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RAIPUR, WEDNESDAY JUNE 19, 2019, PAGES 12-13

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11 SPORT**

Opp against PM's polls at one go

Modi to discuss 'one nation, one poll' plan with chiefs of parties today, Mamata demands white paper

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a clear indication of the difficult road ahead for its implementation, the Opposition on Tuesday decided to oppose Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious "one nation, one election" proposal, for which he would make the first serious push during his meeting with party presidents on Wednesday.

The decision was taken unanimously at a meeting of the Opposition parties convened by UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and attended by leaders from Congress, TMC, DMK, NCP, NC, RSP, Left and others.

However, BJP's allies like JD(U), Shiv Sena and Shiromani Akali Dal are on board the PM's plan. So are those like Samajwadi Party, BJD and TRS.

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the parties were opposed to the idea in principle. "Since some issues are to be sorted out, the UPA will meet again on Wednesday morning to discuss the issue further and take a



UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi along with Congress president Rahul Gandhi and other leaders after a meeting to decide their strategy in Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday

common stand at the meeting called by Modi in the evening. The Opposition's tone was set during the day itself with West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee excusing herself from attending the meeting citing

lack of sufficient time to come up with a "proper response" to the matter and calling for circulation of a white paper on the subject to all political parties inviting their views by providing adequate time to respond if the Centre indeed wanted "con-

crete suggestions". In her letter to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, who had sent out invites to all party presidents, she said such a "serious and sensitive subject" required consultation with constitutional

and election experts and that to frame a proper response, she needed to consult all the members of her party.

The PM will be meeting with presidents of political parties having at least one Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha member on the issue.

The Left parties — CPM, CPI — are strongly opposed to the idea but their presidents Sitaram Yechury and Sudhakar Reddy may, however, join the deliberations. The Left parties term the proposal totally "unrealistic and non-practical" one. The CPM Politburo in a detailed statement said this proposal is not workable as the duration of the Lok Sabha and Assemblies are based on the floor strength. When the Government loses majority, elections have to be conducted within six months. They cited how in 1996, 1998 and 1999 Lok Sabha elections had to be held when Governments lost the majority.

CPI national secretary D Raja said, "We will oppose this proposal, which is already rejected by many parties as it is totally non-practical."

The main Opposition Congress said the idea per se is not bad but has preferred to go along with consensus of the Opposition parties. But the Congress was yet to name its representative for the meeting for want of a party chief following Rahul Gandhi's resignation.

BJD chief and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will be here to attend the meeting, party leaders said.

But Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray would not make it as he is busy with party's foundation day events. Sanjay Raut is likely to represent the party.

Related report on Page 5

□ Congress is not entirely opposed to the idea but it has preferred to go with the Opposition parties: TMC, DMK, NCP, NC, RSP, Left

□ BJP's allies like JD(U), Shiv Sena and Shiromani Akali Dal are on board the PM's plan. So are those like Samajwadi Party, BJD and TRS

□ Mamata says no sufficient time for meeting to discuss such 'important issue in hurry'

□ The Left parties — CPM, CPI — are strongly opposed to the idea but their presidents Sitaram Yechury and Sudhakar Reddy may join the meeting

Om Birla set to be LS Speaker

BJP picks 2-time MP, UPA backs NDA candidate

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Two-time member of Parliament Om Birla from Rajasthan is set to be the Speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha. In a surprise move, the BJP on Tuesday nominated him as the candidate of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for the constitutional post, to which he is expected to be elected unopposed.

The Congress and its UPA partners have decided to support Birla's candidature, but they have not been forthcoming on the issue of Deputy Speaker. According to sources, the NDA could back someone from the Telangana Rashtra Samit (TRS) for the Deputy Speaker's post.

Birla would be the second two-term MP to be Speaker after G.M. Balagopal, who was succeeded in 2002 by Shiv Sena's Manohar Joshi, a first-time Lok Sabha member. Balagopal, a TDP MP, was elected as Speaker in 1998 and thereafter in 1999, but he could not complete his term due to his untimely demise.

Conventionally, a senior MP is saddled with the responsibility of Speaker's post. The



Speaker-designate's predecessor Sumitra Mahajan was an MP from Indore, from where she won for a record eight times before she reached the BJP's prescribed cut-off age of 75 years for retirement and did not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Birla, the low-profile 57-year-old BJP MP from Kota, is a confidant of party president Amit Shah and is known for his number crunching skills besides being data savvy. "He sends birthday greetings to his voters in Kota," said sources close to Birla, a hands-on organisational man.

With the NDA having a clear majority in the Lower House, that Birla's election will be unanimous is a foregone conclusion. A notice has been given to the Lok Sabha Secretariat by the BJP proposing Birla for the post and bringing a motion for his election on Wednesday.

CAPSULE

JEWAR AIRPORT TO GET 8 RUNWAYS

NOIDA: The Jewar International Airport in Greater Noida will now have eight runways after UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in a meeting held recently endorsed a proposal to add two more runways to existing six.

4 GET LIFE IN AYODHYA TERROR ATTACK CASE

ALLAHABAD: A special court here sentenced four persons to life imprisonment while acquitted one accused in the 2005 Ayodhya terror attack case in which 29 locals were killed and seven CRPF personnel were injured.

4 RBU DEPT HEADS QUIT OVER 'RACIST' REMARKS

KOLKATA: Four departmental heads of the Rabindranath Tagore University here have put in their papers over alleged racist remarks made against them by members of the Trinamool Congress Ghnatra Parishad (TMCP), prompting the State Education Minister to intervene into the matter.

Govt sacks 15 top Customs, Excise officers over graft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after sacking a dozen-odd errant Income Tax officers, the Government on Tuesday dismissed from service 15 senior Customs and Central Excise officials, including one of the rank of Principal Commissioner, on charges of corruption and bribery.

Involving rule 56(j) of the Fundamental Rules, the Government has sacked these Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) officers, ranging from the ranks of Principal Commissioner to Assistant Commissioner, some of whom were already under suspension, according to a Finance Ministry order.

These officers either had corruption cases registered against them by the CBI or were involved in bribery, extortion and disproportionate assets cases, Government sources said.

Among those dismissed include Principal Commissioner Anup Srivastava, who was serving as Principal ADG (Audit) in the CBIC in Delhi, and Joint Commissioner Nalin Kumar, the order said.

Sources said the CBI had in 1996 registered a criminal conspiracy case against Srivastava and alleged that he had shown favours to a house building society which was trying to obtain NOC for land purchases in violation of law.

CNG car rebate on anvil to boost Capital's lungs

GAYATHRI MANI ■ NEW DELHI

In yet another relief aimed at middle class voters, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government is going to grant 50 per cent concession in the registration and road tax charges for Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) factory fitted private cars.

The proposal is a part of Delhi Government's "Green Budget" to recreate breathing space in the city and to reduce pollution level by promoting the CNG usage.

The project was proposed by the Government in the Budget 2018-19 along with other projects such as 1,000 electric buses, 900 electric feeder buses for last mile connectivity, edge-to-edge paving and landscaping of Public Works Department (PWD) roads and others. Under this Green Budget project, 26 anti-

pollution schemes have been listed from various departments of the Delhi Government.

According to the official sources, the finalisation of the scheme is at the last stages and will be placed in the upcoming Cabinet meeting which is likely to be held by end of this month. The proposal was announced in last year's Budget and the Government is working on it to implement the scheme as soon as possible to promote CNG vehicles in the city for better environment condition. The file regarding the same is under submission and will be placed before the Cabinet meeting, said sources.

If everyone converts their vehicles to CNG, the city will be free from hazardous air pollution, said Jasmin Shah, the chairperson of Delhi Dialogue Commission (DDC).

Ultra whose IED car martyred 40 CRP men in Pulwama shot

Another JeM terrorist killed, cop loses life

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

One of the key conspirators in the February 14 Pulwama terror attack, whose car was fabricated and later handed over to the suicide bomber, was among two terrorists gunned down by the joint team of security forces in Marhama area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Tuesday. One Army jawan sacrificed his life in the operation.

Meanwhile, two Army jawans, injured in the IED blast in Muzaffarpur, were in Arhail area of Pulwama succumbed to their injuries in the command hospital in Srinagar early on Tuesday. Late evening, unidentified terrorists lobbed a grenade outside Pulwama police station causing injuries to several pedestrians. Police said two civilians received serious injuries.

In the last five days, 10 security personnel — five CRPF men, four Army men, including a Major, and an Inspector of the J&K Police — have sacrificed their lives. The martyred soldiers were identified as Havildar Amarjeet Kumar and Naik



Paramedics and local people transfer on a stretcher a man wounded in a grenade blast in Pulwama town as he is brought for treatment at a hospital in Srinagar on Tuesday

Ajit Kumar Sahoo. Another CRPF convoy in which 40 CRPF personnel were martyred.

Singh said, the duo were well trained members of the JeM suicide squad. "Two other terrorists killed in Achabal and KP road attack were also part of the same JeM group," he added.

According to police, "Sajad Ahmad Bhat, alias Afzal Guru, had joined militancy days before the Pulwama terror attack. He hailed from village Marhama in Anantnag."

Kashmir Valley has witnessed third vehicle mounted IED attack on the security forces this year.

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Abhishek denies involvement with chit fund company

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Abhishek Singh, former BJP Member of Parliament and son of ex-chief minister Raman Singh, on Tuesday categorically denied the charges of his involvement with Anmol chit fund company.

His denial came after an FIR for forgery was registered against him by Ambikapur police for his alleged involvement in the chit fund scam.

Abhishek talking to The Pioneer over phone refuted the charges of his involvement

with the Anmol chit fund company and claimed that his name would get cleared in the further investigation.

"Law will take its own course and I will be proved not guilty as I was not involved with such companies," he claimed.

Notable, Kotwali police of Ambikapur in Surguja region registered a case against Abhishek and 20 others, including Mayor, Rajnandgaon, Madhusudan Yadav and former Mayor Naresh Dakalia.

The case has been registered against Abhishek and other on June 17, 2019 following a directive of local court in its order on June 3, 2019.



police registered cases against them under section 34, 420 of IPC 1860 and section 10 of Protection of Interest of Investors of Chhattisgarh Act 2005.

An FIR for forgery registered against him and 20 others for involvement with Anmol chit fund company which duped several people in Chhattisgarh

Adhir Chowdhury to lead Cong in LS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With Rahul Gandhi refusing to budge from his stance on not leading the party either in Parliament or outside, the Congress on Tuesday named its five-time MP from West Bengal and former Union Minister Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as its leader in the Lok Sabha.

He will succeed Mallikarjun Kharge, who lost the Lok Sabha election, forcing the party to decide on another name. Chowdhury's name was cleared by the top party

leadership during a meeting at UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi's residence, after which a letter of his appointment was handed over to the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Chowdhury, who took part in the meeting, initially denied any deliberation over the issue. However, later on he confirmed saying, "I have been given this responsibility (the leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha). I was asked to stand in the front. I said okay. I am a foot soldier and foot soldiers stand in front. So I will fight as a foot soldier."

Temp-humidity pattern found in Bihar chamki deaths

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Deaths due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) or 'chamki fever' in Bihar's Muzaffarpur had crossed the three-digit mark before 2019 also. Not once but in as many as four calendar years.

An analysis by experts has found that the death toll had been high whenever temperature and humidity were recorded to be more than 38 degrees Celsius and 50 per cent respectively for consecutive days. This happened in 2011 (197 deaths), 2012 (275) 2013 (143), 2014 (375) and 2019 (106). The epidemic had been at its worst in 2014, when 375 deaths were reported.



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar visits Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital to review the situation prevailing due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome in Muzaffarpur district on Tuesday

Sanjay Kumar said so far 106 children have died this year and more than 430 others between

the ages of 4 and 10 years are being treated at Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital

(SKMCH) and Kejriwal hospital in Muzaffarpur. AES is fatal viral infection hitting the brain and leading to coma. At times survivors are left with serious disabilities — mental and physical.

While 2019 has not been an isolated year when the AES deaths have been reported, it is only now that the Bihar Government has woken up to announce a string of measures to contain the deadly disease. In fact, the Nitish Kumar-led Bihar Government also did not learn lessons from nearby Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh which had reported outbreak of the disease in 2017.

On Tuesday, Nitish, whose visit to the hospital met with a protest from the angry relatives over the Government's cal-

lousness in ensuring timely preventive steps, announced to increase bed strength in hospitals in the district and ordered an environmental study on AES.

At the Central level, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan too held a meeting of a multi-disciplinary group of experts in the national Capital and deliberated on the factors causing high child mortality in the AES/IE cases in the district.

Harsh Vardhan also stressed the need for research on AES to identify the disease that is still not identified and for that research facility should be developed in Muzaffarpur.

The socio-economic profile of the households which have reported the cases, their nutrition profiles, issues such as preventing heatwaves, reported high percentage of hypoglycemia in the children who have died, the prevailing health infrastructure in the district and other factors that could have aggravated the cases were deliberated thereabout.

According to the health experts, most of the children dying from AES belong to the poorest of the poor — the Mahadadi community, including Musahar and Scheduled Castes — and most of them were malnourished.

Senior paediatrician Dr Arun Shah was of the opinion that only awareness programme would not help in preventing the deaths. The kids are afflicted with another disease or are malnourished.

Didi for white paper, skips polls at 1 go meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday excused herself from attending the meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday on the issue of 'one nation, one election'.

She cited lack of sufficient time to come up with a "proper response" to the matter and called for circulation of a white paper on the subject to all political parties, inviting their views by providing adequate time to respond if the Centre indeed wanted "concrete suggestions".

The PM-convened meeting will also hold celebrations on the 75th anniversary of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

In her letter to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, who had sent out invites to all party presidents, she said such a "serious and sensitive subject" required consultation with constitutional and election experts and that to frame a proper response, she needed to consult all the members of her party.

Mamata had skipped the NITI Aayog meeting last Saturday and also did not attend the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his second term on May 30. She had called the NITI Aayog meeting "fruitless".

Reacting to Banerjee's decision, West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh said she was yet to recover from her defeat in the parliamentary polls and was making excuses to avoid any meeting convened by the Centre to all political parties, inviting their views by providing adequate time. "If you only do so, we will be able to give concrete suggestions on this important subject," she wrote in the letter.



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The TMC supremo's decision to stay away from Wednesday's meeting in Delhi comes against the backdrop of heightened tussle between the ruling party and the BJP in West Bengal after the sabbotage party made inroads into the eastern State.

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aspect of a healthy democracy," he said in Kolkata.

With 22 Lok Sabha members, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) is the fourth-largest party in the Lok Sabha along with the YSR Congress, which also has 22 members in the Lower House.

The TMC chief stated that regarding the development of aspirational districts, her party had already conveyed that they were not in favour of the selection of a few districts as it would be conflicting to the overall objective of achieving a balanced and uniform development of all the districts of the State.

Banerjee, nevertheless, said she and her party would wholeheartedly participate in the celebrations for 75 years of Independence and the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. And for ways to improve the productivity of Parliament, the parliamentary affairs ministry might consult the matter with all the political parties.

Opp firm against PM's 1 nation, 1 election call

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties have decided to oppose Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for 'One Nation, One Election'. The decision was taken unanimously at a meeting of the Opposition parties convened by UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and attended by leaders from the Congress, the TMC, the DMK, the NCP, the NC, the RSP, the Left and others.

Prominent leaders who attended the meeting included Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Adhir Ranjan Choudhary, K Suresh all from the Congress party, TR Baalu, Kanimozhi of the DMK, Supriya Sule of the NCP, Feroz Khan Noon of the NC, Thirumavalavan, Thol (VCK), NK Premachandran (RSP), PK Kunhalikutty (IUMML), and Thomas Chazhikadan of KC-M. TMC chief Mamata Banerjee has already opposed by declining to attend the meeting called to discuss the issue of 'One Nation, One Election' idea.

The meeting by Sonia Gandhi was called to chalk out their joint strategy for the Parliament session and to take a decision of the choice of Lok Sabha Speaker. Newly appointed leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Choudhary said the Congress and other UPA allies have decided to support the BJP candidate On Birla for the post of the Lok Sabha Speaker but remained silent on the issue of Deputy Speaker. Chowdhury said the Congress has already moved a motion supporting the ruling party candidate for the post of Speaker of Lok Sabha.



UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi after a meet to decide their strategy in Parliament, on Tuesday

held to decide the strategy on key matters such as Lok Sabha speaker's election and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to discuss the one nation, one election issue.

Sources said the meeting, chaired by Congress Parliamentary Party leader Sonia Gandhi and attended by Rahul Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, discussed the strategy to be adopted by the party during the meeting called by the Prime Minister.

Senior Congress leaders AK Antony, P Chidambaram, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Jairam Ramesh, K Suresh, and Adhir Ranjan Choudhary, were among those present at the meeting held at Sonia Gandhi's residence 10, Janpath. The strategy for the dinner-meeting was also discussed at the Congress meeting.

Pak Army-ISI trying to create another Burhan Wani in J&K?

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The recent spurt in terrorist attacks in Jammu & Kashmir is a play of the Pakistan Army-ISI combine and their terror affiliates to create a Burhan Wani type character to lambast India at a slew of events coming up at the international level, including Financial Action Task Force.

Assessments here suggest, the latest Pakistani tactic comes soon after neighbouring countries' Prime Minister Imran Khan was isolated at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meet in Bishkek amid a towering presence of India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared at the meet to call out nations that sponsor terror.

Earlier, then Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the visit of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited to New Delhi and Islamabad to provoke security forces in Jammu & Kashmir to initiate major counter-terror operation in the Valley.

In its bid to deceive the international community ahead of the FATF meeting later this month, the Pakistan Government has also sent an alert to India and the US that an attack might be carried out in the Valley in the form of an explosives-laden vehicle to project to the international anti-terrorist financing body and the international community that Islamabad has begun taking action against terror groups sharing intelligence with New Delhi and Washington, sources said.

Apart from the cordon and search operations, the security forces have been engaged by the ultras in encounters, firing and throwing of grenades at security forces personnel in the last one week leading to a number of casualties of the Army, paramilitary and state police forces.

sorted terror groups are aimed at creating hero out of a terrorist to exploit the international audience as well as deflect domestic pressures on the falling economy in the terror sponsoring nation," counter-terrorism expert DR Rituraj Mate said.

The Pakistani tactic also comes ahead of the visit of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visit to New Delhi and Islamabad to provoke security forces in Jammu & Kashmir to initiate major counter-terror operation in the Valley.

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As strike ends, SC defers hearing on security of doctors, keeps open 'larger issue' of their safety

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday deferred the hearing on a plea seeking protection of doctors at Government hospitals, saying since doctors have called off their strike in West Bengal and other states, there is no urgency to hear the matter.

The top court observed that it understood the security of doctors is a serious issue but it cannot direct to depute police personnel with each and every doctor without taking into account the holistic picture.

A vacation Bench of Justices Deepak Gupta and Surya Kant refused to issue notice (to the Centre) at present but said that it is keeping the larger issue of protection of doctors open.

"When this matter was mentioned yesterday, we had directed to list it to be heard by the medical fraternity in West Bengal and in some other States was continuing. On Monday, the strike was called off. Therefore we find no urgency to take up the matter. List the matter after the next vacation before appropriate bench," it said.

The Bench said safety of doctors is a serious issue and it needs to take a holistic view in providing security to doctors. "We understand it is a serious issue but we can't provide security to doctors at the cost of other citizens. We have to take a holistic view. We have to look at the larger picture like availability of police personnel and other things. We are not providing protection to doctors but at the same time we cannot direct to depute police personnel with each and every doctor," the Bench said.

Meanwhile, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) also filed an application seeking intervention into the plea already filed, saying protection needs to be provided to doctors across the country. PTI

LOKSABHASESSION: DAY 2

Oath-taking marks exchange of slogans by MPs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The second day of oath-taking in the 17th Lok Sabha on Tuesday was marked by raising of slogans such as 'Jai Shri Ram, Jai Maa Durga, Jai Bheem, Tamil Vazhuka and Allahu Akbar by members with some even engaging in heated exchanges and bravados and countering. The sloganeering went unabated ignoring the Chair's direction to desist from it.

Many MPs were adding their own slogans related to religion and cheering up regionalism from the podium after Oath taking. Ruling party also paid tit for tat for those who on Monday made hue and cry during the Bhopal MP Sadvi Pragna Singh Thakur.

Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM MP from Hyderabad, coined 'Jai Bheem, Jai Meen, Jai Kabir, Allahu Akbar, Jai Hind', after members from the ruling side shouted slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram', 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and



AIMIM MP from Hyderabad Asaduddin Owaisi takes oath as a Member of the 17th Lok Sabha on the second day of its first Session, at Parliament, on Tuesday

'Vande mataram'. Chanting of Jai Shri Ram was at its peak, when Owaisi was called to take oath. At one point, Owaisi was seen asking Chair to control the

sloganeering BJP MPs, asking how could take oath during such a noisy situation.

Slogans of Vande Mataram rose at its peak in Lok Sabha after



Samajwadi Party's MP Shafiqur Rahman Barq takes oath as a Member of the 17th Lok Sabha on the second day of its first Session, at Parliament, on Tuesday

Samajwadi Party's MP Shafiqur Rahman Barq made comments against Vande Mataram from the podium after his Oath taking. "Jahan tak Vande Mataram ka taaloo hai, it against Islam, we cannot follow it," he said after concluding his oath.

While many BJP MPs ended their oath with chants of

'Bharat mata ki jai' and Jai Shri Ram, Samajwadi Party MP from Sambhal, Shafiqur Rahman Barq, objected to Vande Mataram slogan, drawing protests from members of treasury benches who demanded an apology from him.

BSP member Shyam Singh Yadav concluded his oath with 'Jai Bheem, Jai Bharat and Jai Samajwad'. Some of the members especially from West Bengal and Tamil Nadu began and ended their oath with sloganeering despite the presiding officer ruling that that no slogans will go on record. Many DMK MPs ended with slogan 'Tamil Vazhuka' (Let Tamil win), BJP MPs and other MPs from North India also countered them from shouting back Bharat Mata Ki Jai and Jai Hind.

While many BJP MPs ended their oath with chants of 'Bharat mata ki jai' and Jai Shri Ram, Samajwadi Party MP from Sambhal, Shafiqur Rahman Barq, objected to Vande Mataram slogan, drawing protests from members of treasury benches who demanded an apology from him. BSP member Shyam Singh Yadav concluded his oath with 'Jai Bheem, Jai Bharat and Jai Samajwad'. Some of the members especially from West Bengal and Tamil Nadu began and ended their oath with sloganeering despite the presiding officer ruling that that no slogans will go on record. Many DMK MPs ended with slogan 'Tamil Vazhuka' (Let Tamil win), BJP MPs and other MPs from North India also countered them from shouting back Bharat Mata Ki Jai and Jai Hind.

Responding to chanting by treasury benches, he said even Modi is not so much popular in the House. Banerjee hoped that he will continue to get blessing from members of treasury benches.

Sluggish monsoon may fuel drought

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The slow progress of the monsoon, which irrigates more than half of India's farms, may worsen the drought-like situation prevailing in many States with an overall 45 per cent rain deficiency recorded till June 18 since its advent on June 8.

The monsoon is yet to mark its arrival in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Odisha. The country has so far received 46.1 mm of rainfall against the normal of 82.4 mm for this time.

Due to deficiency of rainfall, kharif sowing area was 82.20 lakh hectares compared to 90.34 lakh hectares during the corresponding week in 2018-19. The Telangana Government has issued advisory asking farmers not to rush into sowing. The farmers are also advised not to grow maize on light soils.

According to IMD, south peninsula including Kerala, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, are witnessing deficient rains of over 38 percent till June 18. "As many as 14 subdivisions, including drought-ridden Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, are facing deficiency of more than 60 per cent," the IMD said.

IMD's Director General Dr KJ Ramesh said the monsoon should have reached Central India till June 18. But this year it hasn't even covered Karnataka properly or entered the Northeast.

The East and North East region recorded 43 per cent rain deficiency while North West recorded 27 per cent deficiency. Except



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IMD's Director General Dr KJ Ramesh said the monsoon should have reached Central India till June 18. But this year it hasn't even covered Karnataka properly or entered the Northeast.

Lakshadweep, all subdivisions of meteorological department recorded deficient rainfall till date. June-to-September monsoon made a delayed onset over the Kerala coast on 8 June and has been advancing at a sluggish pace over the mainland. It lost momentum because of Cyclone Vayu, whose formation in the Arabian Sea coincided with the monsoon onset and ended up draining it of moisture. The cyclone eventually drifted away from the Gujarat coast. Adequate rainfall in the monsoon season is critical for India's agricultural output and the overall economy. A deficit rainfall during the early part of the season could delay sowing and reduce crop output even if rainfall gathers pace later. According to IMD, the delayed southwest monsoon is now expected to arrive in Maharashtra by June 21. The much-awaited monsoon is expected to reach southern Konkan and Goa by June 21, and is likely to cover the entire Maharashtra by June 24 or 25.

Govt restores 'ration in kind' for armed forces in peace areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has restored supply of rations to defence officers posted in peace areas following a recommendation by the Defence Ministry.

The scheme in practice since mid 1980s was scrapped in 2017 following a recommendation by the Seventh Pay Commission and in lieu officers were paid Rs 117 per day.

Doing away with providing rations had led to discontentment amongst the armed forces and taking note of it the Government gave the nod for the Defence Ministry proposal for restoration of 'ration in kind', officials said on Tuesday.

The provisions of 'ration in kind' was earlier applicable to junior officers and later allowed for all officer ranks. The officers were given a choice to opt for allowance instead of rations in kind by various officers opted for it, sources said. They also said the Defence forces had appealed for restoration of the scheme soon after it was scrapped in 2017.

However, officers deployed in operational areas continued to get ration in kind besides those posted in peace stations in counter-insurgency areas.

CBI books Anand Grover, his firm under FCRA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked noted lawyer Anand Grover and his Mumbai-based voluntary organisation, Lawyers Collective, for alleged violation of Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) after receiving funds from abroad and other offences under the Indian Penal Code.

The agency has filed an FIR on the basis of a complaint from the Union Home Ministry which has alleged several discrepancies in the utilisation of foreign aid received by the Lawyers Collective.

The CBI has booked Grover, known for his social activism, is the husband of former additional solicitor general and Supreme Court lawyer Indira Jaisingh.

Grover and his outfit has been booked for criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust, false statement made in declaration, violation of FCRA and criminal misconduct. The case was registered on June 13



various provisions of the FCRA, 2010 were noticed, the Ministry said.

It added on-site inspection of books of accounts and records of the NGO was conducted from January 19 to 23, 2016.

The Ministry has claimed that comments were sought from the NGO on the basis of violations reported during the inspection, but those were not found satisfactory, following which its FCRA registration was suspended and a show-cause notice issued.

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by the CBI's office in Mumbai.

Recently, a PIL was filed by Lawyers Voice, a voluntary organisation of advocates, in the Supreme Court, alleging that the funds collected by Lawyers Collective were misutilised for "activities against the nation".

A bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Deepak Gupta had issued notice to Jaisingh, Grover and the MHA, asking them to file their responses on the allegations, including that the money received by Lawyers Collective was used to "influence political activities".

Jaisingh, Grover and Lawyers Collective had issued a statement, disputing "any allegation of misutilisation of any funds".

"It is obvious to us that this is victimisation on account of Ms Jaisingh taking up the issue of the procedure adopted in relation to the allegations of sexual harassment against the Chief Justice of India by a former employee of the Supreme Court, which Ms Jaisingh has done so in her capacity as a concerned citizen, a senior member of the bar and a women's rights advocate, with out commenting on the merits of the allegations," the press statement had said.

Bastar's Tribal weekly markets will have access to medical facilities

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Tribal people living in the hinterlands of Bastar region will have access to medical facility at the weekly market, announced Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel here on Tuesday.

Apart from medical facility in weekly market, for combating malnutrition in Bastar, nutritious food will be provided through Panchayats and women self-help groups (SHGs), he said.

The Chief Minister made the announcement while addressing a programme organised by 'Hardiya Sahu' community held here at Mahadev Ghat. Pilot projects for these schemes will be soon launched in Bastar, he said.

"Bastar regions has the highest malnutrition level across



Chhattisgarh. We have inherited this problem and are committed to completely eradicate it," the Chief Minister said while addressing the gathering.

He informed people that through Gram Panchayats and

women SHGs local people will be provided nutritious food as per their likings. In coming one week a pilot project will be launched in few Panchayats and in coming one month, rest of the districts will be covered, he said.

According to the Chief Minister, tribal people living in forest-mineral rich Bastar region do not have access to health services.

"Bastar and Dantewada collectors have been directed to sent medical teams consisting of a doctor, mobile pathology unit, portable X-Ray unit and necessary medicines at the weekly markets," the Chief Minister said while quickly adding the pilot project for this scheme will also begin in one week time.

As per the Chief Minister within one month the system will be replicated in other districts of the Bastar region.

It will be made sure that medical teams compulsorily visit all weekly markets. He hoped that it will benefit large numbers of people living in the forested region.

NMC pats Chhattisgarh govt for imparting education to minority girls

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Member of the National Commission for Minorities (NGM) Manjit Singh Rai appreciated the Government of Chhattisgarh for running 93 Kasturba Gandhi Residential Girls' Schools in remote rural areas of the state's 27 districts and imparting education to girls from minority communities.

Rai was holding a joint review meeting of Prime Minister's 15-point programme for minorities' welfare with school education, women and child development and health department at new Circuit House on Tuesday.

He directed officials to submit proposal for anganbadi centre and its building in minority dominated areas. The centres should have facilities for vaccination, recording their



blood groups, identification of diseases and treatment of children.

Director, Public Instructions S Prakash briefing the meeting said under state education policy anganbadi has also been included while under Education for All drive school education is provided in 98% settlement.

All Kasturba Gandhi Schools are 100 seaters where education from class 8th to 10th is being imparted and a proposal is on the pipeline for 12th standard. He added that

around 340 are working while meritorious students are being provided scholarship.

The NCM member directed the officials to ensure economic activities, employment, skill development and linking them to bank and providing loans. Panchayat and rural development department officer briefed that in last three years around 3264 minority community members had been given houses while in current year target is to reach out to 1457 beneficiaries.

Minister's initiatives bring back children from Maharashtra

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Due to initiatives taken by minister for labour and urban administration Dr Shiv Kumar Daharia two minor children were brought back to the state from a juvenile remand home in Pune, Maharashtra.

The children Majnu and Shalini were detained in the Pune's juvenile remand home for performing street show despite being minors.

Majnu, 11, S/O Ievrakhan was a resident of village Bargaon of Pamgarh police station area in Janjgir Champa district while Shalini, 8, D/O Jeevanli Dhidhi was resident of village Rewan of Mandir Hasaud police station area in Raipur district.

The children were detained by Maharashtra police when they were performing street play on national highway there. They have been kept at a juvenile remand home since past seven months.

As the parents of the children were illiterate they were unable to make direct contact with the Maharashtra authorities. They therefore informed about their plight to the labour minister Daharia.

Daharia taking the matter sympathetically took the help of women and child welfare department of the state and contacted the officials in Maharashtra and urged them to send them back to their home district under custody of their parents so that they can be brought up their children in a better way.

The parents of the children provided affidavits that they will from now onwards not permit their children to perform street play.

Meanwhile, with the efforts of minister Daharia the children were on Tuesday handed over to their parents with a promise that they will not engage them in street plays in future.

Integrated steps needed to curb Naxal menace: Baghel

CM discussed with trainee IPS officers on challenges of Maoist problem

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Underlining the need to take integrated steps to curb Maoist menace in the state, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Tuesday said it was a big challenge for him to win trust of tribals of Bastar and convince them that security forces are deployed in the area solely for their security and safety.

Baghel was discussing on the challenges before the state on Naxal front at his official residence with trainee IPS officers from across the country who were on a visit to the state on Tuesday. He informed the trainee officials that the problem persisting here in Chhattisgarh was different from the other states.

Citing that around 60-80%



of the people in Bastar are tribals, Baghel apprised the officials that poverty and unemployment are the biggest problems confronting the state. The livelihood of tribals in Bastar is dependent on minor forest produce and they didn't accept that infrastructure development done in their region was for their betterment, he said.

Baghel further stressed that there was an urgent need to work in coordination with

all the concerned departments there like education, health, Panchayat, power and forest. He also underlined the need for focusing on providing tribal ruralities the opportunities of employment, development and social repute to win their trust.

The 22 officials who were visiting the state are of 2018 batch getting training at the National Police Academy, Hyderabad and 7 among them are of Chhattisgarh cadre.

Hardcore Naxal shot dead

The killed ultra was identified as Seema-secretary and Naxal Divisional Committee Member (DVCN) of Sitanadi area committee and carried a reward of Rs 8 lakh on her head

STAFF REPORTER ■ DHAMTARI

A hardcore female Naxal carrying a cash reward of Rs 8 lakh on her head was shot down in an encounter with left wing extremists in the insurgency-hit Dhamtari district, police said here on Tuesday.

According to police, they had received specific intelligence input about presence of Maoists in the jungles of Kattipani and Tarajhar under Borai police station limits.

"An elite commandos of Special Task Force (STF) immediately swung into action and launched search operation from Borai police station limits," a police official said.

Security personnel had a face-off with armed Maoists in a forested patch near Boraigaon which resulted in the gun battle. After a brief gun battle, Naxals slipped into jungle and later while searching of area body of a woman Naxal in uniform was found, police said. A review of Rs 8 lakh on her head, police claimed.

She was identified as Seema, secretary and Naxal Divisional Committee Member (DVCN) of Sitanadi area committee and carried a reward of Rs 8 lakh on her head, police claimed.

Seema was wanted in connection with serious Maoist incidents like, murder, loot, arson, dacoity and others, police said.

Police forces in Bastar to learn 'Gondi'

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Cops fighting Maoists in Naxal Chhotbed of Bastar will now learn 'Gondi', the lingua-franca of Abujmahad region.

"We have decided that for enabling jawans to better understand Bastar and its people they will be taught the native language of Bastar region," Chhattisgarh Director General of Police DM Awasthi told The Pioneer.

The first batch of 50 policemen has already started learning 'Gondi' in Dantewada district, he said.

"Apart from Gondi soon we will also train our security personnel in Halbi and other local dialects spoken in Bastar," he said.

According to police, currently about 30,000 security personnel are deployed in different districts of Bastar for fighting Maoists.

The first batch of 50 policemen has already started learning 'Gondi' in Dantewada district

"A huge section of police force is not aware of the local language spoken by people in the hinterlands of the Bastar which makes communication and interrogation a difficult task," Superintendent of Police Dantewada Dr Abhishek Pallav said. Gondi is more akin to south Indian languages which Hindi or Chhattisgarhi speaking person cannot understand easily.

According to the SP, the knowledge of Gondi language will also make easier interception of Maoist messages, which has to be now translated.

people come with any problem the police staff over there doesn't understand their language which makes policing difficult," he said while adding that a capsule course of three months has been designed for training our people in Gondi.

EOW probe ordered against ex-MD of CGMSC

RAIPUR: Chhattisgarh government on Tuesday gave permission for investigation by EOW (Economic Offences Wing) against former managing director of Chhattisgarh Medical Services Corporation (CGMSC) V Ramarao. He has been accused of tampering data files and favouring particular suppliers as MD of CGMSC.

State Economic Offences Wing had sought permission from Health and Family Welfare Department to conduct investigation on this complaint under Section 17 of Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 and Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act 2018.

Health Minister TS Singhdeo took the complaint into account and gave permission for EOW's investigation in the case. Department has issued letter in the context to EOW, according to government communiqué.

June 22 is last date for submission of poll expenses



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The last date for submission of election-related accounts by candidates of the 2019 Lok Sabha Polls is till 5.00 pm on June 22 at the respective District Electoral Officer's office.

Election Commission of India appointed election expense observers Kumar Ajit and Jadhav Vivekanand Rajendra, for Raipur Lok Sabha

seat held a meeting with candidates and their agents at Red Cross conference hall to guide the candidates and agents regarding the accounts filing.

The observers said that all candidates have to submit their election-related accounts in specified format within 30 days after counting of votes to accounting team. If the candidates fail to submit the accounts then their report is sent to ECI. ECI then declares such candi-

dates as defaulters and debar them from contesting election for next three years.

The observers provided technical guidance on the accounts related problems. Additional collector Ashutosh Pandey stated that if any candidate or his agent is facing any problem in submission of accounts he or she can seek necessary guidance in fulfilling the norms within specified format, before last date of submission.

SHO Chandaura of Surajpur dist suspended

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Director General of Police (DGP) DM Awasthi gave instructions to Inspector General (IG) Sarguja to immediately probe the complaint against SHO Chandaura in Surajpur district, who is accused of extorting truck drivers, a DIPR release said on Tuesday.

Prima facie the complaint was found to be true by IG Sarguja. Hence, SHO Chandaura Raghubeer Singh Thakur has been suspended with immediate effect. It is noteworthy that DGP Awasthi had given clear instructions in the SHO Conference of the

state held on June 13 that illegal recovery by police officials-employees would not be tolerated at any cost and any corrupt-employee indulged in corrupt activities will be subjected to strict disciplinary action.

DGP DM Awasthi has constituted State Vigilance Cell, led by DIG SC Dwivedi, at Police Headquarters for investigation of corruption-related cases of police officials-employees. Under this, immediate action will be taken on complaints related to indulgence of police officials-employees in corruption, illegal recovery and other criminal activities.

BJP suppressing facts with JCC (J)'s help on benefiting Adani: Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Giving a list of coal blocks allotted to Adani group along with iron ore block no 13 in Bailadilla hills, the Congress accused the BJP of suppressing the facts with the help of its alleged 'B' team, the Janta Congress Chhattisgarh (J).

In a statement, state general secretary and chairman communication wing of the party Shailesh Nitin Trivedi said the important dates in allotment of iron ore block no 13 in Bailadilla hills BJP government provided undue benefit to the Adani group in a well planned way. The agreement for allotment of block no 13 was inked by NCL

CMD and Chairman, National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) on December 6, 2018 and the Congress government took the oath on December 17, 2018, he said. This proves that the then BJP in a well planned way benefited the Adani group, he added.

Trivedi further said that if the BJP government was concerned about interest and welfare of the state then the people of region were not forced to agitate and launch a protest. He further blamed that BJP governments at the Center and in states where it is in power were hatching conspiracy to benefit the party's corporate friends and handing over precious mineral resources to them.

SHO crushed to death by speeding truck

BILASPUR: Station house officer Sarkanpa was crushed to death by a rashly driven truck near the police station on Tuesday late evening, police said.

SHO Sarkanpa police station, Hariram Sahu was on his bike when the incident happened. A rashly driven truck coming from behind dashed him near the police station around 8 pm, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP), Bilaspur OP Sharma said. The collision was so intense that Hariram Sahu died on the spot. The truck driver was arrested, the ASP said while adding Hariram Sahu was scheduled to retire in ten days time. Police booked the truck driver under relevant Sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and are further investigating into the case.

Two held for taking out elephant's tusk and bones

The arrested person include Sarpanch of Raghunath Nagar village who had taken out tusk and bones from the carcass of an elephant which died of some natural cause in Tamor Pingla Sanctuary

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Two reporters, including Sarpanch of Raghunath Nagar village in Surajpur district, were arrested for taking out a dead elephant's tusk and bones and trying to sell it, forest officials said here on Tuesday.

"On June 1 we came to know that a male elephant had died deep inside the jungles of Tamor Pingla sanctuary. The death was natural. However, its tusk and bones were missing," Deputy Director elephant reserve Sarguja, Arvind PM (IFS) said. The wild elephant's carcass was decomposed when we found it, so by

looking at its condition it was assumed that the animal would have died four to five days ago before we spotted it, Arvind said.

An investigation was launched into the case and the tusk and bones were seized from Munnalal a resident of Sonhat village of Sarguja district and Manmohan Charva. Charva is the Sarpanch of Raghunath Nagar village, he said.

The duo was booked under Section 9 of the Wild Life Protection Act and have been sent to jail, Arvind said while adding that involvement of other people in the case is under investigation.

PAPER WITH PASSION

Children of a lesser God

Bihar's AES deaths are symptomatic of policy apathy towards public health standards and failure to create awareness



The real headline behind the death of over a hundred children in Bihar's Muzaffarpur is the utter lack of priority towards addressing primary health issues in a backward pocket that is living in denial of itself and the ruling class denies it even exists. So disembodied has reality become from our national narrative that losing a hundred young lives was disgustingly set aside by the Bihar Health Minister during a containment strategy meeting in favour of statistics of an ongoing cricket match. And that reality is of

encephalitis assuming epidemic proportions in the dust bowls of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh every season, both of which serially account for 35 per cent of child deaths in the country. The disease is just the manifestation of a chronic illness called malnutrition and low immunity, which makes the locals vulnerable to outbreak of brain fever, particularly the young and the old. The fact that this has been occurring cyclically since the mid-1990s shows how we have grossly misdiagnosed preventive and primary healthcare in the rural hinterland and failed to communicate combat strategies among the community. Had the children been given proper vaccines, had they access to equipped primary health centres and received first-line treatment, the deaths could have been avoided. Had there been proper awareness campaigns, then it would be found that neither encephalitis nor deadly litchi toxins from neighbouring fruit farms or hypoglycemia were the cause of the deaths. However, each worked together in varying degrees to exacerbate a malaise called collective apathy, covered up as a "mystery disease."

The biggest problem is in defining the malady. Any brain disease, brought on by virus, bacteria, parasites, chemicals or toxins can be defined as acute encephalitis syndrome, which basically manifests as inflammation of the brain. One has to isolate the causative variants, which could differ on a case by case basis. And as studies conducted by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Atlanta-based Center for Disease Control (CDC) over the past few years have shown, the fever strikes when there is a severe heat wave. This leads to severe dehydration, worsening attendant problems relating to under-nourishment. Besides, most victims have been found to work or live near litchi cultivations, consumption of which some say has led to dipping blood sugar levels and hypoglycemia. But experts have found that malnourished children, who ate litchis and went to sleep without a meal, fell ill, particularly during the high heat of summer. And methylene cyclopropyl-glycine (MCPG) found in litchis only affects the brain in severely malnourished victims. So generalising litchi as a toxin and other such confusing theories are deflecting attention from the Bihar government's abject failure in implementing public health correctives and developing resistance to a known health hazard. Early detection and treatment is a near impossibility in these parts with the nearest health centres sometimes eight hours away. That wait gets longer if the health centre is not equipped enough with either trained staff or intravenous glucose drips and the victim has to be taken to a State hospital. And although the Bihar government has mandated availability of free vaccines at all primary health centres, the execution is yet to be a hundred per cent. Little wonder then that with such glaring lacuna in crisis response, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sent notices to the Union Health Ministry and Bihar government over the Muzaffarpur deaths. There is a need for ensuring basic hygiene, health and nutrition parameters for our children, who are the social and human capital of the future. As an Asian powerhouse that's looking to consolidate its economic and strategic standards, it is shocking that India continues to be among the topmost countries with the largest number of children being stunted (46.6 million) and wasted (25.5 million). This is despite the fact that children's health has been the Government's priority since 1975, when the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme was rolled out, or 1995, when the Mid-day meal scheme was launched nationally. The recent National Nutrition Strategy, too, aims to end malnutrition by 2022. It is expected to synergise efforts, monitor progress and issue alerts for timely action and help States/UTs achieve targeted goals. But all of this is possible only when there are resources. In short, budgetary allocation for the health sector needs a thorough relook.

Electric shock

The auto industry is against the move to electrify transport. Is this its last gasp or does it have a point?



The automotive industry is being described by some, who feel the future is electric, as status-quoist. After all India's two-wheeler manufacturers have openly attacked proposals by the NITI Aayog to make all sub-150cc motorcycles and scooters electric. So it is being ridiculed as ancient, not open to new ideas and scared of becoming extinct. But there are some severe issues with electrification in India that urgently need to be addressed and the industry, while dragging its feet on the issue, does have some points. The government and

policy-makers would be silly to ignore them. While India has enough electricity, the electrical grid is nowhere near capable enough of handling the tremendous load that even disaggregated home-charging will place on the system. Of course, that will be built up over the next decades, but the other problem, that of cost, is not going to go away in a hurry.

Electric motorcycles and scooters are expensive, particularly if they have a functional range of over 100 km. The average commuter motorcycle costs around ₹50,000 today, but an e-motorcycle with 100 km range will cost ₹1 lakh at the bare minimum, possibly more. The batteries also will have a lifespan of around 1,500 cycles, which would be decent for a mobile phone, but you wouldn't change your 100 cc motor after five years, would you? Nobody will buy electric vehicles for altruistic reasons, no matter how much greenmail the government and environmentalists indulge in, unless the motorist sees actual benefit of the product. In a two-wheeler, running on electricity is less than half as expensive as running on petrol. Even in extreme scenarios, that means a saving of ₹500 a month. If fuel prices increase faster than electricity prices, buying an electric two-wheeler does not make sense and the government's FAME-II subsidy scheme is but a drop in the ocean. The fact is the four-stroke 100cc petrol motorcycle brought mobility to millions of Indians, giving even the impoverished a mode of transport that empowered them economically. The economic impact of the motorcycle thanks to the mobility it produced was crucial to India in the late 1980s through the 1990s, much like the mobile phone in the mid-2000s and cheap over-the-air data today. Going electric is a noble goal but if we set targets in a very short-term, it will leave millions of Indians behind. It is elitist and if we are to work towards "sabka saath, sabka vikas", we will need to work towards solutions that make environmental friendliness affordable.

opinion

Forked road in Sri Lanka

In a conflict between parallel enquiries into the Easter bombings, the question of accountability will be drowned. The Sirisena Government can't evade tough questions by vilifying Muslims

ASHOK K MEHTA

Two months after the Easter bombings, while the dots have been connected, accountability is still playing truant. Besides Lanka on April 4, 10, 16, 20 and 21 but incredibly, security agencies in Colombo took no action. On this page, after the horrendous bombings, this writer had called the catastrophic event a mystery.

Both President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe of what was once a National Unity Government of two rival parties have said they received no official information on terror attacks. Sirisena is the Minister for Defence and Minister for Law and Order, which place all intelligence, defence, security and police agencies under his command. The Minister of State for Defence for good optics is in Wickremesinghe's Cabinet. While Sirisena has ordered a presidential commission to investigate the bombings, the powerful speaker, Karu Jayasuriya, has appointed a parliamentary select committee (PSC) for enquiry. The PSC has had public hearings aired on television which has upset the President, who has since prohibited all serving defence, intelligence and security officials from testifying before it. It has been boycotted by Sirisena's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP).

Defence Secretary Hemaraj Fernando, who was forced to resign, told the PSC that intelligence was available on April 9 of a possible threat on April 21 and had assumed that Sri Lanka's state intelligence services chief would have informed the President as was the practice. He added that Defence Secretary, he could not meet the President — not even once in two weeks — as he had no time. The shocker was the revelation that Sirisena had told Fernando not to invite the Prime Minister, MoS for Defence and Inspector General Police, Pujith Jayasundara for National Security Council meetings since November 13, 2018, following the Constitutional crisis in which Sirisena had sacked Wickremesinghe and appointed Opposition leader and his presidential rival, Mahinda Rajapaksa, as Prime Minister, which was later revoked by the courts.

IGP Jayasundara, who refused to resign, was suspended by the President and moved the courts, told the PSC that prior intelligence was available, giving specific details about the catastrophic intelligence failure adding: "No emergency was declared." He said Sirisena offered him an assurance that the investigation, assuring him that the presidential commission would clear his name. Jayasundara struck the final nail in the coffin by saying there was "total unpreparedness of Government to act on intelligence reports."

The head of national intelligence, Sisira Mendis, a former police chief who



reported directly to the President, testifying before the PSC said that the bombings could have been averted. Mendis also said that the President failed to hold regular security meetings to assess the threat from Islamic radicals, linked to National Towheed Jamaat (NTJ), Sirisena has dismissed Mendis.

Linked to the suicide bombings is the revelation that in 2018, the premier spy agency, state intelligence chief, Nilantha Jayawardene, ordered the IGP to stop investigating Islamic militants as well as NTJ. He also did not take seriously the information provided by India on the radical NTJ. While in India for Prime Minister Modi's swearing in, Sirisena said there was no proof that the bombers visited India, contradicting Army Commander Mahesh Senanayake, who told BBC that they did go to India for training. Clearing himself of any responsibility for the intelligence failures, Sirisena said: "I was in Sri Lanka up to April 16 before going to Singapore on a private visit. None of the defence Chiefs informed me of any such intelligence."

All that one wished to know about the nine suicide

bombers is now in the public domain. Zahran Hashim, the radical preacher linked to NTJ from Kattankudy in Batticaloa, which has Sri Lanka's biggest mosque, was the ring leader. How the suicide bomber inside Taj Samudra hotel panicked, walked out and blew himself up along with two others in a small hotel in Dethiwa suburb of Colombo is well-known. None of the nine bombers was impoverished, physically or mentally challenged, but all highly educated and affluent, two of them millionaires and all roped in by Hashim. It was a small group connected with Hashim.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's capacity to self-destruct may be hurling it towards another ethnic conflict. The majority Sinhala Buddhists, spearheaded by the clergy and political Opposition, have demonised the Muslims. Anti-Muslim riots, surpassing in scale the worst ones in 2018 in Diganana, have occurred after the bombings. A false narrative of hatred and prejudice is being spread against Muslims. Fake tales about swords stored in mosques and mass sterilisation of Sinhalese by a Muslim doctor are being circulated.

Vilification of Muslims will

further divide society as Muslims live across the country. Calling for unity among communities, it was distinguished on part of Sirisena to warn them of the emergence of a Muslim Prabhakaran, an avoidable simile to the dreaded Tamil supremo of the LTTE who fought an ethnic conflict for three decades, ending 2009. The mass resignation of two Muslim Governors and nine Ministers to enable the Government to conduct investigations, clearing them of linkages to suicide bombings, has opened a new front. Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) envoys based in Colombo have appealed to the Government to protect Muslims and their properties.

The presidential pardon to reactionary monk Gnanasara Thero, who was implicated in the anti-Muslim violence of 2018 and stormed a court hearing old cases of "enforced disappearances", will add fuel to fire. Rumours against Muslims and anti-Muslim riots are a smoke screen to shift focus from the presidential and parliamentary enquiries to resurgent Sinhala Buddhist extremism directed at Muslims. The Government is drafting a leg-

islation to change Muslim laws dealing with *burqa*, *hijab*, *halal*, mosques and *madrasas* in consultation with Muslim clergy and leadership.

The question of accountability will be drowned in the conflict between parallel enquiries reflecting the breakdown of the co-habitation Government. Why did Sirisena not know about the intended bombings and why did intelligence and security forces fail to act? Sirisena can only be investigated after January 2020 by a new President. But the broken-down Government cannot afford to wait to be fixed till after the elections.

The ultimate irony for Sri Lanka was when Wickremesinghe, after a meeting with Modi, who was on a five-hour visit to Colombo this month, sought India's help in counter-terrorism. Since 2009 after vanquishing LTTE, Colombo has proudly showcased its unique prowess and skills in eliminating root and branch, terrorism in the 21st century — a historic first! (The writer is a retired Major General of the Indian Army and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the revamped Integrated Defence Staff)

SOUNDBITE

'One nation one poll' is an attractive idea but cannot be put into practice without a Constitutional amendment providing for fixed tenure for legislatures.

Former CEC
—TS Krishnamurthy

It's been a tough journey for me when it comes to my battle with obesity. Everyone has their own struggles. I have had and continue to have mine.

Actor
—Arjun Kapoor

Trade deficit with China is not economically sustainable and it can also become politically sensitive if we don't take steps to address it.

Indian envoy
—Vikram Misri

A vibrant Opposition, notwithstanding whatever its numbers are, is important in a parliamentary democracy. Every word of the Opposition is valuable.

Prime Minister
—Narendra Modi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Good sense prevails

Sir — Like a raging wildfire, the medical fraternity across the length and breadth of the country lent support to agitating doctors in West Bengal, seeking a Central legislation against hospital violence and attacks by infuriated patients. Janata Party Communist Party of India (Marxist) conspiracy. This fuelled the protests. Creating an image of a victim of the conspiracy and machination of the BJP is no way to help reclaim the situation. Violence against doctors is trying to follow the best line of treatment for a patient is unacceptable. They may have a demi-god status in the public eye, but they are no

More strength to team India

His refers to the editorial, "Not worth the hype" (June 18). For the thousands of Indian fans waving the tricolour at Old Trafford and lakhs of viewers in India, there was never a dull moment. While people were sweating back home, Indians patiently in the rain to watch the Indian team triumph. As scripted, the game started as one of the fiercest rivivals in world sport. India had put its unbeaten streak on the line, while Pakistan was hoping to boost its chances of reaching the semi-finals. But it ended — as is customary — with India riding roughshod over the 'Men in Green'.

It was a day of disruption with the players on and off the field all afternoon. But finally, we had an outcome — India defeated Pakistan by an emphatic 89 runs. Even the rain gods were on India's side. The drizzle hovered over Old Trafford all day but there were only two major interruptions — one towards the end of the Indian innings and the other when Pakistan was on the verge of a huge defeat. For the record, India has now won all its seven



World Cup matches against Pakistan. And remember, it was not firing on all its cylinders — Shikhar Dhawan and Bhuvneshwar Kumar were off the field. Millions are now pondering over the most tantalising question: Can Captain Virat Kohli repeat Kapil Dev's World Cup triumph? If the India-Pakistan match is any indication, Virat's warriors seem sure to be in with a great chance.

KS Jayatheertha
Hassan

many crucial Bills that are pending and require sufficient time to be discussed.

Varun Dambal
Bengaluru

Focus on real growth

Sir — The Prime Minister is reported to have unveiled his vision for a \$5 trillion dollar economy at the NITI Aayog meeting held last week. This is indeed encouraging. But what is of grave concern is that more than 80 per cent of the population is reeling under abject poverty. There are many villages which do not have access to either potable water or electricity. Without proper healthcare, roads and education, people are suffering. Development must be inclusive. It should not be for data or record. Our economy/GDP should speak well about people's standard of living. On the economic front, India has a long road to traverse. Will a \$5 trillion dollar economy spin the fortune of the poor?

NR Ramachandran
Chennai

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Make the right choice

Despite the many risks, it is likely that IPOs will continue to attract investors because they are usually issued by firms in a transitional phase



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) is the oldest stock exchange. It has around 5,000 companies listed with it. On the other hand, the National Stock Exchange, which is comparatively a newer exchange, has around 2,000 firms listed with it. Companies range from Goliaths like TCS and Reliance with market capitalisation crossing the ₹8 trillion mark, to inconsequential companies with market capitalisation as less as the price of a car. Companies had to start somewhere. Each sprang to trading as Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), a process where a previously unlisted company sells new or existing securities and offers them to the public for the first time. Prior to an IPO, a firm is considered to be private — with a smaller number of shareholders, limited to angel investors, venture capitalists and high net-worth individuals; and/or early investors, for instance, the founder, family, and friends. After an IPO, the issuing company becomes a publicly listed company on a recognised stock exchange. Thus, an IPO is also known as “going public.”

Although consumers are on the lookout for the next big thing, IPOs can be difficult to gauge ahead of their listing and incredibly volatile when they hit the market, but are a potentially lucrative investment if done right. But just as with any share, potential buyers need to sort out the firms offering good value, with staying power to thrive in public market from those where red flags could spell disaster. A company's prospectus will give some of the best clues to the underlying business. It should lay out what the company does and what it hopes to do with the money raised. Details about the management team will also be made available. Investors need to feel comfortable with the business they are buying into and should be aware of any factors that could push them to walk away.

One of the first factors would-be investors need to consider is whether or not they like the company and believe that it has room to grow. The listing business should have a sound business model with a strong competitive edge in its market that differentiates it from peers. Investors should feel they understand why a customer would want to pay for the products/services offered by that specific company as opposed to others that offer something similar, especially if its competitors are more established or well-known businesses. As with any other company an investor is looking to buy shares in, discipline is required when assessing the company's strategy, competitive position, finances and the ability of the management team to run it properly.

A more established business may fare better on the public market than one that has a track record. Another important question to ask is about the investment plans by management on having access to funds, whether it will be to fund expansion plans or pay off existing debt, or some hybrid of the two. The former is often preferred since shareholders are often encouraged by a business that can demonstrate that it has plans to become bigger. However, paying down debt also frees the firm from the burden of interest payments, allowing it to invest in its core strategy and to improve its business model and efficiency.

Third, a trustworthy and reputable management team, with a good track record, is a must have. Becoming a public company is a significant step in the life of a business and a big commitment for management to take and so the team must communicate clearly with new shareholders and deliver on the promises.

There are some criteria which show that the companies are in good shape before investing in the IPOs:

- Debt should not be more than twice of the profits.
- 10 per cent earnings growth forecast for 12 months.
- Earnings growth of at least 10 per cent during last two years.
- A healthy flow of free cash flows.

An IPO is a key milestone in a firm's life cycle and a healthy IPO market is important for many reasons. IPOs give entrepreneurs liquidity for investments, so a vibrant market can stimulate and help develop new ventures by bringing new investors to a firm, which facilitates its access to future growth capital. Being public also reduces the costs of raising future capital by stimulating the supply of information from the investment community. IPOs are significant as they are regarded as the barometer of the health of the capital market. A single bad IPO can create considerable market disruptions and stall the plans of other firms that want to go public.

Despite the risks, it is likely that IPOs will continue to attract investors because they are usually issued by companies in a transitional phase. Companies in transitions are exciting and interesting to investors. The prospects for a big win and the possibility of earning millions can be very enticing. Just make sure you understand the risks before you take a chance.

(The writer is Assistant Professor at Amity University)

SANIA, I AM SO WORRIED FOR YOUR KID. YOU GUYS TOOK HIM TO A SHEESHA PLACE, ISN'T IT HAZARDOUS? YOU MUST KNOW WELL AS YOU ARE MOTHER.

—PAKISTANI ACTOR

VEENA MALIK



I DID NOT TAKE MY KID TO A SHEESHA PLACE. NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS. I THINK I CARE ABOUT MY SON A LOT MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE.

—INDIAN TENNIS PLAYER

SANIA MIRZA

Secure outer space

There is a dire need to revisit treaties governing our space to protect our extra-terrestrial security interests and scale down militarisation



RAGHAV PANDEY

ANOUSHKA MEHTA

On May 23 this year, the United States (US) successfully launched 60 of its Starlink internet satellites. Starlink is one of the most ambitious projects of Space X, the private rocket company of high-tech entrepreneur, Elon Musk. The aim of the firm is to launch as many as 2,000 satellites per year, with the ultimate objective of placing up to 12,000 of such satellites into the orbit. Space today has been a witness to numerous projects that are funded by both Governments and private, commercial entities. In the present era of boundless technological capabilities, the use of the outer space for military purposes has become a cause of concern.

“It is not enough to have an American presence in space, we must have American dominance in space,” US President Donald Trump said, adding that he didn't want to see “China and other countries leading us.” With this aim, the Trump administration is in the process of creating a US Space Force, the sixth branch of the US military service, which will undertake missions and operations in the rapidly evolving space domain.

With a global quest for military supremacy and dominance, other space-faring countries have not remained much spectators. Take the example of India, which recently launched an anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon on March 27. Indian military scientists successfully destroyed a low-Earth orbit satellite in space by using a missile which covered a distance of 300 km to engage the target. In a televised address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “India has entered its name as an elite ‘space power’.” An anti-satellite weapon, ASAT, successfully targeted a live satellite on a low-Earth orbit.”

ASAT weapons can be used in warfare as they have the capability to incapacitate or destroy enemy satellites for strategic military purposes. With the recent accomplishment, India became the fourth country to possess such a weapon alongside the US, Russia and China.

Given the increased militarisation of space and the immense threat it poses to nations across the world, it is essential to take a look at the laws which govern the military use of space. The use of space is governed by five space-related international treaties of the United Nations. One of them, the Outer Space Treaty, came into effect in 1967 and was signed by most nations on the globe. It has been signed and made official, or has been ratified, by 105 countries across the world. With regard to the use of space, the treaty prohibits military manoeuvres, weapon testing, establishment of military bases, installations and fortification on celestial bodies. Moreover, objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kind of weapons of mass destruction is forbidden in the orbit.

However, the use of military personnel — any equipment or facility on the celestial bodies — is not forbidden unless used for peaceful purposes. So far, the treaty has worked well but lacks clarity on several issues, which has left plenty of wiggle room.

Questions have been raised as to what constitutes “mass destruction”; whether the outer

“THE CREATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL REGIME, MUCH LIKE THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION, IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR. AN INTERNATIONAL REGIME NEEDS TO BE SET UP WHEREIN DELIBERATIONS ON PEACEFUL USE OF SPACE CAN BE TAKEN UP THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. SINCE ONLY FOUR COUNTRIES OFFICIALLY HAVE THE ASAT TECHNOLOGY, NEGOTIATIONS MUST START AMONG THEM.”



space can be used for exploration of resources to be used in military machinery; if weapons of mass destruction can be placed in space without fully achieving orbit, and what about weapons that would not cause mass destruction? The treaty remains ambiguous in some crucial aspects about the use of the space.

Another issue that has attracted much debate in the arena of public international law is “peaceful purposes.” According to the treaty, the outer space is a “common heritage of mankind” and is to be used exclusively for “peaceful purposes.” However, the term, “peaceful purposes” lacks clarity of definition. There has been a plethora of debates to decide whether the term is supposed to denote the ideology of being “non-aggressive” or “non-military.” Majority view it as “non-military” but the same has not been substantiated upon any of the space treaties.

Another treaty, commonly known as the “Moon Treaty”, falls within the purview of the “Outer Space Treaty”. The “Moon Treaty” specifically is applicable to the Moon and other celestial bodies in the solar system excluding planet Earth. It explains that these bodies should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, that nuclear weapons should not be disrupted; and that the UN should be informed of the location and purpose of any station established on those bodies. It also plugs a loophole in the Outer Space

Treaty by banning ownership of any extra-terrestrial property by any organisation or private person, unless that body is international or governmental.

However, the most controversial part of the “Moon Treaty” pertains to the natural resources on the Moon. It provides that the Moon and its natural resources are the common heritage of mankind and harvesting of these riches is prohibited except by way of an international regime established to govern the exploitation of such capital. The exact nature of this regime is not detailed, nor the term “resources” is defined.

It becomes a cause of concern for the international community when the “Moon Treaty” is neither signed, acceded to, nor ratified by any of the space-faring nations. Also, the ambiguity of the provisions of the treaties can leave the nations to interpret the provisions in a way that complements their self-interest in the issue.

Take the example of the US National Space Policy. On the one hand, it emphasises the country's commitment to the exploration and use of outer space by all nations for peaceful purposes but at the same time, it declares US “defence and intelligence-related activities in pursuit of national interests to be consistent with ‘peaceful purposes’.”

Ever since the treaties were formulated in the 1960s, there was a limited view of the potential of utilisation

of the outer space. But with rapid advancements in the use of technology and intelligence in the space, there is a dire need that the laws governing the use of space be revisited so as to address some important space issues of the 21st century like that of mining, space tourism, Artificial Intelligence and intellectual property of space resources among other things. Meanwhile, the international community can only live in the hope that the world does not see warfare and attack missions in space.

The creation of an international regime, much like the World Trade Organisation, is the need of the hour. An international platform needs to be set up wherein deliberations on peaceful use of space can be taken up through negotiations. Since only four countries officially have the ASAT technology, negotiations must start among them.

It is highly possible that a Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT)-type of regime may be established, wherein ASAT's powers are recognised and further militarisation of the space may be scaled down. India needs to exercise its diplomatic heft to materialise the same because then the country's strategic and security interests will also be secured while discouraging further space militarisation.

(Raghav Pandey is an Assistant Professor and Anoushka Mehta is a student at Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai)

Avoid catastrophe of a war

Approximately 73 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world finds itself in similar straightened circumstances as the US once again puts into motion steps to curb the rise of another Asian power, China. We must be prepared to tackle the fallout



DEEPAK SINHA

American writer and philosopher George Santayana famously said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” We would do well to remember that on December 7, 1941, the Japanese fleet, under Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, launched its devastating attack on the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour, leaving it all but crippled. While to the uninitiated it may well have seemed the first act of the tragedy that would ultimately leave Hiroshima and Nagasaki devastated by firebombs, millions dead and Japan utterly defeated, but in truth, it was only a denouement of events set in motion nearly a century before.

Incidentally, while the attack may have surprised the Pacific Fleet, Washington had broken the Japanese code and was fully conversant with Yamamoto's operational plans. Whether it was sheer incompetence or a deliberate strategy to not inform the Pacific Fleet of the impending attack, to arouse public opinion against Japanese “perfidy” and allow Franklin D Roosevelt to enter the war, still remains a matter of conjecture and debate.

Of course, the delay on the part of the Japanese Ambassador to Washington to convey his Government's decision to declare war on the US, inadvertently delivered into Roosevelt's hands a very well. However, what is now well known is that the Japanese Government was fully aware — even before the first shots had been fired — that it was a conflict they could never win.

Yet, they had little choice but to take on the might of the US if they were not to be economically and militarily strangled and denied

their rightful place in the world. Ninety years before, on July 8, 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry of the US Navy, commanding a squadron of two steamers and two sailing vessels, sailed into Tokyo harbour aboard the frigate Susquehanna and imposed an unequal treaty on the Japanese, making full use of the technological superiority that his force enjoyed. A supposedly powerful Japan was forced to retreat.

From this humiliating event emerged the understanding that if they were to avoid the fate that had befallen a weak and divided China, they would have to copy the Western imperialist powers. The year 1868 saw the start of the reformist movement — the Meiji Restoration — which turned feudal Japan into a modern industrialist nation, best exemplified by its defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 that gave Japan control over parts of Manchuria.

Subsequently siding with allies in the World War-I allowed it to take control of Germany's colonies

in the Pacific. In effect, it emerged as another great colonial power engaged in competition for resources with the British, Dutch and other imperialist powers. The US did not take kindly to, even refusing to treat it as an equal in the League of Nations.

It was only a matter of time before an expansionist Japan found itself in the cross hairs of the US. In 1937, following the Marco Polo Bridge incident, Japan found itself bogged down in a war with China that put extreme strains on its military capabilities and economic resources. The Nanjing Massacre, the occupation of Korea and a series of other incidents led to the imposition of an economic and oil blockade on Japan by the US that finally forced the former to confront the US at Pearl Harbour and take on the British in the Malayan Peninsula in a desperate bid for oil, rubber, tin and other metals required to keep its factories going.

Today, approximately 73 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world finds itself in similar straight-

ened circumstances as the US once again puts into motion steps to curb the rise of another Asian power, the People's Republic of China.

Take the example of the US President Donald Trump, his “America First” ideology and the focus on trade restrictions to curb the exponential growth of the Chinese economy are no different from the embargoes we saw on the Japanese those many years ago. The ratcheting up of tensions in the Persian Gulf from where the Chinese receive most of their oil, is obviously no coincidence and while some may see the US' actions directed at Iran, one cannot rule out the fact that the ultimate target may well be the Chinese.

Many analysts believe that a miscalculation in the Gulf may well ignite an unwanted conflict between Iran and the US. If so, while extremely serious, it would only be one aspect of a larger global problem. What should be of even greater concern is the possibility that American attempts to stymie Chinese growth may lead to conflict

if China finds itself economically cornered and responds much in the manner that the Japanese did in 1941, preemptively if it feels it is being cornered.

Incidentally, a scenario, which could apply to Iran, in its current standoff with the US as well. In such a situation, where would our best interests lie? Would we want to be at the forefront of the confrontation as a close US ally or would we prefer to keep our powder dry? Whatever be our choice, one thing is very clear, we better initiate substantive actions to revamp and reorganise our military if we wish to be ready to tackle the fallout of the ongoing US-China tussle for power. This is an issue that diplomacy alone cannot solve and we would do well to remember Mao Zedong's prophetic words that “power flows out of the barrel of the gun.”

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



FOREIGN EYE



HONG KONG'S EDGE

Beijing has not, until now, shown much concern for the potential economic impact of Hong Kong's political struggle. But the region's economy is intertwined with that of the southern Chinese mainland, and — with the trade war starting to hit home — leaders may well feel the need to tread cautiously. The bipartisan support in the US Congress for the Bill threatening Hong Kong's status as a special trading partner will have underscored the risks. (The Guardian editorial)

Lenders file for Jet Airways' bankruptcy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The consortium of 26 bankers led by State Bank Tuesday took the grounded Jet Airways to the National Company Law Tribunal to recover their dues of over Rs 8,500 crore. The tribunal will hear the matter Wednesday.

Jet Airways, started over 25 years ago by airline ticketing agent-turned-entrepreneur Naresh Goyal, stopped flying on April 17 after it ran out of cash and the unpaid lessors took away most of its 100-odd operational airplanes. The lenders have been trying to sell the airline as a going concern since the past five months, but failed due to many a reason.

Apart from banks, the airline also owes ₹10,000 crore to its hundreds of vendors, primarily aircraft lessors and over ₹3,000 crore to around 23,000 employees who have not been paid since March.

The airline has been having negative networth for long and has run a loss of over ₹1,300 crore in the past few years. Thus it has over ₹36,500 crore of debt and being a services company negligible assets to recover.

Also, most of its domestic airport slots have been given away to other airlines by the government and so are of some

its slots at some key international airports.

On the aeroplane asset side, Jet had only 16 on its book which are valued around ₹5,000 crore as per media reports, as the rest of its 123 fleet were on lease and most of them have been de-registered or taken away by the foreign lessors already.

The Jet shares are at multi-year low, plunged 41 per cent Tuesday to close at ₹40.45 on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 52.78 per cent to hit an all-time low of ₹32.25. In the past five trading sessions alone, the shares lost over 73 per cent of their value. When the shares converted a part of their debt into equity when the stock was trading over ₹250 apiece. The conversion price was fixed at a nominal Re 1, though.

Following a meeting of the lenders, it was decided to file for Jet Airways under the bankruptcy code since only a conditional bid was received.

The statement further said the move was necessitated as the prospective investor (a consortium of Etihad Airways and Hinduja group) wants some Sebi exemptions waiving the open offer requirement, which can be worked out better under the bankruptcy laws.

Jet Airways shares plummet 41% as company lands in NCLT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jet Airways' shares faced massive drubbing on Tuesday and tumbled nearly 41 per cent after State Bank of India-led consortium of lenders decided to send the grounded airline to the National Company Law Tribunal.

The scrip plummeted 40.78 per cent to close at ₹40.45 on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 52.78 per cent to hit an all-time low of ₹32.25.

On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), shares plunged 40.78 per cent to close at ₹40.50 apiece. During the day, it dropped 53.72 per cent to a record low of ₹31.65.

This is the 12th consecutive trading day fall for Jet Airways and the scrip has plunged over 73 per cent during this time, wiping out ₹1,253.5 crore from its market valuation, on the BSE.

Sensex, Nifty close higher; all eyes on US Fed policy meet

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty on Tuesday closed in the green on emergence of buying in metal, energy and IT counters, but gains were capped by a caution among investors ahead of the crucial US Federal Reserve meeting.

Snapping its four-day losing streak, the 30-share Sensex set a record high of 34,022.26 points or 85.55 points higher. The index swung over 300 points in a highly volatile session.

Similarly, the 50-stock NSE Nifty ended at 11,691.50, up 0.17 per cent or 19.35 points. The benchmark turned an optimistic towards the flag-end of the session in view of lower crude oil prices and strengthening rupee.

Top gainers in the Sensex pack included Vedanta, Coal India, Hindalco, ICGI, Bank of India, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finance and Infosys — rising up to 2.47 per cent.

On the other hand, Yes Bank emerged as the biggest loser, cracking 5.94 per cent, followed by Maruti, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma and HDFC twins, shedding up to 2.20 per cent.

Shares of Jet Airways plummeted 40.48 per cent after State Bank of India-led consortium of lenders Monday decided to send the grounded

Jet Airways to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) as they have not yet received any concrete proposal for the airline.

Sectorally, BSE oil and gas, tech, power, energy, metal and utilities rose up to 1.13 per cent, while BSE healthcare, auto and FMCG fell up to 0.55 per cent.

Broader BSE midcap index settled 0.88 per cent higher and BSE smallcap index fell 0.42 per cent.

Analysts opined that market is finding it difficult to sustain at elevated levels due to a host of reasons like muted corporate earnings, slow moonshot growth concerns and weak economic and monsoon data. Market will be careful during the ongoing FED meeting which is expected to provide a dovish, Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

RBI sets up panel under UK Sinha to study MSMEs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday set up an eight-member expert committee under the leadership of former chairman of Sebi UK Sinha to review the current framework for the MSME sector.

The committee will suggest long-term solutions for the economic and financial sustainability of the micro, small and medium enterprises, RBI said in a statement, adding the panel will submit the report by the end of June.

The central bank said the committee will study the impact of the recent economic reforms on the sector and identify the structural problems affecting its growth.

"The committee will examine the factors affecting the timely and adequate availability of finance to the MSME sector," the RBI said.

The other members include development commissioner for MSME Ram Mohan Mishra; joint secretary at the department of financial services Bankaj Jais; SBI managing director PK Gupta; ICGI Bank executive director Anup Bagchi; IIM-Ahmedabad professor Abhimanyu Das; Spirit Foundation founder Shradha Sharma and Dvara Trust chairperson Bindu Ananth.

RBI to examine concerns over data localisation rule: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The RBI will examine concerns around its strict data localisation rules that require storing of customer data exclusively in India without creating mirror sites overseas, the Government said Tuesday.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in April last year asked payment firms to ensure their data are stored exclusively on local servers, setting a tight six-month deadline for compliance. That deadline was said to have been missed by some foreign firms including credit card giants Visa and Mastercard.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday held extensive consultations with the tech industry and e-commerce companies, a statement by his ministry said.

"All the companies who were represented in this meeting put forth their concerns related to RBI data storage requirements and processing related guidelines issued by the RBI. Deputy Governor of RBI, BP Kanungo, assured the industry representatives that the Reserve Bank of India will look into this," it said.

The RBI in April 2018 put out a circular requiring that all "data relating to payment systems" are "stored in a system only in India" within six months.

International giants usually store data on global servers and the requirement to store data locally would require them to make an additional investment. But policymakers in India believe storing data locally would help monitor and conduct investigations if the need arises.

Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga joined the meeting via video conference, the statement said.

Besides the RBI rule, concern was also expressed at the meeting about a draft e-commerce policy that requires exclusive local storage and processing of data generated by users in India. Various sources including e-commerce platforms, social media and search engines.

While domestic companies such as Reliance Jio have spoken up in support of the government's localisation efforts, others like Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, and Mastercard have led the way in opposing it.

"The e-commerce industry representatives also put forth their concerns before the Commerce Minister about the e-commerce draft policy which they felt was not adequately consultative," the statement said adding Goyal assured them that each and every concern of the industry will be addressed.

₹ rises 21 paise to 69.70 vs USD

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 21 paise to close at 69.70 against the US dollar as easing crude prices and a weak dollar ahead of the US central bank's meeting helped the currency snap its three-day losing streak.

Forex dealers said the selling of the American currency

by exporters and gain in other Asian currencies also supported the rupee.

The US dollar fell against its major rivals before the US Federal Reserve's meeting amid expectations that the central bank may signal a rate cut. The dollar index dropped 0.1 per cent to 97.43 Tuesday.

The domestic currency had settled at 69.70 against the

global oil benchmark, eased 61 per cent to \$60.66 per barrel.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 69.82 per dollar and advanced to a high of 69.63 during the day. It finally settled at 69.70, up 21 paise over its last close.

The domestic currency had settled at 69.70 against the

US dollar Monday.

"Rupee has broken the three-day losing streak by appreciating 21 paise against the US dollar taking a cue from other strong Asian currencies. The weak trend of Brent crude prices has also helped the rupee," said V K Sharma, Head-PCG & Capital Market Strategy, HDFC Securities.

Micromax co-founder 'electrifies' two-wheeler industry

Rahul Sharma calls new venture 'Revolt', showcases first product



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Revolt Motors wants to revolutionise the two-wheeler industry, the company established by Micromax co-founder Rahul Sharma showcased their new RV400 product today. Sharma, however was very frank about the issues faced by Micromax in the past, which led to the company's exit from the market.

Sharma said that the RV400 would be open to pre-launch orders from June 25 on the Amazon and Revolt Motors sites for ₹1000. However, he did not disclose any pricing details. But it appears that he is emulating the model practised by Micromax in the past, which was to import Chinese products with some localisation and slap an Indian brand on them as the RV400 is a rebadged Super SOCO 1200 made by Chinese manufacturer SOCO. The Chinese product costs around \$3300,

removing the range anxiety that electric vehicle owners rightly have.

Sharma said that the RV400 would be open to pre-launch orders from June 25 on the Amazon and Revolt Motors sites for ₹1000. However, he did not disclose any pricing details. But it appears that he is emulating the model practised by Micromax in the past, which was to import Chinese products with some localisation and slap an Indian brand on them as the RV400 is a rebadged Super SOCO 1200 made by Chinese manufacturer SOCO. The Chinese product costs around \$3300,

Sebi permits stock exchanges to introduce futures on commodity indices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday permitted stock exchanges to offer commodity derivative segment to introduce futures on indices.

The stock exchanges, willing to start trading in futures on commodity indices, are required to take prior approval for launching such contracts, Sebi said in a circular.

"Exchanges will have to submit at least past 3 years data of the index constructed along with data on monthly volatility, roll over yield for the month and monthly return while seeking approval from Sebi," the circular added.

Constituent futures contracts should be in existence on the respective exchange for at least previous twelve months, and should have traded for at least 90 per cent of trading days in last twelve months and have a minimum average daily turnover. The turnover should be at least ₹75 crore for agricultural and agri-processed commodities, and ₹500 crore for all other commodities, Sebi said.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a female namedly Unknown, W/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, was found on 10.06.2019 at 10:51 PM between Badli Metro Station and Samaipuri Badli Railway Station, Delhi. In this regard proceeding DD No. 100-A, dated 10.06.2019 has been lodged at Police Station, Samaipuri Badli, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of female is as under:
Name: Unknown, Age: 50-55 Years, Height: 5', Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Wearing: Blue Saree and Pink Blouse.
If anyone have any information or clue about this female deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.
SHO
Police Station, Samaipuri Badli, Delhi
DP/372/ON/19 Ph: 011-27854757, 8750870326

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED (See Section 82 Cr.Pc.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused persons (1) Duggi, S/o Shri Fandebaj, (2) Ruksana, D/o Shri Fandebaj, (3) Manoj, S/o Shri Fandebaj, (4) Chidi, S/o Shri Fandebaj all are R/o Jhuggi Gaziur, Delhi has committed the offence in case FIR No. 92/18 U/S 323/341/354B/365/197/506/34 IPC PS Gurgaon Teg Bahadur Enclave, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused (1) Duggi, (2) Ruksana, (3) Manoj, (4) Chidi can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused (1) Duggi, (2) Ruksana, (3) Manoj, (4) Chidi have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused persons (1) Duggi, (2) Ruksana, (3) Manoj, (4) Chidi of case FIR No. 92/18 U/S 323/341/354B/365/197/506/34 IPC PS Gurgaon Teg Bahadur Enclave, Delhi are required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 22.07.19.
By Order
Ms. Chhavi Kapoor
Metropolitan Magistrate
Mahila Court No. 1
Karkardooma Court, Shahdara, Delhi
DP/9605/SHD/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a Boy namedly Furkan @ Kaka S/o Sh. Gabbar, R/o A-531, Jhuggi, Behind ITI, K-Block, Jahangir Puri, Delhi, Age: 16 yrs., Height: 4'6", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: White Colour T-shirt, Blue Colour Jeans and Sandal in Feet, has been missing / kidnapped since 15.04.2019. In this regard a case FIR No. 276/19 dated 08.06.2019 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at PS, Jahangir Puri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped Boy but no clue has come to light so far.
If anyone have any information about this missing / kidnapped boy please inform undersigned.
Website: http://cbi.nic.in, Email: cbi@cbi.gov.in, Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641, Fax: 011-24368639
SHO
PS, Jahangir Puri, Delhi
DP/9005/NW/19 Ph: 011-27636000, 27631600

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED (See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person Vasim S/o Bashrudud, R/o Malhi has committed the offence in case FIR No. 107/19 u/s 356/379/34 IPC registered at PS Janakpuri Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Vasim could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Vasim has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person Vasim of FIR No. 107/19 u/s 356/379/34 IPC PS Janakpuri, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 31.07.2019.
By Order
Sh. Deepak Vats
Metropolitan Magistrate
Room No.9, Ground Floor,
Dwarka District Courts,
Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi
DP/8288/W/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General Public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo) namedly Babita D/o Sanjeev Kumar R/o H.No.247, Sultampur Dabas, Delhi Aged-18 Years 04 months has been reported missing since 19.05.2019 from the area of P.S. Bawana, Outer North Distt. vide DD No. 52-A Dated 24.05.2019 registered at Police Station Bawana, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:
Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 4'9", Face: Round, Clothing: Pink Coloured top, Black Coloured Jeans and Jutti in feet.
Any person having any information/Clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Bawana, Delhi at E-mail: cbi@cbi.gov.in or website: http://cbi.nic.in
Tel: No. 011-24368638 or 24368641 Sd/
FAX No. : 011-24368639 SHO, Bawana, Delhi
DP/351/ON/19 Tel: 011-27751949, 27756090

Appeal For Identification

General public is hereby informed that this person Name: Unknown S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 40 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 5 Ft. 4 Inch, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Black Colour T-shirt, has been found dead on 10.06.2019 Near Axis Bank ATM, Nicholson Road, Kashmir Gate, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 30-A Dated 10.06.2019 has been lodged at PS, Kashmir Gate, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.
Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.
SHO
PS, Kashmir Gate, Delhi
DP/127/N/19 Ph: 011-23967889, 8750870123

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one man namedly Suresh Kumar, S/o: Late Sh. Kula Ram, R/o: G-438, Jahangir Puri, Delhi is missing since 18.03.2019 from the area of P.S. Jahangir Puri, Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 40A dated 13.05.2019 has been lodged at PS, Jahangir Puri, Delhi. The description of the missing man are as under: Age: 53 yrs, Height: 5'11", Face: Long, Built: Thin, Complexion: Swallow, Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the man but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this man kindly inform to the following.
Website: http://cbi.nic.in
E-mail Id - cbi@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
SHO
PS, Jahangir Puri, Delhi
DP/9011/NW/19 Ph: 011-27631600, 8750870229

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one person namedly Raju S/o Late. Sh. Sharada R/o H.No. 258, Banjara Hill Gali-Village, Haiderpur, Delhi Age-26 years, Height-5'6", Face-Oval, Built-Thin, Complexion-Sallow, Wearing-Black Colour T-Shirt and Pyjama and Hawal Chappal in his feet has been missing since dated 15.04.2019. In this regard, DD No. 49A Dated 21.04.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this person please inform undersigned.
E-mail: cbi@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 SHO
Fax: 011-24368639 PS, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi
Ph: 011-27495198
DP/9019/NW/19 8750870227

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. PC
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Bajinder S/o Mahender Singh R/o H. No. 2428, Goniyana Road, Muktsar, Punjab has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence of case registered vide FIR No. 232/16 at Police Station - Alipur, Delhi which is punishable under section 407/468/471/420/11/201/34 of Indian Penal Code and a warrant of arrest issued thereupon has been returned unexecuted stating that the said accused Bajinder could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Bajinder has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Bajinder is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 30.08.2019.
By Order
Sh. Gagandeep Singh
Chief Metropolitan Magistrate,
Room No. 115, 1st Floor
Rohini Courts, Delhi
DP/349/ON/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one unknown dead body of male, Age 55 years, Height 5'8", Complexion Shallow, Thin Built, Wearing White colour T-shirt and grey colour pant was found dead at Red Light Opposite DT Mall, PS Shalimar Bagh, Delhi on 11.06.19. In this regard a DD No. 64-A dated 11.06.19 has been lodged at PS Shalimar Bagh, Delhi.
Any person having any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be informed to the undersigned.
SHO
PS : Shalimar Bagh, Delhi
Ph: 24495198, 8750870227

CRICKET CRADLE

TODAY LIVE

STAR SPORTS
New Zealand vs South Africa
3:00 pm IST
VENUE: Edgbaston, Birmingham

Tweet a buzz

India maintained their dominance over arch-rivals Pakistan in World Cup history when the Virat Kohli-led team thrashed Pakistan by 89 runs at Old Trafford, Manchester on Sunday. It was for the seventh consecutive time in the history of the showpiece event when the Green Brigade failed to put up a show against the Men in Blue. While everyone saw the rivalry between both teams on the field, the roar of the fans was also loud on microblogging site Twitter. The much anticipated World Cup game broke records by becoming the most-tweeted about ODI match, generating 2.9 million tweets. While there was dialogue between both countries on the platform, when compared, official hashtags like #TeamIndia and #WeLoveVirat as well as the number of tweets mentioning Indian cricketers and Pakistani cricketers, the Indian side dominated the conversation on Twitter.

We are Indians

India vice-captain Rohit Sharma slashing Pakistan pacer Hasan Ali for a six over backword point in their clash at Old Trafford on Sunday had fans revisit the upper-cut played by the legendary Sachin Tendulkar off Shaib Akhtar in Centurion in 2003. While there have been constant comparisons between the two shots and who played it better, Tendulkar shared his take on the same. Taking to Twitter, Tendulkar wrote: "We both are from India and in this case, Aamchi Mumbai as well. So heads I win, tails you lose! (sic)" Earlier, ICC had posed the question for the fans when it tweeted: "Sachin in 2003 or Rohit in 2019 — who did it better?" It was an amazing display of professionalism from the Men in Blue against Pakistan in Manchester. They first scored 336/5 in their 50 overs with Rohit hitting a brilliant 113-ball 140 and the bowlers then tightened the screws on the Pakistan batsmen as the Indians won the game by 89 runs (D/L method).

Don't get personal

Shoaib Malik, who is drawing flak after Pakistan's embarrassing defeat to India, has lashed out at the country's media for claiming that he and other players were out partying and smoking sheesha hours before the crucial encounter in Manchester. There were questions raised about the Pakistan players' fitness and the apparent flouting of the curfew norms after a series of photos and videos showed certain members of the team allegedly socialising past curfew. "When will Pak media be accountable for their credibility by our courts? Having served my country for +20 years in international cricket, it's sad that I have to clarify things related to my personal life. The videos are from 13th June and not 15th," he tweeted. Sania too took to Twitter to answer potshots being aimed at her post the defeat. She battled Pakistani actress Veena Malik as she denied taking their kid to the Sheesha bar. "Veena, I have not taken my kid to a sheesha place. Not that it's any of your or the rest of the world's business that I think I care about my son a lot more than anyone else does. Secondly I am not Pakistan cricket team's dietician nor am I their mother or principal or teacher," she tweeted.

Forget & move on

Sarfraz Ahmed has warned his teammates of further backlash as home if they fail to lift their game in the remaining matches of the ongoing World Cup. Pakistani cricketers are facing strong criticism from both fans and former players after the 89-run defeat to India in the marquee World Cup clash on Sunday. With just three points from five games, Pakistan are at the second last position in the tournament table and Sarfraz has cautioned his teammates to be ready for the wrath of the public back home if the below-par performances continue. "If anyone thinks that I will go home, then it is their idioy. If God forbid something unfortunate happens then I won't be the only one going back home," Pakistani media outlet *theNews.Com.Pk* quoted Sarfraz as saying. The captain has urged the team to forget the loss against the neighbours and move on. "Forget the bad performance and uplift the team for the remaining four matches," said Sarfraz.

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	+1.029	7
4	ENG	4	3	1	0	+1.557	6
5	B'DESH	5	1	2	2	-0.270	5
6	SL	5	1	2	2	-1.778	4
7	WI	5	1	3	1	-0.272	3
8	RSA	5	1	3	1	-0.208	3
9	PAK	5	1	3	1	-1.933	3
10	AFG	4	0	4	0	-1.638	0

An open partnership



Rohit Sharma, right, congratulates teammate KL Rahul on scoring fifty runs during World Cup match between India and Pakistan at Old Trafford

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Communication had been the biggest USP in Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan's enormously successful opening partnership and the Indian vice-captain wants to create the same level of understanding with KL Rahul by the time World Cup reaches business end.

Dhawan's fractured left-hand has put Rahul in the line of fire in a stage like World Cup but his senior opening partner is confident that they will slowly be able to build up the right level of communication required in such big event.

In fact against Pakistan, Rohit allowed Rahul to take first strike, which he normally does when Dhawan is around.

"Yeah, KL also likes to take the strike, and for me it was important to give him that because just like me, he also has the mindset of taking the first ball. That is

his comfort. He is playing his first game as an opener here, so I wanted to make sure that he's comfortable," Rohit said while making it clear what his responsibilities are as a senior player.

Rahul, on his part, knows what a big opportunity it is and he is ready to fill in the big boots of Dhawan till the time he comes back (if at all in this tournament). "Obviously Shikhar and Rohit for the last three or four years have been such a dangerous combination having done so well. They have owned those positions. I had to wait for my chance and I am just happy that I got to bat in the top of the order," Rahul told reporters in mixed zone.

However, during their stand of 136, there were a couple of occasions when Rohit could have nearly got run out primarily because of the lack of communication between the two.

But the champion opener is game for this new challenge as that's what

WE (RAHUL & I) HAD A LOT OF COMMUNICATION (DURING PAKISTAN GAME) WHILE WE WERE BATTING, SO SLOWLY WE WILL BUILD ON IT. NOW THAT I KNOW HE'S GOING TO OPEN FOR THE NEXT FEW GAMES AS WELL. SO THAT CONVERSATION BETWEEN US IS REALLY, REALLY IMPORTANT, AND I HOPE THAT CONTINUES BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO ONLY HELP BOTH OF US
— ROHIT SHARMA

Not a perfect score

PTI ■ MANCHESTER

Promoted to the opening slot, KL Rahul rated his performance against Pakistan at six out of ten, saying he will only get better after his composed fifty helped India set up a challenging total against the arch-rivals.

With Shikhar Dhawan ruled out of three World Cup games following a hairline fracture on his thumb, Rahul opened the innings with Rohit Sharma in his first international match against Pakistan here Sunday.

Rahul, who made 57 off 78 balls as part of the record 136-run opening partnership with Rohit, said he is grateful to get the opportunity to realise his dream of representing his country against Pakistan.

"Shikhar and Rohit, in the last three or four years, have been such a dangerous combo. Their partnerships, if you see anywhere in the world, they've played so well for the country and they've been No 1 and 2 — they've owned those positions," said Rahul.

"I've had to wait for my chance and I'm just happy that I got to bat in the top three. It's my first international game against Pakistan and it has come in a World Cup so I couldn't ask for anything bigger or better."

As a kid or as a young cricketer growing up this is what you dream to do — I'm really happy that I got the opportunity and I give myself six out of ten! Hopefully I carry on the confidence and get better."

The 136-run partnership was India's best first-wicket stand in an World Cup match against Pakistan as the two-time champions set an intimidating total of 336/5 against their arch-rivals.

Rahul stressed on the need to fight in the initial few overs to



KL Rahul bats during nets session

AP

build up a partnership.

"With the new ball, against any bowler, it's important to see off the first few overs. That was especially true here because we didn't know what to expect from the wicket as it had been under covers for the past few days," he said.

"Once we got through those, we felt a lot more comfortable. For an opening batsman it's important to hit a few balls in the middle of the bat and get a few boundaries going."

Then you start to focus on the game and all the pressure, the hype of India-Pakistan and the World Cup stage just goes away from your head. The initial few overs are the fight, so we were happy to get through that and happy to get the win."

For Rahul, the biggest challenge against Pakistan was to play out Mohammed Amir's first spell, which they did with a fair degree of success.

"Look I mean, with the new ball against any bowler, you have to see off the first few overs and didn't know what to expect from the wicket as it was under covers for the first two days. It was important that we saw off the first spell," the talented Karnataka batsman said.

Amir, whether it was Champions Trophy final in 2017 or the Asia Cup T20, a year before that, he had always struck in the very first over that he bowled but this time around the Indians had done their homework.

"We needed to focus from ball one as he has earlier done damage in the first over itself. We were switched on from ball one and we didn't take too many chances in the first few overs. We gave their bowlers and the ball the respect it deserved and carried on from there," Rahul said.

Fun, food & other things

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

A team that stays together, plays together.

At least that's what the Indian team management believes as its plans various activities during long tours which has a two-fold gain — to switch off a bit and also enjoy each other's company off the field which is very important for on-field performances.

The current Indian team also actively take part in bonding sessions, which are carefully planned during an away series. It could be anything from fun games to having a simple meal in a group of four.

Before the start of the World Cup, Indian team was seen playing paint ball and now that there is a break before the next game against Afghanistan on Saturday, some bonding activities are planned.

The team members are provided with a weekly activity schedule and they are told to do things which are more organic in nature than forced.

"In this Indian team, the bonding sessions have been a part for some years now. It could be some fun games and at times some other activity. Right now, the players are with their families enjoying a break. Once they come back, some activities are

planned," a senior BCCI official said.

While Virat Kohli is the captain, the team's Leadership Group has three members — Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

At times, in a team of 15, the 12 players are divided into groups of four and they are handled by each of the three senior members.

"It is always insisted that players from different regions hang out together and at least have a meal together. Just for example, Vijay Shankar, newest member of the team will certainly feel more comfortable interacting with a Dinesh Karthik. Same language, food habits, that is natural."

"But there are times when Karthik will need to have a meal with another junior player. It's not something that is forced but it should happen naturally," the official said.

It's not only about cricket but seniors are encouraged to speak to the junior players about other aspects of life also where they can take a cue from them.

"It could be anything from handling stardom to managing investments. The seniors with their practical experiences could help the juniors out or may be dividing them into groups of three, with the same gym slot.



Shikhar Dhawan's Instagram post in which he and his opening partner Rohit Sharma is seen spending time with their families

Bonding during some strenuous exercises isn't a bad idea either," he added.

Team bonding sessions have been in vogue in Indian cricket for long, only the terminology has changed with changing times.

In 70's, it used to be Sunday Clubs, a concept that was borrowed from English counties where players were told to dress up in a certain way or enact certain scenes.

There used to be punishments like walking from one's own hotel room to the team activity room in underwear with a neck tie around the waist.

Or else, some were made to apply lipstick and told to dance like 'Bambuti of Sholay'. At times it would be fun but other times it could be bordering on ragging as some of the old timers recall.

It became more of a fun during Gary Kirsten's time and Paddy Upton's much acclaimed book 'Banefoot Coach' has some cute pictures of Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir dressed as women during a play they were part of.

From the mid 90's till early 2000's, the team bonding activities hardly took place, especially during Azharuddin's era when the Indian side was a disjointed unit with not much trust existing between the players.



Cricket World Cup ENGLAND

NZ GAME IS NOW A MUST-WIN. WE HAVE TO PUT EVERYTHING TO GET RUNS. AS A TEAM, WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO DRAWING BOARD, FIND SOLUTIONS AND GO & WIN GAME SHAI HOPE

Fight for existence

Proteas desperately need big win to stay alive as Black Caps look to retain No 1 spot

UPNEXT

VS

LIVE ON

3.00 pm IST

STAR SPORTS

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

With pacer Lungi Ngidi back in the side, South Africa will look to avenge their 2015 semifinal defeat while New Zealand will aim to reclaim their position at the top when the two sides clash in a World Cup match here on Wednesday.

South Africa, who suffered a heart-breaking loss to New Zealand in the last edition, had a dismal start to their World Cup campaign, losing three straight games followed by a wash-out before registering their maiden win against bottom-placed Afghanistan.

In contrast, New Zealand are yet to face defeat in the tournament and are lying second on the table with three wins and a washout.

Injuries to pacers Dale Steyn and Anrich Nortje have hurt the South African bowling unit severely.

With Ngidi fully fit and the team finally tasting victory, skipper Faf du Plessis will breathe a sigh of relief.

"Hopefully this is a real confidence booster for everyone on the team. And there's a little bit of weight that you feel that's off your shoulders now. We need to win every game that we play," Du Plessis had said after the win against Afghanistan.

South Africa will need their bowlers to step up to keep their World Cup hopes alive.

A lot will depend on veteran spinner Imran Tahir should the Edgbaston surface offer turn. The 40-year-old took two wickets each against England and Bangladesh, before running through Afghanistan.

The Proteas have been mostly done in by their batting but they will take heart from the fact that opener Hashim Amla and Quinton de Kock finally clicked in the previous game.

The pair, alongside Du Plessis, will have to navigate their way through a quality seam attack led by Trent Boult. However, considering South Africa's dismal record against spin and the



New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson, right, and pacer Tim Southee



South African captain Faf du Plessis reacts during team's practice session

HEAD TO HEAD				
	Played	NZ	RSA	N/R
Matches	70	24	41	5
Day matches	33	13	18	2
In World Cup	7	5	2	-
Last 5 matches	5	2	3	-

HIGHEST TOTALS			
New Zealand	299-6 in 42.5 overs at Auckland		24-03-2015
South Africa	324-4 in 50 overs at Centurion		25-10-2010

PERFORMANCE IN WC						
Team	P	W	L	T	N/R	Success%
New Zealand	82	51	30	-	1	62.31
South Africa	60	36	21	2	1	62.50

FAISEL FEATURES

brown Edgbaston wicket, the Black Caps might consider deploying leg spinner Ish Sodhi alongside the reliant Mitchell Santner.

New Zealand have a solid batting unit. Skipper Kane Williamson anchored the side to victory against Bangladesh

and Afghanistan while Ross Taylor has also been among the runs but the team will hope for openers Colin Munro and Martin Guptill to start clicking.

New Zealand also have two destructive all-rounders in Jimmy Neesham and Colin de Grandhomme in their ranks

SQUADS

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (captain), Martin Guptill, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Colin Munro, Jimmy Neesham, Henry Nicholls, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Trent Boult, Colin de Grandhomme, Lockie Ferguson, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Tom Blundell.

South Africa: Faf du Plessis (captain), Aiden Markram, Quinton de Kock, Hashim Amla, Rassie van der Dussen, David Miller, Chris Morris, Andile Phehlukwayo, JP Duminy, Dwayne Pretorius, Beuran Hendricks, Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi, Imran Tahir, Tabraiz Shamsi.

XFACTOR

- Pace battle between Rabada-Ngidi and Boult-Henry
- Ross Taylor & Williamson's batting in middle overs
- Imran Tahir's spin magic
- De Kock & Du Plessis' role
- Morris' all-round performance especially with ball
- Will South Africa be able to take revenge of 2015 semis defeat?

MEN WHO MATTER

KANE WILLIAMSON (NZ)

The skipper has been in prime form, scoring 40 and 79* in his last two innings after aggregating 152 runs in the two warm-up games. Williamson, who scored a century in his last outing at Edgbaston, will once again look to play a long innings.



KAGISO RABADA (SOUTH AFRICA)

The star spinner, who could bowl against New Zealand after being hit by a Lockie Ferguson bouncer earlier in the day, went wicket-less in seven overs against South Africa. Rashid will eye a much-improved performance on Tuesday, as he holds the key to Afghanistan stopping the power-packed England batting line-up.



It will be a cloudy start to the day with chances of some light rain showers. However, it should become increasingly dry and bright as the day wears on. Teams batting first have won three of the last four completed games at Edgbaston.

Courtesy — © ICC Business Corporation FZ LLC 2018

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

South Africa pacer Lungi Ngidi has confirmed he is "100 per cent fit" to take the field in their World Cup match against New Zealand today.

South Africa's start to their World Cup campaign has been far from ideal, having lost three opening games and a wash-out tie, with a slew of injuries hampering their progress.

Ngidi played just the two opening games before sustaining a left hamstring injury in a match against Bangladesh.

"It's been tough. Injuries are never nice, but with the support staff that I've had around me it's been pretty good and I've been alright," Ngidi was quoted as saying by the official website of the *Cricket World Cup*.

"It's just been frustrating not being able to play."

"I've just finished a fitness test today and passed that, so I'm match-fit ready. It's 100 per cent. That's how the fitness test goes and if you're not bowling at 100 per cent then you're not ready to play," the young fast bowler added.

South Africa had been forced to field a depleted pace attack with legendary fast bowler Dale Steyn ruled out of the entire tournament, while Ngidi sat out of three matches.

The 23-year-old pacer's return is expected to bolster South Africa, who have only an outside chance now of making it to the semi-finals after three losses from five games. In their last match, South Africa finally managed to get a win under their belt after beating Afghanistan and now they would need to win the

All is well



South African pacer Lungi Ngidi reacts during practice session

rest of the league stage matches in order to make the last four, and Ngidi feels New Zealand do have some weaknesses that could be exploited. "I don't think their middle and lower order have been tested enough.

They have got most of their runs at the top of the order, so if we can get one or two maybe we can test them. I think then you could be looking at a different situation with their batting," said Ngidi.

AFP ■ EDGBASTON

Quinton de Kock has told his South Africa teammates to keep their heads when they face New Zealand in a must-win World Cup match on Wednesday.

South Africa's hopes of making the semi-finals would effectively be over if they lose at Edgbaston after a wretched start to the tournament.

England, Bangladesh and India have left South Africa wicketkeeper-batsman De Kock billing the New Zealand match as a "quarter-final".

A nine-wicket victory over Afghanistan on Saturday was their first win in this World Cup in England and Wales.

The Proteas cannot afford any more slip-ups in their remaining games against New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Australia if they are to maintain slender hopes of a semi-final berth.

De Kock admits South Africa's chances of avoiding an embarrassing early elimination will be wrecked if they do not cope with the stress of playing in a do-or-die situation.

"Obviously it's a big game for us but, in saying that, our next three or four games that we have, they are all going to be big games for us for the rest of the tournament," he said.

"We're just going to have to go out there, keep our heads steady and play freely. Tomorrow is a quarter-final, I guess you could say it, but if we

Keep heads high



South African wicket keeper batsman Quinton de Kock

do win it, then it's another big game again.

"We have to win all the games, not just focus on tomorrow. But in saying that, we know how good New Zealand are playing at the moment. They are a big team in World Cups. They always seem to step up."

Unbeaten New Zealand are favourites to push South Africa towards the World Cup exit door and De Kock admits morale among Faf du Plessis's squad has not been as high as he would like.

But he hopes the comprehensive victory against minnows Afghanistan will provide a much-needed spark in the nick of time.

"I think before our first game that we played against England, we were in a pretty good space also then, mentally and with our preparation," he said.

"Then obviously, during the course of the tournament, obviously after losing all the time, there's always a bit of a slump in being mentally strong. Getting a win again has given us high hopes. It's just become a mental game at a World Cup, trying to deal with all the pressures and stuff."

"We've put a lot of emphasis on our energy going into the games, and the situation we're in right now, our energy needs to be better than ever."

playerspeak

TRENT BOULT, NZ



■ How much assistance are you expecting out of that wicket?

"Not really too sure. It looks pretty light. Obviously, there's been a lot of weather around, but it's just going to be one of those things that we just go to as it comes. Looking forward to getting out there. We've obviously had a few quiet days. We can't wait to get started."

■ You've only got three wickets so far. What would you put that down to?

"We've got 30 wickets that's the only main thing I'm worried about. As a unit we've been going really well. We've put the ball where we wanted, and we've put a lot of pressure on the teams that we've come against. If we can continue to do it as a unit then I'll be happy."

■ Which South African bowler are you looking forward to batting to?

"We've got to respect all of them. They've got some classy players at the top of the innings. They've obviously had an interesting start to their tournament, so they'll be hungry to come out and perform. Led by an experienced captain, they've got some dangerous hitters lower down in the order. We need to be on the mark with how we start 100 per cent."

■ Have you had to try a few other things during this campaign?

"I'm always trying to get better, first of all, but when the ball hasn't swung, it's always been the biggest challenge to try to get wickets and try to apply pressure. In terms of running on the wicket, it's not really something that I'm worried about. I'm just trying to get close to the stumps and, I suppose, make the most out of the swing that is available."

■ This is essentially a knockout match for SA. Does that confer an advantage?

"There have always been exciting games between NZ and SA over the past World Cups and past time that we've met each other. 2015, the semis at Edgbaston was one of the greatest games that the Kiwis have played. It obviously got a lot of attention back home, and it was a cool one to be a part of it. We're looking forward to facing them."

■ Why do you think NZ has had the upper hand over SA at World Cups?

"I'm not too sure. Like I said, they're big games. Whether there's a lot of pressure on them, I'm not too sure. For us, we know what works well. For me as a bowler, I'm sure I want to lead the bowling attack as best as I can. If we can do the things that we do well at, we know that works well, put some early pressure on and get some wickets, then, hopefully they feel that pressure a little bit more."

■ NZ have come across as the nice guys. What do you think about that?

"I don't think we're going out there to aim to be the nice guys. World cricket is all about putting on a front of any sort. We've just been genuine and been who we are. Just playing the game in good spirits and enjoying it. That's why I fell in love with the game and that's why a lot of people follow the team is because we go out and have fun."

■ Has the NZ attack been sufficiently challenged in the matches?

"It's definitely going to be a big challenge to see where we're at. We've been lucky to be on a couple of new surfaces that have offered a lot to our style of bowling. The challenge is always going to be to see what we can do on NZ pitches that don't offer too much, and that's what we're prepared for here. It's a quality wicket. There's been a lot of runs scored here, so it's definitely going to be a good challenge."

Captain Marvelous

Morgan's record breaking 148, Bairstow's 90 and Root's 88 guide England to 397-6 against hapless Afghanistan



England's captain Eoin Morgan, right, celebrates with teammate Joe Root after scoring a century

MOST RUNS CONCEDED IN AN INNINGS

OVERS	RUNS	BOWLER	OPPONENT	VENUE	DATE
10	113	Mick Lewis (Aus)	South Africa	Jo'burg	12-03-2006
10	110	Wahab Riaz (Pak)	England	Nottingham	30-08-2016
9	110	Rashid Khan (Afg)	England	Manchester	18-06-2019
10	106	Bhuvneshwar Kumar (Ind)	South Africa	Mumbai	25-10-2015
10	106	Nuvan Pradeep (SL)	India	Mohali	13-12-2017

FAISAL FEATURES

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

England captain Eoin Morgan set a new world record for most sixes in a one-day international innings as the World Cup hosts piled up 397 for six in against Afghanistan on Tuesday. Morgan hit 17 sixes in his career-best 148, with England's total of 25 sixes also a new world record.

Morgan, dropped on 28, dominated a third-wicket stand of 189 with Joe Root (82), whose contribution to their partnership was a mere 33. Afghanistan star leg-spinner Rashid Khan set an unwanted record with 0-110 in nine overs — the most expensive return at a World Cup and second costliest in all ODI cricket.

Morgan's tally surpassed the record of 16 sixes in an ODI innings previously shared by India's Rohit Sharma, South Africa's AB de Villiers and West Indies' Chris Gayle.

But one ball after launching Gulbadin Naib for the record-breaking six, Morgan holed out for the Afghanistan captain to end a 71-ball innings that also featured four fours.

His innings, which featured 118 runs in boundaries, was all the more impressive as Morgan had been doubtful for this match with a back spasm suffered in England's eight-wicket win over the West Indies, in which he could not bat. Jonny Bairstow (90) net England off to a solid start after Morgan won the toss, with the home side accelerating after James Vince fell for 26 when he mishooked pace man Dawlat Zadran to short fine-leg.

Jonny Bairstow (90) net England off to a solid start after Morgan won the toss, with the home side accelerating after James Vince fell for 26 when he mishooked pace man Dawlat Zadran to short fine-leg.

Sixes	(Score)	Batsman	Opponent	Venue	Date
17	(148)	Eoin Morgan (Eng)	Afghanistan	Manchester	18-06-2019
16	(209)	Rohit Sharma (Ind)	Australia	Bangalore	02-11-2013
16	(149)	Ab de Villiers (SA)	West Indies	Jo'burg	18-01-2015
16	(215)	Chris Gayle (WI)	Zimbabwe	Canberra	24-02-2015
15	(185*)	Shane Watson (Aus)	Bangladesh	Dhaka	11-04-2011

Balls	(Score)	Batsman	Opponent	Venue	Date
50	(113)	Kevin O'Brien (Irl)	England	Bangalore	02-03-2011
51	(102)	Glenn Maxwell (Aus)	Sri Lanka	Sydney	08-03-2015
52	(162*)	Ab de Villiers (SA)	West Indies	Sydney	27-02-2015
57	(148)	Eoin Morgan (Eng)	Afghanistan	Manchester	18-06-2019
66	(101)	Matthew Hayden (Aus)	South Africa	St Kitts	24-03-2007

FAISAL FEATURES

Bairstow was untroubled until, and in sight of his eighth ODI century, he chipped a return catch to Naib.

A visibly annoyed Bairstow walked off having been in command during a 99-ball innings that featured eight fours and three sixes.

Morgan settled in quickly, hitting Naib for two sixes including a fine hit over long-on. But the left-hander should have been out when he skied Rashid Khan only for Dawlat Zadran at deep midwicket to make such a mess of the catch that the ball bounced out of his hands and over the rope for four.

It was a costly error, with Morgan immediately hitting a soaring six. He cleared the boundary again in a 36th over that cost 18 runs.

Morgan then went to fifty with his fifth six in 36 balls faced when he pulled off-spinner Mohammad Nabi high into an 8,000-capacity temporary stand.

Root was denied a second successive hundred and third of the tournament when he holed out off

SCOREBOARD

England		
James Vince	c Mujeeb b Dawlat Zadran	26
Jonny Bairstow	c & b Naib	90
Joe Root	c Rahmat b Naib	88
Eoin Morgan	c Rahmat b Naib	148
Joe Butler	c Naib b Dawlat Zadran	2
Ben Stokes	b Dawlat Zadran	2
Moeen Ali	not out	31
Chris Woakes	not out	1
Extras	(b 0, lb 1, w 7, nb 1, p 0)	9
Total	(6 wks, 50 overs)	397
Fall of wickets: 44-1 (James Vince, 9.3), 164-2 (Jonny Bairstow, 29.5), 353-3 (Joe Root, 46.4), 359-4 (Eoin Morgan, 46.6), 362-5 (Jos Buttler, 47.4), 373-6 (Ben Stokes, 49.1)		
Bowling		
Mujeeb Ur Rahman	10-0-44-0	
Dawlat Zadran	10-0-65-3	
Mohammad Nabi	9-0-70-0	
Gulbadin Naib	10-0-68-3	
Rahmat Shah	2-0-19-0	
Rashid Khan	9-0-110-0	

Gulbadin, whose three for 68 was not a bad return in the circumstances. But the sixes kept coming, with Moeen Ali setting a new team record when he launched the penultimate delivery of the innings, from Dawlat, over long-on.



Roy targets Aus match for return

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Jason Roy is targeting England's match against arch-rivals Australia for a World Cup return after being sidelined with a torn hamstring.

The in-form opening batsman was ruled out of England's match against Afghanistan at Old Trafford and their pool encounter with Sri Lanka at Headingley on Friday.

He tore his left hamstring in the field during England's eight-wicket win over the West Indies last week and did not bat. But having suffered a similar injury during England's tour of the Caribbean earlier this year and with the World Cup featuring a long pool phase that sees all 10 teams play each other ahead of the semi-finals, the 28-year-old Roy is confident of returning to action.

"I did it in the West Indies and it was a lot worse," Roy told Sky Sports. "It could be way worse — the scan told me it's minimum 10 days. We've got to assess it as we go along."

"It's a huge understatement being frustrated, but I've got to keep smiling," the Surrey star added.

Roy hit a fifty in England's opening win over South Africa and then struck a commanding 153 in the host nation's victory over Bangladesh.

But he fell for just eight during England's surprise 14-run defeat to Pakistan at Trent Bridge.

Now he hopes to return to reigning champions Australia at Lord's on June 25.

"We're targeting Australia but we'll see how this week goes," said Roy, whose opening partnership with Bairstow has been a key factor in England's rise to the top of the one-day international rankings and their status as favourites to win the World Cup.

"If this week goes to plan, then Australia. If not, then who knows. Hamstrings are such a grey area."

OTHER SPORTS



Chile's Eduardo Vargas, center, celebrates scoring his side's second goal during Copa America Group C match against Japan

Vargas scores brace as Chile rout Japan

AFP ■ SAO PAULO

Eduardo Vargas scored twice as Chile launched the defence of their Copa America crown with an emphatic 4-0 defeat of Japan in Sao Paulo on Monday.

Vargas, who plays for Mexico club Tigres UANL, netted twice in the second half as Chile gradually overpowered a skillful but limited Japan, who are playing in the South American showpiece as one of two invited teams from Asia.

Erick Pulgar had opened the scoring for Chile in the first half before Vargas doubled the 2015 and 2016 champions' advantage with a deflected second-half strike.

Manchester United's Alexis Sanchez then took his Chilean record goals tally to 42 after diving to head home in the 82nd minute before Vargas scored the pick of the goals moments later with a deft lob over Japan goalkeeper Keisuke Aoki.

The win saw Chile join Uruguay at the top of Group C, level on points and goal difference.

"The important thing is that we move on now with humility," said Chile coach Reinaldo Rueda.

"This win doesn't suddenly make us a dream team, just as we weren't the disaster that our critics were saying we were before."

The scoreline was harsh on Japan, who had carved out sever-

al promising chances but were let down by poor finishing from young striker Ayase Ueda.

"We deserved to score a goal," said Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu. "The difference was that they were clinical and took their chances. We're sad to lose but proud that we really took it to them."

Japan had started confidently, dominating territory and possession albeit without threatening the Chile goal.

Their best early chance came after nine minutes when Shoya Nakajima let fly after bursting forward only to see his shot saved by Chile goalkeeper Gabriel Arias.

As the first half wore on, Chile looked increasingly more threatening, and Sanchez sounded the alarm in the Japanese defence in the 35th minute when his low shot flashed just wide.

Sanchez then almost played in Charles Aranguiz but the Bayer Leverkusen midfielder took too long to get his shot away, allowing Japan to deflect behind from a corner.

CHILE DOMINANT

Aranguiz made amends, though, in the 41st minute by delivering the set piece which gave Chile the lead.

The goal reflected Chile's dominance, but Japan were given a glorious opportunity to equalize just before half-time.

Chile coughed up possession inside their own half and Gaku Shibasaki released Ueda on goal.

The 20-year-old Ueda was unable to make the chance count, though, rounding Arias but failing to find the empty net with his shot from a tight angle.

The half closed with Chile threatening to add to their lead, Sanchez's header from close range saved by Aoki.

Chile picked up where they left off as the second half got under way, stroking the ball around confidently to deny Japan possession. In the 54th minute the Chileans doubled their lead. A fluent build-up saw Mauricio Isla go clear down the right and he squared for Vargas, whose shot took a wicked deflection off Takehiro Tomiyasu on its way into the net.

Once again, though, a Chilean goal was followed by a golden Japan opportunity which they again squandered.

Shibasaki's fine cross picked out an unmarked Ueda at the back post but the youngster's composure again deserted him, hooking his shot wide with Arias and the Chile goal at his mercy.

Ueda missed another chance in the 69th minute but Chile slammed the door shut on hopes of a revival when Sanchez headed in Aranguiz's cross on 82 minutes before Vargas made it 4-0 a minute later.

PTI ■ HIROSHIMA

Gurjit Kaur slammed four goals, including a hat-trick as India thrashed lowly Fiji 11-0 to storm into the semi-finals of the FIH Women's Series Finals hockey tournament, here on Tuesday.

Gurjit struck in the 15th, 19th, 21st and 22nd minutes, while Monika (11th, 33rd) scored a brace for India in a top-sided Pool A match.

Lalremisiami (4th), Rani (10th), Vandana Katarinya (12th), Lilima Minz (51st) and Navneet Kaur (57th) were also among the goal scorers for the winners.

World No 9 India dominated their lowly ranked opponents throughout the match, allowing Fiji to only have one circle entry in the entire 60 minutes, whilst making 74 entries into the opposition's striking area.

The first quarter was dominated by India which saw them take the lead in the fourth minute when Lalremisiami's cross-field ball was deflected by a Fiji defender into the back of the net.

Captain Rani scored India's second goal in the 10th minute from a penalty corner.

India maul Fiji 11-0, enter semis



Indian player battles for ball possession with her Fiji counterpart during last group stage game

In the next minute Monika made the scoreline 3-0 from Neha Goyal's assist.

Forward Vandana Katarinya scored only her second goal of the

competition when she struck in the 12th minute.

Gurjit then scored her first of four goals by converting a penalty corner in the last minute of the first

quarter to hand India a 5-0 advantage.

In the 19th minute, Gurjit scored from another penalty corner by slotting home in the left bottom side of Fiji goal to make it 6-0 in India's favour.

Two minutes later, Gurjit completed her hat-trick when she scored from a rebound with a reverse stick shot after her drag flick was blocked by a defender.

Gurjit struck again in the 22nd minute from another penalty corner to make it 8-0 in India's favour.

Early in the third quarter, midfielder Monika scored India's ninth goal of the match, deflecting in Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam's shot from just outside the circle in the 33rd minute.

Lilima then joined the party and registered her name in the score sheet with reverse stick shot in the 51st minute.

Six minutes later, Navneet pounced on a loose clearance by the Fiji goalkeeper to round off the tally for India.

India will play their semifinal encounter on Saturday.

Real's Rodrygo identifies with Neymar

AFP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid's new signing Rodrygo has said he models his game on Neymar and Robinho as the 18-year-old on Tuesday became the latest arrival unveiled at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Madrid completed a 45-million-euro (\$50.3 million) deal for Rodrygo Silva de Goes in June last year but agreed to let the Brazilian transfer outlay to Santos for another season.

He is the fifth player to join Madrid this summer, following Eden Hazard, Eder Militao, Ferland Mendy and Luka Jovic for a minimum transfer outlay to 300 million euros.

"For me it is a dream come true," Rodrygo said at a press conference. "I have always said it is the dream of every child in Brazil and I'm living a dream. It's the happiest day of my life."

Rodrygo has signed for Madrid's first team but said he would be happy to play



Brazilian player Rodrygo Goes, left, poses with Real Madrid President Florentino Perez during his official presentation at the Santiago Bernabeu

of around 2,000 fans.

"I'm a fast striker, I score and dribble," he said. "I'm Brazilian and we're a bit like that. Like Robinho and Neymar, I identify a little with them."

"I like to play on the

wings, on the left especially, but I have no preference. I'm ready to play."

Neymar has been linked with a return to Spain, just two years after he joined Paris Saint-Germain from Barcelona for a world record 222 million euros.

Asked if he would like either to play alongside or emulate his compatriot, Rodrygo said: "Neymar is a great player but he's on another team and I can't talk about him."

"No, I would like to be the Rodrygo of Madrid. There is only one Neymar, there can't be another."

Madrid struggled for goals last season in the wake of Cristiano Ronaldo's departure to Juventus, despite another Brazilian teenager, Vinicius Junior, enjoying an impressive first year in the Spanish capital.

Vinicius began the season playing for Castilla but was promoted by coach Santiago Solari. Rodrygo hopes to follow suit.

"I have spoken to Vinicius since I signed and when we met in the national team we talked about the club," Rodrygo said.

"Madrid always has the best players in the world, I know and there will be a lot of competition but I am available to the club to play in the first team or for Castilla."

"The pressure is here at all football clubs but there it is much higher. Vinicius told me about his experience. He told me to be patient. I'm young. I have a big future ahead of me and everything will happen naturally."

Perez said: "Today marks a momentous time in your career, soon you will wear the white shirt."

"Your growth has been spectacular and you now face the challenge that you have chosen. Here you will succeed with work and humility, the fans will always be on your side but you must know the high demands of our club, it is a hallmark of Real Madrid."