

OPINION 8 UPHOLD PRESS FREEDOM

MONEY 10 NBFC CRISIS TO PULL DOWN HOME LOAN GROWTH FIRST TIME IN THREE YEARS: REPORT

WORLD 11 HONG KONG LEADER APOLOGISES AS MASSIVE RALLY CHOKES CITY

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AKSHAY IS AGAINST NEGATIVITY 12 VIVACITY

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.

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 in 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.

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.

In the meeting, issues like celebrations of 75 years of India's Independence in 2022 and 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary this year are also expected to be discussed. 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, said Joshi, 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."

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said all those Bills which are in the interest of the people "we are not opposed to them."

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Pak's rain gambit fails to tame dominant India

India beat Pak by 89 runs (DLS) to make it 7-0 in WC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After winning the toss at Manchester's Old Trafford stadium on Sunday in 2019 ICC World Cup clash against India, Pakistan opted to field first keeping in mind the overcast conditions. However, its plan to tame dominant India failed to take off. The pitch had very little moisture and turned out to be a batting beauty which Rohit Sharma and other Indian batsmen exploited to the fullest and India beat Pakistan by 89 runs (DLS method) in their rain-interrupted clash. Powered by Rohit's 140 (113), India set a target of 337. Pakistan, in reply, reached 166/6 in 35 overs before rain caused a temporary halt to the proceedings.

On resumption, their revised target was 302 and they had to chase it down in 40 overs. Only managing to reach 212/6, they fell to their third defeat of the tournament. With this win India have now a 7-0 record against Pakistan in World Cup matches. This is India's third win of the tournament and they jump to third on the table.

Brief scores: India: 336/5 in 50 overs (Rohit Sharma 140, Virat Kohli 77; Mohammad Amir 3/47)

Pakistan: 212/6 in 40 overs (Fakhar Zaman 62, Babar Azam 48; Vijay Shankar 2/22)

Detailed report on P16



Indian cricket team celebrate win against Pakistan in the Cricket World Cup match at Old Trafford in Manchester, England on Sunday.



Suman Rao, a CA student from Rajasthan, crowned as Femina Miss India World 2019 beauty pageant in Mumbai on Saturday.

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 ready 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 misdemeanor 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, "hav-



ing 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 cam-

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

Continued on Page 6

Bihar heatwave claims 61 lives, 3 districts hit

Nitish announces ex gratia of ₹4L each, 100 people hospitalised

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 three districts and has announced a payment of ₹4 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



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.

Continued on Page 6

Encephalitis toll mounts to 83

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 ₹4 lakh each.

Nitish expressed grief over the children's death in Muzaffarpur and ordered payment of ₹4 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.

Detailed report on P7

CAPSULE

LOK SABHA'S FIRST SESSION FROM MONDAY
New Delhi: The first session of the 17th Lok Sabha will commence from Monday during which the passage of the Union Budget and key legislations such as triple taluk will be on top of the agenda for the Government.

8 ON WAY TO SEE TAJ KILLED IN ACCIDENT
Mathura: Eight members of a Greater Noida family on their way to the Taj Mahal were killed when their car rammed into a truck on the Yamuna Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district on Sunday, police said.

INDIA, MYANMAR TARGET N-E TERRORISTS IN OP
New Delhi: The armies of India and Myanmar carried out a three-week-long coordinated operation from May 16 in their respective border areas, targeting several terrorist groups operating in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam, defence sources said on Sunday.

Wayu loses steam to usher in sluggish monsoon

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Monsoon is expected to advance further up north as cyclone Wayu 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 Pasighat, 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. Wayu 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 hindered due to Cyclone Wayu. 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 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. Sultampur, Varanasi and Basti in the State recorded 45 degrees Celsius, 44.2 degree Celsius and 44 degrees Celsius respectively.

Continued on Page 6

Modi should bring ordinance to construct Ram temple: Uddhav

Lucknow (PNS): Amidst slogans of Jai Shree Ram, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had the courage to bring an ordinance to pave way for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya and he would do this with the passage of time. "We know very well that Prime Minister Modi can make the Ram temple and we are with him. Modiji has resolved several vexed issues and the Ram temple issue can be solved only by him. We believe that one of the ways is to bring a resolution and Shiv Sena is ready to support the Bharatiya Janata Party if they bring an ordinance for construction of Ram temple," Uddhav Thackeray said while addressing a press conference in Ayodhya on Sunday after

Continued on Page 6

Withdraw proposal to hike power tariff: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party has demanded that the proposal to hike power tariff be withdrawn immediately as it is not only anti-people but also demonstrates the Yogi Adityanath government's insensitivity towards the common man.

SP president Akhilesh Yadav said here on Sunday that the proposal to hike power tariff, submitted by the UP Power Corporation Limited to power regulator UP State Electricity Regulatory Commission, was unjustified with the people below poverty line and the urban middle class.

He said it was a double whammy for the power consumers as the one hand power supply was very erratic at the height of the summer and, on the other, power tariff was being hiked.

UP Power Consumers' Council chairman Avadhesh Kumar Verma has alleged that the yawning revenue-expenditure gap and the projected loss by the state power utility is due to its inability to bring down the line losses which are still over 30 percent against the

norm of 15 percent.

Moreover, he said, the gross inefficiency of the UPCL management, apart from the procurement of expensive power, was behind the power corporation decision to seek hike in power tariff.

"The Power Consumers' Council will not allow such a steep hike in power tariff for domestic consumers. We will soon chalk out our next course of action to oppose this unjustified proposal", he said, adding that his organisation would take to streets if the proposed higher tariffs were approved by the UPERC.

The UPCL has proposed more than 25 per cent hike in power tariff for domestic consumers. Against the prevailing power tariff of ₹4.90 per unit for the first 150 units of monthly consumption, the UPCL has proposed to increase the slab by more than 26 per cent to ₹6.20 per unit.

Similarly, the variable slabs for power consumption between 151-300 units, 301-500 units and 500 units upwards have been proposed to be increased by 12-20 per cent to ₹5.50 per unit from the present ₹5.40, ₹7 per unit from the present



and ₹7.50 per unit from the present ₹6.50, respectively.

Additionally, the fixed monthly charge for a domestic connection is also proposed to be increased by 10 per cent. Besides, the power tariffs for the state commercial sector consumers have also been proposed to be hiked by 10-15 per cent.

The UPCL has already submitted the proposed new power tariff structure for 2019-20 to the UPERC for vetting and final approval.

Now, the power regulator would hold public hearing and issue a public notice before taking an attempt by the Shiv Sena to put pressure on ally Bharatiya Janata Party on the Ram temple issue. But Sena has maintained that Thackeray's visit should not be seen in this light.

The title suit over the Ram Jambhoomi-Babri Masjid site is being heard by the Supreme Court.

tariffs unchanged for 2018-19 in run-up to the Lok Sabha elections and to keep the different categories of consumers in good humour.

Power tariffs had witnessed a hike in November 2017, when the UPERC, while sparing the industrial sector from any increase for 2017-18, had announced an average tariff rise of 12.72 per cent across board.

The average power tariff hike was then steepest compared to preceding two years with average hike in 2015-16 and 2016-17 figuring at 5.47 per cent and 3.18 per cent, respectively.

The state energy department has sought to justify the proposed hike in power tariff for the current year citing steep prices of fuel, including coal, and consequently the higher cost of power generation.

In its proposal filed with the UPERC, the power utility has pegged 2019-20 annual revenue requirements (ARR) at ₹76,495 crore, while estimating the revenue-expenditure gap at ₹18,091 crore, thus offering a justification for increasing power tariffs in the state for economic viability and sustainability.

8 of family die in accident on Yamuna e-way

Lucknow (PNS): In a tragic incident, eight members of a family were killed on their way to Agra after the car they were travelling in rammed into a truck on Yamuna Expressway in Mathura district on Sunday.

The Wagon R was going to Agra from Greater Noida and it rammed into the truck moving ahead around 9 am near milestone number 140, under Baldeo police station, about 30 km from Mathura city.

The Wagon R was completely mangled and gas cutters had to be used to bring out the bodies. Police suspect that the man driving the Wagon R tried to overtake the truck and this resulted in the mishap.

Police said five persons of the family from Jewar in Gautam Buddha Nagar died on spot, while three succumbed to injuries on way to hospital. Those killed were identified as Neeraj (25), Anita (30), Vishnu (25), Karuna (22), Santoshi (19), Shalu (20), Anjali (11) and Gabbar (24), the SP said.

In Muzaffarnagar, two persons were killed after their motorcycle was hit by a car on Miranpur road on Sunday. Six occupants of the car were also injured after it collided with a tree after hitting the motorcycle.

Modi and Shah behind BJP's great show in polls: Pandey

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Janata Party's Uttar Pradesh unit president Mahendra Nath Pandey said that due to the collective leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party chief Amit Shah, and the hard work of party workers, the BJP achieved record success in 385 Vidhan Sabha segments in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in the state.

"The analysis of the Lok Sabha results is an eye opener for all of us. People have reposed full faith in the leadership of the Prime Minister and the way Amit Shah has shepherded the party workers, we have reached a new goal," Pandey said while addressing office-bearers and district presidents of the party in a meeting held here on Sunday.

The BJP state chief said the party not only got over 50 per cent of vote share but was also ahead in 385 Assembly segments, more than what the party got in UP Assembly polls in 2017.

"The success can be gauged from the fact that the party wrested Lok Sabha seats like



Members of UP Gram Rajgarh Sewak Sangh submitted a memorandum of their demands to BJP state chief and Union minister Mahendra Nath Pandey at party office in Lucknow on Sunday.

Amethi, Kannauj and Budaun. This is a record of sorts that we achieved because of the hard work of the party workers," he said.

Pandey along with other party leaders elected to the Lok Sabha were felicitated in the BJP headquarters here.

In the meeting, the organisational strategy was also chalked out. Party vice-president JPS

Rathore has been made in-charge of membership campaign and Govind Narain Shukla and Devesh Kori its coordinators.

The party calendar was also released, according to which meeting of district presidents and members will be held from June 26 to 30.

The membership drive will be launched from July 6 and continue till August 10.

Litigant questions motive of Sena MPs' Ayodhya visit

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's visit to Ayodhya along with the MPs of his party sparked a controversy with Iqbal Ansari, one of the plaintiffs in the Ram Jambhoomi title suit, questioning the motive for their visit.

"When the Supreme Court is hearing the matter then everyone should have some patience. Let the court decide on the issue and they should then give their opinion," he told reporters in Ayodhya on Sunday.

Ansari was reacting to the

statement of Uddhav Thackeray that an ordinance should be brought for construction of Ram temple. The Shiv Sena chief even said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had the courage to resolve the Ram temple issue and bringing an ordinance could be the right way out and the Shiv Sena would support BJP in this.

Talking to reporters, Ansari said: "We welcome pilgrims in Ayodhya for worshipping in the temples but coming here with 18 MPs is not a religious visit but a pursuance of some political agenda."

The Shiv Sena chief along

with his party's 18 newly-elected Lok Sabha members offered prayers at the Ram Lala temple here on the eve of the first session of the new Lok Sabha on Monday.

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 Bharatiya Janata Party on the Ram temple issue. But Sena has maintained that Thackeray's visit should not be seen in this light.

The title suit over the Ram Jambhoomi-Babri Masjid site is being heard by the Supreme Court.

Fake liquor found in a shop, licence suspended

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Despite stern orders, some model shop owners are still selling fake/adulterated liquor in violation of the norms for sale of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL).

This came to light during surprise checking of a liquor shop at Achalganj locality of Bahman in Rae Bareilly by a team of excise and police officials led by sub district magistrate.

The team recovered five fake small bottles of a popular brand of liquor. The team recommended suspension of the licence of the liquor shop and also served a notice on licensee Ritika Jaiswal of Lucknow.

The excise officials said they conducted the checking on a tip-off.

"We found one Rohit Jaiswal selling liquor at the shop. When we asked him to show the licence, he showed us a temporary licence. During checking, we found six small bottles of a popular brand of Indian Made Foreign Liquor. The QR code of only one bottle matched while the other five bottles were fake," the official said.

They said selling liquor bottles without QR code or with improper QR code was crime under the provisions for sale of IMFL.

Meanwhile, a woman, Gayatri Devi (42) and her daughter Khusboo (16) committed suicide after consuming poison in Mahuli village of Sant Kabir Nagar on Sunday, police said. Both were rushed to a hospital in serious condition where they died during treatment. The bodies were sent for post-mortem.

130 ponds to be revived to improve groundwater level in Muzaffarnagar

Muzaffarnagar (PTI): As many as 130 ponds will be revived in this district in order to improve the groundwater level in the area, officials said on Sunday. They added that the ponds had been identified. According to Chief Development Officer Archana Verma, work is going in 87 ponds in the Budhana area, which is the worst-hit in the district due to the low groundwater level. Saplings will also be planted on the boundary of these waterbodies, the CDO said.

गर्मी न कर दे बीमार धूप/लू से बचें हर बार

क्या करें **क्या न करें**

- पर्याप्त मात्रा में पानी/ठंडा पदार्थ जैसे छाछ, नींबू का पानी, आम का रस का उपयोग करें।
- अधिक प्रोटीन वाले तथा बाहरी खाद्य पदार्थ खाने से बचें।
- वाष्प करने वाले पानी सावधान रहें।
- शराब, चाय, कॉफी, सोदाय ड्रिंक आदि का सेवन न करें।
- निर्जलीकरण से बचने के लिए ओआरएलएस का प्रयोग करें।
- विशेष तौर पर मज्जादू 12 बजे से अपराह्न 03 बजे के बीच सूर्य के ताप से बचने हेतु बाहर जाने से बचें।
- संतुलित, ठण्डा व विविधित भोजन करें।
- बच्चों व पालतू जानवरों को बन्द वाहन में कभी भी आबोला न छोड़ें।
- हल्के रंग के सूती व ढीले कपड़े पहनें। शिर को ढके एवं कभी धूप से बचें।
- जीवनशैली को जवाब दे बचें एवं उन्हे पर्याप्त पानी पिलायें।
- अधिक तापमान में बहुत अधिक शारीरिक काम न करें।
- बीमार व गर्भवती महिला कामगारों को अतिरिक्त सावधानी बरतनी चाहिए।
- जहाँ तक संभव हो घर में रहे एवं सूर्य के संपर्क से बचें।
- आमतक शिवि से निपटने के लिए प्राथमिक उपचार का प्रतिक्षण से।

बाहर न जायें, घर पर रहें

- जवाबदार स्थान में रहें।
- शिवि/बिबी को घर पर अतिरिक्त रखें।
- पंखे, कुल्लर, ए.सी. का उपयोग करें।
- ढके पानी से नहायें।

लू/तापघात से इनको सबसे ज्यादा खतरा

- मज्जादू।
- 65 वर्ष से अधिक आयु के व्यक्ति।
- गर्भवती महिलाएं।
- 5 वर्ष से कम उम्र के बच्चे।
- गर्भवती महिलाएं।
- धूप में काम करने वाले मज्जादू।

शरीर को पूरी तरह से ढककर रखें

- हल्के रंग के ढीले-ढाले एवं सूती कपड़े पहनें।
- सूती कपड़ों का उपयोग करें।
- शिर ढककर रखें।
- टोपी, मज्जादू, छतरी का उपयोग करें।
- जूते-बाघल पहनें।

लू के लक्षण

शिरदर्द, उन्ही, तेज बुखार, बेहोश होना, ज्वर/बिबी, कमजोरी, मज्जादू होना, शरीर में ऐंठन।

आकस्मिक उपचार के लिए 108

एम्बुलेंस को बुलायें

बचाव

सूखे पानी पीयें

गर्माव रोकने के लिए सूर्य के प्रकाश से बचें

ढके कपड़े पहनें

बच्चों को बंद वाहन में न छोड़ें

घर वाले एवं बच्चों के खाने का बर्तन सूर्य के प्रकाश से बचें

हमारे आरोग्य का रक्षण करें, बापू भवन राधिकाबाग, ऊधुम

टोल फ्री नं 1078, फोन: 8522-2237515, 2235083

4 injured in clash between two groups

Muzaffarnagar: Four men were injured in a clash between two groups of people over a dispute at Udupur village under Jhijnjhana police station of Shamli district.

Police said the clash took place on Saturday, when two persons — identified as Shehzad and Shahid — got into an argument over marking the boundary lines of their respective fields. Others joined the melee soon after and the verbal confrontation turned into a violent clash, in which lathis and sharp weapons were used.

Four persons — Shehzad, Arif, Sharik and Shahnaz — were injured in the clash and were shifted to a hospital.

A case was registered in connection with the incident, the police added. PTI

Cane arrears remain high at ₹10,415 cr

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sugarcane arrears for the 2018-19 crushing season, which ended recently, remain high at ₹10,415 crore despite the Yogi Adityanath government having taken a series of measures, including provision for soft loans to private sugar mills, admitted that the arrears.

In the last three financial years since it assumed office in March 2017, the Yogi Adityanath government has ensured payment of about ₹68,000 crore to the sugarcane farmers.

During the Lok Sabha polls,

the Uttar Pradesh government tried to make some payment to the cane farmers and even gave the facility to sugar mills to take loans. However, with the conclusion of the Lok Sabha polls, the process for payment has slowed down.

Uttar Pradesh Sugar Mills Association (UPSMA), the umbrella body of the private sugar mills, admitted that for the crushing season 2018-19, the total cane arrears on the mills were ₹10,343.94 crore out of which the private mills had to pay ₹9,838.61 crore, the corporation mills ₹61.32 crore and the cooperative sector sugar mills ₹444.01 crore.

The UPSMA said that

besides this, the private sugar mills had to pay ₹22.29 crore as cane arrears of 2016-17 season and ₹49.95 crore for the year 2017-18.

The total payment made by 191 sugar mills in the state, including 92 of the private sector, during 2018-19 season amounted to ₹22,608.55 crore, which is 68.61 per cent of the total cane arrears of ₹33,015.92 crore.

In 2018-19, the sugar mills in UP crushed 10,296.31 lakh quintal cane to produce 1.18 crore metric tons of sugar by achieving a recovery of 11.48 per cent. UP is the second largest sugar producer in the country after Maharashtra.

Doc deprived of cash, valuables

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

In a daring incident, four unidentified miscreants looted cash and gold ornaments from a dentist in Gomti Nagar when the police were carrying out a traffic awareness drive on Sunday morning.

The traffic awareness drive, led by the UP DGR, started from 1090 crossing and reached Hazratganj via Fun Republic, Ambedkar Udyan, Hotel Taj and Gold Club. Senior officers, including ADG (Lucknow Zone), were present during the exercise.

According to Dr Sachin

Jaiswal, a native of Deoria, he came to Lucknow from Azamgarh on Sunday morning and was going to his friend Saurabh Maurya's house at Sharda Apartment in Gomti Nagar Extension when the miscreants targeted him.

"I got down from a bus at Husadiya crossing and hired a rickshaw to reach there around 6.45 am. When I reached near the power sub-station in Gomti Nagar Extension, four youths masquerading as policemen conducting a checking drive asked the rickshaw-puller to stop," Jaiswal said.

He said two of the miscreants

were aged around 35-40 years while the others 25-30 years. "They told me that a murder had taken place in the locality and some weapons recovered. They asked me about my profession and then asked me to keep the cash and ornaments (gold chain, ring and bracelet) in my bag. When I kept the valuables in the bag, they snatched it from me and fled the scene even before I could raise an alarm," he said.

"I could not note down the registration number of their vehicles," he said, adding the attackers thrashed the rickshaw driver when the latter tried to

save him. Jaiswal has his clinic in New Colony locality in Deoria and was in Lucknow to purchase some equipment for dentistry from an exhibition at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Vibhuti Khand.

A huge number of morning walkers and locals converged on the scene and dilled the police control room. They told the police that the miscreants sped off towards Shaheed Path.

Meanwhile, in another incident in Chinhath, bike-borne unidentified miscreants looted the gold chain and earrings of a woman who was

going to a meditation centre near her house. The victim, identified as Urmila Singh of Gahmar Kunj Colony (Faizabad Road), left for the meditation centre on Kama Nehru Nagar in Chinhath around 7 am. On the way, the miscreants struck her. "The miscreants came from behind and the pillion-rider laid his hand on my chain. I offered resistance but was overpowered. He also snatched my earrings, leaving me injured," she told the police. The police said they were scanning the CCTV footages and would nab the miscreants soon.

SGPGI Faculty Forum flays Kolkata incident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The SGPGI Faculty Forum on Sunday condemned the Kolkata incident and requested the state and Central governments to take some measures for ensuring the safety of the doctors. The doctors said that this was really sad and shocking that the two junior doctors, Paribaha Mukhopadhyaya and Yash Tekwani suffered severe head injuries and were hospitalised at the NRS Medical College, Kolkata. One of them who actually suffered a skull fracture has undergone a critical surgery at the Institute of Neurosciences in Mullickbazar while Tekwani is still admitted in NRS.

President of Faculty Forum, SGPGI, Dr Ashok Gupta said that they strongly condemned this insane and barbaric attack on the doctors.

"The forum also condemns the inhumane and apathetic approach in the handling of the current crisis. All of us need to realise that the doctors are not only an integral but indispensable part of the society and work tirelessly under stressful and difficult conditions ranging from a few hours to many days. Many a time they are compelled to work unflinchingly without any off (leave) for 24 to 72 hours at a stretch and that too with the help of a frail support system and a skeletal infrastructure," he said.

He pointed out that in the recent years the doctors were becoming easy targets and such incidents were occurring more frequently. "This is due to the inadequate safety measures at the working place, lack of an effective law to protect health personnel at the working places, lack of basic facilities and a substandard infrastructure, growing intolerance in the society and political patronage

CMO puts government hospitals on alert

Lucknow (PNS): In view of the IMA strike call on Monday during which all private clinics, pathologies, diagnostic centres, nursing homes and hospitals will remain closed for 24 hours from 6 am to Monday, the CMO has directed all government hospitals to remain alert.

The doctors will boycott OPD and other normal duties on Monday. However, emergency services will not be affected and continue as usual. Meanwhile, the Association of Psychiatrists announced withdrawal of non-essential services in support of the IMA.

He said that the forum urged the West Bengal and Central governments to take stringent action against the culprits in order to resolve the crisis immediately. "The Forum also urges the Central government and the Union Health Minister, Harsh Vardhan, to take appropriate steps to prevent the recurrence of such incidents."

He said that the faculty urged the authorities concerned to ensure the safety of the doctors at the working place. "It is the need of the hour to make a 'National Protection Law' for the doctors with the provision of non-bailable arrest of the perpetrators, to improve the infrastructure within the existing hospitals before opening new medical colleges and hospitals, to raise the financial aid to the existing hospitals which is currently not only meagre but shameful too," he said.

He said that it was again

highly deplorable that India currently spent a little over 1 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on health, far below many less developed countries which spent over 2 per cent of their GDP, according to the latest National Health Profile (NHP) data. "It is important to stop expenditures on petty schemes which are primarily the vote seekers rather than meant for the welfare of the masses. Passing the buck from the Central government to the state and vice versa stating that this was a law and order situation and was the responsibility of the state government should also be stopped. Lastly keep such issues primarily apolitical and all the parties along with the society should work together in close coordination to create a tolerant society that understands the doctors are not 'God' but 'compassionate healers,' he added.

Slight relief from heatwave



People making the most of let-up in heatwave conditions at a park on Sunday evening

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Met department has forecast thunderstorm and dust storm activities in isolated parts of the state because of the presence of a western disturbance over Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan. However, heatwave conditions are expected in parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. In the state

capital, Monday is likely to be a day with overcast skies.

Though Sunday was yet another hot day, the skies turning grey in the evening, giving some relief to the residents reeling under the heatwave. Met director IP Gupta said the heat prevailed because of the north-westerlies. The city recorded the maximum temperature at 41.6 degree Celsius, which was

three notches above normal. The minimum temperature at 32.5 degree Celsius was six degrees above normal.

In the state, Allahabad remained the hottest at 45.3 degree Celsius.

The Met department has forecast rains in the last week of June. Until then, people in the city will have to bear with the hot weather.

1 more involved in fake marksheet racket held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Tightening the noose around those involved in selling fake marksheets and certificates of Lucknow University and other prestigious institutions, the Hasanganj police on Sunday arrested a man whose name had figured in the racket busted some time back.

The miscreant, identified as Sanjay Singh Chauhan, was absconding after his name surfaced in the fraud and the police launched a manhunt for him. "An informer tipped us off about Sanjay and we nabbed him from sector L of Vikas Nagar on Sunday morning," Hasanganj SHO DP Kushwaha said.

The police had smashed the gang and arrested some accused, including former LU employee Khirodhan (said to be the mastermind), and a clerk. It had surfaced that the gang had been active in the fraud for a long time and sold fake marksheets & certificates to several persons and earned lakhs of rupees. The police had

suspected that the miscreants sold several hundreds of marksheets to different persons.

"The miscreants roped in LU employees and secured confidential information to use the same in making fake marksheets & certificates for graduate, post-graduate and law courses being run from LU and other universities and colleges," sources had said.

Meanwhile, two youths, identified as Dheerendra Pratap Singh of Hardoi and Kanha Mishra of Rae Bareilly, were arrested for carrying ganja in Gudamba on Sunday. The cops recovered 50 kg ganja from the accused. Police said the arrested youths were members of a drug peddling gang. "Both the accused disclosed the names of their aides and also the name of the boss. We are carrying out raids to nab them," the police said.

The cops drew a blank when asked about the progress of the case in which the police had recovered 128 kg ganja and arrested two accused some time ago from Tedhipulia crossing in Gudamba.

यूपी 100 UP 108

सड़क सुरक्षा सप्ताह

17 जून से 22 जून, 2019

यातायात नियमों का पालन करें

BIS मार्क हेलमेट प्रयोग करें

सीट बेल्ट पहनें

वाहन चलाते समय मोबाइल का प्रयोग न करें

तेज गति से वाहन न चलायें

नशा करके वाहन न चलायें

सुरक्षित सड़क – सुरक्षित उत्तर प्रदेश

परिवहन विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

Khaas event for aam lovers!

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The 'Biodiversity Orchard Visit' of the seventh edition of UP Mango Festival was organised by Awadh Mango Growers' Association in collaboration with UP Tourism on Sunday. The event brought more than 300 people, groups of friends and families out of their homes into the orchard to relish mangoes, enjoy fun activities related to mangoes, enjoy a delicious brunch and revel in nature at its best.

Tourists from USA, Columbia and France besides parts of India took part in the event with enthusiasm.

Claudia (from Columbia), who is on a visit to attend the festival, enthralled. She said there were a lot of similarities between the mangoes in India and Columbia.

The orchard walk conducted by owner Shafiqul Jabbar Abbasi gave visitors an insight into how mangoes are grown and the different types of mangoes growing in this region.

Malini, a Lucknow resident, said, "At last, there is some place where I can introduce my children to the simple joys of our childhood, savour quantities and qualities of mangoes we never get in the city and a clean & fresh environment. To swing on a mango tree and look up at the dappled sunlight is fabulous. We loved spending time here with friends and family and look forward to



more events like this."

Key organiser of the team Jyotsana Habibullah said they had been working hard for the promotion of local flavours from the village and the mangoes. Tourists from Switzerland and UK, Jaipur, Mumbai, Delhi and Kanpur had been contacting the team for the much-awaited event.

UP's mangoes are so diverse that there are many varieties which the tourists tried for the very first time. From Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's favourite mango Lal Bebaah to Husnara, the favourite of Begum Hamida Habibullah.

The other attractions included local crafts supporting rural entrepreneurs like mud utensils, hand-woven fabrics that Barabanki is famous

for, mango eating competitions etc. and activities such 'Heart to Art' contest, Qissagali among others.

The next highlight of the festival will be a mango-inspired art at a city hotel and

'Mango Food Festival' from June 23 to July 6. The annual 'Mango Show' will take place on June 22, followed by mango farmers' market at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan on June 23.

Expert underlines yoga benefits

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

With the International Yoga Day round the corner experts who have been teaching yoga for the past several years propound the immense benefits which its exercises accrue. UP coordinator for the Art of Living Tanuj Narain, while speaking about the advantages of yoga, gave the tenets highlighted by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

He said that yoga could be best described as a technique which united the body, mind and spirit. "Yoga relieves you from stress and tension. It is stress that causes weakness, anger, jealousy and all the negative emotions. When you get rid of stress using breathing techniques, meditation and some simple exercises, it helps your body and mind and creates a sense of well-being and happiness from inside. If you're well and happy you will not be violent. When someone engages in violent activity, know that behind the violence there is anger and frustration," he said. He said that the staff of the guest house was also using. "It unites the small mind with the big mind, bringing harmony between body, breath and mind. If the



body and the mind are not aligned then it is not yoga. In yoga you bring them in harmony. We have all done yoga as kids. A child would have done all the yoga asanas by the time it is three. You don't need a yoga teacher if you observe a baby. The way a child breathes is different from the way an adult breathes," he added.

"Breath is the link between the body and emotions and by attending to it you are able to soften the emotions and get rid of the negative ones. Being a yogi is becoming like a baby again. Similarly all animals also do some asanas. A person performing yoga is one who is connected with the infinity;

connected with everybody. He doesn't feel isolated with anyone and at anytime," he added. He said that such a person was one who was skillful, one who was flexible. "Some people have a very flexible body but their minds are very rigid. A rigid person is not very palatable. He cannot communicate properly and is not open to new ideas. The one who performs yoga is one who is not rigid but at the same time is not very wishy-washy; he is very straight forward. He has strength, yet is soft. He has innocence yet depth in wisdom. He is childlike not childish. He has simplicity yet is wise. He is sensible and sensitive," he added.

admitted that often people who think they are very sensible are not very sensitive and people who are very sensitive are not sensible at all.

"For those performing yoga come out as a perfect combination of sensibility and sensitivity. He is one who is loving, yet very centered. Often people lose their centredness and those who are very centered they don't seem to be radiating love. A yogi is a perfect combination of head and heart; being centered and at the same time being very loving. You can assign all ideal characteristics to such a person who is one who is connected to the self, connected to the universe, connected to everybody; because everybody is connected," he added. He said that the knowledge of yoga was vast like an ocean. "The practice makes you ready to know the higher truth. If you are miserable it takes you out of your misery. If you are very restless, yoga brings you that equanimity of temper. It also helps you in attaining skills that you do not have, because it is an action which brings you happiness or sorrow. And if you are skillful in action then your action will bring you happiness," he added.

Youth accused of blackmailing girl

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A youth was accused of blackmailing a girl, who happens to be his distant relative, in Madaion on Sunday. In her police complaint, the girl alleged that her relative was a resident of Sitapur and studied with her at a school in the city. She further alleged that he hacked her email ID four months back and secured some of her personal photos in which she was with her friends. "He has been harassing me since then and demanding money from me and my brother. He always threatens to share my photos on social

media," she alleged. She said she complained to the SSP, Lucknow. Police said investigations were underway.

Meanwhile, angered over power disruption and delay in generator back-up, a group of youths from bride's side thrashed the manager of a guest house in Jankipuram where the marriage was to be solemnised on Saturday night.

The critically injured manager, identified as Jagannath, was admitted to KGMU Trauma Centre.

Reports said the power supply was disrupted at 11.45 pm on Saturday and the youths asked the manager

start the generator. Due to some technical snag, the staff could not start the generator. Angered over this, the youths attacked Jagannath with an iron rod. They also attacked the staff of the guest house when confronted. Police said the attackers had been identified would be nabbed soon.

DUPED
Four youths, identified as Rahul, Monu, Deepak and Aman (all of Jankipuram) were accused of duping Dr Rajeev Agnihotri, a resident of Jankipuram (sector F) of Rs 84,000. The complainant alleged that the group

promised to get a bank loan of Rs 10 lakh sanctioned and took the cash from him for the favour, but later reneged on their word. Meanwhile, two youths pulled the wool over Dr Harish Kumar Singh (SGPGI), a resident of IIM Road in Madaion, and stole his bag containing cash, credit card and other documents on Saturday night. Police recovered the empty bag on Sunday. Reports said the miscreants asked Singh to stop his car on the pretext of flat tyre. As Singh got down from the car, the miscreants picked up the bag and fled the scene.

CITY BRIEFS

CMS DELEGATION TO AUSTRIA
A five-member delegation of City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus II, will be leaving for Austria shortly to participate in the Children's International Summer Village Camp (CISV). The delegation comprises four students and one teacher. The student members of delegation include Krishna Mehrotra, Sarika Yadav, Sanskriti Saigal and Jaskaran Singh, led by teacher Jasjeet Kaur. The camp is being organised under the aegis of CISV (England) in which several students' delegations from different countries will be participating.

DANCE CHAMPIONSHIP
Naytri Studio of Performing Arts is organising an event called 'Naytri Icon Dance Championship' at International Research Institute of Buddhist Studies in Gomti Nagar on June 29. Director of Naytri Studio of Performing Arts Vidhi Aggarwal said, the event was launched in 2018 with an aim to identify the budding talents of Uttar Pradesh and to provide them a better platform to showcase their talents and to represent the state at national and international levels. The theme of the event is 'Peace, Harmony and Brotherhood'. A Nuktad Natak will be performed by children based on the theme 'Peace and respecting the dignity of life'. The chief guest at the event will be mayor Sanku Bhatia. A dance workshop will be held on June 27 and 28 by Ananya Rana.

STUDENTS TRAINED IN TISSUE CULTURE TECH
Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) organised a hands-on training for students pursuing DBT-sponsored 'PG Diploma in Agricultural Biotechnology' from Amity University; three students from Mewar University (Rajasthan); and three students from Bundelkhand University (Jhans) on various techniques of tissue culture technology for one month in order to prepare them for industry.

Students trained in tissue culture tech

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The training module included class lectures, lab practicals and exposure visits to commercial laboratories. The institute was getting request for more such training programmes in large numbers, CISH director Shaileendra Rajan said.

"Last year, CISH trained a rural youth Eklaya Dixit in secondary hardening of tissue-culture (TC) banana which led to development of a start-up called 'Satwik Biotech'. This year, he has scaled up production to 50,000 tissue-cultured plants. The institute is also



providing training in this area as cost of investment is not very high and rural youth can easily start their nursery or start-up on secondary hardening of TC banana and other plants after vocational training," the CISH director said.

The vocational training on tissue culture was organised by principal scientist, Manesh Mishra. CISH is planning to organise a tissue culture entrepreneurship workshop to cater to large number of youths in days to come. India has already entered

the league of trillion dollar economies. The country is home to 25% world's workforce which is young and this gives India unrivaled edge in global economies. In the next decade, economic growth is likely to create over 500 million jobs, 75% of which will be skill-based. India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables. The requirement of quality planting material is already skyrocketing. Tissue culture technology has travelled from laboratories and reached commercial firms

Wild rice originated in India: BSIP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

One of the research works of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP) which has caught attention worldwide because of the debate over where in the world has wild rice originated is the research of its director Vandana Prasad. The research shows that the wild rice originated in India.

The BSIP director, while talking to *The Pioneer*, gave a background to the research which she had carried out and added that there had been several papers which had been issued the world over about the domestication of wild rice. "The domestication of rice can start only in that country where wild rice has originated. The debate is whether it was in India or China where this happened. We have discovered that the earliest record of wild rice fossil in Central India was near Nagpur. One specimen we were able to locate in the facial matter of the dinosaur and the other we were able to get from the sediments in that area," she said.

Earth and started using agricultural technology. The importance of this research is that wild rice existed several years before the human beings came into existence. The second step now is to find out whether India was the area where the domestication of rice also took place. Till date we have got no evidence," she added. She admitted that a lot of research work was going on in this area with the support of the Chinese government.

Talking further about the research, she said that there were several interesting factors to it. "The Indian plate which merged with Asia was 60 degrees south first and it moved several latitudinal belts and then collided with the Asian plate and thus became a part of Asia. When India was moving like an island it carried with itself all the biological traits from Australia and Madagascar and Antarctica. So when it collided with Asia many of the traits were transferred to the Asian lands and hence it is also inferred that the rain forests in South East Asia may have come from the traits which were transferred by India. We are currently working on this aspect too," she said.

OFFICE OF THE PROJECT MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION UNIT
UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
Construction Unit, Uttarakhand, Dehradun, Distt. Uttarakhand, India

E-TENDER NOTICE (Date: 15.06.2019)

1. Name of the work - FINISHING OF LORD SHIVA'S EXISTING STRUCTURE OF STATUE BY CEMENT PLASTER WORK WITH MAKING PROPER BEAUTIFUL SHAPE, PAINTING ETC. COMPLETE AND APPURTENANT WORKS AT BARRHANGI MAHADEVI TEMPLE CHAKRAPUR (GHATIMA), UTTARAKHAND NAGAR.

2. Estimated Cost - Rs. 44.20 Lakh. 3. Period of Completion - 09 Month.

4. Date and Time of opening of bids in the portal - 14.06.2019 (18:00 hrs).

5. Last date/Time of receipt of bids in the portal - 26.06.2019 (17:00 hrs).

6. Date & Time of Technical Bid Opening - 29.06.2019 (12:00 hrs).

7. Name and Address of the Office Inviting Bid - C/O Prakash, Collocators Compound, Rudrapur (Uttarakhand Singh Nagar).

8. Pre-bid meeting details (if required): Date & Place - 18.06.2019 (13:00 hrs) Rudrapur.

9. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal: www.ukteenders.gov.in

Project Manager

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

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

E-TENDER NOTICE

The Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam Haldwani (Nainital) 263139, on behalf of Chairman, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Dehradun, invites sealed item rate tender on e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal <http://www.ukteenders.gov.in> for Construction of Transit Hostel (8 Room) for Medical Officer at CHC Ramgari District - Nainital. Work cost nearly Rs. 17.00 Lacs + GST. The tender can be downloaded from <http://www.ukteenders.gov.in> from 17.06.2019, 10:00 hrs. to 03.07.2019, 17:00 hrs. Other information can be seen in tendering office or office notice board or from phone no. 9411107868 of office of tender inviting authority.

Project Manager

जल संचयन - जल संरक्षण - जल संचयन को प्रोत्साहित करने के चरणों में शामिल होना - जल संचयन को प्रोत्साहित करना हमारी उत्तरदायिता है।

Legal awareness need of the hour: Mishra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Integrated legal awareness in education is the need of the hour so that young people have its comprehensible knowledge. Capacity building of Asha Yojit Kendras is also required for helping in the provision of psychological support.

These were the recommendations made by a women organisation while releasing a report on acid attack victims recently. Renu Mishra, a legal activist and the key person involved in the report, said it was necessary to conduct sensitisation and awareness programmes with the police. "The police action in case of acid attack should be quick and legally strong. The police should be made to compulsorily refer to social organisations for socio-legal support," she said, adding that it was important to prioritise acid attack cases for

the fast-track courts. She pointed out that timely response was the thin line between life and death in cases of acid attack. "In such situations, lack of burn care infrastructure in hospitals results in deterioration of critical injuries. Equipping primary healthcare centres and community healthcare centres with elementary burn units, burn response medical supplies and specialised emergency responders that are trained to treat acid burns can be essential to minimising harm. Burn units in major government hospitals must be properly regulated with separate beds reserved for acid attack survivors that are in properly sterilised environment, insulated from infection exposure," Mishra said.

She added that regular training and orientation programmes for panel lawyers on sensitive handling of cases of acid attacks, and training & sen-

sitisation of judicial officers to ensure quick and adequate award of compensation, including interim compensation and fair & dignified treatment of the victims of acid attack during trials, was required. Mishra said that gender-based violence against women might manifest in many overt and covert forms. "Patriarchal social control over women is firmly rooted in the need to assert power over women's autonomy, choice and bodily integrity. The impunity with which women are violated reflects the perceptions around the ownership of their bodies lying external to them, that is, with the family, kinship, community and caste communities. As such, women's rights on their own bodies are often invisibilised, with rules inscribed for them and imposed on them by patriarchal societies. Any 'transgressions' by women from these rules, any attempts

6,500 liquor bottles seized

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

In a major development the Excise department raided an area under the Handia police station and seized 6,500 bottles of liquor. In another development 75 cartons of spurious liquor were seized from a truck. Alcohol traders also made the QR code and when it was scanned the truth came to light.

The District Excise Officer, SB Dowdell, said that on being tipped off by an informer that illicit liquor bottles were being kept in a car for being smuggled a raid was conducted around 75 cartons of liquor were recovered from a truck. Its driver told the police that he was coming from Pratnagarh. In the Handia the raid was conducted at Virendra Patel's place. He was found absconding. As many as 6,500 bottles and lids were recovered by the police. In the evening on



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 set to take tours of Uttar Pradesh at very short intervals. She 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 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 Dukhtar-e-Milat, Asiya Andrabi, was grilled



by it about the educational expenses of her son in Malaysia incurred by Zahoore Watali, who was arrested in a terror funding case, said in a statement issued here on Sunday.

'During interrogation, Andrabi admitted that she had been collecting funds and donations from foreign sources and Dukhtar-e-Milat had been organising protests by Muslim women in the valley', the agency said.

The NIA has already approached the relevant authorities for providing evidence relating to certain bank accounts used by Andrabi's son

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

Another headline separatist leader, Shabir 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, said 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 ul Dawah, Dukhtar-e-Milat, 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-ul Dawah Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, 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 businessmen, 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 Dukhtar-e-Milat, separatist leader Shabir Shah of JKIDFP 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 (Imlong), 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 Kalandan multimodal transit transport project.

The Kalandan 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 Sittoung Port in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

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

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 a parliamentary panel for early consideration of the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018, was introduced in the Upper House on December 31, 2018, by former health minister J P Nadda. It was then referred to the parliamentary standing committee on health and family welfare for its recommendation.

It is estimated that the proposed legislation will directly benefit around 8-9 lakh existing allied and healthcare professionals in the country and several other graduating professionals joining the workforce annually.

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 councils which will frame policies and standards, regulation of professional conduct, creation and maintenance of life 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 PTI. '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.

Gvt 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 alling 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 be 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 AAILM, Pharmaceuticals from Delhi.

BGR-34 is a natural DPP-4 (dipeptidyl peptidase 4) inhibitor with no side effects, added Sanchit Sharma from AAILM. 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 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 his 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.'

Focus on peaceful Amarnath Yatra

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After the 'dayven' strike on Khanabal-Pahalgam road in South Kashmir district of Anantnag, in which five CRPF personnel sacrificed their lives on Wednesday, the focus of the entire security grid has been shifted to ensuring 'peaceful' and 'incident free' conduct of the Amarnath yatra, starting from July 1.

Every year elaborate security deployment is made on ground zero, starting from the gateway of Jammu at Lakhnampur to base camps in Baital and Pahalgam, but securing each and every four wheel and passenger buses ferrying Amarnath pilgrims will be the biggest challenge this year.

Apart from securing 300

km long National Highway between Jammu and Srinagar, the biggest challenge this year would be securing every inch of the road route connecting interior roads with the yatra base camps and common routes taken by the pilgrims to reach Srinagar via Baital and Pahalgam during the yatra period.

Series of IED blasts triggered by the fresh crop of terrorists, post Pulwama attack, in Kashmir valley and fresh threat of a similar strike is already giving jitters to the security establishment in the state.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, is also scheduled to visit the Amarnath valley, to start the yatra on June 30. He is expected to chair high level security review meeting

before heading to Amarnath cave shrine to offer special prayers inside the sanctum sanctorum.

Around 450 companies of para military forces are expected to be deployed to provide three tier security cover to the pilgrims along the entire yatra route.

In addition to this, the security grid is also going to utilise men from 300 additional companies, stationed in the state on account of Lok Sabha election duty, for army domination and patrol duties during the yatra period.

Exuding confidence, K Vijay Kumar, Advisor to Jammu and Kashmir Governor, on Thursday said that sufficient precautions will be taken for the smooth conduct of the

upcoming Amarnath yatra. He also ruled out any security lapses in the killing of five Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel in a dayven attack.

"The attack took place where civilians were moving. The attack was not at a place of isolation. It was not a security lapse. Still only within seven to ten minutes proper action was underway to tackle the militant attack," Kumar told media men on the sidelines of wreath laying ceremony of slain CRPF personnel at Humhama in Budgam district.

He said that the attack was claimed by the Al Umar militant group but the government is not giving it a complete credibility and that it is investigating the attack further.

Soon after Union Home Minister Amit Shah had assumed charge of Union Home Ministry he had chaired high level security review meetings to review yatra arrangements.

Official sources said, "apart from additional deployment of para military forces the state police would be required to set up security check points in sensitive areas to ensure safety of pilgrims".

In addition, Union Home Ministry has directed the state police and paramilitary forces to exercise extra caution during the movement of passenger convey every day and prevent movement of unregistered vehicles and those without high security registration plate on the yatra route.

Keep protest symbolic: K taka Govt to doctors

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Health Minister Shivnand S Patil Sunday appealed to the doctors in the state to keep "symbolic" their protest to express solidarity with their West Bengal counterparts.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has given the call for the nationwide strike Monday with withdrawal of non-essential health services across the country in the wake of the recent assault on doctors in Bengal.

In a letter to Karnataka chapter of IMA, which was released to the media, Patil

condemned the attack on doctors in West Bengal recently and made a fervent appeal to those in the private and government hospitals in the state not to put ordinary citizens in trouble.

"I fervently appeal to the government and private doctors to keep their agitation symbolic without putting patients in trouble.

The people of the state will also support you if you keep your agitation symbolic and I believe that you will not put the poor patients of the state in trouble," he said.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka IMA chapter president

Annadani M Meti said its members would not take non-emergency cases on Monday.

"We will take only trauma, emergency and pregnancy cases Monday. This is as per the decision taken by the national body of the Indian Medical Association," Meti told PTI.

He demanded a stringent law to ensure protection of doctors from attacks.

Officials in the medical department said adequate measures have been taken to ensure that people were not inconvenienced in view of the nationwide protest called by the IMA Monday.

Ponzi scheme: K'taka Cong leader seeks formation of regulations

PTI ■ BENGALURU

In the backdrop of the alleged financial fraud by an investment firm here, Senior Congress leader H K Patil Sunday urged the Karnataka government to formulate regulations under a law that enables confiscation of properties of fraudsters and returning it to investors in 180 days.

In a letter to Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy on Sunday, Patil gave a slew of suggestions to protect the interest of investors by returning the dues and initiate action against the culprits.

"The state government should immediately formulate regulations under the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance-2019, and enable confiscation of properties of fraudsters and returning the property to the investors in 180 days," he said.

The city-based IMA jewels had allegedly cheated a large number of investors after promising them impressive returns on their deposits.

Nearly 30,000 complaints have so far been received by police in connection with the case, relating to which seven directors of the firm were apprehended on June 12.

Mohammed Mansoor Khan, owner of the firm went absconding after allegedly threatening to commit suicide in an audio clip.

Patil also demanded Kumaraswamy to constitute a competent authority under section 7 of the ordinance and appointment of officers and staff without any delay.

Advocating setting up of special courts for speedy trial in such cases, Patil said mere vigilance was not sufficient but initiating action under such regulations was also necessary.

Underlining the necessity to instill confidence among people about the administration, Patil insisted upon financial awareness among people.

Chief minister Kumaraswamy has not responded to the suggestions yet.

While BJP leaders including MLA Basanagouda Patil continued to demand a CBI inquiry into the case given that a few Muslim leaders' name surfaced, Karnataka forest minister Satish Jarkholi ruled it out, saying the Special Task Force was competent enough to solve the case.

On June 12, the Karnataka government had formed a 11-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the case.

As reports emerged that Khan had fled to Dubai, the SIT had said they were investigating his whereabouts.

DMK seeks discussion on NEET, Mekedatu, farm loan waiver in LS Session

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The DMK Sunday said it would take up a slew of demands including farm loan waiver, Mekedatu dam issue and exemption for Tamil Nadu from NEET, during the first session of the new Lok Sabha.

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi after attending an all-party meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, DMK Parliamentary party leader T R Baalu, said a demand to pass the women's reservation bill in the current session would also be raised.

"Exemption from NEET, scrapping of Mekedatu dam and hydrocarbon project in the Cauvery delta, making Tamil official language in central government offices in the State would be some of our other demands," he said.

Kaleswaram project in T'gana to benefit 70% districts

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

The Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation project, which would be inaugurated on June 21, is expected to supply water to 70 per cent of districts in Telangana to meet agriculture, drinking water and the industrial needs.

The Telangana government has decided to start pumping water from the next month, official sources said.

Water from river Godavari at Medigadda, which is about 100 metres above sea level, is lifted at six stages and supplied to Kondapochamma Sagar, which is at 618 metres height, an official release said.

In other words, the water from Godavari River is being lifted at about half-a-km height. The pump houses are being constructed to lift 2 TMC of water every day this year," it said.

Preparations are on to lift three TMC of water from next year.

The Telangana government

had entered into an agreement with the Maharashtra government on March 8, 2016, putting an end to differences that existed for decades over the issue, it added.

The agreement has paved way for the construction of Kaleswaram project at Medigadda.

Chief Minister K Chandrababai Naidu laid foundation stone at Kanneppally for the Kaleswaram project on May 2, 2016. Within a short span of three years, major components of the Kaleswaram project, including construction of barrages, pump houses have been completed.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said that the construction of the reservoirs was going ahead on a fast track.

It is estimated that for lifting two TMC water from Kaleswaram, 4,992.47 MW power is required and arrangements are being made for the supply of adequate power.

"For the first time in the annals of country's history, the

Telangana State Electricity organisations are using 139 MW pumps in the Kaleswaram project at package 8 Ramadugu. Nobody ever used such a capacity pumps in the country," the release said.

To complete all the works on Kaleswaram project in a record time, works are going on 24 X 7. Under the projects, three barrages, 19 reservoirs, 20 lifts are constructed for the storage capacity of 141 TMC," it added.

The Telangana Chief Minister had gone to Mumbai last week and invited his Maharashtra counterpart Devendra Fadnis for the inaugural ceremony.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy would also be invited for the event, a CMO release had said last week.

Meanwhile, Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader M Bharti Vikramarka alleged Sunday irregularities in implementation of Kaleswaram project.

Claiming that the project

was originally initiated as B R Ambedkar Pranahita-Chevella project when late Y S Rajasekhara Reddy was Chief Minister in undivided Andhra Pradesh at a cost of Rs 38,000 crore, he said a sum of Rs 10,000 crore was spent during Kaleswaram project, he said.

However, the TRS government re-designed the project and increased the estimated cost to more than Rs one lakh crore, renaming it as Kaleswaram project, he said.

"Thus, crores of rupees of public money were misused," he alleged. In an open letter to Jagan Mohan Reddy on Sunday, Vikramarka said if he attended the inauguration of Kaleswaram project it would "disappoint the soul of (his father) Rajasekhara Reddy."

Jagan Mohan Reddy's presence at the inauguration would also amount to making him indirectly responsible for "encouraging the conspiracies behind the re-designing of the project decided earlier," he claimed.

Modi should...



From Page 1
worshipping at the Ram Lalla temple. The Shiv Sena chief said the entire country wanted Ram temple at Ayodhya and his party had also said "first temple and then government".

"We have allied with the BJP only for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya. Now that the BJP has got full majority, the process for construction of Ram temple should start," the Shiv Sena chief said and added: "The government should bring an ordinance for construction of Ram temple. The issue concerns all Hindus and the temple has to be constructed at the earliest."

He also raised the slogan "kanoon banao, manao banao" (Make a law to construct temple). The newly-elected 18 Lok Sabha members of the Shiv Sena along with party chief Uddhav Thackeray, his wife and son Aditya, offered prayers at the Ram Lalla makeshift temple in Ayodhya on the eve of the first sitting of the new Lok Sabha on Monday.

Expressing his close attachment to Lord Ram and Ayodhya, Thackeray said, "I want to come here (to Ayodhya) regularly but if I do so people will say I am doing politics. But this time I wanted my new MPs to start their Lok Sabha session after taking blessing from Lord Ram."

While 10 Shiv Sena MPs reached Ayodhya on Saturday evening, and rest along with Uddhav Thackeray and his family reached the city on Sunday morning. Uddhav Thackeray and his family had worshipped at the Ram Lalla makeshift temple on November 25 last before the Lok Sabha polls. Prolife had a hard time in controlling the crowd and had to use some force when some local Shiv Sainiks protested on not being allowed to meet Uddhav Thackeray.

Hold bypolls to 2 RS seats in Guj together, demands Congress

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Terming as "unconstitutional" the Election Commission's decision to hold separate bypolls to two Rajya Sabha seats in Gujarat, the state Congress Sunday accused the ruling BJP of pressurising the poll body so that it could win both the seats.

The opposition party also raised question marks over the impartiality of the EC and threatened to move the Supreme Court against it.

"Election to two vacant Rajya Sabha seats in Gujarat should be held together. But in order not to lose any of the two seats, the BJP has pressurised the Election Commission into holding the polls to the two seats separately, which is unconstitutional," Gujarat Congress president Amit

Chavda told reporters here Sunday.

"The notification is wrong, unconstitutional and raises questions over the impartiality of the Election Commission. We will move the Supreme Court against the notification," Chavda said.

The EC had Saturday said that bypolls to six Rajya Sabha seats, including two in Gujarat vacated by Union ministers Amit Shah and Smriti Irani, will be held on July 5.

The seats fell vacant after Shah won from Gandhinagar and Irani from Amethi Lok Sabha constituencies respectively. Reacting to Chavda's accusations, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said by-elections to the Rajya Sabha seats are held separately, which is why the EC decided to issue separate notifications for the same.

Need to have dialogue with 'disgruntled' youth of J&K: NC

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

The National Conference (NC) said on Sunday that there was a need for having a dialogue with the "disgruntled" youth of Jammu and Kashmir for achieving long-lasting peace in the state.

Demanding the restoration of autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir, NC general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar said the party is not seeking anything novel or outside the ambit of Constitution of India.

"There is a need of having a dialogue with the disgruntled youth of the state. The idea of achieving long-lasting peace in the state cannot be achieved by closing the doors for dialogue and reconciliation. The youth of our state have never felt so disoriented and alienated as they are feeling now," he said.

"The need of the hour calls

for engaging with the youth. An earnest dialogue with the youth will inevitably prove fruitful towards increasing the prospects of peace and prosperity in the state," Sagar said.

He was addressing workers' conventions of Ashuqam, Pahalgam and Khanabal of south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

"We have been demanding for the restoration of the position that our state enjoyed until 1953. We are the only Muslim majority state of India. Maharashtra's accession with the Union of India was purely restricted to certain areas," he said.

"Our state is not like any other state of India. The people at the helm of affairs in New Delhi should understand that they are dealing with an area, historically and geographically, and in all manner of things with a certain background.

They have to be men of vision and there has to be a broad minded acceptance of facts," the NC leader said.

Sagar said the victory of the party candidates from three parliamentary constituencies of the state was reflective of the mood of the people.

"The people of Kashmir have considerably reposed their faith in the party for the sole purpose of protecting the interests of the state.

People have come to understand that there is no other credible and strong voice that could put stiff resistance to the machinations of BJP, RSS and its henchmen in the state," he said.

He added the "forces which are inimical" to the special status and integrity of the state are worried by the NC and are hardening their stance making it their leadership.

28 Bills to be discussed in Monsoon Session: Maha CM

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A total of 28 bills will be discussed in the monsoon session of the Maharashtra legislature beginning Monday, which will be the last session ahead of the assembly elections, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said here Sunday.

"Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana" for disbursal of funds ahead of the kharif season.

"We plan to introduce 13 new bills in the monsoon session whereas 15 bills are already pending before the legislature - 12 of them in the Legislative Assembly and three in the Legislative Council," Fadnis told reporters.

The chief minister also rubbished the Opposition's allegation that his government's claim on development were "virtual" and didn't reflect on the ground.

"The Opposition is cut off from the ground because of their perception (that the government's functioning was virtual) they suffered such a humiliating defeat in the recent general elections," Fadnis said.

Earlier in the day, senior leaders from the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party tore into claims made by the Fadnis government over developmental works.

Hitting back, Fadnis blamed the Opposition for "messing up" the Maratha quota issue when in power ahead of 2014. "They messed up the Maratha reservation issue. We, however, implemented the quota effectively. There will be some provisions and schemes for the Dhangar community as well in this Budget session," Fadnis said.

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Medical services to be hit as IMA to go ahead with...

From Page 1

The announcement came on Sunday, a day after Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan asked the States to consider enacting specific legislation for protecting doctors and medical professionals from any form of violence. The IMA, however, demanded a comprehensive Central law in dealing with violence on doctors and healthcare staff, and in hospitals. It said, hospitals should be declared as "safe zones".

Structured safety measures, including a three-layer security, CCTV cameras and restriction of entry of visitors should be well defined and enforced uniformly across the country in all sectors. Security measures and the determinants leading to violence should also be addressed, the IMA said in a statement. Essential punishment for perpetrators of violence should be a component of the Central law and suitable amendments should be brought in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Code of Criminal Procedure

(CrP), the IMA said. The IMA said all non-essential services, including outdoor patient department (OPD) services, will be withdrawn for 24 hours from 6 am on Monday to 6 am on Tuesday. Emergency and casualty services will continue to function, it said. The medical body had launched a four-day nationwide protest from Friday and wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah demanding enactment of a Central law to check violence against healthcare workers. On Saturday, Vardhan, along with a letter to all Chief Ministers, also attached a copy of the draft Act provided by the IMA - the Protection of Medical Service Persons and Medical Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage or Loss of Property) Act, 2017.

Emergency and casualty services in West Bengal is still in grave and fear of violence is present in all medical colleges and major hospitals, the IMA claimed. The violence following the attack on resident doctor Paribabbar in a statement. Essential punishment for perpetrators of violence should be a component of the Central law and suitable amendments should be brought in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Code of Criminal Procedure

Modi's fresh push for polls...

From Page 1

There should be a discussion on farmers distress, unemployment and drought, he said. He also called for the conduct of Assembly elections in Jammu & Kashmir, currently under President's Rule, asserting that if Lok Sabha polls can be held then why not State polls. It appears that the Centre wants to run the State through the Governor's administration, he alleged. Congress's Adhir Ranjan Choudhary and K Suresh were also present.

Dr Derek O'Brien demanded that the Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, be brought immediately in the session. The first session of the newly-constituted 17th Lok Sabha will be held from June 17 to July 26.

Doctors agree...

From Page 1

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 who had the dream 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 those of the civil society 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...

From Page 1

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. The weatherman has predicted overcast conditions and thunderstorm accompanied with light rains on Monday.

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.

Bihar heatwave claims 61...

From Page 1

A heatwave is declared when the maximum temperature is 4.5 degrees Celsius above normal for two consecutive days, a Met official said.

Saturday's maximum temperatures recorded in Patna, Gaya and Bhagalpur were 9.2 degrees, 7.6 degrees and 5.5 degrees Celsius above normal respectively.

The Met department has forecast that the heatwave will continue in these three cities on Sunday too.

The state government on Saturday said all schools in Patna city will remain closed till June 19 in view of the prevailing weather conditions.

Patna District Magistrate (DM) Kumar Ravi said all government and private schools in the state capital will remain shut till June 19 due to a persistent heatwave in the condition for the past several days, an official release said.

This is the second time the district administration has extended the suspension of academic activities in schools due to the weather.

Earlier on June 9, the DM had ordered closure of schools till June 16.

Medical services to be hit as IMA to go ahead with...

From Page 1

The announcement came on Sunday, a day after Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan asked the States to consider enacting specific legislation for protecting doctors and medical professionals from any form of violence. The IMA, however, demanded a comprehensive Central law in dealing with violence on doctors and healthcare staff, and in hospitals. It said, hospitals should be declared as "safe zones".

Structured safety measures, including a three-layer security, CCTV cameras and restriction of entry of visitors should be well defined and enforced uniformly across the country in all sectors. Security measures and the determinants leading to violence should also be addressed, the IMA said in a statement. Essential punishment for perpetrators of violence should be a component of the Central law and suitable amendments should be brought in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Code of Criminal Procedure

gation that his government's claim on development were "virtual" and didn't reflect on the ground.

"The Opposition is cut off from the ground because of their perception (that the government's functioning was virtual) they suffered such a humiliating defeat in the recent general elections," Fadnis said.

Earlier in the day, senior leaders from the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party tore into claims made by the Fadnis government over developmental works.

Hitting back, Fadnis blamed the Opposition for "messing up" the Maratha quota issue when in power ahead of 2014. "They messed up the Maratha reservation issue. We, however, implemented the quota effectively. There will be some provisions and schemes for the Dhangar community as well in this Budget session," Fadnis 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 promised 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 Kejrival Hospital, which was run by a trust.

According to the release, 69 children had died at the SKMCH, while 14 died at the Kejrival 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 hypoglycaemia, 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 Kejrival Hospital with suspected AES, but most of them were found to be victims of hypoglycaemia.

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 an 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**

TR 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 Fadnis 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, Fadnis 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 Fadnis 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 Alhas Bala Bhagde, Dr Parinay Phule 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 lawn of Raj Bhavan in south Mumbai.

Fadnis, Union Minister of State Ramdas Athavale, 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 of 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 State Cabinet.

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

Vikhe-Patil (Ahmednagar), Suresh Khade (Miraj), Sanjay Alhas Bala Bhagde (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 Phule, all from Vidarbha, Kshirsagar (Beed) and Atul Save (Aurangabad), both from Marathwada. However, Konkani region and north Maharashtra have gone unrepresented.

Cabinet expansion for regional balance, new faces: Maha CM

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis 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, Fadnis 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, Fadnis 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 Fadnis 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.

Jayakumar, the Additional Chief Secretary of Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, flagged off two buses carrying the pilgrims for the first climate acclimatisation 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 acclimat-

ization schedules.

Mangang also urged the pilgrims to follow the directions of the liaison officers and adhere to the given timings.

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

The pilgrims will start at 15th Mile and 17th Mile for the first two days and at Sherabang for another two days for acclimatisation before undergoing the final round of medical check up by the ITBP at Sherabang 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 Kanchecherla, Gudlavalluru mandals during which huge quantity of Gutkha and 'khanees' (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

TR 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 Brahmapur, 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 Fadnis 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 by 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.

Kathua: Court didn't rely on prosecution eyewitnesses while acquitting Vishal

PTI ■ PATHANKOT (PUNJAB)

The only acquittal in the Kathua rape-and-murder case came as the trial court set aside the statement of three prosecution witnesses who had claimed that Vishal Jangotra, the son of main culprit Sanji Ram, was in the car at the time of the crime. District and sessions judge Tejinder Singh relied on the statement of the landlady of Vishal that he was in Meerut in Uttar Pradesh where he was studying in a college.

According to the 432-page judgement delivered on June 10, the prosecution counsel relied on the three eyewitnesses who had claimed to have seen Vishal in Kathua on January 13 and 14 last year and forensic experts' opinion that writing samples of Vishal did not tally. "The prosecution claims that as per the said report (hand-writing), the questioned signatures do not tally with the standard items in general writing habits such as movement, skill and speed. The differences observed in writing are fundamental in nature," according to the verdict. Vishal had presented his signature in the attendance sheet of his college to

show that he was in Meerut, and not in Jammu and Kashmir as claimed by the prosecution. The prosecution also submitted evidence of mobile operators to prove the fact that Vishal was very much present in Kathua on days when the crime against the eight-year-old nomadic girl were committed in Kathua. While analysing the eyewitnesses of the prosecution, the court said it is of the opinion that these witnesses "are under some mistake relating to identity". Commenting on an eyewitness, who had seen a TV report about absence of Vishal from Kathua and came running to crime branch officials where he claimed to have seen Vishal along with Parvesh, an accused sentenced to life. The eyewitness, who belongs to nomadic tribe, identified Vishal and Parvesh in the court but the judge did not rely on his statement saying that he "never moved any complaint before any authority against the news channel" or its staff.

"...As such oral evidence of these witnesses cannot be given preference over the documentary evidence on record having been led by defence of Vishal Jangotra, Vishal was the only one among the seven

accused to be acquitted by the court.

Three, including his father Sanji Ram who was the key conspirator, were given life sentences. Others were Parvesh Kumar and Deepak Khajuria. Three policemen have been sentenced to five years' jail for destruction of evidence. Parvesh Kumar, who has been convicted, had said in his confessional statement that Vishal was present with him during the crime. The crime branch has been maintaining that Vishal had come to his village on January 13 and left again on January 14. The court took into account a statement from Suman Sharma, the landlady of Vishal, who had said that he was present all along in Meerut where he is studying and also testified that he had attended his granddaughter's birthday celebration on January 16 last year. Pointing out some elementary mistakes in the investigation, the court observed that Sub-inspector Urfan Wani categorically deposed that before arresting Vishal from Uttar Pradesh's Meeranpur, they had not enquired from his college or his examination centre whether he had regularly appeared for his examination that started from January 9, 2018.



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

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-disintegrated 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

viewing 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 fierce 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 132-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 Lal 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**

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 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**

ahead with his 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 towards 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.

However, the BJP went

Events in the Straits of Hormuz 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 intermeccine 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 humoring 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 the US and Iran are muscleving 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 Homeopathy 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 inequality 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 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 one newspaper solely for propaganda purposes of pre-2001 regimes. Today Afghanistan boasts over 1,000 print and broadcast media outlets.

Moreover, in 2018,

“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 ONE NEWSPAPER SOLELY FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES OF PRE-2001 REGIMES. TODAY AFGHANISTAN BOASTS OVER 1,000 PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA OUTLETS.”

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

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SOUND BITE

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 (Government) to wake up the Yogi Adityanath government and give direction to control the prevailing 'jungle-raj'.

Samajwadi Party chief
—Akshay 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 collar 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.

The latest attack on a CRPF patrol party on route to the Amarnath cave is the latest example. While Al-Umar Mujahideen, a defunct terror group, claimed responsibility, it is being suspected that it was a handiwork of Jaish-e-Mohammad. The Imran Khan Government has been reiterating that global terrorist outfits have been banned and their bank accounts have been frozen but such assurances are nothing but lies. As long as the Army with help from terrorists wants to bleed India, Khan calling India for peace talks has no relevance.

KR Srinivasan
Secunderabad

Emerge stronger

Sir — Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has shown some courage by opening up to the party's debate. But leaders do not have the gumption to accept his resignation. The Congress must prove to be a party of substance than one of sycophants.

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 in 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, the Hypocrite 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 long 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 he 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 a much younger person."

Andrea Leadson, Dominic Raab and Matt Hancock all said that they had smoked cannabis at university, but had never done 'hard' drugs. Jeremy Hunt was more breaking, admitting that "I think I had a cannabis fass when I went back 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 150,000 paid-up members, who are socially conservative, mostly rural and well over 60 on average. If anybody is going to push these hypocrites, it's them.

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

NATIONS SUPPORTING, PROMOTING AND FUNDING TERRORISM SHOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE AND MADE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.
—PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI

POINT COUNTERPOINT



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 MEHMUD 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 wins stem 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 decolonise 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 *talak*.

Secularism, defined the Modi 2.0 view, veers at moving away from the purist ideological moorings to turn more mainstream and inclusive. This means subsuming the networks of vote-bank politics and replacing it with *antarday*, delivering economic uplift to the last man in the line.

While it's easy to praise the victory, 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 back-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, notably, 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 top 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 splash since.

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 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 subsided 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

"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 outcome. 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 manoeuvring. 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 an anomaly 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)



UTTAM GUPTA

I n 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 through it is not an exact science, and can never be done with arithmetic precision."

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.

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 B N 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 tribunals 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 different views on levying GST. Large 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.

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 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 illegals, 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.

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 anote.

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.

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 Rajesh Sharma, CMD, PFC and Ajay Kumar Agrawal, 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, PK 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.

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 assessing 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 RBI 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.

The estimate indicates capital requirement of ₹20,000-30,000 crore, provided banks are also able 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 retaliation to the US decision of significantly hiking customs duties on certain steel and aluminium products. India has 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 moon moon 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 Ramesh Tiwari, Head of Research, CapitalAim.

The BSE Sensex started 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.

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).

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.

The identification of these products is part of a study carried out by the ministry which states that the ongoing tariff and customs duties war between the US and China provides 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.

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, tubes 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 Fici and Cii have apprised the Ministry of Steel in a pre-Budget proposal.

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

ing 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.

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.

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 future is just the latest chapter in what many see as a battle for the soul of Hong Kong. For the last decade the

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 platform Weibo scrubbed clean of 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's official newspaper, China Daily, Chinese state media -- which has drummed up sup-

port 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 extradition 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 opposes the intervention of external forces in Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs."

GLOBE TROTTING

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

Qamishi: 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 par-



Arab daily Ashraq 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."

Abe had been on an unprecedented visit to the Iranian capital in a bid to defuse tensions between Washington and the Islamic Republic when the attacks took place. 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 object" before a second blast on board, the operator's head said Friday.

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.

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. AFP

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 Pakistan-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 his month.

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



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 Khan in the 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, southeast 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 in the late night and throughout the day, said a spokesperson for the London Mayor.

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.

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.

ed 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 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 are needed, similar to those in the Paris Agreement on climate, he added.

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.



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, Ashraq 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." In recent days, Yemeni

rebels known as Houthis claimed responsibility for a missile strike on a Saudi airport in the city of Abha that the kingdom said wounded 26 passengers and one child, also carried out a drone strike last month on a key Saudi oil pipeline. Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of arming and training the rebels, which the kingdom has been at war against in Yemen since early 2015.

"The choice before Iran is clear. Do you want to be a normal state with a constructive role in the international community or do you want to be a rogue state?" the crown prince was quoted as saying.

His comments mirrored those made by his father, King Salman, at emergency summits held in Mecca last month that drew heads of state from Arab and Muslim countries to address the sharp rise in tensions with Iran.

B'desh prison breakfast menu gets makeover after 200 years

AFP ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh authorities have for the first time served a colonial-era breakfast menu in all its prisons, an official said Sunday, as part of a reform of the country's penal system.

Bazur 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."

'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 working 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 bar-storming 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 Giammetti, 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 Giammetti, a doctor running for the conservative Vamos party, trails with just 11 per cent.

AFP

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, it's 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 Franco 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-ringed. At 73, Sharada 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 money for 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 4000 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 'Vasudeva Kutumbakam', while on the other, elders are considered a burden to be treated shoddily. She focus on the three perspectives, which held centrestage 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 a starkable number, 25 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-giving 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 equasions.

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



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 Anora, 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.

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).

SURPRISE ASSISTANTS

However, considering that the aged

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

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 Navavati*.

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 excitement 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 Eka Kapoor's forthcoming web series *The Verdict: State Vs Navavati*, 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 Navavati, a much-decorated naval officer shot his wife's paramour, it has had cinematic outings in the past too, including *10th Raasteey Ham 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 Navavati who was supported to the hilt by fellow Parsi Russi Karanjia's tabloid, *Blitz*. Navavati 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 *Triping* or *Official CEOgri*. 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 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."

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 Mikes/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 Baji Bantur*, 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 life 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.

Not over yet

Captain call

AFP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Jos Buttler says he is ready to step up and captain England in the World Cup if injured skipper Eoin Morgan fails to recover in time to face Afghanistan on Tuesday.

Morgan had to leave the field with a back spasm during the West Indies innings in Southampton on Friday, with opening batsman Jason Roy also forced off the field due to a tight hamstring. Vice-captain Buttler himself was unable to keep wicket in the team's previous match against Bangladesh but said he was fully fit as he contemplates leading the side.

"I'd rather Eoin plays," said Buttler. "He'll have a scan and Jason the same and see how his injuries are but obviously we hope for the best." But he said England's approach would not change much if Morgan did not make it in time.

"We've played under Eoin for a long time," he said. "I think he's a fantastic captain. He's someone I've tried to learn from, being vice-captain. I've talked to him a lot about the game. We've got some quite similar views so I think it would be very similar."

The injuries to Roy and Morgan in Southampton forced 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.

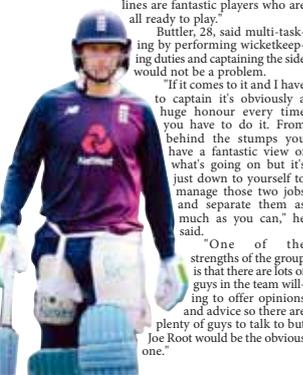
It is that flexibility and the quality of the players not currently in the starting 11 including Tom Curran, Moeen Ali and James Vince that gives Buttler confidence.

"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 who will be open to offer opinions and advice so there are plenty of guys to talk to but Joe Root would be the obvious one."



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 was n'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 quick wicket really well with control but couldn't pick up wickets. The only way to limit good batting



Kusal Perera leaves the pitch after he is bowled by Mitchell Starc

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.

“ WITHOUT THE MIDDLE ORDER FIRING, IT WILL BE TOUGH TO POST TOTAL ABOVE THE 300-MARK BUT SRI LANKA IS DEFINITELY CAPABLE OF BEATING ENGLAND, ALTHOUGH IT WON'T BE EASY ”

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 line-up.

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 line-up 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

MASTERSTROKE



By MAHELA JAYAWARDENE
Former Sri Lanka captain

OTHER SPORTS

Colombia stun Messi's Argentina

AFP ■ SALVADOR

Roger Martinez and Duван 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 Agüero 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.

AFP ■ HIROSHIMA

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 lions 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 Kataria pounced on a loose ball — after Gurjit's draglick 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

goal to 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

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Paul Pogba has given a strong indication that he wants to leave Manchester United this summer to seek a "new challenge".

The French World Cup winner rejoined United from Juventus for a then world record £89 million (\$112 million) fee three years ago, but has largely failed to live up to expectations.

Pogba has been strongly linked with a move to Real

Madrid or even a return to Juventus with United having failed to qualify for the Champions League next season.

"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 chal-

lenge 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.

AFP ■ HALLE WESTFALEN

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 Novem 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.

Federer fresh for 10th Halle title tilt

AFP ■ HALLE WESTFALEN

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"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

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"



Paul Pogba celebrates after scoring

It was important for South Africa not only to win but to do so emphatically and they did just that against Afghanistan.

CaribSay



By **JACQUES KALLIS**

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

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 were 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 start. "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.

Gib-some 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 their first rain delay in Cardiff, Gibson scolded his bowlers for being a little too wayward. They returned with more focus.

"At a World Cup, the bowlers get 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 his new 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 of their five matches at the World Cup, losing just one so far.

Starc, who started 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 IT 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.

"Stoin's 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 started 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."

Sailors of the same boat

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

UPNEXT



PTI ■ CARDIFF

Bangladesh will have the psychological advantage when they face West Indies though both teams are sailing in the same boat as far as their World Cup campaign is concerned.

Bangladesh beat West Indies as many as three times in tri-series that Ireland hosted ahead of the World Cup.

Even though West Indies stars such as Chris Gayle and Andre Russell were not part of that series, Jason Holder's team still must be smarting from those three consecutive losses last month.

Both teams are on three points from four games, having lost two games with one game each being a washout.

Bangladesh, who last played on June 8 when they lost to England, will be itching to take the field after a forced break of one week with the game against Sri Lanka called off due to rain. They had the opportunity to score two points against a struggling Sri Lanka before the weather sealed their fate.

The Mashrafe Mortaza-led side has batted pretty well so far but needs to step up in the bowling department. The bowlers conceded as many as 386 runs against

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.

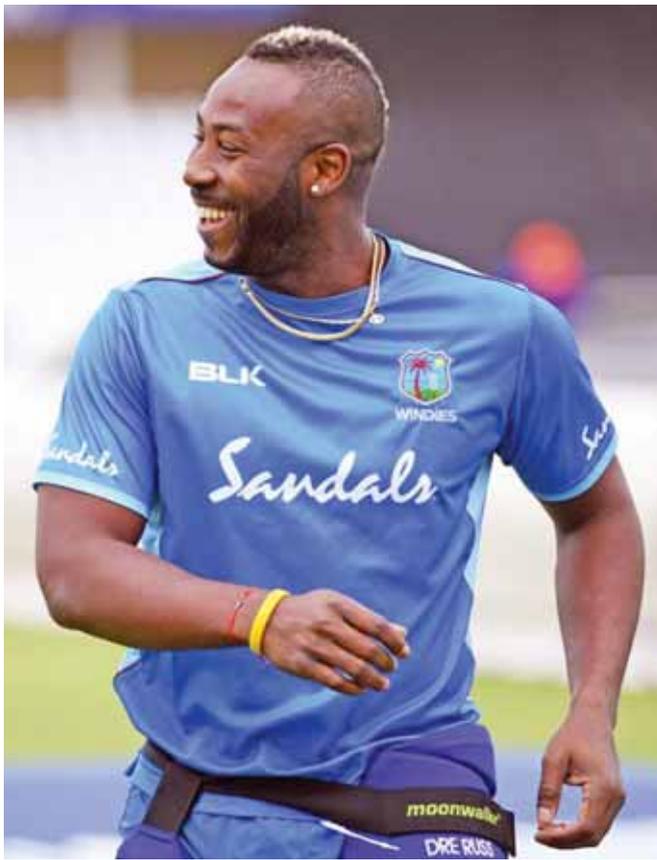
SQUADS

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 Cottrell, Holder, Russell, Thomas
- Shakib Al Hasan's all-round performance



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, 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 got 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.

Courtesy — © ICC Business Corporation FZ LLC 2018

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

MEN WHO MATTER

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

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's 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 need a victory, but 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

"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

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."

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

Courtesy — © ICC Business Corporation FZ LLC 2019

CRICKET CRADLE

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 was as usual a cauldron 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 monsoon 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	IND	4	3	0	1	+1.020	7
4	ENG	4	3	1	0	+1.557	6
5	SL	4	1	2	1	-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	5	1	3	1	-1.930	3
10	AFG	4	0	4	0	-1.638	0

Dominance continues

Rohit slams ton as India beat Pak by 89 runs (DLS) to make it 7-0 in WCs

PNS ■ OLD TRAFFORD (MANCHESTER)

With classic lazy elegance, Rohit Sharma scored his second century of the tournament to give India the seventh World Cup win over arch-rivals Pakistan. Chasing 337 to win, Pakistan were cruising at 117-1 after 21 overs before double strikes from Kuldeep and Hardik Pandya reduced them to 129-5 and all but broke the back of Pakistan's resistance.

A rain lengthy interruption at the end of the 35th over meant that when play resumed, Pakistan needed 136 from 5 overs according to the revised playing conditions which set them a target of 302 in 40 overs, meaning India had no trouble recording their seventh straight win in World Cups against their arch-rivals.

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 appreciable figure of 3/46.

It was Kohli'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, lined up by the expected juice in the pitch aided and abetted by the overcast conditions on the pitch.

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



Rohit Sharma, left, celebrates with captain Virat Kohli, right, after completing century against Pakistan

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 warning that came to a harried Pakistan's defence, when Wahab decided to come round Alarmingly for Pakistan, both its

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 steading 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 wielding his bat more like Bhisim's legendary *godan* 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 Amir his first breakthrough in his third spell.

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/Virat Singh	Centurion	01-03-2003

FAISEL FEATURES

- VIKAT 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.

FATEST 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

Pandya's departure brought in the vintage and golden pair of MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli to the middle to speed up the pace in the last five overs of the game. Amir got his second man 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 he kicked 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 get 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 but 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

England is used to. Their noise 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 Amir, 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.