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100,000 HIT STREETS AS
PROTESTS CONTINUE TO ROIL HK

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ANY PASSENGER
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FOR SMALL BORROWERS

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SMITH OUT OF
2ND TEST WITH
CONCUSSION
12 SPORT

Hooda backs Modi on Art 370

Criticises Cong J&K stand, speculation rife that ex-CM may quit party

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Amid growing speculation about him quitting the Congress and floating a new political outfit, Haryana former Chief Minister and senior party leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday supported the Narendra Modi Government's move to abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution and lashed out at his own party over its stand on the issue.

"When the Government does something right I support them. Many of my colleagues had opposed the decision... My party has lost its way. It is not the same Congress it used to be. When it comes to issues of patriotism and self-respect, I will never compromise," Bhupinder Hooda said at a political rally in his hometown Rohtak.

"I was born in a patriotic family, those who oppose (abrogation of Article 370), I



want to tell them *usulon par jahan aanch aaye, vahan takrana zaruri hai, jo zinda hai to zinda dikhna zaruri hai* (It is necessary to clash when it comes to principles, whoever is alive must show it)," the two-time former Chief Minister said. Assembly elections are to be held in Haryana in October. The veteran Congress leader

said, "I support the decision to abrogate Article 370 but I want to tell Haryana Government that it will have to give an account of its five years and don't hide behind this decision."

At the rally, Hooda announced a 25-member panel, comprising 12 MLAs owing allegiance to him, to decide the future of the party

in the State. "Since the issue (to continue with the Congress or not) pertains to the future of people, I can't take the decision alone," he said.

The decision of the 25-member committee will be announced in Chandigarh within a week, he added. The rally was a clear signal to the central Congress lead-

ership to hand over the party's reins in the State to Hooda, or he would go his own way ahead of the Assembly polls.

For the last four years, the Hooda camp has been pressuring the party high command to replace Haryana Congress chief Ashok Tanwar with Bhupinder Hooda as party president.

Speculations are rife that Hooda and his son Deepender Singh Hooda, former MP, might quit the Congress after they said they were sidelined by the party high command. In view of Vidhan Sabha polls, Hooda also announced various sops including 75 per cent reservation in jobs for the people of Haryana.

"If we form the Government, we will bring a law like Andhra Pradesh, so that 75 per cent of jobs in the state go to the people of Haryana," he said.

Continued on Page 4

Talks with Pak only on POK, says Rajnath

Asks Pak to stop aiding terrorists

PNS ■ KALKA (HARYANA)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday thwarted any possibility of an early resumption of dialogue with Pakistan asserting that future talks with the neighbour would be focused only on Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK).

Addressing a public rally in Kalka ahead of the flagging off the BJP's Jan Ashirwad Yatra for the October Assembly polls in Haryana, Rajnath said, "If talks take place with Pakistan, it will be on POK and not on any other issue."

Virtually ruling out resumption of talks with Pakistan, Singh said, "About what should we talk? What's the issue on which there should



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flags off the Jan Ashirwad Rally from Kalka Assembly Constituency in Kalka on Sunday

be talks? Why there should be a talk? If there would be any talk with Pakistan, it would happen only when Pakistan stops supporting terror from its soil." Rajnath said for the present Government, India's respect, pride and prestige was

above all and they were committed to this and it was not any election stunt.

On the scrapping of the provision granting a special status to Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, Rajnath said the decision had sent jitters to Pakistan and it became a cause of concern for them.

"Now it (Pakistan) is knocking every door and approaching various countries for help. Have we committed any crime? And they are trying to threaten us. However, America, perceived to be the most powerful country in the world by people, has snubbed Pakistan, telling them to initiate a dialogue with India," he said.

He also accused Pakistan of wanting to destabilise and weaken India through terrorism. "At times, Pakistan wants to break our country by using terrorism. But our Prime Minister has shown that he has a 56-inch chest. He took a decision to give a befitting reply after the Pulwama terror attack as our Air Force carried out the Balakot strike," he said.

The Defence Minister also highlighted the development works undertaken by the Government during its second term. "We have carried out a number of development works, but we have not left issues which concern nation's pride. Whatever we had said in our election manifesto, we are committed to fulfil that, be that the revocation of Article 370," Rajnath said.

The Union Minister further stressed that the Opposition used to say if anybody touched Article 370, the country would be divided and the BJP won't be able to come to power. "I want to say it clearly that the BJP does not do politics for forming Government. We do politics of nation building. Under no circumstances, we will allow the prestige of our country to be tarnished," he added.

On the promises made in their election manifesto, Rajnath said, "Our Prime Minister keeps telling us to remain committed to the promises made in the manifesto. 'Pran jaye par vahan na jaye'. We do not go back on what we have promised. We scrapped provisions of Article 370 and 35-A for J&K's interests.

Leaders throng AIIMS to enquire about Jaitley's health

Former Minister remains critical

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, and Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Smriti Irani and Ram Vilas Paswan visited All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on Sunday to enquire about the health condition of former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley who was admitted there on August 9 after he complained of uneasiness and weakness.

Jaitley has been put on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), which is used for patients whose lungs and heart are incapable of



operating on their own, hospital sources said. The AIIMS administration has not released a single medical bulletin regarding his health condition since August 10. "Visited Sh Arun Jaitley ji. I pray to God for his good health and fast recovery," Kejriwal tweeted.

Other leaders including Himachal Pradesh Governor Kalraj Mishra, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) joint general secretary Dr Krishna Gopal and former Samajwadi Party leader Amar Singh also visited the hospital on Sunday.

Continued on Page 4

Schools, Govt offices to reopen today in J&K

Schools in old city of Srinagar to remain close due to security restrictions

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After remaining closed for two long weeks, since August 5, large number of schools and State Government offices are all set to reopen across different parts of Kashmir Valley amid tight security arrangements on Monday.

The State Government spokesperson and Principal Secretary, Planning & Development, Rohit Kansal on Sunday said, "Over 190 primary schools will re-open in Srinagar on Monday."

He said, "We are also restoring full functionality of Government offices across Kashmir Valley to restore normalcy. However, ground reports suggested, in the wake of prevailing security restrictions and absence of mobile communication facilities not many parents would be willing to drop their children to schools. Schools falling under old city area of Srinagar are not scheduled to reopen following security restrictions in place.

In Jammu, the mobile internet services, which were restored across five districts of Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Reasi and Udhampur were disconnected early on Sunday morning as a precautionary measure to prevent spread of baseless rumours.

Addressing a Press conference in Srinagar, Kansal said, "The process of easing of Prohibitory Orders and providing relaxations continued on Sunday as well." He said the relaxations were provided in 50 police stations on Sunday against 35 police stations on Saturday and the duration in the relaxation was increased from six hours to eight hours.

Hoping to continue the relaxation in coming days, Kansal said no untoward incident was reported from the



A Kashmiri woman walks past a soldier who prepares to block a road with barbed wires during security lockdown in Srinagar

areas where relaxation was provided; adding traffic including public transport plied and shopkeepers opened their businesses.

Meanwhile, the first batch of 304 Haj pilgrims arrived in two flights at Srinagar International Airport after completing their pilgrimage on Sunday.

The pilgrims were received at the Airport by the Advisor to Governor Farooq Khan, who was accompanied by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Baseer Khan, Inspector General of Police Kashmir SP Pani, Deputy Commissioner Budgam Tariq Ganai, Executive Officer State Haj Committee and other concerned officials.

The Advisor also took stock of the arrangements put in place for the arrival of Hajis so that they could reach to their destinations without inconve-

nience. On the other hand, DGP J&K, Dilbag Singh Sunday visited Rajouri, Udhampur and Jammu to review the security scenario and law & order situation in these districts. He interacted with police officers/personnel and later chaired a high level meeting at Jammu.

The meeting at Jammu was attended by Div Com Sanjeev Verma, IGP Jammu Mukesh Singh, IG Armed Jammu Danesh Rana, IG BSF Narender Singh Jamwal, IG CRPF Subash Chander, DIG CRPF Neetu, DIG CISF S.N. Singh, DIG SSB M.S. Negi, DC Jammu Sushma Chauhan, SSP Jammu Tejinder Singh, SSP Kathua Shridhar Patil, SSP Samba Shakti Kumar Phatak, SSP PCR Jammu Kulbir Singh, SSP APCR R.C. Kotwal and other officers.

During the meeting DGP directed the officers on the

ground to act as per the requirements of the situation besides maintaining alertness in the border areas.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Sanjeev Verma addressing a press conference in the evening said there is complete normalcy in Jammu division and urged people not to pay any heed to rumours and maintain peace and harmony.

The Div Com informed that the internet service which has been restored in some districts became ineffective today due to technical fault while broadband service is still active. However, the mobile internet services remain suspended in some districts as preventive measures, he added. The Div Com said that the rumour mongers who deliberately trying to disrupt the peace in the region would be dealt strictly under law.

Now, eye in sky to curb e-way rash driving, accidents

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Drones may soon be deployed to keep an eye on the menace of rash driving, lane change, over speeding and other traffic violations, particularly on the expressways, to minimise accidents.

The auto-pilot drones loaded with a geographic positioning system (GPS) and a powerful camera can provide real-time pictures for better surveillance.

The Road Transport Ministry may use this technology first on Delhi-Meerut Expressway and Delhi Vadodara Expressway on a prototype basis. If the experiment is successful, drones will be deployed for traffic super-

vision on other important national highways to enforce road discipline.

A senior road transport official said while the use of CCTVs has somewhat controlled rash driving and helped in identification of the offenders, haphazard lane changing, especially by heavy vehicles and high speed cars and motorbikes, has emerged a major menace on expressways or new NHs.

As per an internal study of the Road Transport Ministry, it has been found that people who obey lane driving end up becoming a victim when others speeding vehicles change

lane swiftly.

Drones will keep a watch on them and pass on the message to the nearest control office which in turn will be referred to the enforcement unit for necessary action, said a Ministry official.

The official said currently Hyderabad is using drones to man the traffic and they have been programmed to spot accident sites besides traffic congestions.

Drones are also being used by various departments, including The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and Railways to monitor the progress of projects including the Bullet Train Project.



CAPSULE

YAMUNA MAY CROSS DANGER MARK TODAY

New Delhi: The Delhi Government on Sunday sounded a flood alert for the city and asked people living in low-lying areas to move to safer places as the water level in the Yamuna river is expected to cross the danger mark, officials said.

22 DIE IN RAIN-RELATED INCIDENTS IN HIMACHAL

Shimla: At least 22 people were killed and 12 others injured in rain-related incidents in Himachal Pradesh on Sunday, officials said.

63 KILLED IN KABUL WEDDING BLAST

Kabul: At least 63 people were killed and scores wounded in an explosion targeting a wedding in the Afghan capital, authorities said on Sunday.

Malnutrition, not Maoism the real threat: Baghel

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday said that malnutrition is much bigger threat than left wing extremism in the State.

To combat the threat, the State Government is working hard to improve the health of its people.

Baghel was delivering a special lecture titled "Changing Chhattisgarh Under New Leadership" at India International Centre. The event was jointly organised by Raipur-based Group of Thinkers, founded by senior journalist Sujeet Kumar, and Society for Policy Studies.

"Today malnutrition is bigger threat than Maoism in the State," he told a large gathering of diplomats, thinkers, policy

analysts and industrialists.

He said over 37.06 per cent of the State children are malnourished.

"Thus to provide good nutrition to the children we have started Suposhan scheme in over 109 panchayats of the State," he said. The scheme will be extended throughout the State on October 2, coinciding with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Highlighting works of his Government in last eight months in the State, Baghel said, "After we came to power we returned the lands of the tribals which were acquired in 2006 but no industries were set up on it."

"We returned 4,200 acres of land located in 1,700 villages to the tribal people," he said.

He said his Government also waived off the farm loans of



the farmers in the State. The Chief Minister underlined that the problem of LWE increase in the State as the tribals did not get benefit of the

State's growth story. "So, I decided to speak to them to remove the trust deficit that they have with the Government," he said.

He said to increase the income of the farmers his Government also bought the paddies from them at the minimum support price of ₹2,500

per quintal, which is much higher than the rate prescribed by the Central Government.

To provide better medical facilities, Baghel said he took the primary health centres to the local haats, so that more tribal people can avail the treatment.

"I am happy to share that the list of patients arriving at the local haats is much higher than the patients arriving at the OPDs of a primary health centre and government hospitals," he said, adding that it has brought the medical facilities much closer to the people.

Baghel also appealed to investors to come to Chhattisgarh for investment and that his Government will help them in providing land and power.

He also highlighted his Government's flagship scheme

Narva, Garva, Ghurva Bari (NGGB) in the State.

The scheme emphasises collective action to ensure water conservation, livestock development, use of compost and cultivation of vegetable and fruit backyard.

Referring to the water problem, he said, "Ground water level is deteriorating in the country. Thus I have made the scheme to recharge the ground water in the state by working on the nallahs."

He said detailed project report of over 1,028 nallah has already been made.

Emphasising on the use of livestock's, Baghel said, "To build the cattle day-care centre, such spots have been selected which already have green cover so that the bovine could easily get natural shades of trees."

Amit Shah defends law criminalising triple talaq

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday the politics of appeasement, which led to the Partition, was the reason for the continuance of the "evil practice" of triple talaq for so long.

Speaking at an event here, Shah defended the law criminalising triple talaq, asserting that it establishes gender equality.

"Some people level allegations against BJP Government that such action is anti-Muslim. I want to make it clear that this is only and only to benefit Muslims, not the Hindus, Jains or Christians," he said.

It was a "nightmare" for crores of Muslim women who were denied of their rights, he said. He said 92.1 per cent of Muslim women supported criminalisation of triple talaq.

Coming down heavily on the Congress, Shah, who is also BJP president, said the party has "no shame" and continues to oppose the law on triple talaq.

The Home Minister said it took several decades to end this evil practice because of the Congress, which always resorted to the politics of appeasement.

Referring to the then Rajiv Gandhi Government's decision to bring a law to overturn the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano case, he said it would be considered a "black day" in the history of Parliament.

There is no doubt in the minds of those favouring triple talaq and those opposing it that it was an "evil practice". People should welcome moves for eradication of any evil practice, but there is Opposition in case of triple talaq. "The politics of appeasement is responsible for it," he said.

Some parties were in the habit of coming to power on



Home Minister Amit Shah delivers a special address on 'Abolition of Triple Talaq: Correcting a Historical Wrong' at Constitution Club in New Delhi on Sunday PTI

the basis of vote-bank politics, that's why such evil practices continued, he said. The politics of appeasement has been a hurdle in the path to achieve development and social cohesion in the country.

"When some people are hungry for power, they resort to the politics of appeasement. They are not concerned about Muslim women but concerned only about vote-bank," he said.

But, "when your intention is social uplift, you have to work hard for it, you have to pay it," he said.

"The election of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister in 2014 was the beginning of the end of politics of appeasement and the 2019 mandate is to end it forever," said Shah.

The Home Minister said had the practice of triple talaq been part of Islamic culture, why did so many Muslim countries have ended it. That means this evil practice is anti-Islam and Islam does not support it. As many as 19 countries have ended triple talaq between 1922 and 1963.

"This evil practice of triple talaq was going on for long and

the Modi Government has abolished it forever and given the Muslim women the right to live in dignity and equality," he said.

Shah said many people said it was a civil matter, so why did you criminalise it.

"When 'Sati pratha' (self immolation by Hindu widows) was abolished, no one opposed it. When child marriage was ended, no one opposed it. In case of child marriage, there is a provision for two years jail. Similarly, dowry is a civil matter. In dowry case, if just the demand is made, there is a provision for two years' imprisonment," he said.

The triple talaq has been criminalised to educate people, to create fear among some people that "if you do this, you will be punished". "Earlier, triple talaq had no provision for maintenance for women. Now, we have made provision for maintenance," he said.

The Home Minister said he wanted forgiveness from Muslim women as they had to suffer for long because of this evil practice.

Cong expresses concern over economy 'slowdown'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday expressed concern over what it called the "slowdown" of economy and said the country is facing a situation like that of a "financial emergency". Expressing concern over the economic slowdown, the grand old party stated the situation is like that of a "financial emergency".

Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi accused the BJP of diverting the people's attention from its failures. He raised the issue of slowdown in automobile sector.

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The trend of the slowdown in the automobile industry did not come all of a sudden. The 31 per cent fall in sales is also the ninth straight drop in monthly passenger vehicle sales, Singhvi said.

He also raised the issues of crashing stock exchange and rising fiscal deficit.

The trend of the slowdown in the automobile industry did not come all of a sudden. The 31 per cent fall in sales is also the ninth straight drop in monthly passenger vehicle sales, Singhvi said. "Sales have fallen in 12 out of 13 months since July 2018, underscoring the sharp slowdown in the world's fourth largest automobile market," Singhvi said at AICC Press conference.

He also raised the issues of crashing stock exchange and rising fiscal deficit. The other issues he raised are falling GDP figures, shrinking labour force, recession in real estate sector, continuous weakening of rupee, and falling foreign direct investment and foreign portfolio investment.

Criticising the Narendra Modi Government, he said, "Ironically, if one looks at

between Modi 1 (Government) beginning and Modi 2, he or she shall figure that has been a regression in progress."

Singhvi also accused the NDA government of being unable to come up with a "sound" monetary policy. "It has to consider about the trade-off between unemployment and inflation," Singhvi said.

He also asked "why the rate cuts have been announced by

the RBI even after so many days? Only one-third of the rate cuts have been implemented by the banks, the substantial chunk has not reached the recipients of credit".

"Why there is so much noise about selling ailing public sectors but absolutely no progress on the ground," he asked. Singhvi added when Prime Minister Modi assumed office, the rupee was at 58.7 against the US dollar.

"However, now rupee has further devalued. One USD has reached Rs 71 and is anticipated to cross Rs 72 limit in the coming weeks," he said.

CBI books Nath's kin Puris for fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Sunday conducted searches at six places including the office of Moser Baer India Ltd at Okhla Industrial Area in the national Capital and at residential premises of present and former Directors of the company.

The CBI has registered a case against Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath's brother-in-law Deepak Puri, his wife Nita and son Ratul and their firm Moser Baer in a case of cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy and under provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act for cheating Central Bank of India to the tune of Rs 354 crore till November 29, 2014.

Besides Moser Baer MD Deepak Puri, whole time director Nita, then executive director Ratul, the CBI has also named directors of the accused firm Sanjay Jain and Vineet Sharma besides unknown public servants and private persons as accused in the case.

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The CBI registered the case on Saturday, a day after it received a complaint from Central Bank's Corporate

Finance Branch here on Friday.

"Case was registered on 17.08.19 against the company; present and former officials of the said company; unknown public servants and unknown private persons on the allegations of cheating and defrauding banks," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

In his complaint to the CBI, the Deputy GM of the Central Bank Murali Chitturi alleged that "MBIL has caused unlawful loss to our bank to the tune of Rs 354.51 crore as on 29.11.2014 and interest thereon by getting unlawful gains."

As per RBI guidelines to ensure there is no leakage of revenue, the accused firm and their officials allegedly maintained accounts with a large number of banks outside the consortium. "The sales proceeds generated from the business working capital funds lent were not deposited with the complainant bank/consortium banks and were routed through other banks, thereby indicating fraudulent intentions for siphoning off the monies, the Central Bank alleged in its complaint which now part of the FIR.

MBIL made substantial

investments in subsidiaries and exposure to its related entities amounting to Rs 14,56.12 crore instead of making efforts for redemption of the investments and recovery of receivables from sales, MBIL chose to write them off in order to divert and siphon off the loan amounts. This led to wrongful gains by the company and their officials and wrongful loss to the lender banks, the complainant further alleged.

MBIL has direct investment of Rs 735.87 crore in subsidiaries as on December 31, 2013. However, total exposure of the firm towards subsidiaries and related entities was Rs 1,456.12 crore. MBIL gave corporate guarantee amounting to Rs 2,056.87 crore on behalf of its subsidiaries without any permission from the complainant bank before taking such large exposure on behalf of its subsidiaries, the bank alleged.

The bank also alleged that the accused company and its directors furnished forged documents to buttress their claims towards promoters' contribution in the firm.

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MoS Sanjay Dhotre leaves for 5-day visit to Baltic countries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of State (MoS) HRD, Communications, and Electronics Information Technology Sanjay Dhotre has left for a five-day long visit to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Latvia, as a part of a high-level delegation accompanying Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu visiting these Baltic countries.

After taking charge of the three Ministries, this will be Dhotre's first formal visit to any foreign nations. India and Baltic countries have historical connect and common linguistic roots.

The cutting-edge technology and innovation ecosystem of the Baltic countries complement India's huge market and appetite for these technologies.

This visit led by the Naidu will be the first ever high-level visit to the three Baltic nations.

10 States yet to implement Mental Health Act

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than two years after the enactment of the Mental Health Act, 2017, around 10 States are yet to set up authorities for the proper implementation of the rules under the new legislation. Ten per cent of India's population suffers from mental illnesses, and 90 per cent of them remain untreated.

"Only 19 States have implemented the Mental Healthcare Act so far," said Sanjeeva Kumar, Special Secretary Health Ministry.

He said 10.6 per cent adult population in the country suffers from mental health issues. This is a huge number requiring holistic concept of safety nets, legal frameworks and medical care facilities.

Kumar was speaking at a recent national level review meeting on mental health. The meet was organised by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

The State authorities are supposed to register and regulate all mental healthcare facilities and publish their details online. They are also required to register all clinical psychol-

Only 19 States have implemented the Mental Healthcare Act so far, said Sanjeeva Kumar, Special Secretary Health Ministry. He said 10.6 per cent adult population in the country suffers from mental health issues. This is a huge number requiring holistic concept of safety nets, legal frameworks and medical care facilities. The State authorities are supposed to register and regulate all mental healthcare facilities and publish their details online.

The Act mandates the States to have a functional authority within nine months of the law coming into force, but most of the States have missed the deadline. The States are also yet to draft the rules of the Act. Justice HL Dattu said there is a requirement of 13,500 psychiatrists but only 3,827 are available. Against the requirement of 20250 clinical psychologists only 898 are available. Similarly, there is an acute shortage of paramedical staff also.

She said with the lack of new rules, the rules of the old Mental Health Act (1987) are still being followed.

Earlier, inaugurating the meeting, NHRC Chairperson, Justice HL Dattu said that the efforts to improve the mental health care in the country have been made but a huge gap still remains between the requirements and availability of facilities in the sector.

Flagging it as a matter of serious concern for the Commission, he said that con-

sistent with its policy to monitor the mental health sector, it felt necessary to evaluate the ground realities post implementation of Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

Justice Dattu said there is a requirement of 13,500 psychiatrists but only 3,827 are available. Against the requirement of 20250 clinical psychologists only 898 are available. Similarly, there is an acute shortage of paramedical staff also.

According to a study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in 2016, across 12 States, the prevalence of depression for both current and lifetime is 2.7 per cent and 5.2 per cent, respectively. Approximately 1 in 40 and 1 in 20 people are suffering from past and current episodes of depression all over the country. This survey has shown that the lifetime prevalence of mental disorder is 13.7 per cent as a whole, which would mean at least 150 million Indians are in need of urgent intervention.

However, there is a long way to go to meet the needs. The Health Ministry official highlighted that the States are not using funds dispersed for the implementation of the Act, which has forced the Health Ministry to switch up systems for the transfer of the remaining amount. The Ministry has now decided to reimburse the States instead of paying instalments.

"Despite the system of money dispersal having changed, no States have applied for reimbursements," said Lav Agarwal, joint secretary, Health Ministry. He added if the Centre releases money and the States don't utilise it, then the manpower cannot be increased.

RSS chief pitches for conversation on reservation in harmonious atmosphere

New Delhi: There should be conversation in harmonious atmosphere between those in favour of reservation and those against it, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Sunday.

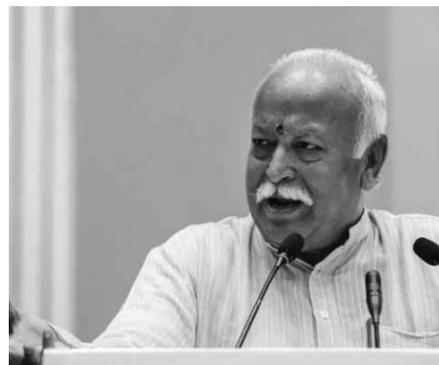
Bhagwat said he had spoken on reservation earlier as well, but it created a lot of noise and the whole discussion diverted from the actual issue.

Those who favour reservation should speak keeping in mind the interests of those who are against it, and similarly those who oppose it should do the vice-versa, he said.

He said discussion on reservation results in sharp actions and reactions every time whereas there is a need for harmony in the different sections of the society on this approach.

Bhagwat was speaking in the concluding session of Gyan Utsav which was on the competitive exams.

Earlier, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief had advocated for review of the reservation policy, drawing sharp reactions from many parties and caste groups.



Bhagwat said the RSS, the BJP and the party-led Government were three different entities and one cannot be held responsible for actions of another.

Talking about the perception of Sangh's influence over the Narendra Modi dispensation, Bhagwat said, "Since there are Sangh workers in BJP and this Government, they will listen to RSS, but it is not mandatory for them to agree with us.

They can disagree as well."

Since the BJP is in Government, it has to look at the bigger picture and can disagree with the RSS point of view, he said, adding once a party comes to power, for it the Government and national interest become priority.

Gyan Utsav was organised by the RSS-affiliated Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas at the Indira Gandhi National Open University here. PTI

Money spent on tiger reserves' management brings indirect benefits

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Every rupee spent on the management of tiger reserves in the country brought in indirect benefits worth Rs 346 to Rs 7,488 within and outside the protected areas, as per the findings of a Government study which analysed 10 of India's 50 big cat habitats. Most of the benefits have been indirect.

For instance, noted the report "Economic valuation of tiger reserves in India: A value + approach", a series of reservoirs and weirs have been constructed in and around Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR), which is blessed with 15 rivers and 64 streams and has various rivers and tributaries, under the multipurpose Parimbukulam Aliyar, Amaravathi and Kadampara projects. These reservoirs supply water to residents of Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts of Tamil Nadu and parts of Kerala and generate approximately 589 MW of electricity annually.

Or for that matter, the report noted that population of around 1,00,000 is dependent

on water supply from the Srisailem Dam in Andhra Pradesh's Nagarjunasagar Srisailem tiger reserve and about 1.2 million gallons of purified water is supplied per day to nearby Srisailem town.

It was noted that the 10 tiger reserves Anamalai (Tamil Nadu), Bandipur (Karnataka), Dudhwa (Uttar Pradesh), Melghat (Maharashtra), Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem (Andhra Pradesh), Pakke (Arunachal Pradesh), Palamu (Jharkhand), Panna (Madhya Pradesh), Simlipal (Odisha), and Valmiki (Bihar) whose economic valuation was carried out offer protection from disease, predators and parasites, which is an avoided cost in the range of Rs 7.7 crore to Rs 24.15 crore.

These are just a few benefits among several that the tiger reserves are providing to the community, said NTCA member secretary Anup K Nayak. He said, needless to say forests are source of fresh and clean water. In addition to providing clean water, forests also absorb rainfall, timber produce, employment, herbs



used for medicinal purpose, refill groundwater aquifers, slow and filter stormwater runoff, reduce floods and maintain watershed stability and resilience besides natural healing for mental peace."

The report which was released recently by Prime Minister Narendra Modi estimated that together these 10 tiger reserves surveyed provide annual tangible and intangible benefits worth Rs 5,96,502.14 crore while the monetary value from these surveyed protected habitats ranged from Rs 5,094.91 crore to Rs 16,202.11

crore annually. Jointly published by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the Indian Institute of Forest Management, (IIFM) Bhopal, the study analysed that monetary benefits of Rs 346.7 were realised from and within Maharashtra's Melghat tiger reserve per year, while for the Nagarjunasagar Srisailem tiger reserve every rupee spent on management costs brought benefits of Rs 7,488.60.

While Union Environment Secretary CK Mishra said the study provides rationale for

continued and enhanced investment in these reserves, Nayak added the monetary benefits obviously are neither direct nor in physical terms.

The findings of the study are significant amidst frequent ongoing debate on development vs environment, more so after Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari recently said in Parliament "a poor country" must decide how far it can go in spending public money to protect environment and balance out development needs. He was replying to a question from Congress MP K Suresh

who asked if the Minister would consider building underpasses on the National Highway between Mysuru and Wayanad to protect tigers in the Bandipur wildlife sanctuary on the lines of the Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

Among the 10 reserves, MP's Panna tiger reserve provided tangible and intangible benefits of Rs 67.14 crore and Rs 20,632.95 crore respectively, the lowest of economic benefits from all ten reserves studied. The highest tangible and intangible benefits worth Rs 34.33 crore and Rs 1,09,664.82 crore respective-

ly were from Jharkhand's Palamu tiger reserve.

Needless to say, the report demonstrates that enhanced investment in these tiger reserves is economically rational. Tigers being apex predators, their presence in an ecosystem indicates towards a well-functioning and balanced food chain. As Tigers require a large area of contiguous forest cover for home and a good prey base for survival, by protecting them we can also ensure the protection of other species. That is why they are also called as "umbrella" species, said Madhu Verma from IIFM.

The report asserts that tiger reserves, which Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar termed as 'engines of economic growth', provide a host of ecosystem services which are of significant value in a time when countries are investing heavily in climate change adaptation and mitigation as it looked at tangible and intangible flow benefits that result from investment in these habitats, including employment generation, fishing, fod-

der, fuelwood, carbon sequestration, water provisioning, sediment retention/soil conservation. The other areas that were analysed were nutrient retention, biological control, pollution, gas regulation, climate regulation, gene pool protection, moderation of extreme events, cultural heritage, recreation, spiritual tourism, and much more.





Glimpses from Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's address to thinkers, policy analysts, diplomats as well as investors on Sunday at India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi. His special lecture was jointly hosted by The Group of Thinkers (GoT), a private think tank of Central India founded by senior journalist Sujet Kumar, and New Delhi headquartered think tank Society for Policy Studies (SPS).

Baghel flays Odisha's stand on Mahanadi water sharing

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday termed Odisha's objection to Chhattisgarh constructing 'anicut' over Mahanadi river as 'pointless' and stated that the river originates from the state, so why should not the state make smaller stop dams for its own utilization of water.

He was answering to a question raised during a function "Changing Chhattisgarh under new leadership" on Sunday organized at India International Centre, New Delhi.

Baghel said, "Odisha had made the massive Hirakund dam and storing water to be utilised for

He was answering to a question raised during a function "Changing Chhattisgarh under new leadership" on Sunday organized at India International Centre, New Delhi.

industries and power generation but it has not benefited the Chhattisgarh and its people at any level."

On the Polavaram water sharing issue with Andhra Pradesh, he said part of the state will be submerged for which the state has approached the Supreme Court. The state will demand adequate compensation for it.

As per details, based on Supreme Court's order in January (2018), the Ministry of Water Resources had notified the setting up of a Tribunal to resolve the dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over the sharing of the water of the Mahanadi river.

Actually, the Mahanadi river originates from Dhamtari district

and travels around 851 kilometres to fall into the Bay of Bengal near Konark, Odisha. The river passes over the states of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, small parts of Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Odisha government has filed a plea in the Supreme Court for an injunction to stop work on six industrial barrages on the upstream of the Mahanadi. Following the plea the construction works in Chhattisgarh were stopped. Earlier, Union minister Nitin Gadkari and former union minister of water resources, river development and Ganga rejuvenation Uma Bharti initiated talks between the two states but could not come up with a solution.

Small is big: Baghel bats for agro based industries

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday invited industrialists, policy analysts and thinkers in New Delhi, the CM said the past industrialization in the mineral-rich state did not benefit local populace particularly the tribals and that led to their alienation.

"When you set up an industry there, please also keep in mind the interest of the local people. If they are not incorporated in the growth story, naturally there will be some local resistance," he said in reply to a specific question from an



industrialist.

In this regard, he said his government would prefer to pay the small agro-based industries which would directly benefit local farmers by making value addition to their products.

The CM also expressed his

reservation in further exploring state's mineral resources. "Pura rajya hi khod diyen hein, aur kitna khodenge (The entire state has been dug up, how much more do you want to dig," he asked.

Raising environment and public health concern, he further stated that his government would not like to go for any large scale mining, particularly the uranium.

He said even the state's development projects should be worked out taking local people into confidence. "When we build roads or school buildings without taking people into confidence, local tribals think those projects are meant for movement of security forces and sheltering them. There is a trust deficit and we need to overcome it."

New district creation hailed

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

People of Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi on Sunday thanked Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel for fulfilling their long-pending demand for a new district.

Around 300 residents from the newly declared district called on the CM at his official residence in Raipur. Forest minister Mohammed Akbar and school education minister Dr Prensai Singh Tekam were also present there.

The people said that it was a long-pending demand of the area as even for small works, they had to go to Bilaspur, spending the whole day in the process.

With the formation of the new district, the administration will come closer to them and they will also get benefit of different social welfare schemes with ease. Now, they will not have to travel to Bilaspur for different works.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said soon new collector and other administrative officers will be posted in the new



district.

He said in the nearest district, the Lemru Wild Elephant Reserve will be set up where the pachidrums would be provided natural habitat for their conservation and protection. It will help to end the human-animal conflict, loss of property and life.

Two Nigerian held for duping Rajnandgaon woman

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh police have arrested two Nigerian nationals from New Delhi for allegedly duping a Rajnandgaon-based woman of around Rs 44 lakh after befriending her on a social networking site, an official said on Sunday.

The accused, identified as Kibi Stanley Okwo (28) and Nwakor (29), were apprehended from Chanakya Place in the national capital on Friday by a special team of Rajnandgaon police, Rajnandgaon Superintendent of Police Kamlochan Kashyap said.

"They were brought to

Rajnandgaon Sunday on transit remand from Delhi," he added.

The complaint in the case was lodged in December last year and after rigorous investigation for eight months, the accused landed in the police net.

"The victim, a native of Station Para here, was operating a Facebook account in her husband's name. In July last year, she accepted a friend request she got from a user named David Suryayan on Facebook," Kashyap said.

The man claimed that he was from London and worked as a ship captain. He started chatting with the woman on messenger. Days later, he told the woman that he is sending special gifts, including a laptop, a mobile, diamond jewellery and other precious items to her although she refused to accept it, he said.

"Later, she got a call from a man who introduced himself as a staffer of the Customs department in Delhi. He asked her to pay around Rs 62,500 as customs duty to receive the goods. The woman agreed to pay the money and made the payment online," he said.

She later got calls from different numbers and mails asking to pay more money as service charge, document charge, processing charge, income tax etc for clearance of the goods, the official said.

The woman ended up paying around Rs 44 lakh online in the entire episode between July to November last year, but received nothing.

Finally, she approached Kotwali police on December 1 last year, following which an FIR was registered in this case, he said.

Police accessed the details of banks accounts to which the complainant had transferred the money, mobile numbers and e-mail ID used by the accused. The investigation revealed the location of the accused near Delhi, he said.

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Haryana's most wanted criminal held in UAE

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Haryana police on Saturday claimed that State's most wanted criminal Kaushal has been arrested in Abu Dhabi of United Arab Emirates (UAE) by the local authorities on the request of the Indian Government. Haryana Police had approached the Union Home Ministry after which details were sent to the UAE via Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and a lookout notice was issued by the Interpol.

Kaushal wanted in over 100 criminals cases carried a reward of ₹ five lakh and is likely to be deported in two weeks, sources said.

Sources in the State police said an operation to arrest Kaushal had started in January 2019. A police team of Haryana Police had got in touch with Interpol in Dubai to collect more information about the dangerous criminal. The investigation team had kept a close watch on his movements and all his gang members operating from different parts of the state.

However, Gurugram police officials were tight-lipped over the issuer and refused to comment. Gurugram

Commissioner of Police Mohammad Akil didn't respond to phone calls.

Kaushal had jumped parole after coming out of Bhandsi jail in December 2016 and had been absconding since then. The gangster was wanted in more than 200 alleged cases of extortion, murder, attempt to murder and kidnapping in Gurugram, Faridabad, Rewari, Jhajjar, Palwal and Rajasthan.

Gurugram Police has initiated an operation against Kaushal and his gang and managed to arrest over 20 people, including his girlfriend and wife who were also involved in criminal activities. It has around 250 members who were mostly engaged in extortion.

Kaushal is a notorious gangster of Gurugram involved in over 100 criminal cases including murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, extortion and running betting rackets in Gurugram.

A native of Naharpur Rupa village in Gurugram, Kaushal was also involved in the murders of bookie Vijay Batra alias Tantrik, property dealer Jaydeep alias JD who was a former gangster, and Haryana Congress spokesperson Vikas Chaudhary in Faridabad.

Kaushal's wife Roshni was arrested by Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by SP Bijarniya on June 29 in connection with the murder of Vikas Chaudhary. With her, the SIT also arrested the gangster's close aide Naresh alias Chand.

Kaushal's girlfriend Manisha was arrested from a house in Burari on June 4. Her arrest was possible after Gurugram Crime Branch managed to nab Rahul Dagar, Kaushal's cousin, at IGI airport on June 3. He had arrived from Dubai after meeting Kaushal.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Haryana Police headed by Palwal SP Narender Bijarniya, Sanjay Singh, DCP, crime branch, Faridabad, Narender Chauhan, crime branch inspector and Anand Yadav played a crucial role in tracing Kaushal's location in Abu Dhabi from where he was arrested by the local police with the help of Interpol.

Sources in the state police said they are waiting for a written confirmation from their counterparts in Dubai and the extradition could take about two weeks after all legal formalities are completed to bring the criminal back to the country.

Incessant rains throw normal life out of gear in Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Troubles pour for Punjab as incessant rains for over 24 hours left three dead and hundreds of people homeless with flood-like situation prevailing in the state.

As Ludhiana District Administration has declared "precautionary" alert in the wake of heavy discharge in the Sutlej river from Ropar headworks, the district administrations at Jalandhar and Ropar has ordered evacuations of several villages.

Throwing normal life out of gear on Sunday, the heavy rains lashing the entire state has left several places flooded besides causing widespread damage to roads and buildings. The situation has led to cancellation of over a dozen trains as the floods inundate railway track at several places in Ropar area. Besides, the Ropar District Administration has ordered closure of schools and other educational institutions for Monday.

The government's Disaster Management Group, headed by Chief Secretary Karan Avtar Singh, reviewed the steps needed to be taken to provide relief from imminent threat of floods in the state.

Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh is expected to review State Government's preparedness to tackle the situation, if so warranted, on Monday.

The government is also expected to order the special girdawari in areas where reports of damage to crops is being reported.

The state Health Department has been asked to keep teams ready and the Electricity Department has been instructed to gear up for supplying power in relief centres. Water levels in most of the dams — Bhakra, Pong and Pandoh — remained closed to the danger mark.

In a village near Khanna, three of a family died when the roof of their house collapsed following heavy rains. The deceased were identified as Surjit Singh (35), his wife Baljinder Kaur (32) and their son Gurpreet Singh (9). The couple's 10-year-old daughter escaped unhurt.

Jalandhar Deputy Commissioner Varinder Kumar Sharma has asked the sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) of Phillaur, Nakodar, and Shahkot to get to get 81 low lying and flood prone villages evacuated to save them from fury of floods in the wake of releasing 1,89,940 cusecs of water from the Ropar headworks.

Sharma said that arrangements for dry fodder for animals have been made, and the mandis will be converted into relief centres, if the need arises.

Evacuation process is underway in dozens of villages in Anandpur Sahib and Nurpur

Bedi blocks of Ropar district. The teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been deployed at Burj village near Anandpur Sahib to avoid any untoward incident, while the NDRF team has rescued several people from Gharat Basti of Anandpur Sahib as Sutlej river flooded the area.

The incessant rains led to flooding of fields in Nurpur Bedi area. Irate, the residents of Bangala Basti blocked Nurpur Bedi-Ropar road after rain water flooded the locality.

The heavy rains have also damaged a small dam near Chhotti Badi Naggal village, where around six cattle have reportedly died.

As per reports, the areas of Pathankot, Ropar, Anandpur Sahib, Nawanshahr and Fatehgarh Sahib received heavy rainfall with Nawanshahr receiving 250 mm rainfall, while Fatehgarh Sahib received 140 mm.

JALANDHAR DC ORDERS EVACUATION OF 81 VILLAGES

In wake of release of 1.89 lakh cusec of water from Ropar Headwork, Jalandhar Deputy Commissioner Jalandhar Varinder Kumar Sharma asked the SDMs of Phillaur, Nakodar and Shahkot to get 81 low lying and flood prone villages evacuated to save them from fury of floods.

The DC has asked the SDMs to get these villages out

of which 63 fall in Shahkot sub division, 13 in Phillaur and five in Nakodar sub division evacuated at the earliest.

"Due to excessive release of water from Bhakra Dam, safe evacuation of people and cattle from low lying areas is necessary," said Sharma.

Sharma said that the District Administration was keeping a close watch on the entire situation and they were already fully geared up to face any unforeseen eventuality arising out of the prevailing circumstances.

He asked the SDMs of Phillaur, Nakodar and Shahkot to be on high alert and coordinate and oversee the evacuation operations of people residing in low lying areas. "SDMs have already identified safer places in the district for movement of people evacuated from these villages," he said.

"The divers have been put on alert so that they could be roped in if needed," he said adding that no stone would be left unturned for extending a helping hand to people in case of any problem.

He added that the District Administration was in touch with Army, National Disaster Relief Force and State Disaster Relief Force to tackle with any sort of situation, while appealing to the people residing in these villages to move at safer places immediately.

PRECAUTIONARY ALERT

IN LUDHIANA

The District Administration has put a precautionary alert in areas around the Sutlej river in Ludhiana city after water was released from the Ropar Headworks in the river.

"Two lakh cusec of water has been released from the Ropar Headworks which takes about five to six hours to reach Ludhiana. Though the situation is under control, a precautionary alert has been sounded in few areas around Sutlej river," said Ludhiana Deputy Commissioner Pradeep Aggarwal.

"The evacuation centres are ready and well equipped if the water level increases. Around 23 villages can be affected if the water level increases and so we have alerted the villagers," he said.

The DC said that the river can handle around three lakh cusec of water, and there is no need for panic in the area.

Aggarwal said that in district, there are about nine points, which are vulnerable and flood prone from where the Sutlej river moves forward in zig-zag manner.

"We have made all the arrangements with sand bags and huge stones etc in case of emergency. The Sutlej enters here from Samrala side and the last point is near Jagraon from where it will move towards Ferozepur," he said adding that the Administration has not given any instructions for evacuation.

18 people dies in HP, ₹490 cr loss reported

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Eighteen people including three children have been killed due to heavy rainfall-related incidents across Himachal Pradesh.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Sunday said that the state has witnessed torrential rains during the last two days resulting in landslides, flash floods and falling of trees.

He said that as many as eight persons were reported to have died in Shimla district alone. Two persons each have lost their lives in Chamba, Kullu, Sirmour and Solan districts. Apart from it, one person each lost their lives in Bilaspur and Lahaul & Spiti districts due to heavy rains during the last 24 hours, he added.

The Chief Minister said that the state has suffered a loss of about ₹ 490 crore in the state during this monsoon season.

Thakur said that all the deputy commissioners of the state have been directed to keep a close vigil on the situation and ensure safety of the local as well as of the tourists.

The tourists have been advised to stay away from river beds as there is always possi-

bility of sudden rise in water levels due to flash floods and heavy rains, he said.

Lahaul & Spiti district has witnessed untimely snow on Saturday and Sunday morning due to which heavy damages had been reported to crops, he added.

The Chief Minister further said that the State Government would ensure time bound clearances of all the major roads so as to ensure that the people of the state, particularly horticulturists does not face any difficulty in transportation of their produce to the markets.

The Deputy Commissioners have also been directed to take decision regarding closure of educational institutions in their respective districts as per the situation well in time so that the students do not face any inconvenience, he added.

The local Indian Meteorological Department on Sunday said Himachal Pradesh received the highest ever rainfall for a 24-hour period, since records began almost 70 years ago.

Meanwhile, hundreds remained stranded after incessant rainfall triggered land-

slides, snapped road links, led to shutting down of hydropower projects and release of excess water from dams.

Traffic on the Chandigarh-Manali highway was blocked between Mandi and Kullu towns following massive landslides along the swollen Beas river. The Mandi-Jogindernagar Highway was also closed for traffic.

Traffic was hampered on 68 roads across the state and the maximum 47 blockades were in Chamba district, a government official said.

A Bally bridge near Kullu town was washed away due to flashflood. As a precaution, excess water was released from Satluj Jal Viduy Nigam Ltd's (SJVNL) 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri plant -- India's largest hydro project in Kinnaur district -- which led to flooding in the Satluj river, he said.

The state authorities said that excess water was discharged from the Pandoh diversion dam, located 112 km upstream of Pong dam, as a precautionary measure. The outflow from the dam was one lakh cusecs. The Pandoh diversion dam is located on Beas river in Mandi district. It

diverts excess monsoon water towards Pong dam. Otherwise, it diverts water towards Satluj river, which feeds the Gobind Sagar reservoir of the Bhakra dam.

Though the inflow of water into state's Pong and Bhakra dam increased dramatically due to heavy rainfall, authorities said there is no need for worry as the reservoirs have surplus capacity.

The Indian Meteorological Department on Sunday said that the entire Kangra district has been experiencing heavy rain for the past two days.

"The state as a whole received 102.5 mm and this was 1,065 per cent more than normal for this day. This is the highest ever rainfall in 24 hours over the state," IMD said in a statement.

Earlier, the highest rainfall in a day was recorded on August 14, 2011, and that was 74 mm. The monsoon was vigorous over the state in the last 24 hours, the IMD said. All districts received excess rainfall. 252 mm rainfall was recorded in Bilaspur district, which was 2,586 per cent more than its normal level.

Google map helps reunite missing girl with family

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 12-year-old girl was reunited with his father by Delhi Police with the help of Google Maps. The minor girl was missing in the national Capital since March this year.

On March 21 the victim girl had taken an e-rickshaw near the Kirti Nagar furniture market. When the minor did not get down at the metro station, the e-rickshaw driver asked her where she wanted to go, but she did not give any reply, following which he took her to the Kirti Nagar police station at 8.33 pm, a senior officer said.

During an initial inquiry, the girl could not remember her house and just said she was from "Khurja" village and her father's name was Jeetan, the officer said.

Police searched Khajuri Khas and Khureji areas of Delhi since their names are similar to the word "Khurja", but could not find any records of missing complaints being filed. They took the girl to the nearby JJ colony, but no one could identify her.

The girl, who is mentally-challenged, also said that she



had travelled to Delhi by a train a couple of days ago with an uncle named 'Pintu'. He took off her clothes in the train's washroom and left her there when she started crying, police said.

On March 22, her medical examination was conducted and no sign of sexual assault was found. A case was registered under Section 354A (sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant sections of the POCSO acts. She was handed over to an NGO named Nirmal Chhaya, the police said.

The 12-year-old was taken to Khurja village in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district by a police team on four different occasions, but they did not get any clue about her fam-

are villages with the name of Sakapar, Sonbarsa and "Kurja". Later, her family was also traced by the police. On August 1, her father Jeetan, a native of Kurja village, came to Delhi from Gorakhpur, the police said.

Jeetan said he brought his daughter to the capital for treatment at the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS). The girl went missing on Holi from his sister's house at JJ colony in Kirti Nagar, but he did not file any missing complaint, the police said.

Jeetan, who works at a scrap factory in Delhi, said his wife, who lives at her parent's house in Sonbarsa, was mentally-challenged and she had also gone to some random place around one-and-a-half years ago, according to the police. "Around three-four months later, she was traced in Ludhiana, Punjab. Similarly, he thought that police will find his daughter also."

Jeetan, who also has a son and another daughter, said there was no uncle by the name of Pintu, following which the case of sexual harassment was dropped, the police said.

Hooda backs...

From Page 1
Speaking on the occasion, Hooda's aides Palwal MLA Karan Dalal, Jhajjar MLA Geeta Bhukkal, Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee's former president Phool Chand Mullana, Vidhan Sabha's former speaker Raghuraj Singh Kadian among others openly challenged the party high command from the stage to either declare Hooda as party president in Haryana or face consequences. Notably, the Congress has been out of power in Haryana for five years, having lost to the BJP in October 2014 assembly polls amid factionalism and accusations of corruption against the government led by former Chief Minister Hooda.

While the assembly polls are just two months away, the Congress is yet to kick off its election campaign in the state.

Two dead, 23 missing following cloudburst in Uttarkashi

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Two bodies have been recovered and at least 23 persons are missing following cloudburst in Mori Tehsil of Uttarkashi district on Sunday. According to the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), heavy rain/cloudburst at 4 AM caused considerable damage in various villages in Mori Tehsil of Uttarkashi district. One body has been recovered while seven to eight persons are missing in Makudi village where about a dozen homes have

destroyed. One body has been recovered while about five persons are missing in Sanel village. Reports are also being received about a dozen people missing in Arakot village while five buildings including one school building were damaged in Tikochi village. Teams had departed to the affected areas for conducting search, rescue and relief efforts.



Delhi's crime stories inspire Bollywood

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

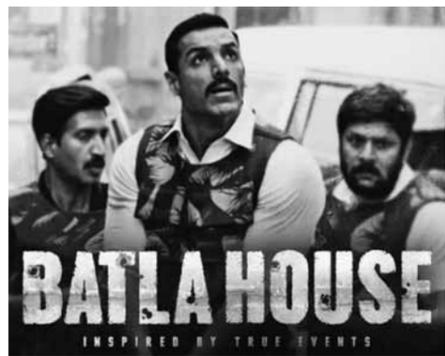
Delhi Crime, "Batla House", "No One Killed Jessica" have a common link. They are all based on sensational stories that hogged national and international headlines and are a key part of Delhi's crime files.

In the last few years, there has been a spurt in the number of films and web series being set in NCR, including Delhi.

"Delhi Crime", a Netflix series, was based on the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case, and showed how the investigators were running against time to solve the heinous case while also battling political pressure and public outrage.

"Batla House", which released this Independence Day, tells the story of the encounter that took place on September 19, 2008, when a team of the Delhi Police Special Cell raided a flat in Batla House in south Delhi's Jamia Nagar on a tip off that the alleged terrorists involved in the September 13, 2008 serial blasts in the national Capital were holed up there. The film also explores the aftermath of the encounter.

While these may be recent examples, there have been other films that have recreated or drawn inspiration from some cases in Delhi. "Talvar", which released in 2015, was based on the Aarushi Talwar-Hemraj murder case while "Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye" was on the shenanigans of 'Bunty



Chor'. Filmmakers believe that crimes in Delhi get international attention and people are aware about them.

"Delhi has had these incidents which have struck everyone, have captured people's imagination, like the Jessica Lal murder case which needed to be told on the big screen," said Raj Kumar Gupta, who was behind the critically-acclaimed movie fronted by Vidya Balan.

Former Delhi police commissioner Neeraj Kumar, who was the story consultant for the series "Delhi Crime" concurred with Gupta and said crimes in the national capital receive worldwide attention.

"Everyone across the globe knows about the Nirbhaya case. The major crimes happening here are known elsewhere and not only in India," he said. However, "Talvar" director Meghna Gulzar differed with

that might have happened or might not have happened. "I spent time with Sabrina (Jessica's sister) and many other people and went through court orders while researching for the subject," Gupta said.

Gulzar, on the other hand, felt thankful that the trial was going on when she was filming "Talvar", which helped in ensuring that audience got to know what was authentic and what wasn't.

She said the challenge involved in bring the case was that there was not a conclusion to the case. The challenge was the dichotomy of a single case -- it had one set of victims but two sets of perpetrators, two different murder weapons and theories and neither of them was conclusive enough to be able to seal the case.

"We met both the CBI teams and their representatives and trial was going on, everything that made it to the news was getting vetted. That was very helpful. We followed the trial meticulously," she said. The filmmaker said the treatment of such stories depends a lot on the intention and sensibility of the person behind the project. "Once you have decided to tell a story that kind of paves the way for its execution. If you want to tell the story because you feel it is an important reflection of our times you will approach it with a different sensibility and if you are going to write it in a sensational way, you are going to do it with a different sensibility."

DJB CEO moves NGT alleging sand mining in Yamuna

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Chief Executive Officer of Delhi Jal Board has moved the National Green Tribunal alleging illegal sand mining in the Yamuna river, prompting the green panel to seek a report.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson justice Adarsh Kumar Goel formed a committee to examine the issue and submit a report within a month. "Let the District Magistrate, Delhi, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) look into the matter and take appropriate action in accordance with law and furnish a factual and action taken report to this Tribunal within one month from the date of receipt of copy of this order by e-mail," the bench said.

The DPCC will be the nodal agency for coordination and compliance; the tribunal said and directed that a copy of the order, along with the complaint, be sent to the DPCC, CPCB and District Magistrate by e-mail for compliance.

"Needless to say that order of National Green Tribunal is binding as a decree of Court and non-compliance is actionable by way of punitive action including prosecution, in terms of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010," the bench said.

Leaders throng AIIMS to ...

From Page 1
Many prominent leaders have been visiting the hospital in recent days to know about his wellbeing. Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and BSP president and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, BJP's Satish Upadhyay, Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik, Congress' Abhishek Singhvi and Jyotiraditya Scindia and Air Force chief Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa visited the hospital on Saturday.

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan had said on Friday, "Doctors at AIIMS are doing the best they can." President Ram Nath Kovind, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had visited AIIMS on Friday to check on the leader's health.

In May this year, Jaitley was admitted to AIIMS for treatment. Jaitley, a lawyer by profession, had been an important part in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet in the BJP Government's first term. He held the finance and defence portfolios, and often

acted as the chief troubleshooter of the Government.

Jaitley did not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha elections presumably because of his poor health. He had undergone a renal transplant on May 14 last year at AIIMS with Railways Minister Piyush Goyal filling in for him in the Finance Ministry at that time. Jaitley, who had stopped attending office since early April last year, was back in the Finance Ministry on August 23, 2018. In September 2014, he underwent bariatric surgery to correct the weight he had gained because of a long-standing diabetic condition.

100,000 hit streets as protests continue to roil HK

IAN S ■ HONG KONG

Over 100,000 people dressed in black took part in the pro-democracy protests here on Sunday, amid severe warnings from Beijing. Rains couldn't dissuade people from filling the Victoria Park then spilling out to occupy major roads in all directions, the BBC reported.

The protests were sparked by an extradition bill, which has since been suspended by the Hong Kong Government.

Subway railway stations were forced to shut after getting clogged with protesters heading to the rally.

Though the authorities didn't grant permission to



organisers Civil Rights Human Front for the march, the sheer weight of numbers around the park meant that activists had to shift to streets. However, the police had allowed demonstration in Victoria Park.

Wong, a protester, said, "We have been fighting for more than two months, but there has been no government response. We could just come out again and again."

Activists and the police have clashed over the past 10 weeks with the security forces

Protesters gather on Victoria Park in Hong Kong on Sunday. Thousands of people streamed into the park for what organisers hope will be a peaceful demonstration for democracy in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory AP

frequently firing tear gas and rubber bullets, but this weekend's rallies have been peaceful.

China, which has built up security forces in nearby Shenzhen, has likened the protests to terrorist activity.

After increasingly violent clashes in recent weeks, there's been a concerted effort to win back public support for the democratic reforms by focusing on larger peaceful gatherings.

Last weekend, activists occupied the airport, leading to cancellation of hundreds of flights.

The turmoil has plunged one of Asia's leading financial centres into crisis. Many businesses remained closed on Sunday, amid fears of violence.

Mass protests erupted in June over the Hong Kong Government's now-shelved extradition bill, the South China Morning Post reported. The administration dropped the draft legislation on June 15 and city leader Carrie Lam later declared it dead.

Since then protesters have escalated the campaign with street demonstrations and non-cooperative action.

GLOBE TROTTER

PAK WON'T RESUME SAMJHAUTA, THAR TRAINS
Islamabad: Pakistan's Ministry of Railways has rejected a request by its Indian counterpart to restore operations of the Samjhauta and the Thar Express trains, which were suspended last week in the wake of New Delhi's move to revoke Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, a media report said on Sunday.

6 INJURED, 13 HELD IN US PROTESTS
Washington: At least six people were injured and 13 others arrested during far-right and counter protests in the US city of Portland, police said.

FB CONTRACTOR FORCED THERAPISTS TO LEAK INFO
San Francisco: Facebook is facing flak from moderators who have alleged that a contractor from the social networking giant pressured counsellors to break agreements by leaking discussions with employees.

FOOTBALL RIOT LEAVES 3 DEAD IN HONDURAS
New York: At least three people were killed and 10 injured in a clash between fans of rival football clubs in Honduras, reports said on Sunday. The violence in Tegucigalpa, the capital of the Central American country, broke out on Saturday evening ahead of a game between Motagua and Olimpia after stones were thrown on the Motagua team bus, injuring three players, the BBC reported.

I WILL RUN GOVT FOR FULL TERM: NEPAL PM
Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on Sunday said he will continue for full five-year term and warned his detractors not to "day dream about toppling" his government. His statement came days before the completion of his two-and-half-year term at the office.

PAK: 5 KILLED IN REMOTE-CONTROLLED BLAST
Peshawar: Five persons were killed and six others were injured in a remote-controlled blast in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday, police said. Unidentified miscreants targeted the double cabin vehicle of a local peace committee head in the mountainous Upper Dir district, police said. While five persons died, the six injured were shifted to a district headquarter hospital.

63 killed in Kabul blast, ISIS owns responsibility

Kabul: At least 63 people were killed and over 180 injured in a suicide bombing at a packed wedding hall here, reports said on Sunday. The ISIS has claimed responsibility for the attack, which has left many relatives of the couple getting married dead.

Citing an ISIS statement issued in Arabic, Khaama Press reported that the attack, "which targeted a gathering of non-believers", was carried out by IS suicide bomber Abu Asim Al-Pakistani.

Earlier, the Taliban, in a statement, rejected any involve-

ment in the Saturday night attack, saying that they condemned incidents which target women and children.

A suicide bomber targeted a wedding hall, packed with hundreds of guests, late on Saturday night.

Interior Ministry spokesman Nusrat Rahimi said the blast, that took place around 10.40 p.m. was a suicide bombing, TOLO News reported. He also expressed apprehensions that the number of casualties might increase.

Sources and witnesses said

the Shahr-e-Dubai wedding hall, located in police district 6 (PD6), was packed with guests when the explosion occurred.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani condemned the attack. "I strongly condemn the inhumane attack on the wedding hall in Kabul last night. My top priority for now is to reach out to the families of victims of this barbaric attack. On behalf of the nation I send my heartfelt condolences to the families of those who were martyred," he said in a tweet.

IAN S



Damage of the Dubai City wedding hall is seen after an explosion in Kabul, Afghanistan on Sunday. A suicide-bomb blast ripped through a wedding party on a busy Saturday night AP

Pak approaches FB, Twitter over suspension of accounts on Kashmir

IAN S ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistani officials on Sunday said they have taken up the suspension of Pakistani social media accounts that posted messages in support of Kashmir with social networking giants Facebook and Twitter, local media reported.

"Pakistan authorities have taken up the case with Twitter and Facebook against suspending Pakistani accounts for posting in support of Kashmir," Director General (DG) Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor was quoted as saying by the Dawn.

Ghafoor reportedly urged social media users to share information about accounts that have been suspended already.

He also added that the reason behind the suspension of social media accounts was Indian employees working at the regional headquarters of the social media giants.

Facebook has the highest number of fact-checking partners in India, followed by the US, said data from the Poynter Institute, according to the report.

UK PM to tell EU leaders to renegotiate Brexit deal

London: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will tell European Union (EU) leaders that there needs to be a new Brexit deal when he makes his first trip abroad as the Prime Minister later this week.

The UK will leave the European Union (EU) on October 31 with or without a deal, Johnson will insist.

Meanwhile, the Sunday Times has printed leaked government documents warning of food, medicine and fuel shortages in a no-deal scenario, the BBC reported.

A source told the BBC that a former minister leaked the dossier to try to influence discussions with EU leaders.

The documents say the cross-government paper on preparations for a no-deal Brexit, code-named Operation Yellowhammer, reveals that the UK could face months of disruption at its ports.

It also states that plans to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are unlikely to prove sustainable.

According to the dossier, reported by the Sunday Times, leaving the EU without a deal could lead to the following situations:

- * Fresh food becoming less available and prices rising.
- * A hard Irish border after

plans to avoid checks fail, sparking protests.

- * Fuel becoming less available and 2,000 jobs being lost if the government sets petrol import tariffs to 0 per cent, potentially causing two oil refineries to close.
- * UK patients having to wait longer for medicines, including insulin and flu vaccines.
- * A rise in public disorder and community tensions resulting from a shortage of food and drugs.
- * Passengers being delayed at EU airports, Eurotunnel and Dover.
- * Freight disruption at ports lasting up to three months, caused by customs checks, before traffic flow improves to 50-70 per cent of the current rate.

The Downing Street source told the BBC the leaked document "is from when ministers were blocking what needed to be done to get ready to leave and the funds were not available".

Michael Gove, who is responsible for overseeing the devolution consequences of Brexit, said in a tweet that Operation Yellowhammer was "a worst case scenario".

"V significant steps have been taken in the last 3 weeks to accelerate Brexit planning," he added.

Energy Minister Kwasi

Kwarteng told Sky News' Sophie Ridge on Sunday: "I think there's a lot of scaremongering around and a lot of people are playing into project fear," he said.

But a former head of the British civil service, Lord Bob Kerslake, who described the document as "credible", said the dossier "lays bare the scale of the risks we are facing with no-deal Brexit in almost every area".

"These risks are completely insane for this country to be taking and we have to explore every avenue to avoid them," he told BBC Radio 4's Broadcasting House.

Irish Deputy Prime Minister Simon Coveney said, in a tweet, that Ireland had "always been clear" a hard border in Ireland "must be avoided".

The Irish backstop -- the provision in former British Prime Minister Theresa May's withdrawal agreement that could see Northern Ireland continue to follow some of the same trade rules as the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the EU, thus preventing a hard border -- was an "insurance policy" designed to protect the peace process, he said.

The leak comes as Johnson prepares to travel to Berlin to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday, before going to Paris to meet French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday.

IAN S

Iceland commemorates 1st glacier lost to climate change

AFP ■ REYKJAVIK

Iceland on Sunday honours the passing of Okjokull, its first glacier lost to climate change, as scientists warn that some 400 others on the sub-arctic island risk the same fate.

A bronze plaque will be unveiled in a ceremony starting around 1400 GMT to mark Okjokull -- which translates to "Ok glacier" -- in the west of Iceland, in the presence of local researchers and their peers at Rice University in the United States, who initiated the project.

Iceland's Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir, Environment Minister Gudmundur Ingi Gudbrandsson, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson are also due to attend the event.

"This will be the first monument to a glacier lost to climate change anywhere in the world," Cymene Howe, associate professor of anthropology at Rice University, said in July.

The plaque bears the inscription "A letter to the future," and is intended to raise awareness about the decline of glaciers and the effects of climate change.

3 Palestinians killed by Israeli troops at Gaza border

Gaza City: Three Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers in the northern Gaza Strip, the Palestinian health ministry said Sunday, hours after three rockets were fired at Israel from the blockaded enclave.

The ministry said another Palestinian was hospitalised in the shooting that came after the Israeli army said an attack helicopter and tank had fired at "armed suspects" along the barrier that separates Israel from Gaza.

"We just identified a number of armed suspects from Gaza approaching the security fence with Israel. We fired towards them," the army said in a statement posted on its Twitter account.

The latest violence came after Palestinians in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip fired three rockets at southern Israel late Saturday, the Israeli army said, in the second such attack in 24 hours.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The army said two of the

projectiles had been intercepted by its Iron Dome aerial defence system but it did not specify what happened to the third rocket.

Air raid sirens had sounded in the southern town of Sderot and its surroundings.

On Friday Palestinians in Gaza fired a rocket at Sderot, in what the army said was the first such attack since July 12.

In response, Israeli warplanes struck at least three targets in the Gaza Strip early on Saturday but caused no casualties, a Palestinian security source said.

The strikes hit a Hamas observation post in Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip, an unidentified target near Gaza City and open ground near Deir El Balah in the central part of the territory, the source said.

An Israeli army statement mentioned only two strikes, against "underground targets belonging to the Hamas terror organisation in the northern and central Gaza Strip". AFP

Leaked UK memos warn of food, drug shortages in Brexit chaos

London: Leaked British government documents have warned of disruptions across the country in the event that the UK leaves the European Union without a trade deal on October 31.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he is prepared to charge out of the EU regardless of whether he is able to renegotiate the Brexit deal struck with Brussels by his predecessor, Theresa May, over the next 10 weeks.

The Sunday Times pub-

lished what it said were confidential Government memos outlining the consequences of tearing up May's deal, warning that a sudden British exit could lead to a decrease in the supply of fresh food.

The memos also warn of "significant" disruptions to drug supplies that could last for up to six months. Britain's Cabinet Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press.

AP

Wildfire forces 2,000 to evacuate in Spain's Canary Islands

Madrid: Authorities on Spain's Canary Islands say around 2,000 people have been evacuated due to a wildfire that has ravaged more than 500 hectares (1,235 acres) since it broke out less than 24 hours ago.

At least 250 firefighters,



nine helicopters and two planes were working Sunday to tackle the flames near the town of Valleseco on Gran Canaria island in the Atlantic Ocean archipelago, the provincial government said in tweets.

Officials say the blaze "has great potential" to spread and have ordered evacuations in at least six towns.

The island suffered another ravaging fire last week.

Wildfires are common in southern Europe during the hot, dry summer months.

Nearly half of Spain's provinces were on alert Sunday for high risk of fires, according to the country's weather agency AEMET.

AP

French waiter shot dead over 'slow service'

London: A waiter in a cafe near Paris was shot and killed by a customer irate over delay in preparing the sandwich he had ordered, reports said on Sunday.

The incident occurred in the Paris suburb of Noisy-le-Grand on Friday evening.

According to the deceased man's colleagues at the pizza and sandwich shop, the customer shot the waiter in the shoulder after losing his temper over the time it took to deliver the meal, the BBC reported.

Though medical aid arrived soon, the waiter succumbed to his injuries on the spot.

The attacker fled the scene and is still to be apprehended.

The killing has stunned local residents and shopkeepers, though some of them complained that crime has increased in the area and more instances of drug trade and public drunkenness were being reported.

IAN S

50,000 people homeless after fire razes Bangladesh slum

AFP ■ DHAKA

At least 50,000 people are homeless after a massive fire swept through a crowded slum in the Bangladesh capital and destroyed thousands of shanties, officials said Sunday.

The fire broke out at in Dhaka's Mirpur neighbourhood late on Friday and razed around 2,000 mostly tin shacks, fire services official Ershad Hossain told AFP.

"I could not salvage a single thing. I don't know what will I do," 58-year-old Abdul Hamid, who ran a tea stall inside the slum, told AFP as he broke down in tears.

Authorities eventually got the blaze under control and no one was killed, although several people had minor injuries, firefighters said.

Many residents -- largely low-income garment factory workers -- were not in the slum as they had left their homes to celebrate the Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday with their families. "Otherwise, the damage would have been bigger," local police chief Golam Rabbani said.

Around 10,000 people have taken refuge in crammed camps at nearby schools closed for the weeklong holiday, according to Hossain.

"We are providing them with food, water, mobile toilets, and electricity supply," municipal official Shafiqul Azam told AFP, adding that authorities were trying to find permanent accommodation.

Some families have erected tarpaulins to shelter them from bouts of rain during the monsoon season, but the wet conditions have turned the fields muddy.

Experts say fires are frequent in Dhaka due to lax safety measures. At least 100 people have been killed so far this year in building fires across the densely populated metropolitan city.

Lankan presidential hopeful claims threat to his life: Report

Colombo: Sri Lanka's presidential hopeful Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, who played a key role defeating the LTTE to end the country's brutal civil war, has claimed that a terrorist group in the North is planning to harm him during the election campaign, according to a media report.

Gotabhaya, 70, the brother of former strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa, complained to President Maithripala Sirisena that his intelligence officers have informed him that there is an attempt to use a sniper rifle and a special type of gun imported from Malaysia for this attack.

He asked the president to investigate the matter and take appropriate action, Sri Lanka Mirror reported. The former defence secretary told the media that not only him but Douglas Devananda, a Sri Lankan Tamil politician, and Karuna Amman, a politician and a former rebel, are also at risk. PTI

AP

Libyan navy says 335 migrants rescued

AFP ■ TRIPOLI

The Libyan navy said on Sunday 335 migrants had been rescued and one body recovered in separate operations off the coast, as they tried to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe.

Nine children were among 57 migrants in a wooden boat rescued Saturday about 40 nautical miles from the town of Zawara, west of Tripoli, navy

spokesman General Ayoub Kacem told AFP.

He said they were from Ethiopia and Egypt.

It came days after Libyan navy patrols on Tuesday "rescued 278 migrants on board four inflatable boats northwest and northeast of Tripoli", Kacem added.

The operations took place off the coasts of the cities of Khoms, 120 kilometres (75 miles) east of Tripoli, and

Sabratha, located 70 kilometres west of the capital.

According to the statement, 128 Sudanese were in the boats, in addition to migrants from Chad, Egypt, Niger, Benin and Eritrea, including 35 women and 11 children.

One body was also recovered by the coastguard. Libya, which has been wracked by chaos since the 2011 uprising that killed dictator Moamer Kadhafi, has long been a major transit route for migrants, especially from sub-Saharan Africa.

In general, migrants rescued at sea are first met by humanitarian agencies that provide medical care and food.

They are then taken into the charge of the body working to combat immigration at the interior ministry of the UN-recognised Government of National Accord.

On August 9, the Libyan

Nepal: Branded 'witch', woman force-fed human excreta

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

A 35-year-old woman in Nepal was allegedly thrashed and forced to eat human faeces by a group of villagers in the latest attack linked to accusations of witchcraft, police said on Sunday.

A group of five women beat the victim and force-fed

her human excreta in Birta village of Bhangaha area in Mahottari district on Monday, they said.

The accused have been identified as Sabita Devi, Poshila Danuwar, Indra Devi Singh Danuwar, Sukeshwori Devi and Rajeshree Anuwar, Superintendent of Police Shyam Krishna Adhikari

said.

Sukeshwori and Rajashree have been taken into police custody, he said, adding that they have initiated an investigation into the matter.

The practice of accusing women of being witches and assaulting or killing them is still common in some parts of Nepal, although it is illegal.

PAPER WITH PASSION

India wins at UNSC

Our diplomatic offensive at UNSC was weather-proofed enough to drown out both Pakistan and China



Given the suddenness of the revocation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, its bifurcation and changed status to a Union Territory, Modi 2.0, in contrast, had amply prepared its diplomatic offensive, anticipating queries, anxieties and sensitivities of the Big Five members of the United Nations, other world leaders and predictable hitbacks from neighbours Pakistan and China. So although China, being an all-weather friend of Pakistan, backed its push for an informal consultation on Kashmir in the UN Security Council, in the end there was

status quo on it being a bilateral matter and acceptance that abrogation of Article 370 was facilitated by a legal clause and, therefore, qualified as an internal matter of India compliant with its statutes. Even US President Donald Trump, who had stirred up a hornet's nest by offering to mediate, has now advised Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan to settle the issue within the bilateral framework. Having failed to internationalise Kashmir enough, a desperate Pakistan did not relent, calling Kashmir a "nuclear flashpoint" even after the UNSC rebuff. While it is but expected to keep the storm and fury going, if only to justify its long-term politics, fact is that the US has made its value to it contingent upon its role in managing the Taliban in Afghanistan post its intended pullout from the region. Besides, the Trump administration has also cut back some funding to it despite Khan's latest visit to Washington. The huff and puff is, therefore, posturing for a long-held constituency that it has nurtured in the Valley, which has been tamed by India's pitch of Pakistan-exported terror camouflaging itself as self-determination, and now the complete revocation of special status which swamps all separatist sentiments. Truth be told, even India had clouded the "no first use" theorem a day before, saying it could be reviewed depending on the nature of external provocation. Our western neighbour, too, took off on this statement. India has anyway been predicating the Kashmir question on a tremendous threat perception from Pakistan just as the latter is seeking to externalise our internal matter. To that extent, this bluster works for both. Of course, the lockdown of the information highway has not helped either and strengthened stereotypes rather than reconciliation. If the government indeed wants to push its development narrative, then a tight-fisted channelisation of information is clearly counter-productive. There has to be a mature way of dealing with protests on the subversion of what has held together Kashmir's matrix with us since Independence. And a jackboots approach to suppressing debate in a digital age may actually quite backfire and damage the tide of opinion in our favour at the moment.

China may not be too happy about the UT status to Ladakh that would give India strategic heft in a region that lies next to Aksai Chin. But so long as the Line of Actual Control is as it is, it won't have any ground to push its belligerence on Kashmir. China, which got the Shaskgam Valley in 1963 from Pakistan, has so far argued that its claim there is contingent on the final resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Now it is part of the UT of Ladakh, nullifying that legitimacy. But China will have to unwillingly accept this considering that it is looking at greater economic cooperation with India and wouldn't want to jeopardise that template of neutrality with a resurrection of border issues. Besides, if it accuses India of making territorial changes, then it also is not exactly immune to helping Pakistan make those changes courtesy the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Its own oppressive role in the Hong Kong protests and Tibet has denied it a moral standpoint at a global forum. And it is this record that didn't wash with other members. Over the years, China has been pushing its agenda of winning hearts of Ladakhis through its own kind of cultural diplomacy, influencing several Buddhist sects and groups and playing them against each other. It has been funding monasteries in the area to link them to the larger Chinese Buddhism, a strategy which has allowed it to make inroads in the Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia too. Given Dalai Lama's ill health, China is already preparing to have a say in the dominant Tibetan Buddhism in the region. The reorganisation now allows New Delhi direct decision-making and first-hand engagement with the Buddhists of Ladakh and could well strengthen Himalayan Buddhism as a counterpoint. China may be an irritant but depending on the relevance of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), that allows it a backhand entry to India without pushing the Belt and Road Initiative, and its stumbling trade block with the US, it is but posturing at the moment.

Plastic problem

It may be a wonder material but its overuse has an environmental cost. Are replacements worthy?



When we first synthesised plastic polymers from crude oil residues, mankind hardly knew how dominant a part they would become of modern life. Like it or not, we cannot imagine modern life without plastics. Think of it this way — it is cheaper today for us to manufacture plastic cutlery than hand out wooden spoons. From the cars we drive and the planes we fly, to almost every product that every single human being comes in contact with, there is a bit of plastic somewhere. And this is a result of not just

the fact that it is cheap but also extremely durable, immune to most types of corrosion and weather. Ergo, it has become the material of choice in several applications. Most beverages, for example, are not sold in glass bottles but in breakage-free plastic containers.

But since it takes centuries to degrade, landfills and oceans are getting filled with its remains. With animals, birds and marine life also being impacted, many humans have ingested it through food. Make no mistake, plastics are harmful — they can block digestive passages of animals. Several whales have starved to death because of choking. In major metropolitan areas though, such as Delhi, plastic pollution has moved from being a potential danger to a threat to life itself. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) found that the capital city topped the nation in the amount of plastic waste it generates. This has spurred the authorities into action. The change, however, must not be driven by the Government alone. Human behaviour and buying habits have to radically change for plastic use to decline. At the same time, we should not rush for solutions without studying the replacement material's impact on the earth. Paper-fibre bags, which are quite popular as a being "environmentally friendly", also degrade slowly and are equally damaging to drains. And unlike many plastics, they cannot even be recycled. While we can do a lot better such as reuse bags, buy fewer packages — a big bottle instead of sachets for example — we should also not go down a route of damning plastics altogether, because they are essential in far too many aspects of our lives. We should develop better ways of recycling them and disposing variants we can't instead of dumping them.

Any passenger comforts?

There is little doubt that mass production of commercial airliners has made flying more affordable but is it time for an international bill of rights for the passengers?



KUSHAN MITRA

Obviously, the Airbus A320neo series of aircraft is an incremental change over the extremely successful Airbus A320 series of commercial aircraft built by the European manufacturer, one of the most successful airliners in aviation history. By using next-generation high-bypass turbofan engines, including some with a gearing mechanism to make them even more efficient, these aircraft are able to burn 15-20 per cent less fuel per passenger kilometre than the previous generation of the same aircraft. The increased fuel efficiency not only adds to the profit of the airlines but also allows some to pass on the cost benefits of the more economical engines to fare-paying passengers. These cost reductions will make flying even more democratic.

But not all the savings are from the engines as weight is of critical concern for airlines. They have saved weight not just by using exotic composite materials in parts of the construction but also in the cabin. Then there's also the fact that the weight of installed seats has been brought down. Thanks to low-cost airlines, which do not offer hot-food options, the amount of space in the galleys for food carts and ovens has come down. This coupled with narrower, slimmer seats and a tight spacing between them, the so-called "seat pitch", have meant that some low-cost carriers like IndiGo are able to offer an additional row of six seats on the A320neo over the previous generation. That may not seem like much but in a cut-throat world of low-cost airlines, where margins are frightfully tight, an additional row of seats at little-to-no-additional cost on a similar aircraft can make a profitable difference.

However, when you fly an A320neo configured with 31 rows instead of the usual 30 on the previous generation, now called the A320ceo, you realise another way they made space for the additional row. The rear toilets have been removed, or rather the rear toilets as we knew them. They are now horribly narrow, best described as a tiny broom closet where a part of the galley used to be. To save space further, the cabin attendant seats are attached to the front door. The toilet is an affront to the dignity of some human beings because there is no way a large person can possibly use it.

One could argue that most A320neo flights are relatively short domestic hops but this thinking ignores the fact that several domestic routes are touching three hours of flight time and with delays on the ground and in the air, thanks to air traffic congestion, it could be four-five hours between the time a passenger can use toilets attached to mother earth. That, you will have to admit, is a fair bit of time. The other problem is that because of the A320neo's new fuel economical engines, coupled with the fact that it has slightly better fuel capacity, it can fly



longer than the A320ceo. This is particularly evident in the fact that earlier this year, during the Paris Air Show, Airbus announced an extremely long-range version of the bigger brother of the A320neo, the A321neo XLR. With an announced range of 7,400 km, the plane could potentially fly between Delhi to most of western Europe, carrying a full load of 244 passengers if configured in a dense all-economy configuration. That is eight hours of flight time and possibly nine to 10 hours between the time a passenger boards the plane to the time he/she disembarks.

There is no doubt that an aircraft like the A321XLR has immense potential — not only can it serve major Indian cities to smaller destinations in Europe and north-east Asia, it can also connect smaller Indian airports like that of Pune, which has a short runway, to major aviation hubs. But if the thought of spending eight hours on a narrow-body plane was not bad enough, the thought of spending time on such a plane with cramped toilets — just three of them or an average of one per 80 passengers — and the possibility of poor toilet hygiene by some fellow passen-

“ THE FACT IS THAT THANKS TO BETTER NUTRITION, AN AVERAGE HUMAN IS GETTING LARGER AND WHILE THE CONVENIENCE OF A NON-STOP FLIGHT MIGHT OVERRIDE OTHER CONCERNS FOR SOME PASSENGERS, EVERYONE WILL EVENTUALLY NEED TO USE THE FACILITIES ON A PLANE ONE DAY, AND THAT DAY, THEY WILL UNDERSTAND WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT ”

gers make for a truly terrifying experience. One cannot even imagine how the poor cabin attendant, who will have to sit on that seat attached to the toilet door, will feel at the end of a flight. After a long haul, that should qualify for a distress allowance.

Which is why, may be it is time for civil aviation authorities across the world to step in for the passengers. The lackadaisical attitude of regulators in certifying the Boeing 737 Max, the American Federal Aviation Administration being a case in point, has allowed years of reduced passenger comfort to pass unchallenged. It is not just the overwing exits that are ridiculously small but things like smaller seats and cramped toilets are problems that need to be redressed.

Again, an argument will be made that passengers have a choice; they can pay more and fly on an airline that offers better facilities like a larger toilet and more space between rows. But as the collapse of Jet Airways and Kingfisher Airlines proves, the aviation sector is in dire straits, forcing even larger airlines to offer fewer amenities or cutting back on those that remain. Even if Air India, which also operates

A320neo aircraft and has not crimped on the toilet size or passenger meals, does offer competitive fares, the crisis won't blow away.

There is not always a choice but to travel on a low-cost airline, which wishes to fit as many travellers on seats as possible, either for time reasons or just because of the fact that they dominate the skies. This is true not just in India but pretty much everywhere else in the world, too.

The race to the bottom will continue unless authorities step in. Regulations need to be set for minimum seat pitches being allowed on aircraft and the size of toilets as well as the doors. The fact is that thanks to better nutrition, an average human is getting larger and while the convenience of a non-stop flight might override other concerns for some passengers, everyone, who flies frequently or infrequently, will eventually need to use the facilities on a plane one day, and that day, they will understand why this is important. Hopefully, that day will not be too late and small airline toilets would not have become *fait accompli*.

(The writer is Managing Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

Amid concerns of widespread unemployment, poverty, inflation, illiteracy, health, stress and violence, there is now a danger of economic slowdown.

BSP chief —Mayawati



If I have to be a good feminist, I would want to contribute to the society in such a way that all get an equal opportunity to show their talent.

Actor —Taapsee Pannu



The vitality of US-India ties is critical to keep a check on China's actions to revive Indo-Pacific for its own interests.

US Deputy Secretary of State —John Sullivan



The revival of the Congress largely depends on the weakening of regional parties which lack ideology. So, the future of the Congress is bright.

Congress leader —Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stop interference

Sir — China, being a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), seems to be pandering to the whims of its all-weather friend, Pakistan. The decision, at the goading of China, to hold a closed-door discussion on Kashmir is a matter of surprise as it is a subject that involves the internal affairs of India.

Much has changed since 1947. The move also shows the big brother attitude of China, which is struggling with many problems back home. China must first concentrate on making peace with protesters in Hong Kong and also show some respect for Tibet and the Uighur Muslims. It has no right to be sermonising about Kashmir, which is being sorted out in a peaceful manner in democratic traditions.

Sravana Ramachandran Chennai

Capable coach

Sir — The decision made by the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) to retain Ravi

The hidden cost of smartphone addiction

With 41 million obese people, India ranks third after the US and China in having the highest number of overweight people in the world. Obesity is a known cause of health problems. However, overweight has to be differentiated from obesity, which is usually done by Body Mass Index (BMI). People with too little physical activity, coupled with excessive food intake, fall in the category of obesity. Diabetes mellitus and hypertension (high blood pressure) are two important lifestyle deviations that can lead to a series of serious diseases. Studies have proved that smartphone technology has led to a sedentary lifestyle. Spending too much time with it can reduce one's portability, keep him/her confined to the chair or bed. As in television addicts, smartphone users are likely to "relax" with alcohol, sweets and snacks.

All these items for relaxation are direct/indirect causes of obesity. The number of hours spent with the smartphones can be detrimental. More than five hours of interrupted or continuous use of smartphones for more than

Shastri as the head coach of the Indian cricket team was on expected lines. The cricket team is currently at a crucial stage post the World Cup loss in England and needs his leadership to evolve stronger to win future games.

Over the years, Shastri has developed a deep understanding with the team, especially with Captain Virat Kohli, and knows

the nuances of cricket and the team through strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis very deeply. He is best suited to lift the boys' morale to the next level and help ensure that the team benefits from his leadership.

It is learnt that during an interview on Skype, Shastri demonstrated a clear road map for team India. There's no case



six months cause unwanted changes. The danger of smartphones is no less than the perils of television. It is, in fact, more injurious because of its portability, comfort, range and the sheer variety of information and entertainment. Every innovation has its attendant risk. In the era of technology marvels, it is crucial to sift good from the bad.

Ganapathi Bhat Akola

Failing humanity

Sir — To celebrate modern civilisation and humanity's achievements as something miraculous is to delude ourselves to the mediocrity of our species. We cannot celebrate everything that humanity accomplishes. In retrospect, we need to express, regret and repent sufficiently for the damage we have caused to the environment.

For this, the chief agent is religion, which glorifies humanity as an outcome of divine providence, and places every other creation of the almighty on a lower strata. It is this narcissism and hubris that make us behave like masters of the universe. The need to find a solution must begin with examining deeply as to why the problem arose in the first place. The answers will be obvious and won't surprise anyone. If not for global warming and climate change, one wonders what kind of a catastrophe can infuse sense into the human psyche?

Anoop Hosmath Mysuru

Varun Dambal Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

An opportunity to reinvent

The proposed investors' summit in J&K holds the potential to bring out the best of this State. However, Ladakh must not be left out



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

At the time of writing these lines, news had just come that the Jammu & Kashmir administration will host a three-day global investors' summit from October 12 in Srinagar. Part of it will also be held in Jammu. An MoU has been signed by the Jammu & Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation and the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) to organise and manage the event. Supposedly, the meet will give the State an opportunity to showcase its approach and a possibility of it entering the global market in a major way. It will also presumably put to rest some anxieties that have arisen due to recent changes in the functioning of the State. It should be a useful occasion to familiarise those who are interested in knowing the potential of the natural resources of this idyllic State and its infrastructure. This should not be a template meet like the ones that have been held in Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh or West Bengal. Reasons for this are different. Natural resources found in Jammu & Kashmir are unlikely to be found in any other Indian State. And it's not just the horticulture and a wide range of agricultural products but also raw materials and the perception there of.

Consider the case of Taiwan, a small island in the East Asian region — small enough not to have any significant raw material but is large enough to innovate with foresight. Ceramic products of this nation is celebrated globally for their design and finesse. They range from tea cups to plaques. Their quality sets its own standards. Couple this with the place Taiwan has earned in the world of information technology, which is also the key to its incredible prosperity. The knowledgeable are aware that Taiwan has resources of foreign exchange in excess of its needs. Indeed, it also has all the problems of plenty. Learning from the example of Taiwan can be a source of policy challenges in its own right.

The hills of the Kashmir Valley and the rugged terrain of Udhampur or of the Kathua region hold a huge potential of literally converting the hill dust to aesthetic and functional products. What is needed is raw material and the vision to redesign products out of it. Some of this is already being done. It is now possible to buy from the markets of Kashmir tea sets or dinner sets, which are a visual and utilitarian delight. The only deficiency is that they do not have brand value. Whether the proposed investors' summit will be able to plug this gap is an interesting question, to which, time alone can provide the answer. Clearly, it has to do much more than just famous names descending in the Valley to lend celebrity value to an area, which has already been reeling under severe challenges of mental recalibration. At this stage of development, equal attention needs to be paid to reconstructing mindsets as well. Locals were earning a livelihood and had the propensity to multiply the business under the pre-August 6 dispensation. The uninitiated would have to be helped to trust the new dispensation. They would begin to believe when results start rolling.

The unmatched skills of artisans in Jammu & Kashmir in Pashmina shawls and the sheer hard work on different types of base material have a rich potential of being converted into useful and marketable products. This can have a global demand, too. It can also leverage the income potential of a region, which is not always identified with prosperity but is always known for its acumen. Talking of tourism and fruit production is to talk about costs as well as gainful employment of a substantial part of the population. However, a much more significant dimension of the State's economy is its potential in aesthetics and revenue generation, supported by business-friendly policies of the Government. What is needed is infrastructure for connectivity, which is now beginning to bloom. The skilled as well as unskilled manpower now has a lot of opportunities knocking at its door. They hold the potential of being unprecedented in its boom. Investment in this region and the coupling of the potential with possibilities may well open a new chapter for their trouble-riddled existence.

Hopefully, Ladakh will not be left out from the focus of the investment summit. With its own version of aesthetics and knowledge management of tribal products, this region has an untold story of humongous dimension. In a joint initiative, the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) is organising a Aadi Mahotsav or National Tribal Festival in the third week of August. This is the first of its kind. It knocks at the door of immense possibilities. In a wonderful country like India, sky is not the limit of innovation and rediscovery. If it can soar anywhere, it can soar in India. Jammu & Kashmir may just be a fitting locale of TRIFED's next frontier. The global investors meet could possibly pick up threads from there, too.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THEY (KASHMIRIS) ARE NOT ALONE. THE VOICES OF THE PEOPLE OF JAMMU & KASHMIR WERE HEARD IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. —PAKISTAN'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UN MALEEHA LODHI



OUR POSITION WAS AND REMAINS THAT MATTERS RELATED TO ARTICLE 370 OF THE CONSTITUTION ARE ENTIRELY AN INTERNAL MATTER OF INDIA. —INDIA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO UN SYED AKBARUDDIN

Educational reforms must

There are over 10,000 schools in J&K, yet the dropout rate is high in the State. Abrogation of Article 370 will help bring about a positive change to a flawed system



CB SHARMA

Academics are lost for words on how to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the historic decision to abrogate Article 370 as, out of all things that have been thrown out of gear in Jammu and Kashmir, education has been the worst hit because of it. Now, academicians hope to witness a swift and drastic change in the levels of education in the coming months and academic years. Successive governments in J&K, no matter what their political doctrine, have deliberately kept participation in and quality of education low so that common people of the state do not understand the injustice being done to them by their political masters. If this grim scenario has to change quickly and have a long lasting effect on the minds and the psyche of the people of J&K, then quality education will have a major role to play as a catalyst of change.

The Modi Government, and all future state governments that actually want real integration of J&K with the rest of the country, will be required to address this very urgent need of the students on a war footing. This push for quality education will no doubt find resonance with most families of the State as each invariably has a few learners.

There are over 10,000 schools in the State, yet the dropout rate is high in J&K and it's not a secret that it is this early age group which is most vulnerable to provocations and radicalisation. Also, the subversive and anti-national forces would force students, both boys and girls, to participate in stone-pelting failing which they would be subjected to coercion and public humiliation, especially girls. Apart from middle and high school education, the government will do well to give a fillip to pre-school and childcare facilities that are pathetic at this juncture. It will not be a difficult task to bring visible change in education and childcare facilities as the government can expect wholehearted support of families for the sake of the future of their wards.

It's not a secret that Article 370 always remained a barrier in the implementation of measures taken by the Centre and statutory bodies to provide quality education in the state. Students from J&K were denied the crucial Right to Education (RTE) which all children of the country are entitled to. RTE not only makes it mandatory for the Government to ensure education for all children of school-going age, but also provide quality education.

It's no secret that curriculum is the most important component of education. What we teach today decides the future of the nation a few years later. India has witnessed how TB Macaulay's 'Minute on Education' written in 1835 for Lord William Bentinck, the governor general of British India, changed the future of Bharat. India has not been able to reverse the effects of Macaulay's policies even after over 70 years of Independence.

Hence, the curriculum and the local textbooks prescribed for the children of the State need to be reviewed immediately. It was decided two years ago by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) that all CBSE schools must prescribe National



Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) books for their students. Now, the Centre can examine the possibility of replacing the textbooks in J&K with NCERT books and give the children the option to do so free of cost.

The government will have to provide opportunities to in-service but untrained teachers to undergo training at the earliest. Training through distance mode can be started immediately. Teachers with degrees from institutions not recognised by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) will require to be re-trained so that they not only become eligible to teach but also become worthy of the job. This will benefit students in the long run as the degrees and diplomas awarded to those educated in J&K are often questioned because of the sub-standard education provided to them. There exist a large number of dummy teacher education institutions as NCTE norms did not apply to J&K. Review of these colleges can be taken up immediately by the NCTE and those which do not make the cut can be shut down or given time to follow the council's procedures.

Simultaneously, the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) can be equipped to undertake refresher programmes for the elementary level teachers. The MHRD in 2017 had decided to provide opportunities to untrained in-service teachers to acquire teaching diplomas through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in a record time of 18 months. A similar exercise can be undertaken in J&K so that the quality of education improves exponentially. Teachers from higher education institutions may also be provided liberal facilities to undergo special orientation and refresher programs, at the Human Resource Centres established in uni-

IT'S NOT A SECRET THAT ARTICLE 370 ALWAYS REMAINED A BARRIER IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES TAKEN BY THE CENTRE AND STATUTORY BODIES TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION IN THE STATE. STUDENTS FROM J&K WERE DENIED THE CRUCIAL RIGHT TO EDUCATION (RTE) WHICH ALL CHILDREN OF THE COUNTRY ARE ENTITLED TO

versities across India, where the positive impact of the abrogation of Article 370 can be explained. Teachers are opinion makers and they can become the messengers of change. The exercise of re-orienting all teachers, catering to all levels of learners can bring a positive impact at the earliest.

Without losing time in creating infrastructure, we can use broadcast technology to bring education to all levels of learners at their doorstep by best teachers from across the country. DD Kashir or other Direct to Home (DTH) channels of Swayam Prabha can be used to reach lessons prepared by distance teaching institutions like NIOS and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to learners in the comfort of their homes.

Once normal telephone services are resumed for the long term, two way communications can also be started so that people can ask questions from experts sitting in the NIOS studios in Delhi. NIOS already has a large number of programmes recorded keeping Kashmiri Secondary and Senior Secondary children in mind.

Fifty madrasas from Kashmir became NIOS centres two years ago. The children, who were pursuing religious education in these madrasas are now being provided modern education too. These madrasas can be provided DTH dish and TV sets so that they can receive the educational broadcasts.

The Central Government may consider forming a task force to suggest various measures to improve various levels of education right from pre-school to doctoral studies. A swift reform, which can be visible on the ground in J&K, will be hugely appreciated.

(The writer is Professor of Education at the Indira Gandhi National Open University. Views expressed are personal)

Reforms, equity in central staffing scheme needed

For better governance at the Centre and State, there should be adequate exchange of CSS officers with IAS/IPS officers on deputation in State administration so that there is a two-way exchange of experience and knowledge



DEEPAK JHA

Even after 72 years of Independence, the country has failed to bring in the much-needed administrative reforms in civil services and link promotions to acquired knowledge and performance.

In fact, favouritism and preferential treatment to some services is the norm rather than an exception, say senior officers.

This is ironic, given the fact that in the historic judgment given by the Supreme Court (SC) in 1991 in the Mohan Kumar Singhania vs Union of India case by a three judge Bench, it was recorded that "there is no denying the fact that the civil services being the top most service

in the country has got to be kept at height, distinct from other services since top echelons have to govern a wide variety of departments."

However, despite the apex court establishing civil services as the top service of the country the fact remains that the Government of India (GOI) is not treating all services on a par. This is despite the fact that in a few services, especially the Central Secretariat Services (CSS) the candidates selected have higher merit in comparison to a few other Group A services.

"Promotional prospects and the empanelment process are not uniform and there is serious favouritism towards a few services. It is generally believed that IAS/IFS candidates are brighter than other services and similarly Group A officers have more merit than Group B officers. But in reality the situation is different," explained a government official of CSS cadre who is fighting for equity.

In fact, CSS cadre officers feel that they are treated as "inferior" to

other Group A services officers recruited by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) like the Indian Engineering Services (IES), Indian Economic Service (IES), Indian Statistical Services (ISS) and so on.

The CSS is the most important organ of the Central Government and earlier its officers used to rise to the post of Secretary to the Government of India, but gradually the IAS lobby muscled in to get postings in the national Capital. Delhi has always been considered a plum posting due to the amenities, facilities and good schools in the Capital, apart from proximity to the corridors of power. Hence over the years, the CSS has been reduced to just a subordinated service.

For instance, in Group A services, all officers get the Junior Administrative Grade (JAG) and Non-Functional Selection Grade (NFSG) in the 9th and 13th year of selection. However, candidates selected in 1998 through UPSC civil services exam who were allo-

cated CSSC got JAG in the 16th year of their selection and are yet to get NFSG.

While IAS/IFS/IA&AS officers get their Senior Administrative Grade (SAG) in the 16th year of selection and other services start getting benefits from the 18th or 22nd year of selection, for CSS officers there is no SAG. To claim SAG the CSS officers have to undergo an empanelment process for the post of Joint Secretary.

In fact, promotions for CSS men virtually stop at the level of Director, which is allocated to all officers of Group A services upon completion of 13 years of service.

In some cases, candidates were allocated Group B services since they did not give the complete service preference in spite of having higher merit than several Group A officers.

A close examination of scores of candidates selected in 1998 reveals that the first ranker of IAS scored 63.56 per cent and 28th ranker 59.39 per cent. Both belonged to the General Category

(GC) and there was a difference of 4 per cent in the score.

An OBC candidate securing rank 143 for the same year scored 55.52 per cent and a Scheduled Caste (SC) category candidate with 195th rank scored 54.73 per cent while a Scheduled Tribe (ST) candidate with 370 rank scored 52.95 per cent.

Therefore, the difference in percentage of marks in comparison with the topper is mere 4 per cent in respect of GC, 8 per cent for OBC candidates, 8.7 per cent for SC candidates and 10.5 per cent in respect of ST candidates. Given that within the GC there is a difference of 4 per cent, if we take it as a single unit for the GC candidates, then the difference of marks of OBC, SC, ST candidates in comparison with the last selected candidates within the GC in IAS is 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively.

But promotions of candidates selected for IAS from various categories (GC, SC, ST, OBC) show that all got the SAG scale at the same time. And for Joint Secretary

empanelment also GC candidates as well as OBC, SC and ST candidates were empanelled together.

"Our point is that when all take the same exams and qualify and within few percentages there is differences in service category then the terms of promotions and career prospects within the service and empanelment should be done for the whole batch, may be through the process of a written examination so that the best will again get a chance to hold the senior level posts in the Government of India under the central staffing scheme," explained the official.

Though selected in 1998, Group B services officials are still working as Deputy Secretary at JAG level whereas the 2010 batch of other Group A services selected through either civil services or non-civil services are eligible to join GOI as Deputy Secretary from July 1, 2019. In effect, this means that someone 12 years junior becomes equivalent to an officer of the 1998 batch of Group B services. Several 1998 batch Group A

officers with lower merit than Group B services have been approved for SAG. "This is major discrimination against Group B officers. It's like someone who aced the IIT-JEE Exam was asked to join some diploma course because of a lower rank or for failing to submit preferences," the officer explained.

Fortunately, the Modi Government, during the last few years has made attempts to rationalise the central staffing postings by giving opportunities to other cadres like, Indian Telecom Services (ITS), Indian Trade Services (ITS) Railway Services, Indian Forest Services and likewise, instead of just the elite IAS officers.

For better governance at the Centre and State, there should be adequate exchange of CSS officers with IAS/IPS officers on deputation in State administration so that there is a two-way exchange of experience and knowledge that would be beneficial to all.

(The writer is with the national bureau of The Pioneer)

CBI to probe phone tapping charges: BSY

Ready for any probe, says Kumaraswamy

Bengaluru: Days after charges of phone tapping during the previous coalition Government headed by JD(S) surfaced, Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Sunday said he will order a CBI probe into the allegations citing demands by several political leaders including Congress.

While former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy, who headed the coalition Government said he was ready for a probe by even an "international agency", his alliance partner the Congress, however, seemed to be a divided house.

"On the telephone tapping issue. Several leaders, including Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah, have said it should be probed and truth should come out, so I have decided to order a CBI probe. Tomorrow itself I will order the probe," Yediyurappa told reporters here.

He also said it was the expectation of the people of the state that a detailed inquiry should be made and the culprits punished. Yediyurappa's announcement comes amid signs that the scandal was gain-

ing political steam ever since disqualified JD(S) MLA AH Vishwanath, who served as JD(S) State president and turned rebel later, last week dropped the political bomb, accusing the HD Kumaraswamy Government of tapping phones and spying on more than 300 people, including him. Congress leaders, including Siddaramaiah, M Mallikarjuna Kharge and home minister in the alliance government M B Patil, had sought a probe while another key party leader and former minister D K Shivakumar has rejected the spying charges and appeared to side with Kumaraswamy.

According to reports, phones of those close to Siddaramaiah, who was the then coalition coordination committee chief, too had come under the watch.

Several BJP leaders, including former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, have directly accused Kumaraswamy of being behind the episode to save his government which was then rocked by dissonance within.

The coalition government ultimately collapsed last month



with Kumaraswamy losing the trust vote in the assembly.

Reacting to the Chief Minister announcing a CBI probe, Kumaraswamy, who has already denied the charges, said "Let them do any inquiry, whether it is a CBI inquiry or any other agency of international standard, or let them talk to Trump (US President Donald Trump) and get it inquired through some one from his side." He also hit out at the electronic media for its coverage on the issue, saying no one can do anything to him and alleged that their intention and attempts were to keep him away from people of the state.

Stating that he was not aware as to why his name was linked to the phone tapping case, he stressed, "If I was involved I would have panicked, I'm open.... There is not even an iota... To point fingers at me."

The JD(S) leader also asked Yediyurappa to bring BJs previous tenure in the government and also that of Siddaramaiah under the ambit of the CBI probe. While Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah has welcomed the CBI probe, hoping that the BJP does not use the central investigating agency for "political vendetta," Congress on its official Twitter handle has said that telephone tapping "was a bundle of lies" and a conspiracy for hate politics.

"I welcome the decision of @BSYBJP to hand over the phone tapping case to CBI.

But in the past @BJP4India has used CBI as its puppet to unleash its venomous political vendetta.

Hope @BJP4Karnataka leaders does not have similar intentions this time," Siddaramaiah tweeted on

Sunday, following announcement of probe by the chief minister. Asserting that allegations of 'Operation Kamala' being done in Karnataka are as serious as charges of phone tapping, he said in another tweet "I urge @BSYBJP to order CBI investigation into alleged Operation Kamala also.

I heard they acted on my advice in phone tapping case & I hope they act on this issue as well." However, the state Congress in a tweet termed phone tapping as "lies" and a conspiracy for hate politics.

Alleging that Yediyurappa was behaving like an "underground criminal" after becoming the chief minister in an "immoral" way by "Operation Kamala" through the backdoor, the party in a tweet said, "In Modi administration CBI was working as a frontal unit of the BJP. Phone tapping was a (bundle of) lies and a conspiracy for hate politics."

Hitting out at the Congress, senior BJP leader R Ashoka expressed surprise over differences of opinion on the phone tapping probe within the grand old party. Pointing out that several Congress leaders, including Siddaramaiah, had demanded a probe, he said, "Before handing over the probe they demanded an inquiry... Now they are blaming the Chief Minister, it is not right." PTI

Photojournalist, brother shot dead in Saharanpur, Priyanka slams Yogi Govt

Lucknow: A photojournalist with a prominent Hindi daily and his brother were shot dead in Saharanpur district on Sunday morning following an altercation over disposal of cow dung, prompting Opposition parties to slam the Government on law and order.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced an ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh each for the kin of the deceased, however, the SP and the Congress slammed the ruling BJP over the alleged collapse of law and order and failure to provide adequate compensation.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra alleged that Uttar Pradesh was "in the grip of criminals" and the state administration was covering up crimes.

Ashish (23), a photographer with Dainik Jagran newspaper, and his brother Ashutosh (19) were killed by their neighbour Mahipal Saini and his sons, Senior Superintendent of Police (Saharanpur) Dinesh Kumar P said.

"In the midst of an argument, Mahipal and his sons entered the house of Ashish and Ashutosh and shot them. Locals rushed the duo to a nearby hospital, where the doctors declared them brought



dead," the SSP said.

Three teams have been formed to nab the culprits who are absconding, he added.

"Chief Minister has taken cognisance of the Saharanpur incident wherein the journalist of Dainik Jagran and his brother were shot dead by the assailants," a statement issued here by a senior Uttar Pradesh Government official said.

"SP Saharanpur has been directed to initiate the strongest action. The state Government stands by the bereaved family in this moment of grief," the statement added.

Hitting out at the Adityanath Government, Priyanka Gandhi in a tweet in Hindi said, "Now, what will you call this system where murders are being committed everyday by shooting people. Those responsible for controlling crime are busy in cover-

ups and UP is in the grip of criminals."

Leader of Congress Legislative Party in UP Assembly Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' demanded the resignation of Adityanath.

"Law and order machinery has collapsed from Saharanpur to Barabanki," he said in a statement.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav expressed grief over the deaths and demanded that the guilty be brought to book at the earliest.

"During the regime of the SP Government, the kin of the deceased used to get ₹20 lakh as immediate financial assistance. The BJP Government should do at least this much," he said.

The BJP expressed grief over the deaths and vowed to take "strong action" against the culprits.

"In the hour of grief, the BJP is with the bereaved family," a statement issued by state BJP chief Swatantra Singh and general secretary (organisation) of State BJP Sunil Bansal said.

"The guilty persons will not be spared, and the government has already issued directives to initiate strong action against the culprits," the statement added. PTI

Pawar calls leaders who quit NCP as 'crows'

Mumbai: Terming as "crows" the leaders who left the NCP and joined others, party chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday said fielding fresh faces in the upcoming Assembly polls was being considered by the party.

The Opposition parties in Maharashtra, particularly the NCP, witnessed its MLAs and key leaders joining the BJP and Shiv Sena last month.

"We don't need to worry about crows (kawale) any longer, instead focus on party workers (mawale) ahead of the assembly elections," Pawar said here.

Three NCP legislators-Shivendrasinh Bhosale, Sandeep Naik and Vaibhav Pichad- had joined the BJP along with the party's state women wing president Chitra Wagh last month.

Besides, NCP's Mumbai unit president Sachin Ahir and Shahapur MLA Pandurang

Barora had also joined the Shiv Sena last month.

"The party will consider fielding fresh faces in the upcoming polls. I would insist on giving chance to youth and women in the coming elections," Pawar added.

BJP taking away leaders groomed by us: Maha NCP chief Jayant

Mumbai: Maharashtra NCP president Jayant Patil on Sunday hit out at the BJP for poaching leaders "groomed" by his party and the Congress, likening it to "buying ready-made clothes".

He was speaking on the sidelines of a state-level NCP meeting here which was attended by several senior leaders, amid speculation that some of those absent may be on their way to the ruling BJP

or Shiv Sena.

"Leaders groomed by us (NCP-Cong) are now picked up by the BJP ahead of Maharashtra Assembly elections. It is the Congressification of the BJP," Patil said.

He added, "The BJP should give a chance to its party workers, rather than inducting our workers. Has the BJP lost credibility and is thus inducting leaders from our party." PTI

State needs people's cooperation to ensure development: UP CM

Gorakhpur: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said mere approval of projects will not ensure development as people's cooperation and implementation by the administration were needed to take the state forward.

He also asserted that Gorakhpur was moving towards a "new era of development".

"Surajkund Dham was waiting to be developed for decades and now a tourism development project worth ₹2.60 crore will be started here. Gorakhpur is moving towards a new era of development, which is not possible without positive and creative thinking," Adityanath said here.

"Development cannot take place just by approving projects but needs implementation by the administration and coop-

eration of the people," he said.

The chief minister also said, "Many development projects will come to Gorakhpur and a lot of employment will be generated. Youth won't have to go to places like Surat, Mumbai, and Delhi etc for jobs, as they will be able to earn their livelihood here itself. The price of land has increased manifold due to coming of new industries and factories in the area."

Adityanath on Sunday visited the Suryakund Dham to lay the foundation stone of projects worth ₹55.30 crore.

The chief minister said power supply in the state has improved. "Electric cables will be removed from the roads and underground cabling will be done. It will not only help in reducing accidents but the roads could also be widened," he said. PTI

Now, pray for integration of POK with India: Jitendra Singh

Jammu: Union Minister Jitendra Singh here on Sunday said after the revocation of the special status of Jammu & Kashmir, people should now pray for the integration of the Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (POK) with India in their lifetime.

He also downplayed the arrest of mainstream political leaders and the communication blockade in the Valley following the scrapping of the special status and bifurcation of the state in union territories.

"We are lucky that it (revoking of the special status) happened in our lifetime. It is because of the sacrifices of our three generations," Singh said addressing a meet on the current socio-political milieu in Jammu & Kashmir, organised by the state BJP at party headquarters here.

He said, "After this historic step, let us move forward with a positive thinking of freeing POK from the illegal occupation

of Pakistan and making it an integral part of the country in accordance with the unanimously passed resolution in Parliament (in 1994)."

"Let us pray that we see the integration of POK with the country and people freely visit Muzaffarabad (capital of POK)," he added.

Without naming the Congress for the criticism on the arrest of former Chief Ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, the Union Minister said it was "unnecessarily being made a big issue".

"Under some compulsion or reason, the Government has taken some steps to maintain peace. You (Congress) had arrested National Conference founder Sheikh Abdullah. Such a thing had not happened in Kashmir," he said, adding that the leaders were not being kept in solitary confinement.

"They are doing their work-out at the gym, reading books

and even ordering and watching Hollywood movies," he said.

Defending the move with regard to Article 370, he said some people were frustrated because they had created a narrative in the country that no power could abolish the special status being enjoyed by Jammu & Kashmir.

"We did it...Article 370 was a miscarriage of history and perhaps the gravest blunder in post-independence India," he said, adding that it led to the lack of development and discrimination within regions but also a "psychological isolation that created mental barriers".

"Former Prime Minister A B Vajpayee talked about insaninayat (humanity), jamhuriyat (democracy), kashmiriyat to restore peace in Jammu & Kashmir. By this move, we have restored jamhuriyat (democracy) and have done the necessary course correction to pave a way for insaninayat and kashmiriyat," Singh asserted. PTI



Devotees carry Ganesha idol to be installed at a pandal ahead of Ganapati festival in Mumbai on Sunday PTI

Wait now on for BJP central leadership to clear list of BSY Cabinet

Bengaluru: With the much awaited expansion of Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's Cabinet in Karnataka to take place on August 20, the wait is now on for the BJP's central leadership to clear the list of 13-14 probable Ministers in the first phase, top party leaders said here on Sunday.

Yediyurappa and the State leadership are expected to get clear instructions from the high command about those to be inducted into the Ministry on Monday.

Having run the Government with a one-man Cabinet for 22 days, Yediyurappa on Saturday finally managed to get the nod from BJP national president Amit Shah to undertake the exercise on August 20.

Yediyurappa, who took oath as Chief Minister on July 26 and proved his

Government's majority on the floor of the Assembly on July 29, is yet to induct any Minister into his Cabinet.

Meanwhile, the BJP legislature party meeting scheduled for Tuesday morning ahead of the cabinet expansion has been postponed.

"On Tuesday, looking at a good time, cabinet expansion will be done by the afternoon. There will be no legislature party meeting that day. We will do it after four days.

All our MLAs, MLCs, MPs, all our leaders and central Ministers have been requested to attend the swearing-in ceremony," Yediyurappa told reporters on Sunday.

Senior party functionaries said though many names were doing the rounds in the media, a clear picture would emerge once the list submitted by the state leadership to the high

command is cleared by Amit Shah, expected on Monday afternoon.

Yediyurappa too had said after his return here from Delhi late on Saturday that he was expecting clear instructions on Monday from the central leadership on those who are to be inducted into the Ministry.

"By Monday afternoon we will get a clear instruction on who all to be inducted. I have held discussions with Amit Shah and other leaders," he had said.

Asked about the number of Ministers likely to be inducted on Tuesday, he said "13 to 14 people are likely to be inducted into the cabinet in the first phase. There may be plus or minus one or two... We have now recommended 13 to 14 of them."

Yediyurappa has had a

tightrope to walk during the cabinet expansion as he has to craft a fine caste and regional balance in view of the large number of aspirants, sources said.

However, with no decision yet by the Supreme Court on the disqualified Congress-JD(S) MLAs, whose resignations from the Assembly paved the way for the BJP to gain power, the Chief Minister has no immediate compulsion to accommodate them.

The then speaker Ramesh Kumar had disqualified 17 Congress-JD(S) rebels under the anti-defection law till the end of the assembly term, which they have challenged in the Supreme Court.

Only if they get any relief from the Apex Court can these disqualified MLA contest the bypolls.

Sources said that if they

get re-elected, BJP planned to make them Ministers as promised and hence Yediyurappa would not be filling all 34 ministerial positions in one go.

They also said that one interesting aspect was that BJP MLAs have not openly expressed their ministerial aspirations or indulged in intense lobbying like in the past, as they fear it may go against them.

However, expressing confidence that he would be made a Minister, considering his seniority, eight-time MLA Umesh Katti Sunday said even if it did not materialise, he would "happily" work as a legislator for the people of his constituency that was affected by floods, while hoping for a larger representation for Belagavi district in the Cabinet.

PTI

Absence of legal awareness root cause of rights' deprivation: CJI

Nagpur: Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Sunday said the absence of legal awareness was the "root cause" of "deception, exploitation and deprivation" of the rights and benefits of the masses.

He also observed that "awareness about ones' rights and the means of securing them are the 'powerful instruments' to bring social and economic progress.

Addressing the valedictory function of the 17th All India Meet of State Legal Services Authority (SLSA) in Nagpur, the CJI said legal services must be constituted to "achieve distributed justice, effective implementation of welfare benefits and elimination of social and structural

discrimination against the poor".

In his speech, he also underlined the importance of "legal literacy", technology and access" and the "impact and accountability" for delivering the quality legal services.

Justice Gogoi also said the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and State Legal Services Authorities are the "crucial vehicles" for discharging the Constitutional mandate of justice to all on the basis of equal opportunities.

"These bodies have to ensure through their methods that justice reaches the remotest corners of the country and the last person," said the CJI.

Emphasising the need for "legal literacy", Justice Gogoi said, "awareness of ones' rights and means of securing those rights are powerful instruments for bringing about social and economic progress. Absence of legal awareness is a root cause of deception, exploitation and deprivation of rights and benefits of the masses. Legal literacy and legal awareness go hand in hand".

Justice Gogoi said the "legal aid movement" cannot achieve its goal until people are aware about their legal rights so as their basic rights.

He said "greater awareness" translates into better and broader access.

The CJI observed that contemporary legal education is

limited to universities training future lawyers and that it should go beyond awareness.

"Though education on legal topics is in school and college curriculum. It should go beyond awareness. What instead required is movement from near awareness to engagement," the CJI said.

Justice Gogoi further underlined the need to implement legal knowledge for the overall good.

"Efforts must be made to secure concerted engagement of young minds in understanding and utilising that knowledge for the benefit of the society. Not only law colleges but the students of schools and colleges must be included in the outreach pro-

gramme. Students and young persons have the potential to become the ambassadors of justice," said Justice Gogoi.

He also emphasised the need to focus on "Technology and Access" and the need for customised legal services as per the needs of the people.

"Technology and innovation should be embraced in all aspects of functions on the professionally-managed rendering of legal services at all the levels. It should ensure (delivery of) timely and effective legal services to the needy," said the CJI.

"Let us use technology to provide greater information about legal aid through mobile apps, provide vital information to those seeking legal aid about

status of their cases and applications," he said.

The CJI also underlined the importance of "impact and accountability", saying in fact there is no better "mirage" than statistics.

"Right to legal aid means the right to quality legal aid. Commitment to quality must be there in the whole organisation," he said.

To ensure quality, the CJI suggested a rigorous selection process for empanelment of lawyers.

"If need be there selection be made on the lines of the process followed for the selection of public prosecutors. This would go all the way in addressing the complaints of lack of quality," the CJI said. PTI

10-yr-old girl injured in ceasefire violation by Pak Army along LoC

PNS ■ JAMMU

A 10 year old girl, resident of Mankote area in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch, early Sunday received injuries in fresh incident of ceasefire violation along the Line of Control. Pakistan Army late Sunday evening also targeted several forward posts in Nowshera sector of Rajouri. In response, the Indian Army gave them a befitting reply using similar calibre of weapons.

According to official sources, 10-year-old girl, identified as Sadiya, daughter of

Mohd Azrat of Dabdj village of Mankote, received splinter injuries during heavy shelling in the area. Local villagers in the area claimed, for last two days Pakistan army is targeting civilian areas in the region. "We are worried as heavy exchange of shelling took place late Saturday night", a senior citizen told local reporters in Poonch when they visited the area on Sunday.

Meanwhile, situation remained tense in Nowshera sector where Indian army reportedly destroyed Pakistan Army post on Saturday.

Rajasthan rain: 49 killed since June 15



PTI ■ JAIPUR

Forty-nine people have died in rain-related incidents in Rajasthan since June 15, an official said on Sunday. Brijendra Singh, OSD, Department of Disaster Management, Relief and Civil Defence told PTI that there was no flood-like situation anywhere in the State. In Kota and Baran, the Army was alerted as a precautionary measure, he said. "Forty-nine people have died in nearly 20 districts due to rain-related incidents from June 15 to till date in the state. Of the total, 20 people died due to wall or house collapse whereas six to seven people died due to lightning. Remaining deaths include those who were swept

away by water," Singh said. He said 500 people were evacuated to safer places with the help of Army, SDRF, NDRF and local administration from several places inundated due to heavy rainfall in the state. According to the MeT department, 12 cm rainfall was recorded in Degana of Nagaur, 11 cm in Makrana, 10 cm in Nawa and 10 cm in Buhana of Jhunjhunu during the last 24 hours. From Sunday morning to evening, 10 mm of rainfall was recorded in Kota and 2 mm in Churu. The department has forecast light to moderate rain with thundershowers at some places in the eastern parts of the State and one or two places in the western parts in the next 24 hours.

NRC authority mulls action against official for irregularities in checking docs: sources

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The NRC authority is considering recommending strong action against a senior Assam Government official for alleged irregularities in checking documents of people from Chamaria and some nearby areas in Kamrup district after which re-verification had to be done, sources close to the development said.

Kamrup Deputy Commissioner Kamal Kumar Baishya has sent a report to the NRC State Coordinator Prateek Hajela about two months back on the alleged irregularities by a former Circle Officer of Chamaria under his district which came to light in 2018. The report noted how the then Circle Officer allegedly made all the affected people Original Inhabitants (OI) only to reduce his workload, the sources claimed. He had allegedly ticked the OI column for all the people, including Hindus and Muslims, in the verification list, which lessened his burden for cross-checking the documents as well as the tedious process of finding out the family tree of the applicants, they said. "It is not a corruption-related case. The DC's enquiry has found out that the official's quality of verification was very poor and he was not sincere about his duties," a source said. The sources told PTI that the

irregularities were initially detected around September 2018, after which the Kamrup district administration swung into action and found that it was affecting the entire Chamaria revenue circle. The NRC (National Register of Citizens) authority was then informed about the development and after much deliberations, it was decided to hold re-verification in these areas. "It was a good pro-active decision by the NRC authority to hold the re-verification process. This shows that they are serious about bringing out an error-free NRC within the deadline," a source close to the development said. The NRC authority has taken the report very seriously and is likely to recommend strong action against the erring bureaucrat, who is an Assam Civil Services official, the sources confirmed. No official comment could be obtained from the NRC Office as the Supreme Court had barred them from talking to the media. The deadline to publish the final NRC is August 31. The errant official was transferred from Chamaria early last year. A new Circle Officer was appointed in Chamaria, but he left the place within months seeking a voluntary transfer. In the second half of 2018, the current Circle Officer was appointed. She along with the deputy commissioner informed

the NRC authority about the irregularities and started the process of re-verification. Calls made to the Kamrup Deputy Commissioner remained unanswered. From August 3 afternoon, notices for re-verification were served across the south of Kamrup district to about 33,000 people, asking them to appear within 48 hours in NRC Seva Kendras (NSKs), almost 400-500 km away from their place of residence, in several upper Assam districts. The sources said that as NRC process is time-bound and the final document has to be published by August 31, all the re-verification work has to be completed as soon as possible. "The NSKs in entire lower Assam were already loaded with their scheduled re-verification process. As there were fewer claims and objections in upper Assam, so the NSKs there were relatively less occupied. That is why the authorities decided to hold the re-verification of these unscheduled cases in upper Assam districts. The only thing is that the notices should have been served to the people by giving them some more time," they added. Many poor people in the south of Kamrup area, with no money to fund their travel at such a short notice, had to pledge their valuables, including gold, cattle or sell their harvested crops at throw-away price.

Magsaysay winner says put under house arrest, UP official denies charge

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Ramon Magsaysay Award winner social activist Sandeep Pandey here on Sunday claimed that he was put under house arrest on three occasions in the past week to prevent him from expressing views on national issues. The Lucknow district administration, however, rejected the claim. "In the past one week, we have been stopped thrice by the police and administration from freely expressing our views. I was put under house arrest on three occasions (August 11, 16 and 17)," Pandey claimed, adding that they were prevented from going to Ayodhya for a two-day programme on communal amity on Saturday. "We were stopped midway," Pandey said. The social activist slammed the alleged "stalling" of their programmes, saying it seemed as if "there was a ban on the freedom of expression". Pandey said on August 16, they were prevented from going to Hazratganj in Lucknow, where they were scheduled to hold a candlelight demonstration near the Mahatma Gandhi statue against the scrapping of the special status for Jammu & Kashmir.

"Police arrived again at my and advocate Mohammad Shoab's place to put us under house arrest an hour and half ago before the programme," Pandey had said in a statement issued on August 16. He said their August 11 protest was for the "restoration of democracy" in the Valley. On the other hand, Lucknow District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma rubbished the claims made by Pandey, who had won the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2002 in the emergent leader category. "Who is stopping him from holding protests at the Eco Garden in the city. He cannot stage any protest in Hazratganj — the heart of the state capital — as the High Court has banned all protests in the area," he said. "The dharna sthal (protest venue) of the district has been identified and he is most welcome to hold any protest, dharna or agitation there for as many days he likes. Why does he deliberately opts for spots where protests are not allowed?" the Lucknow DM said. Sharma said earlier Pandey was told to go to the Eco Garden but "he did not comply" with the orders. The DM denied that Pandey was put under house arrest.

3 illegal B'deshi immigrants held while crossing over to India



PTI ■ MALDA

Three illegal Bangladeshi immigrants were arrested in early hours of Sunday near the Indo-Bangla border in West Bengal's Malda district, while trying to cross over to India, officials said. Bangladesh nationals entered the country for seeking jobs here, they said. The infiltrators are residents of Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj districts of the neighbouring country, an official said. "Three Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended at Kaliachak area by Border Security Force personnel," the official said. They have been handed over to Baishnabnagar police station for further legal action, official sources said. In a separate operation by a team of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), West Bengal, two drug peddlers were arrested from Kaliachak area and one kg of brown sugar was seized from their possession, police said. The value of the contraband is estimated to be around ₹15 lakh.

Ground Penetrating Radars being used to locate bodies; toll now 121

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Ground Penetrating Radars were put into use on Sunday to locate bodies at Kavalappara in Malappuram and Puthumala in Wayanad, where massive landslides had wiped out two villages, even as the toll in rain battered Kerala climbed to 121 with the retrieval of more bodies. A team of experts from Hyderabad started the search operations at the two villages with GPR, which will help detect bodies buried under mounds of earth. A state wide calamity report issued by the government tonight said 121 people have lost their lives in Kerala in the second spell of the South West monsoon rains since August 8

LANDSLIDES IN KERALA

and that 47,622 people are still in 296 relief camps. As per the update, 58 people have so far lost their lives in Malappuram, 12 in Wayanad and 17 in Kozhikode, the three northern districts, where 21 people are still missing. The report also said that 1,789 houses were fully damaged in the monsoon. Meanwhile, over one lakh volunteers have enrolled for cleaning work in flood-hit villages in the northern districts. Kerala's all-women self-help group Kudumbashree has engaged over 50,000 members for the purpose. "Volunteers from various

organisations have identified over 15,000 spots in Wayanad. They are moving in batches and have started the cleaning mission. They will remove the mud and slush from the houses, clean wells and the locality," an official told PTI. The volunteers will clean the wells using "super chlorination" method and the state Suchitwa Mission has arranged material and equipment for the purposes, the official said. State Ministers Kadannappalli Ramachandran and TP Ramakrishnan are coordinating the cleaning mission. Thousands of students, from the Students' Federation of India (SFI), National Cadets Corps (NCC) and National Service Scheme (NSS) have joined the cleaning initiative.

Mamata responsible for BJP's growth in Bengal: Adhir Chowdhury

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The "policies and politics" of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her party, the TMC, has helped the BJP gain ground in the state, leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, has said. He also said that due to the weakening of opposition parties like the Congress and the Left, the people of the state, "who are opposed" to the Trinamool Congress (TMC), had embraced voted in favour of the BJP. "It is due to the policies and politics of Mamata Banerjee and her party that the BJP has gained ground in Bengal.

Banerjee and the TMC deliberately weakened the Opposition parties to create space for the saffron camp," Chowdhury told PTI. His comments come in the backdrop of the BJP making significant inroads in the state by winning 18 out of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the general elections. The TMC's tally came down to 22 seats from 34 in 2014. The Congress won two seats, whereas the Left failed to open its account. Chowdhury, a five-time MP from Beharampore seat in Murshidabad district, is known to be a staunch critic of Banerjee, and has always opposed any sort of alliance with the party.



Residents wade through a waterlogged road following heavy rain in Kolkata on Sunday

PTI

Prez inaugurates bunker museum at Maha Raj Bhavan

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The sea-facing Raj Bhavan on Sunday became the first such Governor's residence in the country that houses a unique museum — a thematic underground bunker museum which has virtual reality booths that transports visitors in time to the 19th century when the bunker was constructed to fire cannons at approaching enemy ships. Spread over an area of 15,000 sq.ft, the first-of-its-kind museum will be thrown open for the general public through prior online booking later during the year. President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the underground Bunker Museum at Raj Bhavan, Mumbai on Sunday. Accompanied by Governor CH. Vidyasagar Rao, the President was shown around the exhibition and given an audio visual experience of the



history of Raj Bhavan at a Virtual Reality booth in the museum. Dioramas of cannons and soldiers, optical illusions of a bunker of infinite length and cannons have also been created inside the museum. It may be recalled that in the second week of August 2016, the state PWD officials discovered a 150-meter long underground British era

ried out and the structure was strengthened. The bunker has 13 rooms of different sizes. It opens with a 20-ft tall majestic gate. Towards the entrance, the structure resembles a fort. When opened, the bunker had rooms bearing names such as Shell Store, Gun Shell, Cartridge Store, Shell Lift, Pump, Central Artillery Store, Workshop, etc. The entire underground bunker was found to have a proper drainage system and inlets for fresh air and light. While carrying out the Conservation works, the authorities have restored the original features of the bunker and it has been readied as a museum by incorporating virtual reality on the themes of Cannon-firing experience, history of Raj Bhavan and a glimpse of the forts of Maharashtra. Earlier, the President unveiled the foundation stone

for the proposed reconstruction of the Governor's Office — Residence building 'Jal Bhushan'. Mrs Savita Kovind, wife of the President, Governor CH Vidyasagar Rao, his wife CH Vinodha, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Minister for Revenue and Public Works Chandrakant Patil and Minister for Higher and Technical Education Vinod Tawde were present on the occasion. Jal Bhushan, the office and residence of the Governor of Maharashtra, has a history of nearly 200 years. The House has undergone several modifications and renovations. Jal Bhushan has been the official residence of the British Governors since 1885 and Indian Governors after Independence. It has evolved around the original 'Pretty Cottage' built by Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone around 1820.

People have right to know about Netaji's disappearance: Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal politicians, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Forward Bloc general secretary Debarata Biswas and Chandra Bose the grand nephew of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, on Sunday demanded an "impartial, thorough and comprehensive inquiry" to ascertain the mystery behind the great leader's disappearance on August 18, 1945. "Netaji went on a flight from Taihoku Airport in Taiwan" on this day in 1945 "only to disappear forever," the Chief Minister tweeted adding "the people have a right to know about the great son of the soil." Banerjee's tweet came against the backdrop of assertions appearing in the Gujarat BJP's official website which referred to Netaji's death on August 18 in a plane crash.

Giving his reactions Chandra Bose, who is a BJP leader too, demanded a "comprehensive inquiry" into the disappearance mystery of one of the greatest sons of India. He said, about writing a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking a thorough inquiry to unravel the mystery once and for all. Similarly former MP and general secretary of Forward Bloc, a party that Bose had launched demanded an "impartial inquiry" into his so-called disappearance. "Three commissions — Shah Nawaz Committee, Khosla Commission and Mukherjee Commission — were instituted first in 1956, then in 1970 and yet again in 2005 but none of them could throw substantial light on the issue," he said adding his party would "never accept any story of Netaji's death until that is proved with evidence."

Veterinarian helping flood-hit in Sangli dies of heart attack

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A veterinary doctor from Latur in Maharashtra, who had been providing help to the flood-affected farmers in Sangli, died of a heart attack on Sunday, an official said. Narayan Kharolkar, 51, was sleeping in his room in Sangli city when he suffered the heart attack, his post-mortem report said. "Some blockages were found in his heart. However, he had never suffered an attack in the past. He had been helping the flood-hit farmers in Sangli since August 15," district animal husbandry officer, Dr Kiran Parag, said. Kharolkar is survived by his wife and two sons. He had visited Sangli during the 2005 floods as well to provide help to the affected farmers, Dr Parag said.

President Kovind meets Lata Mangeshkar in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a rare honour bestowed on India's renowned singer, President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday called on Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar at her residence in south Mumbai and wished her good health. Sharing a photograph of his meeting with Lata Mangeshkar, an elated President Kovind shared a picture on his Twitter handle and described the singer as "the pride of India" who has "sweetened our lives with her soulful melody." "Delighted to meet Mangeshkar Lata ji at her residence in Mumbai. Conveyed my best wishes for her good health. Lata ji, the pride of India, has sweetened our lives

with her soulful melody. She continues to inspire us with her simplicity and grace #PresidentKovind," the President tweeted. An equally thrilled singer shared more photographs of her meeting with the President and wrote on her twitter handle: "Namaskar, Was deeply honoured and humbled, when the President of our country, Shri Ramnath Kovind ji, so gracefully came and met me at my residence. I stand in gratitude. Sir, you make us proud! @rashtrapatibhvn". President Kovind was accompanied by his wife and daughter. Governor of Maharashtra and his wife Vinoda Rao along with Education Minister Vinod Tawde also visited Lata

Mangeshkar's residence. A living legend, Lata Mangeshkar is one of the best-known and most respected playback singers in the country. She has recorded songs in over a thousand Hindi films and has sung songs in over thirty-six regional Indian languages and foreign languages. The Dadasaheb Phalke Award was bestowed on her in 1989 by the Government of India. In 2001, in recognition of her contributions to the nation, she was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour and is only the second vocalist, after M S Subbalakshmi to receive this honour. France conferred on her its highest civilian award (Officer of the Legion of Honour) in 2007.



Five new fish species discovered in Arunachal

PTI ■ ITANAGAR

Researchers of the Rajiv Gandhi University here have recently discovered five new fish species in various districts of the State. The scientific names of the newly-discovered fish species are Mystus prabini, found in Sinkin and Dibang rivers in Lower Dibang Valley district and Exostoma kottelati, found in Ranga river in Lower Subansiri district, a release by the university said. Other discovered species are Creteuchiloglanis tawangensis, found in the Tawangchu river in Tawang district. Garra ranganensis, found in Ranga

river and Physoschistura harkishorei, found in Dibang and Lohit rivers in Lower Dibang Valley district, it said. The team was led by Prof DN Das of the fisheries and aquatic ecology research wing of the Zoology department of the university. "Majority of the water bodies in remote areas of the state are still not easily accessible to the researchers due to a difficult terrain that includes rain forests, steep hills besides communication problems," Das said. He, however, said his research team is optimistic that meticulous exploration may result in more discoveries of new fish species from the state in the future.

Govt plans debt waiver for small borrowers



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government plans to give debt waiver for "small distressed borrowers" under the insolvency law framework, according to a senior official. The proposed waiver would be offered as part of 'Fresh Start' provisions under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Corporate Affairs Secretary Injeti Srinivas said discussions have been held with the micro-finance industry regarding criteria for the proposed waiver for small distressed borrowers from the economically weaker section (EWS). He emphasised that the waiver — as part of individual insolvency — would be for the most distressed within the EWS. "If you have once availed

the fresh start, then you cannot avail it again for five years. We have worked out all safeguards to the satisfaction of the micro-finance industry. "It will like taking haircuts. At a national level, over a three to four years period, it will be not more than ₹10,000 crore," Srinivas told PTI in an interview. As per the IBC, there are various thresholds for 'Fresh Start', including that the gross annual income of the debtor does not exceed ₹60,000. The aggregate value of the debtor's assets should not be more than ₹20,000 and that the aggregate value of the qualifying debts does not exceed ₹35,000. Among others, such a person should not be having an own dwelling unit, irrespective of whether it is encumbered or not, according to the IBC. "We had discussions with

microfinance industry and their concerns are being duly factored in. The idea is not to destroy the microfinance industry. "The idea is to give waiver for small distressed borrowers from debt obligations based on a criteria. The criteria has been discussed at length with the microfinance industry," the secretary said. Further, he said that the IBC provisions pertaining to personal guarantor to corporate debtor would be coming into effect immediately, followed by those related to partnership and proprietorship. "Then we will look to bring fresh start provision," he added. The IBC provides the framework to deal with distressed assets through a market-driven and time-bound process.

PSU banks complete first round of ideation exercise

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State Bank of India and other public sector lenders on Sunday completed the first round of bottom-up ideation exercise for further streamlining the banking sector to help the nation become a USD 5-trillion economy in five years. Banks embarked on a month-long campaign beginning Saturday on the direction of Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance with the aim to generate suggestions and ideas from the branch level for preparing a road map for the future growth of the banking sector. The move by the Finance Ministry is aimed at re-invigorating sagging economy in which banking sector has important role to play especially in boosting consumption through higher credit flow to the productive sectors. Some suggestion were with regard to government and regulators which will be taken up at later stage of the exercise, he said, adding, all these suggestions will be collated over the next week and will be placed at the state-level meeting. Gupta further said, the primary objective of this meeting was to identify and finalise ways and means to increase credit to various sectors of the economy, enhance the use of technology to bring about innovation.

India's holding of US Govt securities jumps to \$162.7 bn

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India's exposure to the US government securities rose by nearly \$6 billion to \$162.7 billion at the end of June, the highest level in at least one year. Latest data from the US Treasury Department showed that Japan was the largest holder, with holdings of American government securities worth \$1.122 trillion, followed by Mainland China whose exposure stood at \$1.112 trillion. These are figures at the end of June 2019. Among the major foreign holders of the Treasury securities, India was at the 13th position with holding to the tune of \$162.7 billion. The exposure stood at \$156.9 billion in May and \$155.3 billion in April, according to the data. India's holding in June was also the highest in at least one year, as per an analysis of the data from June 2018 when it stood at \$147.3 billion. The substantial rise in exposure also comes at a time when the global economy is grappling with multiple headwinds, including trade war and prospects of slowdown in some



emerging markets. The data showed that the UK was at the third position with holding worth \$341.1 billion, followed by Brazil (\$311.7 billion), Ireland (\$262.1 billion), Switzerland (\$232.9 billion), Luxembourg (\$231 billion), Cayman Islands (\$226.6 billion), Hong Kong (\$215.6 billion), Belgium (\$203.6 billion), Saudi Arabia (\$179.6 billion) and Taiwan (\$175.1 billion). "Foreign residents increased their holdings of long term US securities in June; net purchases were \$63.8 billion. Net purchases by private foreign investors were \$63.2 billion, while net purchases by foreign official institutions were \$0.5 billion. "... Taking into account transactions in both foreign and U.S. Securities, net foreign purchases of long term securities were \$99.1 billion," the Treasury Department said in a release on August 16.

Business Corner



Punjab National Bank organised its All India Sports and Cultural Event 2019-20 from August 16 to August 18 at the Thyagaraj Stadium, New Delhi. The event was attended by MD and CEO Punjab National Bank Sunil Mehta who also declared the sports and cultural meet 2019-20 Open and Close



BK Sokhey who was Executive Director (Finance) with NBCC, a Navratna CPSE, has been appointed as Director (Finance) of the Company by the Government of India. An order to this effect has been issued by the Company's Administrative Ministry, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, vide its letter no. O-17034/81/2018-PS dtd. the 16th August, 2019



Northern Railway Women's Welfare Association a philanthropic organisation has always been known for the serve it renders towards the Railwaymen and their families. Celebrating the Independence Day in their characteristic way Harinder Kaur, President NRWVO visited the Northern Railway Central Hospital



The first stage of the bottom-up consultative process designed to generate ideas and review performance of branches and their alignment with national priorities, was conducted of the Circle Office, Delhi-North & West of Oriental Bank of Commerce on 17th and 18th of August, 2019, which was guided by Mukesh Jain-Chairman & Managing Director of the Bank



Minister of Skill Development Mahendra Nath Pandey presenting certificates to tyre fitters skilled under Saamarth project of Rubber Skill Development Council (RSDC) at Trade Facilitation Center, Varanasi while flagging off mobile skill vans. Seen with him are Anil Rajbhar, Minister Uttar Pradesh Govt and RSDC Chairman, Vinod Simon

Expedite claim settlements in flood affected areas, FinMin asks insurers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has asked insurance companies to expedite the claim settlement process for policy holders affected by floods in different states, including Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala, sources said. The ministry has asked the insurers to clear claims under various policies including Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana quickly, they added. Widespread damage to life and property has been reported from different parts of the country as monsoon rains played havoc in several states. Regulator Irdai in a communication to life insurers said that as a result of the heavy rains and floods, there are reports of loss of human lives and loss of belongings in many



states such as Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat. "Initiate immediate action to ensure that all reported claims are registered and eligible claims are settled expeditiously," said the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai). With regard to claims involving loss of life, where difficulty is experienced in obtaining a death certificate due to non-recovery of body, Irdai asked the insurers to follow the process adopted during the 2015 Chennai floods. They have also been asked to update Irdai about state-wise

progress report on the claims settled on a weekly basis. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana claims data need to be submitted separately while including the same in total claims, it added. The Irdai has also asked general insurance companies and standalone health insurers to expedite claim settlements. The insurers have been told to ensure that all claims are surveyed immediately and claim payments are disbursed at the earliest. They have also been asked to engage adequate number of surveyors in the affected areas.

Govt to clarify on applicability of FDI policy on digital media: Sources

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is likely to come out with a clarification on applicability of the foreign direct investment policy on the digital media sector, official sources said. The present FDI policy is silent on the fast-growing digital media segment. In the print media sector, 26 per cent FDI is allowed through government approval route. Similarly, 49 per cent FDI is permitted in broadcasting content services through government approval route. But 100 per cent is allowed for up-linking of non-news and current affairs' TV channels, and down-linking of TV channels through automatic approval route. "In the FDI policy, digital media does not find a place. As the sector is growing fast, we are looking at it will come under FDI cap or not," a source said. The proposal is worked out by the commerce and industry ministry, sources said. On in the proposal, Deloitte Partner Jehil Thakkar said that this is a great move by the government as it would help media companies to raise additional capital for their dig-

ital media segment. "The government should clarify about the FDI cap in the sector and whether that FDI will be coming through automatic route or not," he said. Thakkar added that at present a significant part of the growth in the media sector is coming from the digital area. "Additional capital is needed to keep this growth going and FDI would be the most welcoming thing in this." Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech in July had stated that the government would examine suggestions of further opening up of FDI in aviation, media (animation, AVGC) and insurance sectors in consultation with all stakeholders with a view to attracting more overseas investment. FDI in India dipped 1 per cent to \$44.36 billion in 2018-19. Last year, the government had relaxed FDI rules for several sectors, including single-brand retail, non-banking financial companies and construction. Foreign investments are considered crucial for India, which needs billions of dollars for overhauling its infrastructure sector such as ports, airports and highways to boost growth.

FPIs pull out ₹8,319 cr in Aug amid persisting negative sentiment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors pulled out ₹8,319 crore on a net basis from capital markets in the first half of August, continuing their selling spree in the Indian market amid uncertainty over FPI tax and global trade worries. According to the depository data, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) sold equities worth ₹10,416.25 crore on a net basis during August 1-16 period. FPIs, however, invested a net ₹2,096.38 crore in the debt securities during the period. So far in August, FPIs have been net sellers for nine out of 10 trading sessions, indicating "extreme negative sentiment," Himanshu Srivastava, senior analyst manager research at Morningstar said. In July, FPIs had withdrawn a net sum of ₹2,985.88 crore from the Indian capital markets (both equity and debt). "Prevailing uncertainty over the higher tax on FPI has negatively impacted foreign investors. They have been exiting Indian equities ever since the higher surcharge, or 'super rich', tax was introduced in the budget announced on July 5th," Srivastava added.

Ordnance Factories' representatives meet Gol officials

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Representatives of the three recognised defence federations met with officials of the Govt. of India, in meetings chaired by the Additional Secretary (DP) on the 14th and the 16th of August regarding the one-month strike call to oppose the proposed corporatisation of the Ordnance Factories. During the meeting it was explained that corporatisation would give the organisation greater autonomy in decision making; increased flexibility in day to day operations which would in turn lead to improved efficiencies and productivity. The federations, however, were not satisfied with the views expressed and remained firm on their proposal to proceed on a one-month long strike commencing from the 20th of August. The Director General Ordnance Factories and Chairman Ordnance Factory Board, Saurabh Kumar, IOFS reiterated that there was no plan on the part of the Govt. to privatise the Ordnance Factories.

Hyundai announces 'No Production Days' to suit market conditions

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A major Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) has come out with no production days this month at its Sriperumbudur facility near here, in view of the prevailing market conditions. As per the announcement made on August 9 at the plant, the Korean auto major said, "due to prevailing market conditions, there will be no production in passenger cars, powertrain system and related support departments." Accordingly, there was no production on August 10 and 12 at the body shop, paint shop, assembly shop, operating in all the three shifts. From August 9 to 21 there will be no production in engine shop-1 while engine shop 2 it will be on August 10, 24 and 31. Transmission-1 department was under no production day on August 10 in all its three shifts while transmission-2 on August 10 and 12, it said. The notification to employees said few assembly lines in the mentioned departments would operate as per requirement.

A Hyundai Motor India spokesperson told PTI, the domestic auto industry was going through "unprecedented times of fluctuating market demands." "Specific segments are indeed performing really well — the long waiting period for the newly-launched (Hyundai) Venue and (electric vehicle) Kona and the successful pre-booking figures of similar models in other brands is testament to this," a statement from the spokesperson said. The company said it has been working on multiple strategies like "tweaking production cycles, initiating new internal projects in this scenario." "Our flexible manufacturing process is completely aligned to the market pull and is capable of seamlessly handling the varying market requirements. The specific variances of market have been incorporated in the company's business and operational plan, streamlining production schedules accordingly. Both the company's plants were operating smoothly as per the plans," the statement said.

OFB signs MoU with CSIR for development of new products

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Kolkata on 16 August 2019. The MoU was signed by Umesh Singh, Deputy Director General of OFB and Dr Harish Hirani, Director of the Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute, Durgapur under CSIR. This MoU is an umbrella arrangement under which individual factories under OFB can collaborate with specific CSIR laboratories for taking up of new R & D projects. The MoU will facilitate collaboration and exchange of information between OFB and CSIR on a wide range of technologies. The MoU has been signed as part of the ongoing efforts to boost the in-house research and development (R & D) capability of the OFB so as to give a boost to the 'Make in India' initiative of the Government of India.

ONGC adopts new 'Energy Strategy 2040', targets doubling of oil, gas production

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) has set a target to double oil and gas output from its domestic and overseas fields and expand its refining capacity three-fold alongside diversification into renewables in a new vision document for 2040, its Chairman Shashi Shanker said. ONGC Energy Strategy 2040 envisions the company as "A diversified energy company with a strong contribution from non E&P business; 3x revenues and about 5-6x market capitalisation," he said. The firm produced 24.23 million tonnes of crude oil in the 2018-19 fiscal year and 25.81 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas from its domestic fields. Another 10.1 million tonnes of oil and 4.736 bcm of gas were produced from its overseas assets. It had a turnover of ₹109,654 crore and a net profit of ₹26,715 crore in the year ended March 31, 2019. As on August 16, it had a market capitalisation of

₹164,458 crore. In the company's latest annual report, Shanker said the ONGC board recently approved the business roadmap for the company and its other group entities — 'ONGC Energy Strategy 2040'. The 'Energy Strategy 2040' entails ONGC achieving "three times revenue distributed across exploration and production, refining, marketing and other businesses; four times current profit-after-tax (PAT), with 10 per cent contribution from non-oil and gas business; and 5-6 times current market capitalization," he said. "The strategic roadmap envisions a future-ready organization whose growth is predicated on a few important planks: consolidation of our core upstream business (domestic and international); expansion into value accreting adjacencies in the oil and gas value chain (downstream and petrochemicals) and diversification into renewables (off-shore wind) and select new frontier plays through dedicated venture fund," it said. The document targets

cumulative upstream output (local and overseas) almost doubling from current levels with 2 per cent and 5 per cent CAGR in domestic and international operations respectively. With two 35 million tonnes per annum of oil refining capacity vested in its two subsidiaries — HPCL and MRPL, ONGC is targeting to raise this capacity to around 90-100 million tonnes. Also, expansion is petrochemicals will be prioritised. Besides, ONGC plans to make investments in renewable energy sources with a target to create 5-10 gigawatts portfolio with a focus on off-shore wind power. ONGC has been under pressure to reverse the falling output from its aging fields, where natural decline has set in. It is investing heavily to arrest the domestic fall while at the same time aggressively look for assets overseas. "The strategic roadmap also looks to create long term optionality through investor play (venture fund corpus of about \$1 billion) in select frontier themes such as clean energy, artificial intelligence (AI) or reservoir/field services technology," it said.

Lonza India announces plan to double its turnover by 2024

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lonza India, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Switzerland-based integrated solutions provider for pharma and consumer healthcare, announced its India plan. India being a strategic market for the company, Lonza India with turnover for around 100 million CHF (Swiss Franc) has set the target of doubling its turnover by 2024 with an estimated growth of 15+ per cent. Lonza India, which offers product portfolio in India and covers an entire life sciences industry has taken up an aggressive expansion plan by announcing corporate offices across the country in the current financial year. The company aims to facilitate bilateral businesses and scientific partnerships with Switzerland, has built a wide network of representations across India. Lonza started its operations in India in 1997 as a liaison office. The office was involved mainly in sourcing advanced intermediates from India. Lonza came in as a full-fledged sales and commercial organization with the acquisition of Cambrex Bio Products in 2007.

Chase for Gold

Sindhu, Saina chase elusive yellow metal at Basel World Championships

PTI ■ BASEL

India's double Silver medallist P V Sindhu will look to produce another masterclass when she resumes her quest for an elusive Gold at the BWF World Championships beginning here from today.

Sindhu has been the most consistent performer in the World Championships in the last few years with two back-to-back Silver and as many Bronze medals but a Gold medal has so far eluded her.

The 24-year-old Indian ace has always managed to find her best form in the World Championships, producing stellar performances but she missed the trick in the summit clash twice.

While she lost to Nozomi Okuhara of Japan in an epic battle, lasting 110 minutes in the 2017 edition, Olympic champion Carolina Marin of Spain stopped her in the summit clash in 2018.

Sindhu, who is seeded fifth, is coming into the prestigious event with a runner-up finish at the Indonesia Open last month and has been working on her fitness and defence in her pursuit to outlast her opponents.

She received a bye in the first round and will open her campaign against either Chinese Taipei's Pai Yu Po or Bulgaria's Linda Zetchiri.

"I've been working on my defence, physical fitness and also on-court skills. I have trained hard and I hope I can do well. I have to perform well but there is no pressure," Sindhu said.

If she wins her first match, Sindhu is likely to meet Beiwen Zhang of USA



Saina Nadal prepares to return a shot during her match



Pusarla Venkata Sindhu falls on the court in attempt to make no-look return

BWF World Tour
Live from 7:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

SINDHU HAS BEEN THE MOST CONSISTENT PERFORMER IN THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN THE LAST FEW YEARS WITH TWO BACK-TO-BACK SILVER AND AS MANY BRONZE MEDALS BUT A GOLD MEDAL HAS SO FAR ELUDED HER

in the third round and is expected to face Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying in the quarterfinals.

If everything falls into place, then Sindhu may collide with compatriot Saina Nehwal in the semifinals, provided the former world number 1 too crosses the initial rounds.

Eighth-seeded Saina, who boasts of a Silver and Bronze medal in the World Championships, will take on the winner of the match between Switzerland's Sabrina Jaquet and Netherland's Soraya De Visch Eijbergen in the second round after getting a bye. She is likely to face Mia Blichfeldt of Denmark next.

Saina's likely opponents in the quarterfinals will be China's Chen Yu Fei, who had clinched the All England Championship earlier in the year.

In the men's singles, former world number 1 Kidambi Srikanth, who had reached the India Open finals in March, will look to put up a good show after recovering from a knee problem which he suffered ahead of the Sudirman Cup.

The seventh seeded Indian, who has gone without a title in the BWF World Tour for the last 22 months, will open against Nhat Nguyen of Ireland in a repeat of the opening clash of the 2018 edition.

Sameer Verma, who also was bothered by a shoulder issue, is in the same half as Srikanth and will open against Loh Kean Yew of Singapore.

The 10th seeded shuttler will face a tough challenge against second seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei in the prequarterfinals if he clears the earlier rounds.

Swiss Open finalist B Sai Praneeth will face Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue in the opening round, while H S Prannoy's first-round opponent will be Finland's Eetu Heino.

In the doubles, Indian pairs of Manu Attri and B Sumeeth reddy, MR Arjun and Ramchandran Shlok and Arun George and Sanyam Shukla will also be in the fray.

In the women's doubles, Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy, Jakkampudi Meghana and Poorvisha S Ram and Pooja Dandu and Sanjana Santosh will also look for a good outing.

The mixed doubles pair of Pranaav Jerry Chopra and Sikki too will look to go deep in the tournament when they begin against the English pair of Ben Lane and Jessica Pugh.

Djoker dumped in Cincy semis

AFP ■ CINCINNATI

World number one Novak Djokovic wilted under pressure from Daniil Medvedev, falling 3-6, 6-3, 6-3 to the ninth-seeded Russian in the Cincinnati Masters semi-finals.

Medvedev's upset win on Saturday sent him into a title showdown with another unexpected finalist, 16th-seeded Belgian David Goffin, who defeated France's Richard Gasquet 6-3, 6-4 to reach his first ATP Masters 1000 final.

"I don't know how I turned it around, I was so tired after the first set and I thought I might not be able to keep up the intensity," said Medvedev, who has competed in 15 hardcourt matches since July 30.

"But I had a momentum chance in the second set and the crowd gave me energy," added the Russian, who will be playing his second Masters series final in eight days, after falling to Rafael Nadal in Montreal last Sunday.

"It's a great feeling to win and beat the number one. That shows I deserve to be in this final."

"I played an unbelievable match, I'm very happy." Medvedev also beat Djokovic in their last meeting, on clay at Monte Carlo in April.

He's 1-1 against Goffin, with both of their matches played this season — at the Australian Open and Wimbledon.

Kuznetsov, a two-time Grand Slam champion who sent Barty packing, will be in search of her 19th WTA title — when she takes on American Madison Keys in the final.

Keys, the 2017 US Open runner-up, defeated compatriot Sofia Kenin 7-5, 6-4.

"I'm super-happy to be in my first final here. I love getting matches under my belt before a Grand Slam."



Indian, Aussie player battle for ball possession. HI/Twitter

India, Australia play 2-2 draw

PTI ■ TOKYO

The Indian women's hockey team came back twice from a goal deficit to hold world number 2 side Australia 2-2 in a hard-fought round-robin league match of the Olympic Test Event here on Sunday.

Vandana Kataria (36th) and Gurjit Kaur (59th) scored for India to cancel out strikes from Kaitlin Nobbs (14th) and Grace Stewart (43rd) in their second match of the tournament. India had beaten hosts Japan 2-1 in their first match on Saturday.

World number 10 India began the match aggressively, matching Australia's attacking hockey with their own brand.

And in the 14th minute, Nobbs made no mistake in converting from the spot to give Australia a 1-0 advantage.

India struck on the break as Vandana Kataria finished off a superb move to equalise in the 36th minute. But the lead did not last long as Australia started to look for their second goal.

It was in the 43rd minute that Australia found their second goal through some exquisite team work, which saw Grace Stewart also registering her name on the score-sheet to give Australia a 2-1 lead.

With moves breaking down, and chances going waste, it looked like Australia would hold onto their 2-1 lead, but with just a couple of minutes remaining on the clock, India won a crucial penalty corner in the 59th minute.

And, prolific drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur stepped up and struck a sweet blow into the back of the net to earn India a well-deserved draw.

The Indian women's team will face China on Tuesday in their third and last round-robin match of the tournament.

Meanwhile in the men's game, India squandered an early lead to go down fighting 1-2 to New Zealand in their second match.

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh put India ahead in the second minute by converting a Penalty Corner, but New Zealand struck back in the last quarter through two well-crafted field goals — Jacob Smith (47) and Sam Lane (60) to have the last laugh.

India will face hosts Japan on Tuesday.

HIMA WINS GOLD IN CZECH

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Top Indian sprinters Hima Das and Mohammad Anas won a Gold each in women's and men's 300m races respectively at the Athleticky Mitink Reiter event in Czech Republic on Saturday.

This was Hima's sixth Gold in European races since July 2 though the field in most of them has been mediocre. Her last win was on July 20 when she clinched a Gold in her pet 400m event at Nove Mesto in Czech Republic.

"Finished on the top in 300 m in the Athleticky Mitink Reiter 2019 today in Czech Republic," Hima tweeted after winning the race.

Anas, on the other hand, won the men's 300m race in 32.41 seconds.

"Glad to have won the Gold in men's 300m at the Athleticky Mitink Reiter 2019 in Czech Republic in a timing of 32.41 secs," he



Hima Das, center poses for photo after win

tweeted. National record holder Mohammad Anas has already qualified for 400m event for the World Championships to be held in Doha in September-October while Hima is yet to achieve make it to the Qatar.

VAR comes again to rescue Spurs

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

"I am in love with VAR," joked Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino after his side escaped with a 2-2 draw at Manchester City thanks to Gabriel Jesus's late winner for the Premier League champions being ruled out on review.

Yet, the scoreline masked the fact that Spurs, despite reaching the Champions League final last season and breaking the club's transfer record for French midfielder Tanguy Ndombele, still look well off potential challengers to City's throne as champions.

Mauricio Pochettino's men finished 27 points behind City last season, on Saturday 27 was the difference in the shot count as Tottenham mustered three to the hosts' 30.

City will bemoan their luck and lacklustre defending that allowed Erik Lamela and Lucas Moura to cancel out goals from Raheem Sterling and Sergio Aguero with Spurs' only two efforts on target.

However, there was no evidence in the performance of a slipping of standards after winning the first domestic treble of trophies English football had ever seen last season.



Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino chats with Pep Guardiola after PL match

"When the people say: 'you can do better,' better than this I don't know if it is possible," said a proud City manager Pep Guardiola.

"We played incredible. The best game we have played in our time together, it was so good. We played good, but we could not win."

"If we continue to play in that way we won't have regrets and that is the most important thing."

City were pushed all the way last season by a Liverpool side who recorded the third highest points tally in English football history with 97 and yet still could not topple Guardiola's men for the title.

The European champions have started the Premier League season with two wins to take an early two-point lead over the champions and are clearly the most likely challengers to prevent City a hat-trick of titles.

However, if anything Guardiola's men look stronger last season with Kevin de Bruyne restored to full fitness, while Spanish international Rodri was slotted seamlessly into midfield.

"We have to be proud because to play at this level against a team like Tottenham is really good for the rest of the season," said De Bruyne, who set up both City goals.

"It's always more difficult in a big game but we almost totally dominated them."

VAR may have ridden to Spurs' rescue for now, but on this evidence they face a long season ahead if they are to keep up with the relentless pace set by City and Liverpool.

Ramsey makes Juve debut

AFP ■ TURIN

Aaron Ramsey made his debut for Italian champions Juventus on Saturday in their final pre-season friendly, a 1-0 win over Serie C side Triestina.

The Welsh international midfielder and former Arsenal star, who signed a four-year deal in February worth a reported seven million euros (\$7.9 million) a season, came on for Federico Bernardeschi in the 70th minute of the game in Trieste.

"This was a very proud moment for me to put on this famous jersey," said Ramsey who hadn't played since April due to a hamstring injury.

"I am happy that I got a few minutes out there tonight. I have been working hard to get back fit and hopefully now I can stay fit."

"I know I haven't had the minutes on the pitch, apart from tonight, but I feel good physically. It will take a few games to get there."

Ramsey won three FA Cups in his 11 years at Arsenal and played a key role in Wales reaching the semi-finals of Euro 2016.

"I am really excited to be a part of it and experience the Italian league," he continued.



Aaron Ramsey taps Federico Bernardeschi as he replaces Italian winger to make his maiden appearance for Bianconeri

"We start now on Saturday, so I am looking forward to that and playing my first competitive match."

Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo did not make the trip to north-eastern Italy because of muscular problems, while coach

Maurizio Sarri was also absent because of flu.

A stunning Paulo Dybala goal after 38 minutes was enough to seal a win for the reigning Serie A champions.

The Argentine, who has been linked with a move away from

Turin, celebrated wildly but then missed a penalty in the second half.

Ramsey, meanwhile, threatened with a quick one-two with Gonzalo Higuain, back from a loan spell to Chelsea, but sent the ball just wide of the goal.

Desai stars in Titans win

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Siddharth Desai starred in Telugu Titans' 40-29 win over Haryana Steelers in a Pro Kabaddi League match at the Nehru indoor stadium here on Sunday.

Desai with 18 points, including a 'Super 10' (a Super 10 is achieved when a raider scores 10 or more raid points in a single game), played a key role and helped Titans' snap the Steelers' three-match winning run.

Siddharth, who scored his second Super 10 of the season, took the fight to the opponent, along with his brother Suraj.

Titans went into the match with just one win in eight matches, but the lack of confidence was certainly not evident from the outset as the Desai brothers of Siddharth and Suraj showed their class.

In-form Vikash Kandola, on the back of a hat-trick of Super 10s, was in no mood to let the Titans run away with the match though as he kept pace with the South Indian team.

The most crucial point of the first half came with eight minutes remaining when Siddharth Desai combined well with his team to tackle Kandola.

Vishal Bhardwaj, playing his 50th match in the PKL, brought



Siddharth Desai celebrates after win

about the first all-out in the match, assisting Abozar Mighani to tackle Naveen with four minutes remaining to half time.

The first half ended 21-13 in favour of the Titans.

In the second half too, the Titans' defence kept Kandola at bay and they inflicted a second all-out on Haryana with 11 minutes remaining till the end with Siddharth Desai at the forefront.

It was Titans' second win of the season.

Archer double rattles Aus early

English pacer's early strike put hosts in command after Stokes' unbeaten 115 help Poms to set 267 run target

AFP ■ LONDON

Jofra Archer took two wickets and struck Test cricket's first concussion substitute, Marnus Labuschagne on the grille of his helmet as England pushed for an unlikely series-levelling victory in the second Ashes clash at Lord's on Sunday.

Australia were 46-2 in their second innings at tea on the final day of the second Test.

That left them needing 221 more runs in a minimum of 35 overs to reach an unlikely victory target of 267.

Test debutant Archer also struck Steve Smith on the neck with a rapid bouncer during the star batsman's 92 on Saturday.

Smith was passed fit to resume his innings on Saturday but further tests on Sunday sidelined him with concussion.

Now there are doubts over Smith's availability for the third Test at Headingley starting Thursday, with an Australia spokesman saying the "short turnaround is not in his favour".

Australia, bidding for their first Ashes campaign triumph on English soil in 18 years, lead the five-match series 1-0 after a 251-run win at Edgbaston last week.

In that match, former captain Smith marked his first Test since completing a 12-month ban for his role in a ball-tampering scandal in South Africa with superb innings of 144 and 142.

Under new protocols introduced for the inaugural World Test Championship, Australia could replace Smith with a full, batting substitute in Labuschagne.

World Cup-winning fast bowler Archer also took an impressive 2-59 in 29 overs on Saturday and the 24-year-old Sussex quick was in the wickets again on Sunday with two for two in seven balls.

David Warner's miserable series continued when the left-hander fell for five — his fourth single-figure in as many innings — when he edged



Ben Stokes celebrates after scoring 100 runs not out during play on day five of the 2nd Ashes Test against Australia at Lord's

Archer to Rory Burns in the slips. And Australia were 19-2 when Usman Khawaja was caught behind off a fine ball just outside off stump for two.

Archer's first ball to Labuschagne, a bouncer that sailed over the batsman's head, was called wide.

His second, timed at 91.6 mph, was much straighter and Labuschagne could not get out of the way.

The batsman required several minutes of on-field attention before

resuming his innings and later bravely drove Archer down the ground for a well-struck four.

Earlier, Ben Stokes, missed twice on Saturday and the beneficiary of an Australia decision not to review a rejected lbw appeal, scored 115 not out before captain Joe Root declared England's second innings on 258-5.

The left-handed batsman slogged off-spinner Nathan Lyon for two sixes in as many deliveries on the way to a 160-ball century, his seventh in Tests and second against Australia.

Stokes also hoisted paceman Peter Siddle for a six into the Grandstand before Root eventually called a halt. His innings included 10 fours.

Jos Buttler (31) gave Stokes good support in a fifth-wicket stand of 90 before hooking Pat Cummins to long leg.

Although the sun was shining by the tea interval, rain — which had already washed out five sessions in this match, delayed the start of Sunday's play by over an hour and so made a draw more likely.



'No intention to hurt'

AFP ■ LONDON

England fast bowler Jofra Archer insisted he had no intention to hit Australia's Steve Smith during the second Ashes Test, saying "everyone's heart skipped a beat" after he felled the star batsman with a fearsome bouncer at Lord's.

In an interview with BBC Radio before Sunday's final day, he insisted: "That is never the plan (to hit a batsman)."

"You are trying to get a wicket first. To see him go down, everyone stopped and everyone's heart skipped a beat," he added.

"After he got up he was moving around and you breathe a sigh of relief. No-one wants to see anyone getting carried off on a stretcher. It was a good challenge, a really good spell.

"For me, I wouldn't like to see it end like that."

Archer insisted he was just trying to force Smith out of his comfort zone.

"I've never seen Smith get out of his own accord until yesterday, so I was just trying to rattle him," he told Sky Sports.

"I was trying to get him out. You don't ever want to see anyone carried off on a stretcher, or you don't want to see them missing a day, or a game, especially with what happened a few years ago as well," said Archer.

"It's never a nice sight."

Smith out with concussion



Steve Smith receives treatment as he lies on the ground after being hit on the head

AFP ■ LONDON

Australia's Steve Smith has been ruled out of the last day of the second Ashes Test with concussion against England at Lord's, saying he felt "groggy" on Sunday morning.

"I started to feel a little bit of a headache coming on last night as the adrenaline got out of my system but I was able to get a good night's sleep in, but I woke up feeling a bit groggy and with a headache again," Smith said. "I had some tests done and then some further assessments deemed to be a mild concussion, so I've been ruled out of this Test match unfortunately."

The series is the first being played under the International Cricket Council's new concussion substitute regulations, part of the inaugural World Test Championship.

These allow players who have suffered head or neck injuries to be

replaced fully by a substitute, who was previously restricted to fielding alone.

Marnus Labuschagne, on the field as 12th man when play resumed on Sunday, became the first concussion substitute in Test history after Australia's request was approved by match referee Ranjan Madugalle.

There are doubts whether star batsman Smith will feature in the third Test at Headingley starting on Thursday, with an Australia team spokesman saying "the short turnaround is not in his favour".

As for his prospects of playing in the third Test, Smith said: "Obviously, there's a quick turnaround between Tests."

"I'm going to be assessed each day, hopefully I will be available, but it's certainly up to the medical staff."

"It's certainly an area of concern, concussion, and I want to be 100 per cent fit. There's obviously a few tests I have to tick off and time will tell."

Captain fantastic

Karunaratne's ton leads Sri Lanka to historic win in Galle Test



Dimuth Karunaratne, right, celebrates after scoring a century against New Zealand

AFP ■ GALLE

Captain Dimuth Karunaratne scored 122 as Sri Lanka chased down 268 for the loss of just four wickets to win the first Test against New Zealand at Galle on Sunday and take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

Karunaratne posted his ninth Test hundred along with enjoying a record-equaling opening partnership of 161 with Lahiru Thirimanne, who made 64, as Sri Lanka collected their first points of the World Test Championship.

Former captain Angelo Mathews chipped in with an unbeaten 28 as Sri Lanka finished off the game before lunch after the morning session was extended because only 22 runs were needed at the scheduled time for the interval.

Karunaratne enjoyed some luck on the way to his century, dropped on 58 at forward short leg by Tom Latham while wicketkeeper BJ Watling missed a stumping chance on the same score. He batted for over five hours, facing 245 deliveries, and hit six fours and a six.

Karunaratne and Thirimanne's stand equalled the record for the highest opening partnership in Tests between the two countries. In 1991, John Wright and Trevor Franklin had also put on 161 for the first wicket in Hamilton.

The opening stand was pivotal in Sri Lanka achieving the highest successful run chase in Galle, easily surpassing the pre-

Score	Overs	Team	Opponent	Season
268-4	86.1	Sri Lanka	New Zealand	2019
99-3	16.2	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	2014
96-0	14.1	Sri Lanka	India	2010
93/0	18.3	Sri Lanka	New Zealand	2012-13
92-0	11.2	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	2015

Faisal Features

vious best of 99. Resuming play on 133 for no loss, Sri Lanka required 135 from the remaining three sessions.

New Zealand finally got their breakthrough when Thirimanne was trapped leg before by William Somerville. Given not out by umpire Richard Illingworth, New Zealand overturned the decision on review.

Kusal Mendis soon fell after taking on Somerville, hitting him for a four and a six from the second and fourth balls he faced.

Angelo Mathews joined Karunaratne and the pair put on 44 runs for the third wicket to steady the ship.

Sri Lanka lost Kusal Perera after Karunaratne's dismissal but Dhananjaya de Silva (14) joined Mathews and helped Sri Lanka knock off the remaining runs with two sessions to spare.

Mathews brought up the winning runs with a single to fine leg off Boult.

The second and final Test begins in Colombo on Thursday.

Pujara scores 100 in warm-up game

PTI ■ COOLIDGE

Ishant Sharma grabbed two early wickets as India produced a disciplined bowling effort to reduce West Indies A to 79 for four at lunch on the second day of the three-day warm-up game here on Sunday.

Ishant was the peak of the bowlers as he claimed the wickets of opener Jeremy Solozano (9) and first-down Brandon King (4) in his first spell of five overs, while Umesh Yadav too found his rhythm early, dismissing Darren Bravo during his five overs giving away just seven runs.

Opener Kavem Hodge (45), who was dropped at slips in the third over, held on to one end but regular loss of wickets at the other end affected the hosts' innings. Hodge was five runs short of a half-century at the break and giving him company was Jonathan Carter (2).

West Indies A still trail India 218 runs with six wickets in hand.

Earlier after a delayed start due to rain, India declared their first innings at the overnight score of 297 for five.

In reply, opener Solozano was the first to leave after his flat-footed drive found



an edge and landed in the safe hands of KL Rahul as West Indies slipped to 16 for one in 4.2 overs.

King (4) was then dismissed in the ninth over when he played a loose drive only to be caught behind by Rishabh Pant as West Indies slipped to 30 for 2.

Bravo (11) then tried to stitch a part-

nership with Hodge but after adding 21 runs he edged an Umesh Yadav delivery to second slip with Rahul completing the formality.

In the 27th over, a direct throw from mid-on by Ravindra Jadeja ended the brief stint of Jason Mohammed (6) as West Indies A were reduced to 77 for four in 26.1 overs.

On the opening day, Cheteshwar Pujara struck form with a fine century while Rohit Sharma hit 68 as India shrugged off initial wobble to score 297 for 5.

Pujara and Rohit stitched 132 runs together for the fourth wicket to take India to a strong position after being reduced to 89 for 3 at lunch on Saturday.

Test specialist Pujara got going in his first competitive match of the West Indies tour as he retired after making 100 off 187 balls during which he struck eight fours and one six.

Rohit fell after making 68 off 115 balls. He hit eight fours and one six. After Pujara retired in the final session, Pant and Hanuma Vihari pushed the Indian total further to reach near the 300-run mark.

Kotla to have Virat Kohli stand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In recognition of Virat Kohli's phenomenal success in international cricket, the DDCA has decided to name one stand at Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium after the India captain.

Bishan Singh Bedi and Mohinder Amarnath are the two other Delhi players who have stands after their names but the honour came their way after their retirements.

Kohli will be the youngest active cricketer to be bestowed with the honour of a stand being named after him.

"Virat Kohli's outstanding contribution to world cricket has done DDCA proud. We are happy to honour him for achieving certain milestones and unbeatable captaincy record," DDCA President Rajat Sharma said in a statement.

Virender Sehwag and Anjum Chopra are the other Delhi players who have gates named after them while the Hall of Fame has been named after former India captain MAK Pataudi.

The state cricket body will also felicitate the members of Indian team at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on September 12.

The DDCA function will document Kohli's exceptional talent and success ever since he took over charge in all formats of the game and the state body cannot think of a better tribute than this.

"To cherish these memories, DDCA wanted to dedicate a stand in his name. I am sure the 'Virat Kohli Stand' will be a source of inspiration for Delhi's young cricketers. We are also delighted that Team India is not only led by a Delhi player but it also has an opening batsman (Shikhar Dhawan), a wicket keeper (Rishabh Pant) and a lead bowler (Ishant Sharma)."

Klaassen replaces Second for Tests

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Wicketkeeper Rudi Second has been ruled out of South Africa's Test tour of India in October due to an injury and Heinrich Klaassen will take his place in the squad, Cricket South Africa said.

The CSA said Second, one of the new caps in the Proteas squad announced on August 13 to play three Tests in India in October, has suffered an injury while practising with the South Africa A side. He will require immediate surgery and he has consequently been ruled out of the touring party.

Second's place will be taken by wicketkeeper/batsman Heinrich



South African batsman Heinrich Klaassen

Klaassen.

"Klaassen is part of the one-day squad for the South Africa A tour and he will now be added to the squad in Second's place for the four-day series that will assist his preparation for the Proteas Test series," said CSA Acting Director of Cricket Corrie van Zyl.

The Test series begins on October 2 in Visakhapatnam.

CSA also confirmed that the second Test will now be played in Pune (October 10-14) while the final Test will be held in Ranchi (October 19-23).

Klaassen is yet to make his Test debut and has featured in 14 ODIs and nine T20Is for South Africa.

Test format suits Cornwall's game

PTI ■ ANTIGUA

Big-bodied spin bowling all-rounder Rahkeem Cornwall believes he is well-suited to the longest format and credited his consistent performance in first-class cricket to his maiden call up to the West Indies squad for the Test series against India.

Cornwall first played first-class cricket in 2014 and has 260 wickets from 55 first-class matches along with 2224 runs. He recently scored two half-centuries in two unofficial 'Tests' against India.

"I believe the Test format suits my game because of the consistency a player needs over a long period of time to be successful, and I've enjoyed that challenge so far in my career playing first-class cricket," Cornwall told the Cricket West Indies website.

There is a possibility that Cornwall might make his Test debut during the opening Test which starts on August 22 as part of the World Test Championship.

"The feeling (on getting called up) is great — it's something I've been pushing to achieve for a long time," said the 26-year-old, who is 6'6" tall and weighs around 140 kilograms and couldn't make it to the squad earlier due to fitness issues.

"The feeling would be great if I was picked in the first Test. I just would want to go out and perform and don't disappoint my friends and family."

In 2018-19, Cornwall claimed 54 wickets in nine matches at an average of 17.68 to emerge as the leading wicket-taker. In international A-team cricket, most notably in the 2018, he clinched 19 wickets at an average of 18.42 during their 3-0 home series win versus England Lions.

In the recent series against the touring India A, Cornwall took nine wickets in six matches.

"The A-team preparation has been very good," he said.

"England Lions and India A were two quality opposition teams featuring guys that played Test cricket. Overall it has been very challenging and it was a good place to test skills that I've been trying to perfect every year in our domestic competition."