakh electorates.

It's a neck-to-neck fight and the JDs-Congress combines leaving no stone untouched to trounce the BJP. But Yeddyurappa and BJP is also betting big on to take on Madhu Bangarappa. RSS and BJP are working hard to keep the seat to defeat Madhu Bangarappa. The caste and polarisation is the key factor in deciding the fate of these heavy weights.

With the help of the politically dominant Lingayat community, to which Yeddyurappa and Raghavendra belong, the BJP hopes to outsmart Madhu, who belongs to the backward Idiga (toddy tapper) community. Experts say the coming together of the Congress and the JDS will lead to the consolidation of secular, backward and minority votes against the BJP. It's not about any ideology but in a way direct fight between Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi.



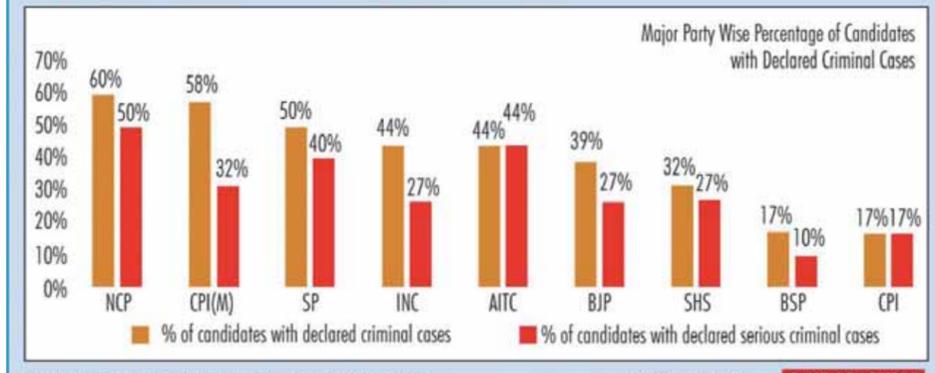
BJP Guwahati Lok Sabha candidate Queen Ojha and party Batadrava legislator Angoolalata Dekar ride a scooter during an election campaign for the Lok Sabha polls, in Guwahati, on Sunday  
**PTI**



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

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

- Party wise Candidates with Criminal Cases:**
- Among the major parties-
    - INC-40(44%) out of 90 candidates
    - BJP-38(39%) out of 97 candidates
    - BSP-16(17%) out of 92 candidates
    - CPI (M)-11(58%) out of 19 candidates
    - SHS-7(32%) out of 22 candidates
    - SP-5(50%) out of 10 candidates
    - NCP-6(60%) out of 10 candidates
  - AITC-4(44%) out of 9 candidates
  - NCP-5(50%) out of 10 candidates
  - SP-4(40%) out of 10 candidates
  - AITC-4(44%) out of 9 candidates
- Party wise Candidates with Serious Criminal Cases:**
- Among the major parties-
    - BJP-26(27%) out of 97 candidates
    - NCP-24(27%) out of 90 candidates
    - BSP-9(10%) out of 92 candidates
    - SHS-6(27%) out of 22 candidates
    - CPI (M)-6(32%) out of 19 candidates



\* Analysis of self-sworn affidavits of 1594 out of 1612 candidates (SOURCE: ADR) IANS GRAPHICS

**Lok Sabha Polls 2019 Phase-III**

### Profile of Candidates

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

### Educational Background

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

### Age Group

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

\*Does not include Tripura East seat, polling for which was deferred from April 18 to April 23  
Source: Association for Democratic Reforms KBK Pollgraphics

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

**PTI ■ BAREILLY**

Humka", "surma", "maanajha" and "baans" — the four specialty trades of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh were hit by demonetisation and the Goods and Service Tax (GST), leading to closure of some businesses but are far from being a Lok Sabha poll issues.

Two of the most significant economic policy decisions of the Narendra Modi government, the overnight scrapping of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in 2016 and the launch of GST in 2017 that subsumed all other taxes, did not bring the expected respite to traders, locals said.

There are around 450 registered jewellers here with an estimated daily business of Rs 15 crore to Rs 20 crore, Sudesh Agarwal, president of the Bareilly Sarafa Committee, claimed. "There were obvious problems after the note ban but the traders here accepted that. The GST is a good decision but has been very confusing. It was billed on the theme of 'one nation, on tax' but now there are different slab rates," he told PTI outside his shop in Sahukara market.

"In the run-up to GST's implementation, workshops were conducted here for traders in which jewellers were assured that corruption would end and it would benefit the community. The benefits that the ordinary traders should have got are yet to be seen, GST has only increased our return filings and paper work," Agarwal, also the Mahamantri of the regional traders association, Bareilly, said.

However, Agarwal asserted that "we are traditional backers of the BJP".

Bareilly is home to one of the finest "surma" manufacturers in the country but some marginal operators shut shop in the after-effect of the note ban, as did some cane traders in the city also referred to as "Baans Bareilly".

# POLL BATTLE ENTERS YADAV LAND

**Lucknow:** As the Lok Sabha election enters its third phase in Uttar Pradesh, the battle is now taking place in Yadav land with the prestige and stature of the Mulayam Singh Yadav clan on test.

The phase will also decide the course that the battle in the Yadav family will take in future.

The Samajwadi Party had contested only three out of the 16 seats that went to polls in the first two phases in the state, but in the third phase, is contesting nine out of the 10 seats that will see voting on April 23.

The Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance looks rather formidable in this phase, given the caste equations and the Bharatiya Janata Party may face an uphill

task on many of these seats.

The seats in this phase include Samajwadi Party strongholds like Badaun, Sambhal, Mainpuri, Ferozabad, and Rampur as well as Aonla, Bareilly, Pilibhit, Etah and Moradabad. One of the safest seats for the SP is Mainpuri where party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav is the candidate. It was in Mainpuri two days ago that Mulayam Singh shared the stage with BSP President Mayawati, burying the hostilities of the past two and a half decades.

There are no guesses for the result in Mainpuri where Mulayam Singh remains the tallest and most popular leader. He was elected from Mainpuri in 2014 as well as Azamgarh but

had chose to retain the latter.

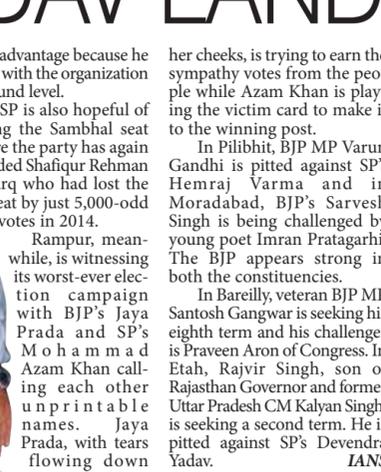
In Badaun, Samajwadi Party's Dharmendra Yadav is locked in a straight fight with Salim Iqbal Shervani of the Congress. The four lakh Muslim and nine lakh OBC votes in this constituency could tilt the scales in favour of the SP.

BJP's Sanghmitra Maurya is, meanwhile, embroiled in a controversy after her video asking her supporters to cast fake votes went viral.

In Ferozabad, the war is between uncle Shivalp Yadav and nephew Akshay Yadav and there is certainly no camaraderie in the air. This is a real battle between Yadav leaders and Shivalp Yadav enjoys an advantage because he is familiar with the organization at the ground level.

The SP is also hopeful of winning the Sambhal seat where the party has again fielded Shafiqur Rehman Barq who had lost the seat by just 5,000-odd votes in 2014.

Rampur, meanwhile, is witnessing its worst-ever election campaign with BJP's Jaya Prada and SP's Mohamamd Azam Khan calling each other unprintable names. Jaya Prada, with tears flowing down



# Warned Pak before pilot's return: PM

PTI ■ PATAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Vote for saving country from narrow-minded ideology: Priyanka

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

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

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

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

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



Pradesh said.

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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



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

# Chunaavi memes take social media by storm

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The dubs-mash video is captioned: "Muft mein lelo 15 lakh, acche din aur jumla". The video gathered over 1,800 comments, 2,700 re-tweets as well as 14,000 likes on Twitter. Yadav's clip surfaced old tweets with #Dubs-mash on the

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

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

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

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

# AI, social media regulation find prominence in poll manifestos

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

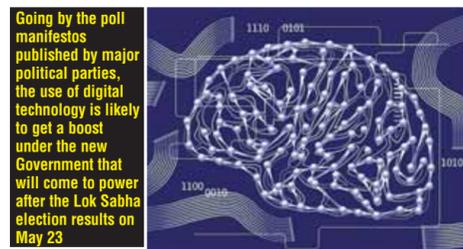
"We will enable development of young agri-scientists to take advantage of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Blockchain technology, Big Data analytics etc. for more predictive and profitable precision agriculture," the BJP said.

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

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

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

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



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

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

PTI ■ FIROZABAD

Rajveer.

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

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

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

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

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



## A Mulayam transition

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



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

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

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

## No belt but tighter ties

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



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

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

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

# Goodbye Jet Airways?

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



KUSHAN MITRA

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

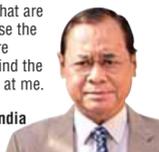
atively new and modern planes like the 300 and 400 series of the Boeing 737. Their air-hostesses spoke well and the entire experience was like a breath of fresh air after decades of Indian Airlines' domination of the domestic aviation space. Over the years, I must have flown with Jet Airways hundreds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

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

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

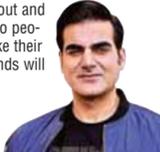
## SOUNDBITE

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



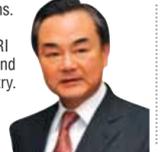
Chief Justice of India —Ranjan Gogoi

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



Actor —Arbaaz Khan

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



China's Foreign Minister —Wang Yi

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



Congress leader —Priyanka Gandhi

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Save aviation sector

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

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

### Why no bar on tainted candidates?

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

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

look at their plight.

Ramesh G Jethwani  
Bengaluru

### Stoking controversy

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

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

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

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

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



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

TK Nandan  
Chennai

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

JS Acharya  
Hyderabad

### Influencing voters

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

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

Ramachandran Nair  
Malappuram

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Bottlenecks in better healthcare

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



SAVITHA KUTTAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is CEO of a leading healthcare organisation)

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

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**



**PEOPLE OF UTTAR PRADESH HAVE REJECTED CASTE-BASED POLITICS. SP AND BSP ARE WORKING AGAINST EACH OTHER'S INTERESTS. —UNION MINISTER PIYUSH GOYAL**

# Life after elections

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



BINDU DALMIA

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

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

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

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

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

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



demand as 60 per cent of the households account for over 25 per cent of the consumption. As 12 crore farmer families are expected to benefit from the expanded coverage of the PM-KISAN scheme — which in the next phase will include tenant farmers — it requires the creation of a database to identify the beneficiaries as also better digital mapping and titling of land records. Essentially, India needs economic growth which is "organic", one that can only happen by enlarging the economic pie, as compared to interim measures that artificially boost incomes at the bottom of the social pyramid through expansive welfarism. Organic growth can happen broadly through:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Secure development with conservation

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



VK BAHUGUNA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ules. CAMPA funds can also be tied up.

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

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



**FOREIGN EYE**



## SMARTPHONE CAN WAIT

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Jet collapse: Privatisation not remedy, says AI union official

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

The abrupt closure of Jet Airways opera-

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

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

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

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

growth is not sustainable, healthy and even".

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

"The government can't expect such a gesture from private airlines," he said. "If the present crisis is allowed to continue, it will lead to unprecedented crisis in the industry leading to more and more employees being thrown out of employment. A mere glance of problems indicate that there is something seriously wrong with the policy direction," he added.

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

Under the Code, the National Company Law

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chakraborty told PTI.

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

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

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

## India is not a tariff king: Experts

**The country has the right to protect specific sectors under WTO**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW YORK

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

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

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

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

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

tors such as apparel, footwear, furniture, kitchenware and other light manufactures to create decent jobs for the masses.

"We need firms in these sectors that are globally competitive and capture the space in export markets that China has been quitting due to its high wages. This requires flexible labour and land laws and an ecosystem that is yet friendlier to large firms," he said.

Panagariya elaborated that one way to achieve this is to create Shenzhen-style Coastal Employment Zones (in China) that create zones of 500 square kilometers or more along the coast that are characterized by highly entrepreneur-friendly regime with respect to land, labour and international trade.

"Eventually, we must extend this regime to other parts of the country as well," he said.

He stressed that it is also time that "we gave a serious thought to privatising public sector banks (PSBs).

"Experience has shown that public sector ownership creates perverse incentives that have repeatedly manifested themselves in episodes of accumulation of non-performing assets (NPAs) in PSBs while the same has not been a problem in private and foreign banks," he said.

Further, public ownership has also resulted in dual regu-

lation of PSBs (by the Reserve Bank of India and the government) and two different RBI regulatory regimes for PSBs and private banks.

"The simultaneous role of the government as a provider of banking services through PSBs, policy maker and regulator create obvious conflicts. There needs to be a separation of policy making, regulatory and service provision functions," he said, adding that it is possible to promote social goals without ownership of the banks as the experience with priority sector lending illustrates.

"As a last resort, if the government feels that it must have control, keeping the State Bank of India in the public sector (with due governance reforms) may be a reasonable compromise," Panagariya said.

The noted academician also stressed that serious thought must be given to the consolidation of numerous transfers into a single cash transfer.

"We must also introduce a sunset clause to all Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Sector Schemes. Ministries running these schemes should be subject to the burden of justifying continuation of their schemes beyond a certain date," he said, underscoring that "indefinite perpetuation" can often mean that the scheme in question is making no progress in achieving its goals.

## US Cranberries partners with SheShines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

crore for this month so far, depositories data showed.

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

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

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

## Hyundai mulls options for sourcing EV components in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 205 railway projects report cost overrun of ₹2.21 lakh cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

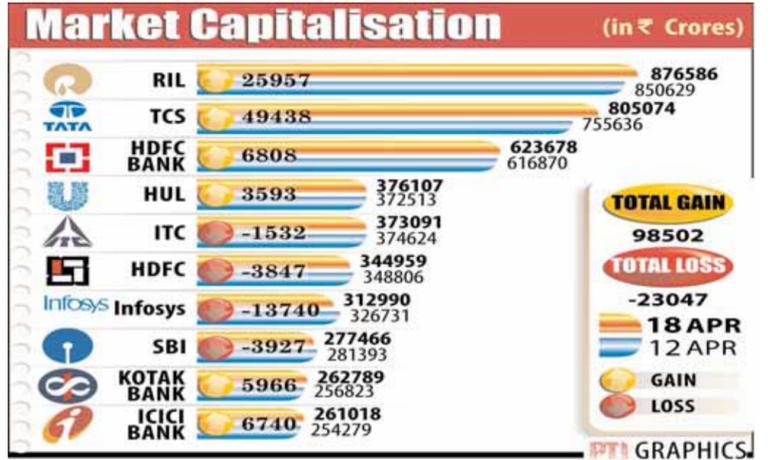
The third largest cost escalation was recorded in the road transport and highways sector where out of the 605 monitored projects, as many as 49 reported cost overrun.

Scheme	NAV	1Yr %			
Reliance US Equity Opp Fund(G)	15.24	21.87	Reliance Banking Fund(G)	284.87	7.80
Tata Digital India Fund-Reg(G)	15.09	18.95	Mirae Asset Emerging Bluechip-Reg(G)	53.62	7.73
ICICI Pru US Bluechip Equity Fund(G)	27.69	18.54	ICICI Pru Multicap Fund(G)	297.04	7.65
DHFL Pramerica Global Equity Opp Fund(G)	18.41	17.34	Sundaram Fin Serv Opp Fund(G)	41.24	7.54
SBI Technology Opp Fund-Reg(G)	65.32	17.09	Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	14.64	7.33
SBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	18.00	15.63	ICICI Pru LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)(G)	382.52	7.27
Franklin India Feeder - Franklin U.S. Opportunities Fund(G)	31.02	14.96	Kotak India EQ Contra Fund(G)	53.08	7.26
Tata Index Fund-Sensex Plan(G)	96.04	14.88	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	43.00	7.25
HDFC Index Fund-Sensex(G)	345.96	14.85	UTI Equity Fund-Reg(G)	144.59	7.19
Reliance Index Fund - Sensex Plan(G)	19.22	13.98	ICICI Pru Focused Equity Fund(G)	30.68	7.16
Franklin India Technology Fund(G)	164.41	13.58	ICICI Pru FMCG Fund(G)	244.28	6.82
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	15.27	13.51	UTI Mastershare-Reg(G)	123.78	6.77
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	15.45	13.45	Franklin India Bluechip Fund(G)	474.63	6.71
ICICI Pru Technology Fund(G)	58.78	13.43	DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund-2-Reg(G)	12.68	6.62
HDFC Top 100 Fund(G)	501.47	12.94	ICICI Pru Value Fund-15(G)	11.00	6.59
UTI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	76.47	12.78	Edelweiss Large Cap Fund(G)	35.76	6.49
IDFC Nifty Fund-Reg(G)	24.21	12.67	Kotak Bluechip Fund(G)	236.43	6.38
HDFC Index Fund-NIFTY 50 Plan(G)	106.58	12.63	Principal Focused Multicap Fund(G)	64.41	6.37
Tata Index Fund-Nifty Plan(G)	70.76	12.58	Reliance Multi Cap Fund(G)	99.29	6.27
SBI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	100.66	12.24	HDFC Growth Opp Fund-Reg(G)	114.95	6.26
Reliance Index Fund - Nifty Plan(G)	19.62	11.96	ICICI Pru Global Stable Equity Fund(G)	14.90	6.20
ICICI Pru Nifty Index Fund(G)	113.15	11.93	Aditya Birla SL Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	29.35	6.11
Aditya Birla SL Index Fund-Reg(G)	114.90	11.75	Canara Rob Consumer Trends Fund-Reg(G)	39.21	5.94
ICICI Pru Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	66.01	11.71	Mirae Asset Great Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	34.98	5.93
Franklin India Index Fund-NSE Nifty(G)	92.82	11.70	ICICI Pru Bluechip Fund(G)	42.57	5.90
Aditya Birla SL Digital India Fund(G)	53.12	11.64	Tata India Pharma & Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	9.18	5.65
IDBI Nifty Index Fund(G)	21.63	11.59	Reliance Capital Builder Fund-II-B(G)	13.23	5.54
Baroda Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	23.16	11.51	Aditya Birla SL Focused Equity Fund(G)	59.75	5.46
			Tata Large Cap Fund(G)	219.32	5.44
			IDFC Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	32.56	5.42
			UTI Banking and Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	101.62	5.40



			Invesco India Largecap Fund(G)	28.94	5.24
			DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund(G)	168.38	5.22
			BNP Paribas Large Cap Fund(G)	88.09	5.11
			Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity Fund(G)	227.12	5.06
			SBI Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)	143.02	5.04
			L&T India Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	27.35	4.96
			UTI Dividend Yield Fund-Reg(G)	65.95	4.95
			UTI Value Opp Fund-Reg(G)	62.02	4.88
			Franklin India Equity Fund(G)	605.91	4.85
			DSP Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	48.47	4.75
			JM Large Cap Fund(G)	66.76	4.73
			Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)	120.80	4.60
			Franklin India Taxshield(G)	574.00	4.54
			DSP World Agriculture Fund-Reg(G)	16.37	4.42
			Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	34.74	4.37
			Edelweiss Emerging Markets Opp Eq. Offshore Fund-Reg(G)	13.00	4.35
			Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)	82.77	4.34
			SBI Large & Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	224.00	3.92
			DSP Top 100 Equity Fund-Reg(G)	208.94	3.82
			Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)	44.29	3.78
			Invesco India Tax Plan(G)	51.16	3.67
			Reliance Close Ended Equity Fund-II-A(G)	18.69	3.29
			Invesco India Growth Opp Fund(G)	34.52	3.26
			SBI Tax Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	24.33	3.21
			Axis Midcap Fund(G)	36.30	3.12
			DSP Equity Fund-Reg(G)	39.29	3.03

Principal Dividend Yield Fund(G)	54.06	2.93	Principal Personal Tax saver Fund	197.86	-1.80
Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	13.74	2.93	ICICI Pru Value Fund-4(G)	21.52	-5.86
DSP Global Allocation Fund-Reg(G)	12.14	2.87	ICICI Pru Midcap Fund(G)	96.63	-6.11
HDFC TaxSaver(G)	529.03	2.83	DSP India T.I.G.E.R	91.57	-6.14
Tata Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	202.57	2.73	HDFC Focused 30 Fund(G)	78.43	-2.13
SBI Magnum	145.77	2.69	Templeton India Value Fund(G)	260.66	-2.34
TaxGain'93-Reg(G)			ICICI Pru Infrastructure Fund(G)	51.65	-2.34
Edelweiss Gr China Equity Off-Shore Fund-Reg(G)	28.40	2.68	Principal Tax Savings Fund	211.11	-2.35
Axis Focused 25 Fund(G)	27.57	2.68	BNP Paribas Multi Cap Fund(G)	46.72	-2.48
HDFC Capital Builder Value Fund(G)	302.14	2.67	SBI Consumption Opp Fund-Reg(G)	119.14	-2.57
ICICI Pru Value Discovery Fund(G)	147.04	2.65	IDFC Focused Equity	36.92	-7.31
SBI Magnum Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	48.89	2.56			
Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)	21.78	2.52			
DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)	23.26	2.52			
Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	14.77	2.50			
JM Tax Gain Fund(G)	17.06	2.49			
JM Multicap Fund(G)	31.32	2.47			
DHFL Pramerica LT Equity Fund-Reg(G)	14.42	2.41			
Aditya Birla SL Equity Fund(G)	733.74	2.38			
ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-1-(G)	10.33	2.38			
UTI Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	86.24	2.36			
Sundaram Value Fund-II-Reg(G)	16.14	2.32			
ICICI Pru Value Fund-8(D)	10.71	2.29			
Aditya Birla SL MNC Fund(G)	776.42	2.28			
Reliance Quant Fund(G)	25.92	2.26			
DHFL Pramerica Tax Plan(G)	31.28	2.02			
SBI BlueChip Fund-Reg(G)	39.50	2.01			
SBI Tax advantage Fund-II(G)	35.56	2.00			
Tata India Tax Savings Fund-Reg(G)	18.10	1.96			
ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	12.54	1.95			
Aditya Birla SL CEF-Global Agri-Reg(G)	23.52	1.92			
Franklin India Opportunities Fund(G)	75.15	1.89			
ICICI Pru Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	326.85	1.88			
BNP Paribas Long Term Equity Fund(G)	38.09	1.81			
Reliance Focused Equity Fund(G)	47.92	1.75			
UTI LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)-Reg(G)	88.14	1.74			
Invesco India Contra Fund(G)	48.36	1.53			
JM Value Fund(G)	32.59	1.44			
DSP Equity Opportunities Fund-Reg(G)	222.08	1.42			
ICICI Pru R.I.G.H.T Fund(G)	43.43	1.21			
Franklin Asian Equity Fund(G)	22.77	1.17			
Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-B(G)	18.62	1.11			
Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	12.92	1.06			
Reliance Value Fund(G)	74.60	0.96			
Principal Nifty 100 Equal Weight Fund(G)	73.51	0.89			
Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	80.45	0.84			
SBI Healthcare Opp Fund-Reg(G)	121.47	0.83			
Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(G)	32.00	0.82			
IDBI India Top 100 Equity Fund(G)	23.98	0.76			
Edelweiss Multi-Cap Fund-Reg(G)	14.63	0.67			
Sundaram Global Advt(G)	17.21	0.49			
DHFL Pramerica Diversified Equity Fund-Reg(G)	13.38	0.45			
Reliance Japan Equity Fund(G)	12.72	0.40			
SBI LT Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	13.53	0.02			
Canara Rob Emerg Equities Fund-Reg(G)	94.58	-0.08			
Edelweiss Large & Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	31.18	-0.16			
Invesco India Midcap Fund(G)	49.02	-0.47			
DSP World Energy Fund-Reg(G)	13.55	-0.56			
DSP World Mining Fund-Reg(G)	8.60	-0.56			
Tata Mid Cap Growth Fund(G)	139.62	-0.64			
Templeton India Equity Income Fund(G)	47.49	-0.74			
Reliance Growth Fund(G)	1126.16	-0.77			
IDFC Multi Cap Fund-Reg(G)	93.58	-1.04			
UTI MNC Fund-Reg(G)	195.14	-1.07			
IDFC Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	45.12	-1.19			
L&T Equity Fund-Reg(G)	82.45	-1.26			
UTI Focussed Equity Fund-I(G)	13.69	-1.30			
Edelweiss Long Term Equity Fund (Tax Savings)-Reg(G)	46.59	-1.31			
Sundaram Diversified Equity(G)	102.30	-1.38			
Reliance Vision Fund(G)	542.02	-1.48			
Franklin India Prima Fund(G)	969.62	-1.70			
Principal Multi Cap Growth Fund(G)	144.19	-1.78			



Tata Equity P/E Fund(G)	135.34	-2.75	UTI LT Adv Fund-IV(G)	10.67	-7.35
Motilal Oswal Midcap 30 Fund-Reg(G)	25.22	-2.79	L&T Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	134.92	-7.41
SBI Equity Opp Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	15.99	-2.83	Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Pan European Equity Fund-Reg(G)	10.82	-7.47
IDBI Diversified Equity Fund(G)	20.99	-3.05	Invesco India Multicap Fund(G)	47.29	-7.83
UTI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	53.82	-3.07	BNP Paribas Mid Cap Fund(G)	31.52	-7.97
Tata Ethical Fund(G)	157.88	-3.13	Aditya Birla SL Dividend Yield Fund(G)	160.34	-8.07
SBI LT Advantage Fund-IV-Reg(G)	12.67	-3.21	IDBI Midcap Fund(G)	10.95	-8.14
ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	11.50	-3.28	Sundaram Infra Advantage Fund(G)	32.83	-8.42
Sundaram Rural and Consumption Fund(G)	41.95	-3.29	Kotak Global Emerging Mkt Fund(G)	15.62	-8.45
UTI India LifeStyle Fund-Reg(G)	25.51	-3.45	Aditya Birla SL Midcap Fund(G)	288.75	-8.54
ICICI Pru Exports & Services Fund(G)	56.96	-3.51	Kotak Infra & Eco Reform Fund(G)	20.18	-8.62
SBI LT Advantage Fund-II-Reg(G)	13.93	-3.57	SBI PSU Fund-Reg(G)	10.36	-8.69
Principal Global Opportunities Fund(G)	28.79	-3.59	Canara Rob Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	44.89	-9.29
ICICI Pru Value Fund-11(G)	12.09	-3.67	SBI Magnum Comma Fund-Reg(G)	36.00	-9.43
Motilal Oswal Multicap 35 Fund-Reg(G)	26.03	-3.95	Franklin India Smaller Cos Fund(G)	54.78	-9.54
Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	404.20	-3.97	IDFC Sterling Value Fund-Reg(G)	51.90	-9.55
DSP Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	54.70	-4.03	L&T Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	15.99	-9.61
IDBI Equity Advantage Fund-Reg(G)	26.32	-4.05	DHFL Pramerica Midcap Opp Fund-Reg(G)	18.26	-9.69
ICICI Pru Growth Fund-3(DP)	10.39	-4.06	SBI Magnum MidCap Fund-Reg(G)	74.48	-9.73
Tata Resources & Energy Fund-Reg(G)	14.39	-4.13	Aditya Birla SL Mfg. Equity Fund-Reg(G)	13.07	-9.74
Aditya Birla SL Global Commodities Fund(G)	12.53	-4.26	Sundaram Mid Cap Fund(G)	467.80	-10.19
SBI Contra Fund-Reg(G)	112.28	-4.36	L&T Business Cycle Fund-Reg(G)	15.24	-10.63
DSP World Gold Fund-Reg(G)	11.12	-4.41	SBI Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	51.99	-10.80
SBI LT Advantage Fund-I-Reg(G)	13.49	-4.47	Kotak Small Cap Fund(G)	71.75	-11.15
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-IV-Reg(G)	14.22	-4.48	Reliance Small Cap Fund(G)	40.33	-11.60
L&T India Value Fund-Reg(G)	36.09	-4.49	Aditya Birla SL Infrastructure Fund(G)	32.30	-11.63
SBI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	15.28	-4.52	Edelweiss Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	26.59	-11.67
DHFL Pramerica Euro Equity Fund(G)	13.49	-4.53	Baroda Mid-cap Fund(G)	8.97	-12.14
L&T Tax Advt Fund-Reg(G)	53.92	-4.55	HDFC Infrastructure Fund(G)	17.05	-12.62
ICICI Pru Dividend Yield Equity Fund(G)	16.98	-4.55	IDBI Small Cap Fund(G)	9.53	-12.73
UTI LT Adv Fund-V(G)	9.83	-4.65	ICICI Pru Smallcap Fund(G)	25.02	-12.76
IDFC Tax Advt(ELSS) Fund-Reg(G)	56.59	-4.68	L&T Emerging Businesses Fund-Reg(G)	24.70	-12.79
Tata Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	55.74	-4.70	UTI Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	100.02	-12.83
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-III-Reg(G)	14.20	-4.74	Reliance Power & Infra Fund(G)	99.11	-14.57
SBI Magnum Global Fund-Reg(G)	169.21	-4.83	DSP Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	55.70	-15.81
Principal Emerging					

# Pope denounces Easter slaughter in Lanka attack

AFP ■ VATICAN CITY

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

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

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

In a special appeal at the



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

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

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

matic event."

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

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

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

## Egypt's Al-Azhar condemns 'terrorist' attacks

AFP ■ CAIRO

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

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

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

## Pak condemns explosions in churches, hotels

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

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

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

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

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

Foreign Office spokesman Dr Mohammad Faisal said on

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

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

Prime Minister Imran Khan also strongly condemned the barbaric attacks.

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

## Putin condemns bombings

AP ■ COLOMBO

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

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

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

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

## GLOBE TROTTER

KING RESTORES CITIZENSHIP OF 551 BAHRAINIS

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

## 2 INDIANS ARRESTED IN NEPAL FOR SMUGGLING

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

## QUEEN ELIZABETH II TURNS 93 ON EASTER SUNDAY

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

## Iraq condemns to death 4 IS members repatriated from Syria

AFP ■ BAGHDAD

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

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

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

## Theresa May condemns 'appalling' church attacks

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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



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

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

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

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

No group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attacks.

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



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

## US special envoy for Afghan peace visits Kabul

IANAS ■ KABUL

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

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



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

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

## ISIS claims deadly attack on Afghan ministry

AFP ■ BEIRUT

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

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

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

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

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

## Sudan protest leaders to unveil civilian ruling body

AFP ■ KHARTOUM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On Saturday Ahmed al-

Rabia, a senior member of SPA, said it was possible that the unveiling of the council could be delayed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Comic poised to take over Presidency in Ukraine vote

AFP ■ KIEV

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

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

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

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

ratists in the east.

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

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

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

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

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

## Afghan SC extends Ghani's term until delayed elections

AFP ■ KABUL

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

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

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

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

"The supreme court understands the financial, secu-

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

and logistical challenges faced by the election commission."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## US withdrawal from Afghanistan focus of next talks: Taliban

AFP ■ DOHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Harris' campaign focuses on black colleges for support

AP ■ ORANGEBURG (US)

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

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

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

To be sure, she is not the only candidate focusing on such institutions. Massachusetts Sen

Elizabeth Warren, New York Sen Kirsten Gillibrand and former Texas Rep Beto O'Rourke have campaigned at historically black colleges. So has the other black candidate in the 2020 race, New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# A LOOK AT SUSTAINABLE FARMING

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

**THE FUTURE OF FARMING**

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

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

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

aquaponics is a responsible and sustainable farming system.

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

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

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

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



## Let's be part of a great transformation

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

BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

**Communicate with your children**

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

**Don't bring work home**

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

# Work is not for home

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

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

**Look for flexible workplaces**

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

**Seek help and support**

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



after work and head home for quality time.

**Look on the bright side**

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

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

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

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

—Albert Einstein

**PEOPLE WHO SMOKE MARIJUANA WEIGH LESS**

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

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

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

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

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



**ADHESIVE PATCH TO REDUCE HEART ATTACK**

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

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

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

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



**VIOLENT AFFAIR AFFECTS MENTAL HEALTH IN WOMEN**

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

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

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

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

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



**SKIPPING BREAKFAST MAY UP DEATH RISK**

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

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

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

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



**BP DRUG FOR TREATING PARKINSON'S**

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

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

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

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



**Trend**  
*Slazer*

**'First film is always special'**

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

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

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



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

—Yami Gautam

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

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

*We The Sikhs* celebrates

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



**Adele separates from husband**

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

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

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

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

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



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

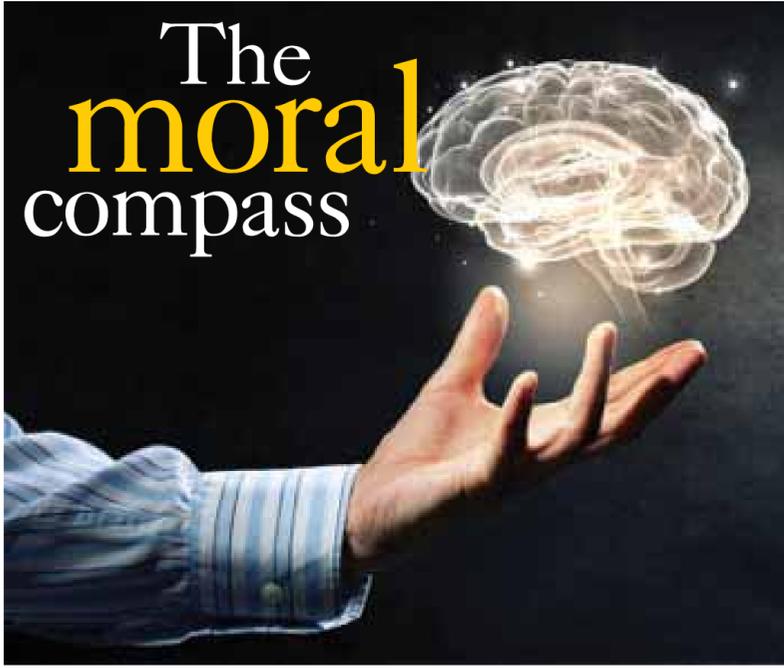
Who decides whether our actions or decisions are morally acceptable or objectionable? A new study reveals that it is the brain activity which is responsible for the differences in our moral behaviour.

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

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

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

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



depending on what serves their interests best.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**WEBBED**  
BONDING: SEASON 1



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

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

**DEAD TO ME**



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

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

**THE PROTECTOR: SEASON 2**



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

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

**TECH TALK**

**A fight against floods**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**'CINEMA IS DYING'**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Fantastic 4 for Everton

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

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

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

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

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

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

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

Sunday's loss also means United have conceded in 12 consecutive games for the first time since December 1998 while, under Solskjaer, the Reds have lost five consecutive away games for the first time in 38 years.

## SECOND BEST

United looked second best even before the hosts scored twice inside the opening half-hour, conceding a succession of corners from which Everton threatened.

It was another type of set-piece, a long throw-in by Digne, from which Everton took the lead after 12 minutes when the full-back launched the ball deep into the United area.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin helped the ball on with the flick of his head and Richarlison sent a spectacular scissor-kick finish flying past David de Gea.

After a humbling 3-0 Champions League exit at Barcelona in midweek, it was not the start



Solskjaer had been looking for. Everton soon made the situation worse for the visitors.

After 27 minutes, Everton cleared a United corner and immediately broke on the counter-attack, with winger Bernard playing a delightful ball inside to Idrissa Gueye.

He, in turn, released Sigurdsson who, with Nemanja Matic backing off, unleashed a magnificent 25-yard shot which bounced just in front of the diving de Gea on its way into the bottom corner.

Richarlison might have given Everton the lead even earlier. His 10th minute shot drew an amazing

reaction save from de Gea. From the rebound the Brazilian hurried his follow-up effort wide.

## BRILLIANTLY TIMED

With the recalled Romelu Lukaku booed every time he touched the ball by his former fans at Everton, United had little response to an impressive effort from the home side.

In between the goals, United star Paul Pogba's long diagonal pass freed Marcus Rashford who could only poke his effort over from a tight angle.

Everton effectively killed the



game in the 56th minute. De Gea punched clear a Sigurdsson corner to the unmarked Digne who sent a superb, first-time volley flying back past the United keeper from 20 yards.

Three minutes later, and from the same left wing, another Sigurdsson corner almost crept in at de Gea's near post before the Spaniard stuck out a boot to clear off his line.

Even though Richarlison had limped off through injury, the agony was not over for United with the Brazilian's replacement Walcott continuing the rout in the 64th

minute. Sigurdsson again carved out the opening with a brilliantly-timed through ball which allowed the former England international the space to sprint into the area and beat the advancing de Gea.

Not until the 86th minute, and a comfortably saved Anthony Martial strike, did United have a shot on target.

Meanwhile Everton, who had not beaten a 'big six' rival in 25 attempts before last month, have now won consecutive home matches against Chelsea, Arsenal and United while keeping three clean sheets in the process.

# Ronaldo '1,000 percent' committed to Juventus



AFP ■ TURIN

Cristiano Ronaldo said he is "1,000 percent committed to staying" with Juventus next season as he claimed his first Serie A title and Juventus their eighth in a row on Saturday.

Massimiliano Allegri's side had needed just one more point for a 35th Scudetto and their latest title triumph helped ease some of the pain of their shock Champions League exit at the Juventus Stadium to Ajax on Tuesday.

A come-from-behind 2-1 win over Fiorentina was enough to give them a 20-point lead on nearest rivals Napoli with five games to play.

Serbian defender Nikola Milenkovic put Fiorentina ahead after less than six minutes.

But Alex Sandro's diving header on 37 minutes and an own goal from Fiorentina defender German Pezzella after a Ronaldo cross in the 53rd minute sealed another title to ease their European disappointment.

"It was a great season and I adapted well. We won the Scudetto and the Italian Super Cup, which is not easy to achieve," said Ronaldo.

"It didn't go well in the

Champions League but next year is a new page, the fans all want it and so do we.

"I'm staying at Juve, 1,000 percent."

It was the 34-year-old's sixth domestic league title, having won three with Manchester United and two with Real Madrid, as he becomes the first player to win the Premier League, La Liga and Serie A.

Their eight straight title sees them overtake French club Lyon for the record of consecutive victories in the top five European leagues.

The day was a double celebration as Juventus' women's team won their second straight league title since being founded in 2017.

"I'm very happy because we've achieved an important goal," said Allegri, who becomes the first coach to win five consecutive Serie A titles.

He has six in total, having also won with AC Milan, one behind Giovanni Trapattoni, who has seven.

Juventus also equalled the record for the earliest the Italian title has been won, with five games to spare, achieved by Torino in 1948, Fiorentina in 1956 and Inter Milan in 2007.

## SINGLES

DEVAAGYH EMERGES CHAMP



Devaagyh Dixit won the 14th Lucknow District Under-7 Open Chess Championship, despite of a last round defeat, at Lucknow District Chess Academy on Sunday. In the last round, Aryan Sadhwani defeated Devaagyh Dixit while Atharva Thapliyal beat Jaideep Rai. After the end of last round, Devaagyh, Aryan and Atharva were on 3 points each but better tie-break scores hand Devaagyh championship trophy. Devagyh and Aryan will now represent Lucknow in the UP State Under-7 Chess championship to be held at Ghaziabad.

## GOLDEN BOYS WIN TOURNAY

Golden Boys blanked Aliganj Sporting 2-0 to win the Rajeshwari Thakur Das Memorial Football Tournament at Chowk Stadium on Sunday. Shivam and Rohan scored in the 25th and 46th minute respectively.

## BCC LIFT TROPHY



BCC Club beat Smashers XI by six wickets to lift the Eshwar Kaur Memorial Cricket Tournament at Ras Behari Tiwari Stadium on Sunday.

**BRIEF SCORES:**  
Smashers: 62 (Abhigyan Singh 21, Tauheed 10; Kanchan Rajput 15/3, Vishwajeet Singh 5/2, Manjeet 14/2, Pranay Bhanot 25/2)  
BCC Club: 63 (Manjeet 29, Amit Singh 10, Vivek Singh 10; Arun Singh 29/2)

## ARIF WINS C'SHIP

Arif Ali pipped Pawan Batham in the last round to emerge winner in the Avijay Open Chess Tournament on Sunday. Vamsi Krishna and Prithvi Singh finished third and fourth respectively.  
**Other results:** (U-16) 1-Aryan Singh, 2-Sirran Sadhwani, 3-Akshin Srivastava; (U-12) 1-Sanwi Agarwal, 2-Atharva Rastogi, 3-Orko Daw.

# Benzema nets hat-trick against Bilbao

AFP ■ MADRID

Karim Benzema made it 30 goals for the season on Sunday as he led the way again for struggling Real Madrid with a hat-trick that shot his side to a 3-0 win over Athletic Bilbao.

Benzema has been one of the few bright sparks in an otherwise dreary campaign for the European champions and it was his second-half treble that proved the difference at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Victory moves Madrid four points behind Atletico in second, while Bilbao stay seventh, with their chances of sealing a spot in the Europa League dented. However Zinedine Zidane's side stay 13 points behind La Liga leaders Barcelona, who beat Real Sociedad 2-1 on Saturday.

Benzema's advance in the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo and surge since the reappointment of Zidane comes in stark contrast to Gareth Bale, who was whistled when introduced as a substitute here and frequently during his 20 minutes on the pitch.

For all the impatience of the home crowd, it was Bale who won the corner for Benzema's second and then teed up his team-mate's third in injury-time.

The 31-year-old has now claimed all of Madrid's last eight goals in La Liga, a run that includes five matches, while in his last seven games, he has scored 10.

It was from the counter-attack that Madrid scored as Toni Kroos was allowed to stroll forward unattended and feed Marco Asensio out wide. Asensio crossed for Benzema to head home.

The game was reduced to almost a walking pace around the hour, with the Madrid fans roused only to jeer the introduction of Bale, who came on with Isco, with 20 minutes left.

But it was his run in behind that won



the corner for Benzema's second, another header, this time at the back post, before a comical mix-up in the Bilbao defence gifted him his hat-trick.

Iago Herrerin rushed out to intercept a speculative ball over the top but made a mess of his headed clearance, the ball falling to Bale to tee up Benzema, 30 yards out but with the goal open.

# Dortmund keep heat on Bayern

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Captain Marco Reus played through the pain barrier to inspire Borussia Dortmund to a 4-0 win over Freiburg on Sunday and kept them hot on the heels of Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich.

Reus picked up a knock to his knee under a heavy challenge from Freiburg's Janik Haberer in the second half, but fired Dortmund to victory with a goal and two assists to keep them a point behind Bayern.

Dortmund was under pressure to pick up three points after title rivals Bayern beat Werder Bremen 1-0 on Saturday.

Far from buckling under the pressure, however, Dortmund delivered one of their most confident performances in recent weeks to fight their way past Freiburg in a nail-biting title



race. A silky move in the box saw Dortmund take the lead 12 minutes in, with Raphael Guerreiro and Marco Reus linking up to provide Jadon Sancho with a tap-in.

Guerreiro, returning to action after two weeks out injured, then set up Reus for Dortmund's second eight minutes after half-time.

Lucien Favre's side then survived a handful of chances for Freiburg before a brutal counter-attack saw Reus set up Mario Goetze to make it 3-0.

Paco Alcacer completed a perfect afternoon for Dortmund, converting a late penalty after a Pascal Stenzel handball.

Dortmund face local rivals Schalke in the Ruhr derby next Saturday, before Bayern travel to take on Nuremberg the following day.

# PSG win sixth French title

AFP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain won the French Ligue 1 title for a sixth time in seven seasons on Sunday after second-placed Lille could only draw 0-0 at Toulouse.

Qatar-backed PSG are now 16 points ahead of Lille who have five games to play after a campaign which saw them only lose on three occasions in another dominant league campaign.

PSG now have eight French championships since their maiden victory in 1986 although they squandered



three earlier chances to secure this season's trophy by failing to beat Strasbourg, rivals Lille and Nantes in the

space of 10 days. Tuchel, in his first year as boss, has complained about not having enough players as

the world's most expensive footballer Neymar, Angel di Maria and Marquinhos have missed large parts of the season through injuries.

The German has had to call on youngsters Colin Dagba, Moussa Diaby and Christopher Nkunku to fill gaps but Kylian Mbappe has proved his 180 million-euro pricetag with 27 goals in 26 league appearances.

The Parisians host Monaco, later on Sunday with Neymar set to return from a foot problem which has kept him sidelined since January.

# Fognini- the master of Monte Carlo

AFP ■ MONTE CARLO

Italy's Fabio Fognini thrilled a crowd composed mainly of his countrymen as he defeated Dusan Lajovic 6-3, 6-4 to win the Monte Carlo Masters on Sunday.

The 13th seed based just 20 kilometres over the border in San Remo, became the first from Italy to lift a trophy here in 51 years, following on from Nicola Pietrangeli, who watched his record fall from the royal box at the Monte Carlo Country Club.

Pietrangeli won the trophy in the principality in 1961, 1967 and 1968.

He came to the court after the trophy ceremony to pose for pictures with his new tennis heir, who was following up his shock semi-final win over 11-time Monte Carlo champion Rafael Nadal. "I started the season rather badly, so



this is unbelievable. I'm very content with this victory, especially with all of the Italians here today," Fognini, 31, said. The 48th-ranked Serb Lajovic was playing in the first ATP final of his career and got to the title match without the loss of a set.

# Aus enter first Fed Cup final since 1993

AFP ■ BRISBANE

Australia powered into its first Fed Cup final since 1993 on Sunday with Ashleigh Barty and Samantha Stosur clinching the deciding fifth rubber in Brisbane against Belarusian pair Victoria Azarenka and Aryna Sabalenka.

Their battling 7-5, 3-6, 6-2 win set up a title match against either France or Romania in November.

The tie was sent into the crucial doubles match after Azarenka crushed Stosur 6-1, 6-1 in the reverse singles, following Barty sweeping past Sabalenka 6-2, 6-2.

Belarus, a losing finalist in 2017, was scheduled to pit Lidziya Marozava and Vera Lapko against the Australian duo, who were playing together for the first time. But with so much on the line team captain Tatiana Poutchek opted instead



for the more accomplished pairing. But they fell short to give seven-time champions Australia a crack at their first title since last winning in 1974.

Elsewhere, World number two Simona Halep battled back from a set down to defeat France's Caroline Garcia 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 6-4 and put Romania within touching distance of a first final appearance since 1973.

LEADERBOARD	
<b>RUNS</b>	<b>517</b> David Warner (SRH)
<b>WICKETS</b>	<b>21</b> Kagiso Rabada (DC)
<b>6S</b>	<b>485</b> IPL IS ALL ABOUT STRINGING WINS TOGETHER AND WE NEED TO CATCH THE MOMENTUM NOW
<b>4S</b>	<b>1084</b> — R ASHWIN

# IPL 2019



## 9 WICKET THUMPING

Bairstow and Warner's 4th 100 run opening stand help SRH beat KKR in just 15 overs



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Jonny Bairstow and David Warner continued their stellar run at the top as they powered Sunrisers Hyderabad to a nine-wicket win over struggling Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL encounter here on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 160, Warner struck 67 off 38 balls hitting three fours and five sixes while Englishman Bairstow punished the hapless KKR attack with seven boundaries and four maximums in his unbeaten knock of 80 off 43 balls.

The openers looked in command as the target was achieved in 15 overs largely due to their 131-run stand. This was KKR's fifth successive loss in the tournament.

This is the fourth time that the opening partnership

of Warner and Bairstow paved the way for a Sunrisers victory this season. The duo had guided SRH to victories against Rajasthan Royals, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Capitals in similar fashion.

KKR were sloppy in the field and ended up paying heavily for their mistakes. Bairstow was dropped twice, once on 5 by Carriappa off debutant Prithviraj's delivery in the second over and then again on 58 by Piyush Chawla off Sunil Narine.

The trio of spinners were the reason for KKR's downfall as Sunil Narine (0/34 in 4 overs), KC Cariappa (0/34 in 2 overs) and Piyush Chawla (0/38 in 3 overs) gave away 106 runs in nine overs.

Prithvi (1/29) got the only breakthrough for KKR dismissing the threatening



Australian but it was a little too late as the hosts needed just 29 runs off 40 balls.

With Warner gone, Kane Williamson (8 off 9 balls) walked in but the captain had little to do with Bairstow hitting a four and two sixes to seal the victory.

With the win, Sunrisers Hyderabad jumped to the fourth spot with 10 points

### KULDEEP DROPPED DUE TO POOR FORM: DK

**HYDERABAD:** He is expected to play a vital role in India's World Cup campaign but chinaman Kuldeep Yadav's slump prompted Kolkata Knight Riders team management to drop him from the playing XI against Sunrisers Hyderabad barely six weeks before the big event.

The wrist spinner has only got four wickets in nine games at an economy rate of 8.66 and KKR dropped him in their 10th game even though his replacement, K C Cariappa, fared worse, giving away 34 runs in two overs.

When asked about Kuldeep's absence from the playing XI, KKR skipper Dinesh Karthik made it clear that he was dropped owing to poor form. "A form issue with (Kuldeep) — as he couldn't stand up for us in the last game. We had to give him a break and get him back fresh."

However, despite his poor form, KKR's other spinners went for plenty and gave away a cumulative 106 runs in nine



overs. "Our bowling has been off colour in the tournament. Our fielding needs a lot of improvement too," said skipper Karthik, who is also under scanner due to his poor form and a controversial berth in the World Cup bound squad. "I think 160 was a par score on this wicket if we'd bowled well. I think they (Warner and Bairstow) batted really well but our fielding cost us. And after that dropped catch (off Prithviraj), he (Bairstow) came at us all guns blazing. A wicket of Bairstow would have felt better, feel for the guy (Yarra Prithviraj). We have been outplayed in this game," Karthik said.

PTI ■ JAIPUR

## DC look to continue momentum against Royals

A win at home finally achieved after multiple losses, a confident Delhi Capitals will hope to keep the juggernaut rolling when they take on Rajasthan Royals in an away IPL encounter here on Monday.

Delhi have been doing better at away games rather than at their home ground but on Saturday night they managed to reverse that at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground with a five-wicket win over Kings XI Punjab, helping them remain on third spot in the points table.

Rajasthan Royals also won their match here on Saturday by the same margin against a formidable Mumbai Indians as Steve Smith celebrated his return at the helm with a captain's innings.

With both teams rejuvenated after their respective victories, it will be an interesting battle for one-upmanship come on Monday.

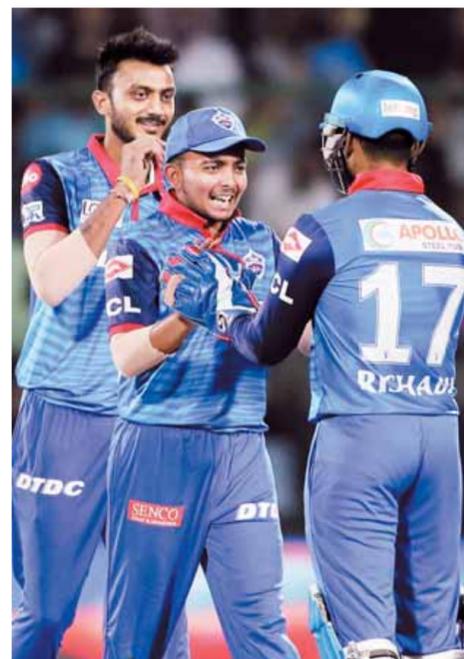
However, Rajasthan would be a bit more desperate than Delhi as they are languishing at the second last position in the points table with just three wins from nine outings.

Rajasthan would look to continue to capitalise on their home advantage under new captain Smith. But they would certainly miss their prolific opener Jos Buttler.

Anjkiya Rahane, who has been struggling with his form and also seemed to be out of ideas, was eventually stripped of captaincy and next he might also lose his opening slot to Rahul Tripathi.

Tripathi was impressive during his 45-ball fifty against Kings XI Punjab, while Rahane was too slow in his 21-ball 26 as Rajasthan failed to chase down 182, finishing at 170/7.

With Smith back in form, and the youngsters like Sanju Samson and Riyan Parag



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JAIPUR

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**DC 7**

off 49 balls to win their last game.

With Dhawan and Prithvi Shaw at the top and the likes of Rishabh Pant, Iyer and Colin Ingram to follow, Delhi would start as a confident batting unit.

Down the order, even Axar Patel is capable of accelerating the run-rate.

As far as bowling is concerned, Delhi Capitals heavily depend on Kagiso Rabada although they have variety in medium pacers Ishant Sharma, Sandeep Lamichhane and spinners Amit Mishra and Axar Patel.

Another victory for Delhi will brighten their chances of making the play-offs and they would leave no stone unturned to achieve a win against the home side.

PTI ■ BANGALORE

## RCB SURVIVE MSD SCARE

Mahendra Singh Dhoni produced an all-time brilliant innings of IPL but failed to take Chennai Super Kings home against Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL encounter on Sunday.

Requiring two runs of the last ball, Dhoni missed the ball and ran to take a single but Shardul Thakur couldn't complete the run.

Earlier, Parthiv Patel's attacking half-century and Moeen Ali's final flourish wasn't enough as Royal Challengers Bangalore put up a sub-par 161 for 7.

Parthiv smashed 53 off 37 balls but didn't get a lot of support from

the other end until Moeen Ali used the long handle to hit 26 off 16 balls even as AB de Villiers (25 off 19 balls) and Akshdeep Nath (24 off 20 balls) delivered little after promising a lot.

Deepak Chahar (2/25 in 4 overs) was impressive as usual while Ravindra Jadeja's (2/29 in 4 overs) twin breakthrough during partnership was also important in the context of the innings.

Dwayne Bravo (2/34 in 4 overs) also chipped in with a couple of wickets in the end.

Virat Kohli (9) hit a couple of



boundaries before a thickish edge off a Chahar outswinger brought about his downfall. Mahendra Singh Dhoni took a nice catch behind the stumps.

However Parthiv and AB de Villiers (25 off 19 balls) added 47 runs in only 4.2 overs with the former South African skipper looking in fine touch.

De Villiers smashed Chahar over square leg while Parthiv also flicked Shardul Thakur (0/40 in 4 overs) for a couple of sixes.

Having picked 16 runs off the final Powerplay over, RCB looked

in control before Jadeja induced De Villiers to go for a big shot only to be holed by Faf du Plessis at Long-off.

Parthiv was joined by the burly Akshdeep Nath (24, 20 balls), who hit a six off Jadeja, added 41 runs with his senior partner before being caught by Du Plessis at long-off Jadeja's bowling at the stroke of team's 100-run mark.

The baby-faced Parthiv, whose form has been inconsistent during the tournament so far, was ready to punish the loose balls on the day as he sent a Jadeja half-tracker soaring into the stands for his third six and hit Imran Tahir for a fourth one.



## Annu, Parul open India's medal account

PTI ■ DOHA

Javelin thrower Annu Rani and 5000m runner Parul Choudhary won a Silver and a Bronze respectively as India opened its medal account on the opening day of the Asian Athletics Championships here on Sunday.

On a day which saw sprint sensation Hima Das suffer a lower back spasm while runner her quartermile event, Dutee Chand smashed her own national record in 100m dash to qualify for the semifinals.

The 26-year-old Annu, who had won a Bronze in the 2017 edition in Bhubaneswar, hurled the spear to a best distance of 60.22m to grab the Silver. China's Lyu Huihui won the Gold with an effort of 65.83m at the Khalifa Stadium.

Annu's performance was, however, more than 2m short of her national record shattering effort of 62.34m during the Federation Cup at Patiala last month which gave her a berth in the World Championships to be held at the same venue in September-October.

The other Indian in the fray, Sharmila Kumari finished seventh with a best throw of 54.48m.

The 24-year-old Parul gave India the second medal as she finished third in women's 5000m race, clocking a personal best of 15 minutes 36.03 seconds. She bettered her earlier personal best of 15:58.35 which she had clocked during the Federation Cup last month.



The other Indian in the fray, Sanjivani Jadhav finished fourth with a time of 15:41.12.

Bahrain took both the Gold and Silver through Mutile Winfred Yavi (15:28.87) and Bontu Rebitu (15:29.60). Saritaben Gayakwad (58.17s) and M Arpitha (58.20s) qualified for women's 400m hurdles finals from their respective heats while M P Jabir (50.17s) did the same in men's 400m hurdles.

Earlier in the morning session, 23-year-old Dutee clocked 11.28 seconds to set a national record while winning her heat in the women's 100m race. She has qualified for the semifinals.

Dutee bettered her earlier national record of 11.29 seconds which she set last year in Guwahati.

The Odisha runner, however, could not touch the 11.24 second qualification mark for the World Championships.

The Indian contingent suffered a jolt as Hima failed to finish her 400m heat due to a lower back spasm.

## MIRABAI MISSES BRONZE, JEREMY SMASHES YOUTH WR

PTI ■ NINGBO

Former world champion Mirabai Chanu produced her personal best but missed out on podium by a whisker, while Youth Olympics Gold medallist Jeremy Lalrinnunga went on a record-smashing spree at the Asian Weightlifting Championship here on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Mirabai lifted 86kg in snatch and a personal best of 113kg in clean and jerk for a total of 199kg in the women's 49kg event to finish on fourth position. Her earlier personal best total in 49kg was 192kg in the EGAT Cup in Thailand in February.

In a remarkable performance, 16-year-old Jeremy secured second place in group B of the 67kg men's event. During his record-smashing spree, he claimed three world marks.

Earlier in the day, Jhili Dalabehera opened India's medal account, claiming a Silver medal in the women's 45kg category. However, 45kg is not a Olympic weight category.

The points gathered from this event will come in handy when the final rankings for 2020 Tokyo Olympics are made



next year.

Unfortunately Mirabai missed the Bronze as China's Zhang Rong with the same total of 199kg (88kg+111kg) finished third under new rules, which came into effect in 2017.

Under these rules, the competitor who has a lower clean and jerk result (that means higher snatch result) will be ranked higher in the classification of athletes for total lift.

The Gold medal went to Hou Zhihui of China who produced an effort of 208kg (92kg+116kg) while North Korea's Ri Song-gum clinched the Silver, lifting 200kg (86kg+114kg) in the Gold level Olympic qualifier.

Mirabai, however, picked up a Bronze in clean and jerk

Talib, who lifted 304kg (140kg+164kg).

The final standings for the men's 67kg event will be known after group A competition on Monday.

Jeremy, in fact, broke 15 records in total, combining national and international marks. He smashed six international records — three youth world and three youth Asian — and nine national records — three youth national, three junior national and three senior national.

The Mizoram weightlifter pulled off clean lifts in two of his three attempts in snatch (130kg, 134kg) to set a new youth world record. The earlier youth world record was also in Jeremy's name when he had lifted 131kg in the EGAT Cup in Thailand in February.

Jeremy then lifted more than double his body weight (157kg, 163kg) in two successful attempts in the clean and jerk, and in the process obliterated Kazakhstan weightlifter Saikhhan Taisuyev's youth world record of 161kg.

It was Jeremy's personal best and 9kg more than his 288kg youth world record effort in the EGAT cup, where he won the Silver medal.

## 5 pugilists enter Asian C'ship q/f

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shiva Thapa placed himself just one win away from securing a record fourth medal by entering the 60kg quarterfinals, along with four other Indians, on the third day of the Asian Championships in Bangkok on Sunday.

Shiva was at his destructive best as he out-punched Kyrgyzstan's Seitbek Uulu 4-1 to march into the quarter-finals.

Four-time Asian Championships Gold medallist Sarita Devi began her hunt for a staggering sixth medal from this elite event in impressive fashion.

The 37-year-old Indian blanked Korea's Gwon Sujin to storm into the quarter-finals after a RSC (Referee Stop Contest) decision in Round 3 as she was too dominant for her opponent.

Agile and sharp as ever, Amit Panghal opened his campaign and made it to the last-eight with a 5-0 decimation of Taipei's Tu Po-Wei in his first continental competitive bout in the 52 kg.

Panghal continued his sublime form after starting the season with a glittering Gold from the Strandja Cup and will hope to record his second consecutive victory over reigning Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov in a highly-anticipated quarter-final showdown.

Former world junior champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) was at her imperious best in her opening bout against Cambodia's Srey Pov Nao. The Telangana pugilist advanced to the quarterfinals by RSC in Round 2 as her rival could not contain the flurry of punches.

In the men's 69kg, Ashish continued his scintillating run of form with a strong 4-1 win over Abdurakhman Abdurakhmanov of Kyrgyzstan in a split verdict to book his quarter-final berth.