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AS MASSIVE RALLY CHOKES CITY

VIVACITY 13
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GREAT
RESTAURANT AND OTHER RESTAURANTS

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जय किसान फसल ऋण माफी योजना का अगला चरण प्रारम्भ

एक ही बैंक खाते वाले किसानों के एक लाख तक फसल ऋण माफ किये जाने का कार्य प्रारंभ।



अपने हर वचन की पक्की सरकार

कमल नाथ, मध्यप्रदेश

मध्यप्रदेश सरकार

Modi's fresh push for polls at one go

PM invites Opp leaders on June 19 to discuss one nation, one poll

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday invited heads of all parties to a meeting on June 19 to discuss the "one nation, one election" issue and other important matters. Noting that there are many new faces in this Lok Sabha, Modi who chaired an all-party meeting on the eve of the first session of the new Lok Sabha, said the first session of the Lower House of Parliament should begin with "fresh zeal and new thinking." In the meeting, the Opposition, meanwhile, demanded discussion on issues such as farmers distress, unemployment and drought should be debated upon in Parliament.

Addressing the media after the meeting, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi said the Prime Minister urged leaders of all parties to "introspect whether Members of Parliament are able to fulfil people's aspirations as their representatives and the manner in which last two years of the 16th Lok Sabha were wasted."



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister and BJP president Amit Shah and other leaders leave after an NDA meeting at Parliament library in New Delhi on Sunday

An all-party meeting is a customary procedure before the beginning of every session of Parliament to ensure its smooth functioning. Joshi said the Government has requested all parties, especially the Opposition, for their cooperation for the smooth functioning of both Houses of Parliament.

Modi has invited presidents of all those parties, who have an MP either in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, for a meeting on June 19. The meeting has been called to discuss "one nation, one election" issue, celebrations of 75 years of India's Independence in 2022 and 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary this year.

It will be followed by a dinner meeting with all members of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on June 20 to freely interact and exchange views with the Government, Joshi said, adding that these two novel initiatives would go a long way in building team spirit among all parliamentarians.

After the all-party meeting, Modi tweeted, "We had a fruitful all-party meeting today, the first one after the election results and before the start of the Monsoon Session. Thankful to the leaders for their valuable suggestions. We all agreed on the smooth running of Parliament so that we can fulfil people's aspirations."

Pak's rain gambit fails to tame dominant India

PTI ■ MANCHESTER

Chasing a stiff 337-run target, Pakistan were 166 for six in 35 overs against India when rain halted play in their World Cup clash, here Sunday.

Imad Wasim (22) and Shadab Khan (1) were at the crease when the skies opened up as Pakistan need 171 more runs from 15 overs.

Rain had briefly held play when India batted. In India's innings, opener Rohit Sharma hit a majestic 140-run knock while skipper Virat Kohli scored 77 after Pakistan elected to field in the marquee match. India have a 6-0 record against Pakistan in World Cup matches. Rohit pulverised a pedestrian Pakistan attack. Despite heavy rains and overcast conditions during past few days, the pitch had very little moisture and turned out to be a batting beauty which Rohit and the other Indian batsmen exploited to the fullest.

The Indian vice-captain scored his 24th ODI hundred — 140 off 113 balls while KL Rahul (57) played the perfect second fiddle in an opening partnership of 137 runs.

Skipper Virat Kohli switched gears effortlessly during his 77 off 65 balls and also became the quickest to 11,000 ODI runs, eclipsing a 17-year record held by iconic Sachin Tendulkar. Mohammed Amir (3/47) pitched the ball up and maintained discipline despite a couple of official 'warnings' for running out the pitch while Wahab Riaz (1/71) and Hasan Ali (1/84) bowled short consistently.



Rohit Sharma celebrates his century against Pakistan with captain Virat Kohli during the Cricket World Cup match at Old Trafford in Manchester, England on Sunday



Self-proclaimed Godman Vairagyanand Giri Maharaj alias Mirchi Baba talking to media persons after the district administration denied permission against his wish for watery grave, in Bhopal on Sunday

Bihar heatwave claims 61 lives, 3 districts hit

PTI ■ PATNA

At least 61 people have died in a blistering heatwave that hit three Bihar districts on Saturday, officials said on Sunday.

The officials at the Disaster Management Control Room said 22 people died in Aurangabad, 20 in Gaya and two in Nawada districts due to the heatwave.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has expressed grief over the deaths due to the "loo" winds and the heatstroke in the three districts and has announced a payment of Rs four lakh as ex-gratia to the next of kin of those killed, an official release said.

Stating that the Government stood firmly with the affected families, Kumar

ordered payment of ₹4 lakh as ex-gratia from the State disaster relief fund to the next of kin of those killed due to the heatwave in the three districts.

He also directed the officials concerned to take necessary steps and measures in dealing with the blistering heat and loo. The Chief Minister also asked the officials to provide all medical help to those affected by the heatstroke.

Major cities such as Patna, Gaya and Bhagalpur witnessed the heatwave on Saturday.

According to the Patna Meteorological Centre, the State Capital registered a maximum temperature of 45.8 degrees Celsius on Saturday, the highest in June in the last 10 years, while Gaya and Bhagalpur recorded a high of 45.2 and 41.5 degrees Celsius respectively.

Doctors agree to Didi parley with rider

Say talk 'should be open to media coverage'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The ongoing junior doctors' strike across West Bengal entered its seventh day on Sunday with the agitating medicos responding to Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's talks offer with a tactical move saying they were game for talks but not inside closed doors but at a public platform.

Mamata had on Saturday asked the doctors to send in their representatives to Nabanna to thrash out a solution to the ongoing imbroglio. "I have already met the doctors' demands and am ready to talk to them. I have forgiven them for their misdemeanour towards me and have not invoked the stringent Essential Services Maintenance Act considering their career. But they should accept the talks offer and send their representatives to Nabanna from where the Government of the State is run," Mamata had said.

However the doctors, "having considered carefully the Chief Minister's statements," decided to respond to her offer for talks, with a mild adjustment saying, "We too want to talk to her but not inside the closed doors but in a public place and in front of the camera so that people can see it for themselves."

In a statement given after a general body meeting, the doctors said, "We are keen to end this impasse. We are ready to hold talks with the Chief Minister at a venue of her choice, provided it is held in the open, in the presence of medi-



apersons, and not behind closed doors," adding "the venue for the talks should be spacious enough to accommodate representatives of all the medical colleges."

They said, "Where so many thousands of doctors are involved in the agitation how a group of few can end it through a closed-door talks. Let the talk take place in a public venue. Let the Chief Minister choose the venue."

The doctors also said the victim of the Sunday's attack who was hit with a brick on his forehead was suffering from intermittent memory loss and epileptic attack. "A bright student as he was his dreams of becoming a surgeon will end now," they said adding two other doctors from other colleges had lost their eye sights in similar attacks during the strike period.

"Though the Chief Minister claimed that she had taken action and arranged for

police, attacks in the past one week have been as many as 230 on on-duty junior doctors across the State," they said.

The doctors' statement on Sunday came in the wake of an appeal from the president of Indian Medical Association Dr Shantanu Sen who said, "If the strike continues then the doctors would lose public sympathy," adding it was in the interest of both the patients and the doctors that they returned to work as soon as possible.

The junior doctors of Kolkata's NRS Medical College struck work from Monday after a large number of hooligans raided the premises and attacked some of them injuring two of them grievously. They ceased work in demand of a better security system for the doctors apart from a better infrastructure. They also wanted all the culprits to be arrested while the police arrested only five of them.

Even as the Chief Minister in a subsequent statement threatened to use coercive laws like ESMA, the striking doctors hardened their stance making an appeal to her to visit the NRSMH personally.

Amid ongoing war of words from both the sides and some politicians and the members of the civil society making occasional statements in favour of the striking doctors their colleagues from other Government institutions struck too.

At least 15 people have died for lack of treatment in the past seven days, Government sources said hoping the strike would end soon.

Vayu loses steam to usher in sluggish monsoon

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Monsoon is expected to advance further up north as cyclone Vayu loses intensity paving the way for the wind system to move towards the Arabian Sea, the weatherman said on Sunday.

By now, monsoon should have reached the Central India, including parts of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, eastern Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, but it is yet to reach Maharashtra.

It still remains over Mangalore, Mysore, Cuddalore over the southern peninsula and Passighat, Agartala in the northeast, according to the India Meteorological Department. The western coast — from Maharashtra to Gujarat

— has been receiving rainfall due to the cyclone.

Only coastal Karnataka and Kerala have received rains due to monsoon.

Vayu is expected to cross the Gujarat coast on Monday evening as a depression. This will pave the way for monsoon winds to move up towards the Arabian Sea.

Monsoon made an onset over Kerala on June 8, nearly a week after its usual onset date.

"The progress of monsoon was halted due to Cyclone Vayu. As its intensity decreases, we expect monsoon to progress in the next 2-3 days," said Devendra Pradhan, additional director general, IMD.

In its monsoon bulletin, IMD said conditions are becoming

ing favourable for further advance of the southwest monsoon to more parts of central Arabian Sea, Karnataka and remaining parts of Tamil Nadu. It is expected to cover more parts of central, north and south Bay, northeast India, north Bengal and Sikkim in 1-2 days.

The overall monsoon deficiency in the country has reached 43 per cent due to its sluggish pace. IMD's central division — which covers

Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Goa — has recorded 59 per cent of rainfall deficiency while east and northeast India has recorded 47 per cent deficiency. Rainfall deficiency in meteorological subdivisions west and east Madhya Pradesh,

Chhattisgarh was 75, 70 and 72 per cent, respectively.

Deficiency in Vidarbha is 87 per cent. According to the Central Water Commission, the water level in reservoirs of south Indian states and Maharashtra is lesser than the average of last ten years.

Several parts of the country are reeling under intense heatwave, especially the east Indian States of Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha. On Sunday rain brought down the mercury in some western and northern States.

Rain and thunderstorm have been predicted on Monday in Uttar Pradesh, where sweltering heat continued unabated with Allahabad in the eastern part being the

hottest at 45.3 degree Celsius, six notches above the normal.

Sultanpur, Varanasi and Basti in the State recorded 45 degrees Celsius, 44.2 degrees Celsius and 44 degrees Celsius respectively.

In Delhi, traces of rain and strong wind reduced the daytime temperature which settled at 36.3 degrees Celsius, three notches below the normal. The weatherman has predicted overcast conditions and thunderstorm accompanied with light rains on Monday.

Parts of Rajasthan witnessed rain since Saturday, bringing respite from the sweltering conditions. The State Capital recorded 9.2 mm of rains on Sunday, the meteorological department said.

सरकार गठन के केवल दो माह में 20 लाख किसानों के फसल ऋण माफ



अपने हर वचन की पक्की सरकार



कमल नाथ, मुख्यमंत्री, मध्य प्रदेश

D-11045/19

Musical evening at Tribal Museum

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Bhopalites enjoyed a calm musical evening with clarinet recital and Bharatnatyam dance at Madhya Pradesh State Tribal Museum here on Sunday.

The programme started with Narasimha Vedavati (Bangalore) with her son Venkateswara Vedavati and grandson Trimulesh Vedavati for 'Clarinet recital'. In which they first presented Raga Shyam Kalyani, a rhythm and three rhythms in front of the audience. After playing in Raga Shyam Kalyani, artists presented melodies Raga Pillu. Ramendar Solanki accompanied them on tabla during the presentation.

After playing Clarinet, Sheikh Modini Hombal (Khairagarh) presented 'Bharatnatyam group dance' with her fellow artists. The

THEY FIRST PRESENTED RAGA SHYAM KALYANI, A RHYTHM AND THREE RHYTHMS IN FRONT OF THE AUDIENCE. AFTER PLAYING IN RAGA SHYAM KALYANI, ARTISTS PRESENTED MELODIES RAGA PILLU. RAMENDAR SOLANKI ACCOMPANIED THEM ON TABLA DURING THE PRESENTATION

dance presentation started with Shiva Tandava Pushpanjali 'Jatavigal Jajal Pravahvitashale' in Raga Mohanam. In this, the wonderful beauty of Lord Shiva, with his voice in the style of Ganga and with the sound of Damru, was described in which his attractive dance was performed.

Watching Ganga's dance Shiva get absorbed in devotion and become overwhelmed with joy. After the Shiv Tandava, the artists presented 'Devi Deepangali' centred

Bharatanatyam dance. In this presentation, the gentle and rudra form of Goddess Parvati was described, in which the daughter of Mountrajraj and the goddess Parvati, who reside on the Himalayas, the beautiful, maternal forms were beautifully presented.

On the contrary, in the form of Durga, she has destroyed innumerable demons- demons and not only fears in the form of the Ranchandi but also fearsome. After the Goddess Deepangali,

the artists made a dance on 'Durga Prachya' dedicated to Raga Malika and Tala Saraika and made all the audience amazed with their dance skills. In this presentation, Goddess Durga was described by the dancing medium of the death of Mahishasura, Chanda, Munda, the demise of the monks, and their superhuman nature.

After the Goddess Stuti, the artists presented 'Shiv Kirtan' concentrated dance in Raga Ravati. In this composition, the story of Shiva's creation of Kamdev, and the story of holding the Ganga on Sheesh was presented in this presentation of dance performed in Ardhanarishwar Swaroop of Shiva Shakti. Hombal with her fellow artists concluded her presentation while rendering dance on 'Tilakya' in Handsolam and Tal block Ekam.

Woman among 5 held for duping computer vendor

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The MP police have booked two private firms and five persons including a woman for duping a computer vendor to the tune of ₹4.5 crore by not paying for goods provided by victim.

The complainant Prakash Gupta who owns a BootCom computer and computer accessories store in MP Nagar have provided computer and computer accessories to the accused for long and for the past few months the accused defaulted on payment and later provided cheque which got dishonored.

Victim has lodged complaint with the MP Nagar police but no action was taken and later victim filed case with

THE TWO PARTIES HAD ORDERED COMPUTER AND COMPUTER ACCESSORIES WORTH ₹4.5 CRORE AND LATER FAILED TO MAKE PAYMENT

court in which it was found that the claims made by the victim were true. Court ordered MP Nagar police to register FIR against the accused who have failed to make payments.

The victim has provided computer and computer accessories to Latest Devices Private Limited operated by Bhupendra Singh, Rashi Singh,

Hari Singh while another computer and computer accessories were also provided to Ravi Wadhvani and Manish Wadhvani. The two parties had ordered computer and computer accessories worth ₹4.5 crore and later failed to make payment.

The provided cheques which were dishonored and later they provided account details stating that the payments have been made but they were found to be fake and were cooked.

The police have registered a case under section 420 of the IPC and started further investigation. Accused are yet to be quizzed and police said that the five accused would be questioned in the further investigation.

Drizzle at isolated places post heavy spell

Bhopal: After heavy spell of rains witnessed in the past two days, Sunday remained quiet with drizzle and light brief showers at isolated places in the state capital.

In the past 24 hours few regions have witnessed good rainfall in which Sarangpur and Pandhana recorded 5 cm of rainfall, Mandla recorded 4 cm of rainfall, Lakhnadon and Multai recorded 3 cm of rainfall while Sohagpur and Katni recorded 2 cm of rainfall.

Rainfall and thunder activities have faded away for while and for the whole day cloud cover and sun shine were witnessed keeping the weather conditions moderate in the state capital and maintaining day temperature at 36.7 degree Celsius and night temperature at 25.6 degree Celsius.

Soaring high temperatures have dipped to 43 degree Celsius recorded in Khajuraho on Sunday. Except Khajuraho most of the places across the state recorded day temperature below 40 degree Celsius.

Very few regions are witnessing high night temperature. Gwalior recorded the highest night temperature at 32 degree Celsius.

In the past 24 hours most of the parts in Jabalpur division and few parts of Sagar, Indore and Bhopal divisions witnessed rainfall. Shahdol, Rewa, Indore, Hoshangabad, Gwalior divisions also reported rainfall.

The divisions which have not received good rainfall witnessed increased temperatures. Rewa and Ujjain divisions witnessed significant increase in temperatures.

The difference in day and night temperatures has increased after the weather conditions have changed in the past three days.

Seminar on GST annual return held at ICAI Bhawan

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In order to train the students about the peculiarities and criticalities involved in annual GST return, CICASA Bhopal Branch of CIRC of ICAI organised a seminar on GST annual return at ICAI Bhawan on Sunday.

The programme started by Welcome speech of CA Anshul Agrawal Chairman CICASA Bhopal Branch.

CA Ankur Jain, Secretary Bhopal Branch also graced the event by his presence.

It is to be noted that more than 100 students participated in this seminar.

National speaker from city

of lakes CA Navneet Garg addressed the session and enlightened the students with the norms and key aspects of GSTR 9 along with latest notification related to filing of the return.

He explained how relevant information to be filled in the six parts and nineteen tables of the return.

It greatly helped student and lot of questions and queries too was addressed by speaker.

The session was followed by the felicitation of winners of the Quiz section and selfie contest winner of the Newsletter of CICASA Bhopal Branch - ("GARUN" - The

Birds Eye View), which is a platform provided to the students to portray their talents.

The students cleared their doubts during the seminar.

A questionnaire session was also held during the seminar wherein the students asked about their queries and the experts answered the questions.

It was an informative session for all the students.

CICASA Secretary Sakshi Prajapati conducted the event along with Vice Chairman Zaid Husain Khan and Committee member Knowledge Sahu, Mirza Shahad, Anuj Jain.

Hindi play 'Kabira Khada Bazaar Mein' staged

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The city theatre artists sor-wad their charm before the Indorians as they gave spontaneous performance at Indore on Sunday. The Indore theatre lovers witnessed the purity and truthness of Saint Kabir, in a Hindi play 'Kabira Khada Bazaar Mein'.

The play marked the grand closure of day long event 27th Kabir Jan Utsav held at Indore. Directed by Nizam Patel the play is adapted from a story written by a noted novelist and a playwright Bhishm Sahani. It was performed by the artists of Hum Theatre Troupe.

Began with one of the famous doha of Kabir, "Kabira khada bazaar mein, Mange sabki khair, Na kahu se Dosti,

The play focused on how Kabir tells the common folk to realize that God dwells within each one of us and thus not to mistreat other human beings, but treat them with dignity and love

Na kahu se Bair" the play traces some events in his life and the prevailing social conditions that shaped his thoughts and actions. His sharp intellect, rationality, undaunted courage and command over the spoken word gave him the unique power to communicate with the common people. He was a people's poet and sang

from his heart. The play focused on how Kabir tells the common folk to realize that God dwells within each one of us and thus not to mistreat other human beings, but treat them with dignity and love.

Beautifully sung by an impressive chorus and performers in the style of opera, is

inspired by folk tunes of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Uttarakhand. Some verses are recited. These verses logically and cohesively form the part of the narrative which captures the life and times of the poor Muslim weaver, Kabir. Through his verses he condemns the rigid caste system perpetuated by the Brahminical social and religious order and the futility of idol worship.

Though peaceful, the ruling classes become his enemies. But, his followers are convinced of his philosophy that all men are equal. All the artists of the play maintained to capture the attention of the audiences at each event that was played on stage. The theatre-goers of the city enjoyed the play whole heartedly.

26-yr-old man dies in lightning strike in Kajlikheda forest

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 26-year-old man died of lightning at Kajlikheda forest under Kolar police station area on Saturday; charred body was found late in the evening at the forest.

Police said that the deceased identified as Sonu Singh Tomar was found dead in Kajlikheda forest.

Police were informed after the body was spotted by the family members inside the forest.

The family members started to search for the accused after he failed to return in the evening and they went to check in the forest where he had gone for grazing of goats.

The deceased used to work as shepherd and would usually return in the evening after the work.

On the day of incident thundery activities and heavy rainfall was witnessed and later he was struck by lightning.

The body was sent for the post mortem after the preliminary investigation.

The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and started further investigation.

During the investigation police found that the circumstantial evidences suggest that the deceased died of lightning as the body was severely damaged and other possibilities of death could be ruled out easily.

Meanwhile, a 3-year-old baby girl drowned in a bucket at Misrod area while playing on Saturday; Misrod police have started investigation.

The baby girl Aadhya Raghuvanshi was found drowned in a bucket at her house and was rushed to Noble hospital where she died during treatment.

After the preliminary police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC. Police have started further investigation.

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Newly wedded couples during mass marriage ceremony organised by Shri Bhagwat Sewa Jan Samiti (left) and Muslim brides participate in community's mass marriage ceremony at Iqbal Maidan (right), in Bhopal on Sunday

Pioneer photo

Two held for stealing fuel

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Gunga police nabbed two miscreants from Ratua village who were involved in stealing fuel from vehicles and recovered 50 liters of diesel; one of the gang members is absconding.

According to the police, acting on a tip off regarding miscreants involved in stealing fuel from the vehicles police team reached market of Ratua village and nabbed two accused while one of the accused managed to escape.

The nabbed miscreants were identified as Khemchand Kushwaha (38) and Deepak

AT THE TIME WHEN THE ACCUSED WERE NABBED THEY WERE CARRYING DIESEL IN OIL CANES

Kushwah (28) of Ratua village while the third accused is identified as Deepak Ahirwar.

At the time when the accused were nabbed they were

carrying diesel in oil canes.

On June 15 complaint was lodged with the Gunga police regarding the stealing of diesel from truck bearing registration number MP04HE4583 and MH04DD4189 by the three accused Khemchand, Deepak Kushwaha and Deepak Ahirwar.

Based on the complaint after the preliminary investigation the police registered a case under section 379 of the IPC and started investigation and nabbed two accused on Sunday.

During the investigation police found that the accused

are involved in stealing for long and are habitual drinker and for spending on liquor they used to steal fuel and other goods.

Police would investigate the accomplices who help in the disposal of fuel.

Meanwhile, Kotwali police have nabbed a minor vehicle lifter and recovered five two wheelers from his possession on Sunday.

The accused is a resident of Aishbagh and used to steal vehicles from different parts of Bhopal.

Police suspects that more vehicles would be recovered in the further investigation.

Kukshi, Manawar to get water for irrigation: Min

Bhopal: Reviewing the Omkareshwar Project in Indore today, Narmada Valley Development Minister Surendra Singh Baghel informed that Kukshi and Manawar Assembly constituency will not have to face any problem now for water for irrigation.

A ₹80 crore scheme has been approved for these regions. The water will be released soon in the canals in the fourth phase.

Minister Baghel informed that in the 4th phase of the pro-

ject, the problem of water shortage in the canals has been resolved. Now the remaining nearly 4 thousand hectare area of this phase will soon start receiving water for irrigation.

For this the proposal of additional irrigation has been prepared.

Minister Baghel said that intensive efforts have been made to make adequate water available for irrigation for farmers. In the 4th phase, action will be taken against officers and contractors responsible for water crisis in some areas. SR

Shivraj visits Mandva slums

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, a day after launching his 'beti bachao' campaign, on Sunday reached Mandva slums, where a nine-year-old was recently raped and murdered.

Chouhan listened to the problems of the residents and assured them of providing solutions. In the presence of religious leaders, he informed the girls about good and bad touches and how they need to be alert.

Earlier, on Saturday, to ensure safety and security of a girl child in the state, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced that soon 'Beti Bachao' committee will be formed in all the colonies of Bhopal and the campaign for the same will commence from Sunday.

He also informed the media that members of religious and social organizations will gather on Sunday in order to take part in the campaign.



BJP National Vice President Shivraj Singh Chouhan addresses local residents of Mandva Basti, near incident site of the rape and murder of a minor girl child during a campaign to 'Save Girl Child' in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Members of religious, social organisations gathered together. To ensure the safety of daughters, it was decided to form 'Beti Bachao' committee in all colonies of Bhopal, the

campaign begins on June 16. Leaders of various organisations will visit colonies tomorrow and form committees," he said.

The former MP chief minister also had stated that the campaigners of 'Beti Bacho' will collectively take out a March on

July 7 in Bhopal with an aim to provide protection to the girl child and will also demand 'hanged to the death penalty' for rapists.

EARLIER, ON SATURDAY, TO ENSURE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF A GIRL CHILD IN THE STATE, FORMER MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN ANNOUNCED THAT SOON 'BETI BACHAO' COMMITTEE WILL BE FORMED IN ALL THE COLONIES OF BHOPAL AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE SAME WILL COMMENCE FROM SUNDAY

July 7 in Bhopal with an aim to provide protection to the girl child and will also demand 'hanged to the death penalty' for rapists.

"We will send one lakh postcards to Chief Justice of India urging him for the hand to death punishment for rapists," he added.

'BJP conspiracy' behind rape: Sharma

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Raising questions over the campaign launched by former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Madhya Pradesh Public Relations Minister PC Sharma raised doubts talking of a possible 'BJP conspiracy' behind the heinous incident.

While talking to media persons, Sharma said that the fact that the accused was given a shanty on rent by a BJP worker only a few months ago and the police were not informed of this according to rules and then BJP workers were trying to make hue and cry over the incident in the same locality, reeked of conspiracy.

He further said that the police nabbed the culprit in 24 hours, presented the charge-sheet in 48 hours and expecting verdict within a month. However, the BJP is making big issue out of the incident.



"So, I have asked the police to probe all possible angles," Sharma said.

"Also now the former chief minister is starting his so called campaign to save girl children and attempt to form local level committees (mohalla samiti) from the same locality is all questionable. Such attempts cannot be specific but is a government move. So many incidents of violent crime against women

He further said that the police nabbed the culprit in 24 hours, presented the charge-sheet in 48 hours and expecting verdict within a month. However, the BJP is making big issue out of the incident

happened in the BJP regime. Why did Shivraj Singh Chouhan not start such a campaign then?" the minister asked.

Earlier, Sharma also said that the BJP and RSS are known for hatching conspiracies and this could be a move to defame the Congress government.

At his residence, Sharma also narrated a list of achievements of state government during the past six months, highlighting the fact that the government got only three months to work due to election code of conduct.

Congress government would complete six month in

rule on June 17.

"We have fulfilled almost 100 promises out of our vachan patra in this duration. From farm loan waiver to investment approval of ₹6 crore, halving power bills of farmers, doubling pensions of senior citizen and DA of employees, increasing the sum for girls' marriage scheme, upgrading of cow shelters and so on," he said.

In-charge ministers, district Congress presidents and other office bearers would hold press conferences at district level and meet workers and people to highlight their six-month achievements, he said.



Riders take part in slow bicycle ride for climate justice organised by Slow Roll Members, in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Govt plans to promote investment instil confidence

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

With State Government's decisions to promote investment and industries for employment, youth have got new hope. Looking at Government's speedy decision regarding investment, the youth who are looking for employment opportunities from them are enthusiastic.

A proposal has been sent to the Government of India for sweet and namkeen cluster in Jabalpur. This will prove to be a new step in Mahakaushal region. A confectionery cluster is being developed in the Malwa region of Indore which will provide employment to the local people. Apart from this, textile parks are coming up in Mohana industrial area Dhar, Acharpura industrial area Bhopal, Lehgadua industrial area Chhindwara and Jaora industrial area Ratlam. In these parks also, local youth will get

Looking at this new scenario, it can be said that with the speed in which the process of establishing investment and industry is going on in a gap of three months, youth have more hopes from the future

employment opportunities.

Work of setting up new units is in progress in the food processing sector. Looking at this new scenario, it can be said that with the speed in which the process of establishing investment and industry is going on in a gap of three months, youth have more hopes from the future.

After the decision to make 70 percent employment to local youth in the industries mandatory in the state, it has now become necessary for industries to come up speedily. Investment proposals of ₹6,000

crores of big industries like India Cements, HEG, Wonder Cement, Procter and Gamble have been approved. This will provide employment to 7500 youth.

Work on several schemes is in progress to connect the youth with employment. The recent decision to allow youth to use government land for horticultural crops in the villages is significant and will prove to be revolutionary in any ways. The Government has expressed its intention to provide skill training to the youth so that they can be

employed immediately and this has made the youth hopeful of moving ahead. The development scenario of Madhya Pradesh has been multi-coloured and multi-dimensional in many ways. Governments come with their own thinking and viewpoints and work accordingly. With time, new policies and decisions are required. With this view, when the state's Kamal Nath government came to power after 15 years, it was necessary to take such decisions which can take the development of the state forward more rapidly. Chief Minister Kamal Nath has not caused any delay.

The government-administration started with the order of waiving loans of farmers under debt of ₹2 lakhs. This is the biggest step in the history of the state. Loans of about ₹21 lakhs have been waived or are in the final process. The second phase of loan waiver has started.

Meanwhile, nearly 3 months passed by in Code of Conduct due to the Lok Sabha polls. In the true sense, the government got only 3 months to work. In such a short span, the speed with which decisions have been taken has re-instilled faith in people.

The government has reiterated its resolve for development of the state and the prosperity of the common citizens. The speedy decisions have proved that the government is a government of common people.

A new history of development of Madhya Pradesh is ready to be written. The state has got the experience and visionary leadership needed to strengthen the infrastructural framework of the socio-economic development of Madhya Pradesh. Three months of decisions have knocked at every area of development.

Two neelgais' bodies in eight pieces seized

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Remains of two Neelgai in eight pieces have been recovered from a house near Babe Ali Stadium under Shahjehanabad police station area on Sunday; man detained deals in cattle and their products.

SHO of Shahjehanabad Zaheer Khan said that the accused identified as Mohammad Rauf has been detained after skins of two Antelops have been recovered from his house. The accused deals in rearing and selling goats and cattle.

The involvement of accused in poaching and selling animals would be investigated as in the initial investigation accused refused that the skins are owned by him. The customers and accomplices who are involved in the whole network would be investigated, he added.

Initially he tried to mislead the police and police found that the accused is involved in poaching for long and evi-

The accused deals in rearing and selling goats and cattle

deals for establishing offence would be collected. The case would be handed over to Forest Department for further investigation.

During the investigation police have not found any weapon which was used in the hunting and it is possible that the weapons used in the hunting would be recovered later in the investigation.

The nabbed accused has been booked under Wildlife Protection Act 1972. Police said that the accused is involved in hunting in the past. He had been hunting with the purpose of selling products obtained from the hunted animals. Earlier it has been found that wild animals were killed for selling to hotel owners for flesh and in this case it has to be investigated.

Surbhi Singh shares her mountaineering experience

Mhow: Secretary of Vikrant group of institution, known for new initiatives and adventurous activities, Surbhi Singh Tomar unfurled Indian national flag on the 5895 meter high Kilimanjaro Mountain in Africa. Surbhi Singh Tomar began her mountaineering expedition from Marang gate.

The temperature of the mountaineering track was - 20 degree Celcius. Seven members out of 20 members team of different countries of her team left the mountaineering expedition in between and stayed at camp 3 and camp 4 but Surbhi Singh Tomar with her other remaining team mates successfully climbed the Kilimanjaro mountain and reached at the top on the time.

In another achievement of mountaineering by the vikrant group of institutions the ex student of the vikrant college Madhusudan Patidar climbed the highest peak of Europe Mount Elbrus which is 5642 meter high.

In this way in a fortnight two different mountaineers of the Vikrant group climbed two different peaks of different continents of the world and brought laurels and pride to the country.

Bhopalites enthral judges in audition for K-POP fest

Bhopal: The Bhopalites enthralled the judges while auditioning for South Korean regional auditions for K-POP World Festival on Sunday. The talented aspirants gave wondrous performance for the auditions for the world competition.

It is to be noted that it is an annual event organised by South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the support of numerous government agencies. After going through a few preliminary rounds, fans of K-pop are invited by the South Korean government to take part in the final round of the competition held every year in Changwon, South Korea.

Notably there will be three winners from both category that is from Dancing and Singing. First winner from both category will get chance to perform in grand finale in New Delhi.

Bhopal based fan club Madhya Pradesh Korean fan club MPKFC_HALLYUWAVE founded by Monica Sankule who is HR by profession in a MNC company in Bhopal.

This group was created out of curiosity on July 10, 2018.

KPOP is Korean Pop Culture and is a music genre originating in South Korea

that is characterized by a wide variety of audiovisual elements. Although it includes all genres of "popular music" within South Korea, the term is often used in a narrower sense to describe a modern form of South Korean pop music drawing on a range of Western styles and genres, such as Western pop music, rock, jazz, hip-hop, reggae, electronic, techno, nu metal, folk, country and classical on top of its traditional Korean music roots.

This year the KPOP Contest India is being organized in more 10 States and Bhopal is one among them.

According to the organizers, the purpose of the event is to bring Hallyu fans from all over the world to South Korea, thereby fusing the culture of Korea with the cultures of various countries from all over the world.

In an effort to make the event one where Korean culture comes together with cultures of participants, those who reinterpret or rearrange K-Pop by fusing it with their traditional music or instrument sounds, will be given extra points.

This event organised by Korean cultural centre India collaborating with I.G India.

Rly withdraws massage services proposal

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Indian Railways has withdrawn its proposal of providing foot and head massage services to passengers inside the trains after local representatives expressed concerns that the plan may cause inconvenience, especially women travellers.

Western Railways had last week proposed head and foot massage services to passengers on trains originating from Indore. The proposal was made from the Ratlam division of Western Railway zone under New, Innovative Non-Fare Revenue Ideas Scheme (NIN-FRIS).

Senior PRO of Ratlam Division Jitendra Kumar told that a proposal of providing head and foot massage services on 29 trains had been put forward by Ratlam Division. Railway administration has

rejected the proposal after respecting the views of the local representatives who had criticised it, saying there would be a paucity of space on trains and may inconvenience people, especially women.

Outgoing Lok Sabha speaker Sumitra Mahajan had reportedly written a letter to Railways Minister Piyush Goyal, raising questions over the proposal. She had said that the facility could pose a safety risk for women. BJP MP from Indore Shankar Lalwani also reportedly shot off a letter to Goyal criticising the proposal and batted for provision of medical aid facilities on trains instead. Jayant said that Western Railway will continue working to improve passenger amenities. On June 8, the Indian Railways had announced massage services for passengers on board running trains.



Rajya Sabha MP RK Sinha felicitates Mrs Universe Priya Hazarika at the 30th annual convention of Janparishad at State Museum in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Man rapes friend's wife who was alone in house

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 23-year-old married woman was sexually assaulted by her husband's friend at her house at Nariyalkheda under Gautam Nagar police station area on Saturday.

According to the police, the victim lodged a complaint regarding sexual assault by her husband's friend Salman.

In her complaint victim has stated that for the past one month she was staying alone leaving her husband and the accused used to visit her house. On Saturday afternoon accused came and after finding her alone he sexually assaulted her and left the house threatening not to report the incident.

The victim used to work with a catering service and left work for the past few days. She

MEANWHILE, A 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY MISCREANT AT MOTHER INDIA COLONY UNDER SHAHJEHANABAD POLICE STATION AREA. A COMPLAINT WAS LODGED ON SATURDAY

was living alone for the past one month and accused was aware of the fact. The police have registered a case under section 376 of the IPC and have started further investigation

into the matter.

Meanwhile, a 17-year-old girl was sexually assaulted by miscreant at Mother India Colony under Shahjehanabad police station area; a complaint was lodged on Saturday. According to the police accused Zaheer Khan raped the victim at her aunt's house where she had gone on June 9 and threatened her not to report the incident.

In her complaint victim stated that she became friend over social media and later started to speak over phone. She had gone to stay with her aunt on June 9 and when the accused came to know he reached to meet her and raped her. The police have registered a case under section 376 of the IPC. The accused went missing after the case was registered and is still at large.

Senior PRO of Ratlam Division Jitendra Kumar told that a proposal of providing head and foot massage services on 29 trains had been put forward by Ratlam Division. Railway administration has rejected the proposal after respecting the views of the local representatives who had criticised it, saying there would be a paucity of space on trains and may inconvenience people, especially women

इलाहाबाद बैंक ALLAHABAD BANK
 Zonal Office: Bhopal Ph. No. - 0755-2583669/2602347
Premises Required Kharwakalan Branch
 Bank desires to engage premises (constructed) on rent (lease) having about 1200 sq ft carpet area with minimum 20 feet Front for shifting its Kharwakalan Branch. Preference will be given to GF Constructed premises located in nearby area of existing premises with adequate Parking Space.
 The offers are invited in two-bid system i.e. Technical Bid & Financial bid. Interested parties (except brokers) may obtain the prescribed format of technical bid (Annex-1) and financial bid (Annex-2) from our Kharwakalan Branch (between 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 pm from Monday to Saturday) from 17.06.2019 to 30.06.2019.
 The Bank reserves right to cancel any or all tenders and stop the process at any point of time without assigning any reason or notice whatsoever.
 Date: 16.06.2019 Zonal Head

Poverty forcing parents to sell off daughters

Cases galore in Boudh, Subarnapur districts

SRIKUMAR MAHANTA ■ SONEPUR

Cases of girls from Boudh district being trafficked to Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttara Pradesh and Rajasthan under the pretext of marriage are not uncommon. Neither are cases where poverty stricken parents sell away their daughters fully for meager amounts to these States.

Such a case has surfaced in Sindurpur village under the Kantamal police limits of Boudh district. Madhu Rajhans (80), who has already sold away his elder daughter through a middle man is presently mulling over selling away his matriculate and differently abled younger daughter.

The farmland Madhu owns is less than one acre. Acute poverty and old age prevent him from carrying out cultivation there. He has given

away the land to sharecroppers. His income comprises eight gunny bags of paddy in a year and Rs 500 a month as old age pension.

His wife does not get old age pension even though she is a sexagenarian. Their daughter is differently abled but is yet to get a disability pension.

Madhu and his wife have been doing rounds of Panchayat office. They are tired of submitting applications, requesting for pension, atleast for their daughter but to no avail.

None has given them an ear so far. Their son is yet to come of age to win bread for the family.

The old man says he can afford neither the education cost of his daughter nor the marriage expenses. "I am not able to send my daughter to college, nor can I marry her off while following all the tradition. I am considering selling her off," Madhu said.

There are many parents in the village and of nearby villages who have sold off their girls out of sheer compulsion of money. Many of them are clueless

about the whereabouts of their daughters.

"I married off my daughter Apeswari four years ago. I handed her over to an unknown person for a meager Rs 20,000. She has visited us only once in past four years. Sometimes she would call to our neighbours to inquire about us," said a parent.

When asked if it does not hurt him as a father to think about selling off his daughter in name of marriage, he says he has no choice. She would live the life what her destiny has in store for her, he said.

Notably, girl trafficking rackets are highly active in Boudh and nearby Subarnapur districts. After striking a deal with poor hapless parents, the middleman takes the girl to other States. They are often promised better standards of living, marriage options and job among others. However, more often than not, once taken away, the whereabouts of these girls become a mystery. Several reports in the past have shown that they are forced into manual labour and prostitution, among others.

Puri seer to skip Snana Yatra



BUT TO JOIN CAR FESTIVAL

PNS ■ PURI

Jagadguru Sankarcharya of Puri Gobardhan Pith Swami Nischilanda Saraswati would not be able to participate in the Snana Yatra of the Lords on Monday because of health rea-

sons. As per a release issued by Gobardhan Math, the Sankarcharya is presently under post-surgery care in a Gujarat hospital. However, he would be available for the Rath Yatra (Car Festival) on July 4 as he would be back in Puri on July 2.

Notably, the Sankarcharya had undergone a knee transplant surgery on June 2 in a hospital in Baroda.

No work Monday for doctors in Jharkhand

PNS ■ RANCHI

In protest of the attack on junior doctors in West Bengal, the Jharkhand chapter of Indian Medical Association (IMA) has decided to ensure a no-work-Monday for doctors across the State. Not only will the Government and private hospitals be affected due to the protest, but also diagnostic centres and private clinics will remain closed on Monday, officials from IMA said.

"The Deputy Commissioners and Civil Surgeons of all the 24 districts have already been informed. Even diagnostic centres and private clinics have agreed to remain closed for a day as a mark of protest against attacks on medical professionals across the country," said Dr. Pradeep Kumar Singh, General Secretary of IMA's Jharkhand chapter.

Junior doctors in West Bengal are on strike since last Tuesday in protest of an attack on two of their colleagues at NRS Medical College and Hospital Kolkata. The protest

While doctors will remain off duty on Monday, emergency services will run across the State in order to address any exigency

has snowballed into a nationwide movement of doctors affecting work at hospitals in New Delhi, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Patna and several other cities. In Jharkhand, junior doctors from all the government hospitals went on a daylong strike on Friday, which affected the functioning of the Outdoor Patient Department (OPD).

While doctors will remain off duty on Monday, emergency services will run across the State in order to address any exigency. Jharkhand, doctors said, has witnessed several incidents of attacks by attendants on medics in the recent past. The Medical Protection Act (MPA) is yet to be implemented here and doctors have been pressing for its implementation

since years. In February last year, a doctor was heckled by attendants of a patient at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) prompting medics at the hospital to go on an indefinite strike. A couple of months later, in June, a nurse was thrashed by attendants of a patient who died in the hospital.

This incident too caused uproar by RIMS staff. Similar incidents were also reported in Patliputra Medical College Hospital (PMCH) in Dhanbad and Mahatma Gandhi Medical College Hospital (MGMCH) in Jamshedpur.

Implementation of MPA has been a long pending demand of the Jharkhand chapter of the Indian Medical Association (IMA). The Act has already been implemented in 18 states in India and IMA wants Jharkhand to be the 19th state to implement the MPA. "The Cabinet had approved the MPA in Jharkhand in 2017. Later, a select committee too gave a report on it.

Govt to improve homoeopathy sector: Min Das



PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

Minister was felicitated by members of the western Odisha homoeopathic physicians' forum

I am impressed over the kind of diseases being successfully treated by homoeopathic treatment these days. We will discuss and implement suggestions from the doctors who are in this field for improving the condition as well as the development of homoeopathy in Odisha," said Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das on Sunday.

Das said this while on a visit to the JDS Homoeopathic Hospital in Jharsuguda and appreciated the work being done for the benefit of people through the homoeopathic treatment.

The Minister was felicitated by members of the western Odisha homoeopathic physicians' forum along with Dr Deoshlok Sharma and Dr Jitesh Sharma, directors of JDS Homoeopathic Hospital.

Other distinguished guests were Dr Brahmananda Nayak

and Dr Bipra Chandra Rout. Rout a former Reader, Utkalmani Homoeopathic Medical College, Rourkela, presided over the meeting.

Dr Gopal Chandra Behera, president, All Orissa Government Homoeopathy Services Association, Dr RK Singh, Principal, Sambalpur Homoeopathic College, Dr Sudhandu Singh, Professor, Sambalpur Homoeopathic College, Dr Harihar Khuntia, Medical Officer, Sambalpur Homoeopathic College, Harish Ganatra (former Chairman, Jharsuguda Municipality), Sandeep Awasthy, president, Jharsuguda Bar Association, were present.



Slum children celebrate Father's Day with members of 'Parvarish,' an NGO, at Regional Museum of Natural History (RMNH) in Bhopal on Sunday

Detainee's death sparks tension in Nabrangpur

PNS ■ NABARANGPUR

Tension erupted near the Kodinga police station in Nabarangpur district on Sunday over the alleged death of a 62-year-old person who had been detained by cops on Saturday.

According to reports, Gobardhan Bindhani of Panjaroga village under the Dabugaon police limits had been picked up by police from the Khatiguda market over his alleged involvement in betting.

Gobardhan was detained at the Kodinga police station and later taken to the District

Headquarters Hospital (DHH) as his health condition deteriorated. He was then shifted to a hospital in Visakhapatnam.

Family members of Gobardhan, on being informed by a particular source about his death at the hospital, staged a road blockade near the police station by burning tyres. The situation turned ugly when Gobardhan's kin and locals scaled the boundary wall of the police station and resorted to ransacking in the police station.

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC were clamped at the spot to avoid any further untoward incident.

JMM ponders over fate of Grand Alliance

MRITUANJAY KUMAR ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's (JMM) senior leadership on Sunday pondered over its strategy for the upcoming Assembly elections. During the concluding day of the party's Central Committee meeting, the leaders opined that JMM's Central Committee should take a final call on whether the party will contest the elections alone or as a part of an alliance prior to drawing a blueprint of their game plan.

This was the second meeting of the party's Central Committee since its humiliating defeat in the 17th General Elections in Jharkhand.

The leaders said that either JMM will play the role of a big brother in the alliance or contest the elections all on its own.

SC, ST bodies demand Patngarh MLA's arrest

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The SC and ST Coordination Committee and other Dalit and tribal bodies here on Sunday demanded that the Government take immediate steps to arrest Patngarh MLA Saroj Kumar Meher for forcing Junior Engineer Jayakant Sabar to do sit-ups in public on June 5.

"The MLA's action was not at all abrupt one. Rather, it is a well-planned conspiracy against an Adibasi officer. While an FIR has been lodged against the MLA, the MLA has admitted to have committed the crime and the district

Government has found the allegation to be true; the Government's silence has raised a question mark on its transparency," lamented leaders of various organisations in a statement

Collector's inquiry report submitted to the

Government has found the allegation to be true; the Government's silence has raised a question mark on its transparency," lamented leaders of

various organisations in a statement.

Committee State coordinator Laxman Mallick, Nilamadhab Adibasi Sangha president Laxmidhar Behera and Rashtriya Dalit Mahasabha president Ashok Kumar Mallick condemned the MLA action and lamented saying that some OBC supporters of the MLA are requesting not to execute the SC and ST Prevention of Atrocities Act in punishing the MLA.

They too demanded that action also be taken against the Executive Engineer who slapped the JE at the behest of the MLA in the public.



Telugu devotees during Sri Sharda Devi New Temple Punah Pratishtha Mahotsava organised by Telugu Sanskritik Parishad in Bhopal on Sunday

When 'Queen of Hills' was resort of celebrities

JASKIRAN CHOPRA ■ MUSSOORIE

This hill station is witnessing its peak summer tourist season these days. There have been a large number of tourists both in the Doon valley as well as Mussoorie over the past one month.

One of the many reasons for Mussoorie's popularity is that this "Queen of Hills" has been a resort, down the years, for the royalty and very important people. In its history of around 200 years, it has had the privilege of hosting many celebrities.

Dev Anand, his wife Mona, Bina Rai, Premnath, Prem Chopra and a number of other famous people from the film industry visited the resort often as they had homes here. Other film personalities too came here to spend a few days in summer. Tourists used to wait for hours on the Mall Road to catch a glimpse of their favourite actors.

As the peak tourist season begins every year, one can be

sure to hear the tales of the "good old times" of Mussoorie from old residents of the hill station who look back nostalgically to the days when esteemed persons like Motilal Nehru walked down The Mall and Camel's Back Road.

The relationship between the Nehru family and Mussoorie began with Motilal Nehru's visits to the hill station, mainly for recuperating from illness.

His wife, Swaroop Rani and their daughter Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, all had a great attachment to this hill station and visited it all through their lives.

Vijay Lakshmi Pandit stayed in Landour for some time and was a frequent visitor to the famous "A Prakash & Co" in Sisters Bazaar. Several generations of the Nehru family have patronised this store which stands unassumingly in a tranquil corner of the popular hill station.

India's first prime minister Jawahar Lal Nehru visited Mussoorie often and the hill

As the peak tourist season begins every year, one can be sure to hear the tales of the "good old times" of Mussoorie from old residents of the hill station who look back nostalgically to the days when esteemed persons like Motilal Nehru walked down The Mall and Camel's Back Road

town had a special place in his heart. In 1959, Nehru arrived in Mussoorie to meet the Dalai Lama after he came here from Tibet.

Mussoorie became Dalai Lama's first home in India. Memories of his days here are still narrated by the older citizens of the hill town. But this was not Nehru's first visit to Mussoorie.

Nehru recalls in his autobiography, his visit to Mussoorie in October, 1930

where his father was recouping. "On October 13, Kamala and I went off to Mussoorie to spend three days with father. I remember those quiet and delightful three days well; it was good to be back in the family.

Indira, my daughter was there and my three little nieces, my sister's daughters. And these three days were the last I was to have with my father before his fatal illness came to snatch him away from

me," he writes in his autobiography. In the summer of 1920, Nehru brought his ailing mother and wife to the famous Hotel Savoy of Mussoorie, alongwith little Indira. He had not entered active politics till then but an incident in Mussoorie catalysed his entry into the sphere. Staying at the Savoy was an Afghan delegation which was in India for political talks with the British Government.

Nehru did not know about the Afghans till after he arrived there. The government, afraid that he might contact them and influence them asked him to sign an undertaking that he would not get in touch with the delegation. Nehru refused to do that.

Though he was not interested in meeting the Afghans, he believed that nobody had the right to prevent him from meeting them.

He was ordered by the authorities to leave Mussoorie within 24 hours. Nehru and his wife spent many a summer in Mussoorie. Personal and polit-

ical matters brought Indira again and again to these hills and she had many good friends here like Sita, the princess of Kapurthala. Indira was extremely fond of staying at "Ekant", the guest house of the Haryana government. It was here she lived for some days in 1981.

Radha Bhawan and Savoy Hotel were also Indira's favourite places to stay at while in Mussoorie.

Residents of Mussoorie and Doon valley can never thank her enough as it was due to her love for the hill station that she took it up personally to ensure that its barrenness was removed and the limestone quarrying was stopped. Her initiative led the SC to give a judgement against the mining and the region was rejuvenated thereafter.

The Nehru family's love for the hills brought them here often. They found it quite similar to Kashmir. "Kamla Castle" and "Craig Top" were two of the other resorts which they stayed at often.

Police CO office finally opens in Lalkuan

PNS ■ LALKUAN

Considering the long standing demand of the local residents, the Nainital senior superintendent of police has established the office of police circle officer in Lalkuan.

The police circle officer Rajiv Mohan sat in the office and disposed of various tasks here on Sunday.

The people of Lalkuan and Bindukhatta had for a long time been demanding that the office of the Lalkuan police CO and Pargana officer be opened in Lalkuan.

Taking cognisance of the public demand, the SSP Sunil Kumar Meena, considering the interests of the public, directed the opening of the police CO office in the erstwhile primary health centre in ward number three of Lalkuan. On Sunday morning, the

The police circle officer Rajiv Mohan sat in the office and disposed of various tasks here on Sunday

CO sat in this office for the first time. Various representatives of the public also visited the office to meet the police officer.

It is pertinent to mention here that till now the office of the Lalkuan CO was situated in the multipurpose building at Haldwani.

The opening of this office in Lalkuan spread a wave of cheer among the local residents.

The people of Lalkuan and Bindukhatta are now demanding that the office of the Pargana officer also be opened in Lalkuan for the convenience of the public.

Congress yet to decide on leader in Lok Sabha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress is yet to take a decision on who it will appoint as its leader in the Lok Sabha with the issue still pending with the top leadership. With the Budget Session scheduled to start from Monday, the Opposition also seems to be in a disarray as far as floor coordination is concerned with no meeting held to discuss the strategy to corner the Government on key issues.

A Congress leader said most Opposition parties are yet to decide upon their leader in the Lok Sabha and once those processes are completed a meeting can be held. The Congress itself has not taken a decision on who it will appoint as its leader in the Lok Sabha.

While the party is yet to resolve the crisis arisen due to resignation by Rahul Gandhi as Congress President, he has reportedly gone abroad and is



not planning to return till June 19 when the swearing in of the new MPs takes and also the meeting convened by Centre for the all heads of the political parties.

In between Rahul has also left behind sordid state of affairs in the State units of the party where factionalism is growing day by day. While talks of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as interim President is gaining grounds after AK Antony declined, party spokesperson Randeep Surjewala last week insisted that

Rahul will continue as president. A section of leaders led by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath also deliberated over dinner hosted by Nath in national Capital which, according to sources has not gone well with the Congress first family and their advisor Ahmed Patel who were not taken into confidence.

In the 16th Lok Sabha, senior party leader Mallikarjun Kharge led the Congress in the House, but he lost the Lok Sabha polls from Karnataka this time.

BJP will be at forefront of pro-people governance: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday held its Parliamentary party meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi assuring Indians that his Government will be at the forefront of facilitating legislation that manifests the spirit of "Sabka Saath, Sabka vikas, Sabka Vishwas". A day before the first session of the newly-constituted 17th Lok Sabha, a meeting of the NDA was also held in the national Capital.

"BJP is grateful for people's blessings. We assure our fellow Indians that we will be at the forefront of pro-people governance and facilitating legislation that manifests the spirit of 'sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas'," Modi tweeted after the meeting.

After securing a massive mandate in the general elections, the prime minister had said in a speech, "Our mantra should be 'sabka saath, sabka vikas and sabka vishwas' (with all, for everybody's development and having everyone's trust)."

After the ruling coalition's meet on Sunday, Modi said the "NDA family" looks forward to fulfilling the dreams of 130 crore Indians, who have reposed "unparalleled faith" in the alliance. "We shall fulfil regional aspirations and work untiringly for national progress," Modi said and posted pictures of both the meetings.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister and BJP president Amit Shah and other leaders leave after an NDA meeting at Parliament library in New Delhi on Sunday

EYE TO 2022 ASSEMBLY POLLS

Priyanka will increase UP tours, meet Cong workers twice a week

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With eyes on 2022 Assembly elections, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi is all set to take tours of Uttar Pradesh at very short intervals and has decided to interact party workers twice a week to boost their morale.

Priyanka, who was appointed as the party general secretary just ahead of the Lok Sabha polls to reap benefits for the grand old party, had campaigned vigorously for Congress candidates in Uttar Pradesh particularly in eastern UP.

AICC sources said that Priyanka is ready to hit the ground in the state following the Congress's debacle in the recent Lok Sabha election in order to strengthen the party organisation in time for the

2022 Assembly polls. "In a bid to ensure a direct communication with the party workers, she will meet them twice a week without prior appointments," sources said.

"It emerged from the review meetings held after the Lok Sabha polls that there should be a greater coordination and communication between the leaders and the workers. For this, it has been decided that Priyanka Gandhi will meet the party workers at least twice a week," said a Congress leader.

The plan to step up her Uttar Pradesh tours and establish a direct communication with the party workers comes days after Priyanka Gandhi, during a visit to Rae Bareilly, told the workers that they had let down the grand old party in the Lok Sabha polls. Accompanied by her mother

and United Progressive Alliance (UPA) chairperson Sonia Gandhi, who visited her parliamentary constituency last Wednesday, Priyanka Gandhi pulled up the party workers for failing to work for the Congress during the polls.

"I will find out the names of the workers who did not work for the party in the election," she had said, adding that those who had toiled honestly and sincerely for the party knew that from the core of their hearts. "But those who did not, I will find out their names," she had said.

But of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in the state, the Congress could manage to win only Rae Bareilly. Even party president Rahul Gandhi lost to Union minister Smriti Irani from his family stronghold of Amethi.

Separatist leaders received funds from abroad: NIA

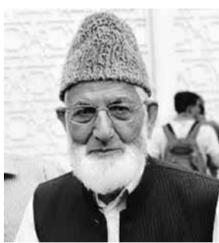
Utilised them for personal gains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA has alleged that its probe into terror financing from Pakistan in Jammu & Kashmir has revealed that hardline separatist leaders, including Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani, received funds from abroad and utilised them for personal gains — from amassing properties to paying for foreign education of their kin.

The revelations came to the fore after the agency interrogated several top leaders of Hurriyat Conference and other separatist outfits and claimed that they had confessed to receiving funds from Pakistan to fuel separatist sentiments among the people of Kashmir Valley.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) said the firebrand leader of Duktran-e-Milat, Asiya Andrabi, was grilled



Mohammad bin Qasim while he was studying in the Malaysian university, it said.

Another hardline separatist leader, Shabbir Shah, had to face some tough time when he was confronted about his businesses, including a hotel in Pahalgam which is allegedly funded through foreign funds received by him from Pakistan, the statement said.

"During the custodial interrogation, Shabir Shah was confronted with evidence relating to transfer of money by Pakistan-based agents and representatives of APHC (All Parties Hurriyat Conference) factions to parties affiliated to Hurriyat in J&K. He was also confronted about his investments in various hotels and businesses in Pahalgam, properties in Jammu, Srinagar and Anantnag," the NIA said.

The NIA had registered a case in May, 2017 against terrorists belonging to Jamat ud Dawah, Duktran-e-Milat, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and other separatist leaders in the state for rais-

ing, receiving and collecting funds to fuel separatist and terrorist activities and entering into a larger conspiracy for causing disruption in Kashmir Valley and for waging war against India.

The NIA has so far charge-sheeted 13 accused, including leader of Jamat-ud Dawah Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed, head of proscribed terror outfit Hizb-ul-Mujahideen Syed Salahuddin, seven separatist leaders, two hawala conduits and some stone-pelters.

Watali is one of the main hawala conduits who used to generate and receive funds from Pakistan, ISI, UAE and had floated various shell companies to disguise foreign remittances for further transfer to separatist leaders and stone-pelters in the valley, it said.

The agency said these funds were used to fuel unrest in the Kashmir valley and organise violent agitations and anti-India activities which resulted in large scale violence leading to numerous injuries and deaths of civil-

ians and security forces.

Evidence relating to funding of these separatist elements through Pakistan and UAE-based businessman, ISI, High Commission of Pakistan in Delhi has been collected and presented to the NIA Special Court in the charge sheets, it said.

The agency has arrested Yasin Malik, leader of proscribed terror outfit JKLF, Asiya Andrabi leader of proscribed organisation Duktran-e-Milat, separatist leader Shabir Shah of JKDFP and Masarat Alam of Muslim League.

Malik told the agency that he was instrumental in bringing together the factions of Hurriyat Conference and formed the Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) which spear headed the violent agitations in 2016 in Kashmir Valley by issuing "Protest Calendars" leading to economic shut down for over four months and also caused death and injuries to civilians and security forces during the violent protests.

India, Myanmar conduct joint op to target militant camps in N-E

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The armies of India and Myanmar carried out a three-week-long coordinated "Operation Sunshine 2" from May 16 in their respective border areas, targeting a number of insurgent groups operating in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam.

During "Operation Sunrise 2", the two armies coordinated with each other to bust camps of militant outfits, including the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), the NSCN (Khaplang), the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), sources said.

At least six dozen militants belonging to these groups were nabbed and several of their camps destroyed during the operation, the sources said, adding, the two sides might launch the third phase of the operation, depending on intelligence inputs and the ground situation.



Besides the Indian Army, troops from the Assam Rifles were also part of the operation.

In June 2015, the Indian Army had carried out an operation against NSCN(K) militants in areas near the Indo-Myanmar border, days after militants killed 18 armymen in Manipur.

The first phase of

"Operation Sunrise" was conducted in 2017 along the Indo-Myanmar border, during which a number of camps of North-East-based militant groups were busted.

In the first phase of "Operation Sunrise", the Indian Army targeted members of the Arakan Army, an insurgent group in Myanmar, who were

opposed to the Kaladan multimodal transit transport project.

The Kaladan multi-modal transit transport project is viewed as India's gateway to Southeast Asia.

India entered into a framework agreement with Myanmar in April, 2008 to facilitate the implementation of the project. On completion, the

project will help connect the north-eastern state of Mizoram with the Sittwe Port in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

On the Indian side, work is on to extend the Aizawl-Saiha National Highway by 90 km to the international border at Zorinpui.

According to security agencies, there were over 50 camps of insurgent groups from the north-east in Myanmar till last year. Many of the insurgents of Northeast often flee to Myanmar after attacking the security forces and a coordinated actions by the two forces will help in containing their menace, sources said.

Myanmar is one of the strategic neighbours of India and shares a 1,640-km border with a number of north-eastern states, including the militancy-hit Nagaland and Manipur.

India has been pushing for a deeper coordination between the armies of the two countries while guarding the border.

Vardhan writes to V-P for early consideration of Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has written to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu to expedite the reconstitution of the parliamentary standing committee on health and family welfare for early consideration of the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, official sources said.

The bill provides for setting up of an Allied and Healthcare Council of India and corresponding state allied and healthcare councils, which will play the role of a standard-setter and facilitator for such professions.

As per the bill, there will be 15 major professional categories, including 53 professions in allied and healthcare streams. The offences and penalties clauses have been included in the bill to check malpractice.

The bill also provides for structure, constitution, composition and functions of the central council and state coun-

cils like framing policies and standards, regulation of professional conduct, creation and maintenance of live registers, provisions for common entry and exit examinations among others.

The central council will comprise 47 members, of whom 14 members shall be ex-officio representing diverse and related roles and functions, and remaining 33 shall be non-ex-officio members who mainly represent the 15 professional categories, an official statement had said.

Professional advisory bodies under the central and state councils will examine issues independently and provide recommendations relating to specific recognised categories. Besides, the bill will also have an overriding effect on any other existing law for any of the covered professions. The bill also empowers the central and state governments to make rules in this regard.

400 new flats to be built for MPs in Lutyens' Delhi using construction waste

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has decided to demolish 400 old flats and construct new ones in their place in Lutyens' Delhi for Members of Parliament using construction waste. The flats which will be coming up in North Avenue and South Avenue, located on either sides of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, will replace the old ones built nearly 60 years ago, officials of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) said.

"All old MP flats, which were built in North and South Avenues after Independence, will be demolished," CPWD's Director General Prabhakar Singh told PTL. "We will use construction & demolition (C&D) waste in building the new flats for MPs in North and South Avenues, an area which has many old flats," he added.

The wastes from the demolition site of the old flats are likely to be used for the construction of the new ones

after being processed at a facility.

CPWD, the prime construction agency of the central government, recently constructed 36 duplex flats, at a cost of ₹80 crore, which are ready to be allotted for the newly-elected parliamentarians. "The new MP flats will be constructed in a phased manner in North Avenue and South Avenue so that there is no chaos after demolition of the old ones," he said.

The swanky low-rise buildings will have solar power panels and designated car parking spots, among a host of other facilities, the official said. The new Lok Sabha has around 300 first-time members and Government has made temporary arrangements to accommodate 350 MPs till the time they are allotted full-time official residences.

In the past, newly-elected MPs used to stay in five-star hotels, but the practice has been dropped following the Lok Sabha Secretariat's cost-cutting measures.

Guv't mulls providing Integrated medicare at W&H Centres

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Encouraged by the positive results, delivered by its recently concluded three-year-long study where-in around 2,50,000 patients ailing with lifestyle diseases such as diabetes were treated with integrated medicare, the Government is mulling to provide similar services at around 12,000-15,000 Wellness and Health (W&H) Centres which will be exclusive AYUSH centres.

In other words, at least 10 per cent of the total 150,000 W&H centres (also called as the Primary Health Centres) in the country will exclusively focus on providing integrated holistic medicare. The Ministry plans to roll out 4,000 centres this year.

In this regard, Union AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik last week said, "All Primary Health Centres or W&H Centres in the country will

now have AYUSH doctors besides allopathy practitioners. The people would be introduced to alternative medicine through such measures."

At the AYUSH centres, scientifically developed ayurvedic medicines, dietary regimen and yoga classes will be offered to patients suffering with the non-communicable diseases which are increasing at a disturbing rate. In fact, India has already become diabetic capital of the world and Ayush centres aims to focus on preventive health strategies including yoga, providing cost-effective herbal drugs and diet modifications to cut down the NCDs.

A senior Ayush Ministry official talked about the anti-diabetic herbal drugs like BGR-34 which has been jointly developed after standardisation and pre-clinical studies by the two labs --Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) and National Botanical

Research Institute (NBRI).

A few years ago, in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Naik had said BGR-34 is meant to be used by patients of newly diagnosed diabetes only as a measure of management of the disease. The herbal composition, BGR-34 is being sold by the AIMIL Pharmaceuticals from Delhi.

BGR-34 is a natural DPP-4 (dipeptidyl peptidase 4) inhibitor with no side effects, added Sanchit Sharma from AIMIL. He explained that DPP-4 inhibitors are a class of drugs used to lower blood sugar in adults with Type-2 diabetes.

In three year-long study, the Ministry introduced yoga, diet modification and added some simple medicine, and followed the patients for as many duration. In these periods, we found that their quality of life had improved and doctors reduced the dosage. The patients had fewer complications, said an official.

Inspector succumbs to Anantnag terror attack injuries at AIIMS

PNS ■ JAMMU

Inspector Arshad Khan, Station House Officer of Sadar Police station, Anantnag, succumbed to his fatal injuries shortly after he was airlifted in an air ambulance to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on Sunday.

The brave officer of the State police had received grievous injuries in the terrorist attack on KP road on June 12. He along with his security personnel had immediately rushed towards KP road area after learning about the terror strike on CRPF post near Oxford school.

Paying rich tributes to their colleague, official twitter handle of Anantnag district police posted a tweet, "Our brave



heart inspector Arshad Khan who got injured as SHO Anantnag couldn't make it. May the departed soul rest in peace."

Officers of Kashmir Zone Police also wrote, "We pay our rich tributes to Inspector Arshad Khan who attained martyrdom today after sustaining injuries in a terror attack in Anantnag. Our thoughts & prayers are with his family & we stand by each other at this critical juncture".

Hot waters

Events in the Straits of Hormuz are not good, not just for the players involved but also for the rest of the world



Pictures of an oil tanker ablaze in the Persian Gulf must have sent shockwaves at every foreign ministry across the world. From the crisis in the mid-1980s, when Saddam Hussein went to war with post-revolutionary Iran, all the way up to the end of the first Gulf war in the early 1990s, this narrow stretch of water, just 21 km wide at its narrowest point, has been the spark plug of conflict across the region. Under the water sits trillions of gallons of oil and gas which have powered the global economy for almost

a hundred years now. It is also a region laden with strife, from internecine conflict between the two paths of Islam, Shia and Sunni, to conflicting egos of heads of States, once that of the dictator Saddam Hussein and now that of a whole new cadre of Arab autocrats. Into this picture has entered the United States (US), not to stop the crises in Yemen or Syria but seemingly angling for a whole new fight with Iran. This has been evident in the way US President Donald Trump called off the deal that his predecessor Barack Obama had orchestrated. Iran, too, is not humouring Trump, rejecting American overtures that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe recently attempted.

But several things have changed since the last time images of burning oil tankers filled newsprint. There has been the transformation of several Arab cities into modern global metropolises, the economies have changed and oil itself seems to be less in demand thanks to progress in new green energy sources. In fact, it is the potential economic damage that a war in the region would cause, rather than any disruption in oil supplies, that is the biggest risk. Take aviation for example. Airlines such as Emirates of Dubai have become some of the largest and most critical inter-continental carriers in the world. In 1988, an American warship, the *USS Vincennes*, shot down an Iranian passenger jet on its way into Dubai killing 290 men, women and children. A war in the Persian Gulf right now could paralyse air travel out of the world's biggest air hubs and from an Indian perspective, with Pakistani airspace still closed, this could potentially paralyse air travel between Asia and Europe. Millions of Indians have made their lives across this region, manifold from the start of the 1991 Gulf War. Evacuating them will be a mammoth task. This, of course, ignores the human cost — thousands of soldiers and civilians might die in any potential war. The US and Iran must be pushed back from the precipice though Donald Trump and his advisors seemingly want war and some in the Iranian establishment want to give the Americans a bloody nose. The rest of the world, particularly countries like India, which are friendly with both sides, should do their utmost to prevent any chance of a conflict. Thankfully, things appear that they can still be managed if some egos are massaged. In the end, both US and Iran are muscled-flexing to renegotiate terms for modifying the old nuclear deal. However, at the same time it is imperative that India's diplomats and government start preparing for the worst and draw up emergency evacuation plans as well as bolster oil supplies. Nobody wants a war and chances of a conflict in the near-term seem remote but it would be prudent to be prepared for one any which way.

Weight of expectation

Everybody is looking forward to the Budget as the 17th Lok Sabha convenes. The Opposition seems to be in a disarray



As the 17th Lok Sabha has its inaugural session today, it is expected to lay the policy map of the Narendra Modi government with the Union Budget expected to set the tenor of proceedings. This will be the maiden Budget for new Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who has a tough call to make at a time when the economy is sputtering, banks are tight-fisted about lending and there is no room left to be adventurist about reforms. Particularly when GDP growth is slow, no matter what the battle about percentages,

and joblessness is a monstrous decelerator. Then there is the expectation of welfare and populism from a new Government, which has returned on a mammoth verdict and needs to honour the promise of development. There will be challenges of boosting investment while giving tax breaks. And the rosy doles of the vote-on-account this January will be assumed to continue as the Prime Minister has committed to empowering the poor economically with quotas and pivoted all his discourse around improving the lot of the underprivileged. Standing on a cliff, Sitharaman's Budget will have to be actionable, not one of intent.

Politically speaking, the Lok Sabha will be a one-sided match with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) having the vote of 303 MPs, a humongous chunk where the Opposition bloc hardly has a chance. The Congress can claim to be a very distant second with 52 but it is yet to work out a coherent House strategy. It is still confused about its floor leader what with Rahul Gandhi not quite ready to be assertive about his political role within the party, leave aside being its face. Much has loosened in the *mahagathbandhan* space, its frontline leaders still smarting under their pathetic electoral performance. And since the alliance of convenience didn't quite work on the ground, each has drifted away, the quickest being the collapse of the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party (SP-BSP) deal. In fact, they stand sharply divided as ever. Still, in the interest of parliamentary debate, democratic spirit and institutional decorum, the Opposition needs to present a strategic counterweight and frankly, the Congress has to take the lead in coalescing a response during discussion on crucial Bills that are expected to be tabled. The Triple Talaq Bill is the ruling NDA's priority. In its first tenure, it had failed to get the Bill cleared in the Rajya Sabha as the Opposition opposed the criminality clause. Even after removing that criterion, the government could not table the Bill, owing to continuous disruptions. So the NDA's floor managers have a tough task in a hostile Rajya Sabha. However, it is hoping that with friendly State governments and its own hopes of an improved tally in some State elections, it should be able to exert some weight in the Upper House by 2020. Which is why it may introduce certain Bills for the record and debate it across sessions. Two Medical Bills, the Indian Medical Council (Amendment Bill), 2019 and the Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment Bill), 2019, will be reintroduced, too. Given the doctors' stir, both are aimed at bringing in accountability, transparency and quality in the governance of medical education in the country. However, all eyes will be on indiscipline and disruptions in Parliament, which not only stall necessary business but also tarnish the image of this esteemed institution. Important legislations are held up. Besides, adjournments eat into the valuable Question Hour. According to figures, the 16th Lok Sabha recorded really low working hours. It met for 1,615 hours, 40 per cent lower than all full-term Parliaments. One hopes the 17th Lok Sabha will at least mean business.

Uphold Press freedom

A free media has played a seminal role in strengthening governance in Afghanistan. The international community must help the nation build on its democratic gains



M ASHRAF HAIDARI

Afghanistan has experimented with different forms of Government since its emergence as a modern nation-state. From absolute and Constitutional monarchies to the first republic and communist/Marxist regimes, never has Afghanistan experienced as much democratic rule as over the past 18 years since the fall of the Taliban. Even though democracy has gradually evolved with most of the Afghan State institutions still developing to deliver on the promise of democracy in a system of checks and balances, the process of institutionalisation of democracy continues unhindered with the strong support of the Afghan people and commitment of the country's leadership, including President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

Free press, which is one of the key features of any rising and functioning democracy, has played a seminal role in strengthening democratic governance and rule of law in Afghanistan. More notably, free media has directly contributed to the rapid development of a still-growing civil society and as its essential member, has empowered vulnerable groups of women, youth and the poor — a clear majority in Afghanistan — to increasingly exercise their rights under the country's progressive Constitution.

In other words, where women and youth are often relegated to the bottom of society, given traditional practices of gender inequity and other cultural double standards, the free Press — through the media of TV, radio, and print — has awakened them to show how they can play their rightful, equal role in helping to stabilise, rebuild and develop Afghanistan on a sustainable basis. Moreover, the Afghan media has lost no opportunity to tap into the social media platforms — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others — to serve its role as a check on the Government, helping expand transparency and highlighting efforts or lack of them to fight corruption.

Since the judicial institutions of Afghanistan, including law enforcement agencies, lack adequate investigative capacity and are still developing, the free Press has filled some of the gaps, investigating and reporting on major crimes and cases of corruption. This interim contribution from the Press has helped the Government take punitive measures against the perpetrators, who could possibly escape justice.

Even when the exposure by the Press about corruption and crimes has delivered gradual results, the public has at least been informed of the principal criminals and those engaged in corruption — undermining the rule of law. This naming and shaming by media has helped expose the corrupt, who would otherwise evade public knowledge and eventually justice. This critical role of media as a check has extended to the Afghan Parliament and the functioning of this key legislative institution. Media reporting from par-



liamentary sessions and meetings has informed the public of the laws proposed or adopted for implementation and enforcement, as well as follow-up reports whether the passed laws have actually been applied and made a difference in the lives of Afghan citizens.

Moreover, the Afghan media has helped shape and direct electoral processes, reforms and campaigns, including presidential, parliamentary, provincial and now district elections across the country. As relevant State institutions remain weak, the media has informed the public of its electoral rights, how to exercise them, as well as explained the logistical and security preparations in place for conducting elections at the national, provincial and local levels. Ensuring transparency and fairness in all electoral processes has been one of the key achievements of the media as a contribution to institutionalisation of democracy in Afghanistan.

Despite its constructive role in ongoing gains over the past 18 years, however, war and violence have limited the reach of the media to do more to help strengthen democracy in Afghanistan. Since 2001, over 60 Afghan journalists have been killed and many wounded, according to Reporters Without Borders, which recently record-

ed that 2018 in Afghanistan was the deadliest year when "a total of 15 journalists and media workers were killed in a series of bombings that began early in the year, nine of them in a single day." Even though the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) — which is led by a dedicated journalist and advocate for free press, Najib Sharifi — has conducted many safety training workshops for journalists across the country, they remain vulnerable to complex terrorist attacks, as well as to threats and intimidation by criminals, whose wrong-doings journalists often investigate to uncover and report.

In spite of these challenges, which have intensified since the end of 2014, when most of international forces withdrew from Afghanistan, the 2019 World Press Freedom Index ranked Afghanistan 121 out of 180 countries. In this light, Afghanistan has the freest media among all countries of South Asia and Central Asia. There was a time when there were only one radio and a newspaper solely for propaganda purposes of pre-2001 regimes. Today Afghanistan boasts over 1,000 print and broadcast media outlets

Moreover, in 2018, Afghanistan was ranked at the top on the Global Right to Information Rating with an impressive score of 139 points out of a possible 150, or 93 per cent. Indeed, this is a shared achievement of the Afghan Government and its international partners, who remain firmly committed to ensuring and protecting the freedoms of the Press and expression in Afghanistan.

All told, however, like the rest of Afghanistan's state-building enterprise, media development and the contributions it has made to institutionalisation of democracy remain a work-in-progress. In the years to come, the international community — especially the United States, Europe, India, and other major democracies — has a clear opportunity to help Afghanistan further build on its hard-earned democratic gains of the past 18 years. This should underpin the current peace efforts, in support of the Afghan Government, whose key pre-condition for negotiating a sustainable political settlement is the preservation of the Afghan Constitution and its core provisions for institutionalisation and protection of human rights, including the freedoms of expression and Press.

(The writer is the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Sri Lanka and a Senior International Security Fellow at the New America in Washington, DC)

SOUNDBITE

I worry that if you regulate for the sake of regulating it (data), it has a lot of unintended consequences.



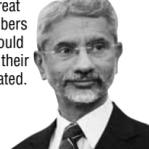
Google CEO — Sundar Pichai

I'm very secure as an actor, but not as a star. I don't know where will I be sent back to if a couple of my films fail at the box office.



Actor — Taapsee Pannu

Terrorism is the gravest threat we face in Asia. CICA members are its victims and so it should be clear that terrorists and their victims must never be equated.



External Affairs Minister — S Jaishankar

We have requested him (Governor) to wake up the Yogi Adityanath government and give direction to control the prevailing 'jungle-raj'.



Samajwadi Party chief — Akhilesh Yadav

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Message delivered well

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Pak back to old games" (June 16). There's no denying the fact that there is huge international pressure on Pakistan to act against terrorist camps and organisations based on its soil. Islamabad knows it well, too, that economic assistance from organisations like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will come only when it mends its ways in taking action against such terror organisations.

Having said that, Pakistan being Pakistan, which is known for its notorious activities and hostility, cannot change its true colour overnight. After all, whether it is the Jaish-e-Mohammed or Al-Umar Mujahideen — they are all nurtured by the Pakistani Army.

At the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a strong signal by calling upon member countries to promote cooperation in combating the menace.

Bal Govind Noida

Doctors and patients must communicate better

This refers to editorial, "Needed, a healing touch" (June 15). Doctors are no Gods. On the same lines, not all doctors are benevolent. As in every profession, there are black sheep in the doctors' community, too. Similar to professions being termed 'noble', the medical world has certainly ceased to be a virtuous one. Money-mindedness, selfishness and rudeness have become an unfortunate part of the field. However, if there is one section of professionals, who people trust to a large extent, it is the doctors. No doctor will treat to kill; mistakes are naturally ingrained in the day-to-day aspects of his work. But without negligence and arbitrariness, mistakes pale because to a large extent, people tend to judge the functioning of doctors on their intent than the final outcome. Danger lies in the fact that the sanguine layers of society may be swayed by emotions and may follow in the footsteps of the unscrupulous. The problem intriguingly stems from the advancements made in medicine. Today's medicine is no longer the primitive one where major illnesses were left undiagnosed much to the patient's detriment.

Doctors need time while the patient's kin are impatient. They want instant results leading to heartburn. Sadly, there is no correct communication channel between the doctors and the patients' relatives. What can be conveyed



in two sentences is often missed due to the busy schedule of doctors, lack of understanding of visibly perturbed relatives and the tendency of senior doctors to burden their juniors with all the work in the world. Overworked doctors may tick off the patients' attendants. Governments have taken the doctors for granted because authorities believe that the white collared community is incapable of striking work for a long time. Despite repeated demands for impregnable security at the work place, the inability of successive Governments to put in place a foolproof mechanism at hospitals is mysterious.

Ganapathi Bhat Akola

Mend ways

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Pak back to old games" (June 16). In the first place, Pakistan is a failed state which has always

backtracked on its promises. The dismantling of terror infrastructure on its soil and ban of dreaded terror outfits are only an eye-wash. Despite the ban, many terrorists continue with their treach-

erous ways. It is a known that the *de facto* Government headed by Imran Khan is only namesake. It is the Army and the Inter-Services Intelligence, which call the shots.

Shubham Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Drugs taint Brexit successors

Legalisation of 'hard' drugs is not going to happen in this generation because there is still too much political mileage to be gained by 'fighting' them



GWYNNE DYER

A drug bust can ruin your whole day, so it's best to have a get-out-of-jail-free card ready. In the US, being White will usually make the police take a charitable view but in the UK, the best strategy is to say that you are planning to go into politics. (Although being White helps there, too.) These observations are prompted by a recent scandal in the UK, whereby seven of the 10 candidates for the leadership of the Conservative Party had been outed as former users of illegal drugs. This includes all three leading candidates for the job — Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and Jeremy Hunt — one of whom will, therefore, almost certainly become Prime Minister next month.

The revelations were prompted by a just-published biography of Michael Gove, currently Environment Secretary, which revealed that he had used cocaine repeatedly 20 years ago, when he was still a journalist. Indeed, on at least one occasion in 1999, he hosted a party at his Mayfair apartment in London where the guests were openly using cocaine. Now he says that "it was a mistake. Now I look back and think 'I wish I hadn't done that.'" Although mentioning it quite recently to his media coaches in what he thought was a private training session was his real mistake.

But he deserves to suffer. On the day after that party in 1999, Gove wrote a column in *The Times* in which he condemned "middle-class professionals" and "London's liberal consensus" for treating recreational drug use as a harmless peccadillo. In the trade, that's known as working both sides of the street. So Gove wins the Hypocrisy Cup, but it was a highly competitive event. Boris Johnson, tipped to win the Brexit succession struggle after Theresa May's resignation, hasn't said anything about drugs recently, but journalists swiftly dug up a 2005 television appearance in which he said quite a lot.

"I think I was once given cocaine, but I sneezed and so it did not go up my nose. In fact, I may have been doing icing sugar." Vintage Boris, but a) he did think he was doing cocaine and b) in a 2007 interview, he said that he had tried both cocaine and cannabis at university, but that they had "no pharmacological, psychotropic or any other effect on me whatever." This is known as the "Bill Clinton" or "I did not inhale" ploy. And then all other candidates for Conservative Party leader and British Prime Minister were asked the same question. Esther McVey said: "I have never taken any class A drugs [heroin and cocaine], but have I tried some pot? Yes, when I was much younger."

Andrea Leadsom, Dominic Raab and Matt Hancock all said that they had smoked cannabis at university, but had never done 'hard' drugs. Jeremy Hunt was more creative, admitting that "I think I had a cannabis lassie when I went backpacking through India." Nicely done, that. Hunt didn't really know it was cannabis, he's been around a bit — and he dodged having to say what other drugs (if any) he had done. And finally, Rory Stewart, who explained that he went to a village wedding in Afghanistan when he was walking around the country. It would have been rude to refuse: "I was invited into the house, and the opium pipe was passed around." And then the Bill Clinton defence: The family was so poor that they may have put very little opium into the pipe.

There's nothing surprising about the fact that seven out of 10 prime ministerial candidates have done some drugs. You could hardly have gone to a university in the 70s or 80s in Britain — or anywhere else in the West — without sampling at least a few. It doesn't seem to have done them any harm, except perhaps politically. The shame and hypocrisy lie in the fact that these men and women belong to a Government that routinely jails other, less privileged people who have done exactly the same thing, or at least bans them from working in their chosen profession (as Michael Gove's department did to teachers found to possess class A drugs, even at home, when he was education secretary).

Should we legalise all recreational drugs? Of course, we should. They would no longer support vast criminal empires that exploit their illegality and they would be less likely to harm people if their quality was monitored by the state. Some people would get addicted, just as with alcohol or tobacco, but that's less a function of the drugs than of the individual's vulnerability to addiction. Which particular substance hardly matters.

Legalisation of 'hard' drugs is not going to happen in this generation because there is still too much political mileage to be gained by 'fighting' them. But here's a consoling thought: The people who will finally decide the Conservative leadership contest are the party's 160,000 paid-up members, who are socially conservative, mostly rural and well over 60 on average. If anybody is going to punish these hypocrites, it's them.

(The writer's new book is *Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work*)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

NATIONS SUPPORTING, PROMOTING AND FUNDING TERRORISM SHOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE AND MADE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

—PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI



WHEN INDIA PREPARES ITSELF, IT WOULD FIND US PREPARED, BUT WE WILL HOLD TALKS ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY, IN A DIGNIFIED MANNER.

—PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER
SHAH MEHMOOD QURESHI

Reimagine tryst with prosperity

NDA 3.0 is all set to dramatically alter the course of Indian politics as also the economy. The Modi-Shah duo should accord greater primacy to issues of governance over politics



BINDU DALMIA

2019 is a watershed year — a definitive inflection point in reshaping the country's political history. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popular mandate signifies two dominant trends transforming the political landscape here on. First, there is a fading appeal of political parties who built their capital on pseudo-secularism. Asymmetric appeasement of the 20 per cent minorities in preference to the majority community, which comprises 80 per cent within their own country, will no longer hold. Second, it signals the decimation of self-serving, venal and nepotistic dynasties who held a monopoly on Central as also regional power and governance for far too long.

Modi's successive win stems from a groundswell of Hindu consolidation as the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) vote-share rose from 31.3 per cent in 2014 to 37.4 per cent in 2019. This brand of "muscular nationalism" finds its echo in global trends prevalent in the UK and the US. Just as Brexit signalled the voice of Britain that sought to revive its grand narrative, or a Trump's "America First", Modi's return signals the resurgence of majoritarianism that seeks to dismantle and de-colonise the elitist mindset of previous regimes.

The Western media tried hard to sabotage pre-election opinions, peddling fears that the return of India's "divider-in-chief" augured a regressive, illiberal and totalitarian regime. What Western lobbyists and Lutyens' intelligentsia missed was gauging the zeitgeist right, the popular mood of the moment. And that mood perceived Modi as a unifier, whose social uplift schemes had permeated across strata, even if it meant taking a tough stance on the regressive practice of triple *talaq*. Secularism, defined the Modi 2.0 way, veers at moving away from the *parivar's* ideological moorings to turn more mainstream and inclusive. This means subsuming the networks of vote-bank politics and replacing it with *antarodaya*, delivering economic uplift to the last man in the line.

While it's easy to praise the victor, existential challenges lie ahead for the Modi-Shah duo at the helm of governance to win the economic battle with the same fervour as the BJP won the political battle. Winners don't need free advice. As champions of political wicraft, Modi and Shah know better that the speed with which the Government of India handles economic headwinds will be crucial to how history will judge Modi's ultimate legacy.

Politically, the dominant takeaway is how Modi's overwhelming mandate impacts the Congress, regional parties as also vests the BJP with greater power to ignore tantrums of mercurial allies like the Shiv Sena and the Janata Dal (United) here on. First, the electoral outcome has slayed every dynastic fief: Lalu and company, gone with the wind. Pawar and company, stung by the debacle. *Mahagathbandhan* experiments done and dusted. Most importantly, the capitulation of the Congress after successive Lok Sabha debacles demolishes an entire eco-system of the Lutyens' club of fixer-cronies and lobbyists for 5+5 more years. Which means meritocracy is here to stay — whether it is in politics or business deals.

Five more years of exile from power for the Congress could mean "five boring, long years of whining, lying and buck-passing" if the party does not reinvent itself and continues to function as a

“AS CHAMPIONS OF POLITICAL WICRAFT, MODI AND SHAH KNOW BETTER THAT THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HANDLES ECONOMIC HEADWINDS WILL BE CRUCIAL TO HOW HISTORY WILL JUDGE MODI'S ULTIMATE LEGACY. POLITICALLY, THE DOMINANT TAKEAWAY IS HOW MODI'S OVERWHELMING MANDATE IMPACTS THE CONGRESS. REGIONAL PARTIES AS ALSO VESTS THE BJP WITH GREATER POWER TO IGNORE TANTRUMS OF MERCURIAL ALLIES”



negative Opposition. With the grand old party at its nadir, the Congress could well splinter into further factions as it did with the exit of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Trinamool Congress (TMC) and YSR Congress Party when strong regional leaders rejected the high-command culture even as the contagion of disarray within the party continues to spread to every State unit — from Telangana to Punjab. In hindsight, had the NCP+TMC+YSR not broken away from the Congress years back, notionally, the combined tally in the current Parliament of all four constituents stands at 52+22+22+5 = 99 seats. Which means the break-away factions over 20 years have chipped away nearly 50 per cent seats from the grand old party.

The expected State-wise aftermath of the "TsuNaMo"? There are multiple possibilities near-term and over the next one year. Imminent ramifications are that it could lead to the collapse of two recently formed Congress Governments in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the coalition in Karnataka as all three are on fragile ground with Congress Chief Ministers struggling with factionalism. In Karnataka, it's a wait and watch game for the BJP as to how and when it makes a bid for power to topple the minority Government. The BJP retains the Modi momentum, having won 25 out of 28 seats in the State with a large chunk of OBCs and Vokkaligas making a big saffron shift.

Second, if the Modi wave retains its velocity, it could have a cascading

effect on Maharashtra elections slated later in the year and yield a big win for the party in Delhi elections next year. Third, the exponential growth of the BJP's vote-share in Bengal — from 21 per cent in 2014 to 40.5 per cent in 2019 — reflects the untapped potential for Hindu consolidation in a State that has an above-national average Muslim population.

Tapping into economic discontent will be a major poll plank as the TMC failed to attract investment in the State, nor did it support Tata Motors for the setting up of a plant in Singur, which has huge employment generation potential. Mounting MLA defections signal ominous trends for the 2021 Bengal elections with the BJP targeting 250 seats. This has left a nervous TMC to go back to its drawing board to plan ahead by signing up political strategist Prashant Kishor, who recently helped YSR Congress sweep Andhra Pradesh.

In the politically crucial State of Uttar Pradesh, the TsuNaMo has convincingly decimated regional parties — Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) — for the second time in Lok Sabha elections, bringing an end to the divisive politics of the Mandal era. The voter has shown that it has little patience with the revolving door regimes of feudal cult-based organisations like SP and BSP. Because both parties are perceived as nepotistic, corrupt, they now have a diminishing appeal among Yadavs and aspirational Dalits. This was reflected in the BJP's vote-share rising to 50 per

cent in 2019, while the SP-BSP's share languished at 20 per cent.

That the BJP now has on board parties like the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), YSR Congress Party, Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which have been offering unconditional support, augurs well for Centre-State relations turning more cooperative than combative. As the victor, Modi's stance is expected to be more accommodative towards these neutral parties in order to gain political goodwill from States not governed by the BJP. Strategically, YSR's 22 MPs in the Lok Sabha could act as a buffer to counter future pressures from the Shiv Sena and JDU.

NDA 3.0 is now in an uncharted territory to dramatically alter the course of Indian politics as also the economy. One reckons that the pragmatic Modi-Shah duo will accord greater primacy to issues of governance over politics, having raised the benchmarks of voter expectations. Consequently, voter criteria by the next elections will no longer be determined by caste but would be subsumed by the quantum of deliverables on housing, health and education. As the Government gears up for India@75 by 2022, Modi 2.0 would target to showcase its achievements at mid-point of his tenure. Personally, I am optimistic to expect that premature surprise from the present regime.

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

Draw the line on tax evasion

While there can be no two opinions on the overarching need to increase funding for start-ups, the Government must not do anything which compromises its fight against black money. The DCF valuation method is not sustainable and must be challenged



UTTAM GUPTA

In a major ruling that will have a profound impact on the way companies are taxed, the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) has upheld the validity of the Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) method for arriving at the fair market value of a company's share. The order says "the DCF method is recognised; though it is not an exact science and can never be done with arithmetic precision."

The order needs to be viewed in the backdrop of tax demands raised on hundreds of companies by the Income Tax (IT) department for the payment of tax on the extra capital raised through the issue of shares over and above their Fair Market Value (FMV). These included notices for the so-called

"angel tax" to start-ups — a euphemism for unlisted firms which turn 'innovative ideas' into attractive business ventures. Demands were raised under Section 56 of the Income-tax Act, 1961, treating excess capital so raised (excess of the purchase price over FMV) as "income from other sources." The most crucial determinant of the tax liability is FMV. If it is high, the tax levied will be less. On the other hand if it is low, tax will be high.

The department questioned the high valuations that were based on future projections about the likely performance of the company. It averred that by inflating the FMV and thereby deflating excess capital, firms were intending to minimise the tax outgo. The taxman had reason to suspect as how come an entity suffering losses in the present could command high valuations?

On a closer look, it turns out that the real culprit is the DCF method, which provides room for maneuvering. Accordingly, the IT department decided not to look at it and instead, opted for a more realistic basis for determining the FMV. But the



Tribunal does not agree. It has ruled "the fact that future projections of various factors made by applying hindsight view cannot be matched with actual performance does not mean that the DCF method is not correct."

The Tribunal recognises that actual numbers do not match with projected values and yet, it upholds the DCF method, which acts as a springboard to inflated FMV. This is anomalous and will be a big setback to the taxman. Companies will continue to get away with high valuations and resultant high premium (in many cases despite incurring losses year after year), thereby denying the revenue department its

legitimate dues. Already, the Government has given huge relief to start-ups by (i) increasing the funding limit by unlisted firms and individuals in a start-up to be exempted from the angel tax from the current ₹10 crore to ₹25 crore; (ii) setting no such limit for investments by listed firms with net worth above ₹100 crore or turnover of ₹250 crore and (iii) relaxing the criteria for start-up from current seven years to 10 years and turnover limit from existing ₹25 crore to ₹100 crore.

Henceforth, a start-up fulfilling the above criteria needs to submit a "memorandum of information" to the

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, who after confirming eligibility, will tell the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to notify exemption of the concerned entity from the angel tax.

The liberalisation of norms has ensured that an overwhelming number of start-ups goes out of the tax net. With the ITAT order, even firms other than start-ups (besides a few unfortunate ones on whom the bureaucrat in the Commerce Ministry may not shower his/her benevolence) will be able to escape payment of tax as the DCF method cannot be rejected by the taxman routinely.

This brings us to the genesis of the tax on excess capital raised by the start-up or any other entity. When an investor pays an amount in excess of its FMV (or premium), this is as good as profit/income in the hands of the receiving firm. In case, however, the premium is exceptionally high, having no relationship whatsoever to the fair market value, it raises eyebrows. It points towards unaccounted cash or black money being funnelled into the

corporate entities.

This fundamental point can't be brushed aside simply because the recipient of the laundered money happens to be a start-up — firms which offer huge potential and are crucial to a rising India. Apart from revenue consideration, taxation of the premium amount should also be viewed as an instrument of reining in black money.

While there can be no two opinions on the overarching need to ensure an increase in funding for start-ups, the Government must not do anything which compromises its fight against black money. This will also be in sync with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's philosophy of "zero tolerance" for corruption and black money. Viewed in this much-broader perspective, the IT department should challenge the order of the ITAT at higher levels in the judicial forum. Concurrently, the Government should take a re-look at the package offered by DPIIT. It must refrain from giving the start-ups blanket exemption from levy of angel tax.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)



FOREIGN EYE



SPEAK UP, REACH OUT

For all the drawbacks, the idea of talking to strangers is a good one and the promotion of sociability is good for society. Although it does seem to be a general rule that people are friendlier the fewer there are of them and more hostile and indifferent as cities get more crowded, there are still considerable cultural variations; and there is evidence that friendlier places are also healthier and their inhabitants happier. (The Guardian editorial)

Anti-Profitteering Authority GST Council may give one-year extension

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council is likely to extend till November 30, 2020 the tenure of the National Anti-profitteering Authority (NAA), which deals with customer complaints regarding not receiving tax cut benefits, at its next meeting on June 21, an official said.

The Council at its 35th meeting, the first under new Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is also likely to consider a proposal to set up one appellate tribunal for north-eastern states, and another one for all Union Territories.

Besides, the Council would discuss a proposal to levy Goods and Services Tax (GST) on extra-neutral alcohol (ENA), which is used for manufacturing alcoholic liquor for human consumption, the official added.

ENA is a derivative of sugarcane molasses (95 per cent high-purity ethyl alcohol) and is not an alcoholic liquor for human consumption but can be used as raw material or input, after processing and substantial dilution, in the production of whisky, gin, country liquor etc.

The Finance Ministry is of the view that NAA should be given an extension of one year till November 30, 2020 as the authority continues to receive complaints of profiteering by companies, the official told PTI.

The NAA is keen for a two-year extension, the official said,

adding the final call will be taken by the GST Council in its meeting on June 21.

Earlier, the meeting was scheduled for June 20, but has now been postponed to June 21.

Soon after the GST was rolled out from July 1, 2017, the government had approved setting up of the NAA for two years to deal with complaints by consumers against companies for not passing on GST rate cut benefits.

The NAA came into existence on November 30, 2017, after its Chairman BN Sharma assumed charge. So far, the NAA has passed 67 orders in various cases.

The GST law provides for setting up of benches of appellate tribunal in all states. Although 18 states have got the approval to set up appellate benches, none of these states have operationalised them.

The GST Council in its June 21 meeting is likely to approve the proposals of Delhi, Odisha and Telangana to set up appellate tribunal benches.

The Council will also take a call on setting up a combined bench for all north-eastern states as well as one bench to deal with appeal cases in six Union Territories — Chandigarh, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Daman and Diu,



Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the official said.

With regard to bringing ENA under GST, states have divergent views on levying GST. Larger states like West Bengal, Rajasthan, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have been of the view that ENA should be out of GST.

States levy Value Added Tax (VAT) and Central Sales Tax (CST) on ENA and states will have to forgo the right to tax the product if it is brought under GST.

The GST Council had earlier sought the opinion of the Attorney General on legality of imposing GST on ENA. The AG had then opined that since ENA is not consumed directly by people, GST can be imposed on it.

Currently, potable alcohol is out of the ambit of GST and states are free to levy taxes on them.

Among other things, the GST Council will also consider issuance of e-invoice by entities with turnover of over ₹50 crore for business-to-business (B2B) sales in a bid to curb GST evasion.

IL&FS case: Independent directors, rating agencies, auditors under Sebi lens

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A large number of individuals and entities, including independent directors, top management personnel, rating agencies and auditors formerly associated with crisis-hit IL&FS may soon face action by capital market regulator Sebi for their role in the alleged fraud at the group.

Sebi has been conducting an in-depth investigation into the role of several entities and individuals, including for suspected violation of disclosure and corporate governance norms, and many of them would soon face stringent penal action for hurting the interest of minority shareholders and the overall capital markets with their fraudulent actions, senior officials said.

Officials said the regulator is also looking into the role of some listed borrowers, who were allegedly given multiple fresh loans despite their earlier defaults.

The Sebi probe had begun soon after the crisis came to light at IL&FS group last year, following huge defaults by various entities which together had a debt burden of over ₹90,000 crore.

The government had to supersede its board and appoint a new one, which is now working to clear the mess and also recover the losses caused by fraudulent acts of the previous management. The matter is being probed by multiple agencies, including the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), which has also found connivance of the pre-

vious top management with auditors and independent directors.

Several entities of IL&FS (Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services) group have been found to have indulged in multiple circuitous transactions involving several illegalities, including fast disbursements to some borrowers despite their bad track record in servicing existing loans and also delayed recoveries.

Investigations have also found that several entities from the IL&FS group continued to enjoy high ratings from various rating agencies, including due to window-dressing of the books of the companies and ever-greening of their loans.

As per the probe, a number of borrowers, including listed firms, were not servicing their debt obligation timely.

While the top management at IL&FS was aware of the potential problem accounts which were getting stressed, they continued to provide them with fresh loans to serve their principal and interest of the defaulters, rather than classifying them as NPAs.

This process was repeated multiple times with the earlier loan facility getting closed and a new facility being created which was again funded, on their default, through another cycle of funding through the same or another group company.

Such manner of debt servicing led to ballooning up of the outstanding liabilities against a group, which were funded from the borrowings from the market.

NBFC crisis to pull down home loan growth first time in three years: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Housing finance growth is set to slow down to 13-15 percent this fiscal, lower than the average of the past three years, due to the lingering liquidity issues faced by non-banking lenders, warns a report.

There can also be an adverse impact on the outstanding housing credit, which stood at Rs 19.1 lakh crore as of March 2019, ratings agency Icria said in a weekend report.

It can be noted that the government is betting on housing sector as one of the major vehicles to push the sagging economic growth.

Given the tough operating environment, we expect housing credit growth in FY20 to be in the range of 13-15 percent which is lower than the last three years when it clipped past 17 percent, it said in a note.

The overall industry loan growth for housing finance companies had slowed down to 15 percent for FY18.

It said the issues with the non-banking lenders since last September that has seen a slew of companies like DHFL and Reliance Capital suffering, slowed down credit growth of dedicated housing finance companies to 10 percent in FY19.

Banks grew faster at 19 percent as against 13 percent, taking their overall market share to 64 percent from 62 in the year-ago period, it said, adding banks will lead the growth curve in FY20 as well.

However, given the underpenetration of mortgages, the agency expects growth to recover soon.

Business Corner



REC Ltd. (formerly Rural Electrification Corporation Limited) has signed a performance-based 'Memorandum of Understanding' (MoU) with Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) detailing various targets to be achieved by REC during FY 2019-20. The MoU has been signed by Rajeev Sharma, CMD, PFC and Ajeet Kumar Agarwal, CMD, REC in presence of various senior officials of PFC & REC Ltd



Ravinder Singh Dhillon took over the role of Director (Projects) in Power Finance Corporation Ltd. on June 12, 2019. Presently serving as an Executive Director in PFC, Dhillon has more than 34 years of experience in various areas of power sector



Raksha Mantri, Rajnath Singh met General Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Army Staff, Lieutenant General Devraj Anbu, Vice Chief of the Army Staff and all the GOC-in-Cs on Sunday



Union Power Minister, RK Singh addressing the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy & Environment. Singh highlighted the pathbreaking efforts made in last 5 years in providing energy access to all in India



The employees of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) have contributed Rs 3 Crore towards the relief work of cyclone Fani to Odisha Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF). Anil Kumar Chaudhary, Chairman, SAIL handed over the cheque to the Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik yesterday in presence of Union Minister of Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan at Odisha Bhawan in New Delhi



With the declaration of JEE Advanced 2019 results, 38705 students have finally made it to their dream institute. IIT's Himanshu Gaurav Singh (AIR 2) and Archit Bubna (AIR 3) students of FIITJEE, pioneer in engineering and other entrance training has yet again performed brilliantly this year

Saudi Arabia remains committed to Aramco IPO: Crown Prince

AFP ■ RIYADH

Saudi Arabia remains committed to selling shares in national oil conglomerate Aramco through an initial public offering but only at the right time, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has said.

"We are committed to the IPO of Saudi Aramco based on appropriate conditions and at the right time," Prince Mohammed told the pan-Arab daily Asharq al-Awsat in an interview published on Sunday.

He reiterated his earlier expectations that the IPO of Saudi Aramco "will take place in (late) 2020 or the start of 2021," almost two years later than expected.

Saudi Arabia plans to sell up to five per cent of the world's largest energy firm and hopes to raise up to \$100 billion.

Prince Mohammed said it was still premature to announce where the IPO will be held, adding that many requirements for the sale to go through had been successfully completed.

Riyadh has taken a number



of key procedures in preparation for the IPO including issuing a law for hydrocarbons tax, appointing a new board for Aramco and allowing an independent auditing of the kingdom's oil reserves, the crown prince said.

Aramco has also opened its accounts books for the first time to international ratings agencies, declared the size of its profits and transformed into a public shareholding company, he said.

The IPO — expected to be the world's largest stock sale — forms the cornerstone of a reform programme envisaged by Prince Mohammed to wean the Saudi economy off its reliance on oil.

India's coal import rises 15% to 24 MT in May

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's coal import increased by 14.5 per cent to 24.01 million tonnes (MT) in May this year.

The country's coal import was at 20.96 MT in May 2019, according to a junction services report, which is based on monitoring of vessels' positions and data received from shipping companies.

The report comes at a time when the government is looking at relaxing the timeline for the one billion tonne coal production target it had set earlier for Coal India (CIL), which accounts for over 80 per cent of the domestic coal output.

Imports during May this year stood at 24.01 MT (provisional) as compared to 26.3 MT (revised) in April, 2019.

The provisional figure for April 2019 stood at 20.72 MT. Of the total import during May, non-coking coal was at 17.74 MT, while coking coal import stood at 3.8 MT.

Metallurgical coke import during the month was at 0.31 MT.

Fin Min assessing capital needs of PSU banks; Budget may make provision for ₹30,000 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry is evaluating capital needs of state-owned banks, and likely to provide about ₹30,000 crore in the upcoming Budget to help them meet minimum regulatory capital requirement in the current fiscal, sources said.

The first budget of Modi 2.0 Government is scheduled to be presented on July 5 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the backdrop of India's economy hitting 5-year low growth of 6.8 per cent in 2018-19.

In addition, the public sector banks would also require capital for the credit growth, which has just started picking up. Five weak banks under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework of the RBI too need capital to maintain minimum regulatory capital ratios as per the Basel III norms.

Besides, if the Government goes for another consolidation like Bank of Baroda, the three-way merger would also require additional capital, the sources said.

It is to be noted that the Government infused ₹5,042 crore in BoB to enhance its capital base to meet additional expense due to amalgamation of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank.

In all the Government made record capital infusion of ₹1,06,000 crore in the public sector banks last fiscal. It was enhanced from earlier provision of ₹65,000 crore in December 2018.

As a result of capital infusion, five banks - Bank of India, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Bank of Maharashtra, Allahabad Bank and Corporation Bank — came out of PCA. Following merger of Dena Bank with BoB, it also came out of weak bank category. Out of 11, only five are left under weak bank category of the Reserve Bank of India.

As far as their own resource mobilisation are concerned, sources said, they are unable to tap capital market because of their low share prices.

They are banking of sale of non-core assets which are not enough, the sources said, adding that PSBs would require capital infusion from

the government this fiscal as well.

How much will come would depend on the Government fiscal math that the Budget division of the Finance Ministry will take a final call near Budget preparation, the sources noted.

Initial estimate indicates capital requirement of ₹20,000-30,000 crore, provided banks are also to raise funds on their own from the market both through asset and share sale, they added.

Many banks, including State Bank of India and Bank of Baroda (BoB), have already got the board approval for capital raising as and when required.

For example, BoB plans to raise ₹11,900 crore during the current fiscal through share sale, including Employee Share Purchase Scheme to shore up capital for meeting business expansion requirement.

The bank expects to garner ₹1,500 crore from Bank of Baroda Employee Share Purchase Scheme (BoB-ESPS). ESPS will be within overall limit of capital plan 2019-20 of ₹11,900 crore.

Fed rate decision, trade scenario to set market trend: Analysts

During the last week, the Sensex fell 163.83 points or 0.41 per cent, to close at 39,452.07

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian equities this week will be guided by factors like geopolitical developments, US-China trade negotiations and Fed interest rate decision amid lack of major domestic triggers, say analysts.

Investors will also keep a track on the domestic trade situation following reports that India has decided to impose retaliatory tariffs on 29 US products with effect from June 16.

The Government had on June 21, 2018 decided to impose these duties in retali-

tion to the US decision of significantly hiking customs duties on certain steel and aluminium products. India had extended the deadline for imposition of duties multiple times in the hope that some solution would emerge.

"Markets are currently dancing to the global tunes and we do not see this changing any time soon, in absence of any major local trigger," said Jayant Manglik, President - Retail Distribution, Religare Broking.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said: "Ripple effect from a weak global market while premium valuation and slow economy is hurting the market. Continuous exchange of words between US and Tehran regarding the oil tanker attack, progress of US-China trade war, Fed policy outcome on 19th June and progress of monsoon will be closely watched by the investors."

Global markets were spooked last week after two oil tankers were attacked in the

Gulf of Oman, leading to ratcheting up of tensions in the Middle East.

Crude oil prices, movement of rupee against the dollar and foreign fund investment trend would be crucial for the markets, experts added.

"Negative news flow from the finance sector on loan repayment is dampening the investors sentiment which can be a trigger for a bigger correction before the budget session," said Romesh Tiwari, Head of Research, CapitalAim.

The BSE Sensex stayed on the back foot for the third straight session Friday as investors dialled down equity exposure amid high valuations and a fresh spell of uncertainty in the global markets.

The markets suffered a sudden sell-off towards the fag-end following reports of India deciding to impose retaliatory tariffs on 29 US products.

During the last week, the Sensex fell 163.83 points or 0.41 per cent, to close at 39,452.07.

Honda Cars mulls hiking vehicle prices by up to 1.2% from July

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Honda Cars India is considering to increase vehicle prices by up to 1.2 per cent from next month to offset rise in cost of raw materials and introduction of new safety features, as per a senior company official.

The company currently sells a range of models from premium hatchback Brio to premium sedan Accord Hybrid, priced between Rs 4.73 lakh and Rs 43.21 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi).

"We are working on price increase on our models from July," HCLIL Senior Vice President and Director Sales and Marketing Rajesh Goel told PTI.

He said the cost of raw material has gone up in the last few months, but the same is currently being absorbed by the company.

India can boost exports of 300 products to US, China amid trade war: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing trade war between the US and China offers an opportunity to India for boosting exports of as many 350 products such as chemicals and granite to these countries, a study by the Commerce Ministry has said.

The identification of these products is part of a study carried out by the ministry which states that the ongoing tariff or customs duties war between the US and China proves a big window of opportunity for enhancing India's exports to these two nations.

Both the US and China are imposing heavy import duties on each other's products, which has triggered a trade war kind of situation.

According to the study, as much 151 domestic products including diesel, X-ray tubes and certain chemicals have an outright advantage to displace the US exports to China.

Similarly, 203 Indian goods like rubber and graphite electrodes have the advantage to displace Chinese exports to the US.

It said that the specific products in which India can potentially expand exports to China immediately based on its strengths and available market access in the neighbouring country and also those in which concerted efforts need to be made to acquire market access are being shared with the line ministries.

The ongoing trade war may bring about a shift in the global trading patterns due to spillover effects and displacement of the bilaterally traded communities to other countries, it said.

The Indian products which can tap the Chinese market include copper ores, rubber, paper/paperboard, equipment for transmission voice/data in a wired network, tunes and pipes.

Steel, iron makers seek removal of duty on coking coal; higher tariff on scrap

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Budget, domestic iron and steel players have sought abolition of 2.5 per cent basic customs duty on import of coking coal — a key raw material used in steel making.

Removal of duty on coking coal is a long standing demand of the industry.

At present India's 85 per cent of demand of coking coal is met through imports, industry bodies Ficci and CII have apprised the Ministry of Steel in a pre-Budget proposal.

"As there is no substitution for coking coal in steel making, import duty of 2.5 per cent on coking coal is redundant as industry demanded in the proposal.

Due to the increasing and volatile coking coal prices, domestic merchant pig iron industry is suffering from huge losses, which forced many players to stop operations, it said.

The industry has forecast that financial year 2030 — the year by which India aims to take its capacity to 300 million tonnes — the demand for coking

coal would be at 178.7 million tonnes and 140.2 MT will be met through imports.

However, it also noted that as per the National Steel Policy, the dependence on imported coking coal is supposed to be brought down to 65 per cent by 2030.

Scrap is another element which is posing a threat for the domestic steel manufacturers, the proposal said, requesting the duty on import of scrap should be raised to 10 per cent from the current level 2.5 per cent.

It also sought for BIS standard for scrap besides review MIP of scrap.

"Cheap quality scrap imports have increased by 9 per cent in FY19 from FY17 which has resulted in net forex outgo increase by 58 per cent to \$1.77 billion till February 2019.

"No BIS certification or standards are in place for scrap which leads to lack of authenticity on material import. There is also risk of scrap being hazardous and radioactive since there is no norms or check," the proposal note said.

Bihar CM announces ₹4 lakh ex-gratia

Child death toll rises to 83 in Muzaffarpur

Patna/Muzaffarpur: With one more child dying of suspected AES in Muzaffarpur on Sunday morning, the death toll of children in the district rose to 83 this month, even as Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced an ex-gratia of Rs four lakh each.

Kumar expressed grief over the children's death in Muzaffarpur and ordered payment of Rs four lakh as ex-gratia to the next of kin of the deceased, an official release said.

He also directed the officials of the Health department and the district administration as well as doctors to take all possible measures to tackle the disease. The chief minister prayed for a speedy recovery of the children suffering from suspected Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES).

A press release issued by the Muzaffarpur district administration said till Sunday 9 am, 83 children had died at the state-run Sri Krishna

Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH) and the Kejriwal Hospital, which was run by a trust.

According to the release, 69 children had died at the SKMCH, while 14 died at the Kejriwal Hospital due to suspected cases of AES.

Officials, however, maintained that a majority of the victims, most of whom were below 10 years of age, had fallen prey to hypoglycemia, a condition caused by a very low level of blood sugar and electrolyte imbalance.

Since June 1, 197 children were admitted to the SKMCH while 91 were taken to Kejriwal Hospital with suspected AES, but most of them were found to be victims of hypoglycemia.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan is scheduled to visit Muzaffarpur on Sunday to take stock of the situation. He will hold meetings with doctors and officials of both the central and state governments.

Vardhan is also scheduled

to hold a review meeting with the officials of the Health and other departments concerned of the state government in Patna later in the day.

He will be accompanied by state Health Minister Mangal Pandey during his visit to Muzaffarpur.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, who is also the Bihar unit chief of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), visited the SKMCH on Saturday.

He expressed grief over the deaths and cancelled all the functions for welcoming him in view of the brain fever that has taken a heavy toll on children's lives.

Principal Secretary (Health) Sanjay Kumar had said a few days ago that the disease had affected 222 blocks in 12 districts, especially in Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Sheohar and East Champaran.

A team of experts from the Centre visited Muzaffarpur on Wednesday. **PTI**

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In the last reshuffle of his Ministry undertaken ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly polls to be held in October this year, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday inducted 13 new Ministers — eight Cabinet ranked ones and five Ministers of State — into the State Cabinet, after dropping six existing Ministers from his Cabinet.

As part of the Cabinet reshuffle, Fadnavis brought in ten Ministers from the BJP, two from the Shiv Sena and one from the RPI (Athavale). This is for the first time that an RPI (Athavale) nominee has been given a berth in the State Cabinet.

As anticipated, the Chief Minister inducted into his Ministry erstwhile senior Congress leader and leader of the Opposition Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, erstwhile NCP leader and now a Shiv Sena leader Jaydutta Kshirsagar and BJP's Mumbai unit president Ashish Shelar, as Cabinet ministers.

Apart from Vikhe-Patil, Kshirsagar and Shelar, the five others whom Fadnavis accommodated in his Ministry as Cabinet Ministers were: Sanjay Kute, Dr Suresh Khade, Dr Anil

Bonde, Ashok Uike and Dr Tanaji Sawant.

Similarly, Yogesh Sagar, Avinash Mahatekar, Sanjay alias Bala Bhegade, Dr Parinay Phuke and Atul Save were inducted as Ministers of State in the State Cabinet.

Maharashtra's Housing Minister Prakash Mehta of the BJP, who is among the six BJP Ministers dropped from the State Cabinet, paid the price for his indictment for his involvement in the alleged irregularities in the permissions given by a slum rehabilitation authority (SRA) project at MP Mills compound at Tardeo in south Mumbai. Lokayukta M L Tahaliyani.

Maharashtra Governor CH Vidyasagar Rao administered the oath of office and secrecy to eight new Cabinet Ministers and five Ministers of State at a swearing-in-ceremony held on the lawns of Raj Bhavan in south Mumbai.

Fadnavis, Union Minister of State Ramdas Athawale, Assembly Speaker Haribhau Bagade, senior Shiv Sena leader Manohar Joshi, several ministers, Mumbai Mayor Vishwanath Mahadeshwar, legislators and bureaucrats were among those present at the swearing-in ceremony.

The State Cabinet re-jig

comes ahead of the monsoon session of the Maharashtra Legislature, beginning on Monday.

Vikhe-Patil, whose son Sujay quit the Congress in March this year and won the Lok Sabha polls by a margin of 2.81 lakh votes from Ahmednagar constituency on a BJP ticket, has been rewarded with a ministerial berth by the ruling BJP even before he formally joined the BJP.

Vikhe Patil, who had stepped down Leader of Opposition in March after

Sujay had joined the BJP, had resigned as a Congress MLA on June 4.

Kshirsagar, who quit the NCP and joined the ruling Shiv Sena on May 22, also found a place in the State Cabinet.

Shelar, under whose leadership the BJP bagged all the three seats it contested in Mumbai in the recent Lok Sabha polls, made it to the Fadnavis Cabinet.

In his Cabinet reshuffle, Fadnavis has tried to accommodate MLAs from three major regions and Mumbai —

Vikhe-Patil (Ahmednagar), Suresh Khade (Miraj), Sanjay alias Bala Bhegade (Maval), all from western Maharashtra, Shelar, Yogesh Sagar, Avinash Mahatekar (all from Mumbai), Anil Bonde (Amravati) Tanaji Sawant, Ashok Uike, both Yavatmal), Sanjay Kute (Buldhana), Dr Parinay. Phuke, all from Vidarbha, Kshirsagar (Beed) and Atul Save (Aurangabad), both from Marathwada. However, Konkan region and north Maharashtra have gone unrepresented.

Cabinet expansion for regional balance, new faces: Maha CM

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the Cabinet expansion carried out on Sunday was for regional balance and to create an opportunity for other party workers to serve, and no one was dropped for "poor performance".

Thirteen ministers were inducted into the state government Sunday, and six serving ministers tendered their resignations to the CM, all of

which were accepted.

Speaking on the eve of the monsoon session of the Maharashtra legislature, Fadnavis said, "We wanted to present new faces as well as create a regional balance. No one in the cabinet was removed because of poor performance. The new team will perform better."

Commenting on a Lokayukta report related to outgoing Housing Minister

Prakash Mehta's alleged land deal, Fadnavis said, "The report is going to be presented in the House. I cannot comment on it now." Speaking on former Congressman Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil's induction into the cabinet, the Maharashtra CM claimed, "I have been doing developmental work and that is why new people are joining the BJP." With Sunday's expansion, the Fadnavis Government now has 41 Ministers. **PTI**

1st batch of 31 pilgrims flagged off for Mansarovar Yatra

Gangtok: The first batch of 31 pilgrims was flagged off for Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Nathula Pass in Sikkim on Sunday.

K Jayakumar, the Additional Chief Secretary of Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, flagged off two buses carrying the pilgrims for the first climate acclimatization camp located at 15th Mile and 17th Mile enroute to Nathula.

Earlier in the day, the pilgrims, including 11 women, and two liaison officers, attended a briefing session at a hotel here, which was organized by the Sikkim Government's Tourism and Civil Aviation Department.

Addressing the session,



Representational image

Jayakumar informed the pilgrims about the significance of the journey to the holy place.

"The Central Government and the Sikkim Government have put in great effort for smooth conduct of the journey and there is nothing to be

worried about," Jayakumar told the pilgrims.

The Commandant of the 48th Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), T S Mangang, briefed the pilgrims about the route chart to Kailash Mansarovar and the acclimatization schedules.

He apprised them about the rules and regulations to be followed during their onward journey and advised everyone to remain mentally strong.

The pilgrims will stay at 15th Mile and 17th Mile for the first two days and at Sherathang for another two days for acclimatization before undergoing the final round of medical check up by the ITBP at Sherathang on June 19, a day before crossing the Indian territory at Nathula for onward journey towards Kailash Mansarovar on the following day. **PTI**

Gutkha worth over ₹1 lakh seized in Andhra, 53 held

Machilipatnam (AP): Gutkha worth above ₹1 lakh was seized in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh and 53 people were arrested in this connection on Sunday, police said.

SP, Krishna, M Ravindranath Babu said raids were conducted in Machilipatnam, Pedana towns and Kanchekacherla, Gudlavalleru mandals during which huge quantity of Gutkha and 'khainee' (chewing tobacco) packets were seized.

He said 53 people were arrested and 35 cases registered in connection with the seizure of the banned items. **PTI**

Congress' Wadettiwar to be Maharashtra's new LoP

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Ahead of the start of the monsoon session of the Maharashtra Legislature on Monday, all the Opposition parties on Sunday decided to nominate Vijay Namdevrao Wadettiwar as the new Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly.

Wadettiwar will replace erstwhile Congress leader Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, who resigned from the Congress early this month and was inducted into the Maharashtra Cabinet on Sunday.

"Leaders of all the

Opposition parties met State Assembly Speaker Haribhau Bagade and submitted a letter, nominating Wadettiwar as their joint choice for the post as the new Leader of Opposition," Congress' newly appointed deputy leader in the Assembly Naseem Khan said.

With a strength of 41 members, the Congress is the single largest Opposition party in the 288-member State Assembly. The NCP is the second largest Opposition party with a strength of 39 MLAs in the Assembly.

An MLA from Brahmपुरi, Wadettiwar has been rewarded with the LoP's

post for saving the Congress from a total wipe-out in the May 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that the State Government would table 28 bills — including 15 pending bills — in the monsoon session of the State Legislature.

The monsoon session, being held on the heels of a spectacular performance put up the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena alliance in the Lok Sabha polls, is the last session of the State Legislature before Maharashtra goes in for the Assembly polls in October 2019.

K'taka CM offers to hold talks with Opp, BJP leaders court arrest during 'siege' protest

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Sunday offered to hold talks with Opposition BJP on issues raised by it even as the saffron party workers courted arrest while attempting to proceed towards his official residence despite police barricades.

As the State BJP, led by its chief B S Yeddyurappa, intensified its two-day sit-in over issues, including sale of land in Ballari to JSW Steel at a "throw away" price, drought and farm loan waiver, Kumaraswamy, in a letter to the opposition leader, said he was prepared to discuss all matters. "I am always ready to discuss with you. Steps will be taken to seek your time as per your convenience," the Chief Minister said in the letter to Yeddyurappa, a copy of which was released to the media.

However, the BJP went ahead with its plan as the leaders and workers, who were on a round-the-clock sit-in at Anand Rao circle here since Friday, attempted to proceed toward the chief minister's residence despite heavy police presence and barricades in the area.

The protesters were stopped by police and huddled into buses as they tried to break through the barricades. In the ensuing melee, a few BJP leaders including, former deputy Chief Minister R Ashok, suffered some bruises. The protesters were taken to a nearby police ground and let off later, police said. In his letter, Kumaraswamy informed Yeddyurappa about the measures taken to tackle the drought situation and added the loan waiver scheme for farmers in progress. **PTI**

Modi has courage, should bring Ordinance to construct Mandir: Uddhav Thackeray in Ayodhya

Ayodhya (UP): Government should bring an ordinance to construct Ram temple, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray said on Sunday in Ayodhya, asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the courage to do so and there would be no one to stop it.

Thackeray offered prayers at the makeshift Ram Lalla temple along with his son Aditya and 18 newly-elected lawmakers of his party. The Shiv Sena has said the visit was to fulfill the promise Thackeray made last November to come to Ayodhya again after the elections.

"The case is in the court for many years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the courage. If government takes the decision, there is no one to stop it. Not only Shiv Sena, Hindus of the whole world are with this," Uddhav

said, while addressing a press conference after his visit to the Ram Lalla (or infant Ram) temple.

"The government should bring an ordinance for construction of Ram temple. The temple has to be constructed at the earliest," he said, raising the slogan of "kanoon banao, mandir banao (formulate law and construct temple)".

Maharashtra will be going to polls later this year and the visit is being seen as an attempt by the Shiv Sena to put pressure on ally BJP on the Ram temple issue. But Sena has maintained that Thackeray's visit should not be seen through the electoral lens.

"For us Ram temple is a matter of faith and not politics," Thackeray said. **PTI**



Married women perform rituals around a banyan tree on the occasion of Vat Savitri festival in Ahmedabad on Sunday

AP

Patna's over century-old heritage market demolished for Smart City project

Patna: The over 100-year-old Gole Market, a unique heritage building constructed as Patna's first planned municipal market, has been demolished by local authorities as part of a Smart City project.

The demolition work began on Friday and by Sunday the historic landmark, located in the heart of Bihar's capital and endowed with beautiful red-tiled roof, was reduced to a skeletal shell.

"The Gole Market was demolished as part of a major redevelopment project of the railway station area under the Smart City initiative. Other markets lining the streets are also being knocked down as part of the mega project," Patna Municipal Commissioner Anupam Kumar Suman told PTI.

As part of this Smart City project, the now-dismantled Gole Market, located near Patna Junction, will make way for a seven-storeyed commercial complex and a modern municipal market along with a



A view of demolished structures at the British-era Gole Market, in Patna on Sunday

PTI

vending zone will come up in the area adjoining the Station Road, he said.

Popularly known as Gole Market, among the local people, it was Patna's first planned municipal market designed by architect Joseph Fearis

Munnings while he was planning the layout of the 'New Capital' city of colonial Patna after the creation of the new province of Bihar and Orissa in 1912.

Despite the historical value of the building, the demolition

has drawn feeble protest from citizens of the city, but many people in Patna are angered by this "shocking move" of the Patna Municipal Corporation (PMC).

"This is just madness. It was a historical building and

should have been preserved. But, instead of restoring and reusing it as a cafe or something, the corporation razed it," said city-based researcher and author Arun Singh.

"One by one the local government is knocking down heritage buildings in the city. This is an attempt to erase the colonial history of Patna in the name of development," he alleged.

In December last year, the 133-year-old Anjuman Islamia Hall, perhaps the first public hall of Patna, was demolished to make way for a modern complex.

The heritage market had faced decades of neglect and its occupant shopkeepers had been feeling the shadow of the wrecking ball for years as local authorities had planned a redevelopment project much earlier too, which kept on getting stalled, a local shopkeeper, who did not wish to be named, said.

"My grandfather had a meat shop in it during the

British time, and elite of the city would come in their cars to buy meat, fish, chicken, eggs, grocery and milk. It should have been preserved," he said.

City-based 84-year-old architect and INTACH Patna Chapter Convener J K Lall also expressed shock and anger over the demolition of Gole Market.

"It was a unique single-storeyed building with a raised central hexagonal core topped with elegant red-tiled roof and two flanks came out of it and again it was topped with red tiles of the colonial-era Burn & Co. It was a perfect building and a perfect setting for a heritage cafe," he told PTI.

"Smart City also means preserving our architectural legacy and not just building new ones," he said.

PMC Commissioner Suman, when asked why the building was demolished, said, the Gole Market was "coming in the middle" of the layout of the Smart City project plan. **PTI**

OFFICE OF THE PROJECT MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION UNIT
UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
 Collectorate Compound, Rudrapur, Distt. Udham Singh Nagar

पत्रांक : 941 / निविदा / 193 दिनांक : 11.06.2019

E-Tender Notice

- Name of the work :- FINISHING OF LORD SHIVA'S EXISTING STRUCTURE OF STATUE BY CEMENT & SAND MORTAR WITH MAKING PROPER & BEAUTIFUL SHAPE, PAINTING ETC. COMPLETE AND APPURTENANT WORKS AT BANKHANDI MAHADEV TEMPLE CHAKARPUR (KHATIMA), UDHAM SINGH NAGAR.
- Estimated Cost:- Rs. 44.20 Lakh 3. Period of Completion :- 09 Month
- Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:- 14.06.2019 (16.00 hrs)
- Last date/Time of receipt of bids in the portal:- 26.06.2019 (17.00 hrs)
- Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :- 28.06.2019 (12.00 hrs)
- Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid :- Er. Om Prakash, Collectorate Compound, Rudrapur (Udham Singh Nagar).
- Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place :- 18.06.2019 (13.00 hrs) Rudrapur.
- For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in.

Project Manager

Office of Project Manager, Construction Unit
UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM, HALDWANI

Letter No. 784/ADHES - 4 /64 Date : 15.06.2019

E-TENDER NOTICE

The Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam Haldwani (Nainital) on behalf of Chairman, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Dehradun, invites sealed item rate tender on e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>, for Construction of Transit Hostel (8 Room) for Medical Officer at CHC Ramgarh District - Nainital Work cost nearly Rs. 170.00 lacs + GST. The tender form can be downloaded from <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> from 17.06.2019, 10:00 hrs. to 03.07.2019, 17:00 hrs. Other information can be seen in tender form or office notice board or from phone no. 9411107868 of office of tender inviting authority.

Project Manager
 जल संवय - जीवन संवय "कृपया जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित होने से बचायें"
 वैधानिक चेतावनी - जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित करना दण्डनीय अपराध है।

Hong Kong leader apologises as massive rally chokes city

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Hundreds of thousands of protesters choked Hong Kong's streets for a second straight Sunday in a defiant rebuke of a reviled extradition law, piling pressure on the city's embattled pro-Beijing leader who apologised for causing "conflict" but refused to step down.

The show of force saw huge crowds marching for hours in tropical heat, calling for the resignation of chief executive Carrie Lam, who was forced to suspend the bill as public anger mounted.

Thronged of black-clad protesters snaked their way for miles through the streets to the city's parliament -- a repeat of a record-breaking demonstration last Sunday that organisers said more than a million people attended.

As night fell the huge crowds had once more taken over multiple major thoroughfares, including outside the legislature, with the police seemingly ceding the streets to the jubilant masses.

Critics fear the Beijing-backed law will entangle people in China's notoriously opaque and politicised courts and damage the city's reputation as a safe business hub.



Protesters carry a huge banner that reads "Our hearts are torn to pieces. Withdraw the monstrous bill" as they march on the streets against an extradition bill in Hong Kong on Sunday. AP

Lam's office put out a statement late Sunday admitting that shortcomings in how her administration handled the law had "led to a lot of conflict and disputes" and "disappointed and distressed many citizens".

"The chief executive apologises to the citizens and promises to accept criticism with the most sincere and humble attitude," it said.

It came a day after she announced she would postpone the law indefinitely.

Still, Sunday's statement fell well short of demands that she resign, shelve the bill permanently and apologise for police using tear gas and rubber bullets earlier in the week. "Hong Kong people feel that she's not sincere and con-

tinues to be extremely arrogant," political analyst Dixon Sing told AFP. "I don't think the anger will subside."

The international finance hub was rocked Wednesday by the worst political violence in decades as protesters were dispersed by baton-wielding riot police. Many accused the police of using excessive force and anger was further fanned by authorities calling the largely young protesters "rioters". Nearly 80 people were injured in the unrest -- including 22 police officers -- with both sides showing a willingness to escalate action and reaction to levels unseen in the usually stable business hub.

One man died late Saturday when he fell from a building where he had been holding an hours-long anti-extradition protest. He had unfurled a banner on scaffolding attached to an upscale mall, but fell when rescuers tried to haul him in. Police said they suspected the 35-year-old was suicidal.

Throughout the day, demonstrators queued for hours to leave flowers and tributes where he fell. The extradition furore is just the latest chapter in what many see as a battle for the soul of Hong Kong.

For the last decade the

city has been convulsed by political turbulence between pro-Beijing authorities and opponents who fear an increasingly assertive China is stamping on the city's unique freedoms and culture enjoyed since the handover in 1997.

Opposition to the extradition bill has united an unusually wide cross-section of Hong Kong, from influential legal and business bodies to religious leaders.

Trump to discuss Hong Kong protests with Xi at G20: Pompeo

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump will discuss the mass protests in Hong Kong with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the upcoming G20 summit in Japan, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday.

"I think we'll get the opportunity to see President Xi in just a couple weeks now at the G20 summit. I'm sure this will be among the issues that they discuss," Pompeo said in an interview with Fox News.

China stays mum as Hong Kong protests against extradition Bill

AFP ■ BEIJING

Chinese state media remained largely silent Sunday as hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong people took to the streets to protest against a controversial extradition bill, with social platforms scrubbed clean of any pictures or mentions of the rally.

Hong Kong's government has been rocked in recent days by massive demonstrations -- and some violence -- which forced the city's embattled leader to indefinitely suspend passage of the bill.

Critics fear the Beijing-backed law will entangle people in China's notoriously opaque and politicised courts and damage the city's reputation as a safe place for business.

Except for a short opinion piece in the Communist Party mouthpiece People's Daily,

Chinese state media -- which has drummed up support for the bill in recent weeks -- remained mum Sunday after the climbdown by Chief Executive Carrie Lam.

China's state broadcaster, CCTV, avoided the subject in its main news bulletins throughout the day.

The proposed law that would allow extraditions to the mainland was "supported by mainstream public opinion in Hong Kong", the People's Daily article said.

"The general public is looking forward to blocking legal loopholes to prevent Hong Kong becoming a haven for sinners," it added.

China has blamed the protests on what it says is a small group of organisers who are colluding with Western governments.

The People's Daily echoed the oft-repeated government line that "it resolutely oppos-

GLOBE TROTTER

LT GENERAL FAIZ HAMEED IS NEW ISI CHIEF

Islamabad: Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed would be the new chief of Pakistan's powerful spy agency ISI, the Army announced on Sunday. The Pakistan Army on Sunday announced a number of changes to postings of its top generals.

GUNMEN KILL 34 VILLAGERS IN NIGERIA

Kano: Gunmen have killed 34 people in Nigeria's northern Zamfara state where criminal gangs have been terrorising remote villages, police said on Sunday. Armed bandits on motorcycles stormed into neighbouring Tungar Kafau and Gidan Wawa villages in Shinkafi district late Friday and shot dead 34 people.

FIELD FIRES IN SYRIA'S HASAKEH KILL 10

Qamishli: Fires engulfing vital wheat fields across Syria's northeast have killed at least 10 people, a war monitor said Sunday, as Kurdish authorities claim the blazes were set deliberately. Kurdish authorities and the Damascus regime are competing to buy up this year's harvest as fires -- some claimed by the Islamic State group -- continue to scorch crops in the country's breadbasket. The victims included civilians and members of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

Damaged tankers reach safe waters after Gulf attacks

AFP ■ DUBAI

Two damaged tankers arrived safely on Sunday to locations off the Emirati coast after they were rocked by explosions in Gulf waters, in an incident Saudi Arabia blamed on its regional arch-rival Iran.

The Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous was carrying highly flammable methanol through the Gulf of Oman on Thursday when it came under attack along with the Norwegian-operated Front Altair -- the second assault in a month in the strategic shipping lane.

US President Donald Trump has said the operation had Iran "written all over it" -- rejecting Tehran's vehement denial -- and its key Gulf ally Saudi Arabia has also lashed out against Tehran.

In his first public comments since the attacks, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in remarks published Sunday that he would not hesitate to tackle any threats to the oil-rich kingdom.

"We do not want a war in the region... But we won't hesitate to deal with any threat to our people, our sovereignty, our territorial integrity and our vital interests," he told pan-



Arab daily Asharq al-Awsat. He said Iran had responded to a visit to Tehran by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe "by attacking two tankers, one of which was Japanese".

The vessel's Singapore-based BSM Ship Management said in a statement Sunday that it had "arrived safely at the designated anchorage" and that its crew were "safe and well".

A damage assessment and preparations for transferring the ship's cargo would start once authorities had completed "security checks and formalities", it added.

The other ship, the Front Altair, was under safe tow by tug boats towards an area off the coast of the eastern Emirati port of Fujairah.

The crew of the Kokuka Courageous saw a "flying

Israel PM's wife convicted of misusing public funds

Jerusalem: An Israeli court Sunday convicted the wife of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of fraudulently using state funds for meals, under a plea bargain which saw her admit to lesser charges.

Sara Netanyahu was found guilty of exploiting the mistake of another person and ordered to pay a fine and compensation, in a deal approved by Jerusalem magistrates' court justice Avital Chen. Netanyahu was also fined 10,000 shekels (\$2,800) and ordered to reimburse the state a further 45,000 shekels, the latter of which she will pay in nine instalments, at her request.

"The deal reached between the sides is worthy and appropriately reflects the deeds and their severity on the criminal level," Chen said in his ruling.

The 60-year-old, a high-profile presence at her husband's side throughout his long tenure in office, was initially charged in June 2018 with fraud and breach of trust for buying catered meals despite the presence of a cook at the minister's official residence.

The amended indictment, approved Sunday, dropped the graft charges.

Trump stirs up feud with London Mayor over attacks in city

PTI ■ LONDON

US President Donald Trump has further stirred up his ongoing feud with London Mayor Sadiq Khan by blaming the Pakistani-origin Labour leader a "disaster", blaming him for a recent spate of stabbings and street violence in the UK capital.

Trump and Khan have repeatedly clashed ever since the mayor questioned the red carpet being rolled out for the US President by Britain, most recently for a state visit hosted by Queen Elizabeth II earlier this month.

Khan has also likened Trump to "20th century fascists" for his divisive views on immigration, with Trump hitting back with social media messages about his "terrible job" as Mayor of London.

The US President's latest intervention on Twitter follows in the same vein, demanding that Khan should be replaced.

"London needs a new mayor ASAP. Khan is a disaster - will only get worse," he said, while retweeting a message that highlighted two stabbings and a shooting in London in the last few days.

"He is a national disgrace who is destroying the city of London," a follow-up message



read.

Khan's spokesperson said the London Mayor's thoughts were with the victims' families and he "is not going to waste his time responding to this sort of tweet".

"Violent crime has no place in our city, and there's no higher priority for me than Londoners' safety," Khan said on Twitter.

His online feud with Trump dates back to just after Trump took office in 2016, when the Mayor called the President's proposed Muslim immigration ban "divisive and outrageous".

After the Islamic State (ISIS) claimed the 2017 London Bridge terrorist attack, Trump said Khan was guilty of "pathetic" behaviour and in July last year he claimed the Mayor had "done a very bad job on terrorism".

Opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn attacked the US President's latest outburst, saying it was "absolutely awful to see Donald Trump

using the tragedy of people being murdered to attack the Mayor".

He tweeted: "Sadiq Khan is rightly supporting the police to do their job while Katie Hopkins spreads hateful and divisive rhetoric. They seek to divide at a time we need to come together".

The Metropolitan Police said 14 people -- including several boys and a girl -- have been arrested in connection with the incidents of stabbing and shooting in Wandsworth, Plumstead and Clapham areas of London.

An 18-year-old man was stabbed to death on Friday afternoon in Wandsworth, south London, then minutes later a 19-year-old man was shot dead in Plumstead, south-east London.

A man in his 30s then died after he was stabbed in Tower Hamlets, east London, on Saturday afternoon. In the early hours of Saturday, two men were stabbed in Clapham and another was stabbed in Brixton.

"Sadiq is focusing on supporting London's communities and over-stretched emergency services. He has been in regular touch with senior Met police officers last night and throughout the day," said a spokesperson for the London

G20 agrees marine plastic pollution deal

AFP ■ TOKYO

The Group of 20 major economies said they agreed a deal to reduce plastic waste that is choking the seas at a meeting in Japan on Sunday.

Under the agreement, G20 member countries committed to reducing plastic waste but gave little detail on how that would be done. They added that the steps would be voluntary and progress would be reported once a year, according to local media.

The Japanese government hopes to hold the first meeting in November, said newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun. "It is great that we were able to make rules for all, including emerging and developing countries," Japanese environment minister Yoshiaki Harada said after the two-day meeting of the G20 environment and energy ministers' meeting.

Plastic pollution has become a global concern, particularly after bans imposed by China and other countries on the import of plastic waste from overseas.

Many countries, including Japan, have seen their waste pile up as a consequence. Microplastics -- tiny pieces of

degraded waste -- have attracted particular attention.

They absorb harmful chemicals, accumulating inside fish, birds and other animals, and are difficult to collect once in the water.

The framework agreed at the meeting in the central mountain resort of Karuizawa would be the first to reduce plastic pollution in the ocean involving not only rich nations but emerging economies as well. The deal would be "the first step" to tackling plastic waste, Hiroaki Odachi of Greenpeace Japan said in a statement.

"However, it is insufficient to rely on countries' voluntary actions" to resolve the crisis, he said. Only an estimated nine percent of plastics ever produced are recycled and campaigners say the only long-term solution to the plastic waste crisis is for companies to make less and consumers to use less.

"G20 countries should clearly announce that they will prioritise reducing generation of single-use plastics" along with recycling and reusing materials, Odachi said.

"Legally binding international rules with clear timelines and goals" are needed, similar to those in the Paris Agreement

MBS says Kingdom isn't seeking war in region

AP ■ DUBAI

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in remarks published Sunday that the kingdom is not seeking war in the region, but warned it will not hesitate to confront threats to its security.

His comments came just days after the US blamed Iran for suspected attacks on two oil tankers near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, denouncing what it called a campaign of "escalating tensions" in a region crucial to global energy supplies.

The US alleges Iran used limpet mines to target the tankers, pointing to black-and-white footage it captured that American officials describe as Iranian Revolutionary Guard troops removing an unexploded mine from the Kokuka Courageous.

Iran has rejected the US claim that it was responsible for Thursday's attacks, saying it stands ready to play an active and constructive role in ensuring the security of strategic maritime passages.

Iran has also been accused of being behind the May 12 attacks on four oil tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates. Two of those vessels belonged to Saudi Arabia.

In his first public comments since the start of these incidents, the powerful Saudi prince, who is also defence



minister and oversees all major levers of power in the country, said the attacks "confirm the importance of our demands of the international community to take a decisive stance" against Iran's behaviour.

"The kingdom does not seek war in the region, but we will not hesitate to deal with any threat to our people, sovereignty and vital interests," he said in an interview with the Arabic newspaper, Asharq al-Awsat.

He accused rival Iran of using militias to destabilise the region.

He also touted US-Saudi relations as "essential to achieving regional security and stability".

"The problem is in Tehran and not anywhere else," he said.

"Iran is always the party that's escalating in the region, carrying out terrorist attacks and criminal attacks either directly or through its militias."

B'desh prison breakfast menu gets makeover after 200 years

AFP ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh authorities have upgraded a 200-year-old colonial-era breakfast menu in all its prisons, an official said Sunday, as part of a reform of the country's penal system.

Bazlur Rashid, deputy head of the Prison Directorate, said the nation's more than 81,000 convicts would from Sunday receive an improved breakfast, replacing the bread and molasses that has been on the menu since being introduced by British colonial rulers in the 18th century.

The new diet will contain bread, vegetables, sweets and khichdi -- a spiced rice cooked with lentils -- Rashid said.

Previously prisoners were given just 116 grams (four ounces) of bread and 14.5 grams (half an ounce) of molasses, he said.

Bangladesh's 60 prisons, built to house 35,000 inmates, are notoriously overcrowded and frequently draw criticism from rights organisations.

Inmates also often complain about the quality and quantity of food served in the jails.

Rashid said the diet change is part of a series of reforms to "help prisoners get motivated and rehabilitated".

"We are gradually trying to reform... So the convicts can adapt themselves during their stay in the facilities," he said.

'Good gifts': Putin presents Xi with birthday ice cream

AFP ■ DUSHANBE (TAJIKISTAN)

Russian President Vladimir Putin presented his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping with a giant box of ice cream for his 66th birthday before a summit in Tajikistan on Saturday, the Kremlin said, in a sign of the pair's warm ties.

"Happy birthday, my best wishes... I am delighted to have a friend like you," Putin told Xi, according to the Kremlin website.

The two leaders met in the Tajik capital Dushanbe for the fifth summit of the Conference

on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which brought together delegations from 27 countries including Iran and Qatar.

Xi last week made a three-day visit to Russia to visit Putin, whom he described as his "best friend", as the two countries seek to bolster ties amid shared tensions with the US.

"We came with good gifts," Putin said on Saturday before presenting a huge box full of Russian ice cream as temperatures in Dushanbe sweltered above 30C degrees (86 Fahrenheit).

Corruption tainted Guatemala set to elect new President

Guatemala City: Corruption-weary Guatemalans are set to elect a new president Sunday after a tumultuous campaign that saw two leading candidates barred from taking part and the top electoral crimes prosecutor forced to flee the country, fearing for his life.

Gang violence, poverty and streams of US-bound migrants have dominated campaigning in Central America's most populous country, where a crowded field of 19 candidates is vying to succeed outgoing president Jimmy Morales.

The country's top anti-corruption campaigner, former attorney general Thelma Aldana, is not among them.

She was expected to poll strongly, but was barred from running last month over allegations of irregularities dating from when she was a barnstorming public prosecutor.

Sandra Torres, a 63-year-old businesswoman and former First Lady, heads into the election as favourite, having built a clear opinion poll lead over second placed Alejandro Giammattei, also 63.

Torres -- candidate for the center-left Unity of Hope (UNE) -- has over 22 per cent of voter preferences in the latest polls, while Giammattei, a doctor running for the conservative Vamos party, trails with just over 11 per cent. AFP

nacasta ENGLAND

WE'VE PLAYED THEM (B'DESH) QUITE A BIT IN THE PAST AND THEY'VE GOT THE BETTER OF US, BUT IT'S A DIFFERENT OCCASION AND THERE'S LOTS AT STAKE, SO WE'RE ALL UP FOR IT — JASON HOLDER

Sailors of the same boat

B'desh face West Indies in order to keep semi-final hopes alive

UPNEXT

LIVE ON
3:00 pm IST

England in Cardiff and it was too much of an ask for the batsmen who ended at 280. West Indies, on the other hand, need to change their approach in batting. Most of their batsmen seem to be in T20 mode while playing 50-over cricket. "Our batters needed to take more ownership and form a few more partnerships. We needed to dig in deep and need to correct it. It has happened twice in two games now. We misread the wicket in terms of pace and didn't get the short balls high enough. Were a bit erratic as well," Holder had said after the loss to England on Friday.

England in Cardiff and it was too much of an ask for the batsmen who ended at 280. West Indies, on the other hand, need to change their approach in batting. Most of their batsmen seem to be in T20 mode while playing 50-over cricket. "Our batters needed to take more ownership and form a few more partnerships. We needed to dig in deep and need to correct it. It has happened twice in two games now. We misread the wicket in terms of pace and didn't get the short balls high enough. Were a bit erratic as well," Holder had said after the loss to England on Friday.

SQUADS
West Indies: Jason Holder, Fabian Allen, Carlos Brathwaite, Darren Bravo, Sheldon Cottrell, Shannon Gabriel, Chris Gayle, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope, Evin Lewis, Ashley Nurse, Nicholas Pooran, Kemar Roach, Andre Russell, Oshane Thomas.
Bangladesh: Mashrafe Mortaza (c), Abu Jayed, Liton Das, Mahmudullah, Mehidy Hasan, Mohammad Mithun, Mohammad Saifuddin, Mosaddek Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain, Sabbir Rahman, Shakib Al Hasan, Soumya Sarkar, Tamim Iqbal.

XFACTOR

- Mustafizur Rahman's pace
- Chris Gayle-Evin Lewis opening partnership
- Windies' pace quartet of Cotrell, Holder, Russell, Thomas
- Shakib Al Hasan's all-round performance

HEAD TO HEAD					
	Played	WI	Bdesh	Tied	N/R
Matches	37	21	14	-	2
Day matches	20	8	10	-	2
In World Cup	4	3	-	-	1
Last 5 matches	5	1	4	-	-

HIGHEST TOTALS					
West Indies	338-7 in 50 overs at Basseterre	25-08-2014			
Bangladesh	301-6 in 50 overs at Basseterre	28-07-2018			

PERFORMANCE IN WC						
Team	P	W	L	T	N/R	Success%
West Indies	35	12	22	-	1	35.29
Bangladesh	75	42	31	-	2	57.33

FAISEL FEATURES



Andre Russell trains during West Indies team practice session. Windies/Twitter

captainspeak
JASON HOLDER, WI

Any updates on Russell?
We're keeping it cuttled. I saw him on Saturday. Saw him on Sunday morning as well, and he's progressing quite nicely yes, you know. We'll have a final answer with him tomorrow morning.

Also Evin Lewis get struck in the nets. Is he okay?
Yeah, quite a few people got struck in the nets, including myself, but he's fine. Just a little bruise, should be fine.

The matches between these two teams are dominated by Bangladesh. Do you feel Bangladesh will be more confident?
If you want to put us in the underdog category, fair enough. We've played them quite a bit in the recent past and they've gotten the better of us in recent past. Like I said, different stage, lots at stake for this game. We're all up for it.

You've had a bit of a tough run at the start of the tournament compared to a team like NZ. But do you see a good run here?
I don't feel any of the teams are easy, but we may — at this present time with five games left, I think the ball's in our court, we've just got to be consistent. We've got to play some consistent cricket going into the back half of this tournament. It's quite a good stage to pick up momentum as well. And we're full confidence that we can do it. We've just got to take it game by game. Tomorrow is a challenge against Bangladesh, and we just want to get over Bangladesh and move forward.

Bangladesh rely heavily on the spinners. Do you expect them to come with the same attack even in this small ground?
Yeah, probably. I don't want to sit here and try to perceive what they would come with, but we're open to anything. Traditionally they rely heavily on their spinners. We don't expect them to move too far away from it. It's a smallish ground. I saw the wicket today as well. There's quite a bit of grass on it. We'll see how it plays tomorrow. But we know what we're expecting in a sense from Bangladesh. And I can't see them being much different from that.

Only recent times, Bangladesh won seven games out of nine. Do you think today is going to play this game with favourite attack?
I guess if you win seven over the last nine, as you said, probably, yes. Yeah, it's the game of cricket. We all saw — we've all been seeing how this World Cup has panned out. There are quite a few close games. And there's one or two upsets as well, too. So cricket is played on a day, and we're looking to play some good cricket tomorrow.

Concerned with the form of the batsmen top of the order, Evin Lewis and Darren Bravo?
Everybody is hungry for runs. I guess a few guys haven't gone on and capitalised on a few starts that they have got on. Some guys haven't really got on any starts. It's another opportunity for them to come to the priority, to get some confidence going into the back half of this tournament. And, yeah, starting today against Bangladesh.

How good a start for Pooran so far?
Pooran has been really good. I'm really pleased with his progress so far. He's shown a lot of maturity, which is really good for a young player. And he's got quite a few shots in his locker. And it's really good to see from a young talent. So I just want him to continue in the way he's been going at this, I guess, for him, making a mark for himself extremely hard. He would like a hundred. So let's hope tomorrow he steps up tomorrow and carries it deeper.

SHAI HOPE (WEST INDIES)

The wicket-keeper batsman averages a staggering 94.57 against Bangladesh, almost twice his overall career average of 49.72. West Indies, who lost to Australia and England due to lack of partnerships with the bat, need someone to play a long innings — who better than Shai Hope to do that?

MUSHFIQUR RAHIM (BANGLADESH)

A key middle-order batsman, Mushfiqur, along with Shakib, laid the foundation for Bangladesh's win over South Africa with a steady innings of 78. Mushfiqur, who has scored five half-centuries in his last ten outings against West Indies, averaging 63.71 in that time, will aim for a big innings on Monday.

UNDER THE WEATHER

A fine start to the day is expected, with early sunshine, followed by partly cloudy intervals thereafter. With the sun expected to stay out for the most part, and the boundaries at Taunton featuring short dimensions, a high-scoring game could be on the cards.



Nicholas Pooran returns to pavilion after getting dismissed. AP

All weather man

TAUNTON

Nicholas Pooran is keen to shed his T20 specialist tag, insisting his mature knock against England proves he can become West Indies' man for all formats.

The 23-year-old has played in 102 T20 matches in his career, compared with just three first-class games with Trinidad and Tobago — the last of which came in December 2014.

He only made his international ODI debut in February against England and was picked for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019 after a single 50-over appearance for his country.

But on a tricky Southampton pitch, he made a composed 63 against the hosts, putting on 89 for the fourth wicket with Shimron Hetmyer to help steer West Indies away from a perilous 55-3.

Both eventually fell cheaply and West Indies subsequently collapsed to 212 all out en route to an eight-wicket defeat.

But Pooran's innings was nonetheless impressive and the Trinidad left-hander believes he can thrive at ODI and, ultimately, Test level.

"My job is to play cricket, it does not matter which format. I'm not rushing anything, I'm just trying to get better and better each day. I back myself to do that," he said.

"My dream was always to play

cricket professionally and represent the West Indies at a World Cup someday. It feels wonderful.

"I just learned a lot from T20 cricket and now my chance is to play ODI cricket. It's different, you have to bat longer and so it is up to me now to adjust.

"I want to get better and better and not make the same mistakes over and over again. You can't judge T20 cricket and every game brings a different situation."

West Indies need Pooran to deliver more runs if they are to stand a chance of reaching the semi-finals.

Their defeat to England leaves them with just one win from four matches and sixth in the group standings ahead of Monday's game with an equally under pressure Bangladesh.

"We will come out hard and we need a victory," he added.

"We made simple mistakes [against England] but we need to stick to our game plan. We lost some wickets cheaply but I don't think we have given our hand away yet.

"They were soft dismissals. In every game, we have dominated periods but we now just need to dominate for a lot longer.

"We need to improve in the middle and dominate the big periods for us."

Courtesy — © ICC Business Corporation FZ LLC 2019

Tigers can tame pace attack

TAUNTON

West Indies' explosive batting line-up may be feared around the world, but Mashrafe Mortaza believes Bangladesh's Tigers can tame them again at Taunton.

Needing victory in Monday's clash to keep pace with the leading pack, Bangladesh boast an enviable record against Jason Holder's side over the past few years, triumphing in ODI series home and away as well as the recent Tri-Nation series.

Key to that successful match-up has been the potent use of spin, and with Mehedy Hasan and Shakib Al Hasan both in wicket-taking form so far this World Cup, skipper Mashrafe is confident his side have a viable plan of attack — even on the notoriously short boundaries of the County Ground.

"It's a very important match for us, especially losing few points in the last three matches," he said.

"We've been quite successful against them with some off-spinners. And if you look at recently, Mehedy bowled really well against them. And also he's bowling so well in this World Cup as well, even the right-handed.

"Obviously the top five West Indies batsmen are left handers, and Mehedy bowled against them really well too.



Mashrafe Mortaza trains during team's practice session ahead of Windies clash. AP

ways.

"So we take it positively that, as we said, the matchup, I think our bowling has been fantastic against them last two, three series we played against them.

"We've got to back ourselves. But as we've been succeeding against them, I think we have to rethink about it. And whatever the ground, whatever the wicket, we have to back our own strength. That's what I feel."

Approaching the midway point in the competition, the Tigers have been left to rue several near-misses, including the narrow defeat to New Zealand at the Oval.

Further ground was lost in the rained-off clash with Sri Lanka last week, but Mashrafe, a World Cup stalwart, insists belief remains high in the camp regarding qualification for the semi-finals.

"We lost against New Zealand, that might cost a little bit," he concluded. "But we have still five matches left, as I said, that if we can take one by one at a time, and if we really perform well, you have to do it.

"It's been ups and downs. But we can make the difference.

"We have to believe in it, which I believe that my team is believing."

Courtesy — © ICC Business Corporation FZ LLC 2019

"So it's a positive sign. And the same thing I'll say that it's a small ground, too, so we have to think about it as well. West Indies have so much power to do it."

With T20 specialist Chris Gayle at the top of the order and Andre Russell providing an x-factor in the middle, West Indies will hope to take advantage of the specific conditions they are likely to face at the County Ground on Monday. And while facing players of their quality is a daunting task for any team, Mashrafe, 35, feels the Men in Maroon's reputation as big-hitters remains something of a double-edged sword.

He added: "They come hard. And the kind of cricket they play, they're always positive and play shots in the middle, which is good, which can be bad, both



सभी किसान चालू खाते में लेन-देन रखें जारी

अपने हर वचन की पक्की सरकार

मध्यप्रदेश सरकार

जीरो प्रतिशत ब्याज और अन्य योजनाओं का लेते रहें लाभ

कमल नाथ, मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

Not over yet Captain call

It's going to be an uphill struggle for Sri Lanka to reach the semi-finals following the 87-run defeat to Australia but it is still possible.

It was a disappointing defeat because they had a great opportunity to get two points but let it slip away.

The opening batsmen, Dimuth Karunaratne and Kusal Perera, set up the chase of 335 really well with a brilliant century partnership at 6.5 runs per over.

We just needed two good partnerships to get through the two later spells from Mitchell Starc because there wasn't much momentum for the other Australian bowlers.

But then there was a complete collapse in the middle order, which is exactly what happened in the warm-up game against South Africa, then the New Zealand loss and even the win against Afghanistan.

It's a bit of a concern and when Glenn Maxwell bowled, our left-handers got stuck in the situation where he's their fifth bowler but they were unable to put him under pressure.

If they could have got after Maxwell, then Australia didn't really have many other options to turn to but it's a worrying pattern where the middle order are consistently unable to control the tough situations.

They're experienced players as well, so it's disappointing. They're trying different ways to get out of it but for me, the only way is the old-fashioned way — grind it out.

Sri Lanka had opportunity to do that because of the brilliant start by the openers — two good 50-run partnerships would've put Australia under tremendous pressure and enabled us to control the chase quite easily.

The fast bowlers bowled really well but both teams tactically probably didn't get right by not playing a main spinner - which you need to control the middle overs.



Our quicks bowled really well with control but couldn't pick up wickets. The only way to limit good batting teams is by picking up wickets in middle overs, so you can keep them to 270 or 280.

If Sri Lanka had a genuine spinner in the side it could've made a difference and I thought they should've gone with Jeevan Mendis because he can bat as well.

Now they need at least two more wins to be in consideration for the top four and it's four tough teams left —

England, South Africa, West Indies and India.

It's England next and for that match, you have to take a leaf out of Pakistan's book — they played their natural game against England and deservedly won.

They attacked the England spinners, especially in the middle overs, and I thought Mohammad Hafeez batted brilliantly in that period.

Sri Lanka have to take those chances, put those England bowlers under pressure and kick on when they can.

What you've seen to win games at this World Cup is that either posting a score above 300 or restricting the opposition to less than 270.

It's all about how Sri Lanka can achieve that. Pakistan had the bowling attack, had the variation and pace to challenge the England batting lineup.

I don't think Sri Lanka have the pace but the variety is there and I think they have to use a spinner in their lineup to create those opportunities in the middle overs.

Without the middle order firing, it will be tough to post that total above the 300-mark but they are definitely capable of beating England, although it won't be easy.

Courtesy: © ICC Business Corporation FZ LLC 2019

England to rejig, with Test captain Joe Root moving up the order and scoring a century as an opener as the host nation cruised to victory by eight wickets.

It is that flexibility and the quality of the players not currently in the starting 11 including Tom Curran, Moeen Ali and James Vince that gives Buttler confidence.

"Yes they are absolutely (ready to step in). We've talked about how hard the 15 was to pick and getting in the 11 is a really competitive squad so those guys on the sidelines are fantastic players who are all ready to play."

Buttler, 28, said multi-tasking by performing wicketkeeping duties and captaining the side would not be a problem.

"If it comes to it and I have to captain it's obviously a huge honour every time you have to do it. From behind the stumps you have a fantastic view of what's going on but it's just down to yourself to manage those two jobs and separate them as much as you can," he said.

"One of the strengths of the group is that there are lots of guys in the team willing to offer opinions and advice so there are plenty of guys to talk to but Joe Root would be the obvious one."



By MAHELA JAYAWARDENE Former Sri Lanka captain

OTHER SPORTS

Colombia stun Messi's Argentina

Roger Martinez and Duvan Zapata put a dent in Lionel Messi's hopes of finally landing a major international title as Colombia began their Copa America campaign with a 2-0 win over Argentina on Saturday.

Martinez struck a stunning opener on 72 minutes and fellow substitute Zapata sealed the win three minutes from the end after Argentina had dominated the second half of this Group B encounter in Salvador.

On paper at least, this promised a thrilling attacking spectacle between two star-studded forward lines.

For Argentina, five-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi was joined by Sergio Aguero and Angel Di Maria, while Colombia could count on James Rodriguez, Radamel Falcao and Juan Cuadrado.

But it was two players who began the game on the bench that took the chance to steal the headlines.

It was a fast and furious opening that proved too helter skelter to produce any genuine chances.

Colombia, playing in a fluorescent blue and orange kit, were the first to really threaten on 16 minutes when Falcao laid off a Cuadrado cross for Martinez, whose shot was deflected behind.

Argentina gifted Colombia an opening with time running down in the first period as goalkeeper Franco Armani and center-back Nicolas Otamendi played themselves into trouble



James Rodriguez, 2nd right, and Lionel Messi, 2nd left, at the end of the Copa America Group B match

deep inside the area.

Falcao robbed Otamendi and tried to tee up James but Guido Rodriguez got back to nick the ball off the talented playmaker's toes.

Moments later, Martinez wriggled free down the right and picked out Falcao but his shot was blocked.

Colombia had been much the better side, dominating possession and chances, with a subdued Messi, as so often for his country, a peripheral figure in a goalless first half.

DECISIVE SUBSTITUTES

Argentina created their best chance so far in the opening minute of the second period as Leandro Paredes let fly from 30 yards, sending the ball whistling past the post with goalkeeper David Ospina scrambling to his right. Messi briefly came to life, nutmegging Davinson Sanchez to burst into the area, but the tireless Wilmar Barrios got back to crowd out the Barcelona superstar.

Argentina had their tails up and Paredes thrashed in a shot from an angle that Ospina did well to punch clear.

What had been a petulant affair threatened to boil over when Cuadrado was booked for a foul on Messi that sparked a brief melee of pushing and shoving.

Colombia were in danger of losing their heads and Cuadrado was quickly withdrawn by Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz.

Argentina were by now well on top and Ospina made a smart low save to deny Otamendi's header, before Messi headed the rebound wide.

But against the run of play, Colombia struck a hammer blow to Argentina and Messi's Copa hopes.

James spread a delightful crossfield ball out to Martinez, who cut in from the left wing and thumped a stunning right footed shot into the far corner.

And four minutes from time, Martinez found overlapping full-back Jefferson Lerma, another substitute, and his left-wing cross was stab home from close in by Zapata.

Argentina created several chances but most fell harmlessly into Ospina's arms.

Gurjit scores brace in India's 5-0 win

Gurjit scored a brace to lead the Indian women's hockey team to a dominant 5-0 victory over Poland at the FIH Women's Series Finals Hiroshima 2019 here on Sunday.

Right from the outset, India were on the attack, their left side causing problems for Poland's defence with regularity. Poland enjoyed the lion's share of possession, but India were causing more problems with their speed in attack. The best chance to open the scoring fell for India in the final seconds of the quarter.

India's high pressing strategy put Poland's defenders constantly under stress as they looked to play the ball out quickly, often inaccurately and turned over possession in crucial areas with regularity.

Put under pressure by Sunita Lakra, Poland faltered in playing out from the back, and the ball fell to Navjot Kaur on the left. Her cross was inch perfect, directed towards the far post, where Jyoti deflected it in, giving India a deserved lead.

India won a flurry of PCs in the final five minutes of the quarter. From one of them, Vandana Katarjiya pounced on a loose ball — after Gurjit's drag flick had been saved by Gabara — to score India's second. From another, Gurjit slotted the ball into the bottom left corner, to give India a three goal lead as they went into halftime. India won a stroke in the 35th minute, and Gurjit duly dispatched it to score her second and India's fourth of the game. It was with that lead the team went into the final break.

The final quarter was an ill-tempered affair, both teams reduced to ten at times,



Indian Eves celebrate after scoring fifth goal against Poland

by players being carded. India held firm control over the game though, their regular circle penetrations enough to keep Poland in defensive mode.

India's fifth came via brilliant stick work from Navneet Kaur in the 56th minute. Navneet picked up the ball with her back to goal at the top of the Poland circle, turned away from her marker with ease and unleashed a shot into the bottom corner. Gabara got a hand to it, but the power of the shot was too much for her to save. It was the final bit of action as India got home comfortable 5-0 victors.

Pogba hints Utd exit



Paul Pogba has given a strong indication that he wants to leave Manchester United this summer to seek a "new challenge" somewhere else.

"For me I have been for three years in Manchester and have been doing great; some good moments and some bad moments, like everybody. Like everywhere else," Pogba was quoted as telling reporters in Tokyo by The Guardian on Sunday.

"I think for me it could be a good time to have a new challenge somewhere else. I am thinking of this: to have a new challenge somewhere else."

Despite scoring 16 goals this season, half of which came from the penalty spot, Pogba was often criticised for his contribution under both Jose Mourinho and Solskjaer as United limped to a sixth-placed finish in the Premier League.

Should Pogba move on, United are likely to seek a higher fee than they spent on the 26-year-old in 2016.

Federer fresh for 10th Halle title tilt

Roger Federer says staying wide awake will be the key to his grass court season with his focus on claiming a record tenth Halle title this week.

The 37-year-old Swiss was given the run around by Rafael Nadal last time out on the Roland Garros clay, but says he'll be back in his element on his preferred lawns at the freshly renamed Noventi Open. "It was good to reach the semi-final of a Grand Slam tournament again, and in my first appearance in Paris for four years," said Federer, who last won the title in Paris in 2009.

"I feel fresh, rested and ready for the grass season now," said Federer, who will target a ninth Wimbledon win in July.



Roger Federer was presented a memento upon his arrival at Halle Westfalen

"The surface suits me: I like the intuitive, aggressive game," Federer told a press conference ahead of Halle.

"The matches on grass are often decided in a few rallies. You have to stay awake and concentrated." Federer added: "Winning the tournament always has to be my goal in

Halle. "I love to play at this venue, so I am going into the tournament with a very good feeling," said Federer, who first appeared in Halle in 2000 and has gone on to play the tournament 15 times.

"It would be just amazing to win for a 10th time," said Federer, who was beaten by Croatia's Borna Coric in the final last year.

Federer gets his campaign under way against a tricky opponent in John Millman, who beat him at Flushing Meadows last season.

"John is always a tough opponent who doesn't give anything away. He always gives 100 percent on court and it will be a real test, but that is perhaps exactly what I need."

vivacity

AKSHAY IS
AGAINST
NEGATIVITY
-P 14



WHAT MAKES RESTAURANTS GREAT AND STAND OUT

The goal of a restaurant is to attract patrons and to provide such an enjoyable experience that those patrons become repeat customers. Team Viva tells you more



Dining out presents a great opportunity to unwind, relax and enjoy a delicious meal in a great atmosphere. While this is what most people are looking for when they decide to dine out, it is not always what they get. There are some very good restaurants, but unfortunately, they are few and far between. People will always make a return visit when they enjoy the dining experience and it is to everyone's advantage for the restaurant to up its game!

The goal of a restaurant is to attract patrons and to provide such an enjoyable experience that those patrons become repeat customers. Word of mouth is essential to the survival of a restaurant, and in this era, negative online reviews can have a significant impact on a restaurant's success. The most heralded restaurants share several qualities in common, which help ensure their continued growth.

No restaurant can survive without offering quality food, which uses the freshest ingredients to give patrons a satisfying meal. Some restaurant owners, however, don't understand that patrons judge their food based on what was promised. For example, the promise of a good family restaurant is that it offers comfort food that reminds people of the favorite meals their mothers cooked when they were kids. So, quality food for a family restaurant consists of entries such as hamburgers, roast beef, and hearty, wholesome pasta. That would differ from standard cuisine at a five-star restaurant,

where patrons desire food in which the unique offerings and the richness of flavor is far beyond that of cuisine of a family restaurant.

The patron experience at a restaurant should begin the moment that person walks through the door, and it shouldn't end until that person walks out. Successful restaurants will ensure that a host or server greets diners as soon as they enter and then welcomes patrons to the establishment. Servers must be friendly but professional, and should be able to discuss each item on the menu with confidence. They should keep patrons informed about the wait time for food, and they must fulfill each request in as short a time as possible.

Most importantly, the service must match the spirit of the restaurant. For example, in a family restaurant, the servers should make patrons feel relaxed and comfortable as if they were hanging out at a friend's house. In a five-star restaurant, servers should make patrons feel pampered and special, as if they're taking part in an exclusive, worthwhile experience. When service is good, patrons feel as if they are dining in a restaurant that appreciates their business.

A clean restaurant communicates the health standards that a restaurant owner finds important. Cleanliness is also a significant contributor to the overall ambiance of a restaurant. When patrons enter a restaurant, they make instant judgments, based on the interior appearance of the establishment. If tables are not

properly cleaned, or if the floors are strewn with food and debris, that creates an unfavorable impression that's difficult to overcome.

One of the biggest challenges in a restaurant is to maintain immaculate restrooms. Clean, fresh-smelling bathrooms reflect a restaurant's standards, and can help cement goodwill in a patron's mind. A good restaurant always looks clean, orderly, and structured. This creates a positive mood that sets the tone for the patron's dining experience.

If your restaurant provides good food and service but is too similar to other restaurants, customers may overlook your restaurant when deciding where to dine. A good restaurant should have one or more unique features that stand out in a customer's mind and give it a competitive advantage over others. For example, your restaurant may be the only restaurant in town that makes its ingredients fresh daily or it may have an amazing view of the city that none of your competitors have.

A good restaurant owner manages the business aspect of the restaurant properly, which increases the chances that it can provide quality food and service without interruption. Running your restaurant properly can also help boost your small business's profits. You must manage your restaurant's finances, keep good records and stay current with regulatory requirements, such as taxes and health inspections. For example, consistently paying your vendors on time reduces the risk of



Most importantly, the service must match the spirit of the restaurant. For example, in a family restaurant, the servers should make patrons feel relaxed and comfortable as if they were hanging out at a friend's house

running out of items on your menu.

If lacking in passion, successful management is impossible and success will remain out of reach. Restaurant managers must be passionate about what they do, and determined to succeed. Passion makes things happen. Without it, the whole establishment will collapse.

Most people are looking for something different when they decide to dine out. A great restaurant promises to offer something that is not available elsewhere. Being different is a good thing and it is a quality to look out for when choosing a restaurant. If providing good food and service is all that a restaurant can offer, that is nothing new. If customers can get the same experience from dozens of other restaurants, they are bound to overlook the restaurant. A great restaurant will have one or several unique features that will stand out in the patrons mind and this creates a competitive advantage.

The price is an important consider-

ation when people are dining out and it takes into account different characteristics of the restaurant. People pay for the overall experience and not just the food and that is why some restaurants charge much more than others. Restaurant customers expect the prices to reflect the type of food, level of service and the overall atmosphere of the restaurant. People will not complain when they feel that they are getting value for their money and a reputable establishment will always strive to set a balanced price. Prices that seem unreasonable will upset customers, discouraging repeat business while unreasonably low prices tend to raise suspicion about the food and service quality.

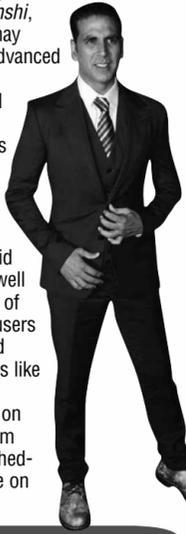
There are many restaurants in every region but it is not unusual to find that while some are always filled to capacity, others remain empty night after night. Most people look for popular restaurants because they know that all those people cannot be wrong.

Trend Slazer

Akshay against negative trends

Actor AKSHAY KUMAR has urged his fans not to indulge in any negative practice on social media regarding his upcoming film *Sooryavanshi*.

A few days ago, the release date of Rohit Shetty directorial *Sooryavanshi*, featuring Akshay Kumar, was advanced to March 27, 2020, to avoid clash with Salman Khan's *Inshallah* at the box office. The change in the release date did not go down well with a section of social media users as they started using hashtags like "boycott *Sooryavanshi*" on Twitter. The film was earlier scheduled to release on Eid 2020.



'I never thought I would be doing the things I have gone on to accomplish. So every milestone and every step of the journey so far feels like a dream. I have worked very hard for everything but to find myself around people I look up to and admire that too at an India-Pakistan match at the World Cup is unbelievable.'

—Divine



Actress YAMI GAUTAM's *Uri: The Surgical Strikes*, after its massive success, is now set to release in Telugu. The actress said, "I am very happy and glad my film *Uri* is getting released in Telugu, its been a while I haven't worked in Kannada, Tamil and Telugu languages. I am very happy and its always good when a good film reaches a wider audience. The Telugu and Kannada audience have always acknowledged good cinema. Good films like *Uri* will do well everywhere. For me there is a special connect all the more because I started off my career with films down there, so I am very happy to back with a good film."



Romeo & Juliet's Zeffirelli dead



Italian director FRANCO ZEFFIRELLI, who delighted audience around the world with his productions, most famously captured in his cinematic *Romeo and Juliet*, has died in Rome at 96. Throughout his career, Zeffirelli took risks and prided himself on knowing the tastes of modern movie-goers. He was one of the few Italian directors close to the Vatican and the church turned to Zeffirelli's theatrical touch for live telecasts of the 1978 papal installation and the 1983 Holy Year opening ceremonies in St Peter's Basilica.

Her hair is a smoky grey, the face, a little wrinkled and the eyes, blood-flecked. At 73, Sharda Gambhir, a resident of Malviya Nagar, needed care, love and attention from her loved ones but life had something else in store for her. "Can you even imagine your daughter harassing you because she wants maximum rights in your property? Or making false allegations and calling the police?" she asks. She adds that it was only after several rounds at the courts spread over the months that she managed to get a judgement in her favour. Gambhir is one of the elderly people who featured in a report that was released by HelpAge India, a charity working with and for disadvantaged elderly for nearly four decades. The nationwide report called 'Elder Abuse in India: Role of Family in Caregiving: Challenges & Responses' was released on the eve of the United Nations' World Abuse Awareness Day over the weekend. The organisation also launched a helpline as an outreach for seniors. The report not only has surveys but also contains an in-depth analysis with the objective of studying the responsibility of care of older persons in the family on the sandwich generation. It also lays stress on the coping mechanism adopted by caregivers.

The report, where 4,000 people spread across 20 cities were surveyed, has some startling revelations which run quite contrary to our belief that India has a value system that is family-centric. Anupama Datta, head, Policy, Research and Advocacy, of the organisation has given an analytical insight into the report. She makes a notable point showing India as a hypocritical country, where on one side we inculcate the philosophy of *Vasudev Kutumbakam*, while on the other, elders are considered a burden to be treated shoddily. She focuses on the three perspectives, which held centre stage in the research — physical, financial and emotional aspects.

ATTITUDES IN FAMILY

A look at the figures reveals that we are certainly moving in a direction where family as a primary care-giving unit is gradually phasing out with 25.7 per cent of the care-givers feeling fatigue and frustration, which in turn results in aggressive behaviour towards their elderly relatives. It is an ossified belief that family is the care-giver, which often compels the elders tolerate aggressive behaviour. There is also a sizeable number, 35 per cent to be precise, of care-givers, who 'never' felt happy looking after the elderly. Twenty-nine per cent of family members feel the "burden of caregiving an elder" is moderate to severe and 15 per cent consider care-giving a serious burden. It is also important to note that 82 per cent adopt certain strategies to cope with the burden while 53 per cent express anger and frustration by accepting their feelings.

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

While the responsibility of care-giv-

Old not gold but grey

A survey conducted across 20 Indian cities reveals that care-giving for elderly is increasingly being looked upon as a burden. By SAKSHI SHARMA



ing primarily lies with women, especially daughters-in-law (68 per cent), that of the financial is attributed to sons (57 per cent). However, there's another figure which is stark where 70 per cent women are happy caring for the elderly while 30 per cent want to send them to old age homes.

Since material pursuits rule, the changing attitudes might have to do with the fact that only 11 per cent of the elderly dependents contribute to the family resource pool. The fact that 42.5 per cent of care-givers always have to pay for the medicine bills, which keep on rising as sick senior citizens grow older, also complicates their mutual equations.

SURPRISE ASSISTANTS

However, considering that the aged

become more dependent, 32 per cent of the care-givers say they extend physical care to elderly for Activities of Daily Living (ADL) such as assistance in changing clothes, walking, eating and more. Interestingly, it is not the blood relatives but 68 per cent daughters-in-law who are providing physical care to Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) such as helping in using a telephone, shopping, preparing meals as against the sons (51 per cent). Moreover, the youngsters, too, chip in as grandchildren are sharing the burden of taking care of the elderly (higher in case of grandsons (41 per cent) as against granddaughters (38 per cent) in daily activities.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Loneliness on account of a loss of

spouse and also shrinking of the social circles mean that the elderly are in need of emotional support. Almost 70 per cent of them seek this prop from care-givers at a time of crisis. About 29 per cent always need emotional support when they suffer from lack of self confidence and experience same amount of stress. Despite dependence gradually becoming a part of life as a person ages, 30 per cent need emotional support when have fear of dependence.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

India does not have a long-term rehabilitation policy for its dispossessed senior citizens. The report highlights that for lack of an institutional or hospice option, 65 per cent of care-givers in the



family have to leave the elderly persons alone. For instance, while 15 per cent acknowledge that there are institutions that take care of the elderly for money, 85 per cent feel that the steep prices are a deterrent to quality of service. The government needs to build hospitals, where elders can go alone and also make a provision for adequate transport facilities.

WORKPLACE SUPPORT

Another area which demands change is the role of the employers of care-givers where the 78.1 per cent of the latter feel that there is no leeway. Sushila Arora, a member of the senior citizen council, points out that the importance of elders is getting decimated in households as there are round-the-clock maids on hire. "Children get more attached to them, so naturally they do not imbibe love, affection and traditions from us. Won't this create a behavioural havoc going forward?" Neelam, a resident of Green Park, complains that the senior citizen issues cannot be isolated but would have to be linked to the generation after it. It would also have to be rights-based. Her friend Sunita Kashyap says, "Children think we have some complaints and that is the reason we are asking them to come. They forget that we are just calling them over to enjoy each other's company and familial bonds."

A balance and rethink is essential as no sight could be more dreadful than of those droopy, dull eyes shedding tears. These hands are weak but their will is not. These legs are shaky but their steps are not. Old age is nothing but wisdom curved into a smile.

A sum of many parts

SUMEET VYAS has romanced Kareena Kapoor Khan, played goofy roles in web series and is now looking forward to portraying Ram Jethmalani in *The Verdict: State Vs Nanavati*.

By SIDDHIKA PRAJAPATI

He has no second thoughts while answering any of our questions. Nor does he hesitate or fumble. He is quick and smart while at the same time has an air of detachment around him despite the recognition that he has been getting for his work of late. Actor Summeet Vyas, who has been seen across different platforms — films, TV and web series — is devoid of any regret or guilt about his life or the kind of work that he has done.

It is the actor's confidence and self-conviction that has got him so far. Vyas is set to play an intense role in Ekta Kapoor's forthcoming web series, *The Verdict: State Vs Nanavati*, which is a switch from the goofy roles that he has been portraying recently. He took it up as it was a long time since he found a story which offered something different as he had been getting roles that were similar to TVF's *Permanent Roommates*. So when the show's director approached him to play lawyer Ram Jethmalani, he was surprised and overwhelmed at the same time.

Based on the famous case where KM Nanavati, a much-decorated naval officer shot his wife's paramour, it has had cinematic outings in the past too, including *Yeh Raaste Hai Pyar Ke* (1963), then *Achanak* (1973) and the most recent one being *Rustom*, starring Akshay Kumar. The case in 1959 put the spotlight on Jethmalani, who was the prosecution lawyer while the public sympathy lay with Nanavati who was supported to the hilt by fellow Parsi Russi Karanjia's tabloid, *Blitz*. Nanavati was eventually declared not guilty by a clearly partisan jury vote of eight to one. The larger outcome of the case was that the jury system in India was scrapped forever.

The actor says that there is a method to choosing any role. "I agreed to take up this character as I was bored of doing those 'nice guy' roles. I wanted to play someone with characteristics that do not define me in real life. Also, the story at its core is so powerful that any actor would want to take up the opportunity."



It is the first time that Vyas is being seen portraying a layered role unlike the linear characters that he has been seen in, be it in *Tripling* or *Official CEOgiri*. When it comes to preparing for any role, the actor doesn't believe in getting into its depth as this would affect his personal life. "I don't believe in living the character. Once the shot is done, I immerse myself in my life. It's very important for me and for my process of preparation to disconnect from the charac-

ter once I have wrapped up the role," he elaborates.

The *Veere Di Wedding* actor accepts that playing a real-life character, especially someone as dynamic as Jethmalani, was a huge responsibility. He read his biography and watched video tapes as a part of his homework for the role. He adds, "It's very important to me to know exactly where the character is coming from. I don't apply my personal logic into the character's behaviour or the

motives behind his action. I prefer to be natural without stressing too much."

Talking in-depth about the character, the *Parched* actor says, "For any actor, the complexities of each character are an interesting aspect to scrutinise. No one can completely understand someone as multi-dimensional as Jethmalani. Neither I nor anyone can term him unfair or even reasonable. Thus, it's an intriguing experience to play him on screen."

The actor is one of the reasons we're glued to YouTube. Back in 2016, he made us notice him with his substantial role in the film *Parched*, but it was his portrayal of the character Mikesh/Micky in TVF's *Permanent Roommates* that garnered eyeballs.

Meanwhile, Vyas does not believe in comparing the digital platform with the silver screen. "As an actor, I personally, don't find any difference. I will invest the same amount of efforts in the film which I would put in any other medium. The only difference is the platform through which the story is conveyed," shares the actor.

According to the TVF star, web shows can never replace cinema. He agrees that it has emerged with new opportunities and its market is expanding. But cinema has its own essence. "Cinema has a vast reach whereas web series are quite personal. One can enjoy the film with family but series offers one the freedom to experience it alone," he adds. Vyas has also written Yashraj's web series *Bang Baja Baarat*, which was again a huge success among youth.

Besides acting and writing, Vyas has directed plays. He joined theatre at 17 which helped him grow up as an actor. "The content and the people with whom I work with satisfy me while choosing any project. For me, the medium is inappropriate. Whether it's for stage, web or silver screen, I make sure that it has to improve me as a person. So, what I enjoy and what I don't is the process which makes me decide on taking up any project," Vyas says.

The show is expected to release by the end of this month.

WEBBED

MR IGLESIAS: SEASON 1



Starring Gabriel Iglesias, Sherri Shepherd and Jacob Vargas, the series revolves around a high school teacher (Gabriel Iglesias), who tries to make a difference in the lives of some smart but under-performing students at his alma mater.

The show will release on June 21 on Netflix.

ADAM DEVINE: BEST TIME OF OUR LIVES



Frenetic comic Adam Devine talks teen awkwardness, celebrity encounters, his "pitch perfect" audition and more in a special from his hometown of Omaha. The stand-up comedy show will release on June 18 on Netflix.

THE EDGE OF DEMOCRACY



A cautionary tale for these times of democracy in crisis — the personal and political fuse to explore one of the most dramatic periods in Brazilian history. With unprecedented access to Presidents Dilma Rousseff and Lula da Silva, we witness their rise and fall and the tragically polarized nation that remains.

The show releases on June 19 on Netflix.



naabaste ENGLAND



IT HAS BEEN A WHILE SINCE I OPENED THE BATTING IN A ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL. BIT OF NERVES, BUT HAPPY THAT I COULD GET THE TEAM OFF TO A START LIKE THAT
— KL RAHUL

CRICKETCRADLE

TODAY LIVE



West Indies vs B'desh
3:00 pm IST
VENUE: County Ground, Taunton

RANVIR IN HIS ELEMENTS



Bollywood entertainer and superstar Ranveer Singh dons a new avatar as a sports presenter. He is seen with cricketing legends Sunil Gavaskar, Virender Sehwag, Harbhajan Singh, Brian Lara and Rameez Raja

The only thing more brown than the pitch at Old Trafford was the attire of the as usual on-fire Bollywood star Ranveer Singh who is here to shoot for his upcoming film on the 1983 World Cup win and is playing the central character of then captain Kapil Dev. Though he was all about 1983, his clothing was outlandish by all standards and very 70s. A brown overcoat, over a very brown muffler, bigger than life brown goggles almost covering his face and Burberry check parallels to cover his legs, also brown.

A sartorial disaster if the fashion paparazzi were to be consulted but symbolic of something which could not be fathomed. His role for today was to play a sports presenter which he did with elan, interviewing great like Brian Lara, Sunil Gavaskar, Virender Sehwag and Ramiz Raja, and having fun doing that mid field.

Besides carrying his notes for what he had to say to the camera, Ranveer as usual was a caudron of adrenaline and energy, standing under the players' pavilion and egging on the Indian players to give it their all as Shikhar, Hardik, Karthik and others responded. Dhawan came down from the players' box to give him a hug after which he and Bhajji managed the cameras for some time. Deepika, he said, is not here "but nothing like an India-Pakistan match isn't it," he asked with a wink before hopping away to the inaccessible area of the stadium for some work, a whole lot of fan moments and some good engaging play.

MEDIA SNUB

The ICC is likely to impose sanction on Sri Lanka for not fulfilling their media duties after suffering a humiliating 87-run defeat to Australia. Disheartened by their loss to the defending champions here on Saturday, skipper Dimuth Karunaratne and other Sri Lankan players decided to skip the mandatory media conference and the 'mixed zone'. As a result, Sri Lanka, in all probability would face action from the International Cricket Council. "Yes. Sri Lanka have told us they don't want to do it. The ICC will be speaking to them," an ICC spokesman told reporters when asked if Sri Lanka would face any sanction for skipping the press briefing.

SANGA BLASTS

Former Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara is disappointed with the variations in wickets at different venues in England, where the 2019 edition of the ICC World Cup is underway and matches are also being affected due to rain. A number of games have been hit by rains so far in the showpiece event, which might also be a factor behind the different wickets across venues. Expressing his disappointment, Sangakkara wrote in his column for *Times of India*: "Uniform neutral pitches are a key requirement for a global tournament like this and that has unfortunately not always been the case. Sides have to adjust, but the disgruntled murmurs emanating from some team camps can be understood." "It's a shame that its not practical to cover the entire playing area like is the norm in Sri Lanka. That effort requires huge manpower but it has become something of an artform for us and helps protect cricket from some of the monsoonal downpours we have to contend with," he added.

AGENCIES

PRELIMINARY STAGE							
Pos	Team	P	W	L	N/R	Net RR	Pts
1	AUS	5	4	1	0	+0.812	8
2	NZ	4	3	0	1	+2.163	7
3	ENG	4	3	1	0	+1.557	6
4	IND	3	2	0	1	+0.539	5
5	SL	4	1	1	2	-1.517	4
6	WI	3	1	1	1	+2.054	3
7	RSA	5	1	3	1	-0.208	3
8	B'DESH	4	1	2	1	-0.714	3
9	PAK	4	1	2	1	-1.796	3
10	AFG	4	0	4	0	-1.638	0

PNS ■ OLD TRAFFORD (MANCHESTER)

With classic lazy elegance, Rohit Sharma scored his second century of the tournament, putting India on a sure footing in their campaign in this World Cup. The Men in Blue scored 336-5 after rain stopped play in the 45th over, Shankar won a referral and Mohammed Amir got the wind back into his bowling, taking three strong Indian wickets in his death over spell, returning with applaudable figure of 3/46.

In the end, India got restricted to an under 350 score, giving Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Singh, not to mention Chahal and Kuldeep who was retained over talk of Shami joining the playing 11, a job to do when Pakistan open their defence after a rain-cut 15-minute break.

But it was Rohit's day more than anyone's, despite Amir recovering from opening spell inaction and a near silent 77 from skipper Kohli. India's front loaders fared well with a century, 77 runs and a half century by KL Rahul promoted to open on account of Shikhar Dhawan's injury.

Decked with 14 fours and three sixes, Sharma's 140 runs bespoke of his signature pull shots, hooks, cuts and glides to nullify the much-feared Pakistan pace battery relying on which their skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed chose to bowl on a wicket that was quite obviously calling for the bat, that despite their Prime Minister's advisory to bat.

Though India was on a sound score by the time he left the middle, Sharma was furious with himself for his pre-meditated bagel shot caught at short fine leg by Wahab just when he was looking to overreach Finch's 153 in this tournament. His 140 runs came in 113 balls with 14 fours and 3 sixes. It was nonchalant class, steering clear of the bad balls, avoiding risks, rotating the strike and punctuating it with speed and correctness that came into play after Ahmed elected to bowl, lured in by the expected juice in the pitch aided and abetted by the overcast conditions.

Nothing, meanwhile, worked as planned for Pakistan in the initial phase with Amir returning wicketless from his first two spells and both Hasan Ali and Wahab Riaz pretty much doing the same. Alarmingly for Pakistan, both its lead bowlers Amir and Wahab got two official warnings from the umpire for running dangerously onto the pitch. Three warnings amount to a suspension from the game. Ironically, however, it was the



Rohit Sharma, left, celebrates with captain Virat Kohli, right, after completing century against Pakistan

warning that came to a harried Pakistan's defence when Wahab decided to come round the wicket in his post warning delivery to upset KL Rahul's concentration and luring him to err. Rahul, wanting to guide it through the covers, spooned it up to Babar

Azam instead for a convenient catch when India was steady up to a 300 plus score and Rahul was making a mark at 57 in 78 balls with three fours and two sixes.

Hardik Pandya's cameo of 26 runs in 18 balls, with him wield-

ing his bat more like Bhim's legendary *gadaa* than the blade of the game, cut into expectations as he decided to hit Amir out of the field falling short by a few inches as Shoaib Malik jumped into the air to catch him at the long on boundary, giving Aamir

HIGHEST STANDS FOR INDIA AGAINST PAK IN WC

Runs	Wkt	Partners	Venue	Date
136	1st	Lokesh Rahul/Rohit Sharma	Manchester	16-06-2019
129	2nd	Shikhar Dhawan/Virat Kohli	Adelaide	15-02-2015
110	3rd	Virat Kohli/Suresh Raina	Adelaide	15-02-2015
102	3rd	Sachin Tendulkar/M. Kaif	Centurion	01-03-2003
99*	5th	Rahul Dravid/Yuvraj Singh	Centurion	01-03-2003

FAISEL FEATURES

VIRAT RECORD FEAT

- Virat Kohli became the third Indian and ninth batsman overall to complete 11000 runs in one day internationals.
- He also set the record of fastest 11000 runs in one day internationals by reaching this milestone in 222nd Innings.
- Sachin Tendulkar who completed his 11000 runs in 276th innings held the previous record.

FASTEST 110000 RUNS IN ODIs

Batsman	M	I	Time
Virat Kohli (India)	230	222	11 years & 301 days
Sachin Tendulkar (India)	284	276	12 years & 41 days
Ricky Ponting (Australia)	295	286	13 years & 9 days
Sourav Ganguly (India)	298	288	15 years & 228 days
Jacques Kallis (S.Africa)	307	293	14 years & 303 days

FAISEL FEATURES

DECKED WITH 14 FOURS AND THREE SIXES, SHARMA'S 140 RUNS BESPOKE OF HIS SIGNATURE PULL SHOTS, HOOKS, CUTS AND GLIDES TO NULLIFY THE MUCH-FEARED PAKISTAN PACE BATTERY RELYING ON WHICH THEIR SKIPPER SARFARAZ CHOSE TO BOWL ON A WICKET THAT WAS QUITE OBVIOUSLY CALLING FOR THE BAT

his first breakthrough in his third spell.

Pandya's departure brought in the vintage and golden pair of MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli to the middle to loud cheers but did not live up to the billing as Dhoni, wanting to speed up the pace in the last five overs of the game. Amir got his second wicket in Dhoni who made a huge swipe outside the off-stump going straight into the gloves of Ahmed at a measly score of one, denting his finisher tag on the biggest stage of the tournament.

Meanwhile, Kohli silently scampered to his half century, second consecutive one in this tournament, when India was 278 and in the 44th over.

But just when both sides had gathered steam for extreme round of action in the ultimate five overs, the rain came down to hold up proceedings and excitement for a bit but not before a referral by India showed up that Shankar not being out as declared.

The rain break had Amir on fire again, as he took out man of the moment Kohli in the most crucial of death overs when he could have led the Indian score line over the 350 mark. But that was not to be and as he nicked Amir's short bouncer to Ahmed on an overhead shot and walked before the umpire could raise his finger, inviting pats on the back for fair play, by the Pakistani players.

Kedar and Shankar (15 off 15 with one boundary) failed to up the ante managing to score just nine runs off the last over.

Over to the arm department now.

Indian fans deluge stands, chirp all blue & happening

PNS ■ OLD TRAFFORD (MANCHESTER)

The Indian Tricolour far outnumbered the green crescent in the stands (50 to 2) at the Old Trafford where decibel levels went zooming past the city limits, breaching the largely insulated Press Box too. The fans started streaming in from 7 am onwards, most of them looking skywards and praying in unison that the rain be kept at bay and it seemed to have been heard as play started on time with Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed winning the toss and electing to put the Indians to bat under overcast conditions.

As expected, though not condoned, the chirp between the Indians and Pakistani fans outside the stadium flew fast and high crossing boundaries and limits with impunity, before moving on to the game. There was camaraderie yes, but only on the surface with everything from this match to the 2017 Champions Trophy Final to, of course, Kashmir, becoming mentions that drew cheers and boos in equal measure.

"Pakistan is a wannabe with not too many moments to celebrate against India. All they can talk of is the Champions Trophy. So they raise non-cricket issues like Kashmir to aspire for victory where there is none," said an all-Tricolour painted Indian fan calling himself Jiggery India.



Indian fans celebrate after Rohit Sharma smashes a boundary during the ICC World Cup match between India and Pakistan at Old Trafford in Manchester on Sunday

Imran Ahmad, flying the Pakistani flag high, wanted to move on and enjoy a good game of cricket "under the sun and for the full 50 overs each."

The total capacity of this stadium is 23000 for the World Cup and it was packed to capacity, filling up in a few minutes after

news of India coming in to bat broke. The sun too came out after an hour's play, perhaps to complement the show put up by the Indian openers.

The excitement and the frenzy around an India-Pakistan cricket encounter is unprecedented and goes way above what

England is used to. Their noisiest is The Ashes series against Australia which draws in the crowds but never ever has transcended the noise and the chatter that the Indian and Pakistani fans rev up in the stands and out of it. This match is reportedly the most expensive televised match

in recent history of any sport, garnering more than ₹ 100 crore in spot advertisements. It would have been a huge loss for the official broadcaster Star TV had it been rained out, like India's earlier tie against New Zealand. Fans have converged on Manchester from far and wide, including

non-cricket regions like South America where the Indian population is steadily growing. There was a group from Venezuela here.

The high-octane tone for the match was set by none other than Pakistan Premier and former Pakistan skipper Imran Khan who shot off a series of tweets exhorting his team to banish all fear of losing. His advice to Sarfaraz Ahmed was to bat if he wins the toss, a suggestion not heeded by him, perhaps because he got lured in by the juice in the skies and in the pitch consequently. As it turned out, with no success till India reached a handsome 136 run count.

That had the Indian fans in the stands, outnumbering the Pakistanis 80 to 20 per cent, in constant celebration even as the motley people from across India's border sat quietly waiting for Aamir, Wahab or Ali to strike. Sharing a beer in the back stands, there was also a lot of talk about the Pakistani wish to celebrate Indian wickets differently. "The only way the Pakistanis have celebrated till now is by silence as they've been unable to breach the great Indian defence," said one fan, tongue-in-cheek loud enough for a group of Pakistani fans queuing up for some fish and chips could overhear. "Wait my friend, wait," was their goodwill answer.

Indeed, the day is yet to pan out.

naabaste ENGLAND

SELECTION IS SOMETHING THAT IS ULTIMATELY UP TO THE SELECTORS BUT IF I CAN KEEP MY ECONOMY RATE PRETTY GOOD & TAKE WICKETS ALONG THE WAY THAT WILL GO A LONG WAY TO PLAYING MORE GAMES — JASON BEHRENDORFF

It was important for South Africa not only to win but to do so emphatically and they did just that against Afghanistan.

There will be a lot of happiness and above all relief from that nine-wicket victory and hopefully it can kickstart their ICC Men's Cricket World Cup.

There is still a chance they can make the semi-finals if they win all their remaining games, so the camp should be a little more upbeat.

It was a good bowling performance, and a lot of players will have taken confidence from getting some wickets. It was good to see the guys take the opportunity they had and not just go through the motions against a team that was slightly weaker than them.

I was also really pleased to see Hashim Amla get some runs. It wasn't a case of scoring quickly, but instead getting some time out in the middle. The run-rate did not really matter, it was about getting some form and Hashim did just that.

First of many



South African players chat during team meeting ahead team's training session *CSA/Twitter*

“THERE IS STILL A CHANCE THEY CAN MAKE THE SEMI-FINALS IF THEY WIN ALL THEIR REMAINING GAMES, SO THE CAMP SHOULD BE A LITTLE MORE UPBEAT”

I still think he will be really important for South Africa over the course of this tournament given his experience. That will be especially true in the next game against New Zealand at Edgbaston. The Kiwis always play well in these tournaments and they are always contenders. They also find ways to do something different and be unpredictable.

It will be a big test for South Africa who will have to be at their very best if they are going to win.

For me, the key is to get off to a good start, with bat or ball. That is where Hashim's runs will help. We've seen throughout this World Cup that if you keep wickets in hand, you can really post some big totals. If you lose wickets early, then it can be tough for the players coming in to get in.

South Africa will have to be aggressive with the ball as well. They have to be the ones to throw the first punch in the game. They cannot let New Zealand dictate, they have to

try to smother them from the off. That will not be easy though.

Edgbaston is a good wicket so it should make for a competitive game. South Africa will need a complete performance and that means getting their discipline right with the ball and bowling in the right areas.

We have seen at this World Cup that it is harder to bowl slightly fuller and usually you get more reward if you bang it in back of a length.

So it will be important to summarise the conditions and adjust accordingly. The other thing that will be crucial is that if South Africa do get the upper hand early on, then they cannot take their foot off the pedal and give New Zealand a way back into it.

Overall though, it was great to see South Africa up and running and hopefully we can see them really carry that momentum into the rest of the competition and particularly the next game on Wednesday. © ICC Business Corporation FZ LLC 2019

CaribSay



By JACQUES KALLIS

Keep calm, play full 50 overs

PTI ■ CARDIFF

Afghanistan captain Gulbadin Naib has urged his batsmen to remain calm in the middle and play full 50 overs after yet another collapse saw them go down to South Africa by nine wickets in a World Cup match.

Put into bat under cloudy skies, Afghanistan negotiated the new ball brilliantly, surviving Kagiso Rabada's natural seam and probing length but after a second rain delay, they lost five wickets for eight runs to eventually get all out for 125.

A sudden collapse is becoming a worrying trend for Afghanistan, who fell from 66 for no loss to 70 for 4 against New Zealand last week, and Naib asked his batsmen to control their nerves.

"Every time I'm saying to the batsman, control your nerves. We need calm cricket in the middle. Everyone is trying to put a score on the board so we have an opportunity to defend it," said Naib.

"We did not play a 50-over game because we did not last. We have played a lot of cricket in the last few years but there is pressure on the team. We lost the toss so we did not take responsibility enough and that was the difference," he said.

While Imran Tahir's (4/29) spin did the damage on a green surface, Afghanistan's leg-spin maestro in Rashid Khan, no.1 ranked T20 bowler in the world, failed to extract same advantage from the pitch.

"He (Tahir) is a world-class spinner but we are used to leg-spin in the camp, so we are playing it every day in the nets," said Naib.

The skipper said his team had a realistic chance against a lowly South African side but his players missed to grab the opportunity.

"South Africa is a good side but if you look for the last three games, they didn't play well. We had a good opportunity to play against them but we missed it.

"So credit goes again to their bowlers and also the conditions, it's bad luck we missed the toss. South Africa were just the better team," said Naib.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan batsman Hashmatullah Shahidi felt his team has enough quality to



Mohammad Nabi chats with teammate during Afghanistan innings

ACB/File Picture

A SUDDEN COLLAPSE IS BECOMING A WORRYING TREND FOR AFGHANISTAN, WHO FELL FROM 66 FOR NO LOSS TO 70 FOR 4 AGAINST NEW ZEALAND LAST WEEK, AND NAIB ASKED HIS BATSMEN TO CONTROL THEIR NERVES

upset hosts England next week but the onus would be on the batsmen to score crucial runs.

"I can say if we play good cricket, we can beat any team but it depends on our batting," said Shahidi.

The 24-year-old agreed with his captain that the batsmen need to

capitalise on a good starts.

"We are struggling. We have lost four in a row so we are disappointed. We tried to come back but things have not gone our way. We still have five games to go.

"We collapsed against Sri Lanka and New Zealand, losing wickets in a short space of time. We lost four

wickets in two overs here. We started well but we lost wickets quickly, that was the main reason for the defeat," he admitted.

Shahidi said Afghanistan must quickly learn from their mistakes.

"We have played four games and they have all been on difficult tracks, on green tracks. But we know that runs can be scored, look at what Australia did against Sri Lanka.

"I hope the next games will be good for the batting. We are making small mistakes, we have to learn from them. We just had a plan to be calm. The first 30 or 35 overs is important and we wanted to take our time and play slowly but in the middle overs we collapsed," said Shahidi.

Gibson tips

PTI ■ CARDIFF

South Africa all-rounder Chris Morris has credited head coach Ottis Gibson for making him a better bowler.

The Proteas finally banked their first victory of the Cricket World Cup with a nine wicket win over Afghanistan here on Saturday. And Morris played his role, with 3/13 his best figures of the tournament.

The 32-year old all-rounder was a late addition to Faf du Plessis' team, replacing Anrich Nortje, who was ruled out with a hand injury.

And Gibson, a former pacer himself, has worked hard to establish his place in a squad that have been hit with injuries to their frontline bowling attack, Dale Steyn flying home with a shoulder injury and Lungi Ngidi still on the sidelines with a hamstring problem.

"There are a lot less worms in my head on the cricket field these days. The job I was given by Ottis was quite a clear-cut one. If I stick to that, it's a job I think I can do," said Morris.

"I have worked quite nicely with Ottis in the last two weeks. We have found something in the run-up that we've changed. That's given me a lot more rhythm and more balance at the crease. It's coming on nicely for now.

"I try not to bowl as fast as I can because that's when I tend to break. It's just about finding rhythm, hitting the wicket and not trying to do too many things."

Though Morris opened the bowling against India, he usually comes in at first or second change where has the dual task of containing the opposition's run-rate and taking wickets.

In the past, Morris focussed more on bowling fast but now he is working on subtle skills to ensure he stays injury-free.

Morris' new approach has brought him consistency, something that South Africa's attack as a whole have been striving for and may have found in their win over Afghanistan. After Afghanistan scored 33 runs in the first 5.5 overs before the first rain delay in Cardiff, Gibson scolded his bowlers for being a little too wayward. They returned with more focus.

"At the first rain break, the bowlers got a bit of a slap on the wrist. We were told we need to be more consistent in what we are doing and that we don't need to try too much,"



Chris Morris celebrates with Faf du Plessis after taking the wicket of Rahmat Shah

AP

I HAVE WORKED QUITE NICELY WITH OTTIS IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS AND THAT HAS GIVEN ME A LOT MORE RHYTHM AND MORE BALANCE AT THE CREASE. IT'S COMING ON NICELY FOR NOW

added Morris.

"After that rain break, we came on and we were a lot more consistent, a lot more at the batters and everything in the field just clicked for us. We needed a little bit of a pep talk from the coach and that was quite good."

South Africa then took two Afghan wickets before another rain delay, after which they forced a collapse of five wickets for eight runs in 29 balls, taking advantage of Afghanistan's penchant for playing their shots.

No time to rest

PTI ■ LONDON

In pole position at top of the table to make the World Cup semi-finals, Australia must be tempted to give their key pacer Mitchell Starc a break this week, but the fast bowler said he has no intention of resting.

Starc, who is now joint number two on the all-time list of Australian World Cup wicket takers alongside Brett Lee, said he would not like to take a break considering that he is currently leading the chart with 13 wickets.

"If I'm fit I'd like to play all the games. It's not up to me but it's the World Cup. I definitely won't be putting my hand up to rest," Starc was quoted as saying by ICC website.

Australia have won four out of their five matches at the World Cup, losing just one so far.

Starc, who starred with figures of 4/55 during Australia's 87-run win over Sri Lanka here on Saturday, said: "I'm just glad we won."

“IF I'M FIT I'D LIKE TO PLAY ALL THE GAMES. IT'S NOT UP TO ME BUT IT'S THE WORLD CUP. I DEFINITELY WON'T BE PUTTING MY HAND UP TO REST”

Asked about how he has managed to rise to the occasion throughout the tournament with similar breakthrough spells against West Indies and Pakistan, and now Sri Lanka, Starc said: "I do enjoy the challenge.

The pacer admitted having a higher economy rate than other bowlers but insisted that his aim was to provide breakthroughs for the team.

"It's the challenge at the death, that challenge of trying to win a game for your team or trying to defend a title, I really enjoy that. It's something I work really hard at and it's been a role I've done for a long time.

"My economy rate might be higher than others, but I'm there to make breakthroughs for the team," explained Starc.

"Test cricket is still the pinnacle for me but the fact I've kept it pretty simple in terms of my gameplay for white ball cricket has held me in good stead through World Cups," he added.

The Australian team's balance has got affected by the recent loss of Marcus Stoinis to injury, but Starc said the all-rounder was doing all he can just by being with team.

"Stoinis in great spirits, he's always got a smile on his face, I think that's why Justin Langer calls him the spirit of the team. He's a great team man who just wants to do well for his mates and be around so he's doing all he can."



Mitchell Starc bowls during his opening spell against Sri Lanka *cricket.com.au*

It's all in mind

PTI ■ LONDON

Aaron Finch says it was a slight change in mindset and technique that helped him overcome a dismal Australian summer that even raised questions over his place in the ODI side, both as player and captain.

The Australian skipper is now back to his best and bludgeoned 153 from only 132 balls at the Oval on Saturday to lead the defending champions to an 87-run win over Sri Lanka.

He is now the top run scorer in the World Cup, has equalled Jason Roy for the highest individual score of the tournament so far and also overtaken Ricky Ponting for highest individual score by an Australian captain at a World Cup.

All of that comes after a miserable summer back in Australia that saw him dropped from the Test side and fear for his ODI captaincy. But a change in mindset has yielded rewards when it counts most.

"My technique has tightened up slightly, there are a few technical things I have worked one. Sometimes you change some things but you don't get rewarded straight away for the work you put in behind the scenes. So it's nice to get that reward," said Finch.

"I changed my mindset a bit more than anything. I stated to doubt my game in the Australian summer, there were a lot of times when I was questioning every decision I was making, technical, physical, mental, looking for



Aaron Finch acknowledges crowd after getting dismissed

AP

an answer and you don't know what the answer is. It was a really great learning for me.

"It would have been nice to have that at 22 not 32, but what I learned is you can strip it back as much as you want but it doesn't change the basics of the game. Defend the good ball and then score runs."