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16 SPORT

## Sheila amar rahe echoes in Delhi

Ex-Delhi CM cremated with full State honours; leaders across party lines pay tributes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid scores of political bigwigs, party workers and commoners, three-time Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, 81, who died on Saturday due to cardiac arrest was cremated on Sunday at Nigambodh Ghat near the Yamuna River with full State honours.

Union Home Minister and BJP president Amit Shah, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia, Power and Health Minister Satyendar Jain, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, her daughter and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi as well as other Congress veterans, colleagues, workers and admirers witnessed the last rites braving heavy rain and gusty winds.

A large number of people, including BJP stalwart Lal Krishna Advani and former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh paid homage to Dikshit at her Nizamuddin East residence before the body was taken to the Congress headquarters in the heart of Delhi. Dikshit's body was taken to the Congress headquarters where top party leaders, including Manmohan Singh, chief ministers Ashok Gehlot and Kamal Nath, paid their respects. Later, the body was taken to the Delhi Pradesh Congress



Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi pays her last respects to the mortal remains of former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit at the AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Sunday

Committee office, the city unit which she was heading at the time of her death.

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah too visited Dikshit's residence. From there, Dikshit's final journey to Nigambodh Ghat began in a van with her sister Rama Dhawan sat with the body. The truck carrying the casket moved slowly as the road was packed with supporters who chanted 'Jab tak suraj chand rahega Sheila ji ka naam

rahega' and Sheila amar rahe amid light rains. Many other The cremation was done using the CNG method that was installed at the ghat during her tenure as Delhi CM.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath and senior leaders Ahmed Patel and Raj Babbar were among others who joined the emotionally charged crowd.

Vinod Singh (56), a party worker who was standing outside DPCQ headquarters, try-

ing to get in to pay homage amid unprecedented gathering, claimed that he worked with Dikshit in Delhi Assembly elections. He said can never forget the love and warmth of the former CM. "The national Capital is renovated by her. Everything that you can see here, it is all became possible because of her extraordinary efforts during her 15 years as Delhi CM," he said.

"She was still working and trying to revive the party. She

has left us but will be remembered for her extraordinary works for the party and for people of Delhi. She was a dedicated leader till her last breath. She kept motivating party workers, a soft-spoken and a fighter," said Ashish Gupta, a DPCC post-bearer.

Earlier, paying homage to Dikshit, Sonia Gandhi said the CM was a friend and like an elder sister to her. Her demise was a big loss to the Congress party, she said.

As the longest serving woman CM who steered her party to victory for three consecutive terms in 1998, 2003 and 2008, Dikshit ushered in an era of all-round develop-

ment that transformed Delhi into a world class Capital. She also initiated green reforms in public transport sector successfully accomplishing the shift from polluting vehicles to a CNG based fleet.

Kejriwal, who handed Dikshit her first electoral defeat in decades, was among the first to underscore the importance of the CM's contribution.

After announcing that the Delhi Government would host a State funeral for her, he wrote, "Only last month I had met her for nearly an hour when she came with her party's delegation to submit a memorandum on several issues."

### LJP MP and Ram Vilas's brother dies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Janshakti Party MP from Bihar's Samastipur Ramchandra Paswan died on Sunday afternoon following a brief illness.

Ramchandra Paswan, 57, the younger brother of Union Minister and LJP chief Ram Vilas Paswan, passed away at 1.24 pm at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital here.

Detailed report on P5

### Former Delhi BJP chief Mange Ram Garg passes away

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Mange Ram Garg passed away at a city hospital on Sunday morning. The demise of Garg, 83, was mourned by senior party leaders, along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi who described him as a party man with deep connect with Delhi who selflessly served its people.

Detailed report on P3

## 2019 LS poll mystery not history: Didi

Says her Govt will ask SEC to hold civic polls with ballot papers

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Once again holding tampered electronic voting machines responsible of her party's electoral defeat at the hustings and indicating that she would eventually lead the "ballot-versus-EVM" battle till its logical in 2021 Assembly elections, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday gave a call to dump EVMs which her own Trinamool Congress Government would attempt at doing in next year's municipal polls to begin with.

Speaking at a mammoth TMC martyr's day rally, Mamata attacked the BJP for manipulating the EVMs saying the 2019 general elections was "not a history but a mystery" to her. "I have no hesitation to declare that the Lok Sabha election was not a history as is claimed by the BJP but mystery" thanks to the manipulated EVMs, Mamata said reminding how the advanced



West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee during a rally in Kolkata on Sunday

countries like "America, England, Germany and France gave returned to the old ballot boxes." She declared "our Government will write to the State Election Commission to hold the municipal and rural elections with ballot papers. We will start ballot paper once again giving a new direction to electoral politics."

The TMC was stunned by the BJP in the April-May general elections when the Bengal ruling party came down from a whopping tally of 34 seats in 2014 to 22 seats this time round conceding 18 out of 42 seats to the saffron outfit.

### CAPSULE

#### 4 TRIBALS BEATEN TO DEATH IN JHARKHAND

Ranchi: At least four elderly members of the tribal community, including a couple, were dragged out of their houses and beaten to death by an enraged mob on charges of practicing witchcraft in the interiors of Jharkhand's Gumla district, about 100 Kilometers west of capital Ranchi, in the wee hours of Sunday.

#### HDK GOVT FATE LIKELY TO BE DECIDED TODAY

Bengaluru: The fate of the fragile Congress-JD(S) Government in Karnataka is likely to be decided on the floor of the Assembly on Monday even as the rebel MLAs on Sunday bluntly refused to compromise on their stand and Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy made an appeal to them to attend the Assembly in an effort to save his 14-month old ministry.

#### 38 DIE IN RAIN-RELATED INCIDENTS ACROSS INDIA

New Delhi: Thirty-eight people were killed in rain-related incidents across the country on Sunday with heavy showers in Kerala, where a red alert was sounded in five districts, even as the floodwater receded in some parts of Assam.

## After ravaging Bihar & Assam, flood fear looms over Kerala

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After destroying thousands of acres of standing crops, affecting lakh of people, and killing around 150 people in Bihar and Assam, the flood fury is now eyeing Kerala.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted heavy rainfall in six districts of Kerala in the coming days. The Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) has issued a "Red Alert" for Kasargod, Idukki, Kannur, Wayanad, Kozhikode, and Malappuram.

A "Red Alert" denotes likelihood of very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall. Orange Alert means a warning to "be prepared to face any situation arising out of severe weather condition". Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea due to the rough weather.



As many as 38.66 lakh animals including 21.47 lakh poultry, 1.79 lakh hectare of crops, 48 lakh population and 3705 villages are affected in 27 districts in Assam flood. In Bihar, 69.76 lakh people in 12 of the 30 districts, 25 lakh animals have been hit by the calamity.

## Chandrayaan-2 launch likely today: ISRO

PTI ■ SRIHARIKOTA (AP)

India's second moon mission Chandrayaan-2 seeking to explore the uncharted Lunar south pole by landing a rover will be launched onboard its most powerful rocket GSLV-Mk0III-M1 from here on Monday, a week after the lift-off was aborted due to a technical snag.

The ₹978 crore mission, which has been rescheduled for Monday after scientists corrected the glitch in the rocket, will be launched at 2.43 pm from the second launchpad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre here, over 100 km from Chennai.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientists, who aborted the previous launch with 56 minutes left for the countdown to end on July 15, have taken quick remedial action based on an analysis carried out by a team set up to look into the snag and announced the rescheduled launch three days ago.

## MP Assembly creates history, holds session on Sunday

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh State Assembly created history by carrying out business in the house as usual on Sunday, the public holiday.

The functioning on Sunday continued till 10 pm, followed by marathon proceedings on Saturday which ran all the way till 11 pm on Saturday. In the past few days as well the House was functioning till 8 pm in the evening.

The proceedings in the House were carried for almost 12 hours on Saturday when the House met at 11 am and the business continued till 10.45 pm. As the Question Hour, Zero Hour, Call Attention Motion and other government businesses were carried out, the House even did not adjourn for the lunch break. However, the decision to carry out business on Saturday

**After the marathon proceedings on Saturday which ran all the way till 11 pm, the functioning of the House continued on Sunday till 10 pm**

and Sunday was taken by Business Advisory Committee of the Assembly after the House did not meet on July 15 and 16 due to Government holidays.

The Congress and BJP MLAs also exchanged some words over the credit for the House functioning on Sunday. Meanwhile as the House again met on Sunday morning, the Congress MLAs raised the

matter of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi's detention while she was on her way to meet victim families of Sombhadra killings.

Tribal Affairs Minister Omkar Singh Markam intervened objecting to the fact that Gandhi was not allowed to meet family of the victims.

The speaker suggested to take up issues of Zero Hour in MP Assembly on the lines of Parliament to take up issues of urgent important but the BJP MLAs led by Leader of Opposition objected to this leading to pandemonium and Assembly getting adjourned.

Former Assembly speaker Sitasaran Sharma also raised the issue of promotion in reservation during Zero Hour. BJP MLA Rameshwar Sharma also raised the issue of sand storage in city limits and demanded discontinuing this system.

## House clears ₹2.33 lakh Budget

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh assembly on Sunday passed the Budget of ₹2.33 lakh crore, in the absence of main opposition BJP in the House.

While discussions on the Budgetary demands of Energy department were going on, BJP leader Narottam Mishra all of a sudden raised the demand of obituary to senior Congress leader late Sheila Dikshit. Speaker NP Prajapati declined the request saying that once it was decided in the morning that the obituary would be paid on Monday, the issue cannot be raised now.

On this, the Opposition members created bedlam and the House was adjourned for five minutes. Later, when the House re-assembled, Chief Minister Kamal Nath said that in the business advisory committee meeting in the presence of

Continued on Page 4

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LAND DISPUTE

3 men run tractor over woman

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A tribal woman succumbed to her injuries after three men run over her as she refused to give her land in Singrauli district.

Police said, the three miscreants have been identified as Lalpati, Prabhakar and Bandhu Bais. The three reached the woman's house on Saturday to usurp her land. When met with objection, they rode a tractor and began ploughing the land forcefully. Following this, Kiran Kol, the deceased farmer, entered into a feud with the accused.

As the dispute escalated, the accused ran their tractor

**AS THE DISPUTE ESCALATED, THE ACCUSED RAN THEIR TRACTOR OVER WOMAN AND FLED THE SCENE, LEAVING HER CRITICALLY INJURED. VILLAGERS RUSHED HER TO A NEARBY HOSPITAL WHERE SHE SUCCUMBED TO HER INJURIES**

over her and fled the scene, leaving her critically injured. Villagers rushed her to a nearby hospital where she succumbed to her injuries.

The police have lodged a

case based on the complaint registered by the woman's family. All the accused have been booked for murder. case has been lodged against the three in connection with the woman's

death and an investigation is on," Additional Superintendent of Police, Singrauli Pradip Shende said. While two of the three accused have reportedly been arrested, the hunt is on for the third culprit.

Meanwhile, villagers claimed that over 8,000 cases of land disputes are pending with the revenue department in the district.

The incident comes at a time when the country stares at the Sonbhadra massacre in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, where ten people from the Gond tribal community were shot dead during a scuffle that broke out over the possession of a piece of land.

Skin Clinic owner held for raping Mumbai-based model

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

MP Nagar police have booked owner of a Skin Clinic involved in sexually assaulting a 24-year-old Mumbai based model in the name of facilitating role in movies; Mumbai police registered case of zero FIR and transferred case to MP Nagar police.

Police said that accused Ahineet Sarvesh Gupta runs Poison Anti-Ageing Pvt Ltd and assured the victim girl that he could facilitate roles in big movies as he is acquainted with big shots of film industry.

The victim in her complaint stated that she met the accused at a party in Mumbai

**Police said that accused Ahineet Sarvesh Gupta runs Poison Anti-Ageing Pvt Ltd and assured the victim girl that he could facilitate roles in big movies**

where the accused introduced himself as a close friend of movie directors and makers. The victim was later contacted through social media and developed relationship with her. The accused offered to marry her and assured that he would help in getting good movies with big banners and sexually assaulted and exploited her but later when the victim came to know

about the reality she lodged complaint with Mumbai police in the month of June this year.

Mumbai police registered a zero FIR case and transferred the case to MP Nagar police. After the preliminary investigation the police found registered a case of sexual assault on Saturday and started investigation. Police said that the accused would be nabbed as he went absconding after the case was registered.

During the investigation the police found that the accused asked the victim to visit Bhopal and was sexually assaulted at Amar Vilas hotel due to which the case has been registered with MP Nagar police.

Case filed against anonymous for stealing jewellery worth ₹60K

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Talैया police have registered a case against unidentified miscreants who stole gold bangles worth ₹60,000 of a lady doctor from a purse from a Sultania Government hospital.

According to Talैया police, the victim Dr Abha Jindal, posted as senior doctor in Sultania found that her gold bangles from purse were found missing.

After she failed to find the gold bangles she approached Talैया police and lodged complaint stating that the incident took place on Saturday morning when she went to hospital and kept her bag in doctors room. Later she went into operation theatre for operation and kept gold bangles in her purse and forget to close it. After completing the operation when she asked a nurse to bring her bag from the doctors room when she checked the bag gold bangles were found missing from it. She enquired about her missing gold bangles but no one was able to provide detail.

Based on the complaint after the preliminary investigation police have registered a theft against unidentified person. In the further investigation nursing staff and other staff who were on duty would be quizzed.

Meanwhile, Talैया police have booked a youth for threatening and extorting ₹100000 of a 16-year-old girl in the name of making photographs public.

The victim became friend with Atif over Instagram and later Atif extorted ₹100000 in two parts.

The youth again pressurized victim to extort ₹10000 but this time the victim braved to inform the family. A complaint was lodged and police have registered a case against the accused.

Two vehicle-lifters arrested, 2-wheelers worth ₹2.64L seized

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Gautam Nagar police have nabbed two vehicle-lifters from Nariyalkheda and recovered five worth ₹2.64 lakh from his possession on Saturday.

According to the police, acting on a tip off two youths were detained and when they were asked details regarding the vehicle they failed to provide details and documents and confessed that the two-wheeler was stolen one.

The nabbed accused were identified as Akbar Khan (22) and Nadeem Ali (26). In the initial investigation police have recovered one scooter bearing registration number MP04SM4470. Later other vehicles were recovered from their possession which were stolen from different areas of the state capital. The accused was trying to sell the vehicle but was not able to find and convince customer to purchase vehicle and before he could sell the vehicle he was nabbed by

the police.

Police have recovered four scooters and one motorbike worth ₹2.64 lakh from their possession. The friends and family members would be questioned in the investigation which could help in obtaining more details of earlier crimes and involvement in other crimes.

Police said that the parking spaces were used to park the stolen bike and which were to be sold later. During the investigation police have not found any criminal record of the miscreant and told that search for the crime record would be done in the further investigation.

Police said that the four vehicles were stolen from Talैया, Hanumanganj, Koh-e-Fiza and Kotwali. The details of recovered vehicles would be provided to the respect police stations. The police have started search for other accomplices who have helped the accused in stealing and disposing the vehicles.

Not elected as MP to clean toilets, drains, says Pragya Singh of BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

At a time when leaders in the Narendra Modi Government are doing everything possible to make 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' a success, BJP MP from Bhopal Pragya Singh Thakur has made a statement that could court controversy.

Thakur's statement came barely a week after actor-turned-politician Hema Malini, along with Minister of State For Finance Anurag Thakur, took part in a cleanliness drive within Parliament premises.

While interacting with BJP workers at Sehore district headquarters on Sunday, she said that she has not been elected as Member of Parliament to clean toilets and drains.

Within minutes, the video of Pragya Thakur went viral on the social media.

Notably, the sanitation campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and each and every member of the party have been shouldered responsibility to participate in the sani-



tion campaign.

Thinking otherwise when all NDA ministers are spreading awareness about India's largest cleanliness campaign, Thakur said, "We were not elected to get your drains cleaned. We were not made to get your toilets cleaned. We will do all the work for which we have been elected."

She further said, "With honesty I will do the duty that I have been entrusted with." Her comment was applauded by other local leaders present at the meeting.

Her comment came in response to a grievance raised by a BJP worker here over the issues faced by people due to lack of cleanliness and hygiene in the area.

Pragya Thakur, who successfully contested the Lok Sabha elections against senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh from Bhopal constituency, has been in news several times in the recent past for making controversial statements, including that on former Maharashtra ATS Chief Hemant Karkare.

Youth drowned at Lower Lake while fishing

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 20-year-old youth drowned at Lower Lake when he had gone for fishing on Saturday; body was found in the morning on Sunday at Patra Pul in the investigation by Jehangirabad police.

The youth had gone for fishing along with his friend. The two went inside water in which one swept in the heavy water current after he slipped. Jehangirabad police have started investigation.

The deceased, identified as Mohan Batham of Talैया had gone for fishing along with his friend Usman. Two entered in water while Mohan went at the area which was with heavy water current and slipped and drowned, Usman informed the family members who informed the police and later a missing complaint was lodged with the police.

The deceased was searched by the divers and failed to find him later his body surfaced on Sunday. After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and have started further investigation.

Meanwhile, a 4-year-old boy got electrocuted at Ratibad on Saturday; he got electrocuted while he tried to switch on the TV. Police said that the boy identified as Krishna tried to switch on the TV. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead.

The body was sent for the post-mortem. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC. In the investigation it was found that due to rains the walls were wet and which resulted in the incident.



Teachers under the banner of Azad Adhyapak Shikshak Sangh demonstrate demanding seventh pay commission salary in Bhopal on Sunday

Officer attacked on way to carry out raid at illegal sand mining site

Bhopal: A Naib Tehsildar was attacked allegedly by associates of a mafia in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh on Friday night while he was on his way to carry out a raid at an illegal sand mining site. The official, Atul Srivastava, was injured after his private vehicle was stopped and he was attacked by a group of men.

"We got information about illegal mining in Manwada village. We formed a team including Tehsildar, Nayab Tehsildar, police officers and myself to raid the site. The Nayab Tehsildar was in a private vehicle. We were approaching the site from different directions. Meanwhile, some people attacked him," Sub Divisional

Magistrate RS Baghel said. The attackers, however, said that they attacked him on suspicion of child-lifting, a claim rejected by the officials.

Baghel said, "Though they claim they attacked him on suspicions of child-lifting, I believe that the attack was perpetrated by them in a bid to stop the officers from visiting the illegal mining site. This is could be their conspiracy."

Fifteen people were detained while efforts are on to nab 10 others involved in the case. Officials also seized 15 tractors and trolleys, two JCB machines along with other tools used in illegal mining. SR

Sharma plants sapling at Durga Mandir

Bhopal: Minister for Public Relations PC Sharma planted a sapling in Durga Mandir premises of Bagmugali Extension Colony today. He said that every citizen must plant saplings in his/her house/colony for environment conservation and take responsibility for their nurturing till they become trees. He urged people to do maximum plantation in order to make Bhopal green.

Local youth, women, children and public representatives took part with enthusiasm in the programme. Sharma garlanded idol of Bhagwan Buddha at Buddha Vihar of Panchsheel Nagar. He also inspected construction works and sanitation arrangements in the colony. SR

CM: Late Sheila Dikshit was synonymous with development of Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Kamal Nath paid tribute by laying wreath on the mortal remains of the Senior Leader of Congress and former Chief Minister of Delhi Sheila Dikshit in New Delhi today.

Nath said that Late Sheila Dikshit was synonymous of development of Delhi.

The Chief Minister reached Delhi from Bhopal in the morning on Sunday and paid tribute to Late Sheila Dikshit at Congress headquarters.

He met Sandeep Dikshit, son of Late Sheila Dikshit along with other family

members and offered condolences.

Nath said that as the Chief Minister of Delhi for continuous 15 years, Late Sheila Dikshit made Delhi, a model of inclusive development.

Residents of Delhi will never forget remarkable works of Smt. Sheila Dikshit, who laid a network of metro, flyovers, roads, CNG buses and developed infrastructure besides many other works.

Nath further mentioned that Dikshit was simple and affable personality. She had a talent to work in unison. Her death has caused an irreparable loss.

Clash over land dispute leaves 13 hurt

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

At least, 13 people were injured in clashes between two groups, which took place over a land dispute in Rajgarh on Sunday.

Investigating officer ASI ND Mishra said, "We were informed that clashes broke out between two groups here over a land dispute. At least, 13 people were injured in the incident."

"The injured, who were attacked with guns and other weapons, have been shifted to

the hospital for treatment. Out of the 13 injured, two are in a serious condition," he added. Keshav Dhangar, one of the victims, claimed that the land belonged to them.

"This land has been with us for decades. A group of 30-40 people came to the land where we were working and attacked us with guns," he said.

"Women and children were also attacked," he added. Further investigations into the matter are underway.

2 thrashed for stealing, police intervene to stop

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A group of people were witnessed thrashing two persons accused of stealing bikes from Housing Board Colony area. They were later handed over to the police.

In the video, a crowd of locals is seen beating the two persons outside a police check-post. A policeman was seen intervening in a bid to stop the crowd from beating them. Police said the locals had caught the two accused while stealing bikes and then dragged them to the police check-post. Police have registered a case in this regard. Further investigation is underway.

Investiture ceremony held at St. Joseph's Convent School

Bhopal: The investiture ceremony held at St. Joseph's Convent School.

To inculcate the leadership qualities in students and to give them a feel of functioning of the administrative body, a school cabinet was formed. Bhopal Collector Tarun Pithode was present as the chief guest on the occasion.

Father Ajesh was present as the guest of honour. Both the guests were welcomed with presenting saplings.

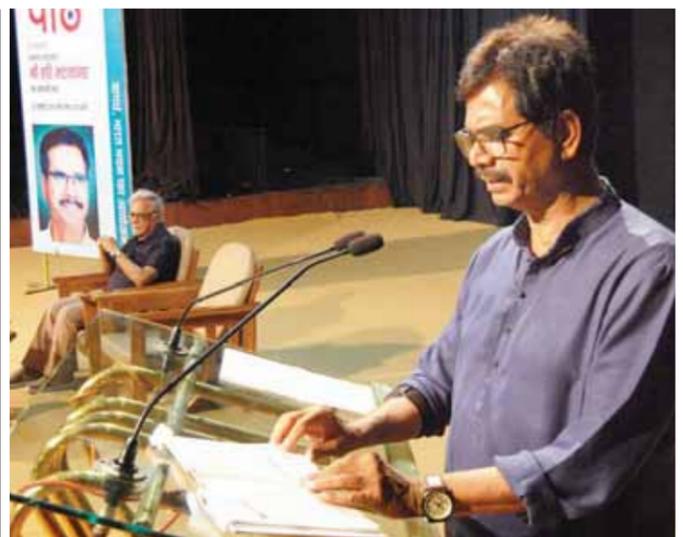
The newly elected cabinet members of the school were vested with their sashes and badges of honour. Each leader stood tall and proud prepared to shoulder the responsibilities with vigour, zest and new found passion.

The programme began with the lighting of the lamp as the choir sang a popular hymn

relevant to this day followed by a prayer, hymn You are my Lord. Later, the students presented a traditional dance on Aye Malik Teri Duniya Me Humko Tera Hi Aasra.

The leaders were solemnized by the oath where they promised to uphold and follow the principles of the school. The chief guest addressed the zealous trailblazers about the important qualities of a virtuous leader and the significance of being a pioneering pathfinder.

Chief Guest Bhopal Collector Tarun Pithode said that everyone should dream 24 hours, but should make their dreams come true. Everybody is unique its just one has to find out his or her uniqueness. He advised the parents to let their children dream and help their child reach out to that dream.



Noted storyteller Hari Bhatnagar narrates his stories in a session at Bharat Bhawan in Bhopal on Sunday

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# Gandhi's life enthrals art aficionados

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The art aficionados were enthralled to have a close look at the lifestyle of Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba Gandhi which was spectacularly showcased by the little artists of the city to mark the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.

A four long painting exhibition was put up Swaraj Bhawan that concluded on Sunday. As many as 14 displays of Rangoli were displayed before the art fanatics of the city leaving them awestruck. The artists enthralled the spectators with their creative skills.

Interestingly, the artists beautifully described their perceptions about Mahatma Gandhi with the use of vibrant colours on rangoli.

The colours spread over the floor by the young artists explained connection between the art and the perceptions of the artists. Not only this, the spectators had a close look at the various events from his life. The expressions of the artists were different but they shared the same intuition behind their art works. This feature made the spectators at the gallery spell-



Visitors going through Rangoli art paintings at an exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi during his 150th birth anniversary celebrations organised by South Central Zone, Cultural Centre, Union Ministry of Culture, at Swaraj Bhawan, in Bhopal on Sunday  
Pioneer photo

bound as they watched the blend of perception of the creations enabled the viewers to touch most profound depths of the concept the little painters worked upon. The purity of style, uniqueness of imagination with brilliant technique made the creations more enchanting.

# Man arrested for duping 71-year-old man of ₹5L

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Piplani police have booked a miscreant for duping a 71-year-old man of ₹5 lakh at Chatrasal Nagar in connection with a work at BMC of massive amount; police have registered case after complaint was lodged by the victim.

Police said that the victim Ravi Pratap Singh was approached by the accused identified as Mahendra Mishra in the month of August last year and asked to provided ₹5 lakh for work and which he would return in the month of January but later he refused to return and threatened her.

The victim Ravi in his complaint stated that Mahendra offered him a tender

**Police said that the victim Ravi Pratap Singh was approached by the accused identified as Mahendra Mishra in the month of August last year and asked to provided ₹5 lakh for work and which he would return in the month of January but later he refused to return and threatened her**

which he could facilitated but would require ₹5 lakh as he had to make arrangements and would sign agreement for the return of the money.

After the victim got assured he provided ₹5 lakh in parts to the accused after entering an agreement with the accused signed an agreement and provided a cheque of ₹5 lakh of Central of Bank.

Initially the accused maintained that he would pay the money in the month of January but later he tried to contact the accused he failed to get refund and started to threatened him. The police have registered a case under section 406 of the IPC and have started further investigation.

The accused told the victim that he is a contractor and works with BMC and has been awarded big contracts. The victim lodged complaint with senior officials and later police registered case.

# Discussion session organised at Swami Vivekananda Library

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A book giving rules about 'Love The Forty Rules of Love' was discussed on Sunday at Swami Vivekananda Library.

The discussion session was organised Swami Vivekananda Library in collaboration of Club Literati. Reading and Discussion of Forty Rules of Love was organized.

The famous novel 'Forty Rules of Love' was discussed by member and reader Elif Shafak.

It is a fiction novel that how Jalal-Eidin-Rumi became a mystic poet, under the influence of his master Shams Tabrez.

Discussion was conducted by Club Literati's Seema

Raizada.

After this, Vineeta Bhatnagar gave an introduction to the author and gave information about the book. In the end, the discussion was opened and one by one, all the members read some excerpts from the book and then went on progressing after discussing it.

The mega collection of Hindi was also launched on Sunday in the library. A lot of titles have been translated from English to Hindi in this collection. The book was displayed on Sunday morning at 11 am and the library's co-manager Yatish Bhatel said that the books displayed were very good response and about 50% of books were reserved by the members.

# Classical performances held at Tribal Museum

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under Uttaradhar series classical performances were held at Madhya Pradesh State Tribal Museum. Nimadi Gayan and Odissi dance were performed on Sunday.

The programme started with Sandeep Pare (Bhopal) with his fellow artists 'Nimadi singing'. In which he first presented 'Ganaraj Ganaraya Karoon Thari Seva' and made the spectators present in the auditorium mesmerized with his singing skills.

After this, the artists performed the 'sacche mann sang', Ganga Jamuna Jal Baras Maaya Ko Daloi Rahyo 'and' Chalo So Sakhhi Bagh, Golang Ki Kari Hai 'Bandhas in front of the audience. After this, the artists presented songs like 'Bansi Ka Samvara Mera Jahan Das Ji' and 'Ghaz Ni Tha' with their artistic singing skills.

Sandeep Pare wrapped up



Artists present Odissi dance during a series of cultural programme 'Uttaradhar' at Tribal Museum in Bhopal on Sunday  
Pioneer photo

his performances with 'Rimjhim-Rimjhim Mahulo Baras Sawan' with his fellow

artists.

Sandeep Pare was accompanied by Rashmi Upadhyay, Trupti Bilore, Swati Saraf and Ashiyar Pare, along with Virender Kore on the flute, Sanjay Sharma on the harmonium, on dholak and the Bhagwan Shandilya on the tabla. Sandeep Pare has been active in the field of singing for a long time. Sandeep Pare has given many performances of Nimadi singing on various art forums in the country.

After singing Nimadi, Shriradha Paul (Indore) presented 'Odissi dance' with his fellow artists. The beginning of the dance, the artists presented 'Ishvasam' concentrated Odissi dance in Raga Maalika. Ishvasyam has actually been transformed from the Isha Visayasopanishad.

In this presentation, artists told their thearistic skills that the person should sacrifice the transient worldly wealth and happiness. Man

should do his karma with complete positivity and duty. Following dance presentation on Ishvasam, the artists presented 'Shankarvaram Pallavi' centered dance in Raga Shankarvaram.

In this presentation, the artists presented themselves with their artistic dancing skills in front of the audiences present in the auditorium, coming out of the inner goodness of man and creativity. Shriradha Paul, along with the ensuing cast, paused his Odissi dance presentation while presenting dance on 'Mahakali Stuti' in Tal Malika.

In this presentation the artists presented the fiery form of Goddess Mahakali to the audience through dance medium. In this presentation, artists cast dances in front of the audience in the form of creation, nurturing and ending or destroying Goddess Mahakali.



Buddhist Monks offer prayers at the beginning of three-month 'Varshavas' or Buddhist Lent at Karuna Buddha Vihar in Bhopal on Sunday  
Pioneer photo

# 'Interpersonal skills, ability to iron out differences qualities of Dikshit'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Interpersonal skills and the ability to iron out differences through talks were Sheila Dikshit's strongest qualities and also key to her long stint as Chief Minister, Delhi Congress leaders said.

Dikshit, one of Congress's tallest leaders and a three-time Delhi chief minister, passed away on Saturday and her mortal remains were consigned to flames on Sunday, with colleagues, party workers and admirers braving heavy rains and gusty winds to bid her final farewell.

Known as a warm and affable politician, Dikshit could get along well with politicians from all parties for which she drew widespread respect.

Haroon Yusuf, who was a Minister in Dikshit's Cabinet from 2001 to 2013 and handled portfolios like transport and

**Known as a warm and affable politician, Dikshit could get along well with politicians from all parties for which she drew widespread respect**

food and civil supplies, said she loved to serve food and would often invite her Cabinet colleagues for breakfast when many issues would be resolved.

"Delhi has its own limitations and she was aware of it. She never adopted the approach of confrontation. Instead she believed in persuasion that helped her get work done whenever it was stuck with the Centre or with the bureaucracy," Yusuf, who is the acting president of the Delhi Congress, said.

Dikshit was the president of the Delhi Congress and the

up the next morning if the two had difference of views on a certain subject.

"Either she would call me to her residence or office or she would come down to meet me and sort out the difference, whatever it may be. She had the ability to forget things...She had a big heart," Agarwal said. "She never brought the situation to a level where striking a dialogue with anyone was not possible," he said. This quality helped her be Delhi chief minister for 15 years. Even bureaucrats were happy with her way of working, Agarwal said.

Haroon Yusuf recalled former Delhi chief minister Sheila Dikshit as someone who loved to host people for breakfast, and advised him the same when an officer posted under his department was "difficult" to deal with.

Yusuf, who was a minister in Dikshit's Cabinet from

2001-13 and handled portfolios like civil and food supplies and transport, went to her with a concern over the officer who was known for not performing.

"I went to Dikshit with a request to give me another officer. She (Dikshit) said nothing can be done as she had already spoken to the Lieutenant Governor, who had denied the request," Yusuf said.

The former Delhi chief minister said there was no option but to get the work done through the concerned officer. "She told me to invite the officer for breakfast the next day," Yusuf said.

The trick worked, the Congress leader recollected and he along with the officer could execute different projects.

Yusuf said Dikshit herself hosted people, including her Cabinet colleagues, for breakfast. "She loved to serve the breakfast herself," he recalled.

# With demise of Sheila, Cong lost tallest leader

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

It was in 1998 when Sheila Dikshit was asked by the Congress President Sonia Gandhi to take the reins of a highly divided Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC). She accepted the challenge and took on the then formidable city unit of the BJP and ensured victory for her party. Congress was brought back to power and therein started her dream run as the Chief Minister of Delhi. Credited with transforming the landscape of the national Capital, she ushered in an era of good governance with public participation.

Before being pitch forked into the conundrum of Delhi politics, she had served as Minister of State in Prime Minister's office during Rajiv Gandhi regime. When she took over the charge of Delhi Congress from veteran Dalit leader Chaudhary Prem Singh, she was billed as a rank outsider. She proved her detractors wrong and defeated the combined might of BJP with leaders like former chief

ministers Madan Lal Khurana, Sahib Singh Verma, Sushma Swaraj, former Chief Executive Councillor Prof VK Malhotra, Prof OP Kohli and Jagdish Mukhi. It was a momentous victory for Congress led by Sheila Dikshit despite leaders like Sajjan Kumar, Jagdish Tytler and Subhash Chopra, owing allegiance to HKL Bhagat trying to destabilize her.

During her tenure as Chief Minister, Delhi Congress unit saw many chiefs but the DPCC had become synonymous to Dikshit as he had a major say in organisational matters. Since 2013, the Congress, once in a pole position, was relegated to the third position in every major election that it contested in Delhi. Congress was effectively finished in 2013 with the emergence of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). She bowed out of the Delhi political scene after her uninterrupted rule from 1998-2013 came to an end as she lost her Gole Market Assembly constituency to Arvind Kejriwal and Congress being pushed to third spot with just eight



Irrespressible Sheila Dikshit after filing her last nomination papers for the Northeast Delhi Lok Sabha seat in the 2019 general election  
Ranjana Dimri | Pioneer

Assembly seats. Arvind Kejriwal led AAP

won a landslide in 2015 Delhi Assembly elections and Congress was vanquished from the national capital territory. For first time since 1993, the grand old party had failed to win even a single seat in Delhi Assembly elections.

Dikshit was away from the fight in 2015 and the reins of Delhi Congress were with her former minister Arvinder Singh Lovely. After Congress failed to register its presence during municipal polls under the stewardship of former Union Minister Ajay Maken, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) once again turned to Sheila Dikshit to revive the fortunes of the party.

She was brought back again to head the DPCC in 2018 with the specific mandate to revive the party. She fought a spirited election and brought back Congress to 2nd position in five out of seven Lok Sabha seats in the city.

Despite Congress putting up an improved show in the Lok Sabha elections, her detractors in the party were after her. She had to contend with the Delhi affairs in-

charge PC Chacko who did not like her decision to dissolve block and district level committees. While she was battling for life at Fortis Escorts hospital, Chacko issued a tersely worded order to criticise her 'unilateral action' and revived all the block and district level Congress committees that were dissolved by Dikshit. She did not live to fight her last political battle and breathed her last on Saturday at 3.55 pm.

With her passing away, Delhi Congress has lost its tallest leader. On Sunday Sheila Dikshit's body was taken to the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee's office for the last time, the place that was central to her politics since 1998.

Emotional party workers bid her final adieu and everybody present there had tears rolling down their cheeks. Many waxed eloquent about her affable nature and easy-going nature. With Sheila Dikshit (81), gone to her heavenly abode, the politics of Delhi Congress would never be the same again.

# Was always cordial despite political rivalry, says Gupta

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit never held grudges against her political rivals, BJP leader Vijender Gupta said, recalling his experience with the Congress veteran.

Gupta, who is the leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, said that during his stint as the Delhi BJP president, he had filed a complaint with the Lokayukta against her Government.

Despite this, during his interaction with Dikshit, she never spoke about it and was

always cordial, he told PTI. She had also filed a defamation suit against him in 2012 over certain remarks he had made against her during the MCD polls.

A year later, the two also unsuccessfully contested the Assembly election from the New Delhi seat.

"Later, during an event she met me and said let's settle the issue. The case had reached an advanced stage at that time," Gupta said.

"This reflected her personality of not keeping anything in her heart for too long," he said.

**Despite this, during his interaction with Dikshit, she never spoke about it and was always cordial, he told PTI. She had also filed a defamation suit against him in 2012 over certain remarks he had made against her during the MCD polls**

# Haryana Govt schemes to make youth employable

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Government has started various initiatives to make the youth of the state efficient and employable through the Saksham Haryana scheme, which will prove to be a milestone in the coming time, said an official spokesman.

In this series, a state-wide system is being developed for changes in the youth, which will make the youth of Haryana to get employment by preparing them for the needs of the industries at the earliest, he said.

The spokesman said that achieving the mission of Kaushal Bharat (Skill India), which is to train a minimum of 30 crore people across the country by 2022, is an uphill task across States. The Haryana Skill Development and Industrial Training (SDIT) Department is attempting to solve the skilling challenge through a systemic, state-wide transformation programme, Saksham Haryana. A flagship programme of the Haryana Government, Saksham Haryana aims to ensure career advancement of students, who enter Industrial

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT ACHIEVING THE MISSION OF KAUSHAL BHARAT (SKILL INDIA), WHICH IS TO TRAIN A MINIMUM OF 30 CRORE PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY BY 2022, IS AN UPHILL TASK ACROSS STATES

Training Institutes (ITIs) and who take up short-term training. This involves the transformation of two key components of skilling, which included ITIs and short-term schemes. It also includes the tying together all efforts in this domain under one umbrella for a coordinated effort. Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) and Samagra, a governance consulting firm, are helping the Department in this endeavor, he said.

Over the last four years, Haryana has been at the forefront of solving a lot of skilling issues on the supply and demand side. Beginning with the Shri Vishwakarma Skill University (SVSU), the India's first government skills university, the Department anchored the skilling ecosystem in a strong institutional and academic framework. More than 10 top industries

such as Bikanervala, HDFC and Concentrix participated in this transformation across 15 courses, the spokesman said.

In the past few months, the Department has also made efforts in addressing the quality of training in ITIs. The Department has begun procuring more than Rs150 crore worth of equipment and machinery for every ITI. As a long-term solution, the Department has initiated recruitment of more than 2,500 permanent staff. By creating a central assessment cell and placement cell, the Department has streamlined work on the quality evaluation of a student's skills and their linkage to livelihood, he said.

The spokesman further said that the Department has signed over 70 MoUs with various leading industries to support it in piloting DST this academic year. The objective is to make this model scalable and sustainable for a state-wide rollout. DST courses will be structured in a way to ensure students benefit from training with relevant equipment in an industry setting.

# PSPCL organises digital awareness camps in Patiala

PNS ■ PATIALA

To educate its offline consumers about the use of digital modes and its benefits, the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) has organised digital awareness camps at three prime locations in Patiala city.

Properly trained and expert teams visited different PSPCL cash counters located near Bus Stand, Model Town and Mahindra College in Patiala city, informed PSPCL chairman-cum-managing director Baldev Singh Srana on Sunday.

Srana said that the teams interacted with large number of consumers, who were standing in queues at the cash counters or visited PSPCL cash counters to deposit their electricity bills, and guided and motivated them about availability of various digital platforms.

Teams motivated the consumers to pay their bills digitally, and save their precious

time, energy and contribute saved time for the progress of the society, he said.

Srana added that it was a matter of pride for the entire State as Punjab is on the top position under digital transactions category in the entire nation since November 2018. PSPCL is collecting more than 659 percent amount digitally, said Srana while appealing to the entire citizens of the State to use cost free digital modes for bill payments.

"With the able leadership and continued support of the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, PSPCL would definitely keep on serving the society with more passion and energy in future too and PSPCL will come out with further new



products of bill payments like UPI, Bharat QR etc," assured Srana.

Srana said that for the convenience and awareness of farmers, PSPCL has organised various camps in different villages or areas of Punjab for AP (agriculture pumpsets) load regularization in recent past.

He said that 2251 AP consumers were upgraded with a load of 6,984 BHP in all operations zones in the State. PSPCL has recovered Rs 345.76 lakhs on account of service connection charges for extension of load from the consumers, he said.

# 'Youths must come forward for water conservation'

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

Expressing concern over the water crisis across the globe and rationing of water, the Union Minister for Human Resource Development and Haridwar MP, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said that the youths must come forward and become involved in the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan for water conservation. He also said that the rich heritage of India has enabled the world to become happy and disease free and very soon India would be a Vishwa Guru. He was speaking at Gyan Diksha programme of the Prime Minister's Education Initiative on Sunday afternoon.

Addressing the students in Maha Ritujyoti Auditorium of Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, the Union HRD minister motivated the students to come forward in every possible way and adopt measures to work for water conservation in the country, stressing that it was the need of the hour.



Bollywood actor Ashutosh Rana addresses a programme 'Towards Excellence' organised by Makhnalar Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Mass Communication at the beginning of new academic session of the University, at Ravindra Bhawan in Bhopal on Sunday

# EX Dhanbad MP Roy passes away

**Bokaro:** Former Dhanbad MP Arun Kumar Roy passed away at the age of 84 on Sunday morning. Roy has been ill since a long time and was admitted in coronary care unit at BCCIL Central Hospital at Dhanbad where he breathed his last. Roy was born on June 15, 1935. His last rites will be performed on Monday with State honour.

Condoling the death of AK Roy, Chief Minister Raghuraj said that it is an irreparable loss to Jharkhand. He instructed that Roy's funeral received State honours.

Other dignitaries including Mayor Shekhar Agarwal, MLA Raj Sinha, Jagnath Mahato, Arup Chatterjee former minister Jaleswar Mahato, Mathura Mahato and other party leaders rushed at the hospital to pay homage to Roy on hearing the news of his death. **PNS**

# Facebook post helps woman identify thieves

**Jamshedpur:** A 30-year-old woman, Rekha Verma, was arrested on Sunday along with her husband Sushil Verma for stealing jewellery from her former land-lady in Gambaria in adjoining Seraikela-Kharsawan district on June 5.

The police also recovered the jewellery worth over Rs 2.5 lakh from the house of Rekha at Satbahni area under Adityapur thana area.

Interestingly, a picture of Rekha Verma on Facebook, wearing some of the stolen jewellery noticed on July 16, had led the victim, Arti Devi to lodge an FIR with the Gambaria police station leading the police to arrest the accused on Sunday.

Revealing about the breakthrough, Seraikela sub-divisional police officer (SDPO), Avinash Kumar said that Arti Devi (45) had planned a religious function at her home in Balrampur in Gambaria on June 6.

# Campion School marks 'Feast Day'

**Bhopal:** Investiture Ceremony of Campion School Bhopal for Primary & Secondary section for the academic session 2019-20 were held and 'Feast day' was celebrated on Saturday in a very special way at the Campion School Arera Colony.

The event was presided over by the Chief Guest and Principal Fr Athnas Lakra SJ. It conducted with the high degree of sincerity and enthusiasm. The ceremony began with the Prayer song service 'What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grieves to bare What a privilege to carry, everything to god in prayer' and Itni

Shakti hame dena data",....." followed by Lighting of the lamp by Chief Guest Tanmay Verma Deputy Collector and Ex-Campioneite of 2008 Batch, Principal Fr Athnas Lakra SJ, Manager Fr Christdhari Kujur SJ, Vice

Principal Fr Amrit Lal Toppo SJ, Bursar Blacius Kullu, Senior Teacher Mahendra Kothari Sir, Sister Mary along with Secondary staff secretary Shabista.

On this occasion, Deepak Verma DIG Sagar, father of the chief guest Tanmay Verma was also present. Secondary & Primary Cabinet March Past command given by Johnsy Koshy and Imran to the newly cabinet members.

The badges were bestowed by the Chief Guest, Principal, Vice Principal, Superior Father and Treasurer to all the selected Newly 444 Council or Cabinet members and others.

All the selected students took this Oath under the guidance of Commanding Officer Johnsy Koshy. School Cultural committee was also the part of this auspicious occasion. **SR**

# 1 killed, 2 injured due to pothole till May in Doon

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

This year three road accident cases in which potholes were the main cause have been registered in the state till the month of May in which one person was killed and two were injured. According to the information provided by the State Transport Authority (STA), in the year 2018, 15 such cases were registered in which 56 people lost their lives and 24 were injured.

In the year 2018, the total accidents reported were 1468, in which 1047 people died and 1571 were reportedly injured, out of which 15 road accidents happened due to potholes on roads. This year till the month of May, 571 road accidents have been reported in which 364 people lost their lives and 528 were injured. Out of these mishaps, at least three cases are those in which potholes were the primary cause of accidents.

When asked about this problem, Deputy Inspector General (traffic) Keval Khurana said, "We have given clear directions to all districts to make the department concerned accused also in such road accident cases. Letters to highlight the necessity of road conditions in order to reduce the number of road accidents have also been sent to the departments concerned."

According to a commuter who works at City Heart Centre on Cross Road said, "I live at Yamuna Colony and take the road from here to Clock Tower and Buddha Chowk. The road after Buddha Chowk is fine but before that, the route is filled with potholes. During monsoon it is impossible to see where the potholes are because of water logging situation and poor condition of street lights. I have stopped going from

**In the year 2018, the total accidents reported were 1468, in which 1047 people died and 1571 were reportedly injured, out of which 15 road accidents happened due to potholes on roads**

there after dark or in water logged situations." Another commuter from Miyanwala said, "From Mokhampur Flyover to Miyanwala Chowk the road is filled with potholes. The departmental workers come and fill it sometimes, but one rain washes away the material they fill in those potholes leaving behind a bigger one. Haridwar Road is one of the busiest and important roads in Dehradun, but its condition has remained pathetic. During monsoon accidents happen frequently but no one reports them."

According to a senior official at STA, the departments concerned such as Municipal Corporation of Dehradun, Public Work Department (PWD) and National Highway have been issued letters number of times, but their pace of work is slow.

While features like potholes on the roads are meant to be repaired before the onset of the monsoon, this has not been done on various city roads in the provisional state capital. Due to this, people continue to face risk and inconvenience while commuting on the city roads.

# Rain deficit makes vegetables dearer

NISHU CHHETRY ■ RANCHI

Vegetable prices which have remained on the lower side till this summer in the State capital have doubled in the past 10 days, said vegetable vendors on Sunday. Rain deficit in the State this time has led to the steep hike in vegetable prices, they added.

Tomato and potato, sold at throwaway prices till a few weeks ago in the market, have seen a sharp spike in prices. Tomato is now fast going out of the reach of common man as its price in the retail market has shot up from Rs 20-30 per kg to Rs 60-65 per kg.

Meanwhile, the cost of potato is also on the rise. The wholesale rate for potato has doubled from Rs 15-18 to Rs 30 a kg. Besides, there is spurt in the price of capsicum from Rs 10 per kg to Rs 30 per kg and ladyfingers from Rs 10 kg to Rs 25 per kg.

Vegetable seller, Soma Devi is of the opinion that so far the heavy

rainfall has disrupted the supply of the vegetables but this time the late arrival of monsoon has hit the production.

Though prices usually increase every year during monsoon which is common for the city folks but this time rain deficit has hit the consumer's budget miserably. It seems that the customers at this point will have no more respite from high prices till widespread monsoon rainfall resumes across major producing regions of Ranchi.

"Monsoon season seems to be a curse this time, as it has desolately hit my business. very few customers visit my shop. I feel helpless after looking at my crises situation at this period of time," said Kunti Kumari, a vegetable vendor at CMPDI vegetable market.

Jharkhand this year has witnessed rain deficit of at least 40 per cent. As many as 10 of 24 districts in the State have not even started sowing of crop. Although the Directorate of Agriculture says that it is too early



to predict if the State is staring at drought like situation, farmers are crying hoarse over the apathy of the rain gods.

Sakhua Oraon, a farmer in Pithoria block of Ranchi, said that the rain deficit has affected paddy sowing in his region.

"Many farmers are now relying on cultivation of cereals as scanty rainfall has left them with no other option," said Oraon.

# Ranchi doc performs 246 surgeries under Ayushman Bharat

SHRUTI NANJAN ■ RANCHI

While the State Government is consistently seeking the support of doctors and hospitals in making the ambitious Ayushman Bharat Yojana a success in Jharkhand, a cardiac surgeon in Ranchi has gone out of his way to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of providing accessibility of expensive medical facilities to the poor.

Meet 54-year-old Dr Kunal Hazari, MS, MCh, who has successfully completed as many as 246 open heart surgeries in less than a year under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

Hazari, the Vice Chairman of Medica Superspecialty Hospital near Booty More, believes that every doctor

should be accountable for the health of people living in the country.

"We are all accountable for the health of our citizens - the government, the hospitals and the doctors," Hazari said. The 246 surgeries that he performed includes Bypass Grafting, Valve replacements, Tetrology under Ayushman Bharat till now, Dr. Hazari started operating cases under this scheme from October 2018. Since then the graph of patients getting treatment under this scheme has just gone up. Today, out of every 40 patients he operates monthly, at least 35 are covered under this programme.

The scheme provides a cover of ₹5 lakh per family annually for 10 crore poor and vulnerable families.

# House...

From Page 1

Leader of the Opposition Gopal Bhargav it was decided that the obituary would be scheduled on Monday. "Following this, I had left for New Delhi paying homage to the departed soul. Now, raising the issue disrupting the normal proceedings of the House is not justified," he added.

"On this, the opposition members walked out of the house and the Speaker passed the budget and postponed the proceedings till 11 am on Monday.

# BJP leaders held on the charge of disrupting Govt work

**Bhopal:** Three BJP leaders Rajendra Gupta, Sudhir Jachak and Nikhlesh Mishra were on Sunday arrested on the charge of disrupting government work under section 353 of the IPC. Later, the three were produced in the court of Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Krishnapal Singh Sidodia, who granted bail to them on personal bonds of ₹30,000 each. **SR**



Muslim Brides participate in a mass marriage ceremony under Mukhyamantri Kanyadan Yojna at Iqbal Maidan in Bhopal on Sunday

# HDK Govt's fate likely to be decided today

PNS ■ BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

The exit of Congress-JD(S) coalition Government seemed imminent when the trial of strength in the Karnataka Assembly takes place expectedly on Monday.

While 11 Congress rebel MLAs released a video on Sunday claiming they would not attend the Assembly proceedings, two independent MLAs have petitioned Supreme Court to direct the Speaker to wind up the vote of confidence process 5 pm on Monday.

The Kumaraswamy Government, on the edge for last one month, had on July 19 defied the two deadlines set by Governor Vajubhai Vala to prove its majority on the floor of the House.

Hoping for some kind of relief from the Supreme Court, the ruling coalition, mean-

while, was making last ditch efforts to win back unrelenting rebel lawmakers.

Kumaraswamy and the Congress had moved the Supreme Court on Friday, accusing the Governor of interfering with the Assembly proceedings when the debate on the trust vote was underway and sought clarification on its July 17 order, which they said, caused hindrance in issuing whip to the legislators.

The Assembly was adjourned till Monday after the Governor's 1.30 PM deadline and the second one to conclude the confidence motion process by Friday itself was ignored, prolonging the instability and suspense on the possible survival of the coalition Government.

As the first deadline neared on Friday, the ruling coalition questioned the Governor's



power to issue such a direction, with Kumaraswamy citing a Supreme Court verdict that a Governor cannot act as ombudsman of the legislature.

The Governor's second missive was dismissed as a "love letter" by Kumaraswamy, who criticised Vala for talking about horse-trading now "when it had been happening" for the last several days.

However, before adjourning the House on Friday, Speaker Ramesh Kumar extracted a "commitment" from the coalition that the motion of confidence would reach finality on Monday, even as he made it clear that it would not be prolonged further under any circumstances.

If the ruling coalition tries to delay the proceedings on Monday also, all eyes will be on the next move by the Governor, who has been keeping the

Centre posted on the curious ups and downs in the state.

The "delay" in completing the trust vote process was seen as an attempt by the ruling coalition aimed at buying time to woo back rebel MLAs, herded down in a Mumbai hotel allegedly by the BJP to protect them from poaching by the ruling coalition, whose resignation has pushed the government to the brink of collapse.

There are about 13 MLAs of the Congress and the JDS who have resigned from the assembly and are apparently no mood to go to the ruling alliance as the Congress has accused the BJP of horse trading and conspiring to destabilize the state coalition government of the state.

BJP State president BS Yeddyurappa on Sunday expressed confidence that Monday would be the last day

of the Kumaraswamy led coalition Government.

"As Siddaramaiah, Speaker and Kumaraswamy have said that they will seek majority on Monday, I am 100 per cent confident that things will reach a conclusion."

"The SC has clearly said in its order that under no circumstances should the 15 MLAs staying in Mumbai be compelled to attend the current assembly session", he said.

It has clearly stated that it is left to them (MLAs) whether they want to attend it or not," the former chief minister said.

He emphasised that whip has no value in such a situation, which the ruling party leaders too know. As Yeddyurappa has called the meeting of party's legislature party on Monday, Congress held a detailed strategy session in a hotel at Bengaluru on Sunday.

## D Raja appointed CPI gen secy unanimously

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha member D Raja was selected unanimously as the general secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI) on Sunday. The veteran leader, who replaced S Sudhakar Reddy, is the first one from Dalit community to head the party.

Reddy stepped down due to health reasons and the recently concluded CPI's National Council decided to select Raja.

Asserting that the party's fight against "retrograde" forces would continue, Raja said, "The country is going through a critical period under the fascist regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Left might have lost seats in the Lok Sabha election and might have been reduced to a smaller force in Parliament, but it does not mean that we have shrunk within the country or our ideological and political influence has shrunk."

Raja said the Left parties would continue to fight against the "retrograde policies" of the present government. "The BJP government may have won the electoral battle but not the social or the political one. We want all communist parties to come together. We will have to rework our strategies. That's what our parties are trying to do," he said.

Doraisamy Raja (70), popularly known as D Raja was unanimously chosen as Reddy's



successor at a three-day meeting of the CPI National Council, the top decision-making body of the party, earlier this week.

Reddy, who stepped down as the CPI general secretary due to ill health, was also present at the press conference. Raja hailing from Tamil Nadu was National Secretary of CPI for past 15 years and became Rajya Sabha MP in 2007 and reelected on 2013. His 12 year long tenure in Rajya Sabha is ending on July 24. His wife Annie Raja is also a CPI leader and is general secretary of CPI's women's wing National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW).

## LJP MP Ramchandra Paswan passes away

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Janshakti Party MP from Bihar's Samastipur Ramchandra Paswan died on Sunday afternoon following a brief illness. He was 57.

Ramchandra Paswan, the younger brother of Union Minister and LJP chief Ram Vilas Paswan, breathed his last at 1.24 pm at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital here.

He was admitted to the hospital last week after suffering a heart attack.

The body will be kept at his residence in New Delhi and on Monday, at the LJP office in Patna for paying last respects. He will be cremated in the Bihar capital on Monday evening.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

"With profound sadness, I am informing that my dearest and youngest brother Ramchandra Paswan, MP Lok Sabha has passed away today at 1.24 pm in Dr Rammanohar Lohia Hospital, Delhi," Ram Vilas Paswan said.

"The body will then be taken to Patna, where it will be kept at Lok Janshakti Party's office there from 11 am to 3 pm for paying

the last respects. He will be cremated at 4 pm in Patna," he said. President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla



Union Home Minister Amit Shah pays his last respects to Lok Janshakti Party MP Ram Chandra Paswan at his residence in New Delhi. Ram Chandra Paswan died at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Delhi due to cardiac arrest. He was 56 PTI

were among those who con- doled his death.

Ramchandra Paswan was a four-time MP and was first elected in 1999.

He was re-elected to the Lok Sabha in 2004 and then again for the third time in 2014.

In May 2019, he was elected to the Lower House of Parliament from Samastipur in Bihar for the fourth time on a LJP ticket.

"Sad to hear of the passing of Shri Ram Chandra Paswan, MP (LS) from Samastipur, Bihar. He remained committed to serving those at the grass- roots and contributed much to the well being of the people of Bihar. Condolences to his family, constituents and colleagues," President Kovind

tweeted. The vice-president said, "I express my condolences on the untimely demise of Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan's brother and Lok Sabha MP Ram Chandra Paswan ji."

Modi said Ram Chandra Paswan worked tirelessly for the poor and downtrodden and spoke about rights of farmers and the youth.

"Shri Ram Chandra Paswan Ji worked tirelessly for the poor and downtrodden. At every forum he spoke unequivocally for the rights of farmers and youngsters. His social service efforts were noteworthy. Pained by his demise. Condolences to his family and supporters. Om Shanti," the PM tweeted.

## Around 11L voted through e-postal ballots in LS polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the seven phases Lok Sabha polls, a record 18,02,646 eligible personnel were enrolled and 10,84,266 voted through the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) or e-postal ballots.

According to the Election Commission (EC), a record 60.14 per cent military and paramilitary personnel and those deployed in Indian missions abroad used the e-postal ballot to vote in the Lok Sabha elections. The ETPBS is a flagship IT programme of the Election Commission that empowers people eligible to vote but posted far away from their homes to vote electronically.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the Commission said that in contrast, the voting in this category was only 4 per cent in 2014. According to the EC, over eight lakh service voters were enrolled for the 2019 elections compared to 13,27,627 in 2014.

Of the total, 10,16,245 were from Defence Ministry, 7,82,595 from Home Ministry (Central Armed Police Forces); 3,539 from External Affairs Ministry and 267 from state police.

Persons working in para-military forces and the military and government officials deployed in diplomatic missions outside India are classified as Service Voters.



The EC said the record voting was possible because of ETPBS, which was among one of its kind initiatives adopted by the poll panel this year.

Enabled through the dedicated portal https://www.servicvoter.eci.nic.in online registration, the service voters for the first time were sent postal ballots electronically one way to save processing time, resources and avoid human errors.

"A total of 18,02,646 postal ballots were dispatched electronically using the flagship IT programme ETPBS. In return, 10,84,266 e-postal ballots were received indicating 60.14 per cent turnout," the EC statement said.

The poll panel said ETPBS was a fully secured system, hav-

ing two security layers.

"Secrecy of voting is maintained through the use of OTP (One Time Password) and PIN and no duplication of casted ETPB is possible due to the unique QR Code in the portal https://www.etpbs.in," the EC said.

The Commission said the purpose of the online system was to create convenient and easy-to-use online system for defence personnel to become Service Voters.

"With the motto 'no voter to be left behind', ETPBS has empowered and ensured all eligible service electors with their constitutional power to vote while performing their duty for the nation," the Commission added.

## Bangladesh Home Minister to visit India on August 7

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan will visit India on August 7 during which he will hold bilateral talks with Home Minister Amit Shah, who is expected to flag issues like illegal immigration and anti-terror cooperation, officials said. Khan will have bilateral talks with the Home Minister on August 7 when issues concerning both the countries will be discussed there.

India is expected to take tough stand on the issue of

**India is expected to take tough stand on the issue of unabated illegal immigration from Bangladesh**

unabated illegal immigration from Bangladesh.

Anti-terror cooperation, movement of illegal immigrants, and smuggling of cattle, arms and ammunition and a few other issues are expected to be discussed in Shah's dialogue

with Khan. Radicalisation of youths and Rohingya refugees issues may also figure in the talks. The delegation-level talks will also be attended by top internal security officials of India and Bangladesh.

During the delegation-level dialogue, steps to be taken to strengthen the existing mechanism to check movement of illegal immigrants and smuggling of cattle, narcotics and other items through the porous Indo-Bangla border will figure prominently, another official said. India shares a 4,096-km-long border with Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was sworn-in on May 30

## Modi Govt 2.0 sets sights on making India \$5 trillion economy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi Government has underlined its priorities in the first 50 days of its second term, setting sights on making India a \$5 trillion economy and hitting the ground running on spurring growth.

Two persons in the know of the government policy making said the dispensation truly feels that transformative changes can be brought about only through economic growth and inclusive development.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was sworn-in on May 30

after the BJP won 303 seats — the first time since 1971 that an incumbent government returned to power with such a thumping mandate.

The government was off the blocks on day one and set the ball rolling on manifesto promises such as pension schemes for farmers, small traders and unorganised workers, extension of PM-KISAN to all farmers, and setting up of a Jal Shakti Ministry, say political observers.

Just days after coming to power, the government spelt out its key priorities in the bud-

get which was focused on laying the foundation for making India a \$5 trillion economy and doubling farmers' income, the two persons in the know of the government's policy making said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her budget speech, said in the current fiscal, India's economy will grow to become \$3 trillion economy, sixth largest in world.

The minister had emphasised the need for structural reforms for achieving \$5 trillion economy.

## Will do best to ensure no harm comes to pride, honour of our jawans, says Rajnath



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Major General Gagan Deep Bakshi chant patriotic slogans at a function to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas, in New Delhi on Sunday PTI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lauding the heroes of the Kargil war, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said he will do his best to ensure that no harm comes to the pride and honour of the soldiers. Addressing a gathering of war veterans, Kargil war widows and others at an event held here to commemorate 20 years of Operation Vijay, Singh also asserted that people's "faith in armed forces has increased".

"Whatever we can do to honour our martyrs is less. We honour them and salute the war widows present here. We feel proud of our soldiers," he said. He also shared his experiences of visiting Drass on Saturday, where he paid homage to fallen soldiers at the Kargil War Memorial.

"I can only say this from my

side that I will do my best and whatever is possible to ensure that no harm comes to the honour, pride and esteem of our jawans," the defence minister said to a thunderous applause. He also said a man could compromise with other things, but not with his pride and honour.

"That pride (swabhiman) could be personal, social or nationalistic (rashtriya swabhiman)". It was with this sense of pride that 18-year-olds and 20-year-olds had embraced the gallows during the freedom struggle," Singh said.

During his Kargil visit, he was given a detailed presentation on Operation Vijay, the defence minister said.

Operation Vijay was the name given to India's limited war against Pakistan after the Kargil War country infiltrated in 1999.

## CRPF gets sanction to install sanitary pad dispensers for women in combat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After unveiling full body protectors for the women troopers in the CRPF, the paramilitary has now decided to install over 500 sanitary pad dispensers and incinerators across the formations across the country to help them in ensuring personal hygiene with ease.

The Union Home Ministry has sanctioned funds to the CRPF to procure and install the equipment for the combatised women in the Force.

As many as 288 sanitary pad vending machines and as many incinerators to scientifically dispose off used sanitary napkins will be installed in the CRPF campuses.

The Ministry has also authorized the CRPF to acquire 783 steel frame stands for dry-



ing clothes for all its six 'mahila' battalions, 15 special anti-riot units of the Rapid Action

Force and training institutions. With an outlay of ₹2,10,69,000 these equipment

will be installed as one sanitary pad vending machine costs ₹25,000, a burning machine

about ₹40,000 and a cloth drying stand ₹3,000, officials said.

The acquisition of these equipment will help the force in ensuring better living and operating conditions for the over 8,000 women personnel in its ranks. The budgeting for gender-sensitive facilities is expected to be extended to other paramilitary forces as well as the Union Home Ministry has been pitching in for the inclusion of women in all the paramilitary forces.

The idea for gender sensitive budgeting and creation of an enabling environment for women in uniformed ranks was first mooted during the 'National Conference for women in Police' in 2016. The conference was organised by the Union Home Ministry in the national capital. IPS officer Renuka Mishra,

currently an Additional Director General (ADG) in Uttar Pradesh police, had conducted a study a few years back flagging the issues of health, privacy and challenges being faced by women personnel in police forces.

Mishra was an Inspector general with the border guarding Force Sashastra Seema Bal at its headquarters during her study on the issues being faced by the women in the uniformed ranks including in the police and paramilitary forces.

The CRPF had on Friday unveiled the country's first prototype of a full body protector for women personnel which it has jointly developed with the Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS, an entity of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)).

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Priyanka perks up

While she may have seized a moment in UP, she must launch an original campaign as a grassroots worker than a family rep



At least somebody in the Congress is alive and kicking given the political *sanyas* taken by former president Rahul Gandhi, who is now a disembodied conscience of the party that only reminds the rump it has become, forcing an ideological conflict between his mother's old guard and his young rebels and confusing the party and rank and file. In this context, his sister and Congress general secretary for UP East, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who has taken up the cudgels on behalf of the dispossessed tribals in Sonbhadra, some of whom were shot over a land that was sold among consenting power-brokers without recompensing them, is at least keeping herself relevant among the grassroots Congress workers, if not the country's politics. At least, there is a rooted realism to her brother's exalted escapism. Her refusal to furnish a bail bond after she was detained from visiting affected villagers by the Yogi Adityanath government, which fears politicisation of what is indeed an embarrassing issue, may be dramatic but did generate a talk point. The night-long *dharana* in a Mirzapur guest house, the visit of State officials whom she refused to comply with, the power cuts which she attributed to the establishment's way of dampening her spirit, all fit the agitationist politics that at least got her better visuals than those of her election campaign. Even perked up some local Congress workers. And considering Sonbhadra's proximity to Varanasi, the constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, her antics probably made more sense than when she had casually challenged his candidacy with a hint of her own and not followed through. Question is whether it all works uphill from here or not.

Considering Congress insiders are hoping her to be a campaigner-in-chief on the ground in a State, which is slated for the next round of Assembly polls, she at least is trying to build a narrative. However, this time there has to be an all-new approach than the one that has been relied on her family for years. Already, Congress workers have started comparing her Mirzapur protest to Indra Gandhi's campaign against upper castes who had tortured Dalits at Belchi way back in 1977, forgetting that the Congress has zero base in Uttar Pradesh in 2019 compared to then. Besides, the Lok Sabha verdict for the Congress shows that the voter is no longer interested in dynastic entitlements but performance graphs where descendants have to strip their armour to be a commoner. What Priyanka needs to do is not be a paratrooped people's princess but be a permanent presence in Uttar Pradesh, relocate herself to Lucknow and consistently develop her party first before even aiming for this Assembly. This is what another of the young Turks, Sachin Pilot, did by moving to Rajasthan. Not only does she need to live down her tag, she needs her own mantra and not Rahul's. The good thing for her is that her political sensibilities are primed. And she did seize the moment in Sonbhadra with earnestness and promptness while the UP parties like Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party trailed way behind. The Trinamool Congress, too, sent a delegation to Varanasi to prop up some semblance of Opposition unity. Frankly, Priyanka needs to stay away from such diversions as they will never give her any momentum except add to her nuisance value. One must remember that she could not even generate a swell, leave alone a wave, in the Lok Sabha and completely lost the plot in the family seat of Amethi. Yet she has been backroom in-charge of both her mother Sonia's Rae Bareilly and brother Rahul's Amethi seats. This only strengthens claims of her being a visiting alibi rather than a serious Congress leader that the party would like to look up to. And before she or her brother blames the party workers or organisation, they should first ask themselves if they have done anything in the first place to restore confidence and faith. Priyanka must also realise that she cannot stake her all in UP, where the Congress has its lowest capital at this point of time, the worst flatliner that her kin ever had to face. And that it would need more than theatrics and spearheading a real issue-based movement to recharge the base first. Elections are due in Haryana, Jharkhand, Delhi and Maharashtra and the party needs to snap out of its trauma. And since everybody accepts that the new Congress president would be a puppet, she should press for organisational elections so that at least there are State-level faces to prepare a plan. For all the charm around her before, Priyanka must believe that personality politics is her real beast of burden.

## Countering Trump

As the campaign for the US presidential elections, slated for November 2020, heats up, can the man be defeated?



Much newsprint has been wasted by commentators doubting US President Donald Trump's intelligence or his methods, particularly his single-minded determination to keep Twitter relevant in foreign ministry offices and corporate headquarters across the world, let alone American homes. Yet one must admit he is a smart man. You do not win the US presidency against an establishment candidate after securing your party's candidacy in a crowded field. Trump's upending of the global trade paradigm has been drastic but he does make some sense when it comes to domestic priorities. But his latest statement against a few American Congresswomen from the Democratic Party, telling them in no uncertain terms that if they do not "love America" they should go back to where they "came from," is distressing. It just so happens that Ilhan Omar, one of the Congresswomen attacked by Trump, is of Somali descent and this is nothing more than Trump catering to the nativist part of the American electorate. Instead of reaching out to minorities, who are unlikely to vote for him, he is trying to energise his base. So the "Lock her up", Trump's slogan against Hillary Clinton, has been intensified now with his supporters chanting, "Send her home" about Omar.

Trump has been pilloried by political rivals. The Democratic Party, fractured by a contentious primary election to select the man or woman who will contest against him, has backed Omar and her fellow Congresswomen. Even foreign politicians have attacked him, particularly from Europe. Yet, Trump's attack resonates as nativist forces in the US look on immigrants as interlopers in their nation, ignoring that immigrants have actually been change agents. But with few of Trump's Republican allies attacking him, he will carry on this path and his cries against immigrants will get stronger. It remains to be seen if the Democratic Party can put up a credible candidate who can stand against Trump. The risk they run, like several other liberal parties across the world, is that they might put someone from the extreme-left ideological wing of the party who will stand little chance against Trump's intelligence. Some say Trump was a failure in everything that he did, his business ventures have never been as successful as he claims. But looking at him now, it is impossible to see how he is anything but a winner.

# Change the narrative

Asking the super-rich to pay a little extra is a modest step in reducing inequalities. Instead, the Government must work towards bringing such citizens under a tax net



UTTAM GUPTA

In the Union Budget 2019-20 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 5, the Government levied a new surcharge on individuals, Association of Persons (AOP) and trusts with an annual income between ₹2 crore and ₹5 crore from the existing 15 per cent to 25 per cent and on individuals/AOS/trusts with income an income more than ₹5 crore from the existing 15 per cent to 37 per cent. Post the hike, the effective incidence of tax will be 39 per cent on earners between ₹2 crore and ₹5 crore and 42.7 per cent on those earning in excess of ₹5 crore.

This revised tax surcharge has led to a hue and cry. While wealthy Indian residents argue that this move will act as a disincentive to wealth generation, foreign portfolio investors (albeit those, who are registered in India as AOP or trusts) see this as a deterrent to attract foreign investment. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) opine that this move will be come as a setback at a time when the Government is keen on investing ₹100 lakh crore in infrastructure to fulfill the dream of making India a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25. Arguments in this context are amusing.

There is no dearth of wealth generation in this country, which is mostly concentrated in a few hands. According to a 2018 Oxfam Report released at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in January 2019, "Indian billionaires saw their fortunes swell by ₹2,200 crore a day last year, with the top one per cent of the country's richest getting richer by 39 per cent as against just three per cent increase in wealth for the bottom-half of the population."

Indeed, this has been possible under the existing policy environment, which includes the policies on taxation. A slight tweaking of the policy (read: Extra tax on the super-rich), which is expected to yield ₹12,000 crore (equivalent to less than a week's addition to wealth by the billionaires), is unlikely to make even the slightest dent on the pace of their wealth generation.

Put simply, consider a person earning in excess of ₹5 crore per annum, say ₹10 crore. *Per se*, an effective tax @42.7 per cent may appear to be high. But look at the absolute numbers: After paying ₹4.27 crore as tax, he/she will still be left with ₹5.73 crore or close to ₹50 lakh per month. This is a substantial amount for leading an extraordinarily good life (with all amenities at their best) and yet save a good sum to take care of future needs even under adverse financial circumstances.

In recent years, we have seen Indian billionaires donating a portion of their wealth to welfare trusts with the intent of using the money to help the poor. They do this towards the end even as most of their life span is spent accumulating wealth, which may even involve fleecing the



consumers (including poor) by charging higher prices and other unfair practices. The impact of such belated "philanthropic" steps could at best be limited.

So, the real issue is one of highly inequitable distribution of the fruits of development. Ironically, successive Governments (Modi 1.0 included) have only focussed on increasing the size of the cake, thinking that the benefits will automatically trickle down. But facts on ground zero speak otherwise.

Asking the super-rich to give a little extra is a modest step in the direction of reducing inequalities. However, there is an urgent need to nab those, who are currently evading the taxman. And this number continues to be huge.

According to the 'Household Survey on India's Citizen Environment & Consumer Economy' (ICE 360° survey) by the People Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE) for the year 2015-16 — when seen in juxtaposition with the income tax data for that financial year — for every person with an income more than ₹5 crore paying tax, there are 13 people earning that much but they don't pay.

Bringing the latter under the tax net is a big challenge that the Modi Government must address (if this is not done, then the former will have a reason to grudge).

The resultant boost to tax collection will help the Government fund the galloping expenditure on building infrastructure. Physical: Rail, road, highways, port, airport and waterways among others. Social: Schools, colleges, hospitals and wellness centers among others. Besides it can also fund a host of welfare schemes such as toilets, homes, electricity, gas connections, subsidised food and mid-day meals for school kids.

Money spent in this manner can contribute to generation of widespread demand (both by way of creating more jobs as well as augmenting capacity of the people to spend more) and in turn spur growth. It will also help in reviving a potent engine of growth, namely 'private consumption', which has been sagging for the last couple of years even as the Government has relied mostly on boosting 'public expenditure'.

Had the surplus money remained with a few rich, this would be of little help in boost-

ing demand as there are inherent limits to spending by any/group of individuals. Even if those few were to deposit the money in a bank, who lends it to industries and businesses, the impact will be much less than if it gets distributed among millions of people under welfare schemes or as wages to workers employed on projects undertaken by the Government with additional tax.

Another potent way of helping the poor is for industrialists to cut prices, which will leave more money in the hands of the former. This will be inclusive development in the true sense of the term instead of the current focus on "tokenism" such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) or philanthropic initiatives.

In so far as the FPIs are concerned, the Government needs to follow a policy of taxing all wealthy people "uniformly", irrespective of where they come from. Merely because a wealthy person is from a foreign land, he/she can't be spared the levy of additional surcharge. This would have been outright discriminatory. Besides, it will have unintended implications of Indian residents moving their funds to foreign shores

and bringing back ('round tripping' as it is known in common parlance) to benefit from the lower tax incidence on FPIs.

Only 40 per cent of the FPIs registered as AOP or trust are affected by the increase in surcharge (as they are treated as individuals for taxation purpose) even as the balance 60 per cent registered as corporations need not worry. The former had chosen that route to avoid the hassles of registering a company; besides escaping the minimum alternate tax (MAT) that the latter has to pay. Having decided to go for AOP/trust, they should live with its pluses and minuses. They can't do cherry picking.

Even so, for AOP/trust earning more than ₹5 crore, the hike in surcharge will increase the effective tax on long-term capital gains from 12 per cent to 14.2 per cent; whereas on short-term capital gains, this will be 21.3 per cent, up from 17.9 per cent. This isn't the kind of blow that ought to affect foreign inflow. Nirmala Sitharaman has rightly dismissed the demand for roll-back or any dilution of the extra tax on super-rich in her reply to discussion on the Finance Bill. (The writer is a policy analyst)

## SOUNDBITE

Kashmir is in my heart and the Government wants it to become not only paradise of India but tourist paradise of the world.



Union Minister —Rajnath Singh

The TV industry has evolved and there is work for actors across all age groups. What matters is a lot of talent, hard work and luck.



TV star —Urvashi Dholakia

The two neighbours (India and China) should not allow any individual case at certain time to disrupt the bilateral relations.



China's Ambassador to India —Sun Weidong

I am devastated to hear about the passing away of Sheila Dikshitji, a beloved daughter of the Congress with whom I shared a close personal bond.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Half victory

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Breather for Jadhav" (July 19). Pakistan can proclaim that it has been vindicated by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) but there is a pregnant message though in the court's directive, ordering Pakistan to review the death penalty awarded to Kulbhushan Jadhav in 2017.

This also reflects on the conduct of military courts and their rough-and-ready justice. While the court has stayed Jadhav's execution pending a reconsideration of his conviction and sentence, the exhaustive list of remedies requested by India has not been entertained — ie, our request to annul the military court verdict, appeal for the release and safe passage of Jadhav and plea for a retrial in civilian courts.

The ICJ verdict did not acquit Jadhav as it did not have the jurisdiction to examine the evidence for and against the accused. Now that the ICJ has ruled on this matter, India and Pakistan must move forward with maturity and avoid hyperbole, which may cause hind-

### Privatisation is a big ask for railways

After the Modi Government took over for a second term, shrill cries over the privatisation of the Indian railways were heard from some quarters. And when the Government mulled new projects and technology for private players, cries grew even louder. It is believed that privatisation will bring some semblance of order in an elephantine public sector unit mired in disorder. That the employees and trade unions are vehemently against handing over the railways to private players is well-known. The railways is a huge employment generator and privatisation poses serious threats to job security and opportunities. On this count, the Government has not done much to allay the apprehensions of trade unions. One also cannot vouch for the fact that wholesale privatisation will do wonders. Specific operations like manufacture, sanitisation and freight train routes can be given to private players.

Massive efforts have also been put by successive Ministers to provide a facelift to the railways through a slew of schemes. It goes without saying that the Government alone cannot initiate and sustain projects that cost a fortune to the exchequer. Railways Minister Piyush Goyal has clarified that the Government is not

drance in the judicial process. India must now build on this reluctant yet affirmative action shown by Pakistan and, thus, secure an honourable release of Jadhav.

KS Jayatheertha  
 Bengaluru

### Change for the better

Sir — Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla must be complimented for bringing several positive changes in the working of the House. Even members in the Opposition are

happy with his conduct. Birla is trying to make the Lok Sabha function in truly 'Indian style' by conducting proceedings in Hindi rather than traditional till-now English. He has even asked the members to not talk when proceedings of the House are on, say-



in favour of privatisation and is only keen in forging partnership with private players, domestic and abroad. Obviously, investment is the key to technology. No one can dispute that the Modi Government has infused a new vigour in the railways. By the same logic, one cannot say that the railways will transform to become one of the new wonders of the world by wholesale privatisation. Careful planning, unbiased cooperation between the Government and trade unions bode well.

Ganapathi Bhat  
 Akola

ing it was unacceptable. It is to be hoped that his efforts to enforce strict discipline will make the House more productive.

Madhu Agrawal  
 Delhi

### Surprising verdict

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Breather for Jadhav" (July 19). The verdict given by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), directing Pakistan to "review and reconsider" the conviction and death sentence of Kulbhushan Jadhav is surprising. While the court admitted that Pakistan had violated both the Vienna Convention and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it did not annul the death sentence given to Jadhav by a military court. Given the strained relationship between India and Pakistan, it will be difficult to release Jadhav. But India must put all efforts, including using the diplomatic channel, to secure his release.

SK Gupta  
 Via email

Send your feedback to:  
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Nurture neglected businesses

The world of possibilities is so large that one institution cannot possibly plug the gap. We need to widen the ambit of R&D in a manner which is a win-win situation for all



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Forest wealth is one of the biggest assets for India. It needs application of principles, creativity and innovation in the same scale and intensity as has been done in the larger R&D section of manufacturing and services. Application of the principles of subtraction, modification, addition, alteration and more of the creativity process to the sequence of modification of the produce will add value to the product. To illustrate, subtracting the content of sulphur in hydro carbon products makes the petrol less polluting. The principles of creativity and innovation do not end with such transformations alone. They include practices of attribute listing, forced matching, synectics and the list can be long.

The inability to institutionalise these interventions on forest products like tamarind and chiraunji among others has come in the way of product value addition. It is everyone's loss — from the general public, who would have gained from the medicinal property of tamarind to the gatherer, who gets less remunerative prices.

It does not need a genius to realise that Sal leaf can be used for dona making or indeed peeling together all petals for popular use. This would have been hygienic and economical for the user and remunerative to those who collect. In fact, Sal seed, which is generally used for oil extraction, can be used as a bio fuel. Putting together cow dung on shafts of the corn plant or the bare paddy plants and drying them has served useful service in bringing light to areas where electricity may not have reached. Local innovation plays a crucial role in making life not only more bearable but also joyful. Organised R&D, which is often a fallout of formal education, has by and large not shown much awareness for such interventions of innovation at the grassroot level. It does not need a genius to know that tamarind seed powder is an input in the medical sector and can also be used for talc and starch purposes.

Similar is the story of Mahua seeds, which can yield bio fuel. They can have good usage, say in proportion of 20 per cent in petroleum fuel for vehicles. There is nothing against Western paradigm of research. Similarly, there can be nothing against R&D efforts. But the plea in these lines is to widen the ambit of R&D in a manner which is a win-win situation for all. The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) is trying to attempt at this. However, the world of possibilities is so large that resource of one institution cannot possibly plug the gap. Indeed, it will be very difficult even for an institution, which is commercially oriented. To do this, R&D is needed. This will give large-scale benefits to make it not just commercially viable but remunerative for all stakeholders. For some strange reason, businesses do not see this as an opportunity.

This is not the only sector which has defaulted in larger processes of Indian industry and business. A young graduating engineer with a management degree will not seek employment in a unit manufacturing, say of the industrial alcohol in the rural sector. Even though he may be given a sprawling farm house or extensive club facilities and support to commutations to towns and more, he will still be reluctant. His first choice will remain employment in the larger sector say of FMCG, IT or finance division in a metropolis. It does not matter to him that living conditions over there are often harsh, requiring him to travel long distances and long hours in inhospitable conditions. Daily chores keep gnawing at whatever cushion time he can snatch from ever expanding office hours.

**Such is human nature:** It is often riddled with contradictions and attracted towards the incoherent. Trying to keep up with the trend, many keep chasing at a mirage of comfort. These are subtle issues of orientation and acclimatisation of value systems which gain approval. Social climbing in circles, where one seeks acceptability, is a push factor. Tribal welfare and interventions may even make business sense but being bereft of social glamour, they have very little pull factor. The argument of going to the tribal areas to do some good to the communities is a facetious one — it is neither true nor fair to the tribal world. So the talent in dominant percentages does not move in the right direction in significant numbers. Without this talent intervention, communities in not so fashionable areas don't reap the harvest of technology at a sufficient scale. This needs serious thought. Unfortunately, snazzy economist paradigms and a large percentage in corridors of power have found little time to address these issues.

Indeed, many of the tribal products can fuel favourites of the urban communities, for example chiraunji seed, which is popular in many areas, including Jharkhand and is a useful input to the ice cream industry. Perhaps in the business of the linkages indicated above, all are left the poorer by the neglect.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SEC144 IS IMPOSED IN SONABHADRA. IF YOU GO TO FULFILL POLITICAL INTENTIONS, IT'S NOT RIGHT. NO ONE SHOULD DO POLITICS ON SENSITIVE ISSUES.

—UTTAR PRADESH DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER  
DINESH SHARMA



I HAVE COME HERE NOT TO VIOLATE ANY LAW BUT TO MEET THE VICTIMS. THEY (OFFICIALS) DID NOT TELL ME THE GROUND OF DETENTION.

—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY  
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA

The bridge to Asean

Expanding bilateral ties with Myanmar is vital for India's 'Act East' targets. With a creative blend of diplomacy and culture, both nations can only scale new heights, says VIKAS KALYANI

India has emerged as the fastest growing economy in the world. It believes in forging multilateral relations and not in unilateral favouritism. Equivocally, it does not agree to a uni-polar or bi-polar world order. It believes in mutual growth by means of cooperation in all fields with as many countries as possible, given that understanding is mutual.

Towards this, the country has been part of multilateral forums that are growth oriented. Being one of the key players in the South Asian as well as the Indian Ocean region, India has been engaging with many Asian and littoral countries on a regular basis. It realised the importance of East Asian countries in the 1990s and, thus, started active dialogue process with members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Putting the Indian perspective for the Indian Ocean region — of mutual growth in a secured environment as a priority — India also has a shared vision, the Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), with all its oceanic neighbours.

Through the "neighbourhood first" policy, India has been according top priority to South Asia and countries in the adjoining region. Out of the 10 ASEAN countries, Myanmar is the only one which shares its borders with four Indian States and, hence, is of great importance as it acts as a bridge to the ASEAN-India future relationship.

India shares a long land border of over 1,600 kms with Myanmar and a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. Four North-eastern States, viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, share a boundary with Myanmar. Both nations share a heritage of religious, linguistic and ethnic ties.

**Present relations with Myanmar**

**Trade cooperation:** India is the fifth largest trading partner of Myanmar — its the fifth largest destination for exports and the sixth largest source of imports. The agriculture sector dominates trade, particularly the supply of beans and pulses (\$809million, 2016-17) and timber (\$ 156 million) to India. Indian exports to Myanmar include sugar and pharmaceuticals among others. Bilateral trade between the two countries has been growing steadily and reached \$1.257 billion as of January 2018.

**Defence cooperation:** Defence ties between the two countries continues to strengthen. Exchanges of high-level visits, enhanced training cooperation, capacity building and support in provision of specific equipment and technology have led to a more wholesome relationship between the two and the development of better understanding in matters related to mutual security concerns.

**Disaster relief:** India has always responded promptly and effectively in rendering assistance following natural calamities in Myanmar like Cyclone Mora (2017), Komen (2015), earthquake in Shan State (2010), Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and the recent outbreak of influenza virus in Yangon in July-August 2017.

**Development cooperation:** India has extended development assistance to Myanmar on generous terms and our assistance portfolio is now over \$1.75 billion. Projects include the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP); the Trilateral Highway Project, which is an East-West corridor connecting the North-east with Myanmar and Thailand; the Rhi-Tiddim road; assistance for border area development in Chin State and the Naga Self-Administered Zone.

**Ongoing projects**

According to a statement issued by the Indian Embassy in Myanmar, "The landmark Land Border Crossing Agreement between



India and Myanmar, signed on May 11, 2018, has been brought into effect with the simultaneous opening of international entry-exit checkpoints at the Tamu-Moreh and the Rihkhawdar-Zowkhatwar border between Myanmar and India."

The idea is to have better connectivity by all means. Like India, Myanmar, too, does not support China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Infrastructure cooperation between the two can counter Chinese debt-oriented approach to run over countries. Similarly, the India-funded Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP), a \$484 million project connecting the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar, by sea will allow sea access for landlocked Northeastern States of India via the Kaladan River in Myanmar.

As far as air connectivity is concerned, there is hardly any direct flight to Yangon from any Indian city.

**Way forward**

**Air connectivity:** With the Indian aviation sector emerging as one of the fastest growing industries, it is bound to prosper in the near future. Investment in North-east aviation sector will not only connect local people better but also will offer faster and convenient passage to travelers from the eastern neighbourhood. Improved infrastructure and air connectivity is the need of the hour.

**Bus services:** Other than developing better trade opportunities at the two border opening points (mentioned earlier), we can also improve bus services to connect local villagers/commuters to deepen the cultural bond.

**Port connectivity:** There is a need to actively pursue the timely construction of ports. Deepening of port-to-port services will provide a much shorter sea route to the economically vibrant Southeast Asian region and help boost trade.

WITH A CREATIVE BLEND OF DIPLOMACY AND CULTURE, INDIA-MYANMAR RELATIONS CAN ONLY SCALE NEW HEIGHTS IN THE DAYS TO COME. WE NEED TO 'ACT EAST' USING THE 'SAGAR' VISION TO HAVE CREDIBLE AND RELIABLE RELATION WITH THIS STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT NEIGHBOUR, WHICH IS A KEY LINK BETWEEN INDIA AND ASEAN PARTNERSHIP

**Medical tourism:** India, in particular Delhi and Mumbai, has grown as a prominent exporter of speciality health services for nations across the world. Similarly, for the East Asian countries, the North-east can become a medical tourism hub.

**Educational tourism:** Many students from Myanmar prefer studying in China because of its proximity. China, too, has made a few concessions for the students like easing visa rules for Myanmar. Comparatively, India, too, has affordable and well-reputed educational institutes — not only in metropolitan cities but cities in the North-east as well. But we must give a boost to this sector so as to attract students from Myanmar and other South East Asian countries and, hence, help young minds grow, thus ensuring a long lasting relationship in the years to come.

**Defence interaction:** Camps of insurgent groups operating in the North-eastern border areas often hamper the timely completion of connectivity projects as well as the economic growth of the region. Joint operations against such groups can be conducted to rein in the problem.

**In conclusion**

Ever since Myanmar underwent a political transition, it has been "opening up", which has helped the country grow to emerge as a 'new player' among the established team of old players in the region. The democratisation, along with economic reforms, has unleashed new opportunities for India, which is determined to make up for lost time. With a creative blend of diplomacy and culture, India-Myanmar relations can only scale new heights in the days to come. We need to 'Act East' using the 'SAGAR' vision to have credible and reliable relation with this strategically important neighbour, which is a key link between India and ASEAN partnership.

(The writer is a senior research fellow at the India Foundation)

A bitter pill to swallow

While historical, religious and socio-economic disparities may have forced us to adopt caste-based reservation policies, these very moves have been detrimental to the promotion of meritocracy. India's loss in the World Cup is an apt example



DEEPAK SINHA

Poet Robert Browning had once said, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for." Unfortunately, grasping excellence seems to be absent from the DNA of not just an average Indian but even those who excel. Of course, we simply refer to this as the 'chalta hai' culture that permeates almost every aspect of our life — be it social, cultural or professional.

Take the recent performance of the Indian cricket team at the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup held in the UK. Not only was it the odds-on favorite to win but apart from a couple of hiccups, the team played a superlative

game of cricket and got into the semi-finals as the top team. Therefore, the Indian team's loss to New Zealand was not only unexpected but shocking, given the relatively modest total that it confronted despite the loss of its front line batsmen scoring in single digits.

It goes without saying that defeat and victory are part and parcel of sports and one cannot but admire the manner in which the fans accepted the unexpected knock out gracefully — undoubtedly a sure sign of growing maturity.

Interestingly, both the coach and the captain accepted responsibility for the loss with equanimity. Captain Virat Kohli even went on to make the point that "45 minutes of bad cricket put you out of the tournament." Coach Ravi Shastri echoed the captain's sentiments and said, "Walk out with your heads held high. Be proud. Those 30 minutes can't erase the fact that you guys have been the best team in the last couple of years... One tournament, one series and that, too, 30 minutes of play can't decide



that..." Undoubtedly, both made an excellent point but there's a catch: It wasn't really the "30 or 45 minutes" that mattered but the manner in which the team played for the rest of the time in the game subsequently. While the batsmen did put up a fight, it was just not comparable to the manner in which the English recovered from similar circumstances to go on and win the

trophy. Clearly, there was an excellent display of skill, acumen, sheer grit and above all, exemplary determination.

Therefore, such a mindset on the part of the Indian team reflects not just its unwillingness to accept any weakness but what is worse is complacency that is totally uncalled for, given that loss and complacency make strange bedfellows.

Obviously, it is here that our

DNA is at play, for that allows us to accept the selection of some players for reasons other than form and their inability to deliver under pressure. Moreover, it isn't as if this came as a complete surprise to those involved in team selection. This is exactly what they are paid to foresee but they preferred to ignore. It is this very fact that makes the "45 minutes bad cricket" answer glib and utterly dishonest.

That brings us to the larger question: Do we, as a country — and not just in sports — hope to progress, to become a "great power"? And if we do, can it be done without focussing on the very lynchpins of excellence, meritocracy and integrity?

While historical, religious and socio-economic disparities may well have forced us to adopt caste-based reservation policies as a necessity, these very moves have been detrimental to the promotion of meritocracy. Instead of providing equal opportunity and inclusiveness, the state has promoted divisiveness and a culture of enti-

tlement. Wherever we have been able to avoid these pitfalls, results have been overwhelmingly positive.

Take the Army for instance, where apart from regional quotas for each State to ensure diversity, only merit counts in selection. Surely, that must have an exceedingly important part to play in ensuring that their performance, over the years, has been outstanding.

Though, it must be added that defeat here is wholly unpalatable. Surely, it behooves our political leadership not to accede to protests by those wanting to be included in the reservation pie, such as the Jats, Gujjars and Marathas. Instead, they must push us towards a more equitable and just society that places great value on skills, integrity and merit. Without this transformation in attitude we will only continue to grope for leftovers in the undergrowth.

(The writer, a military veteran, a consultant with the Observer Research Foundation and Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai)



FOREIGN EYE



A NEW RACE FOR SPACE

Space isn't what it used to be. But one image of what happened on the way to the moon in 1969 needs challenging. In celebrating the lunar landing, let's remember that it wasn't only buzz-cut white men who had the right stuff: behind the scenes were female mathematicians, several of them African-American, tasked with plotting the route to the moon. Without them, Mr Armstrong would never have got there. (The Guardian editorial)

# Yogi meets families of Sonbhadra clash victims

Accuses Cong of being 'anti-tribal'

**Sonbhadra:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday met the families of 10 Gond tribals killed over a land dispute here four days ago, promising a slew of steps to help the community, and alleged that "sin" committed during the Congress rule was responsible for the present situation.

Adityanath enhanced the compensation from ₹5 lakh to ₹18.5 lakh each for families of the deceased and from ₹50,000 to ₹2.5 lakh to those injured in Wednesday's clash and ordered completion of inquiry into the case from 1952 within 10 days.

Vowing to crackdown on land mafias, he said action against them will be taken under the stringent NSA and similar cases in the region will be probed.

He announced that houses, electricity and LPG connections, toilets and other amenities will be provided to improve living condition of families belonging to tribal and other marginalised communities in the district.

"This sin was committed during Congress tenure. Congress will have to pay for their sins. The land belonging to tribals was transferred in 1955 to the trust of the then Congress MLC. The investigation committee will also probe this," he alleged stepping up his attack on the opposition party. He also did not spare the SP and BSP, claiming that the accused have links to them and were involved in misuse of power when the two parties were in the Government.

"A three-member committee has been formed under Additional Chief Secretary to inquire into the incident. Congress party and its policies have always been anti-tribal. Those who have up-rooted the poor from their land will not be spared," the chief minister told reporters.

He said that other cases of Sonbhadra will also be investigated. "Full details of this case from 1952 will be examined, and report will be submitted in 10 days," he said.

His remarks came as Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who had



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath meets the members of the aggrieved families of the recent clashes in Sonbhadra on Sunday

Saturday met the families from Sonbhadra after a day-long standoff with UP authorities which stopped her from going to the district, took a jibe at the chief minister over his visit, saying "acknowledging one's

duty is good." "Only when thousands of Congress workers and justice-loving people extended their support to the affected families of Umbha, then the Uttar Pradesh government felt that

some serious incident has taken place. All the announcements, which have been made today, must be implemented at the earliest," Priyanka tweeted. The BJP and the Congress have been involved in a war of

## Priyanka takes dig at UP CM, says acknowledging one's duty is good

**Lucknow:** Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday took a dig at Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath after he visited Sonbhadra where 10 Gond tribals were shot dead over a land dispute four days ago, saying "acknowledging one's duty is good".

She said the UP government has acted only after the Congress came out in strong support of the tribals.

The Congress general secretary met relatives of the victims at a guesthouse in Chunar town of Uttar Pradesh's

Mirzapur district Saturday, a day after she was detained and prevented from going to Sonbhadra.

In a tweet on Sunday, she said, "I welcome UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's visit to Sonbhadra. Standing with the affected people is the duty of the government. Acknowledging one's duty is good."

"Umbha has been awaiting justice since a very long time. Hope the affected people of Umbha will get justice and their five demands will be fulfilled," she added.

After Adityanath's visit to Sonbhadra, the Congress general secretary in another tweet said, "Only when thousands of Congress workers and justice-loving people extended their support to the affected families of Umbha, then the Uttar Pradesh government felt that some serious incident has taken place. All the announcements, which have been made today, must be implemented at the earliest." She said the tribals should get the ownership of land and most importantly the people of the village should get security. **PTI**

## Govt looking at shifting Athivarathar idol to bigger place: TN CM

**Salem(TN):** Facing flak over 'poor arrangements' for devotees thronging a temple in Kancheepuram for worshipping Lord Athivarathar, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami said the Government was looking at the feasibility of shifting the idol of the deity to a bigger place to manage the burgeoning crowd.

Four devotees had died on Friday at the Devarajaswamy temple in Kancheepuram, about 70 km from Chennai, which has been witnessing heavy rush of devotees to have darshan of the deity's idol made of fig wood, called 'athi' in Tamil, on July 1 after it was taken out from the temple tank on June 27.

Four devotees died last week after darshan of Lord Athivarathar, a deity taken out from under the water once in 40 years, with Palaniswami inform-

ing the Assembly that they had 'pre-existing' health conditions. "Yesterday a meeting of Ministers, Secretaries of Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowments, Local Administration, Health and Revenue departments were held. In that meeting, issues faced by devotees who come to visit the temple were discussed. It was also discussed whether the idol can be shifted to a bigger place to manage the crowd," he told reporters here.

The 48-day "Athivaradar festival" has been drawing huge crowds, including women and senior citizens, since the first day. President Ram Nath Kovind offered prayers to the deity on July 12.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary K Shanmugam and DGP J Tripathy took stock of the situation at Kancheepuram on Sunday. **PTI**

## Shia board to discuss mob lynching in July 28 meet, press for strict laws

**Lucknow:** The All India Shia Personal Law Board will hold elaborate discussions on the need to have strict laws pertaining to mob lynching in its annual meeting scheduled for July 28 here.

"The one-day annual meeting of the All India Shia Personal Law Board (AISPLB) will be held in Lucknow on July 28, and a demand will be made to the State Government to frame strict laws pertaining to mob lynching," AISPLB spokesperson Maulana Mirza Yasooq Abbas said on Sunday. Referring to the mob lynching incidents reported from various parts of the country, he said members of a particular community are being targeted by the attackers.

"The Shia community is of the view that strict laws are needed to curb this and even capital punishment be awarded," Abbas said.

Taking a swipe at the 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,



Sabka Vishwaas' (with all, for everybody's development and having everyone's trust) slogan given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the AISPLB spokesperson said statements given by some leaders are 'breaking the 'vishwaas' (trust) instead of enhancing it'.

The meeting is also likely to deliberate upon how the Shia community is being "ignored" by successive governments, he said.

"The All India Shia Personal Law Board wants that a committee be constituted on

the lines of the Sachchar Committee to study the economic, social and educational situation of Shias," Abbas said, adding Shia Muslims are minorities among the minorities.

"Of the total population of the country, the Shias constitute 5 per cent, he said.

Apart from Uttar Pradesh, Shia clerics from Bihar, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana are likely to participate in the July 28 meeting, the spokesperson added. **PTI**

## Rape accused escapes from police custody; four cops suspended

**Jammu:** An accused in a rape case, who was brought at a hospital here for treatment, escaped from police custody, officials said on Sunday.

Four policemen escorting him have been suspended for dereliction of duty and a department inquiry ordered against them.

Sajad Ahmad, a resident of Chakyas village of Drass in Kargil, was brought to the Shri Maharaja Gulab Singh hospital for treatment from Sub-jail Reasi but managed to give a slip to the accompanying cops on Saturday, the officials said.

The accused was under judicial custody for the past two years in connection with a rape case registered against him at police station Mahore in Reasi district, the officials said. **PTI**

## Farmers meet UP Guv, seek return of land 'grabbed' by Azam Khan

**Lucknow:** A delegation of Rampur farmers met Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik here on Sunday, urging him to help them get back the "land of farmers" from senior SP leader Azam Khan.

The former Uttar Pradesh minister was named in the FIRs lodged in connection with alleged forcible acquisition of land for Mohammad Ali Jauhar University, of which he is the founder and Chancellor.

In a statement issued here, Congress leader Faisal Khan Lala said, "A 12-member delegation met UP Governor Ram Naik and handed over a memorandum to him, informing that despite being mentioned in the list of land grabbers, Azam Khan is unwilling to leave the land of farmers and poor people." "Despite a large number of

cases registered against him, police is yet to arrest him," he added.

Lala said the Governor assured of taking up the matter with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Family members of those whose land was allegedly grabbed by the Rampur MP were part of the delegation.

Recently, Rampur MP Azam Khan's name was put on an online list of "land mafias" by the district administration. "The name of the Rampur MP has been put on the list of the anti-land mafia portal of the State Government after FIRs were lodged against him on land-grabbing charges," Additional District Magistrate (Administration) JP Gupta had told PTI.

"The listing was done by SDM Sadar," he had said. **PTI**

## Tight security arrangements for Tripura panchayat polls

**Agartala:** Tight security arrangements have been made for Tripura panchayat elections and more than one thousand polling booths have been identified as "sensitive", a senior police officer has said.

Elections to the three-tier panchayat polls in Tripura would be held on July 27. Ballot papers would be used in the rural polls.

Tripura State Rifles (TSR) personnel and 17 companies of BSF and CRPF would be deployed in all the 1,848 polling booths of which 1,172 have been identified as sensitive, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Arindam

Nath told a press conference here on Saturday.

The DIG said 17 cases of poll violence have been registered in the state till July 20.

The BJP has won 85 per cent of the seats uncontested in the panchayat polls in Tripura.

"Of the total 6,646 seats comprising gram panchayats, panchayat samities and zilla parishads, the BJP has won 5,652 seats uncontested," secretary of the state Election Commission (SEC), Prasenjit Bhattacharya has said.

Polling will now be held for around 850 gram panchayats, 85 panchayat samities

and 80 zilla parishad seats, Bhattacharya said.

Tripura has a total 591 gram panchayats having 6,111 seats, 35 panchayat samities with 419 seats and eight zilla parishads having 116 seats, he said.

Altogether, 12,03,070 voters, including 6,16,893 male and 5, 86,176 women will exercise their franchise at 2,623 polling stations between 7 am to 4 pm on the polling day.

"White ballot papers would be used for gram panchayat polls, pink ones for panchayat samities and green papers for zilla parishads," the SEC secretary said. **PTI**

## Rohingya Muslims' attempt to enter Tripura prevented

**Agartala:** The Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday said the force has thwarted an attempt of at least 12 Rohingya Muslims to enter into Indian territory through Tripura from Bangladesh.

Two men, five women and as many children had tried to enter Siphajjala district, about 50 km from here.

"Our troops thwarted their attempts to enter into our territory through Futia village in the international border on Thursday. We have successfully prevented their entry. They are still on the zero line," BSF

Deputy Inspector General C L Belwa said.

A company commander-level flag meeting was held two days back on this with Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) which was followed by a battalion commander-level meeting, he said.

"We have seized biscuits and soft drinks from their (Rohingyas) possession, which were manufactured in Bangladesh. These were provided by the World Food Programme, at Cox's Bazar refugee camp in Bangladesh," he said. **PTI**

## Stop killing innocents, rise against those who looted Kashmir: Malik

**Srinagar:** In a statement likely to give way to a controversy, Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik on Sunday asked militants to stop killing innocent people, including security personnel, and rather target "those who have looted the wealth of Kashmir for years".

"These boys who have picked up guns are killing their own people, they are killing PSOs (personal security officer) and SPOs (special police officers). Why are you killing them? Kill those who have looted the wealth of Kashmir. Have you killed any of them?" Malik asked, speaking at a tourism function in Kargil of Ladakh region.

However, the Governor was quick to add that guns could never be the solution and cited the example of LTTE in Sri Lanka.

"The government of India will never go down before a gun," he said, asking the militants to not take the route of violence.

Taking a veiled dig at mainstream politicians, he said these leaders talk a different language in Delhi and different one in Kashmir.

"They should speak in one language at both places and need not scare us," he said.

The Governor was speaking at the inauguration of Kargil Ladakh Tourism Festival-2019

at Kthree Sultan Cho Sports Stadium Kargil.

The Governor said the twin districts of Kargil and Leh have huge tourism potential and said more such tourism festivals were needed.

He said the Kargil Airport's expansion work will begin soon and that ₹200 crore has been sanctioned for it. This will not only provide round-the-year connectivity but also give a new dimension to the tourism sector in the region, Malik said.

The Governor said the state administration is committed for the holistic development of Ladakh division and concrete measures were being pursued towards this goal. **PTI**

## Over 4000 pilgrims leave Jammu for Amarnath Yatra

**Jammu:** The 20th batch comprising 4158 pilgrims including 1137 women and 260 sadhus Sunday left Bhagwati Nagar base camp here to offer prayers at the 3,880 metre high holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said.

As many as 2,59,889 yatris had visited the cave shrine, housing the naturally formed ice-shivlingam, till Saturday evening since the commencement of the annual 46-day yatra on July 1. The pilgrimage is scheduled to end on August 15, coinciding Raksha Bandhan festival, they said.

A fleet of 156 vehicles carrying the latest batch, which also included 19 children, left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp under tight security arrange-

ments in the early hours Sunday and will be reaching the twin base camps of Pahalgam in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal district later in the day, the officials said.

While 2139 pilgrims including 751 women and 16 children are registered for Baltal route, the rest of 2019 pilgrims including 386 women, three children and 260 sadhus are heading for Pahalgam to undertake the yatra from there.

The yatra is going on smoothly from both the tracks — traditional 36-km Pahalgam and shorter 14-km Baltal route, the officials said. As many as 2,85,006 lakh pilgrims had paid obeisance at the shrine last year, while the number of pilgrims was 2,60,003 in 2017, 3,20,490 in 2016 and 3,52,771 in 2015. **PTI**

## INDIANS ONBOARD SEIZED BRITISH TANKER IN IRAN

# Kerala CM appeals to Centre for security

**Thiruvananthapuram/Kochi:** Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Sunday urged the Centre to take all possible efforts to secure the release of Indian nationals including four Keralites on board a British-flagged oil tanker seized by the Gulf country in the Strait of Hormuz.

In a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, he asked the ministry to share the details of the persons aboard the ship so that their families could be helped.

"I request that all possible efforts to ensure the safety of the crew be made and the relevant details of persons may be shared with the state government so that their family members can be contacted and we can be of help in their hour of crisis," Vijayan said in the letter, the copy of which was released to the media here. Congress MP Hibi Eden,



Representational image

representing Ernakulam constituency, also sought urgent intervention of the Central government for release of the Indian nationals.

Eden visited the family of Dijo Pappachan, a crew member on board the seized tanker,

here. Family of Pappachan hailing from Kalamassery here said the tanker owners have informed them that Dijo was onboard the seized oil tanker.

Asked about the reports that two more people from

Ernakulam district were among the crew, Eden said there was no official information so far.

Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan had said on Saturday diplomatic efforts

were on to secure the release of Indian nationals on board the tanker.

"We are waiting for response from Iranian authorities," Muraleedharan had told reporters in Kuthiran in Thrissur district Saturday evening.

India had said Saturday that it was in touch with Iran to secure release of the Indians on board the British-flagged oil tanker seized by the Gulf country in the Strait of Hormuz.

"We are ascertaining further details on the incident. Our Mission is in touch with the Government of Iran to secure the early release and repatriation of Indian nationals," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar had said in response to a question on the detention of Indian crew members along with the oil tanker Stena Impero by Iranian authorities. **PTI**

According to a media report, 18 Indian nationals are among the 23 crew members of the British-flagged oil tanker seized by Iran amid fresh escalation of tensions in the Gulf region.

The Stena Impero was seized on Friday by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

Iran's seizure of a British-flagged oil tanker was allegedly due to a collision with an Iranian fishing boat, Iran's official news agency IRNA had said.

"There are 18 Indian and five crew members from Russia, the Philippines, Latvia and other countries on board of Stena Impero. The captain is Indian, but the tanker is UK-flagged," the news agency quoted Allahmorad Afifipour, director general of Ports and Maritime Affairs of Hormuzgan province, as saying. **PTI**

BELEAGUERED FADNAVIS ON CM'S POST

# 'Have already said I'll return for 2nd-term'

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said he was the Chief Minister of not only the BJP but also the allies in the State Government and exuded confidence that he would return for a second-term to the top post.

The post of Chief Minister has been a bone of contention between the BJP and the Shiv Sena and leaders from both the parties have spoken out of turn on it.

"I am Chief Minister of not only the BJP but also the Shiv Sena, RPI, Rashtriya Samaj Paksh (all allies in the state government). People will decide who will be the next chief minister. You need not worry. Our work will speak for us," he told party workers at the state executive meeting held here.

"I have already said this that I will return," Fadnavis said.

"Some people are raking up the issue of the Chief Minister's post. Don't fall into this trap. There are people from both parties who speak unnecessarily," he said.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut Sunday evening said there was no dispute between the two parties regarding the chief minister's post.

"There is no dispute over the chief minister's post

between the Shiv Sena and BJP," he told PTI, but refused to elaborate.

Raut also refused to comment on Fadnavis' statement that he was the "chief minister of the BJP and the Shiv Sena" and that he would return to the top post after the state polls.

Recently, there was also talk of Yuva Sena chief Aaditya Thackeray being the Sena's pick for the chief minister's post.

In response, Thackeray had said, "It is the people who will have to decide whether I am ready to occupy the post or not. I can't talk about it as this is the only thing which is not in my hand."

Thackeray was speaking to a news channels Friday during his 'Jan Ashirwad' yatra in north Maharashtra.

The two parties are expected to fight on equal number of seats, and some Sena leaders have routinely stressed that "equal power sharing" also meant sharing the chief minister's post for identical tenures.

Fadnavis said the 2019 Assembly polls in the state would be fought in alliance (with the Sena and other parties) and discussions on seat-sharing would be held soon.

Allaying fears that influx of leaders from other parties into the BJP would put old-timers at a disadvantage, Fadnavis said it was about inducting

good people from other outfits.

"If they wish to join us, our people shouldn't be disturbed. Eight-five per cent of (BJP) candidates in the (2019) Lok Sabha polls were our people," he said.

He told workers not to be complacent post the massive mandate the BJP got in the Lok Sabha polls, as the Assembly elections in the state would be a different battleground.

"Since the battleground is different, our strategy will also have to be different. Don't be complacent and take people for granted," he said.

The chief minister told the gathering that they should be satisfied with the development currently on under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi instead of vying for posts.

He asked partymen not to seek tickets or recommend names as the criteria for nomination was fixed, adding that "we will fight each seat to win."

"The Congress' national, state and Mumbai president have been defeated in the Lok Sabha polls. The NCP president accepted defeat even before the election and the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi also suffered defeat. Defeat doesn't mean insult. Let us train our opponents on how to function as the opposition for 10-15 years," he said. **PTI**

# Modi Government has changed India, brought 'achchhe din': Nadda

**Mumbai:** BJP working president JP Nadda on Sunday said the country has changed under the Narendra Modi-led Government which has brought "good days" in the last five years.

He said when the BJP says it aims at a "Congress-mukt Bharat" (India free of Congress), it means it wants a country free of corruption.

"Achhe din ayenge" (good days will come) and "Desh badal raha hai" (the country is changing) were the slogans of the BJP's campaign in 2014. We would like to remind the people that good days have arrived and the country has already changed in the last five years," he said, addressing the BJP's Maharashtra state executive committee meeting here.

At the meeting, he highlighted the Modi government's achievements in health sector, poverty alleviation, infrastructure, agriculture and rural development.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has changed the "political culture" of the country, he said.

He said when the BJP says it wants a "Congress-mukt Bharat", it means a country free of "corruption and commission".

"By saying Congress-mukt, we don't mean the party as such. 'BJP-yukt' means development-oriented. It means focus on service and development and work at the grassroots level and not work for self-motion," Nadda said.

"Modi's victories in 2014 and 2019 are a rejection of the vote bank and caste politics," he said, adding that "look globally, act locally", should be the motto of BJP workers.

Before 2014, India's image abroad was that of a corrupt country which suffered foreign policy paralysis and lacked direction, he claimed.

"Now, people of Indian origin abroad and those living here feel proud to be Indian," he said, pointing out that Modi has been conferred awards for his achievements by countries like the UAE, Israel, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

The Modi government's cleanliness drive was mocked, but the prime minister was given the 'Champion of the Earth' award by the United Nations, he said.

Nadda asked BJP workers to focus on strengthening the party at the booth level.

Earlier, newly-appointed state BJP chief Chandrakant Patil urged the party workers to focus on poll preparations for all 288 assembly seats in the state.

"Let's leave the alliance talks and seat-sharing to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and party chief Amit Shah. Let's strengthen the BJP at the booth-level in the state. Even if our allies contest particular seats, our booth structure will ensure their victory. Let's focus only on this," he said. **PTI**

# Mizoram's lone surviving INA member, dies at 99

**Aizawl:** Darthawma, the lone surviving Mizo member of Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army (INA), died of multi-organ failure in south Mizoram's Lunglei on Sunday morning, his family said.

He was 99. The freedom fighter's last rites were performed at Lunglei, 170 km from here, this afternoon.

It was attended by representatives from the district administration, Army, paramilitary forces, non-governmental organisations and Ex-Servicemen.

He is survived by six children, 19 grandchildren and 28 great grandchildren.

Darthawma had joined the Army Medical Corps of the British Indian Army on November 27, 1940 during the World War 2 and was captured by the Japanese Imperial Army in early 1942 during his posting at Malaysia's Penang Island.

He joined the INA in May 1942 to fight against the British colonial rule.

Two years after joining the INA, Darthawma was captured by the British in 1944 but was released from Lucknow Jail on January 15, 1945 following the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Indian Government awarded him the 'Tamrapatra Award' in 1972 for his role in the struggle for Indian independence. **PTI**

# Bengal BJP dares Mamata to name CBI officers who 'threatened' TMC leaders

**Kolkata:** West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh dared Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday to name the CBI officers, who had allegedly threatened TMC leaders to join the saffron camp.

Addressing the Martyrs' Day rally here on Sunday, Banerjee, who is also the Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo, alleged that central agencies were threatening leaders and elected representatives of her party to "get in touch" with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or face a jail term in chit fund scams.

She, however, did not name any central agency.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) are separately probing two multi-crore-rupee Ponzi scheme cases in West Bengal.

Ghosh said the chief minister was "trying to malign the CBI" as she was afraid of the investigations being conducted into the chit fund scams.

"Today, she (Banerjee) alleged that CBI officers had asked her party workers to get in touch with the BJP or face imprisonment in connection with the chit fund scams. I challenge her to name the CBI officers, who threatened her party leaders."

"If she is unable to name any officer, she should refrain from making baseless allegations," he said at a press conference here. **PTI**

Reacting to Banerjee's allegation that the BJP was luring TMC MLAs with Rs two crore in cash and a petrol pump, Ghosh said none of them, not even the chief minister, had such a high "market value".

Banerjee alleged on Sunday that the saffron party was trying to "replicate Karnataka's horse-trading model" in Bengal by offering Rs two crore in cash and a petrol pump each to her party MLAs.

"None of the TMC MLAs has such a high market value. Even if they stand idle on the road, no one would be interested in buying them. Not even Banerjee has such a high market value," the state BJP chief said.

Responding to the TMC supremo's statement that a probe would be ordered to ascertain if state BJP leaders were taking commissions to extend the benefits of the Centre's Ujjwala scheme to the beneficiaries, he said the allegation was bereft of truth.

"She has been saying this for the last few years. Why didn't she take any action in the matter all this while? No BJP leader is involved in any scam. Paying 'cut' money to TMC leaders, however, has become a way of life in Bengal," Ghosh asserted.

He claimed that the rally organised by the TMC annually witnessed the lowest turnout in its history this year. **PTI**

# 1 dead in fire at building near Taj Mahal Hotel

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

One person was killed and 14 others were rescued on Sunday afternoon when fire broke in an old dilapidated building located behind Taj Mahal Hotel on Merry Weather Road at Colaba in south Mumbai. Two persons, including a fireman, were injured in the mishap.

Though the cause of the fire has not been established yet, informed sources attributed the mishap to a possible electric short-circuit.

The fire, which broke out in a third floor flat of Church Chamber Building at around 12.10 pm, spread to stair case of the second floor of the ground plus three-storey structure. "The fire was confined to electric wiring, electric installation, furniture, household articles in residential flat on 3rd floor with Loft in an area about approx.5000 sq.ft and staircase



Firefighters attempt to douse a fire at Church Chamber building near Taj Mahal hotel in Mumbai on Sunday **PTI**

of the 2nd floor," a senior fire official said.

One Sham Iyer (54), a resident of the flat where fire broke out, went back inside the flat after his family members ran out, to extinguish and got trapped in the blaze, before the fire brigade arrived on the scene.

During the subsequent search of the flat, Iyer was found with critical burn wounds on his back. Iyer was rushed to GT Hospital, when he was declared upon arrival. Another injured resident, identified as one Yusuf Punawala is undergoing treatment at the Bombay Hospital.

A fireman Bhurmal Santosh Patil from Mandvi Fire Station suffered suffocation while undertaking rescue operation. He was treated inside an ambulance near the mishap site and allowed to go.

The fire brigade personnel battled with fire and smoke for three hours, before bringing the situation under control. They used four fire fighting jets, four fire engines, two Turn Table Ladders and one Angus ladder in the operation.

Of those rescued, five persons - including two girls and a boy - were brought out in a suffocated state from the loft of third floor, while two others were rescued with the help of Angus Ladder - a 45 feet manual extension. Three persons were brought down from the building with the help of a Turn Table Ladder, while the remaining persons were rescued safely by firemen from the staircase using breathing sets.



Muslims offer 'Namaz-e-Istisqa' a special prayer for rains at Himayat Sagar Lake on the outskirts of Hyderabad on Sunday **PTI**

# Community project for autistic people to be ready by 2023

**Kolkata:** In a first of its kind in the country, a township for children suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is coming up in the outskirts of the city and will become operational by 2023.

The India Autism Center (IAC), a community-based initiative will have the capacity to accommodate 4,000 people as its residents, including the families of those having autism, managing trustee and IAC chairman Suresh Somani said on Saturday.

The centre would be located

on a 53 acre plot at Sirakol in adjoining South 24 Parganas district and would be constructed at a cost of ₹350 crore, Somani told PTI.

ASD is a complex neurodevelopment disorder which affects the behaviour of a person and the ability to process information. It affects a wide variety of areas like social interaction, social communication and speech.

"It is a genetic disorder and the level of awareness and knowledge is still low in the country," he said. **PTI**

# Liquor worth ₹10 lakh seized in Bihar

**Purnea:** The Bihar Police has seized 200 cartons of Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) worth around ₹10 lakh and arrested two persons in this connection in Purnea district, an officer said on Sunday.

The consignment was seized on Saturday during vehicle checks at Dalkhola checkpoint, upon receiving a tip-off, that a truckload of liquor from neighbouring West Bengal was being smuggled into Bihar through NH 31, Superintendent of Police Vishal Sharma said.

The cargo was meant to be

delivered at an address in Bihar's Saran district, he said.

Two persons identified as Shamshul Haque and Jahangir Alam, residents of Alhapur village in West Bengal's North Dinajpur district were arrested. Sharma said that ₹17.500 in cash and two mobile phones were also seized from their possession.

The accused have been booked under relevant sections of the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act 2016, and produced in the court, which sent them to judicial custody, he said. **PTI**

# India bags 1 gold, 7 silvers in Olympiads

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Indian teams put up stupendous performance at the 60th International Mathematics Olympiad (IMO) and 30th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) 2019, by winning one gold medal, seven silver medals and two honourable mentions.

At the IMO held at Bath in the United Kingdom, Pranjal Srivastava (Bengaluru, Karnataka) won a gold medal, Ritam Nag (Kolkata, West Bengal), Anubhab Ghosal (Kolkata, West Bengal), Bhavya Agrawalla (Indore, Madhya Pradesh) and Ojas Mittal (New Delhi) bagged silver medals. Soumil Aggarwal (New Delhi) received an Honourable men-



Members of Indian team that participated in 30th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) 2019 at Szeged in Hungary **Pioneer photo**

tion. India finished 15th at the IMO.

At the IBO-2019 at Szeged, Hungary between July 14 and July 21, 2019, three of the four Indian students bagged Silver medals, while one student received an Honourable Mention.

Those who won silver medals were: Hardik Gupta (Agra, Uttar Pradesh), Arunangshu Bhattacharyya (Surat, Gujarat) and Suryadeep Mandal (Bankura, West Bengal). Akshay Gupta (Vadodara, Gujarat) received an Honourable Mention.

In all, 112 countries participated in the IMO-2019, while 72 countries took part in the IBO.

The IBO competition consists of a theoretical and an experimental examination, each of six hours duration. Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE), a national centre of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) is the nodal centre in the country for all the Science Olympiads (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Astronomy and Astrophysics and Junior Science) as well as the Mathematical Olympiad. The HBCSE is responsible for the selection and training of the teams representing India at the international Olympiads.

# J&K: Police to revamp village defence committees to curb terrorism

**Jammu:** Nearly 500 elderly Village Defence Committee (VDC) members and Special Police Officers (SPO) in Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir will be replaced soon, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

The step is part of a strategy to counter terror activities in the hilly district which was rattled by the killing of BJP state secretary Anil Parihar and his brother Ajeet Parihar on November 1 last year, followed by the assassination of senior RSS leader Chanderkant Sharma and his security guard inside a health centre on April 9.

The decision was taken despite reservations expressed by former Chief Minister

Mehbooba Mufti over arming of civilians in Chenab valley.

"Keeping in view the present security scenario in Kishtwar town and the over-staying of SPOs in the district (Kishtwar), an overhauling is being done. A process to replace 352 VDC members and 117 VDC SPOs who are above the age of 60 years has been set into motion," the officer said.

The SPOs, who have over-stayed at a particular place have also been replaced. Besides this, 9 VDC SPOs have been disengaged from the VDC rolls for non-compliance of orders, the officer said.

In response to the recently held SPOs recruitment, he said a list of around 85 meritorious candidates was sent to police

headquarters for final approval.

The VDCs were set up in the mid-1990s with an aim to strengthen the security of Hindus living in remote and mountainous areas of Doda, Kishtwar, Ramba, Rajouri, Reasi, Kathua and Poonch districts of the region.

The members of these committees not only guard the identified villages along the border, but also the infrastructural installations in and around them.

Kishtwar along with several other districts of Jammu province were declared terrorism free over a decade ago but after the recent killings, the authorities have taken various steps to counter attempts by terrorists to gain a foothold in the



Chenab valley. - eight belonging to Hizbul Mujahideen and two affiliated to Lashker-e-Toiba-- were active in the district. **PTI**

Describing the reported plans of the Centre and the Jammu and Kashmir administration to arm civilians in the sensitive Chenab valley as "alarming", Mufti, who is also Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president, had warned that the move would have "dangerous consequences".

She said similar experiments of arming civilians under the anti-militancy grid in the 1990s had led to complete chaos and the wounds inflicted upon the general masses were still fresh.

"Reports about the administration trying to arm civilians under the garb of creating VDC in Chenab valley are disturbing and alarming especially at the time when the gov-

ernment has to be inclusive to avoid further alienation of youth across the state," Mufti had said in a statement on Saturday.

On Friday, police registered a case against former PDP MLC Firdous Tak and some other party leaders after they staged a demonstration against the state administration for strengthening VDCs in the district.

Mufti dubbed the FIR "false and frivolous" and demanded its immediate rollback.

"The party leaders have represented the sentiments and aspirations of the people but it seems that the local administration are working under pressure from a particular political organisation. The registration of

the case only speaks about the sorry state of affairs in Chenab valley," she said.

On July 17, a three-member delegation of senior BJP leaders led by former deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh met Governor Satya Pal Malik at Raj Bhavan in Srinagar and demanded the strengthening of the security apparatus including VDCs and provision of mobile bunkers in Chenab valley region.

They expressed concern regarding growing threats to the safety and security of people, illegal encroachments on forest land, and incidents of bovine smuggling in the region.

The Governor had assured the delegation due consideration of its demands. **PTI**

# Strong rupee, lower GDP to tame inflation to 4.1%: ADB



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has lowered the inflation forecast for India during the current financial year to 4.1 per cent, on the back of gain in rupee and cut in the country's GDP projection.

India will be the main driver to lower the inflation for the South Asian region, ADB said in a supplement to Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2019.

South Asia's inflation forecast for 2019, was revised down from 4.7 per cent to 4.5 per cent, mainly reflecting lowered forecasts for India, the ADO supplement said.

The ADO supplement has lowered India's GDP growth

forecast by 0.2 percentage points from April outlook to 7 per cent in 2019-20.

"In light of a smaller-than-expected uptick in food inflation, a strengthening Indian rupee since October 2018, and a lower GDP growth forecast, this Supplement revises down inflation forecasts for India by 0.2 percentage points to 4.1 per cent in FY2019 (fiscal ending in March 2020) and 4.4 per cent in FY2020 (ending March 2021)," ADB said.

As per the ADO supplement, inflation projections for developing Asia were revised up a notch from 2.5 per cent to 2.6 per cent in both 2019 and 2020, reflecting higher oil prices and several domestic factors.

Price fluctuations for Brent crude oil continue amid various concerns affecting both supply and demand, it added.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank in its last monetary policy review in June had raised the retail inflation forecast marginally to 3-3.1 per cent for the first half of the current fiscal citing reasons of uptick in food prices — mainly vegetables, despite expectations of a normal monsoon this season.

However, the retail inflation projection for the second half of 2019-20 has been cut to 3.4-3.7 per cent as against RBI's previous projection of 3.5-3.8 per cent.

The RBI will review the monetary policy in its upcoming meeting in early August.

# AI freezes promotions, new appointments amid stake sale preparations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India has stopped giving promotions to its employees and recruiting new personnel as the Government prepares for the disinvestment of the debt-laden airline, an official said Sunday.

The Government is expected to soon start the disinvestment process for Air India, which has a debt burden of more than ₹50,000 crore.

For the disinvestment process, the official said the airline's books of accounts till July 15, have been closed and those financials would be used while seeking bids.

Promotions and fresh appointments have also been frozen ahead of the stake sale for Air India, the official added.

The airline has around 10,000 permanent employees.

There was no immediate comment from Air India. Query sent to Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola remained unanswered.

Sources said Air India has also asked all department heads to ensure that there is no recovery pending against any of the employees.

The message was conveyed to the heads of departments by the airline's HR Director Amrita Sharan during a conference call last week, they added.

The Government is looking to complete the Air India stake sale in the next four to five months.

Air India is currently making a revenue of ₹15 crore

everyday.

Efforts to sell 76 per cent stake in the national carrier failed to take off in 2018. Then transaction adviser EY in its report had cited the government retaining 24 per cent stake and corresponding rights and high debt as reasons for the failure of the disinvestment process.

On July 3, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri told the Rajya Sabha that the government is committed to the disinvestment of Air India and the plan is to make it more operationally viable before stake sale.

"It (Air India) will be sold when the buyer ultimately gives the cheque and there are certain prerequisites before any sale, those also have to be met. I do expect that to be finished in 4-5 months but nevertheless to provide for that exigency, we have not accounted for Air India sale proceeds (in budgeted disinvestment proceeds)."

"We will try to finish it off by Diwali, if not before," Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Atanu Chakraborty said on July 7.

In her Budget speech on July 5, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that in view of current macro-economic parameters, the Government would not only reinstate the process of strategic disinvestment of Air India, but would offer more central public sector enterprises for strategic participation by the private sector.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Market regulator Sebi has expanded its probe into the role of five credit rating agencies after a forensic audit mandated by the new board of crisis-ridden IL&FS flagged serious lapses and their possible complicity with the former top brass of the group in giving top ratings despite weak financials.

While CEOs of two rating agencies have already been forced to go on leave pending completion of the probe on the advice of Sebi, officials said the regulator is now looking into possible systemic lapses at all five rating agencies and also into the role of multiple people suspected to have intentionally manipulated the rating procedures.

The special audit conducted by Grant Thornton found that its review of emails exchanged by the former key executives of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) group and the top officials of rating agencies showed that they were aware of the serious liquidity concerns and weakening financials of the group.

"However, various strategies deployed by the then key officials of IL&FS group and certain favours/gifts provided to rating agency officials suggest the possible reasons for consistent good ratings provided to IL&FS group during the period June 2012 to June 2018," an interim report of the special audit said.

The report has also high-

lighted instances where CRAs had "initially decided to downgrade the ratings, but a combination of tactics employed by then key employees of IL&FS and favours/gifts extended to key officials of CRAs resulted in either consistent/good ratings or avoidance of rating downgrade".

The new board of IL&FS, which was appointed in October last year after massive defaults by the group post its debt burden ballooning to over Rs 90,000 crore and suspected wrong-doings by the former top management, had mandated Grant Thornton to carry out a special audit for all high-value transactions undertaken by IL&FS Ltd and some of its group companies for the period between April 2013 and September 2018.

The audit is aimed at identifying siphoning or misuse of funds, fraudulent transactions, their modus operandi, the quantum of the financial loss and fixing of responsibility.

Grant Thornton was also asked to review the ratings provided by various credit rating agencies (CRAs) to IL&FS Transportation Networks Ltd (ITNL), IL&FS Financial Services Ltd (IFIN) and IL&FS Ltd.

In its interim report, Grant Thornton said it appears CRAs had consistently provided and maintained good ratings over the years until in July/August 2018 when they downgraded ratings for the first time for ITNL due to a default of repayment of commercial papers.

During the review period,

IL&FS Group had availed rating services from Crisil Ltd, CARE Ratings, ICRA, India Ratings (a Fitch group company) and Brickwork.

Officials at the rating agencies denied any lapses on their part and some even said the interim report seems to suggest limited knowledge of the rating process and was based on one-sided information.

A higher rating typically helps a borrower get a lower rate of interest and is aimed at assuring investors about the creditworthiness of the company. Besides, it helps create a wider borrowing landscape for the company and is also often used as a marketing tool in the form of a better image in dealing with customers.

Grant Thornton said it identified multiple e-mails over the period from 2008 to 2018 which indicate that the IL&FS group was under stress or faced liquidity issues since 2015.

The main reasons for the liquidity crunch have been identified as a significant increase in debt in the various group companies, majorly ITNL, high capital requirement for ITNL and its various SPVs, decreasing profit of IL&FS group and support to weaker group companies.

It has also identified instances which suggest that CRAs had multiple concerns for the last 6-7 years on the operations of the IL&FS group, but the ratings assigned by them remained consistently high until they were reversed or downgraded after June-July 2018.

# World Bank ready to finance other projects in AP: Official

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

The World Bank has apprised the Andhra Pradesh government of its readiness to finance other projects in the state in spite of its refusal to a \$300 million Amaravati project, an official said.

World Bank officials communicated this to the state government after the \$300 million loan proposal for Amaravati was dropped at the behest of the Centre, a top official in the Chief Minister's Office said.

"The Washington-based Bank is now not averse to extending loan to AP government according to the latter's priorities. The possibility of increasing the quantum of loan was also not ruled out by the Bank," the official said.

He indicated that the Government might seek World Bank assistance for funding the flagship Navaratna programme that was aimed at improving the living standards of citizens in tune with the Sustainable Development Goals.

World Bank officials informed the state government officials that the loan proposal

was dropped mainly due to "non-compliance of its policies," particularly those related to settlement of affected people.

Also, alleged rampant corruption and flouting of various socio-economic norms were cited as other reasons, the CMO official said.

The Independent Accountability Mechanism (teams) of the World Bank conducted an extensive study in the field after touring the capital region in September 2017.

The Bank teams found "many irregularities in the tender process which were heavily loaded in favour of contractors."

They also detected many irregularities in land pooling, utilisation of verdant agricultural land for other purposes, agriculture workers losing livelihood, serious environmental violations, the plan of the new proposed capital affecting the course of Krishna River and other issues.

The World Bank, based on field-level investigations, sought an explanation from the Capital Region Development Authority over these issues but the explanation was "unsatisfactory."

# Govt sweetens deal to attract bidders for Pawan Hans

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Having failed to privatise Pawan Hans last fiscal, the Government has significantly diluted the terms of sale pertaining to employee retrenchment, asset sale and tax liability to attract bidders this time around, sources said.

As per the revised terms of sale proposed by the Government, the successful bidder would be required to retain all permanent employees for a period of at least one year, as against two years stipulated earlier.

The Government has also decided to indemnify the buyer against ₹577 crore worth tax liability of Pawan Hans in case an ongoing tax dispute is decided against the company.

The revised terms of sale have also reduced the time period for stripping of assets of Pawan Hans by the buyer to two years, from three years specified earlier. The relaxation in norms will provide greater freedom to the successful bidder to manage Pawan Hans, the sources said.

The Government had last fiscal tried to sell the helicopter service provider but no buyer came forward. The Government holds 51 per cent stake in Pawan Hans, which has a fleet of 43 helicopters. The remaining 49 per cent is with ONGC.

After the new Government took over, it decided to sweeten the deal by diluting certain crucial terms of sale in view of the concerns raised by potential bidders when Pawan Hans was first put on the block.

As of April 30, 2019, Pawan Hans had 718 employees, of which 415 were regular and 303 on contract. The company's manpower comprises 116 pilots, 101 aircraft maintenance engineers (AMEs), 52 executives, 157 technicians and 292 other technical and non-technical employees.

The firm posted revenues of ₹410 crore in 2018-19, while employee cost was about ₹180 crore.

According to the revised sale terms, the successful bidder would be permitted to provide voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) to existing Pawan Hans employees as per the terms specified by the Department of Public Enterprises.

As regards stripping of assets held by Pawan Hans, the successful bidder would be permitted to sell, transfer or lease the assets two years after consummation of the transaction.

The Government on July 11 had come out with a fresh Preliminary Information Memorandum (PIM), a document inviting bids from companies having minimum net



worth of ₹350 crore.

The last date for submission of Expression of Interest (EoI) is August 22, 2019, and the short-listed bidder will be intimated on September 12.

If the Pawan Hans sale goes through, it would add to the disinvestment kitty and kickstart the process of privatisation. The Budget has set a disinvestment target of ₹1.05 lakh crore for current fiscal, up from ₹85,000 crore raised last fiscal.

The Government had first floated an offer to sell its 51 per cent stake in Pawan Hans in October 2017, but in view of subdued response from bidders, the EoI was withdrawn in April 2018. At that time, some investors had suggested that the Government and ONGC should sell their stakes together.

Later in April, 2018, the

Government again issued an information memorandum for 51 per cent strategic stake sale in Pawan Hans and had sought EoI from interested bidders by June 18, 2018.

On July 2, 2018, ONGC wrote to the Government saying its board has resolved that it would prefer to exit Pawan Hans simultaneously with the Government, following which the Centre came out with a fresh PIM in August 2018, putting 100 per cent stake in the helicopter company on the block.

When the financial bid process concluded on March 6, 2019, only one investor had put in a "conditional bid", which was not accepted. The Pawan Hans sale process was then put on hold till the new Government took charge post the general elections.

# GST Council to decide on tax cut on EVs this week



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will meet on July 25 and decide on lowering tax rates for electric vehicles, officials said.

The 36th meeting of the Council, which will happen through video conferencing, is also likely to decide the valuation of goods and services in solar power generating systems and wind turbine projects for the purposes of levying GST.

The Council, which has State Finance Ministers as members, in its meeting last month, had referred the issue relating to Goods and Services Tax (GST) concessions on electric vehicle, electric chargers and hiring of electric vehicles, to an officers committee.

The recommendations of the officers committee is likely to be placed before the Council on July 25, officials said.

To push domestic manufacturing of e-vehicles, the Centre proposed to the Council to slash GST rates to 5 per cent

from 12 per cent.

GST rate for petrol and diesel cars and hybrid vehicles is already at the highest bracket of 28 per cent plus cess.

The Council will also consider tax structure for solar power projects.

The Delhi High Court had in May asked the GST council to take a relook at the taxation structure following industry petition.

The Government had earlier this year said that for the purpose of taxing solar power projects, 70 per cent of contract value would be treated as goods — taxable at 5 per cent, and balance 30 per cent as services — taxable at 18 per cent.

The solar industry has been pitching for a different ratio for splitting goods and services for levying GST.

Further, the Council may also look at taxation of lotteries. In the previous meeting, the Council had decided to seek legal opinion of the Attorney General for levying GST.

Currently, a State-organised lottery attracts 12 per cent GST, while a state-authorised lottery attracts 28 per cent tax.

# 345 infra projects show cost overruns of ₹3.28 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 345 infrastructure projects, each worth ₹150 crore or more, have shown cost overruns to the tune of over ₹3.28 lakh crore owing to delays and other reasons, a report said.

Total original cost of implementation of the 1453 projects was ₹18,32,579.17 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be ₹21,61,313.18 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of ₹3,28,734.01 crore (17.94% of original cost), "the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's latest report for April 2019 said.

The ministry monitors infrastructure projects worth ₹150 crore and above. Of these 1,453 projects, 345 reported cost overruns and 388 time escalation.

According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till April 2019 is ₹8,84,906.88 crore, which is 40.94 per cent of the anticipated

cost of the projects.

However, it said the number of delayed projects decreases to 317 if delay is calculated on the basis of latest schedule of completion.

For 749 projects, neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported.

Out of 388 delayed projects, 121 projects have overall delay in the range of 1 to 12 months, 78 projects have been delayed by 13 to 24 months, 98 projects reflect delay in the range of 25 to 60 months and 91 projects show 61 months and above delay.

The average time overrun in these 388 delayed projects is 40.28 months.

The brief reasons for time overruns, as reported by various project implementing agencies, are delays in land acquisition, forest clearance



and supply of equipment.

Besides, there are other reasons like fund constraints, geological surprises, geo-mining conditions, slow progress in civil works, shortage of labour, inadequate mobilisation by the contractor, Maoist problems, court cases, contractual issues, ROU/ROW (right of use/right of way) problems, law and order situation, among others, the report said.

It also observed that project agencies are not reporting revised cost estimates and commissioning schedules for many projects, which suggests that time/cost overrun figures are under-reported.

# China importers seek to lift tariffs on US farm goods: State media

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

Chinese importers are applying to their government to lift tariffs on some US agricultural imports, state media reported on Sunday, three weeks after the two sides reached a truce in their trade war.

The unnamed importers were talking to US suppliers about potential pricing and have applied to a Chinese government body with oversight of tariffs to lift the levies, the nearly identical reports in various media outlets said.

The importers were acting "according to the needs of the domestic market," the reports said. No further details were given, such as which products might be affected.

The move may be a goodwill gesture after the United States earlier this month was reported to have removed 110 Chinese export items from its own tariffs list.

The two economic giants have hit each other with puni-

ty tariffs covering more than \$360 billion in two-way trade since US President Donald Trump launched a trade war last year, damaging manufacturers on both sides of the Pacific. But Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to a truce and to revive fractious trade negotiations when they met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Japan on June 29.

The Chinese media outlets on Sunday did not cite a specific source for the reported request to lift the tariffs on US goods.

The reports came just a few days after Trump accused China of backsliding on promises to increase purchases of American farm exports.

Following the Osaka summit, Trump announced that, in return for Washington's pledge to suspend a planned tariff increase on \$300 billion in Chinese imports, Beijing had offered to buy "a tremendous amount of food and agriculture product" from the United States.

# FPIs withdraw ₹7,712 crore from stocks in July so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors pulled out around ₹7,712 crore from Indian equities in this month so far following the 'super-rich' tax announced in the budget for 2019-20, according to analysts.

FPIs had been net investors in the equity segment in the previous five months.

According to the latest data available with depositories, a net sum of ₹7,712.12 crore has been pulled out from equities during July 1-19. However, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) pumped in ₹9,371.12 crore in the debt segment during the period. This has translated into a net investment of around ₹1,659 crore in July so far into the capital markets (both equity and debt).

He further added that from an investment perspective, the current scenario is clearly "unfavourable" for FPIs to invest in Indian equities.



The conclave on Orthopaedic Oncology was organised by Delhi Orthopaedic Association and co-hosted by Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre (RGIRC) and IMSOS. The conclave termed Orthopaedic Oncology CME (Continuing Medical Education) had distinguished faculty including Dr Ajay Puri (Tata Memorial Centre), Dr Ashish Gulia (Tata Memorial Centre), Dr Anand Raja (Adyar Institute) and Dr Gauri Kapoor (RGIRC). Around 100 orthopaedic surgeons participated in the event. There is urgent need to raise awareness about Sarcoma, to save life and limbs of young who are falling prey to this cancer

# Hong Kong protesters egg China office

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Masked protesters threw eggs at China's office in Hong Kong on Sunday night following another massive rally, focusing anger towards the embodiment of Beijing's rule with no end in sight to the turmoil engulfing the finance hub.

The city has been plunged into its worst crisis in recent history by weeks of marches and sporadic violent confrontations between police and pockets of hardcore protesters.

The initial protests were lit by a now-suspended bill that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China.

But they have since evolved into a wider movement calling for democratic reforms, universal suffrage and a halt to sliding freedoms in the semi-autonomous territory.

Police have fired tear gas and rubber bullets, while the parliament has been trashed by protesters as Beijing's authority faces its most serious challenge since Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997.

On Sunday tens of thousands of anti-government protesters marched through the streets -- the seventh weekend in-a-row that residents have



Protesters gesture while holding placards reads 'Form an independent investigation on legislative committee' during a march in Hong Kong on Sunday

come out en-masse. Police ordered protesters to follow a shorter route than normal, but the designated finish line was widely ignored as crowds headed towards the Liaison Office -- the department that represents China's central government.

Thousands of masked demonstrators then seized the road outside the imposing skyscraper, erected barricades and began targeting the building with eggs, projectiles, laser lights and graffiti.

"We are here to declare that Beijing is the one violating our governing values and judicial procedures," a 19-year-old pro-

tester who gave his first name as Tony, told AFP. A man wearing a black mask and bicycle helmet later read out a list of demands on a loudspeaker.

"There is no violent protesters or rioters, there is only tyranny, we will protect our homeland by any means," he

said. "We urge the government to stop leading Hong Kong towards the brink of destruction."

Police were nowhere to be seen outside Beijing's office on Sunday evening, but there were widespread expectations among the protesters there that riot officers would soon respond.

Generally the marches have passed off peacefully, but some have been followed by violence between riot police and small groups of more hardcore protesters who feel years of peaceful demonstrations have achieved little.

Six weeks of huge protests have done little to persuade the city's unelected leaders -- or Beijing -- to change tack on the hub's future.

Under the 1997 handover deal with Britain, China promised to allow Hong Kong to keep key liberties such as its independent judiciary and freedom of speech.

But many say those provisions are already being curtailed, citing the disappearance into mainland custody of dissident booksellers, the disqualification of prominent politicians and the jailing of pro-democracy protest leaders.

# Minority congresswomen should apologise to America: US Prez

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump renewed attacks on Sunday on four Democratic congresswomen he launched xenophobic tweets against last week, demanding they apologise "for the horrible (hateful) things they have said."

"I don't believe the four Congresswomen are capable of loving our Country," Trump tweeted of ethnic-minority first-term Democrats

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley.

"They should apologise to America (and Israel) for the horrible (hateful) things they have said. They are destroying the Democrat Party, but are weak & insecure people who can never destroy our great Nation!" the president tweeted.

The comments come a week after Trump sparked a firestorm of outrage when he attacked the left-leaning lawmakers with a series of tweets, saying they should "go back" to their countries of origin.

The group -- three of whom were born in the United



States -- are of Hispanic, Arab, Somali and African-American descent.

In a rare move, Trump was rebuked by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives on Tuesday for "racist comments" against the women, who are known as the "Squad."

The following day chants of "Send her back!" broke out at the president's "Make America Great Again" rally in Greenville, North Carolina, when he again attacked the women.

To the delight of his thou-

sands of supporters, Trump described Omar and the other Democrats as "left-wing ideologues (who) see our nation as a force of evil."

Trump later said there was "great energy" at the rally but claimed he was not pleased by the taunts. "I was not happy when I heard that chant," he said. "I didn't like that they did it, and I started speaking quickly" to move on with his speech.

Television footage showed, however, that Trump let the chant continue for more than 13 seconds, only resuming speaking as they died down.

# Iran says its tanker held in Saudi Arabia released

AFP ■ TEHRAN

An Iranian tanker held in Saudi Arabia since being forced to seek repairs at Jeddah port has been released and is returning to the Islamic republic, a minister said Sunday.

The Happiness 1 tanker "has been released following negotiations and is now moving toward Persian Gulf waters," said transport minister Mohammad Eslami, quoted by state news agency IRNA.

The ship had been forced to seek repairs in Saudi Arabia in early May after suffering "engine failure and loss of control", the Iranian oil ministry's SHANA news agency said at the time.

The rare docking came despite escalating tensions between staunch enemies Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"Yesterday, with follow-ups from the ports and maritime authority the issue was resolved," Eslami said.

"The tanker is moving towards the Persian Gulf with

the permission of the Jeddah port, towed by two Iranian tug boats."

Iran's national tanker company said in a statement that on top of "political and diplomatic negotiations" the tanker's release required "the payment of related costs" demanded by Saudi Arabia.

According to a July 2 report by Mehr News Agency, Iran paid "over \$10 million to Jeddah port for repairs and maintenance" of the tanker.

Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties with Iran in 2016, after its missions in the country were attacked in demonstrations over the kingdom executing prominent Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr.

They still lack direct diplomatic channels, and Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Sunday thanked "Switzerland and Oman as well as related Saudi parties for offering services and facilities" to resolve the issue.

# UK navy heard in audio trying to thwart Iran ship seizure

AP ■ DUBAI

In an audio recording released Sunday, a British naval officer can be heard saying the transit of a British-flagged vessel through the Strait of Hormuz must not be impaired under international law as Iranian naval forces warn the vessel to change course.

The audio, released by maritime security risk firm Dryad Global, shows how the British navy was unable to prevent the ship's seizure by Iranian Revolutionary Guard forces on Friday.

The seizure has prompted condemnation from the UK and its European allies as they continue to call for a de-escalation of tensions in the critical waterway.

In the recording, an Iranian officer can be heard telling the Stena Impero to change course, saying: "You obey, you will be safe."

"Alter your course to 360

degrees immediately, over," the officer says, before saying the ship is wanted for security reasons.

A British naval officer from the HMS Montrose frigate patrolling the area around the Strait of Hormuz is heard telling the Stena Impero, which had a crew of 23 on board, that its passage must be allowed.

"Sir, I reiterate that as you are conducting transit passage in a recognised international strait, under international law your passage must not be impaired, intruded, obstructed or hampered," the British officer says.

The British officer then tells an Iranian patrol boat: "Please confirm that you are not intending to violate international law by unlawfully attempting to board the MV Stena."

Iranian officials say the seizure of the British oil tanker was a response to Britain's role in impounding an Iranian supertanker two weeks earlier. Friday's incident comes

amid heightened tensions between the US and Iran stemming from President Donald Trump's decision last year to pull the US from Iran's nuclear accord with world powers and reinstate sweeping sanctions.

The US has expanded its military presence in the region, while Iran has begun openly exceeding uranium enrichment levels set in the nuclear accord to pressure Europe to alleviate the pain caused by the sanctions.

Britain's Defense Secretary Tobias Ellwood reiterated calls for de-escalation on Sunday in an interview with Sky News.

"Well, firstly we need to try and de-escalate this. There has been a ratcheting up of tensions in the Middle East," he said, before adding that Friday's seizure is "a hostile act" by Iran.

Ellwood also noted that the British Royal Navy "is too small to manage our interests across the globe" and that this would be an issue for the next prime minister to recognize.

# Ukraine's Zelensky aims to consolidate power in parliament polls

AFP ■ KIEV

Ukrainians on Sunday went to the polls to elect a new parliament as comedian-turned-president Volodymyr Zelensky seeks to bring in political newcomers and consolidate power.

Zelensky's newly-created party is expected to win the largest share of the votes in the early polls expected to usher in a new era in the country dominated up to now by politicians who grew up in the Soviet Union.

The leader's party Servant of the People -- named after a sitcom in which he played a president -- is predicted to get roughly half of the vote even though it barely existed before Zelensky won a landslide victory in an April presidential vote.

Zelensky, however, may not secure a majority and would need to form a coalition, possibly with rock star Svatoslav Vakarchuk's newly-created party

Golos (Voice).

After casting his ballot, the 41-year-old leader said he would make a decision about possible coalition partners after the results of the vote are out.

"We do not see a coalition with the old authorities," Zelensky said in the capital Kiev, wearing a casual blue shirt.

The outgoing parliament, dominated by Zelensky's predecessor Petro Poroshenko, has been hostile to the actor, who called a snap election during his swearing-in as president.

The Ukrainian president must share power with parliament, which will nominate a prime minister and form a government.

Many said they voted for the leader's party. "He was elected but he can't do anything. They (lawmakers) constantly put sticks in his wheels and dump his ideas," Valentyna, an 82-year-old pensioner told AFP in central Kiev.

# 1.3K firefighters battle Portugal wildfires

AFP ■ AMENDOA (PORTUGAL)

Planes and helicopters joined more than a thousand firefighters in central Portugal Sunday to battle huge wildfires in a mountainous region where over 100 people died in huge blazes in 2017.

By 9:30 am (0830 GMT), one of the biggest mobilisations ever seen in the area -- including 1,100 firefighters and 340 vehicles -- had been deployed to fight the blazes in the heavily forested Castelo Branco region, 200 kilometres north of Lisbon, the rescue services said.

The biggest effort -- 760 firefighters, 230 vehicles and 11 planes and helicopters -- battled to douse flames in the municipality of Vila de Rei, which had spread nearly 25 kilometres. One seriously injured civilian was evacuated by helicopter to Lisbon, the commander of the Civil Protection for the region, Luis Belo Costa, told a news conference.

# 9 killed in gun, suicide attack in northwest Pak

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

At least nine persons, including six policemen, were killed and around 40 others injured in northwest Pakistan on Sunday in a terror strike on a checkpoint and a subsequent suicide blast by a burqa-clad woman at a hospital where the victims of the first attack were shifted.

Both the attacks took place in Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a day after the first-ever successful election was held in the newly merged tribal areas of the province.

Four unidentified armed men riding two motor-bikes opened fire on two policemen, who were on duty at the Kotla Syedan checkpoint, and killed

them, District police chief Saleem Riaz told the media.

When the bodies of the slain policemen were brought to the district hospital, a burqa-clad suicide bomber, already sitting there, targeted the people who gathered around the ambulance, the official said.

Seven people, including four policemen, were killed in the suicide blast, police said.

He said the suicide bombing by a female was first ever and unexpected incident in the region.

According to eye witnesses, the bomber was wearing a head-to-toe veil. Police also recovered hairs and feet of the attacker and sent them for forensic examination.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed respon-

sibility for the attack.

The seriously injured people were shifted to the Combine Military Hospital for medical cover. The police and civil administration reached the spot immediately after the explosion.

Riaz said that 7 to 8 kg explosive was used in the suicide explosion. He confirmed seven fatalities, in both the terror act. The death toll could rise as the majority of the victims were in critical condition, he said.

He said that security check is done by the police on the entry of people into the hospital. But due to tradition and customs of the area females are exempted. He said the suicide bombing by a female was first ever and unexpected incident in the region.

# Pak PM Imran Khan arrives in US, will meet Trump today

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan arrived here on his maiden trip to the US during which he will hold talks with Donald Trump and reboot bilateral ties that were hit after the US president publicly criticised Islamabad, cancelled military aid and asked it to do more to fight terrorism.

Khan, 66, is scheduled to meet President Trump at the White House on Monday during which the American leadership is likely to press him to take "decisive and irreversible" actions against terrorist and militant groups operating from Pakistani soil and facilitate peace talks with the Taliban.

The cricketer-turned-politician arrived here on Saturday afternoon aboard a commercial Qatar Airways flight and is staying at the official residence of the Pakistani Ambassador to the US, Asad Majeed Khan.

He was welcomed at the airport by his foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. A large number of Pakistani Americans also welcomed him.

Nawaz Sharif was the last Pakistani prime minister to visit the US on an official trip in October 2015.

During his three-day visit, Khan, in addition to his meeting with Trump, is also scheduled to meet IMF acting chief David Lipton and World Bank President David Malpass.

in Vietnam's 200-mile exclusive economic zone. China claims the South China Sea almost in its entirety and has rattled smaller neighbours by constructing seven man-made islands in the disputed waters of the South China Sea (SCS), where Vietnam accuses Beijing of violating its sovereignty.

State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortugas said in a statement that China's "repeated provocative actions aimed at the offshore oil and gas development of other claimant states threaten regional energy security and undermine the free and open Indo-Pacific energy market."

Vietnam on Friday demanded China remove a survey ship from Vanguard Bank, which it says lies with-

# US concerned over reports on China's 'interference' in SCS

AP ■ HANOI

The United States said it's concerned by reports of China's interference with oil and gas activities in the disputed waters of the South China Sea (SCS), where Vietnam accuses Beijing of violating its sovereignty.

Chinese coast guard vessels also have been reported near a drilling rig in the same Vanguard Bank area where Vietnam has contracted Russia's Rosneft to develop gas fields. "Vietnam has made contact with China on multiple occasions via different channels, delivered diplomatic notes to oppose China's violations, and staunchly demanded China to stop all unlawful activities and withdraw its

ships from Vietnamese waters," Vietnam's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang said in a statement Friday.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang earlier in the week urged Hanoi to respect China's sovereign rights and jurisdiction, "and not to take any move that may complicate matters."

In May 2014, Chinese and Vietnamese vessels engaged in a dangerous confrontation when China's national oil company moved its oil platform into waters Vietnam considers its territory.

Ortugas calls on China to "cease its bullying behaviour and refrain from engaging in this type of provocative and destabilizing activities."

# Japan's ruling coalition secures upper house majority

AP ■ TOKYO

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition secured a majority in Japan's upper house of parliament in elections Sunday, according to vote counts by public television and other media.

Exit polls indicated Abe could even close in on the super-majority needed to propose constitutional revisions.

NHK public television said Abe's Liberal Democratic Party and its junior partner Komeito had won 64 seats in the upper house after two hours of vote counting.

Up for grabs were 124 seats in the less powerful of Japan's two parliamentary chambers.

There are 245 seats in the upper house -- which does not choose the prime minister -- about half of which are elected every three years.

The results appeared to match or even exceed pre-election polls that indicated Abe's ruling bloc was to keep ground in the upper house, with most voters considering it a safer choice over an opposition with an uncertain track record.

To reach the two-thirds majority, or 164 seats, Abe needs 85 more seats by his ruling bloc and supporters of a charter change.

Opposition parties have focused on concerns over household finances, such as the

impact from an upcoming 10 per cent sales tax increase and strains on the public pension system amid Japan's aging population.

Abe has led his Liberal Democratic Party to five consecutive parliamentary election victories since 2012.

He has prioritised revitalising Japan's economy and has steadily bolstered the country's defenses in the backdrop of North Korea's missile and nuclear threats and China's growing military presence.

He also has showcased his diplomatic skills by cultivating warm ties with President Donald Trump.

Abe was hoping to gain enough upper house seats to boost his chances for constitutional revision, his long-cherished goal before his term ends

in 2021. Abe needs approval by a two-thirds majority in both houses to propose a revision and seek a national referendum.

His ruling bloc already has a two-thirds majority in the more powerful lower house.

But Abe and his conservative backers face challenges because voters seem more concerned about their jobs, the economy and social security.

The main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan and three other liberal-leaning parties teamed up in some districts.

They stressed support for gender equality and LGBT issues -- areas Abe's ultra-conservative lawmakers are reluctant to back. At a polling station in

Tokyo's Chuo district on Sunday, voters were divided over Abe's 6 1/2-year rule.

A voter who identified himself only as a company worker in his 40s said he chose a candidate and a party that have demonstrated an ability to get things done, suggesting he voted for Abe's ruling party and its candidate, as "there is no point in casting my vote for a party or a politician who has no such abilities."

Another voter, Katsunori Takeuchi, a 57-year-old fish market worker, said it was time to change the dominance of Abe and his ultra-conservative policies.

"I think the ruling party has been dominating politics for far too long and it is causing damage," he said.

# Israeli Minister boasts his country has been 'killing Iranians'

AFP ■ JERUSALEM

An Israeli Minister boasted Sunday that his country was the only one that "has been killing Iranians", after tensions between Britain and Iran rose in the Gulf.

Regional Cooperation Minister Tzachi Hanegbi's comments to public radio were a reference to Israeli strikes in neighbouring Syria against Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah movement's military targets.

But they came after Iran seized a British-flagged tanker on Friday, adding to tensions between Washington and Tehran linked to a 2015 nuclear deal.

Hanegbi accused Iran, Israel's main enemy, of seeking

to create "chaos" and "harm freedom of navigation." Asked if he feared that Israel would not receive the backing of the United States in the case of a conflict with Iran, Hanegbi suggested that Tehran would avoid such a scenario.

"Israel is the only country in the world that has been killing Iranians for two years," he said.

"We strike the Iranians hundreds of times in Syria. Sometimes we acknowledge it and sometimes foreign reports reveal it."

He added that the Iranians "understand that Israel means business." Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes in Syria against what it says are Iranian and Hezbollah military targets.

It has vowed to keep Iran from entrenching itself militarily there.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke in a similar vein last week with cadets at the national security college.

"At the moment, the only army in the world to fight Iran is the Israeli army," he said.

Earlier this month, Netanyahu warned that Israeli fighter jets "can reach anywhere in the Middle East, including Iran". Iran's seizure of a British-flagged tanker in the Strait of Hormuz for breaking "international maritime rules" came some two weeks after Britain seized an Iranian tanker at the mouth of the Mediterranean on allegations of breaching UN sanctions against Syria.

# Dhawan, No 4 & new pace

Fit again Shikhar back in limited overs side, Bumrah rested as newbies highlight Caribbean tour squad



Rishabh Pant chats with MS Dhoni during IPL

## Pant backed for all 3 formats

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Retirement is solely Mahendra Singh Dhoni's prerogative but chairman of selectors MSK Prasad on Sunday clearly stated that young Rishabh Pant will be "groomed" as India's first choice keeper across formats in the coming days.

Dhoni has not announced his retirement from international cricket amid widespread speculations but has made himself unavailable for the next two months as he will be serving his regiment in paramilitary forces.

Without divulging much on two-time World Cup winning captain's future plans, Prasad said that a legend like Dhoni knows when to retire but the future course of Indian cricket will be charted by the selectors.

"Retirement is purely individual (decision). A legendary cricketer like Dhoni, he knows when to retire. What is the future course of action, that is in the hands of the selection committee. I don't think we need to discuss anything more on it. First of all he is not available. Second, we have already started grooming youngsters," Prasad said at the media conference.

The former India Test keeper wants Pant to get as many opportunities as he gets ready to fill in the big shoes of Dhoni in the coming days.

"He (Dhoni) is unavailable for the series. He has expressed his unavailability. Having said that we had a certain roadmap and plans till the World Cup. Post World Cup, we have laid down a few more plans and we thought of giving as many opportunities as possible to Rishabh Pant and to see, he is groomed. That is our plan right now and we did discuss this with him (Dhoni)," said Prasad.

Pant was already the number one choice in Tests and now with uncertainty over Dhoni's future, he has become the preferred choice in all three formats.

The 21-year-old is a powerhouse of talent but at times, his shot selection in crucial moments has been questioned including in India's World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand.

However, Prasad praised Pant for his innings of 32 against the Black Caps after India lost three wickets for five runs chasing 240.

"He played well. Especially in those conditions, he batted really well," he added.

- Saha back in Test side; Rahul Chahar, Navdeep Saini gets maiden call-up
- Jadhav retained for ODIs, Kuldeep-Chahal left out of T20 squad
- Hardik Pandya rested, Bumrah to feature only in Tests
- Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey considered for No 4 spot

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Opener Shikhar Dhawan on Sunday returned to India's limited overs squad after recovering from a thumb injury while Rishabh Pant was picked in all three formats for the West Indies tour as the selectors braced up for life beyond Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

Former India captain Dhoni, who is at the business end of his illustrious career, has made himself "unavailable" for the West Indies tour but ruled out immediate retirement.

Speculations over Captain Virat Kohli being rested for the tour were put to rest as the batting mainstay will lead India across formats.

Rookie leg-spinner Rahul Chahar emerged as the lone new face across three formats for the upcoming overseas assignments, while all-rounder Hardik Pandya has been rested for the tour. Also coming back into the ODI squad are Shreyas Iyer and Manish Pandey.

Promising batsman Shubman Gill, though, missed out on selection.

The squads for the T20, ODI and Test series were announced by the MSK Prasad-led selection committee.

A notable inclusion was veteran keeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha, who is back in the Test squad after undergoing a shoulder surgery for an injury, sustained during the 2018 IPL.

Saha last played a Test match in South Africa in January 2018.

Rajasthan leg-spinner Chahar has



Shikhar Dhawan returns to pavilion after getting dismissed during World Cup game against Australia

been rewarded for his consistent show in the IPL and domestic cricket with a berth in the Twenty20 squad. He is the younger cousin of seamer Deepak, who is also in the T20 squad.

From the World Cup squad, the prominent player to be dropped is Dinesh Karthik, while Hardik and Jasprit Bumrah have been rested as a part of the board's workload management programme.



MI's Rahul Chahar celebrates with Rohit Sharma after taking wicket during IPL game

Bumrah, though, is part of the Test squad.

Quite a few of the players were picked based on their performance for India A recently.

"We have taken India A performances into consideration. In the longer format, KS Bharat was very, very close to get selected. We have an unwritten norm that when an established cricketer is injured, he should get a comeback opportunity. That's what we have given to Saha," chief selector Prasad said.

Pant, who was included in India's World Cup campaign after Vijay Shankar's toe injury, has been named in the squad across all three formats.

Dhawan, whose World Cup journey was cut short due to a thumb fracture during the second group game against Australia, has been declared fit.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar will spearhead

the attack in the shortest format with Mohammed Shami joining him for the three ODIs. Delhi pacer Navdeep Saini has been included in the limited overs side while Deepak Chahar was picked for the T20Is.

The selection panel also went for left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed for the limited overs leg.

"Rishabh, Wriddhiman and K S Bharat are some of the players we will be looking ahead for Test cricket."

"We had certain plans for the World Cup but after that we have to give opportunities to youngsters who will go on to play for long," Prasad said of the young faces in the limited overs squads.

The young Prithvi Shaw was not part of the squad as he is recovering from an injury.

The tour will kick off with a three-match Twenty20 series (August 3, 4, 6) and will be followed by a three-match ODI series (August 8, 11, 14). The tour will conclude with a two-Test series (August 22-26 and August 30-September 3).

### SQUADS

**T20Is:** Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma (vc), Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (wk), Krunal Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Rahul Chahar, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed, Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini

**ODIs:** Virat Kohli (Captain), Rohit Sharma (vc), Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kedar Jadhav, Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed, Navdeep Saini

**TESTS:** Virat Kohli (Captain), Ajinkya Rahane (vc), Mayank Agarwal, KL Rahul, C Pujara, Hanuma Vihari, Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant (wk) Wriddhiman Saha (wk), R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

# No bias against Rayudu: MSK

Ambati Rayudu's sarcasm-laden "3D tweet" might have hastened his international retirement but chairman of selectors MSK Prasad defended the recently-retired Hyderabad's omission from the World Cup squad, asserting that his panel cannot be accused of bias.

Prasad explained that Mayank Agarwal was summoned as a replacement for injured Vijay Shankar instead of Rayudu because opener KL Rahul's on-field injury during the England game had prompted the team management to seek an opener as "cover".

However Prasad's logic of Agarwal's inclusion was far from convincing as Rahul played three games (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and semi-final) after that.

After being ignored, Rayudu had posted a cryptic tweet, which was certainly directed at the selection committee, which had termed Shankar as a "three dimensional player."

"Just Ordered a new set of 3d glasses to watch the world cup," he tweeted and was widely believed to be the reason behind Rishabh Pant and Agarwal's inclusion as replacement.

Rayudu announced his retirement from all forms of cricket just days after Agarwal's selection.

"It was a lovely tweet. Very timely one. I really enjoyed the tweet. It was fantastic. I don't know how it struck him," Prasad's answer had everyone laughing when asked about Rayudu's tweet.

However he wanted to clear the air that Rayudu couldn't be included purely because of the permutations and combinations and the selection committee didn't resort to any favouritism.

When Agarwal came in, it was more about having a cover for Rahul. In fact, he revealed that it was team management asked for an opener in writing.

"At that juncture, a written communication was given to us on the back-up opener. We looked at some of the openers working out on certain permutations and combinations. Some were not in form, others were injured, so that's when we went to Mayank Agarwal. There is



Ambati Rayudu in a file picture

no confusion on this and by the end of the day, all speculations should be clear," he further added.

But the chairman empathised with Rayudu.



"How much emotions anybody (Rayudu) has gone through, the selection committee has gone through the same emotions," Prasad said.

"When we pick any player and he does well, we feel so happy for him. Similarly when somebody who goes out in this way, the selection committee also feels for it. But having said that, with regards to the decision taken, it has been completely devoid of any bias or any favouritism into why we have picked Vijay Shankar, Rishabh Pant or Mayank Agarwal also," the former stumper said in his committee's defence.

While Rayudu has every reason to be aggrieved, Prasad reminded that when he had failed a fitness test after being picked on the basis of his T20 performances, his panel had backed the Hyderabad man.

"I will give you a small example about Rayudu. When Rayudu was picked, on the basis of 17-18 T20s (2018 IPL performance), we picked him in ODI side. There was a lot of criticism but we had some thoughts about him subsequently.

"When he failed the fitness (Yo Yo) test (before England away ODIs), this selection committee

backed him and we put him through a fitness programme for a month, ensured that he gets fit and comes into the side.

"Once he came into the side, we backed him but due to certain permutations and combinations in the side, we couldn't pick him," Prasad reasoned why Rayudu was overlooked even after Shankar got injured.

But he made it clear that his committee can't be accused of "bias or favouritism".

"That (Rayudu's exclusion) doesn't make the selection committee or me biased about any particular person. We know how emotional Rayudu is, we are also emotional. We as ex-cricketers, also feel for him," he said.

He explained how Pant and Agarwal came in as replacements.

"The team management requested for a left-hander and we had no other choice than Rishabh Pant. We are very, very clear on that. We know what he is capable of. That's the reason we had to bring in a left-hander, which confused many people as to why a middle-order batsman has been selected in place of an opener," he said.

# Dharmasena admits to 'judgemental error' in WC final

PTI ■ COLOMBO

It indeed was a judgement error to award six runs to England from an overthrow in the World Cup final admitted umpire Kumar Dharmasena but the Sri Lankan will never "regret" the decision.

Dharmasena had signalled to add six runs to England's total, instead of five, when Martin Guptill's throw from the deep raced to the boundary ropes after being deflected of a diving Ben Stokes' bat.

The match was stretched to a Super Over which also remained inconclusive and eventually hosts England were declared champions on better boundary count, leaving New Zealand players in disbelief.

"It's easy for people to comment after seeing TV replays," Dharmasena told *Sunday Times*.

"I agree that there was a judgment error when I see it on TV replays now. But we did not have the luxury of TV replays at the ground and I will never regret the decision I made. Besides, the ICC praised me for the decision I made at that time."

The TV replays showed that Adil Rashid and Stokes had not completed the second run



Kumar Dharmasena

when Guptill released the ball from the deep.

Dharmasena, who was standing as head umpire, consulted leg umpire Marais Erasmus and added six runs to the England total following the incident — four runs for the ball reaching the boundary plus two for running between the wicket.

"It's easy for people to comment after seeing TV replays. I agree that there was a judgment error when I see it on TV replays now. But we did not have the luxury of TV replays at the ground and I will never regret the decision I made. Besides, the ICC praised me for the decision I made at that time."

—Kumar Dharmasena

England needed nine from the final three balls. This changed to three off two balls.

The 48-year-old added that according to the law, there was no provision to consult the third umpire on the incident.

"There is no provision in the law to refer this to the third umpire as no dismissal was involved," he said.

"So, I did consult the leg umpire through the communication system which is heard by all other umpires and the match referee. And, while they cannot check TV replays, they all confirmed that the batsmen had completed the run. This is when I made my decision."

Former international

umpires Simon Taufel and K Hariharan had also come out and said the officials standing in the World Cup final erred by awarding six runs.

Law 19.8 of the ICC rules, pertaining to "Overthrow or wilful act of fielder", states: "If the boundary results from an overthrow or from the wilful act of a fielder, the runs scored shall be any runs for penalties awarded to either side, and the allowance for the boundary, and the runs completed by the batsmen, together with the run in progress if they had already crossed at the instant of the throw or act."

"One must understand that there were too many things on our plate. We had to watch the batsmen complete the first run, the ball being fielded, how it was handled by the fielder and whether the batsmen completed the second run. And where the throw would come from, the striker's end or non-striker's end."

"In this case, we were all happy that the batsmen had completed the second run because the ball ricocheted off Stokes' bat at the time of him completing the second run. So, we assumed that they had crossed each other at the time of fielder releasing the ball," Dharmasena said.

# PCB mulling split captaincy, coaching

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan could have separate captains and head coaches for Test and limited overs cricket following its failure to qualify for the World Cup semifinals in England.

A well-placed source in the Pakistan Cricket Board said that when the Cricket Committee meets later this month, a proposal to split the captaincy and coaching for the different formats would be up for discussion.

"Since Pakistan has to play eight Tests of the World Test Championship against Sri Lanka, Australia, Bangladesh and England before the T20 World Cup in Australia next year, the PCB is pretty concerned about how to improve performance of the team in Tests," the source said.

Pakistan will be playing only three ODIs but nine to 10 T20s before the T20 Asia Cup



Sarfaraz Ahmad chats with head coach Mickey Arthur during indoor nets

and T20 World Cup next year, prompting PCB to consider separate captains and coaches for red and white-ball cricket," he said.

He said PCB Managing Director Wasim Khan met with Wasim Akram, who is a member of the Cricket

considering the option of having separate captains and head coaches for Test and limited overs cricket with the support staff i.e., manager, bowling coach, batting coach, trainer, fielding coach, physiotherapist remaining the same for all formats.

Pakistan is presently sixth in the ODI rankings and number one in T20s but it is in Test cricket where Sarfaraz and Arthur have failed to achieve anything notable in last two and half years. The Test team is languishing at number seven in the ICC rankings having lost home series to Sri Lanka, New Zealand before being outclassed in South Africa.

The source said if the board decides to split the red ball and white ball captains and head coach positions than senior batsmen Asad Shafiq and Azhar Ali are likely to be the top candidates for the captaincy.

# WOOD EYES ASHES ROLE DESPITE INJURY

AFP ■ LONDON

England paceman Mark Wood has set his sights on recovering from injury in time to play a role in the Ashes against Australia.

Wood will be out for up to six weeks after suffering a side strain during last Sunday's World Cup final. The 29-year-old won't

play in next week's one-off Test against Ireland at Lord's or the first Test against Australia when the Ashes get under way on August 1.

But Durham star Wood still hopes he can get back to full fitness in time for the last two Tests in the five-match series.

"I might make the last couple (of Tests). It all depends on

selection," Wood told *BBC 5 Live's Sportsweek* on Sunday.

"My side injury is four to six weeks, so hopefully I'll still play a part towards the end of the season, but if not it's been a fantastic summer so far for English cricket."

"There's still plenty more to go and hopefully for me there's still a bit more cricket to play."



## HABIT OF READING NEWSPAPER KEEPS YOU UPDATED

Reading newspaper is healthy habit with great educational value informing readers about current events around world and many other tidbits of information between front and last page, says **TEAM VIVA**



Reading a newspaper is easily one of the most popular morning activities for most people. For most of us, starting the day with the knowledge of the current events across the globe gives us the feeling of being there, where the rest of the world is.

To have missed reading the fresh newspapers leaves a feeling of vacuum that lasts for the most part of the day. No amount of watching television or other media will replace this feeling. Seasoned readers will start reading the newspaper from the front page and go one by one till the last page which is usually dedicated to sports. Most others read the first page for the headlines and then move on to the pages or columns of their interest.

Habits like reading newspaper will not only enhance your knowledge about general information but it will likewise improve your language skills and vocabulary. Many people have habits of reading daily newspapers that their days seem incomplete without taking hold of early morning newspapers.

Reading a newspaper is a daily ritual for most readers. It helps people stay up to the mark with the current events around the world and many other tidbits of information that is available between the front and the last page.

Newspaper is the best source to strengthen reading for student. Student develops habit of reading newspaper daily. Reading is a very healthy activity. Reading habit makes student active learner. Student

gets full command on reading with the passage of time.

Daily reading of newspapers increases the repertoire of student's vocabulary. Student learns different words from newspaper. Student can note down difficult words with meanings. This increases vocabulary of students. Good vocabulary helps to write impressive essays and assignments.

Different political aspects are presented on newspaper. Political students can get a vast range of political information from newspaper. Students should make a habit to read political news, this increases student's political knowledge.

Students who read newspaper daily are very good at general knowledge. They score very high in general knowledge quizzes. Their reading habit enhances their critical understanding as well.

It keeps student updated with current developments of country and the world. Newspaper keeps student updated with the latest happenings of country and the world. Various economic, political and social events are updated. International relations and foreign policies are discussed.

Students get useful ideas about their research proposals. Newspaper is a handy source to get multiple topics and ideas. Latest researches are also discussed in newspaper. Reading newspaper enhances writing skills of students. The writing style is improved and he embellishes his essays and assignments to impress his instructors. The professors get good impression and

student scores good grades in exams as well.

Students get entertainment and sports news. Different sport events are discussed and students get to know about different famous personalities of the sports' world. The entertainment and sports news are also very important for students. They can also get unique and different ideas about vogue and latest trends. Latest discoveries and inventions are published on the newspapers. Students can get their course related information from newspapers.

Student gets information on various topics from newspaper. He becomes a good orator and it helps him in taking active part in debates and speeches. This is very necessary for an orator to possess sound knowledge on multiple topics. When a student possesses knowledge on different topics, he can speak in front of others. It enhances the confidence of student level.

The biggest advantage of reading a newspaper is that it adds value to you and your personality. It improves your English or any other language in which you are reading it in; it enhances your confidence and it actually makes lives easier as you are updated with the current issues, achievements, facts, discoveries, research, laws, events, ideologies, politics, movements, historical facts and what not? It also improves your memory to a certain extent, increases your reading skills and indirectly writing skills, as well. The perks are immense and it doesn't cost more than a rupee.

Making something your habit is not that difficult if you see but maintaining that habit is actually what takes a lot of effort,



time, energy and enthusiasm. You need to understand that a newspaper is full of vital information and updates which are important for you, no matter what you are doing, wherever you live; it's actually immaterial in comparison with what a newspaper can provide you. It can be your best friend at times and your biggest enemy. "Make something your addiction which adds to your self-growth" and yes, a newspaper does add to your self-growth. Try to make it a habit and see the transformation in your personality, confidence, knowledge, mental health, and it will definitely help you in giving an edge to whatever you are currently pursuing in life or going to pursue.

The first important benefit is in infor-

**Students get entertainment and sports news. Different sport events are discussed and students get to know about different famous personalities of the sports' world. The entertainment and sports news are also very important for students**

mation. Reading newspapers helps us keep ourselves updated. There is general news about the happenings in the locality and across the world. Beyond that, the newspapers carry a specific niche for everyone from fashion to lifestyle and sports. It keeps us informed about important events as well as in the areas of our interest. The advertising segments are also informative. They convey important announcement by the government and their programmes. The classifieds are also useful in helping finding jobs and homes.

The second important benefit is knowledge. This is a little different from information. Regular reading of newspaper helps in developing knowledge and building perspective. We can build a global perspective by just reading the newspaper. They carry opinion columns and other kinds of news analysis which help us go beyond the mere information about events. These help in making well informed decisions. It is also a strong vehicle of expression through public opinion and expert opinion.

The newspaper might be a mere collection of facts but the ability to read through them and integrate them into our thought process; it is the best tool for education and development. They are platforms to express our views as well, making it an important communication tool. Reading newspapers is important us in many ways. It is a very cost effective way to keep ourselves updated. We live in a digital age where the several news apps give us live updates. But the habit of reading newspapers helps in developing a holistic personality.

Trend Slazer

Apar joins Pati, Patni Aur Woh

Actor APARSHAKTI KHURANA has been roped in to play a pivotal part in the forthcoming film *Pati Patni Aur Woh*.

"It's amazing to join hands with Bhushanji one more time. After *Luka Chuppi*, *Kartik* and I are quite compatible. So, you will see the chemistry going between us in this one too," Aparshakti said.

"The two pretty girls — Bhumi (Pednekar) and Ananya (Panday) — make the team warmer. I totally love what they are doing in front of the camera and the captain of the ship, Mudassar (Aziz) is leading with full conviction," he added.

The film is an adaptation of BR Chopra's 1978 film with the same title.



**'Conscious sobriety is what I chose two and a half years ago and I now have a new life. Addiction comes in many forms — alcohol, substance, love, work, power... the list goes on. Strength lies in sharing frailties and embracing vulnerability. I just want people to know they are not alone.'**  
—Pooja Bhatt



Although the recently-launched trailer of *MISSION MANGAL* is seeing numerous hilarious memes on the internet, it has garnered praise from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The space research organisation lauded the film as an effort to beautifully depict the emotions and passion that it invests in its missions.

Directed by Jagan Shakti, the film is based on the Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), launched by ISRO in November 2013, to put a space probe in planet Mars' orbit.

**'Actors are misunderstood'**

For BRIAN COX, an actor's job is to reflect the truth. The *X-Men* star, however, feels people don't really understand actors.

"People don't understand actors very much. I constantly find that actors are misunderstood," said Cox.

"People think that actors do some kind of magic. I'd go back to William Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' quote, 'twere, the mirror up to nature' to describe my job as an actor," he added. Cox says he finds the journey of exploring human experiences through his work fascinating. He pointed out that my job is to tell the truth about situations, about why people come to be what they are which is endlessly fascinating.



# MAKING BUSTARD GREAT AGAIN

The bird has been rescued from the brink of extinction. YASHNA SHETTY talks to the experts to understand how the mission is bringing about an improvement in their population as well as a change in mindsets

From far, it looks like an ordinary bird as it moves its spindly legs to roam around the grassland in search of a mate. But what makes this Great Indian Bustard (GIB) unusual is that this is the last male left in Gujarat. While some might despair at the news, others take heart at the birth of an artificially hatched chick in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

The GIB that lost the battle to be crowned the national bird of India is fighting another battle, this time around for survival. However, it is not alone as the decline in bird and animal species has been catastrophic as over the last 100 years more than 500 species have been lost instead of the nine that would have been expected at natural rates.

With less than 130 left in the country, the Centre has decided to step in and has initiated a project worth ₹33.85 crore for their conservation and protection, according to the Environment Ministry. India is spending ₹100 crores over five years to bring four species back from the brink of extinction. They are the Great Indian Bustard, the Gangetic Dolphin, the Manipur Deer and the sea cow or Dugong. Almost a third of the money under the Species Recovery Programme is going towards the conservation of the GIB, the state bird of Rajasthan.

Arjun Awasthi, project associate of The Great Indian Bustard Conservation, Breeding and Habitat Project, Wildlife Institute of India says, "Power line collisions are the biggest issue. The power agencies need to install bird diverters. These devices make the power lines 70 per cent more visible to the birds and have reduced collisions in Europe and South Africa. Other threats to the bustard include loss of their grassland habitat, predation of their eggs by stray dogs and, in some parts, illegal hunting. My job, as someone who has worked closely with other species of bustards and other wild birds, is to facilitate the captive breeding of the birds and to ensure they have a safe, healthy and enriching environment to grow in."

However, the Indian govern-

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RADIO TAGGING BUSTARD FEMALES, FIGURING OUT THEIR NESTING SITES, COLLECTING EGGS SO THAT WE HAVE ONE CHICK IN CAPTIVITY AND ANOTHER IN THE WILD ARE SOME STEPS TO IMPROVE THEIR POPULATION  
”



ment is steadfastly developing a conservation-breeding programme to improve these numbers. "This involves radio tagging bustard females, figuring out their nesting sites, collecting eggs so that we have one chick in captivity and another in the wild and setting up a natural breeding population in a captive environment. All of this, with the hope to restore their natural habitat so that they can be released in the wild in the future," adds Arjun, who has been working on this project for the last two years in Rajasthan. "The programme has seen success mainly in Jaisalmer. Our efforts are not only focussed on the ex-situ (captive breeding) component but there is also a significant push for the in-situ (on site; bustard habitat) conservation." However, just captive breeding to push up the numbers is not the end of the process. Arjun highlights that "the first step in this whole process is completed but the ultimate goal is to release these birds into places where they can live, safe-

ly" As always happens in any conservation programme, the attempt is to involve people and sensitise them, which is a long drawn process. The issue has also been highlighted at WWF.

Asad Rahmani, former director of Bombay Natural History Society and former chairman, Department of Wildlife Sciences says, "We shouldn't be negative about the future of the GIB. The Wildlife Institute, Dehradun, has done a commendable job. For the

last 30 to 40 years, things haven't gone well and we are now left with very few birds but the first step of the conservation programme in Rajasthan has been successful. After breeding them in captivity, we would want to safely release them into the wild, in the future.

We basically need to have a breeding stock."

He goes on to add, "These birds cross the border and fly to Pakistan where they are hunted and people proudly post pictures of themselves with the bird as trophies on social media platforms." Ask him whether people are aware about how serious the issue is, he says, "The need of the hour is sensitising the new generation to the concern as well."

There is a larger issue involved as well which are related to how human beings are overtaking the planet and changing its demographics. Jai Dhar Gupta, environmentalist and founder of Nirvana Being, says, "Threats to most

species are caused because of loss of habitat, which is due to land grab in the country. Even the insects that the bustard eats are poisonous because of the pesticides in them. All our environment-related issues are caused by greed. People like to grab every bit of land available and this is destroying our eco systems, completely." A good example of this, he says, was people wanting to build a highway through the Aravali Hills, which he termed "crazy". "Everything, from the air pollution to the loss of habitat in the country is harming our environment. The bustard almost becoming extinct, is a visible example of the harm being caused and we have literally reached a state of emergency" he concluded. The plan is to successfully complete the conservation programme for the GIB so it is out of the danger zone. While the process will take some time before we can see results, a more holistic approach to conserving all creatures big and small is needed rather than the belief of the survival of the fittest.



TECH TALK

## How many likes did you get?

A photo-sharing app hides 'likes' on its posts so that people don't feel hurt while comparing themselves to others



3,200 followers, added that he understands why Instagram is doing this. Hilton said his younger sister, who is in high school, is "obsessed" with likes.

"It's mostly for the younger generation, people in high school and stuff," he said. "There is a lot of pressure. If someone has 1,000 likes and someone has two likes, that probably makes them feel not very nice."

While Hilton said the change will probably slow down the influencer world a little bit, he pointed out that a lot of young influencers now are using live videos, not static photos, to build their following. Here, likes are still visible.

Guy Avigdor, co-founder and chief operating officer of influencer marketing company Klear, said many marketers are also moving toward Story, Instagram's disappearing video and photo feature.

"If anything, now is a time for the industry to adapt more adequate metrics for measuring influencer impact and reduce reliance on likes," Avigdor said. —AP

## Woman of substance

You may have been born rich or have an illustrious and a wealthy family legacy but in order to be successful and create a unique reputation, you need vision and hardwork, or so believes entrepreneur and philanthropist Priya Jain, who has been listed in the 50 most influential women in India. "In order to attain personal success, you need to set your own goal, pave your own path, believe in yourself and think through a thousand times before taking any decision. And once you have begun your journey, never look back," said she.

Giver her belief, it was not surprising that Priya was one of the 50 women who were felicitated for being the most influential Indian women worldwide. These women call countries like Britain, India, Spain, America, Scotland their home where they have made a mark in their own fields.

At the award ceremony at the House of Lords, British Parliament, Priya dedicated her success and award to her late father DK Jain, who is considered to be a pioneer in the field of education.

She added, "Prime Minister Narendar Modi's new theory *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas* (company of all, development of all and trust of all) has been guiding the world leaders. His welfare measures for

Muslims, especially for women are unparalleled in the history of India. His vision to create a new India has had an everlasting impact on me. Also, schemes such as *Ujjwala Yojana, Swachh Shachalya, Mudra Yojana* and Skill India have changed the mindset of so many people in the country, and especially women."

The entrepreneur revealed that one of her major ongoing projects is a book about Narendar Modi. She said, "The book will not portray his life events and political activities rather, it will be a documented work. It aims to present the views of beneficiaries of different programmes announced by the PM."



W E B B E D

THE BOYS



The series presents an irreverent take on what happens when superheroes, as popular as celebrities, as influential as politicians and as revered as gods, abuse their superpowers rather than utilising them to do good. The story plots the super

powerful against the powerless as the 'boys' embark on a heroic quest to expose the truth about *The Seven*, and their formidable backing.

The sci-fi releases on July 26 on Amazon Prime.

ANOTHER LIFE: SEASON 1



Feeling forgotten and alienated on Mother's Day, three mothers and best friends leave the suburbs and drive to the New York to surprise their adult sons. The film presents a light-hearted take on life after motherhood.

Starring Angela Bassett, Patricia Arquette and Felicity Huffman, the film releases on August 2 on Netflix.

OTHERHOOD



After a massive alien artifact lands on the Earth, Niko Breckinridge leads an interstellar mission to track down its source and make first contact.

Created by Aaron Martin, the series stars Katee Sackhoff, Justin Chatwin, Samuel Anderson. It will release on July 25 on Netflix.



Every week, on an appointed day, a steady stream of women with children in tow can be seen making their way from Yavatmal's Babhulgaon block towards the anganwadi centre in Kopara, Maharashtra. As the women of this quiet rural hamlet gather around in the *baithak* (living room), the little ones get busy playing games.

These mothers' meets are an opportunity for young mothers and mothers-to-be to lean on each other for friendship and support. Together, they seek some sound advice on childcare and indulge in creative problem-solving for the well-being of their offsprings.

Prabha Sudhkar Navade, anganwadi worker, conducts the meeting and invites participants to speak one by one. Gradually, it turns into a full-blown discussion on different aspects of motherhood. "The meetings take place every week so that the women can exchange notes on the health problems that their children face and collectively offer some practical solutions to each other," says she.

The unique feature of these gatherings is that the groups have been formed on the basis of children's age. For example, expectant women gather on the first Saturday of every month, mothers of toddlers come on the third Saturday and so on. "This approach enables them to easily share their experiences since their children are going through similar milestones and difficulties. Very

## Mothering mothers

Women in a small district of Maharashtra have found a refuge in the anganwadi centres where they discuss the health and problems of children, says **DARSHNA DAWDA**

often they find solutions amongst themselves by tapping into collective wisdom," reveals Navade.

This, indeed, is a sustainable and participatory initiative that not only helps in building the confidence of the women but also enables them to safeguard the health of their little ones. For expert opinion and assistance, mothers can always reach out to the anganwadi worker or the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA).

During the *Poshan Pakhwada* celebrations, held in March to mark the first anniversary of the *Poshan Abhiyan*, Navade had called a mothers' meet to discuss nutrition, immu-

nisation and other key elements of childcare. The participating mothers discussed the varied and unpredictable food habits of their children.

Aparna, mother of Aditi Ganesh Mehekar, confessed that earlier she was unaware that she should give vegetables and fruits to her children everyday. She says, "Also, I had no idea how frequently growing children had to be fed". Aradhya Santosh Patil's mother, Seema candidly told everyone, "Earlier, my daughter ate very little at home but now she has learnt to eat everything in the company of other children as they share food. Now she also asks me to cook a variety of vegetables."



Navade is really proud that the mothers associated with anganwadi have understood the value of holistic, healthy living and achieving all-round growth for young ones.

An hour-and-a-half drive away, in the neighbouring block of Digra, there is a village called Harsul. The anganwadi worker and her assistant there have found a unique way to ensure that the children are excited to come to the centre. The health workers have transformed the off-white cloth bag, which was used to provide families with fortified Take Home Ration (THR), into a craft bag for the children. Each bag displays their I-card and this creates a sense

of ownership among children. It also enables friendly competition among them. When they come for classes, they take out time to draw, colour or make something from rough paper and crayons that they have brought from home. When it's time for them to go back, they neatly put their creations back into their bags.

When the children come along with their mothers for weekly meetings at the centre or for some special programmes, the anganwadi-tai asks them to show off their art work. Such display of talent encourages them to learn and grow. Not surprisingly, the mothers can't stop gushing.

—Charkha Features

## Swaraj: Dream of every Indian

The stability and success of the government is possible only after moral and spiritual cleansing, says **RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI**



Recently, an article, written by the chief economic advisor of India, *Towards a \$5trillion economy*, which was published in a leading English daily raised a lot of questions and hopes and made headlines across global media. However, even after the media hype, the common man remains as confused as before. The political fraternity must understand that in the 21st century, where the average voters of India are aged between 18-35, a mere enunciation of national policy objectives, which reads like a wish-list, would no longer work out in their favour.

The approach, however laudable, has to be backed by giving up political and personal antagonism and animus and must be supported by substance and records. The methods of governance have to provide a framework in which the complete political class, undividedly, can work on national issues like poverty, illiteracy, disease, pollution, unemployment and numerous others. Let the politicians bid adieu to personal prejudices and beliefs that have proved to be debilitating and costly for the country to the extent that *Swaraj* has become a distant dream.

Today, every Indian, rich or poor, hopes for a political leader who could act as a role model. The recent past has turned out to be horrific for the country as politics has become synonymous with corruption, exploitation and discrimination on the basis of caste and religion, hypocrisy and double-speak, egoism, lust for power, and some false promises. Some small alliances have also become tools of big parties for swinging them back to power, for toppling the state governments that have been formed by a different party or for ruining the chances of an opposing party from gaining power. So, it is time that we clear this corrupt, stained image of politics as it needs to regain its lost respect and faith among the people so that they don't lose the remaining interest in the government and their methods.

Can politicians, who always claim to be the servants of people, not make some sacrifices for their motherland? Can't they save their country from sliding down further into the morass of divisionism, ill-will and energy-draining activities, returning to co-operation in constructive and consensual ways? However, is it possible to end the morass and bring back social transparency and accountability without morally educating the masses?

When news channels show that the new government will be building more houses, creating opportunities for employment in rural areas, making primary education compulsory, providing free drinking water to the citizens, and making India a hunger-free nation in the next five years and so on — the news is welcomed by all. But one must first question where would the money for these schemes come from. How would these be funded? Also, even though in such cases money is usually raised by broadening the tax-base, would it be possible to make these benefits reachable to the deprived masses? That too, without delays or any kind of inefficiency from the bureaucracy, which has led to leakage of the funds. So is it really possible?

We all wish that these goals should be achieved and that the new government attains stability and success. But with a small note of caution — without moral and spiritual cleansing, *Swaraj* would remain a far-off goal.



## A lifelong process

A technological change demands stronger and continuous connection between education and employment. And that is the reason people should strive to learn more to improve the meaning of their existence, says **PANKAJ KUMAR SINGH**

It is said that life is all about learning and expanding your horizons. Business writer Tom Peters once said, "A career is a portfolio of projects that teaches you new skills, gains you new expertise, develops new capabilities, grows your colleague set and constantly reinvents yourself as a brand." While all these words of wisdom define the depth of learning, simultaneously there is the debate whether education ever stops or it continues throughout life.

Our entire life is a learning experience that never ends. From classroom lectures to real-life experiences, it is a combination of everything that defines your existence. In the current scenario, it is an ongoing process where an individual acquires skills and competence in the formal and non-formal learning set-up throughout his life. Today, education is a highly time-dependent and cumulative process that requires you to move slowly and go deeper to make the best of it.

According to scholars, education or learning is a part of life, which takes place at all times in all places. The lifelong process begins at home with family and friends and gradually moves to society, commu-

nities, schools, religious institutions and workplaces. The best part of this ongoing process is that you evolve as a better individual, who understands the deeper meaning of life and existence. Also, through continuous learning one can become a 'provider' rather than just being a 'receiver'. It has been proven that learning helps in developing the business-oriented mindset that can result in making you a 'job provider'. It enhances the understanding of the world around us, provide us with better opportunities and improves the quality of life.

*Master It Faster* by Colin Rose has described the six stages of learning that are believed to be the key to become an effective learner. These stages can be applied to any type of learning, either formal or informal. The first stage in this process is 'motiva-



tion'. It is believed that it is essential for an individual to have this so that the learning reflects in his personality. Forceful learning is always in

vain. The next stage is called 'acquire'. During effective learning, you are required to read, listen, observe, practice, experiment and experience. The trick is to acquire relevant and meaningful information and develop this into knowledge and skills. The next stage is described as 'search'. At this stage, one needs to search for personal meaning in the information s/he is acquiring. It often happens that we find it hard to remember facts without understanding them or being able to put them into context. Next comes, the stage of 'trigger'. It is the time when you need to make notes of everything you learn as it is difficult to remember everything. You need to examine your knowledge to help reinforce what you have learned. And finally, one needs to reflect on the learning. It is necessary to think about how and why you learned, including how you felt about a particular topic or situation. That is how you develop and evolve your skills.

If you are wondering why it is important, you need to understand that it's also about passion and satisfaction that it offers. When you are passionate about learning, it gives you a kick and an incomparable sense of satisfaction. Also, it skills up your functionality as an individual. From learning a new process at work to using a new app, it is a new world of knowledge every day that makes you an efficient individual. It has been proven that learning is becoming an economic imperative. A technological change demands stronger and continuous connection between education and employment. And that's the reason people in the corporate sector are always striving to learn more in order to improve their existence.

Apart from all this, learning also adds value to your daily life. It makes it more practical, helps you handle everything — right from home to office and from society to nature. In simple words, it makes you an asset to the world. So are you ready to be a part of the process that has no end?

(The author is the managing director of a company engaged in bridging the education gap.)

**People who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.**

—Steve Jobs

### TESTOSTERONE THERAPY UPS STROKE RISK

Ageing men with low testosterone levels who take testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) are at a high risk of experiencing an ischemic stroke or a cardiac arrest especially during the first two years of use, warns a study.

Published in *The American Journal of Medicine*, the findings confirm concerns voiced by many health agencies about the potential risks associated with the treatment. "Our research shows that the use of TRT was associated with an increased risk of stroke, transient ischemic attack or cardiac arrest during the first two years of use," said Christel Renoux from the McGill University, Canada.

As per researchers, there is limited evidence on long-term clinical benefits of TRT to effectively treat the decline of endogenous testosterone levels of ageing but healthy men. "We strongly recommend that clinicians proceed with caution when prescribing TRT and first discuss the potential benefits and risks with patients," he added.



### TAKING HOT BATH BEFORE BED IMPROVES SLEEP

Taking hot bath at least 90 minutes before bedtime is your ticket to sound sleep. Just remember that the water temperature should be around 40-42 degrees celsius, else you may not get better shuteye.

Biomedical engineers at University of Texas-Austin reached this conclusion after analysing thousands of studies linking water-based passive body heating or bathing and showering with warm/hot water, with improved sleep quality.

"When we looked through all known studies, we noticed significant disparities in terms of approaches and findings," said Shahab Haghayegh, lead author on the paper. "The only way to make an accurate determination of whether sleep can, in fact, be improved was to combine all the past data and look at it through a new lens."

Meta-analytical tools were used to assess the consistency between relevant studies and showed that an optimum temperature of 40-42 degrees celsius improved sleep quality.



### EXERCISE AND HYDRATION MAY TACKLE LOW BP

Suffering from low blood pressure? Exercise for an hour or more and stay hydrated to improve the condition and control fainting or dizziness episodes, finds a NASA-funded study on astronauts.

The study is the first to examine the condition called "orthostatic intolerance" during daily activities when the astronauts returned home.

The researchers found that exercise regimens during space flight, followed by saline injections after landing, were sufficient to prevent the condition from occurring.

"Daily exercise of an hour or so was sufficient to prevent loss of heart muscle and when it was combined with receiving hydration on their return, the condition was prevented entirely. We expected to see up to two-thirds of the space crew faint. Instead, no one fainted," said cardiologist Dr Benjamin Levine from UT Southwestern Medical Center. A similar condition is diagnosed in patients as Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, which is mainly found in women.



### FRENCH KISS MAY GET YOU GONORRHOEA

If you thought gonorrhoea — the most antibiotic-resistant of all the sexually-transmitted infections — can spread through only oral, anal or vaginal sex with someone with the disease, hold on. New research suggests mouth kissing can also be a risk factor in spread of the infection and a good-quality anti-bacterial mouthwash can help.

The global sexual health community "needs to recognise that gonorrhoea is on the rise and there should be an increased awareness of the risks of kissing as a route of transmission," said one of the researchers Christopher Fairley, professor at Monash University, Australia.

"Understanding how it is transmitted is the key to learn how to control it — if transmission by kissing is a key route of transmission then it is important to investigate new methods of control, such as anti-bacterial mouthwash. Kissing can also cause gonorrhoea though the chances are less. Saliva is also a reason," he added.



### CIGARETTE BUTTS DAMAGE PLANT GROWTH

Cigarette butts significantly reduce plant growth as their presence in the soil affects the germination success and shoot length, find researchers.

The researchers from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) found that the presence of cigarette butts in the soil reduces the germination success and shoot length of clover by 27 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively, while root biomass (root weight) reduced by 57 per cent. For grass, germination success reduced by 10 per cent and shoot length by 13 per cent.

The study, published in the journal *Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety*, is the first to show the damage that cigarette butts can cause to plants. It is estimated that around 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are littered every year, making them the most pervasive form of plastic pollution on the planet. Most cigarette butts contain a filter made of cellulose acetate fibre.



# SINDHU FALTERS IN FINAL

Yamaguchi beats Pusarla 21-15, 21-16 to win Indonesia crown; Chou Tien-chen bags men's title

PTI ■ JAKARTA

PV Sindhu's hopes of breaking a seven-month title drought came crashing down as the Indian lost in straight games to Akane Yamaguchi in the finals of Indonesia Open BWF Tour Super 1000 tournament here on Sunday.

Seven months after becoming the first Indian to win the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals in December, Olympic Silver medalist Sindhu had an opportunity to finally lay her hands on another crown only to squander, losing 15-21, 16-21 to the Japanese in a lop-sided summit clash that lasted 51 minutes here.

Playing her first final of the season, Sindhu looked a bit anxious and failed to match the brilliance of the 22-year-old Yamaguchi, whom she had beaten in the last four meetings.

"She played really well and there were long rallies. I was leading in the first game by 2-3 points but I made a few mistakes and then she finished it off. If I could have won the first game, it could have been a bit different," Sindhu told reporters.

"In the second I gave her a huge lead like 5-6 points and was left to cover it. But overall, I think it was a good tournament for me and I hope I can take the confidence going forward. Next I am playing Japan and I hope to do well there."

This was Sindhu's fifth loss to Yamaguchi in 15 meetings. The last time the Indian lost to the Japanese was at the semifinals of the All England Championship last year.

The defeat added to Sindhu's list of runners-up finishes, which include Silvers at the World Championships, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Thailand Open and India Open last year.

It was Yamaguchi's third title of the season after claiming crowns at German Open and Asian Championship.

Prior to this in 2019, Sindhu reached the semifinals of Singapore Open and India Open.

Sindhu had a forgettable start in the



PV Sindhu and Akane Yamaguchi pose with the runners up and winners medal respectively at the podium after Indonesia Open women's final match BWF/Twitter

opening game as she lagged 0-3 but soon the Indian controlled the proceedings, making Yamaguchi run across the court and finishing with her precise returns to take a 5-4 lead.

Yamaguchi took the lead at 7-7 when Sindhu went wide. But the Indian managed to grab a three-point advantage at the break

after the Japanese went wide twice.

Yamaguchi then displayed good retrieval skills and grabbed three straight points when Sindhu miscued her strokes.

A delicate net shot took Yamaguchi to 12-13 but she again missed the line. The Japanese levelled par at 14-14 when the Indian went long.

Yamaguchi attacked Sindhu's long backhand corner and soon eked out a 16-14 lead. An attacking game helped the Japanese to widen the gap as Sindhu once again sent a shuttle wide.

A lapse in backhand defence and then one shot going long from Sindhu gave Yamaguchi six game points. The Indian



## INDIA IN QUARTERS DESPITE DEFEAT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India set up a quarter-final clash with Indonesia despite losing their last group match to Korea at the Badminton Asia Junior Championships 2019 (Mixed Team Event) in Suzhou, China on Sunday.

Mainsam Meiraba's great effort was the silver lining of the day for the Indian contingent in their 1-4 loss but by finishing second to Korea in Group C, they made it to the last-eight.

On the first day of the continental event, India blanked both Mongolia and Macau China by an identical score of 5-0.

Manipur's Meiraba had been in sterling form of late and he even won his first international tournament at the White Night Russian Junior International earlier this month. Meiraba refused to give up and fought for 1 hour 32 minutes to subdue Korea's Hyeon Seung Park.

While that was the solitary win of the day for Team India, there were encouraging performances from others. The doubles teams, especially, stood out for their gutsy displays in a losing cause.

The mixed doubles pair of Dingku Singh Konthoujam and Ritika Thaker fought for 56 minutes before going down 21-19, 12-21, 12-21 to Dong Ju Ki and Eun Ji Lee. Goa's Tanisha Crasto and Kerala's Treasa Jolly were equally impressive in their 16-21, 21-16, 12-21 girls' doubles loss to Young Bin Ji and Eun Ji Lee.

The boys' doubles combine of Ishaan Bhatnagar and Vishnu Vardhan Goud Panjala found Korea's Dong Ju Ki and Joon Young Kim too strong in their 17-21, 15-21 defeat. In girls' singles, Malvika Bansod suffered a 10-21, 8-21 defeat to Ga Lam Kim.

## Enter-kaned!

AFP ■ SINGAPORE

Harry Kane scored a stunning 93rd minute winner from the halfway line as Tottenham Hotspur edged Juventus 3-2 in an entertaining pre-season friendly in Singapore on Sunday.

The England captain latched onto Lucas Moura's short pass and launched a first-time shot high over a scrambling substitute keeper Wojciech Szczesny as Spurs rallied past new manager Maurizio Sarri's Italian champions in front of a delighted National Stadium crowd.

"It's probably one of the best goals of my career.

I noticed the keeper was often off his line and thought if I get a chance to shoot I will and it just went in," Kane said in a post-match interview.

A youthful Spurs dominated the first half as Juventus struggled to adapt to their new coach's "Sarri-ball" tactic of playing out from the back with short, quick passes.



Instead of moving the ball forward, Juventus often found themselves defending desperately after being caught in possession as Spurs pressed high up the pitch with the Premier League side going on to take a deserved lead on the half-hour mark.

Son Heung-min started the move by holding up play and feeding Troy Parrott for a clear run at Gianluigi Buffon in the Juventus goal, with the 17-year-old forward's low strike parried by the veteran keeper straight into the path of an unmarked Erik Lamela for a routine tap-in.

"It was a very good game, very competitive. To be honest, we are still short in our preparations and I wasn't planning to play this way so early in the pre-season ... We were still hoping to give some players more rest after a long campaign," Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino said.

"The result was not the most important thing today, the performance was and how we continue our preparations for the upcoming season."

Juventus had more success after the break when they increased their tempo and went more direct, and halftime substitute Gonzalo Higuain levelled the score in the 56th minute with a drilled strike after exchanging neat passes with Federico Bernardeschi.

Buoyed by the equaliser, Juventus were soon ahead when Cristiano Ronaldo arrived late to drive home Mattia De Sciglio's cutback four minutes later, leaving to rapturous applause by an adoring crowd when he was substituted immediately after scoring.

Spurs were level in the 65th minute, however, when Champions League semi-final hero Lucas fired home record signing Tanguy Ndombele's low cross, the French midfielder finding the Brazilian with his first touch after coming on as a substitute.

Kane and Higuain both squandered good chances to score winning goals in the final 10 minutes before the England striker prevented the contest going to a penalty shootout with the most brilliant of strikes.

# Sathiyam-Archana win mixed Gold

PTI ■ CUTTACK

India added another golden chapter to the 21st Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships when its mixed doubles pair of G Sathiyam and Archana Kamath defeated Singapore's Peng Yu En Koen-Goi Rui Xuan 3-0 in the final here on Sunday.

The Gold count, on the penultimate day of the championships, stood at three.

This had, in a way, avenged the earlier loss of A Sharath Kamal and Sreeja Akula in the semifinal by the same Singaporean pair as well as the defeat of Sharath in men's singles quarterfinals by Peng.

The Indian pair was on top in the final as they piled on the agony of their rivals, particularly on a tired Peng who could not cope with the pressure applied by the top-seeded duo.

But the second-seeded Sharath Kamal squandered three match points and then the quarterfinal match, shattering his men's singles medal hope. Though Sharath failed to go past the semifinals in mixed doubles, he would definitely rue the sin-



G Sathiyam and Archana Kamath pose with their medals after winning the mix-doubles finals at 21st Commonwealth TT PTI

gles loss to the younger legs of Peng in the quarters.

The other Indians that made the grade included top-seeded G Sathiyam, who beat Nigerian Bode Abiodun 4-0 and Harmeet Desai who accounted for fellow Indian Sushmit Sriram 4-1. Sanil Shetty

joined Sharath when he went down to England's Thomas Jarvis 1-4.

Earlier, the top-seeded Ho Tin-Tin of England beat the unseeded Archana Kamath, the reigning national champion, 4-1 to enter the women's singles semifinals.

## COMMONWEALTH TT

Ayhika beat Mousumi Paul in straight games.

Archana, who played well until this point, was unable to find her feet against the attacking Ho who cashed in on several unforced errors committed by the Indian. After losing the first game, the Bengaluru girl came back to level 1-1 but lost her rhythm from there to lose tamely.

Madhurika had a good measure of Krittiwika, the national runner-up and despite losing a game she punished her rival when the opportunities presented themselves.

Indeed, Krittiwika had a slight advantage in the fourth game but lost it 10-12 and then the steam. However, for Ayhika it was rather easy as Mousumi could not cope with her rival's quick returns and excellent placements.

Two extended games must have sapped the energy of both Sreeja and Sutirtha but the former held her nerves despite squandering five match-points

to romp home winners.

The scratch pair of Sharath Kamal and Sreeja Akula, in the absence of Manika Batra, had little problem up to the semifinals. But once there, the mismatch became more palpable when the Indian duo took on Singapore's Yu En Koen Pang and Rui Xuan Goi, who play together more regularly.

In men's doubles, two Indian pairs — Sharath and Sathiyam and Anthony Amalraj and Manav Thakkar — made it to the semifinals while the two other pairs that will challenge the Indian domination will be Pang Yu En and Chua Shao Han from Singapore and the English duo of Samuel Walker and Thomas Jarvis, respectively, on Monday.

In women's doubles, Pooja Sahasrabudhe and Krittiwika Singha Roy, Sreeja Akula and Mousumi Paul and Sutirtha Mukherjee and Ayhika Mukherjee entered the semifinal while the fourth pair, top-seeded Madhurika Patkar and Archana Kamath went down to Singapore's Goi Rui Xuan and Won Xin Ru 2-3 (5-11, 8-11, 8-11, 7-9, 9-11).

## Bayern spoil Hazard's Real debut

AFP ■ LOS ANGELES

Bayern Munich spoiled Eden Hazard's Real Madrid debut, downing the Spanish giants 3-1 in a friendly in Houston on Saturday despite goalkeeper Sven Ulreich's sending off.

Corentin Tolisso, Robert Lewandowski and Serge Gnabry had given Bundesliga champions Bayern a comfortable 3-0 lead before recent Real Madrid signing Rodrygo grabbed a consolation goal with a brilliant free kick.

That followed Ulreich's impact at the NRG Stadium — home of the NFL's Houston Texans, where the European giants produced plenty of lively end-to-end action from the kickoff.

It needed a stellar display from Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer to keep Real Madrid at bay.

Bayern led at the interval thanks to Tolisso's 15th-minute strike.

Thomas Muller freed Kingsley Coman whose cross made it to Tolisso — who was denied by Real



Bayern players celebrate after Lewandowski scored second goal FCB

Madrid keeper Thibaut Courtois on his first attempt but slotted home the rebound.

Down a goal with half-time approaching Real Madrid poured it on.

Karim Benzema let a golden chance go begging in the 43rd, meeting a cross from Isco but knocking his effort wide.

Courtois fended off a blast from Coman in first-half injury time to keep Bayern from stretching their advantage before the break.

While Real Madrid applied plenty of pressure, Hazard was circumspect, often opting to pass off to his new teammates.

The closest 28-year-old Belgian came to his first Real Madrid goal was in the 39th minute, when he found space on the left and bent a shot toward the far post only for Neuer to punch it away.

Zidane's wholesale changes at the interval did nothing to further Real Madrid's cause, even though they controlled possession early in the second half.

Lewandowski doubled Bayern's lead in the 67th controlling a high ball from Niklas Sule, turning and firing into the bottom corner.

Two minutes later Madrid gave the ball away deep in their own end and an unmarked Gnabry was able to control the ball and fire past Keylor Navas in goal.

## BALE'S AGENT CALLS ZIDANE A 'DISGRACE'

AFP ■ LOS ANGELES

Gareth Bale's agent has branded Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane a "disgrace" after the Frenchman revealed that the La Liga giants were ready to offload the Wales star in a matter of days.

Zidane left Bale out of the Real squad for Saturday's 3-1 exhibition loss to Bayern Munich, and after the match he revealed he had been dropped because the club were "working on his departure", adding that he hoped it happens soon, "for everyone's sake".

"Zidane is a disgrace, he shows no respect for a player that has done so much for Real Madrid," Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett said.

Asked whether Bale is close to leaving Madrid, Barnett added: "We are working on it".

After Zidane's reappointment, Bale played 90 minutes in just three of the remaining 11 matches, was left out completely four times and frequently substituted when he did play.

He was denied a chance to say goodbye at the end of last season when he was left on the bench in a 2-0 loss to Real Betis that saw Zidane's side submerged with boos and whistles.



Gareth Bale trains during training session Bale/Twitter

"There comes a time when things are done because they need to be done," Zidane added after the Bayern defeat.

"I've not got anything against him. We have to make decisions and change things, that's all there is to it."

"I don't know if this will happen in 24 or 48 hours' time. The situation will change and it's for the best for everyone."

Bale joined Real Madrid to much fanfare, a blockbuster transfer fee and a big salary that may prove to be an obstacle for all but the richest teams.

He has three seasons left on his deal and has been linked to Tottenham, Manchester United and Bayern.