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Viraat backfires

Ex-Navy chief refutes Modi's charge, claims Rajiv was not on private trip

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused late PM Rajiv Gandhi of using aircraft carrier INS Viraat as "personal taxi" during a holiday with his family in Lakshadweep Islands in 1987, several top retired Navy officers, including former Navy chief L. Ramdas, on Thursday refuted his claim and said no ships were diverted for Rajiv Gandhi and the trip was an official one.

Ramdas said Rajiv had boarded the aircraft carrier with his spouse and son Rahul Gandhi and denied Modi's charge that some foreigners too were on the ship.

However, there is no official reaction from the Indian Navy on the controversy.

Retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Wajahat Habibullah, who in 1987 was the administrator of the Lakshadweep Islands, denied Modi's charge that some friends of Rajiv Gandhi's boarded the aircraft carrier. Since all the Ministers besides the Prime Minister were there for a meeting, the aircraft car-



Former Navy chief L. Ramdas (right) refuted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charge that some foreigners were on the ship INS Viraat during a holiday with his family in Lakshadweep Islands in 1987.

rier was stationed there for national security, he said. The former bureaucrat said as the administrator of the Islands, he had to organise a meeting of Island Development Authority in Kavaratti, one of the islands of Lakshadweep. During this visit, he then PM had to inaugurate the Island Development Council.

"After the meeting, Rajiv Gandhi decided to stay on for a couple of days to take a holiday with his family, and was joined by Sonia Gandhi's sister and her husband, friends, including Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan. None of them even went to Kavaratti. They took the helicopter services from Kochi to Bangaram, he said, adding all those who availed of the helicopter service of the State-owned Pawan Hans paid for it as the administration did not get any bills for it.

"Neither did we get the bills for their stay at the guest house in Bangaram. Rajiv Gandhi paid for his family and the other

paid for theirs," Habibullah said.

These reactions came after Modi, during an election rally at Ramlila Maidan here on Wednesday, said Rajiv Gandhi took his family members from Italy for a personal holiday on INS Viraat. The then commanding officer of the aircraft carrier, Vinod Pasricha, denied it and said the protocol was followed on the Prime Minister's official visit.

Pasricha said the former Prime Minister was accompanied by his wife Sonia Gandhi, son Rahul Gandhi and two IAS officers, and Vice Admiral on board the aircraft carrier. Pasricha retired as Vice Admiral. Incidentally, the aircraft carrier was decommissioned in 2017 after 40 years of service. Refuting Modi's accusation, Ramdas, who in 1987 was the Southern Naval command chief, said in a statement on Thursday, "Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Mrs Gandhi embarked on board INS Viraat off Trivandrum enroute

Lakshadweep. The former Prime Minister was at Trivandrum as chief guest for the National Games prize distribution. He was going to Lakshadweep on official duty, to chair a meeting of IDA (Islands Development Authority). This meeting is held alternately in Lakshadweep and in Andamans."

The former Navy chief said there were no foreigners with them. "I, as Flag officer Commanding in Chief, Southern Naval Command, based in Cochin, boarded INS Viraat. Four other ships were with INS Viraat as part of Fleet Exercises. As command chief, I hosted a dinner for them on board INS Viraat.

"There were no other parties held on board INS Viraat or for that matter any other ship in our fleet during that time," he said. He clarified that the statement was issued after collating email responses from his colleagues namely Admiral Arun Prakash, Vice Admiral Vinod Pasricha and Vice Admiral Madanjit Singh. All of them were serving in the Western Fleet during the events referred to said, Ramdas.

"I would like to state unequivocally, that this was not the case," in an apparent reference to Modi's charge. Prakash, who later became Navy chief, was commanding INS Vindhyagiri while Madanjit Singh was commanding INS Ganga at that time. These ships were part of the exercise and accompanied the aircraft carrier.

Gambhir Atishibazi

Tearful Atishi blames BJP rival for obscene pamphlets; Gambhir retorts 'I will quit poll race if you prove it'



Staff Reporter ■ NEW DELHI

AAP's East Delhi candidate Atishi, along with Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, addresses the media in New Delhi on Thursday. Ranjan Dirri / Pioneer

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate from East Delhi Atishi on Thursday alleged pamphlets containing "obscene and derogatory" remarks against her are being distributed by BJP's East Delhi candidate Gautam Gambhir.

However, refuting the allegations vehemently, Gambhir said, "I will quit the electoral race if the allegation against me is proved."

Addressing the media, Atishi alleged pamphlets containing abusive language against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his Deputy Manish Sisodia and herself were being distributed by the BJP at housing complexes.

Gambhir, in a series of tweets, accused the AAP for pamphlets and said he is "ashamed" to have a CM like Kejriwal. "I abhor your act of outraging a woman's modesty @ArvindKejriwal and that too your own colleague. And all

this for winning elections? You are filth Mr CM and someone needs your very own jhadu to clean your dirty mind."

"I had welcomed Gambhir myself when he joined politics but I never imagined that he would stoop to this level in the Lok Sabha polls," Atishi said. "I have only one question for Gambhir. If he is doing this against one woman, what about the lakhs of women in East Delhi who are worried about their safety," said Atishi in a choked voice.

She broke down while reading pamphlet. Sisodia alleged these pamphlets were kept in newspapers and distributed in apartment complexes. Sisodia said he "never imagined Gambhir to stoop so low".

"How can women expect safety if people with such mentality are voted in? Atishi, stay strong. I can imagine how dif-

ficult it must be for u. It is precisely this kind of forces we have to fight against," Kejriwal tweeted.

Gambhir challenged AAP to have open debate and prove if these pamphlets were circulated by him. "My Challenge number 2 to @ArvindKejriwal and @AtishiAAP. I declare that if it's proven that I did it, I will withdraw my candidature right now. If not, will u quit politics?" he tweeted.

The BJP also refuted the allegation. "The BJP has nothing to do with the alleged pamphlets. AAP has no character and its notoriety about stage managing such things is well known. They can do anything like getting their leaders slapped and distribute scandalous pamphlets to be in the race for Lok Sabha elections that they are badly losing," said Nvon Kumar, BJP media incharge, East Delhi.

Ayodhya mediation panel gives report; SC hearing today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court constituted three-member mediation committee, tasked with exploring the possibility of an amicable settlement in the decades-old, politically sensitive, Ayodhya's Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute case, has submitted its interim report in a sealed cover.

The matter has been listed for hearing on Friday.

The SC on March 8 had referred the matter to mediation for exploring the possibility of an amicable settlement.

It had appointed former SC judge FMI Kalifulla, spiritual guru and founder of Art of Living foundation Sri Sri Ravishankar and senior advocate Sriram Panchu, a renowned mediator, as members of the mediation committee.

A five-judge Constitution Bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices SA Bobde, DY Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer will now peruse the report and decide the future course of action. The matter will come up for the first time



on Friday since the March 8 order of the top court. It had said that the mediation process would commence within a week and the panel would submit the progress report within four weeks.

The panel was asked by the apex court to hold in-camera proceedings and complete them within eight weeks.

The Constitution bench had said that it does not find any "legal impediment" to make a reference to mediation for a possible settlement of the dispute. The Bench was told earlier by Hindu bodies, except for Nirmohi Akhara, and the Uttar Pradesh government that they oppose the court's suggestion for mediation. The Muslim bodies supported the proposal.

While opposing the suggestion of mediation, Hindu bodies had argued that earlier attempts of reaching a compromise have failed and provisions of Civil Procedure Code (CPC) require public notice to be issued before the start of process.

The top court had directed that the mediation proceedings should be conducted with "utmost confidentiality" for ensuring its success and the views expressed by any of the parties including the mediators should be kept confidential and not be revealed to any other person.

However, it had refrained from passing any specific restraint order at this stage and instead empowered the mediators to pass necessary orders

in writing, if so required, to restrain publication of the details of the mediation proceedings.

The top court had fixed the seat for mediation process in Faizabad of Uttar Pradesh, around 7 km from Ayodhya, and said that the adequate arrangements including the venue of the mediation, place of stay of the mediators, their security, travel should be forthwith arranged by the State Government so that proceedings could commence immediately.

It had also directed that the mediation proceedings be held in-camera as per the norms applicable to conduct the mediation proceedings. Fourteen appeals have been filed in the apex court against the 2010 Allahabad High Court judgment, delivered in four civil suits, that the 2.77-acre land in Ayodhya be partitioned equally among the three parties --- the Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla.

On December 6, 1992, the Babri Masjid, constructed at the disputed site in the 16th century by Shia Muslim Mir Baiqi, was demolished.

Prove coal mafia charge or do sit-ups, Didi asks Modi

Saugar Sengupta ■ KHARAGPUR/BANKURA

After Tuesday's "tight-slap" came the Thursday's "sit-ups." Mounting a no-holds-barred attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for linking some of Trinamool Congress candidates to coal mafia, TMC chief Mamata Banerjee on Thursday dared the PM to prove his charges or do sit-ups.

"I challenge you Mr Modi to prove what you have said about my candidates accusing them of having links with the coal mafia. Prove your charges and I will withdraw all my 42 candidates from the electoral fray. If you can't, then you will have to hold your ears and do one hundred sit-ups before the public," she said.

Modi had said, "TMC mafia raj is continuing in the neighbouring coal mines and their leaders are minting money while the coal workers are not getting their pays."

Modi had added the TMC



had made mafia a part of its leadership, prompting Banerjee to make the "slap" remarks.

A couple of days ago, the Chief Minister told a public rally that Modi deserved a tight-slap of democracy in his face. Reacting to her Tuesday's remarks, the Prime Minister told an election rally in Purulia that he was ready to take a slap from the Chief Minister which would come to him as blessings. "I respect you (Banerjee) as Didi. But you offer me slaps in return. But that slap would come to me as blessings," Modi said during the rally. "Mamata Banerjee does not accept me as the Prime Minister as she is more respectful for the Pakistani

Prime Minister than me."

He said that Mamata's soaring anger graph was proportionate to the fall in her popularity level. "Didi knows that she is losing popularity fast which makes her angry," adding the remarks made by her in anger were only the proof of her arrogant character. Incidentally, the Chief Minister also leveled similar charges against the Prime Minister. The Chief Minister clarified her position on Thursday saying she had never spoken of any "physical slap." She said, "I did not talk of a physical slap. He is saying that I will slap him. But try to understand the language."

Rahul rakes up Rafale in response to Modi's comments on Rajiv Gandhi

PNS ■ SIRSA

Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Thursday raked up the Rafale issue to attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in response to his comment calling former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi "Bharashtachari No 1".

"If you have to talk about Rajiv Gandhi ji and about me, do so definitely... Speak about it with an open heart. But first explain what you have done on the Rafale issue. You should also explain to the people about your unkept promise of 2 crore jobs for the youth," Rahul Gandhi said at an election rally in Sirsa in support of Haryana Congress chief and party candidate Ashok Tanwar, who is pitted against BJP's Sunita Duggal, a former IRS officer and INLD's outgoing MP Charanjit Singh Rori in Sirsa Lok Sabha constituency (reserved).

He said that Mamata's soaring anger graph was proportionate to the fall in her popularity level. "Didi knows that she is losing popularity fast which makes her angry," adding the remarks made by her in anger were only the proof of her arrogant character. Incidentally, the Chief Minister also leveled similar charges against the Prime Minister. The Chief Minister clarified her position on Thursday saying she had never spoken of any "physical slap." She said, "I did not talk of a physical slap. He is saying that I will slap him. But try to understand the language."

Modi only did jumlebaazi: Kejriwal

Staff Reporter ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing Prime Minister for seeking votes in name of "fake nationalism", Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said he has done nothing in the last five years except "jumlebaazi", foreign tours and lectures.

In response to Modi's comments that Delhi Government brought "nakampanthi" (non-performance) model of governance, Kejriwal said his party has addressed issues related to education, health, electricity and water and asked "what have you done?"

In a tweet, Kejriwal charged, "Modi has done nothing in the last five years except jumlebaazi, foreign tours and lectures and that is the reason he is seeking votes in make of fake nationalism."

Kejriwal said "the people of Delhi have sought answers of three questions from you for which you had no answers":



"Modi has done nothing in the last five years except jumlebaazi, foreign tours and lectures and that is the reason he is seeking votes in make of fake nationalism"

The Aam Aadmi Party chief on Wednesday sought answer to three questions from Modi: "Why didn't the BJP pass an ordinance and stop sealing in Delhi? In 2014, PM Narendra Modi promised full statehood for Delhi.

Why did the BJP not grant full statehood? Why is Imran

Khan endorsing Narendra Modi?" In the tweet, Kejriwal tagged Modi's tweet in which he said Delhi government brought in "nakampanthi" (non-performance) model of governance.

Modi Wednesday launched a blistering attack on the AAP in his first rally in the national capital, accusing the Arvind Kejriwal-led government of supporting the "tukde-tukde gang" and bringing in "nakampanthi" (non-performance) model of governance. He said there are four models — 'naampanthi' (dynastic politics), 'vaampanthi' (left politics) and 'dam and damanpanthi' (hoologanism) and 'vikaspanthi' (those who believe in development).

"But Delhi is the only state where we learnt about the fifth model. Delhi has seen 'nakampanthi' (non-performance) which created anarchy and betrayed the people of the country," Modi said.

Three-day camp of sadhus by Computer Baba: Probe ordered

Staff Reporter ■ BHOPAL

District Returning Officer and Collector Bhopal has ordered an inquiry whether permission was granted for the three-day camp of sadhus being held by Nandas Tyagi, known as Computer Baba.

Besides this, the officer has sought a probe on the cost of the event as well as the role of Congress leader Digvijay Singh. Digvijay along with his wife had on Tuesday performed a 'havan' in the presence of Tyagi and other sadhus at a 'maha yagna' organised in Bhopal.

Tyagi said that the yagna was a form of 'Hat Yoga' to ensure Digvijay's win in the Lok Sabha elections. He had also accused the BJP of fooling

the community of seers by using the Ram Mandir issue as a political tool.

'Computer Baba' was appointed as a Minister of State (MoS) under the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government. However, he had openly rebelled against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after being denied a ticket to contest elections held in Madhya Pradesh. Bhopal will go to polls in the sixth phase of parliamentary elections on May 12, and counting of votes will take place on May 23. In Bhopal, Digvijay is contesting against BJP's Sadhu Pragya Singh Thakur from Bhopal Lok Sabha seat.

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Devotees throng Kedarnath for the reopening of the shrine on Thursday morning in Rudrapur district

Pioneer photo

Nirmala Sitharaman justifies Modi's statement

That late Rajiv Gandhi had used INS Viraat For personal trip

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman justified Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that late PM Rajiv Gandhi had used INS Viraat for personal trip, quoting that a crew from the warship had narrated the incident.

Sitharaman was talking to mediapersons at the BJP headquarters here on Thursday. When asked about her remarks on Rajiv Gandhi, she said it was a family trip on Viraat.

Notably, retired Vice Admiral Vinod Pasricha has claimed that Gandhi was on an official trip, Sitharaman started replying saying it was not only her comment but also an article published on the issue in a leading magazine in 2013.

She claimed she has not seen whatever the retired Vice Admiral had said but she did see something her staff member told as she was on her way

to BJP office in Bhopal. "A person who has identified himself as a crew of Viraat has claimed the Rajiv Gandhi did take the tour with family and in laws," said the Minister saying she could offer the copy of the said statement to the media.

Earlier, commenting on the PM Modi's accusations that late PM Rajiv Gandhi used Viraat as a private taxi for ferrying family on trip, claimed this was nothing new and was in public domain for years a leading magazine had carried an article on this in year 2013.

"What would the new Government do on this, I won't be able to comment right now," said the Minister adding she would definitely say this—the party which brazenly misused the army, navy and air force is now accusing PM Modi of politicising the armed forces.

Trashing Congress president Rahul Gandhi's accu-



Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman talks to mediapersons ahead of the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha elections at BJP State headquarters in Bhopal on Thursday

sation against the Prime Minister over Rafale deal, the Defence Minister claimed it was like mounting a tiger and now the Supreme Court,

CAG and others have offered the clean chit to PM, Gandhi does not how to get off that tiger.

The Defence Minister

claimed PM Modi gets letters from the public asking about surgical strikes so he requires answering them from the stage.

'A Brush with Bhopal' being put up at Bharat Bhavan Art Gallery

IT IS TO BE NOTED THAT EXHIBITION WOULD BE A CONTINUUM OF CREATIVITY AND ONE COULD FEEL THE TRANSFORMATION OF IT INTO COLORS. THE ARTISTS HAVE PRESENTED THEIR PERCEPTIONS BEFORE THE SPECTATORS FOCUSING ON DIFFERENT CONCEPTS LIKE THE BEAUTY OF WOMEN, NATURE AND EVEN MORE

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The art enthusiasts of the city are having a look at the art works from different artists. A group exhibition 'A Brush with Bhopal' is being put up at Bharat Bhavan Art Gallery, evoking a good response by art lovers of the city.

The exhibition is being put up by Chandigarh Lalit Kala Academy. It showcases the beautiful art works by 40 artists.

The artists from Chandigarh have put up the 115 artworks before the Bhopalites in different mediums.

The viewers are enthralled to have a close look at various forms of art created over canvas.

The art work is purely different from each other. Some artists have displayed modern

art and some have displayed abstract art and some traditional paintings could be seen under one roof. The artists have displayed their best of creations at the Gallery.

The art lovers find exquisite works of artists in form of canvas paintings.

It is to be noted that exhibition would be a continuum of creativity and one could feel the transformation of it into colors.

The artists have presented their perceptions before the spectators focusing on different concepts like the beauty of women, nature and even more.

Explaining different concepts the artists have astonished the art lovers with their immensely creative work. There works displayed in oil paint, oil pastel, mixed media and water colours.

The exhibition is loved by the art lovers of the city.

Restaurant owner's house burgled

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The house of a restaurant owner at Mata Mandir under TT Nagar police station area was targeted by miscreants and valuables worth ₹50,000 were burgled on Wednesday. A miscreant had been spotted in a CCTV grab.

Police said that the victim, Uday Shivhare, had gone to restaurant while his family had gone to attend a wedding ceremony in Gwalior. In the afternoon, his neighbour had informed him that the doors were open and valuables burgled.

A complaint was lodged by the victim with the TT Nagar police in which he stated that he had gone to his restaurant in Misrod area in the early morning and in the afternoon, his neighbour informed him about the burglary. When he entered the house, electronic goods and jewellery were found burgled.

In the burglary, one pair of gold ear rings, silver jewellery and ₹12,000 cash from a piggy bank were burgled. The total loss in the burglary is around ₹50,000. The police have registered a case under sections 457 and 380 of the IPC and have started further investigation.

Police said that the CCTV footage of the nearby installed cameras were searched in the investigation and a youth was found breaking the locks and entering the house and later escaping with the valuables. Based on the details in the complaint and information provided by the victim, the police have started investigation.

28-year-old man commits suicide

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 28-year-old man committed suicide by hanging with the ceiling at his residence in B-Sector under Piplani police station area on Wednesday.

According to the police, the deceased, Suraj Patil, was found hanging by his roommate, Hemraj Sahu, and was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead. Police said that the deceased was doing apprenticeship with BHEL and a suicide note was recovered from him but nothing regarding the extreme step has been revealed in the suicide note.

The deceased hailed from Pandurna district. The family members were informed regarding the death and on their arrival on Thursday, post-mortem was conducted. In the suicide note, the deceased asked his roommate to pardon him and take care of his parents. While addressing his parents, he appealed to take care of his sisters.

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

Meanwhile, a 40-year-old man, who sustained injuries at Chopra Village under Sukhieswania police station area on May 5, died while undergoing treatment at Hamidia hospital.

Police said that the man was rushed to a nearby hospital after he was hit by a speeding vehicle on May 5 and later late in the night of Wednesday, he died during treatment. The identity of the deceased is yet to be established. The body was sent for the post mortem after the preliminary investigation. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and have started further investigation.

The man was rushed to a nearby hospital after he was hit by a speeding vehicle on May 5 and later late in the night of Wednesday, he died

MPSD: Theatre aspirants impress judges

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The judges were impressed with the theatre aspirants as the aspiring youngsters showcased their acting skills before the faculty members of Madhya Pradesh School of Drama (MPSD) in an audition for the session 2019-20 held here on Thursday.

Notably, the final audition is being organised for the aspir-

ing students who showcased their acting skills before the faculty members of MPSD. As many as 280 students from various cities of the country were present to give the auditions.

On Thursday the participants were marked on the Focus Participants' Dance, Body Movement, Improvisation, Speech, Poetry, Songs, and reasoning Ability along with the drama's on the Spot situation was given.

While the participants made every effort to make Judges happy, some participants were happy.

The judges panel include actor Ishtiaq Arif Khan, Shiv Prasad Gaur, Hafiz Khan, Swati Dubey, Dwarka Dahiya, Swastika Chakraborty and Suresh Bhardwaj, along with Alok Chatterjee, director of MPSD were also present.

In the 6-day selection workshop, 280 participants

have been called for interview. On the third day, 42 out of 47 participants were selected. Of which 5 were females and 37 were male candidates.

Notably, the auditions are being held for the selection of appropriate candidate for the session 2019 -20.

The selection committee watched their performance with rapt attention and marked them accordingly. In the first round of the audition

the participants performed individually over the scripts they prepared themselves.

For the second session of the audition that would be held on Tuesday the selection committee divided the participants into groups and asked them to come prepared on different topics.

Notably, 25 students would be selected for the diploma course which is for a year.

मध्यप्रदेश लोकसभा निर्वाचन-2019 के तृतीय चरण के मतदान के लिए तैयार हो जाएं

12 मई, 2019

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वोट देने से पहले यह जानें

- आप तभी वोट कर सकते हैं जब आपका नाम मतदाता सूची में हो।
- फोटो वोटर स्लिप को जानकारी / मार्गदर्शन के लिए उपयोग किया जाए तथा साथ में निम्न में से कोई एक पहचान पत्र ले जाएं।

इन 12 दस्तावेजों में से कोई भी एक दस्तावेज पहचान के लिए उपयोग किया जा सकता है

मतदाता पहचान पत्र	आधार कार्ड
पैन कार्ड	ड्राइविंग लाइसेंस
मनरेगा जॉब कार्ड	पेंशन दस्तावेज फोटो सहित
पासबुक फोटो सहित बैंक/डाकघर द्वारा जारी	पासपोर्ट
सर्विस पहचान पत्र केंद्र, राज्य, सार्वजनिक उपकरण एवं पब्लिक लिमिटेड कंपनियां	स्मार्ट कार्ड श्रम मंत्रालय की योजना के अंतर्गत जारी
स्वास्थ्य बीमा स्मार्ट कार्ड श्रम मंत्रालय की योजना के अंतर्गत जारी	सरकारी पहचान पत्र सांसद, विधायक और विधान परिषद सदस्यों को जारी

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मुख्य निर्वाचन पदाधिकारी, मध्यप्रदेश



Students show their gesture after receiving their degrees during convocation ceremony at Indian Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM) in Bhopal on Thursday

Four miscreants nabbed, burglary foiled

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Abiganj police has nabbed four miscreants planning burglary and recovered iron rods and ropes from their possession at Arera Colony in the night on Wednesday.

Police said that acting on a tip off four miscreants were nabbed near Arera Colony and when they were quizzed they confessed that they were planning burglary.

On the receipt of the information police team rushed to the spot and raided the spot where the four were planning.

After spotting police the four tried to escape but were chased and nabbed by the police.

In the initial investigation the nabbed accused were identified as Ramesh Singh, Hari Singh, Dinesh and Paatiram. The crime record of the four would be searched. The four have been involved in crimes in different parts of the city.

The accused confessed that they were planning to target a house in Arera colony and were nabbed before committing burglary. Two of the nabbed accused were scheduled to break in and would

escape with the valuables while third two would keep an eye outside the house to alert them during burglary.

The accused told the police that they planned to target house of having good amount of valuables. After the preliminary investigation the police have registered a case under section 401 of the IPC and section 25 of the Arms Act.

Police said that during the interrogation more crimes would be confessed by the nabbed accused. The accused use iron rods to break the locks to enter the house.

45-year-old man commits suicide

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 45-year old man committed suicide by hanging with the ceiling at a furniture shop in Old Minal area under Awadhपुरी police station area in the afternoon on Thursday.

According to the police, Satish Pal was found hanging at the shop and he was taken to hospital where he was declared dead. Police said that the deceased used to work with the furniture shop in Old Minal area where he committed suicide at around 1 pm and was later

where the doctors declared him dead.

The family members were not aware of the reason behind the death. No suicide note has been recovered. The reason behind the suicide would be investigated in the further investigation. Statements of family members are yet to be recorded which could help in revealing the reason behind the suicide.

After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and have started further investigation.

Meanwhile a 22-year old youth died under suspicious circumstances who consumed medicine in the evening and later died in the night at hospital; deceased was a resident of Tumda village under Khajuri Sadak police station area.

According to the police, Pritam Rathod was found in an unconscious state at his house and was rushed to a nearby hospital where he died during treatment. The deceased was suffering from illness for long and frustrated over his illness. He consumed poison would be investigated in the further investigation.

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Congress candidate from Bhopal Lok Sabha seat Digvijay Singh in a road show in Bhopal North State Assembly constituency (left) and Digvijay Singh feeds a cow during his visit at Gayatri Shaktipeeth (right) at an election campaign in Bhopal on Thursday



Pioneer photo

Farm loan waiver: War of words continues between BJP, Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The war of words on farm loan waiver between BJP and Madhya Pradesh Congress seems far from over as former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched fresh attack on the Congress saying his kin never applied for loan so how come they were issued loan waiver certificates.

While canvassing in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday, Congress president Rahul Gandhi claimed, "We have even waived off loans of Shivraj Singh Chouhan's family." The Congress on Wednesday had issued loan waiver certificates to Chouhan's kin - Rohit and Niranjana, natives of village Jait, the former Chief Minister's birthplace.

Chouhan summoned media to his residence on Thursday morning to reveal that his cousins never applied for the loan waiver how these certificates appeared. "I had enquired about the truth and learnt that my brother Rohit did not apply for loan waiver



BJP National Vice President Shivraj Singh Chouhan and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan talking to media persons at BJP State headquarters in Bhopal on Thursday

and Incoem Tax payee was also written against his name in the loan waiver list, said Chouhan, adding that CM Kamal Nath should reply how the loan was waived and why this favour to him (Chouhan).

Accusing Congress government of peddling lies on loan waiver, Chouhan claimed he won't accept the loan waiver unless banks issue waiver certificates to farmers.

MPPC later in the day tweeted senior leader Suresh Pachauri's statement saying certificates of Chouhan's kin have been uploaded on internet and he should refrain from confusing public on loan waiver. Congress is also saying that BJP MLA Kamal Patel's wife too has availed loan waiver.

Often targeted by Chouhan for allegedly lying on farm loan waiver, Congress president Rahul Gandhi who was in Sagar claimed the Congress has waived off loans in accordance with the promise. We waived off loans of peasants in MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and also

write off loans of Shivraj Singh Chouhan's family, claimed the visiting leader.

He also accused PM Narendra Modi of lying on many issues including farm loan waiver.

As the multi-phase polling got underway, Chouhan had intensified attacks on Congress government saying loans of farmers were not waived off. An upset Congress sent its leaders to his residence on Tuesday dropping bundles of 21 names of beneficiaries. Later in the day the CM Kamal Nath too retaliated saying Chouhan was lying and confusing public on the issue.

He had also shared details of the loan waiver with media claiming it was long and thought out process.

Amid all the bitter exchanges on the farm loan waiver, there was a funny side of exchange as well. The Congress alleging that Chouhan wasn't able to see loan waived in the state had gifted him eyedrop, Chyawanprash and almonds to bolster his vision.

State Govt begins process of loan waiver in 15 districts

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Within 24 hours of getting permission from the Election Commission, the State Government began the process of loan waiver in 15 districts.

On the very first day of acquiring permission, loans worth Rs 34,05,71,000 of 7,706 farmers of 15 districts were waived. The state government has allocated districts to give this amount to the nationalized and rural banks.

The Department of Agricultural Development and Farmer Welfare has released this amount to those districts, where the process of voting for Lok Sabha election has been completed. The Election Commission granted permission to the state government in this connection on May 7. The process of loan waiver was initiated immediately after getting permission.

The amount of loan waiver for eligible farmers of 15 districts has been released for payment to the farmers who have received loans from Nationalized and Regional Rural Banks. The amount of loan waiver payable to eligible farmers who have taken loans from Cooperative banks is

being allocated separately to Apex Bank for payment.

The loans of those eligible farmers that have been waived after permission from the Election Commission in 15 districts include Rs 25.99 lakh of 91 farmers of Chhindwad district, Rs 317.37 lakh of 800 farmers of Balaghat district, Rs 1389.04 lakh of 2702 farmers of Seoni district, Rs 215.69 lakh of 731 farmers of Mandla district, Rs 117.61 lakhs of 205 farmers of Sidhi district, Rs 18.82 lakh of 24 farmers of Shahdol district, Rs 19.28 lakhs of 39 farmers of Singrauli district, Rs 238.83 lakhs of 421 farmers of Hoshangabad district, Rs 15.52 lakhs of 36 farmers of Dindori district, Rs 777.24 lakhs of 2050 farmers of Betul district, Rs 136.86 lakhs of 281 farmers of Narsinghpur district, Rs 41.81 lakhs of 90 farmers of Chhatarpur district, Rs 72.15 lakhs of 133 farmers of Damoh district, Rs 9.66 lakhs of 76 farmers of Jabalpur district and Rs 9.84 lakhs of 27 farmers of Katni district.

It may be noted that the state government had taken the decision to waive the current / PA and timeless / NPA loans upto Rs 2 lakh of account holder farmers of crop loans as

in March 31, 2018 under the Jai Kisan Crop Loan Waiver Scheme. Of the total 51.61 lakh applications received in the scheme, 24.83 lakh applicants were found eligible for loan waiver. Out of these, the loan waiver amount has been transferred to the accounts of 20 lakh farmers, by March 10, 2019.

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MP police to provide internship to meritorious students

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Internships will be offered to the meritorious students to make them aware of the functioning of Madhya Pradesh Police and to encourage them to research.

Students willing for internship will have to submit the application in the prescribed form by May 25 in the district superintendent of the district.

The training branch of the Police Headquarters issued instructions to the police superintendents of all the districts of the state to collect applications from the students of their respective districts, colleges and equivalent academic institutions and get applications from May 25 for internships under 'Police Internship Scheme' that was started last year.

The selected students will be given 6 weeks of internship, which will start from 01 June and will end on July 12.

The interns would be doing internship from larger police stations of in Indore, Bhopal, Jabalpur and Gwalior districts. Around 2-3 interns would be placed in these police stations while one intern will be placed at medium level police stations.

Law graduate, engineering, MCA, BCA, PGDCA, CA, CS from institutions affiliated to UGC Students and Diploma and PhD students related to police could apply for the internship.

The age of the student for internship should be between 21 and 26 years on May 1.

Analytical research paper must be submitted for three thousand words on the subject accepted for internship. Certificates will be provided to the students on successful completion of internship. Internships will be free. But students will have to arrange accommodation and food arrangements.

The selected students will not be eligible for any kind of salary and honorarium.

Children's Festival comes up for young readers at SVL

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Swami Vivekananda Library and Club Literati are coming up with Children's Festival for young readers. The festival will begin on May 11.

In this four-week long festival, the books, quizzes, games will be organized on the books written by Ruskin Bond. Swami Vivekananda Library Manager Yatish Bhatele said that this event will be organized on four different days. Total 4 events will be organised on different dates.

On Saturday i.e. May 11 a discussion on life of Ruskin Bond 'Loan fox dancing' will be held. How some incidents in his life influenced his forthcoming books and also influenced his personality. In this discussion, some decisions taken by him and his results, his environment will affect him and his family, especially during his grandparents, will be discussing shot narratives created by him. The quiz will also be done at the end. It will be hosted by Rishank Goyal, who also owns a Literary blog <https://litoot.blogspot.com>.

On Sunday i.e. May 19 discussion on Ghost and Hills will be organised. The time spent by him by the mountains will be discussed and his love towards nature and the mountains and the Ghost Stories created by him will be discussed. On this day, discussions on

IN THIS FOUR-WEEK LONG FESTIVAL, THE BOOKS, QUIZZES, GAMES WILL BE ORGANIZED ON THE BOOKS WRITTEN BY RUSKIN BOND

superstition stories and treasure hunt will also be done. This is his 85th birthday too, so his birthday will also be celebrated.

On Saturday i.e. May 25 The bond style event will be organised. Discussing the style of writing of Ruskin Bond, in particular, in which they have experienced his past experiences in Short Stories, Poems. His style of writing in which he would go through the emotions he had emitted. In the end, a session of Creative Writing will be written by the short story participants in the style of Jasmine Ruskin Bond.

On Sunday i.e. June 2 Rusty and Me will be organised. The brief summary of the books written by him and then the participants will read some of the books written by Ruskin Bond, and then discuss his favorite characters. In the end, there will be interesting games on books written by him.

IN BRIEF

BDA STARTS ONLINE FACILITY FOR APPLYING NOC

Bhopal: Bhopal Development Authority (BDA) would start online facility for applying NOC for construction on land outside project areas by different institutions, departments, Housing societies and individuals.

The facility has been started as government procedure is time consuming. The online software has been made and along with applying for NOC the system could also provide NOC online which will be benefit those seeking completion of work earlier. Commissioner and Chairman of BDA Kalpana Shrivastava has instructed for the same and sub-ordinate officials and employees have started working for the implementation of the online facility.

The online facility has been started providing online application which would help institutions and individuals to obtain NOC for areas beyond project areas.

WORKSHOP ON TRADITIONAL SAORA PAINTING HELD

Bhopal: Training-cum-demonstration workshop on traditional Saora Painting of Odisha which was earlier scheduled from 10 May 2019 is postponed for May 12, 2019 due to non arrival of artist as road and rail transport from eastern side is badly affected by Phailin tropical cyclone in Odisha.

The registration form for this programme can be obtained from IGRMS, gate no 1 by paying ₹10 from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm. The registration fee is ₹250. Participants will be selected on first come first get basis. For further information desired people may contact on 0755-2526555, 9425080466.

BHEL CMD GETS MANAV RACHNA EXCELLENCE AWARD

Bhopal: For being a changemaker with a track record of innovation and achievement, Atul Sobti, CMD, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has been bestowed with the 'Manav Rachna Excellence Award 2019 for Nation Building'. The award, recognising Sobti for his visionary leadership, was presented by Prof DP Singh, Chairman, University Grants Commission at a glittering ceremony. These awards are conferred on outstanding luminaries and accomplished leaders in various categories. They recognise those pushing the bounds of leadership excellence across a diverse spectrum, therein making a positive difference.

SIX-A-SIDE CRICKET TOURNAMENT ORGANISED

Bhopal: A Six-A-Side Cricket Tournament was organised the other day at Piplani. On this occasion M Isadore General Manager (HR) was present as the Chief Guest while Kuldeep Mathur General Manager (SCR) President AGA Club presided over the programme. Steam Turbine Division bagged the Champions Trophy whereas

Transformer Division won the Runners Trophy. Yogesh Verma won the Best Batsman Trophy, Laxman Tomar the best Bowler, Pankaj for Most Sixes and Arun Sahu won the Man of the Tournament Award.

'DO AND LEARN' EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME HELD

Bhopal: Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya under its popular summer series of 'Do and Learn' educational programmes is imparting training of various art, craft and performing arts during the summer holidays for enthusiasts of all age groups. Today, Traditional Bhil Painting of Madhya Pradesh concluded successfully, where more than 20 participants learnt the said art and craft. Traditional artisans, Smt. Gangu Bai from M.P. imparted training of Bhil Painting. On this occasion Gangu Bai told that Art lovers of all age group learnt the basics of this figurative and narrative visual art and painted various artworks during the workshop.

PEOPLE HAVE GIVEN ME THEIR COMPLETE SUPPORT: PRAGYA

Bhopal: Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate for Bhopal has on Thursday said that everyone knows the difference between a saint and the devil.

She made the remark while campaigning in the State capital, while riding on a motorcycle. "The people of Bhopal have given me their complete support. They want me to be among them," she told media persons near Minal residence locality.

When asked about her rival, Thakur without naming him directly, said, "These are fake people. The people know everything. They know the difference between a saint and the devil." So far 13 out of 29 seats in Madhya Pradesh have voted. Elections in rest of the 16 seats will go to polls in the sixth and seventh phase on Sunday and May 19. Counting of votes will take place on May 23.

POLL OFFICERS INSPECT STRONG ROOM



Bhopal: Deputy Election Commissioner, Election Commission of India Sudeep Jain and Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Madhya Pradesh VL Kanta Rao today inspected the strong room in Krishi Upaj Mandi, Pehrua in Katni. Sealed EVMs and VVPAT machines have been kept safe in this strong-room after the first and second phase of election in Vijayaraghavgarh, Mudwara and Bahoriband assembly segments under Badwara and Khajuraho seats of Shahdol parliamentary constituency.

Deputy Election Commissioner Sudeep Jain and CEO Kanta Rao reviewed the safety arrangement of the strong room besides apprising themselves with the preparations for counting. District Returning Officer and Collector Pankaj Jain informed about the preparations for the counting of votes.

Deputy Election Commissioner Jain and CEO Rao reviewed the security arrangements of the strong-room located at Polytechnic College in Seoni. The officer duo viewed the arrangements of the counting venue and reviewed the preparations for counting. They also held a discussion with the candidates and their representatives.



BJP candidate Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur addresses a public meeting during an election campaign for Lok Sabha elections in Bhanpur locality in Bhopal on Thursday



Principal Secretary of Madhya Pradesh State Assembly AP Singh at a health check up camp at Ayurvedic dispensary in State Assembly premises in Bhopal on Thursday

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Bigwigs of BJP, Cong to descend in Hry on last day of campaigning

NISHU MAHAJAN ■ CHANDIGARH

As campaigning will draw to a close on Friday, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and its main rival Congress have geared up to give a final push to woo the voters and capture 10 Lok Sabha seats in Jatland-Haryana.

Top guns from BJP and Congress will hold rallies in Jat belt of the state on May 10, the last day of campaigning. While the Prime Minister Narendra Modi would push to the crescendo his party's campaign in Haryana in his last political rally at Rohtak, a Jat stronghold, former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda along with central party leaders will hold a rally in Gohana, which falls under Sonapat Lok Sabha constituency, also a Jat dominated seat.

Two-time former Chief Minister and Congress veteran Bhupinder Singh Hooda is

contesting from Sonapat Lok Sabha seat and his son, three-time MP Deependra Singh Hooda is seeking mandate for the fourth time in adjacent constituency of Rohtak.

The BJP has fielded two Brahmin leaders including outgoing MP Ramesh Kaushik in Sonapat and former MP Arvind Sharma in Rohtak to take on father-son duo in two major hubs of Jat electorate.

The rallies by both BJP and Congress on May 10 in Rohtak and Gohana respectively will be the last attempt to swing the voters in their favor before the state goes to polling on May 12.

Rohtak was the lone parliamentary seat that had withstood the Modi wave and was won by the Congress out of 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana in 2014 elections.

On the adjacent Lok Sabha seats of Rohtak and Sonapat, the BJP is banking on strong polarization of non-Jat vote bank while the Congress is hopeful of

consolidation of Jat vote bank to win both the seats.

As political pundits are predicting revival of Congress in Haryana if it manages to win these two Jat-dominated seats, the BJP led by Chief Minister Manohar Lal in the state is leaving no stone unturned to defeat the father-son duo.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had earlier held two rallies each at Fatehabad and Kurukshetra on May 8, will address his last poll rally in Haryana at Rohtak on Friday.

In neighboring Gohana assembly segment, Hooda will hold Samajik Bhaichara rally which would be addressed by Haryana Congress in-charge Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Union Ministers Anand Sharma and Ashwini Kumar, three-time MP Deepender Singh Hooda among other party candidates in Haryana.

BJP chief Amit Shah will address two election rallies, each at Barwala (Hissar Lok

KEY CAMPAIGNING EVENTS ON MAY 10 IN HARYANA

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold rally in Rohtak
- BJP chief Amit Shah to address rallies in Barwala, Charkhi Dabri
- Former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda to hold rally in Gohana
- Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal to address rally in Jind
- Roadshows by actors and BJP leaders Hemi Malini and Sunny Deol to hold roadshows

Sabha), Charkhi Dabri (Bhiwani Mahendargarh LS) on Friday. He had earlier held three elections on May 5 in the state.

To woo the voters of the state, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, whose Aam Aadmi Party is contesting in an alliance with Jannayak Janta Party in Haryana, will hold a rally in Jind, which is part of Sonapat Lok Sabha seat. AAP's Sangur MP and star campaigner Bhagwant Mann will hold a road in Kurukshetra and

Kaithal.

The Congress chief Rahul Gandhi had on Thursday addressed a rally in Sirsa (reserved Lok Sabha seat) to seek votes for Haryana party unit chief Ashok Tanwar, who is pitted against BJP's candidate Sunita Duggal and INLD's outgoing MP Charanjit Kori.

The Gandhi scion had earlier held rallies in Bhiwani and Gurugram in support of party candidates Shruti Choudhry and Capt. Ajay Yadav respectively. On May 7, the party's

general secretary Priyanka Gandhi had sought votes for party candidates Kumari Selja and Bhavya Bishnoi at election rallies in Ambala and Hisar respectively besides holding a roadshow in Rohtak to muster support for Deepender Singh Hooda.

Eying to woo the dalit vote bank in the state, Bahujan Samaj Party's supreme Mayawati had also addressed rallies in Kurukshetra and Panipat on Thursday. Her party BSP is contesting the Lok Sabha polls in an alliance with Loktratra Suraksha Party of BJP rebel Raj Kumar Saini in Haryana.

Notably, the saffron party, which was riding high on the Narendra Modi wave in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections had won seven seats out of 10 seats in Haryana.

This time, Haryana is witnessing a multi-cornered contest with BJP, Congress, Indian National Lok Dal, Jannayak

Janta Party-Aam Aadmi Party combine, Loktratra Suraksha Party-Bahujan Samaj Party combine, flexing muscles to win the 10 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

The state has 1.80 crore voters including 97.16 lakh male, 83.40 lakh female electors.

Ban on holding public meetings

With the election campaign in Haryana coming to an end at 6 pm on May 10, there would be a complete ban on holding of public meetings or processions in connection with an election in the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the close of poll.

Haryana joint chief electoral officer Inder Jeet said that polling for the 10 Lok Sabha seats in the State would be held on May 12 from 7 am to 6 pm.

No person would convene, hold or attend, join or address any public meetings or pro-

cession in connection with an election or display to the public any election matter by means of cinematography, television or other similar apparatus. Canvassing of votes within a distance of 100 meter of polling station on the day of poll is also prohibited. Besides, liquor shops and vendors would remain closed during the applicability of 48 hours, he said.

Inder Jeet said that in order to strengthen the law and order on the day of poll and to ensure an atmosphere where the electors do not feel intimidated in any manner, the Election Commission has directed that all Ministers, Members of Parliament and State Legislative and other political functionaries who have been provided with security should leave the constituency as soon as the campaign period ends, that is 48 hours before the time fixed for the close of poll.

Punjab AAP release its 11-point Lok Sabha poll manifesto

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Claiming not to make "false promises" with the electors and instead being determined, the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Punjab unit on Thursday released its 11-point agenda for the May 19 Lok Sabha elections in the State, touching all aspects concerning the State.

The party, contesting its second parliamentary polls and eyeing to improve its previous performance of four out of 13 seats in Punjab, promised implementation of Swaminathan Commission's recommendations, setting up of agro-based industry, special package for industry at par with hill states, reducing and simplifying GST rates, among other things.

"AAP is aware of the issues and concerns people of the State are wrestling with, be it the distress of farmers and farm hands, the travails of the industrials and traders, the never-ending menace of drugs, unemployment, and so on. These issues need to be addressed sooner than later to bring the State back on the path of progress and prosperity. AAP will make no false promises to the people just to grab power, but would work earnestly and honestly to live up to their expectations. We are here in the public court with our five-year report card of achievements," said AAP's Punjab Campaign Committee chief Aman Arora.

Arora, releasing the party's 11-point election manifesto, said that the party's elected representatives would prioritize issues and concerns of the people and raise their voices to redress their grievances.

He said that the manifesto promised to take up the issue of beleaguered farming community with the Union Government for the implementation of Swaminathan Commission's rec-

ommendations, that is ensuring 1.5 times the cost of production, et al to provide the much-needed respite to the distressed community.

"The manifesto bats for setting up of agro-based industry in Punjab to boost the farmers' income to stop the unending trail of suicides committed by them and farm hands," he said.

Arora said that manifesto also aimed at providing relief to the industrialists by ensuring special package at par with certain hill states availing the package, besides stressing the need for ensuring 'one-country-one-tax'.

"The party would go the whole hog to press the Centre to start the freight corridor from Amritsar to Kolkata as may prove to be boon in disguise for the industry in Punjab which is in doldrums. The project has been hanging in the balance for years now due to the laidback stance of the Union Government," Arora said.

The complainants have submitted an affidavit of Sonu Tomar along with piece of conversation to the police. They have also submitted a complaint to IG Bhopal Jaideep Prasad in this regard. Later they visited the office of chief electoral officer and submitted the complaint.

President of Central Sindh Panchayat Bhagwan Das Israni and Susheel Waswani took charge of the complaints making spree and they even visited BJP office and meet the officials and demanded that the MLA be expelled from the party for using the abusive language against the community.

AAP leader said that the party was aware of the fact that a large number of the youth was jobless and was left with no option but to go abroad in search of greener pastures. "AAP would bring in large scale public sector undertakings (PSUs) to the State to generate ample employment opportunities for the youth," he said.

Besides, the party also promised to bring better and high-end health services by bringing more government hospitals at par with AIIMS and PGI to the state. In addition, the party would also stress for bringing high-end IIMs and IITs to the State.

"All-out efforts would be made by the elected representatives of the party to save Punjab waters, environment, ecology and soil," he said adding that two-third of the MPLAD funds would be spent by the elected members on the peoples' health and education among others.

Huzur MLA booked for remark on Sindhis

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

After seven months of coming to power, the Huzur MLA Rameshwar Sharma has been booked for hatching conspiracy against Sindh community.

Police said that the action has been taken after complaint lodged by Bhagwan Das Israni and Susheel Waswani in November last year against Huzur MLA Rameshwar Sharma who represents BJP.

The SHO of Bairagarh police Ajay Kumar Mishra said that during the Vidhan Sabha elections last year an audio was circulated over social media on November 27, 2018 in which MLA Rameshwar Sharma who was contesting election from Huzur constituency from BJP is heard speaking against Sindh community using abusive language against them, he was talking with Mohar Singh alias Sonu Tomar.

The complainants have submitted an affidavit of Sonu Tomar along with piece of conversation to the police. They have also submitted a complaint to IG Bhopal Jaideep Prasad in this regard. Later they visited the office of chief electoral officer and submitted the complaint.

President of Central Sindh Panchayat Bhagwan Das Israni and Susheel Waswani took charge of the complaints making spree and they even visited BJP office and meet the officials and demanded that the MLA be expelled from the party for using the abusive language against the community.

May God wipe out clan of those involved in sacrilege, cheap politics on it: Sukhbir

"Punjab CM was running away from the issues of development, good governance and welfare. But he lacks the courage to seek a vote on his performance"



PNS ■ MOGA

Kali Dal President Sukhbir Singh Badal on Thursday said he has prayed that the Almighty may "wipe out the entire clan" of those who were involved in this "grave sin" of sacrilege and also of those who indulge in "cheap politics" over the issue.

Lashing out at Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh at a poll rally here, Badal accused him of raking up the sacrilege issue "merely to divert attention from his utter failures" as CM.

"Punjab CM was running away from the issues of development, good governance and welfare. But he lacks the courage to seek a vote on his performance," Badal said.

Amarinder Singh had said he would not spare anyone, including the Badals, found to be involved in trying to divide people of Punjab by allowing desecration of the holy scriptures.

The chief minister had also said they would have to pay for their "sins", including the firing on anti-sacrilege protesters in Faridkot in 2015.

The sacrilege incident took place when the SAD-BJP combine was in power.

A Special Investigation



Congress nominee from Patna Saheb and former Bollywood actor Shatrughan Sinha campaigned in favour of Bhopal's Congress candidate Digvijay Singh at Bagh Mughalia locality of Bhopal on Thursday night

CEO reviews poll preparations

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) VL Kanta Rao and Deputy Election Commissioner of Election Commission of India, Sudeep Jain reviewed the preparations for the Lok Sabha elections in Rajgarh district.

Rao said that adequate facilities should be provided to all officers and employees engaged in the election process. Ensure Police patrolling, night patrolling, mapping and continuous monitoring of sensitive and vulnerable areas.

Rao said that strict monitoring should be done on the border areas and check posts naka. Work of installing GPS in vehicles should be completed soon apart from maintenance of EVMs and VVPATs. Complaints received on c-vigil should be promptly resolved.

Jain said that the Sector Officers should monitor the polling booths regularly. Revenue and police officers should work with mutual coordination. Take immediate action in case of any incident. He said that monitoring in the vulnerable areas and identified locations should be speeded up.

CEO Rao and Deputy Election Commissioner Sudeep Jain met the observers appointed for the Rajgarh Lok Sabha

constituency and sought election-related information.

Besides, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) VL Kanta Rao and Deputy Commissioner of Election Commission of India, Sudeep Jain reviewed the preparations for the 6th phase of Lok Sabha elections (3rd phase of the state) on May 12 in Bhopal. On this occasion, Additional Chief Electoral Officer Sandeep Yadav, District Election Officer Sudam Khade and DIG Bhopal Ishaq Vali were present.

arrangements at polling booths, besides the facilities to be given to voters and law and order were reviewed at the state hangar itself after returning from Rajgarh.

Chief Electoral Officer VL Kanta Rao and Deputy Commissioner of Election Commission of India, Sudeep Jain will review the preparations for voting on May 12 in the 6th phase of Lok Sabha elections (third phase of the state) in Bhind and Morena on May 10.

The Chief Electoral Officer and Deputy Commissioner will leave by helicopter from Bhopal at 7 am. They will hold a meeting to review poll preparations and law and order at 8:45 am in Bhind and at 10 a.m. in Morena.

Karnal is a prestige issue for CM Khattar

NISHU MAHAJAN ■ CHANDIGARH

The "poll battle of prestige" on Karnal Lok Sabha constituency will test the political clout of a non-Jat Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who represents the Karnal assembly segment in the Haryana Assembly.

The Chief Minister's confidant, Sanjay Bhatia is taking on senior Congress leader and former Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Sharma on Punjabi-dominated Karnal parliamentary constituency in the general elections.

In this constituency that has acquired the sobriquet of "Brahmin constituency", the caste equations have always played a key role with voters electing nine Brahmin candidates out of 12 elections in Karnal after the delimitation of constituencies in 1976.

Keeping in mind the caste arithmetic, the BJP has fielded a Punjabi candidate Sanjay Bhatia. Congress has a Brahmin candidate Kuldeep Sharma, Jannayak Janta Party-Aam Aadmi Party's candidate Krishan Agarwal is from Baniya community, INLD's nominee Dharamvir Padha is a Jat and Pankaj Chaudhary, candidate of Bahujan Samaj Party-Loktratra Suraksha Party alliance comes from a Ror community.

A total of 16 candidates are in the fray from the parliamen-

ary constituency. In 2014 Lok Sabha polls, BJP's Punjabi candidate, media baron and political greenhorn Ashwini Kumar Chopra had defeated former MP Arvind Kumar Sharma, a prominent Brahmin leader who was contesting on Congress' ticket.

Due to his known differences with Chief Minister Manohar Lal, Chopra has been replaced by another Punjabi candidate by the BJP in Karnal this time while former Congressman Arvind Sharma had joined BJP earlier this year and is contesting as party's candidate from Rohtak Lok Sabha seat.

Political experts believe that the Karnal Lok Sabha seat is a safest bet for the BJP with eight out of nine assembly segments falling under the parliamentary constituency, represented by BJP legislators.

Karnal is a multi-caste constituency with over 1.5 lakh Jat voters, over 3 lakh Sikh, Arora and Khatri voters, more than 1.5 Brahmin voters. The constituency also has voters from Harijan, Rod, Valmiki, Ghiver, Rajput, Gujjar and Saini communities.

Brahmin and Punjabi voters are considered as potential game-changer in Karnal.

In the past elections, Brahmin candidates namely Arvind Sharma, ID Swami, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma and Chiranjil Lal had won the Karnal parliamentary seat on various

occasions while leaders including Bhajan Lal, Mahinder Singh Lather and Ashwini Chopra, who had also won the seat were non-Brahmins.

BJP's candidate Sanjay Bhatia, 52, a resident of Panipat is general secretary of party's Haryana unit. In the previous two poll battles, he had unsuccessfully contested from Panipat city in 2005 and 2009 Haryana Assembly elections.

The past electoral records may not be in his favor but Bhatia, who is known as "blue-eyed boy" of the CM, is likely to be immensely benefitted by the saffron surge in Karnal constituency since 2014 polls.

Bhatia, who has the backing of Chief Minister, BJP leaders and RSS cadre in the constituency, is also hoping to cash in on "Modi factor" to sail through the ballot box.

To give a big boost to the party's prospects in the state, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a day before addressed a rally in Kurukshetra seeking votes for three party candidates including Sanjay Bhatia. Earlier, the BJP chief Amit Shah had also addressed a rally in Panipat, which is part of Karnal parliamentary constituency.

On the other hand, the Congress' candidate Kuldeep Sharma, 62, is banking on the legacy of his father Chiranjil Lal Sharma, who had won the Karnal seat four times. Kuldeep himself is MLA



from Ganaur Assembly constituency which falls in Sonapat Lok Sabha seat from where former CM and Congress veteran Bhupinder Singh Hooda is party's candidate.

Kulwant Singh Nehra, Assistant Professor, RBI chair at Chandigarh-based Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID) while talking to The Pioneer said, "The BJP has an edge over its main rival Congress on Karnal Lok Sabha seat."

"Karnal is CM Manohar Lal's hometown and he faces a must win situation here to prove his popularity and clout among Punjabi community that dominates the Karnal seat, he said.

Noted sociologist, Jitender Prasad, a former professor of Sociology at Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), said that Karnal is seen as a stronghold of BJP now and the BJP candidate has high chances of winning this seat. Since the Chief Minister represents the Karnal Assembly seat, the BJP leadership and the CM himself is leaving no stone unturned to

register a victory here with a bigger margin, he said.

Congress' candidate Kuldeep Sharma also enjoys support of Brahmin community in the constituency and is trying to give a tough fight to the BJP candidate, he added.

Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhajan Lal had faced defeat for the first time in his political career in 1999 when he had lost the Karnal seat to his BJP rival ID Swami. His defeat against former Union Minister ID Swami came after his victory against the same rival in previous 1998 elections on Karnal seat.

Performance in 2014 elections

Riding high on Modi-wave in 2014 Lok Sabha elections, BJP's Ashwini Kumar Chopra had won the Karnal Lok Sabha seat by a margin of more than 3.6 lakh votes defeating his closest rival Congress' Arvind Kumar Sharma.

Chopra was polled over 5.95 lakh votes (49.84 percent), Congress' Arvind Sharma got 2.34 lakh (19.66 percent), INLD's Jaswinder Singh Sandhu 1.87 lakh (15.74 percent) and BSP's Virender Maratha 1.02 lakh (8.60 percent).

Interestingly, the Karnal parliamentary seat was earlier left by the BJP for its alliance partner Haryana Janhit Congress in 2014 Lok Sabha polls. However, after the con-

trovery surrounding its candidate former Deputy Chief Minister Chandar Mohan, who had in the past hogged the limelight for his tumultuous love life, the HJC had opted to take the Sirsa Lok Sabha seat instead and the BJP had announced Ashwini Chopra as its candidate for Karnal.

The HJC had in 2016 merged with the Congress.

The Karnal parliamentary constituency has nine assembly segments including Nilokheri (SC), Indri, Karnal, Gharanda, Assandh, Panipat (rural), Panipat city, Israna (SC) and Samalkha. Ashwini Chopra had led in all constituencies to record a comfortable victory over his rivals in the last general elections.

Chopra was polled over 5.95 lakh votes (49.84 percent), Congress' Arvind Sharma got 2.34 lakh (19.66 percent), INLD's Jaswinder Singh Sandhu 1.87 lakh (15.74 percent) and BSP's Virender Maratha 1.02 lakh (8.60 percent)

Sheeshe Ke Khilone to be staged at Bharat Bhavan

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A Hindi play Sheeshe Ke Khilone will be staged at Bharat Bhavan on Friday. The play will be staged as a part of guest performance.

Directed by Govind Singh Yadav Sheeshe Ke Khilone is an urdu adaptation of the play The Glass Menagerie written by Tennessee Williams and adapted by Bilquis Zafeer ul Hasan. The play questions why God doesn't take care of humans, as a character of the play Lubna takes care of her glass menageries. Why does God leave us to wander alone in tough times?

This is the motive of the play as expressed by Lubna's brother Aijaaz, at the end of the play. Based on a simple storyline, this play portrays many things.

It is to be noted that Govind Singh Yadav studied at National School of Drama and Bharatendu Natya

Akademi. He has to his credit the direction of plays like Lolita, Andha Yug, Adhe Adhure, Khamosh Adalat Jaari Hai, Miss Julie, Kabira Khada Bazar Me, Duvdha, Ballabhpur ki Roop Katha, Do Koudi ka Khel and Tansen, his most recent show. He received Sangeet Natak Akademi's Bismillah Khan Award for Best Lighting in 2008.

He studied theatre and light techniques at the National Theatre in Korea. Recently he visited the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London to study theatre further. He has designed light for the productions of the National School of Drama Repertory Company, the Theatre in Education wing (NSD), and NSD's student productions. He is presently working as the stage manager, and light designer and executor for NSD Repertory Company.

BJP questions Cong's NYAY

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With two rounds of polling left, the BJP on Thursday stepped up its offensive against the 'first family' of the Congress by reiterating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's allegations that former PM Rajiv Gandhi misused INS Viraat for a family vacation. At the same time, the BJP also questioned Congress' 'NYAY' scheme in the backdrop of its 'low credibility' in practicing what it preaches.

Going hammer and tongs against Congress, BJP leader Arun Jaitley said while 'Kaamdars' (self-made hard-working like Modi) used India's naval fleet to strike at terror, 'naamdars' (dynast like Rajiv) used them for personal reasons.

Modi, during an election rally on Wednesday, had accused Rajiv and his family of using warship INS Viraat as its 'personal taxi' for a holiday when Rajiv Gandhi was India's prime minister between 1984-89.

In a separate tweet, Jaitley said that the Congress which had blamed DMK for Rajiv's assassination has now tied up with the regional party in Tamil Nadu during the ongoing general election. Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on May 21, 1991, at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. "From December 1990 till May 1991, when Shri Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated, the Congress Party supported Chandra Shekhar government was in power." "From May 1991 till 2004, the Congress blamed its present ally the DMK for Shri Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. It even withdrew support



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves at supporters during an election campaign rally from Bankura seat Subhas Sarkar for Lok Sabha polls in Bankura on Thursday

from the United Front government on this ground. 28 years later, today a desperate Congress has discovered a BJP role," Jaitley said.

Jaitley's remark came in response to senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel's assertion that the BJP-backed V P Singh government had refused to provide Rajiv Gandhi with additional security and left the former prime minister with one PSO despite credible intelligence inputs and repeated requests.

The BJP, for its part, alleged through its official Twitter handle that it was on the instruc-

tion of Rajiv Gandhi that the 1984 anti-Sikh riots happened.

Senior BJP leader Nitin Gadkari too alleged that Congress has lost all political credibility when it comes to addressing the issue of poverty.

Gadkari took a dig at Rahul's proposed 'Nyay' scheme by invoking Congress prime ministers, who, he claimed, had vowed to eradicate poverty and failed.

Addressing a press conference, Gadkari further alleged that the Congress had deliberately created 'fear' in the minds of the minorities to divert atten-

tion from performance, work and development, which should have been the issues in the ongoing Lok Sabha election.

"The Congress has no credibility. After 1947, (then prime minister Jawaharlal) Nehru said he will remove poverty. Then Indira Gandhi said this. She used the slogan of removing poverty and won elections, but poverty did not go. Then Rajiv Gandhi repeated that, then Sonia Gandhi and then Manmohan Singh, but poverty did not go.

"Now, even Panditji's (Nehru) great-grandson is saying the same thing. If he

(Congress chief Rahul Gandhi) will remove poverty by giving Rs 72,000, then what did Pandit Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Manmohan Singh do? That is why the political credibility of the Congress in removing poverty has ended," he said.

He further alleged that the Congress had a history of injustice and since 1947, it had been responsible for 'wrong economic policies, bad and corrupt governance and visionless leadership'.

"So, 'Nyay' will not happen, because with justice, the person doing it out should also be trustworthy," he said.

Gadkari also lashed out at the opposition party for the abuse it had meted out to Modi during its poll campaign and said he had a list of 56 such abuses.

"One, fear is their biggest capital. Create fear in the minds of Dalits, minorities, SCs and STs. Two, ensure that a discussion on the work done in five years, which had not happened in 50 years, does not take place. If the discussion revolves around development, then they know they will be in trouble," he said.

"Last time during the Kumbh, the prime minister of Mauritius could not go for a bath in the Ganga... This time, 20 crore people visited the Kumbh and took bath in the river. For the first time, the Ganga was pure and clean.

"We did what we promised. We made the waterways and that is why (Congress leader) Priyanka (Gandhi Vadera) could travel from Prayagraj to Varanasi on a boat while abusing us continuously," he said hitting out at them.

SC junks plea seeking direction to debar RaGa from contesting polls

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a plea seeking direction to the Centre and the Election Commission to debar Congress President Rahul Gandhi from contesting Lok Sabha elections till the issue of his citizenship is decided.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi rejected the contention of the petitioners, who said that in a form along with the annual data of a UK-based company in 2005-06, it was allegedly mentioned that Rahul Gandhi is a British citizen.

"If some company in some form mentions his nationality as British, does he become a British citizen," the bench also comprising Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna told the petitioners.

The plea had said that the petitioners were "dissatisfied" with the "inaction" of the Centre and the poll panel in "deciding the question of voluntary acquisition of British citizenship" by Gandhi in spite of a November 2015 communication by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy in this regard.

The petitioners — Jai Bhagwan Goyal and C P Tyagi — had alleged that since prima facie evidence in this regard has been produced before the Home Ministry and the EC, Gandhi should not have been allowed to contest the ongoing Lok Sabha elections from Parliamentary constituencies he has decided to — Amethi in Uttar Pradesh and

Wayanad in Kerala.

The plea, filed by advocate Barun Kumar Sinha, had also sought a direction to the EC to remove Gandhi's name from "electoral roll till the decision of the question of acquisition of his British citizenship".

In a recent letter to Gandhi, the Home Ministry had said it has received a representation from Swamy in which it has been brought out that a com-

pany named Backops Limited was registered in the United Kingdom in 2003 with Rahul Gandhi as one of its directors.

The Home Ministry had said Swamy's letter mentioned that in the British company's annual returns filed on October 10, 2005 and October 31, 2006, Rahul's date of birth has been given as June 19, 1970 and had declared his nationality as British.

Plea of sacked BSF jawan Tej over cancellation of nomination dismissed

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday rejected sacked BSF jawan Tej Bahadur Yadav's plea challenging the Election Commission's decision to reject his nomination papers from Varanasi Lok Sabha seat to contest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said, "We do not find any grounds to entertain the plea of Yadav."

Yadav had moved the top court challenging the decision of Returning Officer (RO) to reject his nomination papers from Varanasi Lok Sabha seat, saying it was intended to "give walkover" to PM Modi.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the Election Commission, referred

to various apex court judgments and said election petitions can only be filed after polls are over as it would vitiate the electoral process.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for Yadav, said that as per earlier verdict of the apex court, the election petition can be filed during enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

At the fag end of the hearing, Bhushan sought liberty from the court to file an election petition after polling is over.

"We have done what we could have done. We find no grounds to entertain this petition," the court said.

The top court had Wednesday asked the poll panel to examine grievances of Yadav.

Modi has made IAF jets his taxi, pays ₹744: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of making Indian Air Force (IAF) jets his "own taxi" and paying "as low as" ₹744 for using IAF aircraft for election trips. The grand old party also hit back at Modi for alleging that the late Rajiv Gandhi used INS Viraat as "personal taxi" on a family vacation, saying he is a "serial liar" who does not have the courage to fight elections on issues such as unemployment and demonetisation.

Citing a media report based on facts from a RTI, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, ruling party at

Centre BJP paid a total of ₹1.4 crore to the IAF for 240 "non-official domestic trips" made by Modi since the start of his tenure as prime minister till January 2019.

"In some cases, the amount paid seemed to be quite low. For example, the BJP paid ₹744 for a H/P Balangir-H/P Patharchera' trip by Modi on January 15, 2019," Surjewala claimed about the news report.

"Distraction and fakery is your last resort. You have made Indian Air Force jets your own Taxi! You have paid as low as ₹744 for using IAF jets for election trips!" Surjewala said.

In an apparent reference to Modi's allegation that the late PM Rajiv Gandhi used INS



Viraat as a "personal taxi" on a family vacation, the party pointed that a scared Modi is now shamelessly pointing fingers on others.

A day after Modi accused late PM Rajiv Gandhi of using warship INS Viraat as a "personal taxi" for a family holiday, Congress alleged that Prime Minister is spreading canards and lies during elections and

said it proves his "imminent defeat".

Congress' social media strategist Divya Spandana slammed Modi for allegedly taking Canadian citizen Akshay Kumar with him onboard Indian Navy warship Sumitra. Her attack on Modi came a day after he accused late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi of using warship INS Viraat as a "personal taxi" for a family holiday.

Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Abhishek Singhvi alleged that PM Modi was spreading disinformation and lies about former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi taking his family on INS Viraat when he was in office and quoted former Navy chief Admiral (Retd)

L Ramdas and other Naval officers of the time said that Gandhi was on an official visit then.

Congress accused Modi of "demeaning" the office of Prime Minister and said "you have regressed far from progressing". He asked what relation does Rajiv Gandhi's visit to a Naval ship have "in 2019, to the issue of jobs he promised in the air and to agricultural distress or demonetisation which crushed our MSMEs".

Singhvi also said that people know when a party revives a citizenship issue in the middle of elections after five years in power, "without a shred of legal or factual finding against Congress President Rahul Gandhi, it is only proving their

own frustration on knowing their defeat".

Singhvi said the BJP attacked former PM Rajiv Gandhi on Bofors omitting to even mention about the 2004 judgement, which the BJP never appealed. In 2018, the case was dismissed by the Supreme Court.

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel said abusing a martyred Prime Minister is the sign of "ultimate cowardice". "Rajiv ji lost his life due to their hatred and is no longer here amongst us to answer the baseless allegations and abuses which are being unleashed on him. Abusing a martyred Prime Minister is the sign of ultimate cowardice," Patel tweeted.

Rahul gets time to submit respond to EC notice

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) has allowed Congress president Rahul Gandhi to submit his respond till Friday on a show-cause notice issued to him over his remark that the Narendra Modi Government had enacted a new law that allowed tribals to be shot at.

On Tuesday, Rahul had sought time till the weekend to respond to the notice. The Congress chief had sought time till May 7 to respond to the notice, following which the EC had granted him an extension last Friday.

Citing his speech in Sh-ahdol, Madhya Pradesh on April 23, the EC had, on May 1, issued the show-cause notice to Rahul, highlighting a provision of the Model Code of Conduct that barred "unverified" allegations against political opponents and asked him to submit response within 48 hours.

However, it extended the deadline to Tuesday on his appeal. The notice has been issued based on allegations that during the impugned speech, the Congress chief said that Narendra Modi had brought in a new law under which tribal people could be shot at.

SC Collegium recommends Justice Bose, Bopanna for elevation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rejecting the Government's objections, the Supreme Court Collegium has reiterated its recommendation to elevate Justices Aniruddha Bose and A S Bopanna to the apex court, observing that nothing adverse has been found regarding their competence, conduct or integrity.

The collegium has also recommended names of Justices BR Gavai and Surya Kant for elevation to the apex court.

The two resolutions of the Collegium were made public on the apex court's website on Thursday.

The 5-member Collegium headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi had met on Wednesday and deliberated on the issue of elevation of the four high court judges.

"In view of the above, on due consideration of all aspects mentioned in the file, the Collegium resolves to reiterate

the aforementioned recommendation dated 12th April, 2019, especially since nothing adverse regarding competence, conduct or integrity of Justices Aniruddha Bose, and A S Bopanna, has been pointed out," the Collegium said in its May 8 resolution.

The government had earlier returned the names of the two judges, citing seniority and representation of regions as the reasons.

Justice Bose, whose parent high court is Calcutta, is the Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court and is at number 12 in all-India seniority of judges.

Justice Bopanna, whose parent high court is Karnataka, is the Gauhati High Court Chief Justice and stands at number 36.

The government had returned Justice Bose's name to the Collegium last year as well when he was recommended to head the Delhi high court.

Justice Gavai is a judge of

the Bombay High Court and Justice Kant is the incumbent Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court.

"While recommending the names of Justice B R Gavai and Surya Kant, the Collegium has taken into consideration combined seniority on all-India

basis of Chief Justices and senior puisne Judges of High Courts, apart from their competence, conduct and integrity," said the Collegium, also comprising Justices S A Bobde, NV Ramana, Arun Mishra and RF Nariman, in its May 8 resolution.

Govt played fraud upon court to obtain favourable Rafale verdict, petitioners claim in SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre misled and played fraud upon the apex court to obtain favourable order in the Rafale fighter jet case last December, former Union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie and activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan claimed in

the Supreme Court on Thursday.

In a rejoinder affidavit filed in the apex court, they said the December 14 verdict in the Rafale case should be reviewed as the judgement was obtained through "multiple falsehoods and suppression of material and relevant information".

Cereb further informed that while a blood stem cell transplant provides the only hope for a cure and normal life for Thalassemia patients, not all of them have an eligible family blood stem cell donor.

He said that his organization has already joined hands with various Thalassemia associations across India and has appealed to masses to come forward and register as a volunteer Blood Stem Cell donor to save the lives of Thalassemia Children.

Notification stalling highway works in Kerala revoked: Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Denying any discrimination against the southern State, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said that an order that virtually stalled all highway development works in Kerala had been revoked.

His remarks came amidst allegations from Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan that the move was "politically motivated".

Vijayan had claimed that the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), as part of its policy guidelines issued on April 15, had categorised highway projects into

"high priority-1" and "high priority-2", placing the state in the second category.

The CPI(M) leader had also said the NHAI had issued directions to all its regional offices to suspend the land acquisition process of all projects under the "priority-2" category.

"The notification has been cancelled. There is no discrimination against Kerala. The problem in Kerala is that the cost of land acquisition is very high and there are houses on the roadside.

So road widening is an issue and this is Kerala's biggest problem.

"The Kerala chief minister

and I sat together and decided that whatever the cost for the development of the state, we would have to do it. This priority 1 and priority 2 is wrong news.

All the Bharatmala projects are underway and detailed project reports will be made. There will be no injustice towards Kerala. Clarification for the same will be issued on Friday," Gadkari said.

He added that Union Tourism Minister Alphonso Kannanthanam, who hailed from the southern state, had explained the situation to him and he had also spoken to the NHAI chairman on the issue.

The NHAI had earlier asked the Left Democratic Front (LDF) Government in Kerala to stop the land acquisition process for the expansion of National Highway 66. Following the order, the work had to be stopped all over the state except in Kasaragod.

Only the Thalappady-Chengala and the Chengala-Neeleswaram stretches in Kasaragod district come under the "priority-1" category.

The political row over the stalling of projects has been going on for some time. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) had accused Kerala BJP chief Sreedharan Pillai of trying to derail the projects.

Policy on thalassemia all set to see light

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drafted last August, the policy for prevention and control of Hemoglobinopathies — Thalassemia, Sickle Cell Disease and variant Hemoglobins — is all set to see light of the day within the next fortnight, paving the way for the much-needed genetic screening of all pregnant women to prevent the inherited disorders.

The enforcement of the national policy would also ensure putting in place advanced facilities for comprehensive care of such patients besides making provision of medicines, including iron

chelating agents, leukocyte filters and infusion pumps free of cost to the poor patients.

Sources in the Union Health Ministry said that the States have been consulted in the matter and almost all are on the same page, infact many have already started strengthening existing public health facilities for patients with hemoglobinopathies.

A day after the World Thalassaemia Day, experts said that India is the Thalassaemia capital of the world with 40 million carriers and over 1,00,000 thalassaemia majors under blood transfusion every month.

Experts said that a bone

marrow transplant (BMT) can help them live a healthy and normal life. More important is Carrier Genetic Test (CGT), as proposed in the policy, that can be conducted before pregnancy, which can help make out if the baby will stand the risk of having any of the serious diseases including thalassemia, they adds.

"The blood transfusion process these patients do through now and then is painful and expensive. The life expectancy of these patients is generally not more than 25 to 30 years.

But if they find an HLA Matched Unrelated Blood Stem Donor and get a bone marrow

transplant (BMT), they can live a healthy and normal life," said Dr Nezhil Cereb, Co-founder, and Chairperson of DATRI.

Cereb further informed that while a blood stem cell transplant provides the only hope for a cure and normal life for Thalassemia patients, not all of them have an eligible family blood stem cell donor.

He said that his organization has already joined hands with various Thalassemia associations across India and has appealed to masses to come forward and register as a volunteer Blood Stem Cell donor to save the lives of Thalassemia Children.

Nearly 1,200 IPS officers under scanner for non-performance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 1,200 officers of Indian Police Service (IPS) have come under the scanner of the Home Ministry for non-performance, an official said Thursday.

The ministry has reviewed service records of a total of 1,181 IPS officers in the past three years to check deadwood from the Government, he said, adding the numbers of officer under the lens could go up as such a review is a continuous process.

The review of service records was carried out under Rule 16 (3) of All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958 during 2016 and 2018 to check non-performers, the official said.



Former IAS officer of Punjab cadre, SS Channy, joins BJP in presence of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari

PAPER WITH PASSION

Question of survival

With surveys warning us about the extinction of the tiger and a million land species, it's time to change livelihood patterns



They say that the Sundarbans tiger is the most intelligent among the big cat family — it is an excellent swimmer, an intuitive reader of the human mind and behaviour, fiercely adaptive of its hostile surroundings, extremely elusive, frighteningly deceptive, an alert stalker, an agile predator and a fierce attacker if accosted. No wonder it is called the Royal Bengal Tiger and attracts a halo of myths and stories from villagers and fishermen in the mangrove delta. Now if the latest UN report is anything to go by, then it might just become a part of folklore, its extinction predicted as early as 2070 due to climate change, rise in seawater and the rapidly eroding delta, 70 per cent of which is just a few feet above existing water levels. The process is not difficult to imagine considering the raging cyclones, their intensity over the Bay of Bengal and the resultant tidal waves have already decimated much of the vulnerable islands around the delta, shrinking the natural habitat of not only the tiger but its prey base as well. Besides, submergence along the coastal belt has meant that the tiger has been forced to migrate to the Bangladesh side and inland villages, where it has easily fallen prey to the man-animal conflict. A picture of an emaciated tiger, caught in the moment of a forest crossing from a boat a few years ago, had set off alarm bells about the real prospect of the big cat's starvation and breakage of the food chain. Severe climate events have already changed vegetation patterns, impacting the tiger's prey species. Many reports prior to this one had sounded the death knell, too, but we are frankly past warnings as the consequences of global warming have already set in, pushing our fragile ecosystems and threatening many land species. Relocation is a challenge for many species as the natural corridors of animal movement have been fragmented by development. And even if by some logistical miracle that migration is achieved or enabled, there is the problem of over-populating an existing habitat and stressing out its resources. Tigers need roaming liberties and restricted space has meant that territorial fighting has emerged as the new threat for its survival. Just a day after the UN report, a 12-year-old Bengal tiger was found dead at Assam's Kaziranga National Park following a tussle with another feline. The park, which has 100 plus tigers, has been reporting such conflict deaths over the last couple of years or so.

The tiger crisis is representative of a bigger extinction threat that has already been pointed out by a world biodiversity report. According to it, up to one million plant and animal species face their end, many within decades, because of increasing human activities and not just climate change. It warned that without drastic action to conserve habitats, the rate of species extinction — already tens to hundreds of times higher than the average across the past ten million years — will only increase. While industrial development has extracted its price, the new challenge comes from the ever-increasing agricultural activities that are believed to have had the largest impact on ecosystems. Latest figures say that crop and livestock operations currently co-opt more than 33 per cent of the earth's land surface and 75 per cent of its freshwater resources. Then there is the larger issue of emissions of greenhouse gases. Only 37 per cent of the world's longest rivers remains free-flowing. Imagine what it means for our rivers that are fragmented by development, constraining their capacity to flow free and affecting aqua ecosystems that keep the waters healthy. With everything geared towards human consumption, we may soon have nothing left to live on until we adopt crucial transformative habits. Policies won't do, we have to implement them in right earnest, freeze our current livelihood patterns and make our food and living choices entirely sustainable without raising global temperatures. Scientists must develop partnerships with local governments and communities to implement actionable plans. We may not be able to reverse biodiversity drastically but at least save what is left of it in our lifetime.

Sparse infrastructure

Mumbai's wholly inadequate airport is an example of bad planning and how insufficient space can strangle a city



When an Indian Air Force Antonov careened off the runway at Mumbai airport, it did not make the headlines because of any fatalities as it thankfully sank into the mud at the end of the stretch. Such excursions are quite common and tens of such incidents occur in India every year (another one was reported from Surat just last week). But the problem in Mumbai, India's second busiest airport, was that this runway excursion meant that it effectively shut down its primary runway. With the second one shorter and only limited operations possible from it, flights went for a toss. Mumbai is a prime example of a wholly inadequate airport, constrained by insufficient infrastructure and a lesson on how poor planning and politics have led to lopsided development of the city. While the Mumbai airport developer has done a great job in removing some of the slums around the expanse, it is still, as a former civil aviation secretary said, "slumlocked" with local politicians preventing the removal of many clusters that they treat as captive vote banks. As a result, when the airport suffers a problem such as a runway excursion, it effectively shuts down and sends flight schedules haywire.

But it need not have been that way. Mumbai is possibly the best example of an urban metropolis making do with infrastructure that is wholly inadequate and a failure of Indian policy-making, which almost always patches up requirements instead of planning ahead. India's commercial capital needed a new airport over a decade ago and while work continues on the Navi Mumbai Airport, it will take another five years at the minimum to build. This has had a cumulative negative impact on the economic growth of the entire Greater Mumbai region. Aviation may be the preserve of a select few in India, although that number is growing rapidly, but it has a major economic cascade. Delhi's massive airport has played a critical role in supercharging the Delhi-NCR economy. A second NCR airport in western Uttar Pradesh will have a dramatic impact on that region as well. This should be a lesson on how planned infrastructure can impact a city and how inadequate infrastructure can actually harm it. India needs to continue building and developing aviation infrastructure, because it has a multiplier impact on the economy of the nation. With the challenge of creating jobs and employment opportunities, we should keep ensuring that we are building enough for the future and not just enough to patch our needs for now.

But it need not have been that way. Mumbai is possibly the best example of an urban metropolis making do with infrastructure that is wholly inadequate and a failure of Indian policy-making, which almost always patches up requirements instead of planning ahead. India's commercial capital needed a new airport over a decade ago and while work continues on the Navi Mumbai Airport, it will take another five years at the minimum to build. This has had a cumulative negative impact on the economic growth of the entire Greater Mumbai region. Aviation may be the preserve of a select few in India, although that number is growing rapidly, but it has a major economic cascade. Delhi's massive airport has played a critical role in supercharging the Delhi-NCR economy. A second NCR airport in western Uttar Pradesh will have a dramatic impact on that region as well. This should be a lesson on how planned infrastructure can impact a city and how inadequate infrastructure can actually harm it. India needs to continue building and developing aviation infrastructure, because it has a multiplier impact on the economy of the nation. With the challenge of creating jobs and employment opportunities, we should keep ensuring that we are building enough for the future and not just enough to patch our needs for now.

Injustice of a mindset

Individually, men may be endearing in their wisdom of welcoming diversity. But collectively, there's a beehive thinking that's seared deep enough and always doubts otherness



RINKU GHOSH

In many ways, the Supreme Court probe panel's summary dismissal of the sexual harassment charges against the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi is but a natural corollary of the presumptuous sexist attitude towards working women in this country. A mindset that sees them as encroachers in a so far restricted space and, by virtue of laying claim to that space, considers them liberated and bold enough to bend all kinds of rules and worse, use feminine guile as a negotiation tool. Individually, the men may be endearing in their wisdom of welcoming diversity, even making a point in doing so. But collectively, there's a beehive thinking that's seared deep enough and always doubts this otherness. Worse sees it as a threat. And that's sad.

A dipstick survey among men at any workplace shows a majority assigning some portion of the blame of sexual harassment to the woman herself, often concluding that such charges are nothing but the age-old honey trap ploy or cry wolf syndrome to get what she wants. Some even assume that these are extra-territorial relations gone wrong. Rarely would they agree that the predatory attack comes from powerful men, who by virtue of their longer reign in authority, or age, try to use the manipulative and primal hunter-tame strategy. It is almost as if men in power are pre-ordained to be morally invincible and not capable of human frailty or monstrosity. Unless tempted or trapped. Nobody looks at it as either opportunistic or situational from their end. And if they have a profitable career graph, that worth far outweighs a lone woman's dignity.

It may sound incredulous but no matter how many capable women have proven their mettle, how many have broken the glass barrier or how many have brought their unique skill sets and multi-tasking abilities to dynamic management, myths about a woman's role and place in society are embedded far deeper in our cultural DNA. And a woman in a leadership role is either perceived as circumscribed by able male advisors (remember former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's coterie) or almost a man herself (remember UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher). Working women are subjected to unending innuendos and suppositions and cannot get clemency from this mental stranglehold. So much so that some women play by the rules of the game and even overturn them to suit their trajectory. That's there, too, as a collateral damage of this uncodified warfare at the workplace.

That is why the day the allegations against CJI Gogoi surfaced, there was a ready acceptance of his argument that it was a conspiracy to "deactivate" his post on the eve of crucial verdicts and an attack on the institution of the judiciary. In a case saddled with inequities — a rank junior court employee who cannot take on the topmost office-bearer as no legal framework applies to him



except impeachment — the complainant has already been pre-judged regardless of her courage to challenge a systemic shrine rather than an individual. And a litany of her past legal cases was bandied about for every claim that she made about being punished and intimidated for daring to stand up. Then the questions kept floating around: Why did she take so much time to report this alleged misbehaviour? Why did she release statements? What's the price of vilifying a CJI? Will she be decimated in an out-of-court settlement? Why had not other women staffers seen this coming? Why should an educated woman like her feel frightened and vulnerable if she is so empowered? Our line of questioning has no empathy but only discredits the victim's account and shows how we are hardwired to dismiss the allegations rather than probe them. As a society we are yet to buy into the idea — in this case as in the others — that a woman might be traumatised, threatened, ashamed and even outwitted by hostile circumstance. What is often disregarded is her first coming to terms with the violation, getting over self-loathing and then taking the fight to the errant. That reconciliation doesn't often happen overnight. Especially when the offender almost always happens to be familiar and legalities demand specifics as to when and how the line was crossed in intimate encounters. Then there is the larger threat of her economic sustenance, the loss of job as a hitback strategy by the male superior on something as whimsical as non-performance or wrongdoing.

Undoubtedly, there is legal redress in the form of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, but even the prosecution process needs to be free from biases that are shaped by the common worldview. Any inquiry process that does not make the victim feel safe and sure is inherently flawed and not neutral. We may not realise but a formulaic who-where-what-why format and an accusatory tone seem to discredit the victim's account and automatically prepare the ground for the rejection of allegations. Particularly in a set-up where both the accused and complainant have been close and are not strangers. What needs to be looked into is if the charges are verifiable, whether there is corroborative evidence and the complainant's willingness to subject herself to a thorough probe. The complainant in the CJI case just wanted to do that, knowing full well that he couldn't be subjected to existing legal structures. All she wanted was a level-playing field in the inquiry process with the presence of her lawyer, a neutral, apolitical observer and a right to a shared, not one-sided, proceedings. It would be silly to assume that a woman would stake her entire reputation and career path to pursue a case legally, at the cost of her limited resources, only to wangle an out-of-court deal that could have been done informally anyway. It is because there are stereotypes that any inquiry process needs to be above board, honouring the intended spirit of the law. Even around the world as here, any sexual harassment case automatically implies that the complainant is assigned an advocate trained in sexual assault cases, who may in turn lead her to more support services. An audio visual recording is also desirable even if not mandated. The most significant oddity about sexual harassment cases is that unlike other investigations, the focus is not on the offender but the accuser, as if she is the one

whom motives can be ascribed to. The victim's inconsistency or vulnerability always makes news, not the offender's transgressions. If we want true justice, be it nailing the accused or exposing the fakery of the complainant, any judgement has to be based on thorough investigations and procedural propriety rather than latent bias. The last is easy to give in to. But then that is not law. That is what young women lawyers are saying in their silent campaign of sending snail mail letters to Supreme Court judges from across the country with print-outs of the Sexual Harassment Act.

And in their appeal on social media, they have pointed to this very mindset of assumption: "Independence of the judiciary was never envisaged to mean a complete lack of accountability and existence above the law. For an institution, which is meant to be the saviour of the rights of all citizens and the final interpreter of the Constitution, the judges of the Supreme Court of India have for far too long gotten away with impunity from charges of sexual harassment levelled against them."

(The writer is Associate Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

Initially, he (Rajiv Gandhi) was not corrupt but later under the influence of some people, he got involved in the Bofors corruption case.



J&K Governor — Satya Pal Malik

I think people should be a little kinder. She's (Meghan Markle) a young woman who just had a baby, you know?



American actor — George Clooney

Initially, he (Modi) talked about Make in India, then Start-up India, then Stand-Up India and finally he ended on pakodas.



Congress chief — Rahul Gandhi

If Pakistan does not stop terrorism, there will not just be air strikes and water strikes but it will be difficult to find Pakistan on the map one day.



BJP leader — Giriraj Singh

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Well done Amul!

Sir — That Indian dairy giant Amul will be the official team sponsor of the Afghanistan cricket squad at the upcoming ICC World Cup is a matter of pride. Amul is a symbol of rural uplift and empowerment and its association with the fastest growing cricket team is sure to give it a new life. History has it that Frontier Gandhi Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan visited Amul in 1969. Milk producers from Afghanistan have also made industrial visits to Amul units here.

M Pradyu
Kannur

Lost scenario

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Federal front regroups" (May 9). Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's aim of a non-BJP, non-Congress Government is hard to sell and does not have many takers. But one thing was very clear even before the election dates were announced — that all regional parties had been running from

pillar-to-post guided by self-interests and hopes of hefty political posts if voters returned a fractured mandate.

No party seems to be concerned about the welfare of the nation or its people. In the end, many parties may even switch sides for power. God save our motherland.

Sravana Ramachandran
Chennai

SC should be transparent

This refers to the editorial, "Justice or injustice?" (May 8). It is unfortunate that the Supreme Court, on which people repose immense faith and respect, has itself come in the eye of storm. While it will sail the current tide, the moot question is: Will the top court ever be able to regain lost ground? Squarely, the court, too, should share the blame for the current state of affairs for insisting too much on in-house and closed door proceedings.

It must not be forgotten that the judges, too, are human beings with god-given human frailties and political inclinations — the glimpse of which had come to the fore when four judges of the Supreme Court held a press conference to lay bare their grievances in public view. Moreover, has it ever crossed anybody's mind that too much secrecy gives rise to suspicion? Further, a closed system very much goes against the ethos of a 'democracy' and leads to the rule of aristocracy, about which a lot has been spoken by famous philosopher and guide Aristotle. Additionally, the judiciary has armed itself



with a weapon called contempt of court. It is because of this fear that a number of mistakes (not the errors of judgements) committed by the judges neither get rectified, nor come to public notice. This because the legal process is too complicated. It is, therefore, necessary that the workings of the apex court be made transparent.

BP Srivastava
Noida

Act responsibly

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Justice or injustice?" (May 8). In times when people look up to the courts as the last saviour of justice, it is incumbent upon them to reciprocate with the same sentiment. When one says courts, it means our learned judges. They are the ones who

enhance the image of our courts through their unbiased, impartial and fair judgements. Like the orders, the judges, too, should be above suspicion, personally as also work-wise. The sexual harassment case against the Chief Justice of India (CJI) has indeed rattled the very foundation of the edifice.

Like his junior fellow judges, the CJI, too, has an important

role to play to uphold the justice delivery system and the very fair name of the institution he presides over.

Irrespective of whether the CJI is blame-worthy or not, more than anybody else, it is he who has to prove his innocence. For what is at stake is his own personal image, integrity and prestige. This can be achieved only when a fair external probe is set in motion. Till such time he is exonerated, the CJI should step aside in his own interest and in the interest of the institution.

VS Jayaraman
Chennai

An overhaul needed

Sir — This refers to the article, "Scrub allegations and come clean" (May 8) by Kalyani Shankar. The Election Commission's (EC) credibility as a neutral umpire in the respected exercise of elections has been dented, largely due to its own making. It's high time that the EC reinvents its role.

Ashish Kumar
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Tagore, China and Bharat

The poet laureate was the first of our modern thinkers to cherish the long-standing civilisational links between the two Asian neighbours



ABHISHEK PRATAP SINGH

Born on May 7, 1861, 'Gurudev' Rabindranath Tagore, as he was popularly known, was an epitome of Indian literature and an ardent believer of the idea of intra-Asian solidarity and widening pan-Asian cooperation. As we mark his birth anniversary this month, it is essential to acknowledge his belief in the mutually beneficial interactive relationship between the two great civilisations of China and India. Tagore had travelled across the Himalayas and was, perhaps, the first of the modern Indian thinkers to cherish the significance of long-standing 'civilisational links' between India and China in the early 20th century. In one of his poems written in 1932, he reiterated, "The Great morning, which is for all, appears in the East; Let its Light reveal us to each other who walk on the same path of pilgrimage." There are certain key features attached to Tagore's understanding of China, which hold great significance for contemporary scholars of both nations. Much before his visit to China, expressing solidarity with the feeling of "colonial cousins", Tagore, when he was just 20 in 1881, criticised the British imposition of opium trade upon China.

First, much before he went to China, his work drew interest and recognition among the scholars there. Tagore's speeches, writings and visit to China have been well chronicled by Sun Yxue, famous literary scholar, who noticed that Tagore came to China with a "world-saving messianic message." Much before his visit in 1924, Chen Duxiu, one of the founding members of the Communist Party of China (CPC), had already translated his most notable work *Gitanjali* into Chinese in the early 1915s. His poem, *The Crescent Moon*, was also translated and published in Chinese journals around the same time. Tagore's *Kabuliwala*, a short story, was published at least six times in China.

Second, Tagore successfully made deep impressions during his two visits in 1924 and 1928. The first was set around the May Fourth Movement in China at the invitation of the Beijing Lecture Association. This point, India, too, was coming out of colonial resistance. To mark his birthday during his visit to the Peking Normal University, young Chinese actors performed his play *Chitra* in English. During his speeches, he emphasised the true virtues of close interaction among various Asian cultures like India and China.

Third, at a time when the 21st century is witnessing the reinvention of Asia's global position in world politics, it must be recalled that Tagore was one of the most creative exponents of 'Asian universalism' and propagated an 'Asian identity'. The dream of 'Asian Century', as propagated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping, reinvigorates the spirit of 'Asian Universalism' with a difference. Tagore had spoken about it as a dynamic process with flow of Asian cultures and values and one that had fluid national boundaries.

In 1916, Chinese journal *Dongfang Zazhi* published Tagore's speech in Japan, noting his sharp criticism of modern Western civilisation and its materialism. Tagore's critique of nationalism was a fine combination of his anti-colonial ideas and patriotic poetry. In his view, there was no fundamental contradiction between India and China as both emphasised the concept of harmonious development in the spirit of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family) and *Shijie Datong* (world in grand harmony).

Fourth, Tagore's ideas and vision are important for the establishment of a peaceful world order. He emphasised on three key features on his perspective of Southeast Asia. He downplayed the role of any kind of 'military aggression' and highlighted the role of 'cultural exchange' among nations, criticised any monolith understanding of a modern nation-state and allowed drawing cultural influences from others. He also noticed the centrality of Indian cultural forms and products as active agents of history in southeast Asian nations. The idea of an open, peaceful and economically integrated and culturally rich Southeast Asia well captures the vision of Tagore and forms the 'guiding spirit' for every nation.

Last, Tagore's role was unparalleled in the development of Chinese studies in India. The establishment of an international university, *Visva-Bharati*, in Bengal, the formation of first Sino-Indian Cultural Society, and *Cheena Bhavana* (Chinese Department) at Santiniketan were milestone achievements. Many scholars like Tan Yun-shan contributed greatly to modern India's understanding of the Chinese civilisation and its modern development. It is still an abode for Chinese scholars researching in India. Prof Wang Bangwei of Peking University called Tagore an Indian sage, an Asian sage and a world sage. To him, spirituality is the "greatest asset" of successful civilisations of Asia as opposed to the mad pursuit for materialistic gains in the West. While he had his fair share of critics from China's reactionary forces, the late Ji Xianlin, Padma Bhushan, observed that Tagore was an icon of Sino-Indian friendship.

(The writer holds PhD in East Asian Studies from JNU)

RAHUL GANDHI SAYS THE ARMED FORCES ARE NO ONE'S PERSONAL FORCES. BUT RAJIV GANDHI USED INS VIRAAT AS 'PERSONAL TAX' ON A FAMILY VACATION. —PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

POINT COUNTERPOINT



MODI/JI, YOU HAVE MADE THE IAF JETS YOUR OWN TAXI! SCARED OF YOUR OWN SINS HAUNTING YOU, YOU ARE POINTING FINGERS AT OTHERS. —CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON RANDEEP SURJEWALA

Women breaking stereotypes

As we near the 15th anniversary of the 2004 tsunami, the impressive achievements by Tamil women underline their resilience and ability to turn disasters into development opportunities



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

Fifteen years ago, in 2004, giant waves turned 55-year-old Sundari's world upside down. Gushing water crashed into her hut in Nochi Nagar located near the Marina beach in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and had she not grabbed her five-year-old grandson by his hair, he would have been swept away. The next few days were spent in fear, in makeshift shelters along with hundreds of others whose homes along the Marina beach were destroyed by the tsunami. As the days stretched into months and months into years, there were many moments when Sundari and other tsunami-affected families despaired they might never be able to shift out of the temporary shelters. It took 10 years of unwavering struggle before Sundari and around 628 Dalit families from the fishing and non-fishing communities could finally, in 2014, move into two-room flats constructed by the State Government under the Emergency Tsunami Recovery Project.

But communities in coastal States of Odisha and West Bengal, who were hit by Cyclone Fani on May 3, will not have to wait so long. The Odisha Government was well prepared. It evacuated millions of people well before the natural disaster could strike. This helped save lives. Yes, restoring normalcy will take time. People of the State will need basic necessities, houses and livelihoods, with many standing crops destroyed. But considering the swiftness of the Odisha Government's response, the rehabilitation process is expected to be smooth. Comparisons between Cyclone Fani and the tsunami cannot be made. Unlike Fani, the tsunami came unannounced and caught everyone unawares. But even though the Tamil Nadu Government was understandably unprepared, its slow and apathetic post-tsunami rehabilitation process added to the misery and woes, forcing those affected to run from pillar-to-post to claim their rights.

This is why the long and hard struggle by Sundari and others affected is important and offers lessons on how disasters can be turned into opportunities for community development and women's empowerment. It illustrates the vital role played by women in reclaiming their land and rights. Whether it was resorting to cooking food in the middle of the road to protest against the delay in delivering housing promises or forming a human chain to block wrongful land acquisition by the Government, women showed heart and courage to stand up for their rights. Their determination forced the State Government to make several critical changes.

The biggest gain was ensuring the allotted flat was jointly owned by the husband and wife — a big change from the earlier policy of giving it in the name of the male member. The first impact of this move was a fall in domestic violence. Women began to understand that they no longer needed to fear being thrown out of their houses and this awareness boosted their confidence. "Earlier, women were afraid of complaining against their husbands. But now, they approach the police for help," said Sundari. The police, too, have been cooperative.

Another critical change the community movement brought was ensuring each flat, albeit small, had an attached toilet. This is a big boon for women and girls. State tenements built at the Government's relocation site, where several families were shifted soon after the tsunami, are one-room flats and have



“ THE BIGGEST GAIN WAS ENSURING THAT THE GOVERNMENT-ALLOTTED FLAT WAS JOINTLY OWNED BY THE HUSBAND AND WIFE — A BIG CHANGE FROM THE EARLIER POLICY OF GIVING IT IN THE NAME OF THE MALE MEMBER. THE FIRST IMPACT OF THIS MOVE WAS A FALL IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ”

a common toilet for two families. The ability of the Nochi Nagar community, particularly its women, to bring about a design change in their housing, inspired residents of the adjacent fishing community living in Nochikuppam. They allowed the State Government to make new houses to replace their existing dilapidated tenements only after ensuring they, too, would get attached toilets. The triumph of the coastal community of Nochi Nagar boosted their confidence.

For the fishermen of the Irula community, a nomadic tribe living near the sea, this was the first time they got a proper roof over their heads. But more than that, getting ownership of a flat in their name gave them an identity of their own. "Acquiring an identity was something so emotional that it was hard to explain what it meant," said Usha, a 45-year-old Irula fisherwoman. Now, no one can evict them, not even their husbands.

Both the Irula fisherwomen and other women from the non-fishing community like Nochi Nagar resident Sundari were helped by the Forum for Securing Lives and Livelihoods Rights of Coastal Communities (FLLRC), a collaborative platform of four community-based organisations supported by ActionAid India, a civil society organisation. They provided the guidance, training and hand-holding the women and communities needed to rebuild their lives.

Their 10-year struggle also showed that given the opportunity, women use it to further community development through collective action. Once the women learnt about land and gender rights and were trained to use tools like the Right to Information (RTI) Act, there was no stopping them. Sundari used this training to file several RTIs to mon-

itor the progress of the houses promised to them by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) during the time the Nochi Nagar residents lived in temporary shelters from 2009-2014. This way she kept the community in the information loop and ensured design changes like attached bathrooms for each flat were implemented.

She also used it to access information on the TNSCB's housing project for the coastal communities, like hers, living along the Marina stretch. It was through an RTI that she got to know that TNSCB planned to relocate the non-fishing community, to which Sundari and 500 other such families belonged, to areas quite far from the sea. Further, the RTI also revealed that only the fishing community would be provided housing near the coast.

This was unacceptable for Sundari as their predominant livelihood activities were related to fishing and they needed to stay close to the coast to survive. A meeting to discuss the issue was attended by over 500 other Dalit women living along the Marina stretch. As protests grew louder, other Dalit community leaders joined hands, leading to the formation of the Chennai Dalit People's Federation (CDPF), to give voice to the marginalised community. Sundari, who was elected president of the CDPF, led the women's campaign to expose the Government's bid to divide the fishing and non-fishing communities. They received a big boost with the participation of national Dalit leaders from several organisations, including the National Dalit Women Movement, who addressed rallies against the Government's discriminatory policy. When the TNSCB realised that the storm of protest was unlikely to end, it was forced to declare that it would no longer differentiate the

coastal communities on the basis of their occupation.

Women didn't stop here. They used the opportunity to demand that they be treated on par with the fishermen. They argued that the role of the fishermen ended once they returned from the sea. The fish was cleaned and sold by the women. Nearly 75 per cent of the total catch is marketed by women fish workers but they are not covered under any welfare scheme or given equal rights in Government entitlements for the fishing community. These women wanted their labour in the fish trade to be recognised. According to an estimate, women engaged in fishing-related activities constitute 55 per cent of the workforce in Tamil Nadu and 65 per cent at the national level.

So, women leveraged their collective strength by organising a rally that was attended by over 500 women from 16 federations from across the State. They sat outside the office of the Chennai Collector, demanding they be given the same compensation as given to men during the off-season for fishing. They continued their protests until compensation was increased from the existing ₹4,000 to ₹6,700. Although the women could not convince the Government to pay separate compensation, they managed to get the payment in the joint name of the husband and wife. This, too, was a big achievement.

As we approach the 15th anniversary of the deadly tsunami some months from now, a lookback at the impressive panorama of achievements by coastal women in Tamil Nadu underline their resilience and ability to turn disasters into opportunities for community development.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

The rise of the conspiracy theorist

Most young minds are susceptible to believing fantastical theories as this makes them feel knowledgeable about concepts they do not have the patience or training to grasp. The higher the urge, the more likely will he/she believe in fantastical claims and fake news



NADEEM PARACHA

In the early 1980s, I had an acquaintance, Shahzad, who at that time seemed to be one of the most fascinating characters in our group of friends. We were all in our mid-teens at that time. He used to tell us the most fantastical stuff in the most convincing manner. For example, if we were all lying around and listening to a rock record, he would tell us that if we listened to that same record backwards, we could hear "hidden" and often diabolical "messages." If we were smoking cigarettes and they happened to be mentholated, he would explain that menthol cigarettes were specifically formulated by Western tobacco companies to make black and

brown smokers unable to procreate. Shahzad had a fantastic theory about almost everything. And most of these theories had to do with some nefarious grand plan to subjugate or harm certain groups of people.

Being teens, and often in woozy states of consciousness, we would simply lap up what Shahzad was saying without ever bothering to ask where on earth he got all his information from. However, one day, a mutual friend did exactly that.

I remember he questioned Shahzad only because he was feeling agitated; his girlfriend had dumped him. But even for this, Shahzad had a theory: "It's because of her father," he announced. "He's an important employee of XYZ bank... I forget which bank it was, but clearly remember him adding, 'XYZ is run by an important tribe of Jews.' But what did this have anything to do with a Pakistani teen's girlfriend leaving him? Nobody cared."

Perhaps anticipating that his distinctive position in the group

may come under some duress if more of us began asking him awkward questions (instead of simply nodding in awe), Shahzad introduced us to the books by Erich von Däniken.

This Swiss writer had become a sensational bestselling author in the late 1960s and 1970s, especially among the purveyors of counter-culture and 'New Age' spiritualism. Most of his books were about how 'ancient astronauts' or extra-terrestrial beings from far away planets had visited earth and helped ancient earthlings shape various religions and technologies. We were awed so much that we began to question the science being taught to us at school.

For example, Haroon, another common friend, once stood up in our O-level history class and told the teacher lecturing us about the Egyptian pyramids that the pyramids were instructed by aliens on how to build those massive structures. Interestingly, this very theory can be found in the film, *Alien vs. Predator* (2004). Some sci-fi fiction is made of this fascinat-

ing stuff but it is neither history nor science. But Haroon, who was a rather wretched student, had found something that he thought (and we thought) made him sound smart. He knew something that even our respected history teacher didn't know. Beat that.

Eventually, as we entered our late teens and early 20s and expanded our reading and thinking beyond what simply sounded 'awesome', each one of us would giggle about what we had so easily believed to be fact. Shahzad's spell was broken and he no longer seemed to be anything more than a nut.

But to his credit, to shake off this label, he went on to become a productive physicist in Belgium. But to become that, he had to graduate from reading Daniken to learning Einstein and then Stephen Hawking.

Most young minds are susceptible to believing and reiterating fantastical theories because this makes them feel knowledgeable about things they do not have the patience, the discipline or the training to actually grasp in a more substantiated

manner. But such a disposition becomes a problem when it mutates into becoming a widespread phenomenon, affecting the thinking of adults.

In the age of "fake news" being digested by millions of adults — of widespread panics about supposedly tainted vaccines; of 'scientists' claiming they can extract energy from jinn; or cure cancer with cow dung/urine; and increasingly warped and unsubstantiated political and historical narratives — psychologists and sociologists have begun to take more interest in the whole phenomenon of fantastical theories and claims than ever before.

According to professor of psychology Chris French (*BBC*, February 12, 2019), "We see coincidences around big events and make up a story out of them." Such stories find traction because they contain "goodies" and "baddies" — the latter being responsible for all the things we don't like. We need to create villains to explain away our many failures.

In a December 2003 essay,

Meera Nanda, the Indian historian of science, writes that the glamourisation of the whole post-modernist narrative about how the ideas of modernity were tyrannical because they rudely sidelined "local knowledge" encouraged Hindutva nationalists to make fantastical claims, which saw ancient Hindus in possession of whatever the modern sciences discovered centuries later.

The same thing happened in certain Muslim quarters when, in 1976, Maurice Bucaille, a general physician serving the Saudi royal family, was funded by his employers to write a book which tried to demonstrate that the many cosmological and biological discoveries made by science in the 20th century were mentioned in Islam's holy texts! Whereas 19th century Muslim scholars, such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, implored his compatriots to appreciate God's many creations by understanding them with the help of science. Some 20th century Muslims claimed there was no need for ever visiting a lab or thoughtfully gazing at the stars.

Two in-depth studies conducted in 2018 and published in the *Journal of Individual Differences* identified "schizotypy" as a prominent reason behind the growth in the acceptance of fantastical claims and conspiracy theories. According to professor of psychology Joshua Hart (*in Live Science*, September 2018) the word 'schizotypy', though derived from the condition called 'schizophrenia', does not imply a clinical diagnosis. According to Hart, people with schizotypy have an elevated need to feel unique but at the same time, take refuge in a community of like-minded individuals. Such an individual or community was more likely to judge nonsensical statements as profound. They often believe in things for which there is no empirical evidence. The most recent psychological term for this is actually 'Bull**** Receptivity'. The higher this is in a person the more likely he or she is to believe in conspiracy theories, fantastical claims and fake news. (Courtesy: The Dawn)

Don't vote for khichdi coalition: Modi

Mahamilavatis will put nation's security in peril, says PM

PTI ■ AZAMGARH

Accusing the "mahamilavati" Opposition parties of putting the nation's security in peril, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday urged people not to vote for a "khichdi" coalition that will only bring in "anarchy and instability".

"These are the parties indulging in politics of vote bank and caste equations, these 'mahamilavatis' had put the country in danger," he said. "These people had allowed Pakistan to dominate India," he said at a rally in the constituency where Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav is the SP-BSP-RLD alliance candidate.

Modi has been referring to the opposition alliance in UP and possible coalitions elsewhere in the country as "mahamilavati", or adulterated.

He said before the BJP came to power Azamgarh used to be linked to terror attacks by the investigating agencies.

This is because the SP and BSP leaders in Uttar Pradesh used to give patronage to those who helped terrorists, he alleged. He claimed when Opposition

parties were in power, they took into account the "caste, creed and religion" of the terrorists before taking action.

Modi said the terror tag has now been removed from Azamgarh and terrorism is confined only to Jammu & Kashmir and the border areas.

"Earlier, all terror activities had links to Azamgarh. But what happened after 2014 is for all of you to see," he said. Incidents of bomb explosions in big cities are under control, he added.

Modi said his Government has put the national interest first and "stormed" the terror hideouts inside Pakistan.

"This is the new India which takes on the enemy right in its hideouts," he said.

"Be wary of a 'khichdi' Government," he said, claiming that a "mahagathbandhan" victory will only lead to "anarchy and instability" in the country.

He referred to the years when frequent elections took place because of instable Governments at the Centre.

"Between 2004 and 2014, the country saw another 'mahamilavati' Government which earned shame for the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a selfie with BJP's Azamgarh candidate Dinesh Lal Yadav during an election rally for the ongoing Lok Sabha polls, in Azamgarh on Thursday

country the world over," he said, referring to allegations of corruption which surfaced during the UPA Government's term.

"In the 10 years of the Congress-led Government, there was not a single area where there was no scam," he claimed. He mentioned the UN's designation of Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as global terrorist, and said only a strong coalition could ensure this. "Earlier the world was hesitant to stand with us, but

today on the issue of Masood Azhar it is with us," he said. He claimed that the previous UP Government extended even basic facilities to people on the

basis of caste. "All this discrimination was stopped by our Government which is working on the motto of 'Sabka saath

sabka vikas," he said.

The PM claimed that the local Bhojpur dialect and culture have got an identity in the world in past five years.

He mentioned Ravi Kishan, Nirahua and Manoj Tewari — all of them BJP candidates in the Lok Sabha elections — among those who have helped. "Bhojpur cinema is today available on the mobile phone, reaching the poor through YouTube," he said.

The reason, he said, is that smartphones have become cheaper as they are now made in the country. Internet data is the cheapest in India, he claimed. "Because of the 2G scam, mobile phones were not within the means of the common people," he said recalling a UPA-era controversy.

Buoyed by the turnout, Modi predicted that his Government will return. "Wherever I go, I find a similar mood of 'Phir ek baar...'," he said, as the crowd chanted back, "Modi sarkar."

Who is your PM candidate, Shah asks 'gathbandhan' leaders

PTI ■ SIDDHARTHNAGAR/BALRAMPUR

BJP chief Amit Shah on Thursday asked the Opposition parties who will be the Prime Minister if the 'gathbandhan' is voted to power, raising the issue of possible disagreement among them on their PM candidate.

"On Monday, Mayawati will be Prime Minister. On Tuesday, it will be Sharad Pawar and someone else on Wednesday," Shah said at an election rally in Siddharthnagar. He claimed many of the Opposition leaders are in politics only to "realise" their vested interests, hide corruption and for their families.

He contrasted the situation in the Opposition camp with the BJP, saying his party has declared Narendra Modi as its prime ministerial candidate.

"If voted to power, Narendra Modi will become prime minister. But I want to ask Rahul Baba, bua-bhatija (Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati), as to who will be the leader of your gathbandhan?" Shah said. Shah was addressing election rallies in Siddharthnagar and Balrampur during his day-long visit to Uttar Pradesh to woo voters for the remaining two phases of Lok Sabha polls on May 12 and 19.

Attacking the SP, the BSP

and the Congress, Shah said. "For almost 55 years, there was a Congress government in the country. The SP and the BSP had ruled UP for years, but the condition of the poor did not improve. On the contrary, Modiji in a time span of five years gave gas ovens, toilets and houses to poor people."

The BJP chief said, "After the Balakot air strike, Rahul Baba, Bua-Bhatija became sad (chehre latak gaye). They thought that their vote bank had become angry. Why was disturbance in their camp when the IAF had killed terrorists in Pakistan? Were they (terrorists) their maternal-paternal brothers?"

"The security of the country is of top priority to us. If a bullet (goli) comes to us from Pakistan, our people will retaliate with a shell (gola)," he said amidst applause from the crowd.

He said that the BJP is working to make Uttar Pradesh a developed State. Siddharthnagar, which comes under Domariyaganj parliamentary constituency, goes to polls on May 12.

Earlier at a rally in Balrampur, Shah accused the SP and the BSP of favouring certain castes and working for them and said the BJP, on the contrary, believed in the mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'.

Mamata insulting Constitution by not accepting me as PM: Modi

PTI ■ BANKURA/PURULIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is insulting the Constitution by saying that she is not ready to accept him as the Prime Minister of the country.

Addressing an election rally at Bankura, Modi said "Didi (Banerjee) is publicly saying that she is not ready to accept the country's PM as the head of the nation, but she feels proud in acknowledging Pakistan PM as that country's Prime Minister."

He said out of anxiety of losing the general elections, the Chief Minister is insulting the Constitution.

The PM said Banerjee had not received telephone calls when he tried to contact her in the aftermath of cyclone Fani. "She did not take calls from me during the cyclone. The Central Government wanted to sit with officers of the state to discuss the situation, but Didi did not allow that too," Modi said.

Banerjee had said in a rally on May 6 that she does not

accept Narendra Modi as the prime minister of the country describing him as the "expiry PM" and that she will talk to the new Prime Minister after the election results.

"The Chief Minister is not interested in the betterment of the State, but that of her family, nephew and tolajaj (extortionists) of her party," the PM said. Modi said how much the TMC supremo is worried can be understood by the language being used by her. "She is now talking about stones and slaps against me," the PM said.

"I am used to abuses, I have now got the ability to digest abuses from dictionaries from around the world," he said.

The PM claimed that Banerjee has destroyed Bengal in her "lust for power" and now she is bent on destroying it further in the "fear" of losing power. He said the Government of the state is being run by the TMC in name only, while the actual business is conducted by the syndicates. He claimed that everybody — from teachers to intellectuals, businessmen to poor people — are in distress owing

to the rule of extortionists in the State.

"Didi's tolajaj are not leaving poor MNREGA workers, the extortionists are even taking away their job cards," Modi said. He said the Centre sends money so that people get food grains at low prices, but these are also being looted by the extortionists of TMC.

He alleged that TMC leaders are making money from open cast coal mines, while labourers are not getting their wages. "Didi gets angry when Modi talks of these atrocities of TMC, but Modi is not worried about her anger, because the love of 130 crore populace of the country is with him," the PM said.

He said the Chief Minister should rather be worried about the anger of those who were duped by chitfund companies, young people who are jobless despite being qualified and Government employees who are not getting adequate DA and salaries. He claimed that Banerjee "should worry about the Kali, Durga bhaktas in the state who have to perform puja with fear in their minds."



BJP supporters wear masks of Narendra Modi and wait for his arrival during an election campaign rally in Prayagraj on Thursday



In Jangalmahal, voters more inclined to BJP

PTI ■ MEDINIPUR/JHARGRAM

In the former Maoist stronghold of Jangalmahal in West Bengal, it is the substantial vote-bank of the Left Front, along with that of the far-Left parties, which is likely to push the BJP ahead of the TMC in the 2019 general election.

Once a formidable fort of the Left, Jhargram and Medinipur seats in Jangalmahal were won by Trinamool Congress in 2014. But discontent with the ruling party in West Bengal is again sweeping the region. Several people PTI spoke to alleged only those who are associated with the TMC get benefits of the programmes run by the Centre and the West Bengal Government. Others said the State Government is apathetic to them and this has led to a shift in the loyalty of voters as the Left has reduced itself

to a minor player this election. The shift towards the BJP has become more pronounced in the past two years. In Jhargram, BJP has won all former Maoist strongholds in recent polls. It won Lalgarh, Belpahari, Jamboni, Gopiballapur, Nayagram and Sankrail gram panchayats.

"It is tragic, but true," said Mohisho Mahato, once a CPI(M) supporter in Lalgarh village in Jhargram district. He said he will vote for the BJP. "The enemy of an enemy is a friend." Both Jhargram and Medinipur, which go to polls on May 12, form the Jangalmahal region along with Bankura and

Purulia districts.

Jhargram, traditionally a Left bastion, was won by TMC's Uma Soren in 2014. Soren wrested the seat from Pulin Bihari Basko of the CPM, ending the Left's 42-year domination. Medinipur seat was a stronghold of the CPI until 2014, when the TMC defeated it. TMC's Sandhya Roy defeated CPI's Probodh Panda, who had represented the constituency since 2001. Before Panda, the CPI held the Medinipur (general) seat since 1980. "Most people here are basically far-Left by ideology. We voted for TMC last time because we had to survive. Things are different now. It

was literally a fight to stay alive," Mahato said. In this election, TMC has nominated Congress defector Manas Bhunia from Medinipur. He is locked in a close fight with BJP state president Dilip Ghosh.

In Jhargram, TMC has fielded Beerbaha Soren and he is likely to find his match in CPI(M) candidate Deblina Hembram. The TMC candidate from Medinipur, Bhunia, however doesn't agree that people are upset with his party and says the inroads made by the BJP was because the Congress and the Left abdicated their responsibility. BJP's Ghosh sees the saffron surge as the end of the beginning of the TMC.

In Medinipur, a CPI(ML) leader said he understands that Left voters have nowhere to go, but he and his party are working in interior areas to resurrect the ideology.

Will show Shah his 'aukaat': Shotgun

PNS ■ PATNA

Actor-turned-politician Ashatruhan Sinha, who quit BJP and joined the Congress, on Thursday lashed out at the saffron party over reports in a section of the media that party president Amit Shahs proposed roadshow here later this week would show him his aukaat (worth).

Sinha is scheduled to hold a roadshow on Saturday evening. It is slated to commence from Kadam Kuan locality, where Sinha ancestral house is situated and criss-cross several narrow streets in densely populated localities before concluding near the historic Gandhi Maidan.

"I have heard that Shah is coming to Patna. He is welcome as every guest is. He would be served tea and also pakodas which he and his ilk

seem to be very fond of," Sinha, also called 'Shotgun', said in an obvious dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The prime minister while replying to complaints of job crisis, had said that selling fritters should also be seen as an employment. But I have learnt that some people say he is coming here to show me his aukaat (worth). This is going to backfire. Seems the BJP has not learnt its lessons from the assembly polls of 2015 when the DNA remark (by the prime minister) had cost the NDA dearly, he told PTI here.

Modi, while attacking Nitish Kumar at a rally in Muzaffarpur in July 2015 ahead of the Bihar assembly polls had said that it seemed that there was some problem with Nitish Kumar's DNA, referring to the frequent change of political allegiance of Nitish Kumar. The



BJP had lost the election and Kumar had gone on to form the government along with allies RJD and the Congress.

They (BJP) are once again insulting a dharti putra (son of the soil). The people of Bihar in general and Patna in particular have been hurt and they will give a befitting reply on the day of polling, said Sinha, who quit the BJP last month and is

now seeking to retain Patna Sahib on a Congress ticket.

When senior BJP leader and Bihar minister Nand Kishore Yadav had announced Shahs programme at a press conference here Wednesday, questions were raised as to whether the starting point has been decided to tease Sinha since there are many wider streets which could have been chosen.

Yadav, who represents one of the Assembly segments falling under Patna Sahib, had dismissed the questions saying Who cares about the Congress candidate without mentioning Sinha by name. Reports have surfaced in a section of the media here quoting BJP sources that the route has been deliberately chosen to show Sinha, who had been critical of the leadership of Modi and Shah even while within the BJP, his aukaat (worth).

Sanjarpur village in Azamgarh wants to shun 'terror tag'

PTI ■ SANJARPUR

People in this Muslim-dominated village in Azamgarh district, which hogged the limelight as a "terror hub" after the 2008 Batla House encounter in Delhi against suspected Indian Mujahideen terrorists, do not have any expectations from politicians.

They just want to get rid of the "terror tag" on their village. In the encounter, two suspected terrorists, Atif Amin and Mohamed Sajid were killed and two other suspects Mohd Saif, Salman and Arif were arrested. All of them belong to Sanjarpur village, which is over 25 km from the Azamgarh district headquarters.

"We want to get rid of the terror tag on our village that has been given by the media after the Batla House encounter. We don't have any expectations

from politicians who come and go. There are no issues before us but we only want authorities to ensure release of innocent youths caught by security agencies," Mohammad Shadab alias Mister, whose son Saif is lodged in Jaipur jail, told PTI.

He said when accused of Samjhauta Express and Malegaon blasts have been set free for lack of any proof, the "innocent" youths arrested from their village "should also get the similar justice." About Saif's involvement, his father said, "Undoubtedly he is innocent. The case is going on. There is no eye witness. All the witnesses are policemen. The matter should be raised by politicians contesting polls. We are waiting for justice."

In the chargesheet, police claimed Mohd Saif was also present in the flat in which the Batla House encounter took

place on September 19, 2008, in the national Capital.

The prosecution claimed Saif had disclosed he was involved in causing serial blasts in the national Capital on September 13, 2008, in which 26 people were killed and 135 injured. Tariq Shafiq, a local and founder member of Rihai Manch, said the village will be exercising their franchise to elect its representative expecting they will do something. About their choice in the on going polls, he said, "We will vote for the less harmful one though no one has yet taken up the cause of the youths of this village. Everytime elections come, politicians and media visit us but no one really comes for the help."

"The people here never expected such an allegation and label of terror on our village. We are fighting and what if one

day all the youths are acquitted? How and who will they return their golden years," Tariq asked.

After 2009, politicians like Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav, Shivpal Yadav, Congress leader Digvijay Singh and others visited the village promising to take up the case, but nothing happened and stigma remained, he said.

For social activist Mahisuddin Sanjari, "no one takes politicians seriously here. There are no issues here. There is an undercurrent of pro- and anti-Narendra Modi on which voting will be done."

When asked about Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's statement that Azamgarh was made terror hub by the SP, Sanjari said, "Attempts are underway to polarise voters. But there is no reaction here as people have faced a lot and seen

real face of politicians." "We have learnt a lot in the past 11 years with our experience. We know that we can get justice from legal fight," he says. Legendary Urdu poet Kaifi Azmi was born in this district. His actor-daughter Shabana Azmi is developing his birthplace Mizwaan. The area is also famous for the Shibli College, which was set up before Independence.

Sanjarpur is a big village with over 6,000 voters including Muslims, Dalits, Yadavs and Gupras. The village has a primary madarsa, a Government-run primary school and junior high school, a primary health centre and recently some roads were made by local MLA, villagers said.

Rashtriya Ulema Council President Maulana Aamir Rashadi, who organised protests in national and State

capital as he took people from here on train said, "The innocent youths' release will pave way for removing the stigma. Our demand for unbiased probe remains."

Azamgarh Lok Sabha constituency goes to polls on May 12 in the sixth phase of voting, with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav trying to retain his father's seat.



Priyanka calls Modi cowardly, weak PM



Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra with her supporters during an election campaign rally in support of party candidate Sanjay Singh in Sultanpur on Thursday

PTI ■ PRATAPGARH/JAUNPUR

Stepping up her attack on Narendra Modi, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday said she had never seen "a more cowardly and weak" Prime Minister than him. "I have not seen a more cowardly and weak Prime Minister than him (Modi) in my life," she told an election meeting here, a day after Modi fired yet another salvo targeting her father and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, accusing him of using warship INS Viraat as a "personal taxi" for a family holiday. Priyanka claimed that Modi had failed to answer people's questions on his "unfulfilled" promises about generating two crore jobs and doubling farmers' income. "The power of politics does not come from big campaigns and television shows. People are the biggest in democracy. One should have the power to listen and redress people's problems. He (Modi) should have the power to listen to the Opposition. Leave aside listening to you, this PM does know how to reply to you," she said.

"You have been cheated. He (Modi) had promised to check corruption, but now who has been exposed as corrupt?... He hides the reality with his campaigns. If Modiji comes to you, you should tell him that in Amethi, without power connection, a lady showed a Rs-35,000 electricity bill, while another person showed a bill for Rs 50,000," the Congress general secretary in-charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh said. She claimed that loans of big industrialists were waived, "but when (Congress chief) Rahul (Gandhi) asked for farm loan waiver, he was told there was no money". Priyanka also claimed that farmers' insurance money was never paid to them and they were battling the stray cattle menace. "If the PM is so powerful, he should say why he could not solve your problems. In every speech, he mentions Pakistan, but he should also tell you what his Government has done and will do in the next five years. We are here due to you people and you have made us leaders. People are bigger, not us," she said.

The Congress leader alleged that when thousands of farmers from all over the country had gathered in Delhi and sought "a five-minute appointment from the PM, he did not give them time". "In his (Modi's) constituency, Varanasi, in the last five years, he could not even spare five minutes to visit the people in the villages, ask them how they are and what are their problems," she said. Polling for the ongoing Lok Sabha election will be held in 14 seats of Uttar Pradesh, including Pratapgarh and Jaunpur, in the sixth phase on May 12 and the results will be announced on May 23. The war of words between the ruling BJP and the Congress has turned shriller with Modi raising the issue of alleged corruption during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi as PM, saying his life had ended as "bhrashtachari no. 1" (corrupt number one). Later, addressing a rally at Jaunpur, Priyanka Gandhi alleged that under the current BJP-led Government, those who asked for their rights were termed as "traitors".



CONG SEEKS JUDICIAL PROBE INTO KERALA BOGUS VOTING
With a preliminary probe revealing bogus voting in the postal ballots of police officials in Kerala, the Congress party on Thursday demanded a judicial inquiry into the matter while the state police chief ordered a full fledged investigation by the Crime Branch. Kerala's Chief Electoral Officer Teeka Ram Meena, after going through the preliminary report filed by Intelligence chief TK Vinodkumar, asked Kerala Police chief Loknath Behra to give directions for a detailed probe.

RE-POLLING IN 13 BOOTHS IN TN ON MAY 19
Repolling in 13 polling booths in Tamil Nadu on May 19 has been necessitated as the presiding officers there forgot to format the EVMs and there were allegations of some people were not allowed to vote, the state Chief Electoral Officer said on Thursday. The presiding officers in some polling booths forgot to clear the votes polled in the electronic voting machines (EVM) during the mock polling held before the actual polling or the entry in the voter verified paper audit trail (VVPAT), CEO Satyabrata Sahoo told media here. The Election Commission ordered re-poll in order to avoid confusion during the counting of votes, he added.

BENGAL BJP DEMANDS CENTRAL FORCES AT ALL BOOTHS
A BJP delegation approached the Election Commission (EC) on Thursday seeking 100 per cent coverage by central forces of polling booths in West Bengal's constituencies which are set to vote in the sixth phase on Sunday. "In view of violence in the last few phases of the Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal, we demand that 100 per cent booths should be covered and protected by the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)," the BJP said in its complaint to the EC.

BJP TO LOSE POLLS UNLESS IT TAMPERS EVMS: GOGOI
Veteran Congress leader Tarun Gogoi on Thursday claimed that the BJP has just one option to win this Lok Sabha election - that is tampering the EVMs, which the opposition parties are fearing. Claiming that the saffron party will lose in Uttar Pradesh and other states in north and south India, the former Assam chief minister said the next government at the Centre will be formed with the support of the Congress.

'VOTES CAST BY AGENTS' LED TO REPOLLS IN TN: CEO
Votes of elderly people getting cast by party agents and mock poll data not being cleared before commencement of election were among the factors for ordering repoll in 13 polling stations in Tamil Nadu on May 19, Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo said Thursday. In as many as eight booths falling under the Dharmapuri Lok Sabha constituency, it was proved beyond doubt that the polling agents entered inside the voting compartment along with the voters on many occasions, he told reporters here, quoting the Dharmapuri district election officer.

OFFICIAL DENIES THREAT TO EVMS FROM RATS
There is no threat to safety and security of EVMs kept in the strongroom in Mandi Samiti area here, District Magistrate Sarvagya Ram Mishra asserted Thursday after a candidate raised concerns that rats may damage them. Apprehending damage from the rodents, Rashtriya Lok Dal's Mathura candidate Narendra Singh, about a week ago, demanded wire mesh fencing around the strongroom where the EVMs are stored. "EVMs kept in strongroom in Mandi Samiti are fully safe and there is no threat to them from rats," District Magistrate Mishra said after inspecting the strongroom in the area on three successive days. The area under the vigil of central security forces, would remain out of bound for any person, he said, adding that security forces have already been given instructions accordingly.

SP-BSP-RLD to sweep polls in UP: Akhilesh

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party president and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said that the Bharatiya Janata Party, which relies on politics of deceit and hate, would be wiped out from Uttar Pradesh as the SP-BSP-RLD alliance was going to sweep the politically important State of Uttar Pradesh. Addressing an election rally in Dumariyaganj, Akhilesh Yadav said the BJP divided society on religious and caste lines for its political gains. "This election will decide the country's future. It is up to you to decide whether you want a government that believes in divisive politics or one that works for the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden," the SP chief asked and the crowd shouted in unison that they wanted to defeat the BJP. Hitting out at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Akhilesh said that the SP-BSP-

RLD alliance had so much power that it defeated 'Baba' in his own home turf and this time too, the 'Baba' would suffer a humiliating defeat. He was referring to the bypoll to Gorakhpur Lok Sabha seat last year in which the BJP lost to SP. Akhilesh Yadav further said that his government had given stable jobs to Shiksha Mitras but the BJP Government betrayed them. "The present Government even played with the sentiments of farmers. The party talks about development but in the last two years, it has not laid the foundation of even a single power house. My Government even tried to make 'kala namak rice' of this area a brand but the BJP regime stopped the project. We also wanted to construct a hostel for students from Nepal. The proposal was ready but the BJP government did not release funds," he said. **PNS**



Bihar Chief Minister and Janta Dal-United chief Nitish Kumar along with party's Lok Sabha candidate Radha Mohan Singh, LJP Chief Ram Vilas Paswan and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Bihar Sushil Kumar Modi during an election campaign for Lok Sabha polls, at Motihari in East Champaran, on Thursday



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addresses an election rally in presence of actor Dinesh Lal Yadav and BJP candidate from Lalganj constituency, Neelam Sonkar, during the ongoing Lok Sabha polls, in Azamgarh district on Thursday

Past Govt's were soft on terrorism: Yogi

Varanasi: The Modi Government has shown zero-tolerance towards terrorism, unlike past dispensations which were "soft" on it, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Thursday. He also said the BJP will get good results in the country's eastern States, including West Bengal and Odisha, and in

Kerala as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "extremely popular". "In the past five years, no terrorist attack took place in UP this is possible only because of PM Modi," CM said. "Earlier, whenever any terrorist incident took place in the country, people were killed and brave soldiers were martyred. The governments were soft

towards terrorism. But, now, there is zero-tolerance policy against these activities," he said. Highlighting the developmental works carried out in the temple town of Kashi, the chief minister said it is due to the good governance of the prime minister, that the city has "evolved", and now, everyone is witnessing PM Modi's "new Kashi". **PTI**

6th phase campaigning ends today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The electrifying electioneering for the crucial sixth phase polls to 14 Lok Sabha seats in the Purvanchal region of Uttar Pradesh will come to an end on Friday evening. Polling in these constituencies will be held on May 12. The key constituencies in this phase of election include Allahabad, Sultanpur and Azamgarh. The run-up to the sixth phase poll has witnessed intense campaigning by the BJP, the SP-BSP-RLD alliance and the Congress, with their leaders leaving no stone unturned to woo the voters. Polling in this phase assumes importance as the fate of Union minister Maneka Gandhi (Sultanpur), Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav (Azamgarh) and UP Cabinet minister Rita Bahuguna Joshi (Allahabad) will be decided by the voters. Bhojpuri actor Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' is the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate against Akhilesh Yadav from Azamgarh, while Congress has

fielded its old war-horse Dr Sanjay Singh from Sultanpur against Maneka Gandhi. The BJP has continued its campaigning in a big way. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP chief Amit Shah, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and several Union ministers and senior party leaders have addressed rallies in almost all the 14 constituencies. The Prime Minister addressed election rallies in Pratapgarh and Basti on Saturday last, while on Thursday, he addressed three meetings in Azamgarh, Jaunpur and Allahabad. Amit Shah also campaigned in several constituencies and addressed four public meetings on Thursday. Yogi Adityanath, who is camping in Varanasi, has also been criss-crossing the state to address poll meetings along with his colleagues. The SP-BSP-RLD alliance held joint rallies in Azamgarh and Jaunpur and also campaigned in several constituencies separately. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra campaigned against her aunt Maneka

Gandhi by holding a roadshow in Sultanpur on Thursday. She also addressed poll meetings in Jaunpur and Pratapgarh. There are 174 candidates in the fray in this phase of Lok Sabha elections. The constituencies going to polls in this phase are: Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Phulpur, Allahabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Shrivasthi, Domariyaganj, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Lalganj, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Machhlishahr and Bhadohi. In the 2014, the BJP had swept these seats barring Azamgarh from where SP patriarch Mulayam was declared elected, defeating BJP's Ramakant Yadav. But this time, Mulayam has shifted to Mainpuri and his son and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav is contesting from Azamgarh. The highest number of 20 candidates are in fray from Jaunpur followed by 15 each in Sultanpur, Lalganj, Azamgarh and Machhlishahr, 14 each in Phulpur and Allahabad, 12 in Bhadohi, 11 each in Ambedkar Nagar and Basti, 10 in Shrivasthi, 8 in Pratapgarh and 7 each in Sant Kabir Nagar and Dumariyaganj.

Mamata 'Bengal tigress', taught lesson to Modi: Andhra CM



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu flashes victory sign as he participates in an election rally by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, in Midnapore district, on Thursday

IAN S ■ KHARAGPUR country but West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has taught him a lesson. 'Didi' is a Bengal tigress," Naidu said here, speaking in Bengali which evoked loud cheers from the Trinamool supporters. He said West Bengal will play an "important role" in forming the new government at the Centre after the 2019 poll results. "I have come here from Andhra Pradesh to meet you people. What Bengal thinks today, the country thinks tomorrow. Bengal will play an important role in this Lok Sabha election. You people will decide who will come to power at the Centre," he added.

Substantial rise in service voters: EC

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In election season, when all eyes are either on the polling or the counting day, little do people know that there's an intricate and comprehensive exercise before the casting of the ballots to ensure the polling staff, including the security personnel, are not left out of the biggest electoral process in the world. From jawans to school teachers to State Government employees (polling duty staff), they all — called the 'service voters' — as their votes through postal ballot three or four days before the date of polling. According to EC, there has been a substantial increase in the number of service voters enrolled ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections as compared to 2014. As on May 6, when the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections concluded, nearly 18 lakh employees had enrolled as service voters. In February this year, the EC had said that a total of 16,62,993

service personnel have been enrolled as Service Electors in the country in the electoral roll 2019. In 2014, the corresponding figure was 13,27,627. The Ministry of Defence led with 10,16,245 service voters, followed by the Ministry of Home Affairs with 7,82,595 and Ministry of External Affairs with 3,539, according to the latest data. Postal ballot is a special voting arrangement for people who are employed with the armed forces, paramilitary forces, diplomats residing abroad along with their spouses and those who are deployed on election duty. The postal ballot is sent to the service voter within 24 hours of the withdrawal of nomination papers in their particular constituency. A provision in the Representation of the

From jawans to school teachers to State Government employees (polling duty staff), they all — called the 'service voters' — as their votes through postal ballot three or four days before the date of polling

People Act (Amendment) Bill, 2017, passed by Lok Sabha and pending in Rajya Sabha, relates to spouses of service voters. As of now, an armyman's wife is entitled to be enrolled as a service voter, but a woman army officer's husband is not. Sources in EC said that special training camps are organised to polling duty staff to cast



their vote. Those deployed on election duty are handed over their postal ballots on the last day of their training for the elections. In some cases, EC organise special camp to polling staff to cast their vote which is kept protected in respective district offices. For polling staff, the EC provides 'election duty certificate' which makes them to cast their vote at its place of duty in the area of same parliamentary constituency. If any employee is put on poll duty out of parliamentary constituency, he or she belongs to the employee has the facility to cast postal ballot.

Polling duty staff is also considered as service voters. Where the number of voters allotted to a polling station is thousand or less, the polling party will normally consist of one Presiding Officer and three polling officers and where the number of voters exceeds one thousand, the party will consist of a Presiding Officer and four Polling Officers. While personnel of the Armed Forces, Central Armed Police Forces and state police personnel deployed outside their constituencies are considered as service voters. Diplomats and other support staff serving in embassies abroad are also service voters. According to EC, postal ballot papers is sent to the voters 10 days before the polls through Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS). Postal Ballots were transmitted electronically.ETPBS helps an entitled service voter to cast their vote using an electronically received postal

ballot from anywhere outside their constituency. The recipient has to download and print the ballot paper. After casting the vote, the ballot paper can be sent back as prescribed by the EC. This time, the postal ballot will be sent to the record office of the respective service voter through ETPBS, unlike in past elections when postal ballots were sent through post. Secrecy is maintained through the use of OTP and PIN and no duplication of casted Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot (ETPB) is possible due to the unique QR Code. EC officials said the system is based on a relational database with registration and acceptance of forms for Service Voter. Deputy Election Officer will assign the Assembly Constituency to Service Voter, then the form will be displayed to Election Returning Officer (ERO) of that assembly constituency and ERO will accept or reject or reassign the form.



NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
M-33 KV Div. Electrical Engineering Department
Vidyut Bhawan, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Road, New Delhi-110011

e-procurement Tender Notice

Tender ID No. : 2019/NDMC/172210_1
Name of work : Special Repair of Equipments in M-33 KV division during the year 2019-20.
Sub-Head : Repairing of OLTC and overhauling 66/33 KV, 50 MVA, BHEL make PTR No. 1 at 66 KV ESS Vidyut Bhawan.

Estimated Cost : Rs.24,44,960/-
Date of release of tender through e-procurement solution : 08.05.2019 at 01.00 PM
Last date/time for receipt of tenders through e-procurement solution : 21.05.2019 at 03.30 PM
Date & Time for opening of bid through e-procurement solution : 21.05.2019 at 4.00 PM

Further details can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in> Sd/-
Note :- To participate in e-tender in NDMC, registration with Executive Engineer (E) eem33.elect@ndmccmail.gov.in application services provider (NIC) is mandatory. Ph. No. 011-23752184

To be The Global Benchmark for a Capital City

CAIT flags high airfares post Jet shutdown, seeks price control

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing serious concerns over spiralling airfares, traders' body CAIT on Thursday wrote to Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu seeking introduction of a price control mechanism to cap the upper limit of fares.

"It has been seen that after the shutdown of Jet Airways, other airline carriers are taking advantage of the demand and raising their prices illogically. Even the budget airlines are more forward in raising the prices," the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said in a letter to Prabhu.

Running into a debt of more than ₹8,500 crore, Jet Airways has shut down operations temporarily after lenders decided against extending emergency funds for its survival.

"We believe the Government can recommend the upper limit for fares. This will not only prevent airlines from charging exorbitant fares but will also go a long way in fulfilling the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make flying affordable for every common citizen and enhance ease of doing business," CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said.

HDFC puts Jet Airways' office space for sale to recover ₹414 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mortgage lender HDFC has put up crisis-hit Jet Airways' office space for sale with a reserve price of ₹245 crore, as part of efforts to recover outstanding dues.

Jet Airways, which temporarily shuttered operations on April 17, owes around ₹414 crore to HDFC.

"The borrower (Jet Airways) has failed to repay the amount (₹414.80 crore) due to HDFC Ltd. Accordingly, HDFC Ltd has become entitled to enforce its mortgage over the immovable property," it said in a public notice.

The office, spread over 52,775 square feet carpet area, in Mumbai's suburban financial centre Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), is on the fourth floor of the building 'Jet Airways Godrej BKC'.

The e-auction of the office, with a reserve price of ₹245 crore, is scheduled for May 15, according to the public notice.

The distressed airline, which had more than 120 planes in its fleet, has been

grappling with financial woes. The full service carrier has defaulted on various payments, including salaries to employees.

As part of a resolution plan, State Bank of India-led consortium of domestic lenders have sought bids for stake sale in the airline.

Four entities — Etihad Airways, TPG Capital, Indigo Partners and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) — are learnt to have shown interest in picking up stake in Jet Airways. The details of the bidders are expected to be known on Friday.

Earlier this week, a group of Jet Airways' pilots moved the Supreme Court seeking direction to the SBI to provide the assured interim finance for restarting operations.

The petition filed by the National Aviators' Guild has also sought a direction to the Centre and the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to disallow slots of Jet Airways to other airlines on the permanent basis.

₹ slumps 23 paise vs US dollar on persistent trade war worries

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Falling for the fourth straight session, the rupee depreciated by 23 paise to 69.94 against the US dollar Thursday on unabated foreign fund outflows amid simmering US-China trade tensions.

Firming oil prices and a prolonged spell of weakness in the equity markets also weighed on the domestic unit, dealers said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened marginally lower at 69.70 and slipped further to breach the 70-mark, touching a low of 70.03, before finally settling at 69.94, down by 23 paise over its previous close.

The rupee has now lost a hefty 72 paise in four sessions. Globally, the Japanese yen rallied to three-month highs against the dollar as investors retreated to safe haven assets following the fresh flare-up in tensions between the US and China.

Ahead of the next round of talks aimed at ending the trade conflict between the world's two largest economies, China said it will retaliate if US raises tariffs on Chinese products.

"The uncertainty related to election outcome and US-China trade deal have been weighing on the rupee. Overseas investors have turned cautious for the domestic equity and debt market and start-

ed reducing their position ahead of the election outcome scheduled on 23rd May 2019," said V K Sharma, Head PCG and Capital Markets Strategy, HDFC Securities.

The dollar has hit four-month highs against the rupee and the Australian dollar on trade tensions, he added.

Foreign investors remained net sellers in the capital markets, offloading shares worth ₹655.36 crore Thursday, provisional exchange data showed.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, inched up 0.02 per cent to 97.64.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.17 per cent to \$70.49 per barrel.

"From the high of \$75.60 registered on April 25, Brent crude has witnessed a correction of 7 per cent till date. However, for last four sessions, it has been holding a level above \$69 in futures. Breaking \$69 in Brent crude would help domestic currency to recover recent losses against dollar," Sharma added.

Meanwhile, the domestic equity markets nursed losses for the seventh straight session.

The 30-share BSE Sensex closed 230.22 points, or 0.61 per cent, down at 37,558.91, while the broader NSE Nifty shed 57.65 points, or 0.51 per cent, to 11,301.80.

Google will never sell any personal info to 3rd parties: CEO Pichai

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Google will never sell any personal information of its users to third parties, CEO Sundar Pichai has said, amidst growing global concern over the misuse of personal data by some social media giants.

In an opinion piece Tuesday in *The New York Times*, he also said that privacy cannot be a "luxury good" that is only available to people who can afford to buy premium products and services.

The 46-year-old Indian-origin CEO of Google said he believed that privacy was "one of the most important topics of our time."

People today are rightly concerned about how their information is used and shared, yet they all define privacy in their own ways, he said.

"To make privacy real, we give you clear, meaningful choices around your data. All while staying true to two unequivocal policies: that Google will never sell any personal information to third parties; and that you get to decide how your information is used," Pichai said.

Pichai said he has seen this first-hand as he talked to people in different parts of the world.

He noted that privacy was personal, which makes it even more vital for companies to give people clear, individual choices around how their data is used.

Business Corner



A one-day conference was organised at Delhi Secretariat on 'Rehabilitation and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in Delhi', attended by Vijay Dev, Chief Secretary, Delhi, Renu Sharma, Addl Chief Secretary (Home), Sergey Kapinos, Regional Head of United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime, Rashmi Krishnan, Secretary and SB Shashank, Director of Dept of Women & Child Development, eminent dignitaries from Ministry of Women & Child Development, Govt of India & other stakeholders namely JJC, DLSA, DPCPR, CWC, JJB, UN Women, leading lawyers of Supreme Court of India and almost all the NGOs working in the field



Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has launched a new brand of TMT bars named SAIL SeQR (pronounced as SAIL secure), which is safer and has the unique combined features of higher strength with better ductility which will provide enhanced safety to the construction. The production of these TMT bars began in the new state-of-the-art mill of SAIL'S ISCO Steel Plant on 1st May and the first consignment was flagged off on Monday



Street-connected children from North India participated in the play-offs of the first ever Street Child Cricket World Cup, playing at the home of cricket, Lord's Cricket Ground in London, UK. The Street Child Cricket World Cup has united street-connected young people from seven countries to play in their own international cricket tournament to challenge negative perceptions and treatment of street-connected people from around the world

RBI withdraws circular asking banks to declare exposure to IL&FS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Following an NCLAT order, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has withdrawn its circular asking banks and financial institutions to declare details of their exposure and provisions related to the crisis-hit IL&FS.

Last week, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) had allowed banks to declare their defaulting accounts of Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) and its group companies as non-performing assets.

"In view of the NCLAT order dated May 2, 2019...The instructions contained in (April 24) circular stand withdrawn," the RBI said Wednesday.

The circular had asked banks and financial institutions to disclose their exposure to IL&FS and its group entities as the NCLAT verdict was pending.

The cash-strapped IL&FS group is sitting on a debt of about ₹94,000 crore.

Data row: Finance panel wants to reconcile conflicting numbers

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Amid concerns over data credibility, the 15th finance commission chairman NK Singh Thursday said the panel is embarking on a prudential measure of reconciling all publicly available data and arrive at the best conclusion.

He, however, made it clear that the reconciliation exercise to be carried out over the next two days by senior panel officials, has nothing to do with data computation methods which have raised many eyebrows.

"We will try to reconcile and come to a conclusion on what we would consider reliable data in the public domain," Singh told reporters, adding the exercise will be carried out with the CAG and the Reserve Bank.

"We may or may not succeed, but at least we must come to a conclusion that this is what we believe is the most credible before accepting it," he added.

He was replying to a specific query on whether the row over data credibility came up at the meetings with economists here as part of its two-day visit that concluded Thursday.

Singh said while the issue did not feature in the meeting with economists, and suggested that the panel took the decision of data reconciliation proactively.

Asked if the panel regularly carries out such reconciliations, he said the exercise will "be within the bounds of acceptable and appropriate prudence to do so".

It can be noted that a group of over 100 top economists, from the country and outside, had earlier this year held a presser expressing concerns over "political interference" in statistical data, and had called for restoration of "institutional independence" and integrity of statistical organisations.

GAIL to launch a web series on environment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GAIL (India) Limited has been creating awareness and inducing behavioural changes to ensure a greener and cleaner tomorrow through its movement Hawa Badlo. This movement has been actively working towards educating the Indian masses against air pollution through events, short films, contests, raahgiri, pledges etc on advocacy against air pollution, problems caused due to air pollution & solutions for curbing it.

Hawa Badlo will be launching a four episode web series over a premium OTT platform to subtly ingrain the message of a better lifestyle for a better environment. The web series will be first of its kind that is being produced in India on such a serious topic where entertainment meets serious messaging. This web series would lead to amplifying the conversation around better environment.

Emirates Airline profit dives 69 per cent in 'tough' year

AFP ■ DUBAI

Emirates Airline reported a 69 per cent drop in net profits on Thursday on high fuel prices and a strong dollar in what it described as a "tough" year.

The Dubai carrier posted \$237 million in net profits for the financial year ending in March compared to \$765 million in the previous year, it said in a statement.

"2018-19 has been tough, and our performance was not as strong as we would have liked," the chairman and chief executive of Emirates Group, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, said in a statement.

"Higher oil prices and the strengthened US dollar eroded our earnings, even as competition intensified in our key markets," he said.

The airline said that the strengthening of the US dollar against most of the currencies of its key markets eroded \$156 million from profits.

Sir William Mark Tully to launch Samvaad Series of PRSI Delhi Chapter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

PRSI Delhi Chapter has planned to start a Samvaad series of Knowledge sharing initiative for the benefit of PR and Media Professionals. A renowned veteran British Journalist and former BBC India Correspondent, Sir William Mark Tully will launch the series on May 10th, 2019 and will address the gathering on "Creative Listening" at SCOPE Convention Centre, New Delhi. Renowned PR & media professionals representing leading public and private sector, corporates from Delhi-NCR will attend the event.

The Public Relations Society of India (PRSI) is a non-profit national association of PR practitioners which was established in 1958 to promote the recognition of public relations as a profession and to formulate and interpret to the public the objectives and the potentialities of public relations as a strategic management function.

JSPL wins Rail contracts worth ₹665 crore from RVNL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jindal Steel & Power Limited (JSPL), India's only private manufacturer of rails, has won an order from Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) to supply 89042 tonnes of UIC 60 kg IRS T-12 880 grade 13 meter rails for its upcoming projects. The order is valued at approximately ₹665 crore. A notification of award for the same was issued to JSPL on 8th May 2019 by the RVNL.

"It is a privilege to be awarded this contract which reflects the confidence Indian Railways have developed on us based on our recent performance. We are grateful to the RVNL for reposing trust in our capabilities to deliver for the nation. This contract will provide an important foundation for our future rail business. This order is indicative of JSPL's strategic commitment to growing its footprint in the domestic Rail segments. It is a great endorsement of our products and services, and securing another important rail contract from railways in less than a year is a source of great pride," said, Naushad Akhter Ansari, Joint Managing Director, JSPL.

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a Man namely **Vijay Shukla, S/o: Sh. Ganga Shukla, R/o A-352 Jhuggi Chunna Bhatti, Harijan Camp, Kirti Nagar, Delhi** has been missing since 19.04.2019 at 12:00 Pm from the area of P.S Kirti Nagar, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 23-A, dated 20.04.2019 has been registered at P.S. Kirti Nagar. The description of missing man is as under:

Name: Vijay Shukla, Height: 5", Face: Long, Complexion: Fair, Built: Thin, Hair: Black & Brown, Wearing: Green Shirt, Brown Pant and Chappal.

If anyone have any information about this missing man please inform P.S. Kirti Nagar, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO
Police Station, Kirti Nagar, Delhi
Ph: 011- 25190462, 8750871126

DP/8235/WD/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Age : about 60-63 years, Height : 5'5", Complexion : Shallow, Face: Oval, Built : Normal, Wearing : Grey colour kurta - pajama & bare foot** has been found at Patodi house footpath, near H.No. 1739, Darya Ganj, Delhi on 05.05.2019. In this regard a case vide DD No : 12 A dated 05.05.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved in MAMC Mortuary for 72 hours.

Any person having any information or clue about this found dead body may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO :
P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi
Central Distt., Delhi
DP/6262/CD/19 Tel. No. 011-23271751, 23279338, 23263967

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person about 30-35 years of age whose name, residence and family is unknown, was found dead near DDA Flats, Loknayakpuram to Dichaon Kalan Road, Nala, Delhi on 18.04.19 at 11:00 am. In this regard a report has been lodged vide DD No. 27-A, dated 18.04.19 at P.S. Mundka, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:
Sex: Male, Age: About 30-35 years, Height: 5'8", Complexion: Dark, Wearing: Black colour T-Shirt, Blue colour Jeans and Brown colour Jacket.

If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/ Mundka, Delhi.

SHO
P.S. Mundka, Delhi
Ph.: 011-28352010, 28352011

DP/2224/OD/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified male **Age : Approx. 40 years, Height : 5'5", Complexion : Sallow, Identification : A tattoo of "Suresh & Delhi" written on hand, wearing grey colour T-shirt and pink & yellow colour pajama,** was found dead on 27.04.2019 at S-Block Chowk, Mangolpur, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 23-A dated 27.04.2019 has been lodged at PS Raj Park, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone numbers.

SHO - P.S. Raj Park, Delhi.
Tel. No. 011-27910070, 27910071

DP/2225/OD/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a male (depicted in the photo) namely: **Vijaypal S/o : Vidyadhar, R/o Village Dhindhwa Aguna, Tehsil Surajgarh, Distt. Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, Age: 33 Years,** has been reported missing / kidnapped since 30.04.2019 from MCD Office, Zakhira Fly Over, Delhi, vide DD No. 40-A dated 02.05.2019 lodged at Police Station Moti Nagar, Delhi.

His physical description is as under:-
Complexion : Fair, Face : Round, Height : 5'10", Physique/Built : Medium, Clothing : Grey Colour T-shirt, Grey Colour Lower and White Colour Chappal in Feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing / kidnapped male, may inform SHO, Moti Nagar, Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in, website : <http://cbi.nic.in>, Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO
P.S. Moti Nagar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-25101150, 25935888

DP/8243/WD/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one person (depicted in the photo) namely **Shubham S/o Mahender Kumar R/o H.No. 17/10, Subhash Nagar, Delhi** has been reported missing since 30.03.2019 at about Time 03.30 PM from his house vide DD No. 073A Dated 27.04.2019 lodged at Police Station-Rajouri Garden, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Aged - 29 years Complexion: Fair, Height: 5'10" Face: Oval, Physique/Built:Thin, Clothing: Mahroom Colour T-Shirt & Black Colour Pant and Black Colour Fancy Jutti in his feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing person may inform SHO, Rajouri Garden, Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641

SHO
P.S. Rajouri Garden, Delhi
Ph.: 011-25453990, 25448885

DP/8238/WD/19

Appeal for Identification

General public is hereby informed that one male **Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 35 Years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Fair, Sex: Male, Wearing: Blue Colour Shirt & Grey Colour Pant** was found dead on 04.05.2019. Place of Recovery: Main Gate of Nigam Bodh Ghat, Kashmir Gate, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 17-A dated 04.05.2019 has been lodged at PS Kashmir Gate, Delhi. Any clue come to notice please inform undersign.

SHO
P.S. Kashmir Gate, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23968730

DP/9989/N/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male namely **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown,** was found on 28.04.2019 at between Mukundpur and Burari Naya Road, Near Naala in the area of PS Burari, Delhi. In this regard proceeding DD No. 29-A, Dated 28.04.2019 has been lodged at Police Station, Burari, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:

Name: Unknown, Age: 35 Years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Dark, ID Mark: "KADA" in Right Hand, Wearing: Without Cloth.

If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

SHO
Police Station, Burari, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27616844, 8750870130

DP/9986/N/19

JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

May not 'sorry' but feels deep regret

London: Prime Minister Theresa May has repeated the UK Government's deep regret over the Jallianwala Bagh massacre to mark the 100th anniversary of the British colonial era attack in Amritsar on Vaisakhi.

The massacre took place at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar (undivided Punjab) during the Vaisakhi festival on April 13, 1919, when troops of the British Indian Army under the command of Colonel Reginald Dyer opened fire at a crowd of people holding a pro-independence demonstration, leaving scores dead.

At a Vaisakhi reception at Downing Street in London Wednesday evening, Prime Minister May repeated words from her House of Commons statement last month which she referred to the "shameful scar" on British Indian history.

"We deeply regret what happened and the pain inflicted on so many people," she told a gathering of the Indian diaspora.

She said: "No one who has heard the accounts of what happened that day can fail to be deeply moved. No one can truly imagine what the visitors to those gardens went through that day one hundred years ago."

"It was — as the former Prime Minister HH Asquith described it at the time — one of the worst outrages in the whole of our history."

However, it fell short of a formal apology demanded by a cross-section of British parliamentarians and Sikh activists to mark the centenary of the massacre that affected thousands of



Indian lives. "I do not understand why the British Government has not to this day agreed to say sorry," said Lord Loomba, who has also called for an investigation into whether General Dyer instigated the "huge atrocity" of his own accord or was following orders from higher authorities during the British Raj.

Most recently, during a Westminster Hall debate in the House of Commons to mark National Sikh History Awareness Month, a number of British Indian MPs had repeated calls for a formal apology and expressed the hope that perhaps the Downing Street reception would be the appropriate moment for it.

However, the only reference to the debate made by May noted: "I am delighted that last week a debate in Westminster Hall focused on the contribution of Sikhs to the UK — following on from the launch of Sikh History and Awareness month by Seema Malhotra MP in April.

Pope changes Church law to make reporting sex abuse obligatory

Vatican City: Pope Francis on Thursday passed a measure to oblige those who know about sex abuse in the Catholic Church to report it to their superiors, following a global clerical paedophilia scandal. Every diocese in the world will now be obliged to have a system for the reporting of abuse, under a new law published by the Vatican — but the requirement will not apply to secrets revealed to priests in the confessional.

It is time to learn from the "bitter lessons of the past", Francis said in the text of the legal decree. It follows a series of clerical assault cases in countries ranging from Australia to Chile, Germany and the US.

The "Motu Proprio", a legal document issued under the pope's personal authority, declares that anyone who has knowledge of abuse, or suspects it, is "obliged to report (it) promptly" to the Church, using

"easily accessible systems".

"Though this obligation was formerly left up to individual consciences, it now becomes a universally established legal precept" within the Church, said Andrea Tornielli, editorial director of the Vatican's communications department.

The law only applies within the Church and has no force to oblige individuals to report abuse to civil authorities. Under the new measure, every diocese around the world is obliged by June 2020 to create a system for the reporting of sexual abuse by clerics, the use of child pornography and cover-ups of abuse.

The document focuses particularly on the sexual or psychological abuse of children and vulnerable adults, but also targets sexual abuse and violence resulting from an abuse of authority — such as the exploitation of nuns by priests.

Pope Francis admitting publicly in February that priests have used nuns as "sexual slaves" — and may still be doing so.

Victims' groups have long called for Francis to put in place concrete measures to tackle clerical child abuse, including immediately firing any cleric found guilty of even a single act of abuse, or of covering it up.

They also want all abusers or suspected abusers to be reported to police, and any abuse-related files handed over to them.

Some have called for priests who hear of abuse during confessions to be forced to report it. The new law stops short of that.

Catholics believe that within the confessional the penitent is talking to God, and everything in the confession is secret. A priest who reveals such secrets is automatically expelled from the Church. **AFP**

China warns retaliatory measures if Trump slaps more tariffs ahead of crucial trade talks

Beijing: China has threatened to retaliate if US President Donald Trump raises tariffs on \$200 billion worth of goods ahead of the crucial 11th round of talks aimed at ending the trade war between the world's two largest economies.

The talks are due to be held on May 9-10 in Washington between trade delegations headed by Chinese Vice Premier Liu He and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin amid accusations by Washington that Beijing is backtracking on consensus reached on key issues in the earlier rounds of talks.

Ahead of the talks, US President Donald Trump said that he would raise tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods from 10 per cent to 25 per cent as of May 10 in a bid to pile up pressure on China to

conclude the talks to end the trade war at the earliest.

In a late-night announcement on Wednesday, the Chinese Commerce Ministry while expressing regret over the planned measures by the US to raise tariffs on imported Chinese products, said it would launch retaliatory measures in kind.

Stating that escalating trade frictions is against the interests of the two peoples as well as people of the world, the Ministry said: "China deeply regrets this, and will be forced to take necessary counter-measures if the US side puts the tariff measures into effect."

However, there appears to be no change from the Chinese side in its participation in the trade as the announcement neither made any reference to the 11th round of talks nor Liu's participation in it. **PTI**

US tests missile on same day as North Korea's

Seoul: The US Air Force has tested a missile on the same day that North Korea is suspected of having launched two short-range missiles.

The Air Force says it launched a Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missile on Thursday from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

It says the launch was part of regularly scheduled tests of ICBMs to ensure they are ready for potential combat. It said the test was unrelated to any world events. It was the second such test in a little over a week. The Air Force normally does four or five such tests each year.

The ICBM test launches are planned months in advance. **PTI**

The Air Force moved a Minuteman 3 missile from a launch silo controlled by the 90th Missile Wing at Ft. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming to the launch site at Vandenberg.

North Korea's launch was its second in five days and a possible warning that nuclear disarmament talks with Washington could be in danger. South Korea's military says North Korea has fired two suspected short-range missiles. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff earlier said North Korea fired at least one projectile from its western province on Thursday afternoon. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said later that the North fired what appeared to be two short-range missiles. It says they flew 420 kilometers (260 miles) and 270 kilometers (167 miles), respectively. **AP**

Trump invokes 'privilege' over full Mueller report

Washington: The White House invoked executive privilege on Wednesday, claiming the right to block lawmakers from the full report from special counsel Robert Mueller on his Trump-Russia probe and escalating the battle between President Donald Trump and Congress.

The administration's decision was announced just as the House Judiciary Committee was gaveling in to consider holding Attorney General William Barr in contempt of Congress over failure to release the full report.

Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler of New York declared the action by Trump's Justice Department was a clear new sign of the president's "blanket defiance" of Congress' constitutional rights.

"Every day we learn of new efforts by this administration to stonewall Congress," Nadler said. "This is unprecedented."

White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said the action was rather a response to the "blatant abuse of power" by Democratic Rep. Nadler.

"Neither the White House nor Attorney General Barr will

comply with Chairman Nadler's unlawful and reckless demands," she said.

Though the White House initially hesitated on invoking privilege, Trump told his staff and political advisers in recent weeks to refuse to cooperate with Democrats, believing the party's goal was simply to damage him politically going into his re-election campaign. The coming legal battle could stretch to 2020, and the White House is aiming to tie up congressional probes until Election Day.

The president's decision was weeks in the making, the next inevitable escalation between the White House and Congress over a number of probes, including over materials and witnesses from the special counsel investigation. The White House has rejected all efforts to probe Trump's business dealings or tax returns as well as the West Wing's security clearance procedure.

In a letter on Wednesday to Trump, Barr explained that the special counsel's files contain millions of pages of classified and unclassified information. He said it was the committee's

"abrupt resort to a contempt vote" that "has not allowed sufficient time for you to consider fully whether to make a conclusive assertion of executive privilege."

Barr told Trump the president should assert privilege now, "pending a full decision on the matter." Democrats on the committee said the Trump administration was trampling on Congress' duty to conduct oversight.

"This is a moment in history," said Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas. "The president now seeks to take a wrecking ball to the Constitution of the United States." But the top Republican on the panel, Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, called the majority's decision to push ahead with a contempt resolution "cynical, mean-spirited, counterproductive and irresponsible."

Nadler said earlier Wednesday the Trump administration's refusal to provide special counsel Robert Mueller's full Russia report to Congress presents a "constitutional crisis," leaving the panel no choice but to vote forward with a contempt vote against Barr. **AP**

Metro Railway, Kolkata
Kolkata's Pride
ANNUAL MAINTENANCE & UP KEEP OF TRACK AND TRACK BED BOTH UP & DN LINE
Tender Notice for e-tendering is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Metro Rail Bhawan, 33/1, J.L. Nehru Road, Kolkata-700071 for the following work: Name of work: Annual Maintenance & Up Keep of track and track bed both UP & DN Line from Km. 16/19 to 21/06 between KMUK (excluding) to KGTN (including) of Metro Railway, Kolkata. Tender Value: ₹5,59,648 (approx). Cost of Tender Document: ₹5,000. Earnest Money: ₹ 1,91,200. Completion period: The contract shall be in force for a period of one year starting from 01.07.2019. Date of closing: 11.06.2019 at 12.00 hrs. The tender document and other details can be obtained from the website www.ireps.gov.in The bidding for the tender is to be submitted only through e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer, if received shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected.
Abridged e-Tender Notice No. Civil-2296-2019 (Open)
FASTER • SAFER • SMOOTHER • CLEANER

Aro granite industries Ltd.
Regd. Office: 1001, 10th Floor, DLF Tower A, Jassola, New Delhi 110025
Phone: 91-11-41686169 Fax: 91-11-26941984
E-mail: investorgrievance@arogranite.com Website: www.arogranite.com
NOTICE FOR LOSS OF SHARE CERTIFICATES
Notice is hereby given that the following Share Certificate(s) issued by the Company are reported to have been misplaced/stolen and the Registered Holder(s) thereof/Claimants have applied to the Company for issue of duplicate Share Certificate(s).
SI No. Name Duplicate No. Certificate No. Distinctive No. Shares
1 Prashad Kumar 2469 27918 2691701-2691800 100
51037 7476890-7476939 50
53097 11183869-11183943 75
2 Gulshan Kumar 10009 28756 2775501-2775600 100
Any person(s) who has/have claim(s) in respect of above mentioned Share(s) should lodge such claim(s) in writing supported by valid documents with Registrar & Transfer Agent, M/s Akankh Associates Ltd., Akankh Heights, 1E/13, Shandaniya Extn., New Delhi 110055, Tel.-23541234, 42541234; Fax-41543474 within 10 days of publication of this Notice. Thereafter no claims will be entertained and the RTA will proceed for issuing duplicate Share Certificate(s) in lieu of Original Share Certificate(s).
For and on Behalf of
Aro Granite Industries Limited
Sabhasachi Panigrahi
Company Secretary
DATED: 09.05.2019
PLACE: New Delhi

SUPERIOR FINLEASE LIMITED
CIN: L74899DL1994PL061995
Regd. Off: NS-92, Kharsa No-3321, Ranaji Enclave, Najafgarh, Near Arjun Park
Bus Stand New Delhi -110043; Email id: superiorfinlease@gmail.com
Website: www.superiorfinlease.com; Phone No.: +91-9953798335
Extract of Statement of Standalone Audited Financial Results for the quarter and year ended on March 31, 2019 (Rs. In Lacs)
SI No. Particulars Quarter ended 31-03-19 Audited Quarter ended 31-03-18 Audited Year Ended 31-03-19 Audited Year Ended 31-03-18 Audited
1 Total Income from operations 8.13 5.58 26.07 22.39
2 Net Profit for the period (Before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items) 3.43 1.27 13.29 4.76
3 Net Profit for the period Before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items) 3.43 1.27 13.29 4.76
4 Net Profit for the period After Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items) 2.28 0.77 9.59 3.54
5 Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising (Profit) for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax)) 2.28 0.77 9.59 3.54
6 Equity Share Capital 300.10 300.10 300.10 300.10
7 Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet as shown in the previous year -16.78 (20.23) (16.78) (20.23)
8 Earning Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) (a) Basic and Diluted EPS (in Rs.) 0.08 0.11 0.32 0.12 (b) Basic and Diluted EPS (in Rs.) 0.08 0.11 0.32 0.12
Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarter and Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Results are available on the Stock Exchange Website (www.mse.in and www.bseindia.com) and Company's website www.superiorfinlease.com.
For Superior Finlease Limited
Sd/-
(RAJNEESH KUMAR)
Director
DIN: 02463693
Date: May 09, 2019
Place: New Delhi

NORTHERN RAILWAY
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-IV, Northern Railway, Delhi Division for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender on prescribed form for the following work: Name of work with its location: 1. Annual zone work for maintenance of Bridges under ADEN/JHI for two year (P.E. 2021). 2. Left over civil work in doubling of KOTFATEH-C cabin under ADEN/MSZ. 3. Annual zone work for maintenance of Bridges under ADEN/MSZ for two year (P.E.30.06.2021) 4. Annual zone work for maintenance of work under ADEN/ROK for period ending on 30.6.2020. 5. Annual zone work for maintenance of track on DLI-BTI section under ADEN/MSZ for period ending on 30.6.2020. 6. Annual zone work for maintenance of track on DLI-BTI and JHI-SNP section under ADEN/JHI for period ending on 30.6.2020. 2. Approx. cost of work: 1. Rs.54,82,396.82; 2. Rs.74,88,121.44; 3. Rs.54,83,265.39; 4. Rs.64,95,990.82; 5. Rs.69,97,446.46; 6. Rs.64,94,144.93; 3. Earnest money: 1. Rs.1,09,700.00; 2. Rs.1,49,800.00; 3. Rs.1,09,700.00; 4. Rs.1,29,900.00; 5. Rs.1,40,000.00; 6. Rs.1,29,900.00. 4. Date and Time of submission of tender and opening of tender: Up to 15.00 hrs. on 31.05.2019 opening of e-Tender at 15.00 hrs. on 31.05.2019. 5. Website particulars, published e-tender, notice location etc. complete details of tender can be seen and website where the tender form can be downloaded. Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in No. 129-W/260/Tender Notice/12,13,16,17,18 & 19/19-20/W-V Date: 09.05.2019 1382/19
Serving Customers With A Smile

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male Age: 35 years, Complexion: Sallow, Height: 168 Cms., Face: Round, Hair: Small-Grey & Black, ID Mark: OM tattoo on the right hand, was wearing Pink colour Check Shirt and Black colour Pant, was found unconscious from NCC Gate Opposite Kudadan, Near Deer Park, Safdarjung Enclave on 30.04.2019. During the treatment he died on 30.04.2019 at Safdarjung Hospital at 17:41 P.M. In this regard a DD No. 34A, dated 01.05.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
SHO
P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi
Ph.: 011-24106345, 24106346
DP/6862/SW/19

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY
General Public is hereby informed that one male Namely: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 65 years was found dead on Footpath, Redfort Bus Stand Near Parade Ground Parking, Kotwali, Delhi on 04.05.2019. In this regard a case has been lodged vide DD No. 13-A dated 04.05.2019 at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi. The description of the dead person is as under- Age: Approx. 65 years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Sallow, Wearing: Blue T-Shirt & Pant. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.
SHO
P.S. Kotwali, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23977100, 8750870121
DP/9991/N/19

Public Notice
To be known to all: (Name of the Purcaser) Sh. Ujjwal Singh, Khabra La. Vj RoC 235A Lawrent Road, Khabra Purm, Distt. Jhansi, U.P. India. (Name of the Seller) Sh. Ujjwal Singh, Khabra La. Vj RoC 235A Lawrent Road, Khabra Purm, Distt. Jhansi, U.P. India. The original documents i.e. Demand Letter, Possession Letter, Site Possession Slip & VOC of Electric & Water Connection in issued by JDA having File No. F-85 (564) 78th BM of the above plot has been sold on an FR to this effect has been lodged in Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write contact with above named person at above address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (LAB) H or Director (M) - D Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

WESTERN RAILWAY
VARIOUS WORKS
Sr. No. 01, Tender Notice No. & Date: BCT/19-20/99 dt. 07.05.2019. Name of work: Virar-Surat Section: ADEN/Valsad (i) TRR(P) = 7.274 km, TSPR(P) = 7.683. (ii) Truck Wagon Switch Renewal. (iii) Casual renewal of rails for a section of under ADEN-BL. (iv) Painting of AT weld collars & rails under ADEN/Valsad Section. Tender Cost: ₹ 3,25,90,698.73. EMD: ₹ 3,13,000/-.
Sr. No. 02, Tender Notice No. & Date: BCT/19-20/99 dt. 07.05.2019. Name of work: Virar-Surat Section: ADEN/Valsad (i) Complete Track Renewal of existing 60 kg rails on PRC sections at 1660 No./km including deep CTR(P) = 5.854 km, CTR(S) = 3.110 kms. (ii) Deep screwing of P&C. (iii) TFR = 55.04 km & TBR = 4.523 km. (iv) Rectification of bad layouts and TBR of P&C by use of T-28, JCB, Crane etc under ADEN/Valsad Section. Tender Cost: ₹ 3,16,55,349.83. EMD: ₹ 3,08,300/-.
Date & Time of Opening of both Tenders: On 04.06.2019 at 15.30 Hrs. For more details please visit www.ireps.gov.in. Manual offers will not be considered.
Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

PIONEER AGRO EXTRACTS LIMITED
Regd Office - Chhoti Nehar, Malekpur Pathankot-145025 (Punjab)
Tel-0186-2345352/53/54
Email: complianceofficer@pioneeragro.co.in
CIN No - L15319PB1993PLC012975
Website: www.pioneeragro.co.in
Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that a meeting of the Board of directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2019, at Chhoti Nehar, Malekpur, Pathankot, Punjab, inter alia, to consider and approve the audited financial results of the Company for the fourth quarter and financial year ended March 31, 2019.
Notice is further given that Trading Window will remain closed from May 9th, 2019 to 16th May, 2019 (both days inclusive) pursuant to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015.
The Notice of the Board meeting is also available on the website of the Company at www.pioneeragro.co.in and also on the website of BSE Ltd. i.e. www.bseindia.com.
By Order of the Board For Pioneer Agro Extracts Limited
Sd/-
Rajini Mahajan
Company Secretary
Place: Pathankot
Date: 09-06-2019

Tehran: Iran threatened on Wednesday to enrich its uranium stockpile closer to weapons-grade levels in 60 days if world powers fail to negotiate new terms for its 2015 nuclear deal, raising regional tensions as a US aircraft carrier and bombers headed to the Middle East to confront Tehran.
A televised address by President Hassan Rouhani, who once pledged that the landmark deal would draw Iran closer to the West, saw the cleric instead pressure Europe to shield Tehran from the sanctions imposed by President Donald Trump withdrawing the US from the agreement exactly a year earlier.

Rouhani's threats put the world on notice that it cannot continue to rely on Iran complying with terms of the unraveling deal in the coming weeks.
Meanwhile, a US campaign of sanctions hammering Iran's anemic economy and blocking its sale of oil on the global market is only making life worse, putting further pressure on both its Shiite theocracy and its 80 million people.
Rouhani himself compared the situation to a medical emergency for the Islamic Republic, only 40 years after its founding. "We felt that the nuclear deal needs a surgery, and the painkiller pills of the last year

have been ineffective," Rouhani said. "This surgery is for saving the deal, not destroying it."
Iran on Wednesday stopped its sale of excess uranium and heavy water as a first step, Rouhani said, something required under the deal. The US last week ended deals allowing Iran to exchange its enriched uranium for unrefined yellowcake uranium with Russia, and to sell its heavy water, which is used as a coolant in nuclear reactors, to Oman.
In 60 days, if no new deal is in place, Iran will increase its enrichment of uranium beyond the accord-permitted 3.67 per cent which can fuel a commercial nuclear power plant. **AP**

UTTAR HARYANA BIJLI VITRAN NIGAM
PUBLIC NOTICE / TENDER NOTICE
Sr. No. Name of Dept./ Board/ Corp./ Auth. Name of Work/ Notice/ Tender Opening Date Closing Date (Time) Amount: EMD (Approx) in Rupees Website of the Department Nodal Officer/ Contact Details/ Email Tender Ref. No./ Tender No.
1 UHVN System strengthening of 11 KV lines with silication / Augmentation of conductor of HT line and New DT. under Operation Circle, UHVN, Kathal on haranyahsn. 09-05-2019 (15:00 Hrs) 03-06-2019 (13:00 Hrs) 6,60,910/- www.uhvn.in CE/PD&C UHVN, Panickula Ph. No. 0172-2579431 uvm.pdg@uhvn.org.in HIT No. 347/ P&D/2019-20 (Bid No. 591)
RO No. 76304 Dt. 09-05-2019 Sd/- Stamp and Signature of the Issuing Authority

WESTERN RAILWAY
Sr. No. Tender Notice No. & Date Work and Location Aprox. cost of Work ₹ EMD ₹
1 BCT/19-20/102 dt. 08.05.2019 Udhna-Jalgaon section : Updating, reconciling, certification and computerisation of land plans under jurisdiction of ADEN-Vyara and ADEN-Nandurbar 3,08,40,439/- 3,04,200/-
2 BCT/19-20/103 dt. 08.05.2019 Udhna-Jalgaon section : ZONE 12C, General repairs, painting etc., for Bridges in the jurisdiction of AEN-Vyara between Km 3.180 to Km 77.60 between Udhna(excl.) Uka: Songhad(excl.) 79,99,999.66 1,60,000/-
3 BCT/19-20/104 dt. 08.05.2019 Udhna-Jalgaon section : ZONE 14C, General repairs, painting etc., for Bridges in the jurisdiction of AEN-Nandurbar between Km 77.60 to Km 212.482 between Uka: Songhad(excl.) Uka: Sindkhede(excl.) 79,99,999.66 1,60,000/-
4 BCT/19-20/105 dt. 08.05.2019 Udhna-Jalgaon section : ZONE 15C, General repairs, painting etc., for Bridges in the jurisdiction of AEN-Amalner between Km 212.482 to Km 301.470 between Sindkhede(excl.) to Jalgaon(excl.) 79,99,999.66 1,60,000/-
Date & Time of submission: On 04.06.2019 till 15.00 hrs. Date & Time of opening: On 04.06.2019 at 15.30 hrs. Regarding detailed tender condition please visit www.ireps.gov.in. Manual offer will not be considered.
Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly) Follows us on: twitter.com/WesternRly

MOURA'S MIRACLE

Spurs winger second half hat-trick inspires Tottenham to maiden Champions League final

AFP ■ AMSTERDAM

Tottenham have a shot at becoming champions of Europe for the first time in their history after a hat-trick from Lucas Moura pulled off a dramatic victory against Ajax in the second remarkable turnaround in the competition in as many days.

Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino sobbed in joy and called his players "superheroes" after Lucas' goal six minutes into injury time set up the first all-English final against Liverpool since 2008 in Madrid on June 1.

The last-gasp victory on the away goals rule — the tie finished 3-3 overall — came 24 hours after Liverpool had destroyed Barcelona with an unlikely 4-0 victory.

Ajax, a team captained by outstanding 19-year-old defender Matthijs de Ligt, seemed set for the final as they grimly held on to a 3-2 lead on aggregate deep in stoppage time in the second leg of the semi-final at the Johan Cruyff Arena.

Then Lucas, a Brazilian who was released by Paris Saint-Germain and sold to Spurs for a cut-price fee, delivered the killer blow.

When the ball broke to him in the box, Lucas shot beyond Ajax goalkeeper Andre Onana to seal the comeback, making it 3-2 on the night.

The Ajax players slumped to the turf after having a first Champions League final since 1996 snatched away from them.

Leading 1-0 after the first leg, the thrilling Dutch side appeared to have killed the tie after De Ligt and Hakim Ziyech scored in the first half in Amsterdam.

That left Tottenham needing a comeback to match that of Liverpool against Barcelona the previous night, but in an even shorter timespan.

Two goals in quick succession from Lucas early in the second half gave them something to cling onto, before he struck the decisive blow.

Erik ten Hag's team must now lift themselves to try to complete a Dutch league and Cup double.

Their team is then likely to be bro-



Lucas Moura celebrates after scoring Tottenham's third goal against Ajax Amsterdam on Wednesday night during UEFA Champions League second leg semi-final.

"The Champions League final is a dream for me. Since I was a child I dreamed of this moment and now I live this moment. We need to enjoy it. Look at me — it's the best moment in my life, my career."

—Lucas Moura

"Without Harry Kane many people were talking about Son (Heung-min), but today it was Lucas Moura who scored three goals. That showed that the team is more important than any name. When one does not play, another plays."

—Mauricio Pochettino

"I'm very proud of this team and that they made it this far. We have had a great run."

—Erik ten Hag

"We saw Liverpool last night. It just goes to show it's not over until it's over."

—Danny Rose

"It was a ridiculous game. We were really far down and we tried to fight back. We were just lucky."

—Christian Eriksen

ken up before the new season begins — Frenkie de Jong has already signed for Barcelona and De Ligt could reportedly join him at the Camp Nou, although Manchester United are among a host of other suitors.

Both teams were deprived of key players — England striker Harry Kane was missing through injury and Ajax suffered the blow of losing Brazilian winger David Neres to injury just before kick-off.

But the Dutch side shrugged off his loss as De Ligt's header put them ahead on the night.

Spurs did threaten an immediate reply as Son Heung-min hit the net post before Ajax got their second when Dusan

FIGURATIVELY

8 Spurs will be the eighth different English team to feature in a European Cup/Champions League final, after Arsenal, Aston Villa, Chelsea, Leeds United, Liverpool, Manchester United and Nottingham Forest.

2 Tottenham Hotspur are the first team to come two goals behind to win in a Champions League semi-final since Manchester United in 1999 against Juventus.

3 The 2019 Champions League final will be only the third major European final in history to feature two English teams, after the 1972 UEFA Cup final (Spurs vs Wolves) and 2008 Champions League final (Man Utd vs Chelsea).

2 English teams have come from two or more goals behind to win on seven occasions in Champions League history — four more than clubs of any other nation.

5 Lucas Moura has become just the fifth different player to score a hat-trick in a Champions League semi-final, after Alessandro Del Piero, Ivica Olic, Robert Lewandowski and Cristiano Ronaldo.

5 Only Lionel Messi (8) has been directly involved in more goals in the Champions League knockout stages than Hakim Ziyech this season (5 - three goals and two assists).

4 Matthijs de Ligt is the fourth teenager to score in a Champions League semi-final, after Nordin Wooter (1996, Ajax), Obafemi Martins (2003, Inter Milan) and Kylian Mbappé (2017, Monaco).

Tadic cut the ball back for Ziyech, whose shot flew into the far corner.

Few observers could have foreseen what was to come as Spurs echoed what Liverpool had done at Anfield 24 hours earlier.

Spurs scored their first in the 55th minute, Lucas combining with Dele Alli and slotting past Onana.

Four minutes after that Lucas



Kane hopes to be fit for final

AMSTERDAM: Harry Kane says he is on course to be fit for Tottenham's Champions League final clash with Liverpool after the jointed his team's celebrations following their astonishing victory over Ajax.

Kane is recovering from an ankle ligament injury, but he was watching from the stands in the Johan Cruyff Arena as Tottenham recovered from 2-0 down to win 3-2 in the semi-final second leg.

The incredible comeback sent Tottenham through to their first Champions League final and Kane is confident he will be ready to feature when Mauricio Pochettino's men face Liverpool in Madrid on June 1.

"We'll see. So far so good, so if it carries on as it should I would hope to be. There's still a few weeks to go," Kane told BT Sport.

"Rehab is going well. I start straight line running this week which is why I was OK to run on at the end."

"We beat Man City and Ajax so I have to start training even harder to prove myself to the gaffer." AFP

pounced when substitute Fernando Llorente's effort was saved, the Brazilian deftly hooking the ball into the corner.

Ajax came so close to securing victory as Ziyech twice nearly scored again and Jan Vertonghen crashed a header against the bar at the other end.

Just when it looked like Ajax would hang on, Lucas sent his teammates into raptures.

Igor Stimac set to be appointed Indian coach

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Croatia's World Cupper and former manager Igor Stimac is set to become Indian football team's head coach after the AIFF's Technical Committee on Thursday recommended his name for the top job.

The 51-year-old Stimac, a member of the Croatian team that finished third in the 1998 World Cup, got the nod from the Technical Committee which interviewed four shortlisted candidates on Thursday.

"We have recommended Igor Stimac's name to the All India Football Federation's Executive Committee after interviewing all the four candidates. We found him as best suited to become India coach," Technical Committee Chairman Shyam Thapa said.

The AIFF is likely to officially announce Stimac's appointment as India coach on Friday. Stimac's contract is likely to be for three years initially and his first assignment will be the Kings Cup international tournament in Thailand.

Stimac's first match as India coach will be against Caribbean nation Curacao in the Kings Cup at



Buriram in Thailand on June 5. A national camp is expected to begin here from May 20.

The India head coach's position has been lying vacant after Stephen Constantine quit the post following India's AFC Asian Cup campaign earlier this year.

Stimac was the only candidate who turned up in person for the interview while the other three — South Korean Lee Min-sung, Spaniard Albert Roca and Hakan Ericson of Sweden — were interviewed via Skype.

The newly-appointed Technical Director Doru Isac was also present during the interview process.

Stimac's impressive credentials as former player and manager clinched the issue in his favour.

"His (Stimac's) experience as former player and manager is huge, so the Committee was unanimous in the decision to pick him. Salary-wise and in every aspect I feel he is best suited. Indian football will be in safe hands under him," Thapa, a former India player himself, added.

Liverpool rediscovering fear factor: Van Dijk

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Virgil van Dijk believes Liverpool are close to rediscovering the fear factor that made the club such a dominant force for nearly two decades as they target European glory.

Between 1973 and 1990 the Reds claimed 11 league titles and a quartet of European Cups, all four won in an eight-season spell.

Liverpool, who will face Tottenham in the Champions League final in Madrid on June 1, were the most feared side on the continent and the benchmark for the rest of Europe.

The Anfield side fell behind domestic and European rivals but Tuesday's remarkable 4-3 aggregate win over Barcelona secured back-to-back Champions League finals and Van Dijk believes they are starting to re-establish their standing in the game.

"Hopefully, that's something we work towards," said the Dutch captain. "I feel that (Manchester) City already have that bit of status because they have been dominating last year so much."

"Hopefully we can keep going and make it very difficult for any team in the world."

"We have a great age group. Between 20 and 27, 28, so hopefully we can do it all together for the next couple of years at least and grow as a team and hopefully get a lot of success."

With a place in Madrid secured, Liverpool, who last won the Champions League in 2005,



still have an outside chance of winning their first domestic title since 1990.

They need to beat Wolves on Sunday and hope City drop points at Brighton to pip their rivals in an extraordinarily tight title race.

"If it happens, it happens. We have no influence on that. They have it in their hands," added the Professional Footballers' Association player of the year.

"We're still in this season and still anything is possible. If it doesn't happen then it's not the end of the world. We've had a fantastic season, both of us. Man City have been outstanding as well."

Djoker dispatches Chardy; Ferrer ends career in Madrid

AFP ■ MADRID



Novak Djokovic defeated Jeremy Chardy 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) on Thursday at the Madrid Open to extend his domination of French opponents.

The Serb top seed needed less than 90 minutes to reach the quarter-finals at the Caja Magica, beating Chardy for the 13th time in as many attempts.

Djokovic holds an overwhelming record against the French, standing 66-2 against them since leading Serbia to the 2010 Davis Cup title over France.

Djokovic, the Madrid champion in 2011 and 2016, is searching for his top clay form as he begins the chase a fourth straight Grand Slam title when Roland Garros starts in little over two weeks.

He secured the opening set in less than half an hour, but was forced to a tiebreaker as Chardy's resistance stiffened in the second. He will face ninth seed



Marin Cilic next after the Croatian put out Laslo Djere 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, winning 11 of the last 13 games.

Two-time women's champion Simona Halep overcame Ashleigh Barty 7-5, 7-5 to reach her fourth Madrid semi-final.

Romania's third seed and former world number one will next play the winner from top seed Naomi Osaka and in-form Swiss Belinda Bencic.

Halep, who has been struggling with injury, took the opening set and went up a break in the second before losing it against the ninth-seeded Australian who

won the Miami title in March.

Halep regained control with a break of serve for 6-5 as her opponent returned wide. She wrapped up victory with an untouchable forehand to the corner.

"For me, it's a huge victory, it's a huge match I played today," Halep said.

"It means a lot that to win. It was on clay so I liked my chances, but still, it was very difficult and every point was important."

"I'm very motivated after reaching the semi-finals again. I will have another challenge tomorrow (Friday), so I'm not looking any further ahead than that."

"If I can play my best tennis, then we will see," added the player who advanced through her third-round match on Wednesday without the loss of a game.

On Wednesday, Spaniard David Ferrer played the final match of his career, losing 6-4, 6-



Simona Halep returns a shot during her quarterfinal clash against Ashleigh Barty.

1 to Alexander Zverev in his last tournament before retirement.

Ferrer bowed out after losing to Zverev, calling time on a distinguished career that included 27 ATP titles and a highest ranking of number three in the world.

Renowned for his never-say-die attitude, the 37-year-old reached the French Open final in

2014, as well as five more Grand Slam semi-finals.

"I couldn't have given more to this sport," said Ferrer, who left his bandana on the "T" of the service box.

"I don't know what my legacy will be but I always fought until the last point. Maybe it will be that."

SINGLES

INDIA U-19 CLUBBED WITH SAUDI

NEW DELHI: The India U-19 football team has been clubbed with hosts Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan in Group F of the AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers to be played between November 2 and 10. In 2017, the India U-19 team was also drawn along with Saudi Arabia which hosted the group qualifiers. Head coach Floyd Pinto said, "It is a tough draw for us and we are aware of the strengths our opponents possess. But at the same time the boys have shown that they can fight against some of the best teams (in I-League) and we are hopeful of our qualification chances. 'We will have to be on the top of our game if we are to qualify from this group,' he added.

IND U-16 TEAM PLACED IN GROUP B

NEW DELHI: The India U-16 football team has been clubbed with hosts Uzbekistan, Bahrain and Turkmenistan in Group B of the AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers to be held from September 18 to 22. The winning team in each group will earn direct qualification while the four best second-placed sides will also advance to the 2020 Finals from the Qualifiers. Should the host country for the Finals finishes either on top of their group or among the best four second-placed teams, the next (fifth) second-placed team in the ranking among all groups will qualify instead.

STRONG START FOR SHEKHON IN WC

NEW DELHI: Last year's junior World Cup Bronze medalist Ganemat Sekhon of India on Thursday returned the joint third-best score in the Women's Skeet event at this year's third ISSF World Cup Shotgun stage 2 in Changwon. Sekhon shot a credible 72 out of 75 on qualification day one to lie seventh in a 56-strong field. Two more rounds of 25 shots each are scheduled for day two before the top-six make it to the final round, also scheduled for day two on Friday. Besides a coveted ISSF World Cup medal, there are also two Tokyo 2020 Olympic quota places to be won in the event. Day 2 will also be the first day of qualifying for the Men's Skeet event, where India's Mairaj Ahmad Khan, Anagad Vir Singh Bajwa and Sheeraz Sheikh will be fighting for medals and quota places.

ANKITA MOVES TO Q/F IN LUAN

NEW DELHI: India's top singles player Ankita Raina progressed to the quarterfinals of the \$ 60,000 ITF women's event in Luan, China with a straight sets win over Yue Yuan on Thursday. The 26-year-old, ranked 175, dispatched her Chinese rival 6-2 6-3 in the second round of the tournament. "The girl (Yuan) was very attacking and aggressive but I played smart. Even though the score looks one-sided, the match was intense," Ankita said from Luan. Ankita has been on a good run as she cherished a win over three-time Grand Slam champion Samantha Stosur at the \$ 125k tournament in Anning and also made the final of a 60k event in Istanbul. She next faces Hong Kong's Eudice Chong, who is ranked as low as 497.

HAMPSPHIRE SIGN MORRIS FOR T20 BLAST

MADRID: Spain's higher sports council has approved new penalties against fan violence in football after a street fight between radical fan groups left one man dead in Madrid in 2014. Council president Miguel Cardenal says the new penalties that can be applied to clubs linked to violent behavior include relegation, points deduction, and the full or partial closure of stadiums. League president Javier Tebas says "racist, xenophobic and abusive songs" by supporters in a stadium can lead to the partial closure of the stadiums. Agencies

vivacity

IRRFAN KHAN
THANKS THE
MEDIA

-P 14



SAVE YOURSELF FROM HEAT

While taking care of your health is important, exercising too much in this weather will most probably only affect your health adversely. If you lose too much sweat during the summers, you run the risk of being dehydrated. And exercising in the sun can also lead to a heat stroke. If you have to walk, do so in the early morning before the sun comes out—which happens as early as 7 sometimes and starts heating everything up. Or do it at night or late evening. All forms of strenuous exercise should otherwise be reserved for cooled gyms and indoor rooms, writes **TEAM VIVA**

It is basic science that darker colours absorb more heat, something that all of us learned back in 9th grade. However, most of us fail to apply this practically in real life. When we move out wearing dark coloured cloths in the sun, they absorb more heat which is in turn transferred to our bodies, making us feel hotter. To help feel a little cooler during these brutal summers, avoid wearing black. Stick instead to lighter colours like white and pastels that do not absorb that much heat and do not increase your body temperature. Save the black cloths for winters when your body needs as much heat as it can possibly get.

Unless it is absolutely necessary, do not step out of your house, especially in the peak hours of the afternoon. The sun and the sunlight will be a killer combination to reckon with, so do not give up the comfort of your cool room at home or at the office with its AC and fans and coolers. Going out even for a few hours tends to sap you of any energy, making you feel lethargic and dehydrated. So try to stay in as much as possible until the sun sets and the weather changes for good with the arrival of monsoons.

If you are moving out during the afternoon, wrap a scarf or a stole around your head. Make sure that the scarf is of a light material like cotton. This will prevent the heat from directly reaching your head and protect you from the ghastly loo as well. Most women cover themselves with a dupatta before leaving their homes in the summers for a reason. It protects them from the sunlight and the hot winds to some extent. Alternately, you could wear hats which serve the same purpose and shade your face from the sun.

While taking care of your health is

important, exercising too much in this weather will most probably only affect your health adversely. If you lose too much sweat during the summers, you run the risk of being dehydrated. And exercising in the sun can also lead to a heat stroke. If you have to walk, do so in the early morning before the sun comes out—which happens as early as 7 sometimes and starts heating everything up. Or do it at night or late evening. All forms of strenuous exercise should otherwise be reserved for cooled gyms and indoor rooms.

Eat a healthy and light diet full of fruits and fresh vegetables. Cut down on food items that produce heat like red meat and dry fruits. Instead, opt for fish if you are a non-vegetarian. People who like sweets should steer clear of halwas and ghee-rich sweets and opt for lighter sweet dishes like ice creams and ice lollies. Watermelons are a great fruit to have in this weather as they are rich in water and their amino acid boosts energy and cuts down on fatigue. Do not skip breakfast as an empty stomach can cause dizziness during extremely hot days.

This is very important while going out in the sun. Always wear a sunscreen as it helps protect against the harmful UV rays of the sun. Half an hour before stepping out into the sun, cover exposed body parts with a sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher. The SPF is the sun protection factor. Lather your arms and legs and feet along with your face. UV rays have been shown to cause skin cancer, so sunscreens become very important. Besides, sunscreens also help prevent tanning due to exposure to the sun for long periods of time. So, if you want your face and body to retain its fresh complexion, use a good sunscreen before heading out.

When we get hot, our bodies cool



HEART ATTACKS AND STROKES ARE MORE COMMON WHEN THERE'S A HEAT WAVE. THE HEART HAS TO WORK HARDER AND FASTER. EVEN A HEALTHY PERSON CAN DIE OF HEART ATTACK OR STROKE IF THEY TRY TO DO TOO MUCH OUTSIDE ON A HOT, HUMID DAY

down by sweating. As the sweat evaporates, the body's temperature cools. However, on a humid day when the air is full of moisture, sweat cannot evaporate and the body stays hot. The opposite is true when humidity is low, or you're in a dry climate, and the body's ability to cool itself by sweating increases.

Heat exhaustion causes heavy sweating, nausea or vomiting, fainting, a racing pulse and clammy skin. The person may also stagger, be confused or combative. Muscle cramps are often an early

About 10 percent of heat stroke victims die. If they survive, they often have brain damage.

Heart attacks and strokes are more common when there's a heat wave. The heart has to work harder and faster. Even a healthy person can die of heart attack or stroke if they try to do too much outside on a hot, humid day.

When the body cannot cool itself by sweating or the person cannot get a break—even for a few hours of air conditioning—the body's systems break down. Called hyperthermia, it's the opposite of hypothermia that can happen during winter. Hyperthermia means the body's temperature is dangerously high. It is caused by failure of the body's heat-regulating process.

Hyperthermia causes the body to try to cool the blood by dilating blood vessels in the skin and constricting blood vessels in the stomach. Less blood to the gut lets toxins leak into the blood. Cells begin to die, triggering a massive inflammatory response that damages the body's tissues, organs and the kidneys start to fail. Proteins in the spleen start to clump and essentially "cook." Toxins also enter the brain causing strokes and swelling.

This process can happen very quickly; the person may not be aware of the danger. The majority of heat wave deaths occur in older persons and the mentally ill. Older people have more trouble regulating their temperature, and they are less likely to know they are too hot. Additionally, some medicines commonly used by older people can make temperature regulation worse. A third factor is they tend to be more socially isolated than younger people. Social isolation is the greatest risk factor for dying during a heat wave.

sign. To reverse it, stop activity, move to a cool location and apply wet cool washcloths to the body. Heat exhaustion requires immediate medical treatment and rapid cooling. If you cannot reverse it, it quickly advances to heat stroke.

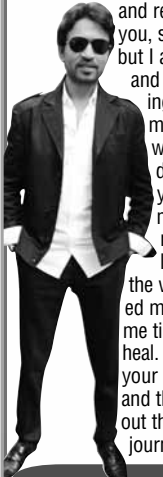
Heat stroke occurs when the body's core temperature is higher than 104 degrees (give or take a couple of degrees, depending on the individual's heat tolerance). Sweating stops, pulse is rapid, and the skin is flushed and dry. The person becomes delirious and may faint.

Trend Blazer

Irrfan's thank you note to media

Actor **IRRFAN KHAN** has written a note to all his friends in the media thanking them for "all the support" during his illness.

He said, "Last few months have been on a road to recovery, a period to heal and fight. I am aware of your concern and request to talk to you, share my journey, but I am fathoming it and internalising, taking baby steps to merge my healing with work. I am deeply touched by your wishes, it means a lot for me and my family. I truly respect the way you respected my journey giving me time and space to heal. Thank you for your patience, warmth and the love throughout this overwhelming journey."



'I am 20. Becoming an actor has been a dream all my life. So, it's not fair of people to say that I am not allowed to have a dream because I belong from a certain family and have a background. A Bollywood background cannot stop one from having a dream. I hope people watch the film (Student of the Year 2) and then make judgement about me. I will be okay with whatever judgement comes after that.'



Actress **BANITA SANDHU**, who made her Bollywood debut with *October* (2018), will be seen in *Pandora*, a sci-fi action series. Set in the year 2199, *Pandora* centres on Jax, played by Priscilla Quintana, a resourceful young woman who loses everything after her parents' death but finds a new life at Earth's Space Training Academy where she learns to defend the Galaxy from threats.



The cast includes Oliver Dench, Raechelle Banno, John Harlan Kim, Ben Radcliffe, Martin Bobb-Semple. Banita tweeted, "So thrilled to announce my next project with The CW." Her *October* co-star Varun Dhawan tweeted, "So proud of you Bani. This means I've to get in touch with your agent now to see you."

Evans' *Infinite* to release in 2020

Actor **CHRIS EVANS'** past-lives drama *Infinite* is set to release on August 7, 2020. Paramount has also moved Eddie Murphy's *Coming to America* sequel off that date and to December 18, 2020. That holiday date had been occupied by James Cameron's *Avatar 2*, but Disney announced that the sequel was moving back a year. Antoine Fuqua is directing *Infinite*. John Lee Hancock and Ian Shorr are adapting D. Eric Maikranz's novel *The Reincarnationist Papers*, which is centered on the Cognomina, a secret society of people who possess total recall of their past lives.



There is no planet B

Experts feel that determining a percentage today of how much biodegradable packaging actually gets decomposed in landfills could be very difficult. By TEAM VIVA

As per the global data, the world has produced and discarded over nine billion tonnes of plastic since the 1950s. Around 165 million tonnes of it have clogged the oceans and since only about nine per cent of it gets recycled, the rest of the voluminous plastic pollutes the environment or gets stacked in landfills, where it takes more than 500 years to decompose while leaching toxic chemicals into the ground. Looking at the domestic statistics, India produces an estimated 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste annually — a figure which is likely to reach 165 million tonnes by 2030.

INITIATIVES BY COMPANIES

After the World Economic Forum announced the aim for companies to reach 100 per cent reusable, recyclable and compostable packaging goal by 2025, many major companies, which represent over six million tonnes of plastic packaging per year, have taken the initiative to make packaging more sustainable.

Monica Bindra, CEO and co-founder, Laiqa (biodegradable brand of sanitary napkins), explains how can biodegradable packaging among more Indian companies can be promoted. She says, "It's a new plastic economy in India and a lot of companies are moving towards biodegradable packaging. However, we need to go much further and faster in addressing the challenge of single-use plastics by leading a transition away from the linear 'take-make-dispose' model of consumption."

She says that companies should embrace simplicity along with creativity to come up with minimalistic designs. "This will help in reducing material use, leading to an overall reduced product cost. Companies should promote more biodegradable packaging by training their staff. If they are aware of the waste disposal processes, they will better utilise it. This knowledge can then be passed from labour to labour."

It was in 2007 when cosmetics company, L'Oreal Group announced its commitment to improve the environmental and social profile of 100 per cent of its products by 2025. In 2018, 79 per cent of new or renovated products have an improved social or environmental profile. For 58 per cent of new or renovated products, this improvement is due to packaging with a lower environmental footprint.



Krish Iyer, president and CEO, Walmart India, says, "Recognising plastic pollution as a critical issue, we have pledged to remove single-use shrink wrap used for storing merchandise and replace it with sustainable storage solutions across all its best price modern wholesale stores in the country in a phased manner."

The Body Shop India has launched its first 'Community Trade Recycled Plastic' from Bengaluru, that highlights the lesser-known, human side of the plastic crisis. The company has unveiled a giant artwork of a female Indian waste picker in London's Borough Market, which is made using recycled plastic from waste-pickers in Bengaluru.

SoulTree, an e-commerce service for herbal products, has introduced a 'biodegradable bubble wrap' as a part of packaging in all their website orders. The wrap decomposes in 180 days, without leaving a long-term impact on the environment. They also have biodegradable sachets to reduce plastic waste for other products.

Hindustan Unilever has "committed to accelerate a transition to a circular economy, moving from the take-make-dispose model to a regenerative approach, claims the company's spokesperson, adding, "We have collected more than 20,000 tonnes of plastic laminate waste in partnership with NGOs and start-ups in more than 20 cities across India."

Environmentalists claim that most landfills are too fundamentally crowded and compacted so tightly that they don't allow space for much air. There's not much dirt and very less of oxygen. And as a result, biodegradation of compostable materials takes place slowly. For instance, a study had recently uncovered 50-year-old readable newspapers.

BANS AND PERCENTAGE OF DEGRADATION

However, the question remains — how much percentage of the packaging material actually decomposes? Environmentalists claim that most landfills are too fundamentally crowded and compacted so tightly that they don't allow space for much air. There's not much dirt and very less of oxygen. And as a result, biodegradation of compostable materials takes place slowly. For instance, a study had recently uncovered 50-year-old readable newspapers.

In India, with plastic polythenes getting banned in major cities, the change has only begun. However, with more companies taking up the policy of 100 per cent sustainable packaging, even though 60-75 per cent of it could be degraded, experts claim that determining proper statistics isn't possible since nothing has been produced so prominently.

Bindra said that determining a percentage today of how much biodegradable waste actually gets decomposed could be very difficult.



'THE BAN ON PLASTIC SURELY PUTS THE ONUS ON THE POLLUTERS OR BRAND OWNERS, BUT SOME EXCEPTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE BY COMPANIES SO THAT BUSINESSES ARE NOT HAMPERED UNTIL ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS ARE SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOPED'

"We cannot say how many companies have actually changed their design policy today. There is no proper data on how much plastic consumption has been reduced by them to compare it with their previous statistics."

Dr Tanweer Alam, joint director and regional head, Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP) Delhi, talks about how banning plastic use at various levels really helps. "The ban surely puts the onus on the polluters/ brand owners, but some exceptions have been made by companies so that businesses are not hampered until alternate solutions are developed and implemented successfully."

It also depends on the kind of materials companies employ to produce the alternatives for plastic packaging. Suggesting some of the key aspects that need to be taken into consideration for companies before trying to identify the most environment-friendly packaging materials, Alam says, "First, the pollutants released when the packaging material is produced should not be ignored. If a particular product cannot be produced without release of toxins into the environment, then it cannot be considered as ecologically responsible. Another aspect is whether the material is recyclable or not. Also, innovative, sustainable and

stylish, green food packaging can be recycled again and consumes less than 0.5 per cent of the space of traditional food packaging if dumped in a landfill."

DESIGNING A NO-PLASTIC POLICY

Apart from the triple-R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) phenomenon, environmentalists say that the first and foremost work should be to construct a no-plastic policy, which starts from landfills and their design technology. Some landfills are now being designed to promote biodegradation through the injection of water, oxygen and even microorganisms. However, these kinds of facilities are costly to create, which is why they haven't been widely considered.

Alam suggests that landfills could be designed in a way that they can have "separate sections for compostable materials" like food waste.

Bindra feels that plastic can't be completely abolished. However, we can focus on using it the right way. She suggests, "Companies should always ask if they still want disposable carrier bags, given that they are burned after a few minutes of use. Investing in creative and innovative ways of delivering products to people without generating plastic waste can help solve the challenges involved. Companies ought to design their packaging keeping in mind what happens to it after use. They should follow the lead of brands that have pledged to use 100 per cent reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging. A collaborative reduction of plastic protocol should be defined to provide common direction. Industries should align on material choices, that will guarantee compatible materials that can be recycled and reused."

Looking at oxo-degradable plastics, which are also biodegradable, one more aspect comes to notice — being biodegradable does not necessarily mean that a material is eco-friendly. Alam argues that oxo-degradable bags can't be recycled and are the ones which actually hamper the recycling process. He says, "Although these plastics break down over time, the tiny pieces they break down into are still plastics that might contribute to pollution. They don't degrade into nothing or anything usable. Hence, this aspect is very important when we talk about biodegradable packaging materials."

(IIP's national conference on 'innovative packaging techniques for food products' will be held at Le Meridien today.)

Honouring the royal trend

Wool wrap for Prince HARRY and Duchess of Sussex MEGHAN MARKLE's baby suggests that the royal tradition will win out

Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor slept through his first press conference, but royal experts say the merino wool wrap in which he snuggled said a lot about how his parents, Prince Harry and Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, will approach his future.

Meghan is known for promoting social causes and niche brands with her clothing choices. Yet she and Harry introduced their son to the world in a hand-finished shawl and cashmere cap made by G.H. Hurt & Son of Nottingham, whose intricate knitwear has swaddled royal babies for decades.

Wrapping Archie in a shawl knitted by the small, family-run English company suggests that Meghan and Harry aren't as intent on shaking up the royal family as much as some people have forecast — or feared. "I read this as an attempt to reassure the public that they are not going to stray too far from tradition," said Pauline Maclaran, co-author of *Royal Fever: The British Monarchy in Consumer Culture*. "There has been a lot of press recently taking a slightly negative tone about Meghan, and this is an opportunity to show that she's not trying to change everything."

Princess Diana wrapped Harry and his older brother, Prince William, in G.H. Hurt. William and his wife, the



Duchess of Cambridge, chose the firm for Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis.

The royals don't advertise, but they do set trends with whatever they are wearing, seeing or doing. Whether it was Queen Victoria popularising Christmas trees or Princess Diana's fluffy collars, people have long tried to copy or emulate their style.

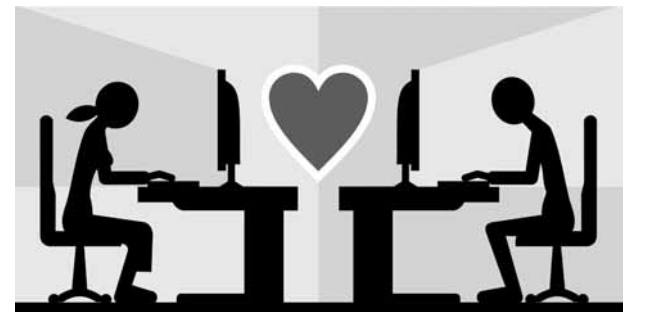
Susan Kelley, the American founder of whatkatewore.com, said the public's fascination with Meghan will likely trickle down to her son. And as a former actress, she has a great sensitivity to the messages sent by her sartorial selections. "Meghan is somebody who wants to carve her own path, but she is respectful of the monarchy and traditions of it," Kelley said. "The fact that Meghan is a feminist doesn't mean she doesn't honour tradition."

Still, by selecting the Leaves And Flowers Baby Shawl with shell detailing (105 pounds, \$137), Meghan chose one of G.H. Hurt's less-traditional designs.

The company saw traffic on its website increase immediately after pictures of young Archie hit the news. In less than an hour, 266 visitors had looked at the shawl, up from five to 10 a day previously.

The firm, which has been in business since 1912, has a collection of vintage hand-frame knitting machines that date back hundreds of years and work alongside modern knitting technology.

"Babies at the best of times are wonderful news and they are wrapped up with so much emotion and goodwill," said Richard Taylor, part of the family firm. "But from a business point of view, we get coverage right around the world."



Dating versus marriage

Partners' 'near me' searches are growing much faster than matrimony queries in the country, says Google

Dating-related searches are growing much faster than matrimony searches in India and non-metro cities have outpaced metros in online search across categories, search engine giant Google said on Thursday.

According to Google's "Year in Search: Insights for Brands" report, there has been a 75 per cent increase in "Near Me" queries and a 100 per cent growth in queries for co-working spaces. "The online space in India has never been more vibrant. India has become the fastest Internet consuming country in the world and Internet has now become the bridge to the country's aspirations. As highlighted in the report, the growing influence of online videos, increase in usage of language and voice, along with a rise of ML and AI are opportunities for brands and marketers," Vikas Agnihotri, country director, Google India, said.

Indian language internet users are expected to account for nearly 75 per cent of the total user base by 2021 and Google search trends show a significant

move in this direction. "Hindi is also gaining traction in the technology sector with a two-fold increase in queries in Hindi, which are mainly coming from laptops and PCs", said the tech giant.

Last year saw an increase in the adoption of online automation as businesses used Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to drive efficiency and improve customer experience. Brands across various categories, such as BFSI and telecom, have started integrating voice assistants like Google Assistant with their customer service to help customers.

Companies like Uber, Ola and Meru have made cab-booking services available on Google Assistant.

Meanwhile, online video audience in India is expected to grow to 500 million by 2020. Watch time for science videos as well as hobby videos in India have more than tripled in 2018, said the company.

CHEF TALK

Fermented foods not only mean better health for customers but can also introduce a quirky twist to regular dishes on a menu, says chef **DIPNA ANAND**.
By TEAM VIVA

A HEALTH BOOSTER

While fermented food has been consumed for a long time, its benefits are only gradually becoming apparent. Consequently restaurants are introducing these often times as side dishes which accompany a more familiar main.

Heading into the harsh summers, it becomes all the more important to eat things gut friendly and healthy. The probiotics produced during fermentation restores the balance of friendly bacteria in your gut and may not only alleviate some digestive problems but also give your immune system a boost and reduce your risk of infections like the common cold. Studies have shown that fermented foods may also promote mental health, weight loss and heart health.

Chef Dipna Anand, co-owner of London based Brilliant Restaurant is among the top five Indian women who are shaking up London's food scene. She explains how fermented food is good for health.

HOW POPULAR ARE FERMENTED FOODS AMONG PEOPLE?

According to a research by The National Restaurant Association, fermenting was rated a hot trend by 57 per cent of the chefs. One of the major reasons for the popularity is the willingness of consumers to experiment with something new. The trend is certainly gaining ground as more people around the world favour foods such as *kimchi*,



miso and yoghurt due to their health benefits. Locally-grown produce, farm-raised, organic meat, artisan cheese and handcrafted beers appeal more to consumers, who like to know where their food is coming from and this leads to a connection being made between consumers and their food source. Even if it is a beer or a side of pickled cabbage, fermented foods offer a unique twist to normal dishes.

People like quirky trends that are at the same time beneficial. In such a scenario, it is not surprising that fermented foods continue to gain popularity. As an example, only a few people would recommend the awesome pickled cucumber that came as a side with their chicken *tikka* burger to their friends, however, they are more inclined to tell their friends about the delicious *masala kimchi* coleslaw served with their burger as it is quirky and has health benefits.

HOW IS FERMENTED FOOD GOOD FOR HEALTH?

Fermentation is a natural process which is used to produce everyday staples including cheese, black tea, bread and chocolate. Recently, more traditional fermented food including *kimchi* and *kefir* are gaining ground all over the world and this is specifically driven by the health benefits.



'FERMENTED FOODS INTRODUCE BENEFICIAL BACTERIA INTO THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM AND HELP TO BALANCE PROPERTIES. MOST OF THEM ARE LOW IN CALORIES AS COMPARED TO OTHER DISHES'

Research suggests that fermented food and drinks introduce beneficial bacteria into the digestive system and help to balance it in your body. Probiotics are known to help in slowing down some specific diseases, improve bowel health, aid digestion and improve immunity. There is also evidence to suggest that having a good balance of gut bacterial and digestive enzymes, helps to absorb more nutrients from the foods you consume. Most of the fermented foods are low in calories when compared with other dishes.

DO YOU ALL HAVE A SPECIAL FERMENTED FOOD DISHES IN YOUR MENU?

I do not have dishes on the menu that fall in to the special fermented food category as yet. However, there are of course dishes that use yoghurt and we also have a *tandoori soya* dish which is a part of our vegan menu. Maybe in the future, it would be beneficial to have a dedicated menu for fermented foods as I am sure it will be received very well.

For restaurants, fermented foods are often cheaper and have low food costs offering a great way to offset the classic menu items like a *chicken tikka masala* or chick-pea and potato curry and *tandoori* mixed grill which sell more and are expensive.

FIT FOR ALL

Mustard oil finds favour with international chefs

It's hard to beat for its versatility — as a cooking medium, as a dressing, as a preservative and for body massage.

More importantly, it has gained global recognition in the past few years, with its market further segmented on the basis of regions; a recent report by Transparency Market Research indicates growing acceptance across North America, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Asia-Pacific excluding Japan, and the Middle East and Africa.

On the basis of regions, mustard oil has higher market demand in Asia-Pacific region which includes India, Thailand and China due to its huge consumption in food. The North America market is expected to expand with a relatively higher CAGR due to its preference as an essential oil in various industrial applications, the report says.

Vivek Puri, the managing director of Puri Oil Mills Ltd, said, "The surge in the acceptance of mustard oil as a healthy cooking medium would also explain the advent of many multinational corporations in a segment that has traditionally been dominated by SME players. India needs to learn from countries like Malaysia and Italy who have managed to sell their edible oil worldwide, which in return has contributed to their economy. Indian mustard oil has the potential to reduce imports of edible oil and can save valuable foreign exchange. What palm oil is for Malaysia, olive oil for Italy and soya oil for America, mustard oil can be for India."

"Mustard oil has both culinary and therapeutic uses. It contains omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids and has low content of saturated fats. Mustard oil not only enhances the taste and flavour of food but it also cures many diseases related to skin, joint, muscles and heart. In cooking, it is used for marination, in salads, for frying and for the purpose of preservation," Shimomura Kazuya, head chef at Megu, the Japanese fine diner at the Leela Palace New Delhi, said.

"A few people avoid it because of its pungent flavour and smell and it takes a while to get used to it. As far as I know, this oil is used in both Lebanese and Mediterranean cuisine. It is sparsely used in daily cooking these days but if used regularly, it's a great product to prepare dishes differently," Kazuya added.

"Cooking with mustard oil has many benefits. It contains rich amounts of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids (MUFA and PUFA). These fats are good as they lower the risk of developing ischemic heart disease by almost half. Mustard oil also has cancer-



fighting properties. Food cooked in mustard oil enhances its flavour," Rajesh Khanna, F&B head, The Metropolitan Hotel and Spa, New Delhi, said.

Due to its pungent taste, mustard oil works as a taste enhancer in Bengali dishes like *Machher jhol*, *Jhal muri* and *Muri ghonto* to mention just a few.

"It is a powerful natural stimulant. It improves digestion and appetite by stimulating digestive juices and bile in the liver and spleen. It is seen that while cooking, the oil behaves differently when heated, it changes texture, colour and taste; it also has nutritional properties. So, while cooking, we should take care not to overheat it as over cooking may destroy useful nutrients and form harmful compounds. It is also known to be one of the healthiest oils in the market. It has multi-purpose usage, you use it for cooking, in medicine, or as an ingredient in your beauty routine, and you will not be disappointed," Khanna added.

For those who have grown up or lived in places like Bengal, Bihar, Kashmir, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, mustard oil is a familiar taste. But in the last decade or so, many non-traditional mustard oil consumers have started using this oil, attracted by a positive buzz circulating across various media and on social media.

This can be traced to a study conducted jointly by the Harvard School of Medicine, Boston; the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi; and St John's Hospital, Bengaluru. The report was published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

The initiative examined Indian dietary habits and their correlation with heart disease, and found that the use of mustard oil as the primary cooking medium (particularly

for deep frying) could reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease (CHD) by as much as 71 per cent. This made many non-mustard oil consumers sit up and take notice, especially since heart disease was already rampaging through large sections of the population.

Also focusing on the MUFA and PUFA aspects, Arvind Das, head of cardiology at Max Hospital, Gurugram, suggested that ground-at-home mustard oil has fatty acids that are important in 'getting bad cholesterol' down.

The good old *sarson ka tel* also has a high smoking point, almost as high as 250 degrees celsius. What's so good about that?

Because it doesn't burn so easily, it's ideal for Indian cuisine obsessed with deep frying and heating.

As for its therapeutic values, mustard oil is considered a natural sunscreen when applied externally; mixed with coconut oil, it makes for a complete head massage and acts as an anti-bacterial.

At the bottom line, let's not forget that mustard oil has been a perennial hit in the rural areas due to its easy availability and ease of processing.

"Nothing can beat it when it comes to traditional Indian cooking. Indian cooking takes time and mustard oil is the ideal medium as the food has to stay on the fire for a longer time," Dushyant Singh, who runs the OTH and Rustic Kitchen in Jaipur, said.

Dr Ripen Gupta, a senior cardiologist at Max Hospital in Vasanti Kunj, had the last word.

"Consumption of about 600-700 ml of mustard oil per month is ideal. Taken daily, it comes down to one teaspoon a meal. It's good for your heart," Gupta said.

What are you waiting for then? Mustard oil's the way to go.

—IANS

gorge us

Fio Cookhouse and Bar has put together a Dandi space. The cocktail menu, which has been derived from fresh and natural ingredients, offers signature cocktails like *Grande Dandy*, *Dandy-Lion*, *Rubicon* and *Fiore*. The food menu includes *Dandy butterfly prawns*, *Black chicken lettuce cups* and *Truffle mushroom croquettes*. **Time:** 12 pm to 1 am **Price:** (for two) ₹3,000 plus taxes (inclusive of alcohol) **Venue:** Dandy, The Fio Bar, Nehru Place.



Hilton Garden suggests to give your mother a break this Mother's Day from all the cooking and plan a date. It is a day to celebrate the most special woman in your life. Savour delectable dishes like *Aatishi murg tikka*, Grilled fish lemon butter *masala*, Paneer butter *masala* and New York cheese cake. **Time:** 12 pm to 3.30 pm **Date:** May 12 **Venue:** Hilton Garden Inn, Saket.

The Imperial Spice is serving heart-warming experiences, from soft and tantalising *Amritsari kulcha* to patate pleasers *Chola tacos*, there are also chef special *Fajda kadi* with *Ghee pulao* to *Idli platter*. Devour meaty specials with *Chakundari ghost*, *Jatooni jhinga* and *Nasi goreng*. **Time:** 11.30 pm to 12 am **Date:** Till May **Price:** (for two) ₹1,500 plus taxes **Venue:** The Imperial Spice, Connaught Place.



Cafe Delhi Heights celebrates Mother's Day with special recipes from Mom's kitchen. From Butter chicken *tikka masala* served with *Jalapeno biryani*, *Punjabi palak chole*, *Sindhi kadi*, Palatable paneer curry in hurry and more. **Time:** 10.30 pm to 12 am **Date:** Till May 19 **Price:** (for two) ₹2,000 plus taxes **Venue:** All outlets of Cafe Delhi Heights.

The Marketplace is serving both special alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks like *Strawberry lemonade*, *Tipsy orange*, *Drunken apple* and *Zesty blue*. Non-alcoholic segment includes *Watermelon peach*, *Mango basil*, *Kivi apple* and more. **Time:** 12 pm to 3.30 pm; 7.30 pm to 12 am **Date:** Till May 31 **Price:** (for two) ₹1,300 plus taxes **Venue:** The Marketplace, Kirti Nagar.



Nueva presents Japanese and Chinese specialities and on offer are delicacies like open-faced *Shumai*, Crystal dumplings, pan-seared and home-made Pot-stickers. Enjoy food, live music and more as you reserve your spot here. **Time:** 12 pm to 11.45 pm **Date:** Till May **Price:** (for two) ₹1,500 plus taxes **Venue:** Nueva, RK Puram.

PANEER TIKKA AND PINEAPPLE SANDWICH

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Butter: 4 tsp
 - Green chutney: 4 tbsp
 - Sandwich bread: 8 slices
 - Tomato, onion and *kachumber* salad: 4 tbsp
 - Paneer *tikka*, sliced: 200 gm
 - Pineapple: 4 slices



- METHOD**
- Spread softened butter and green chutney on one side of all bread slices.
 - Mix sliced paneer *tikka* with *kachumber* salad, divide equally and arrange this filler on half the bread slices.
 - Top it with the pineapple slice and cover with remaining buttered slices of bread.
 - Cut into triangles and serve.

Courtesy: Del Monte

VEG THAI GREEN CURRY

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- To make Thai green curry paste:**
- Lemongrass: 5 stalks
 - Fresh green thai bird chillies, stemmed and chopped: 3
 - Coriander: 1/4 cup
 - Coriander seeds: 1 tsp
 - Basil leaves: 3 sprig
 - Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
 - Whole black peppercorns: 1 tsp
- To make Thai green curry:**
- Onion: 1
 - Spring Onion: 1/4 cup
 - Cloves: 3
 - Garlic
 - Ginger
 - Salt to taste



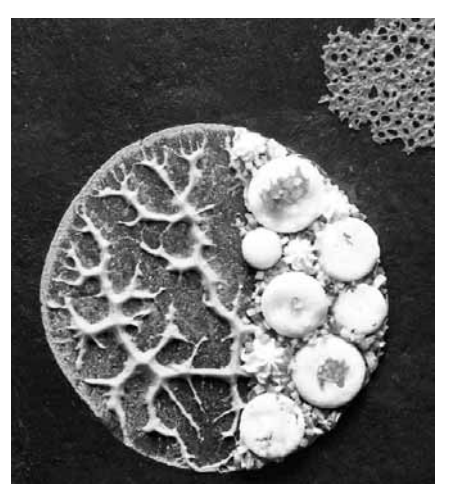
- Unsweetened coconut milk: 400 ml
- Thai green curry paste: 3 tbsp
- Broccoli: 1 cup
- Carrot: 1
- Bell pepper: 1
- Green zucchini (thickly sliced): 1/2
- Brown sugar: 1 tsp

- Basil leaves or *kaffir* lime leaves: 1 sprig
 - Salt to taste
 - Cooking oil: 1 tsp
- METHOD**
- To make the Thai curry paste, take lemongrass stalks and trim any root section below the bulb base. Add and blend green chillies, coriander leaves, basil leaves, coriander seeds, cumin seeds, peppercorns, onions, spring onions, garlic, ginger and salt along with the lemongrass. Add little bit of water and grind till it becomes a paste.
 - To make the curry, heat oil first. Add the vegetables — carrots, zucchini, broccoli and bell peppers. Stir the

- vegetables on high heat until lightly tender. Once tender, turn off the heat and keep aside.
- Add a teaspoon of oil into the hot wok, next add in two to three tablespoons of the Thai curry paste and saute for a few seconds in the oil.
- Next, add a tablespoon of brown sugar and then 400 ml of coconut milk.
- Stir to mix all the ingredients and allow the mixture to thicken a little.
- Once the mixture boils, add in some torn basil leaves and the stir fried vegetables. Stir the mixture, give it a light boil and the Vegetarian Thai Curry is ready to be served.

Courtesy: Chef Kamaljeet at The Masala Grill.

RECIPES



MATRA KULCHA PATE

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Oil: 3 tsp
 - Butter: 5 gm
 - Ghee: 5 gm
 - Tamarind
 - Turmeric: 1/4 tsp
 - Red chilli powder: 1/2 tsp
 - Cumin powder: 1/4 tsp
 - Coriander powder: 1/2 tsp
 - Ginger (finely chopped)
 - *Garam masala*: 1/4 tsp
 - *Chaata masala*: 1/2 tsp
 - Apple: 1/2
- For garnishing:**
- Onion: 2 tbsp
 - Tomato: 2 tbsp
 - Coriander leaves
 - Green chilli (slit): 1
 - Lemon: 1/4
 - Pinch of chaat masala

- METHOD**
- First, pressure cook one cup white peas, two cup water and 1/2 tsp salt.
 - Now in a wok, heat three tsp oil and saute ginger. Further saute all the other spices.
 - Add the above in the pressure cooker and mix well. Mash it slightly for desired consistency.
 - Boil for five minutes or more adjusting the consistency. Let it cool down a bit and then grind it.
 - Garnish with onion, tomato, coriander leaves, ginger, green chilli, carrot pickle, lemon and chaat masala. Serve it with steam *kulcha*.

Courtesy: Chef Ramesh Rana at Decode Air Bar.

LEADERBOARD

RUNS	692	David Warner (SRH)
WICKETS	25	Kagiso Rabada (DC)
6S	760	DELHI PLAYED VERY WELL, THEY ARE A STRONG OUTFIT AND I THINK THEY DESERVED THIS WIN
4S	1604	— KANE WILLIAMSON

IPL 2019



MS STANDS BETWEEN DELHI & HISTORY

Eying first final berth, Iyer led Delhi Capitals face CSK in 2nd Qualifier



PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Delhi Capitals, who have finally come together to play like 'Daredevils', will have to produce another special effort to beat the consistent Chennai Super Kings for the first time this season and make their maiden IPL final here on Friday.

It was CSK who denied Delhi a top-two spot in the league standings with a crushing 80-run win at Chepauk and the Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led side stands in their way again, only stakes are much higher in the Qualifier 2.

The tense win in the Eliminator, set up by their star player Rishabh Pant on Wednesday night is bound to provide an extra dose of motivation going into the knock-out game at Vizag.

Pant's 21-ball 49 in a high-pressure

LEAGUE MATCHES

- Chennai Super Kings beat Delhi Capitals by 6 wickets at Delhi
- Chennai Super Kings defeated Delhi Capitals by 80 runs at Chennai

FOR THE RECORD

- Shikhar Dawan is the highest run getter for Delhi Capitals this season. He scored 503 runs at an average of 35.92 and a strike rate of 135.94 in 15 innings of as many matches. It is third time when he scored over 500 runs in an IPL season after 569 runs in 2012 and 501 runs in 2016.
- Harbhajan Singh who claimed 148 wickets at an average of 26.41 in 155 innings of 158 matches, needs just two wickets to become fourth bowler to take 150 wickets in IPL.
- Chennai Super Kings will become the second team after Mumbai Indians (108 wins in 186 matches) to complete a century of wins if they beat Delhi Capitals. They have won 99 out of 163 matches in IPL so far.

FAISEL FEATURES

Live on Star Sports 1 & 2

CSK VS DC

VISAKHAPATNAM

FRIDAY | 7:30 PM

HEAD TO HEAD

M 10

CSK 14

DC 6

game reignited the debate on social media over his non-selection in India's World Cup squad with former England captain Michael Vaughan saying it was "bonkers" to not have the young-wicket-keeper batsman in the mega event.

His sensational effort made all the difference in the run-chase but he got out when his team was very close to the finishing line.

Not being able to finish games is one criticism that he has had to deal

with repeatedly and there would be no better stage than Qualifier 2 to come up with another match-winning knock and carry his bat through.

Another young gun Prithvi Shaw too played an important innings of 56 and was happy to be back among the runs after low-scores in the previous three innings.

Delhi, having already played a game here, will have the advantage of knowing the conditions better.

Their fast bowlers, Trent Boult and Ishant Sharma, did a decent job in the absence of Kagiso Rabada and were well supported by Keemo Paul, who picked up three wickets.

Veteran spinner Amit Mishra was frugal again and also picked up an important wicket.

The batsmen would be rather relieved that they would not have to face the spin threat of Imran Tahir and Harbhajan Singh on a turner in Chennai but it would be a challenge nonetheless.

Another thing Delhi would have to be wary of is stage fright though the Eliminator surely prepared them for the tougher battles ahead.

CSK, on the other hand, are used to playing the big matches, having won three titles besides being runners-up four times.

They were hammered by Mumbai Indians in Qualifier 1 but expect CSK to bounce back in style.

Dhoni will be expecting an improved performance from his batsmen after the disappointment against Mumbai Indians.

Opener Shane Watson has not been among the runs ever since smashing a 53-ball 96 against Sunrisers on April 23.

The talismanic skipper admitted that they could have read the conditions better against Mumbai at home and asked his batsmen to be careful with shot selection going forward.

"These are the best batsmen we have got, it looks like we are batting well, but at times, they pull off shots that shouldn't be played. These are the players who we have banked on, they have the experience and they should know to assess the conditions better," said Dhoni after the six-wicket loss to Mumbai.



Pant is best finisher among youngsters: Shaw

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Delhi Capitals opener Prithvi Shaw heaped praises on teammate Rishabh Pant, calling him the best finisher among youngsters after the 21-year-old helped Delhi Capitals beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by two wickets in a nerve-wracking IPL Eliminator.

Chasing a target of 163, Delhi Capitals were brought to cusp of victory by Pant, who smashed 49 off 21 balls with five sixes even as West Indies' Keemo Paul finished it off in the penultimate ball of the innings with a boundary off Khaleel Ahmed on Wednesday.

"In these T20 games, there's a lot of pressure. I was praying that we win. Pant did a brilliant job. I have said that he is the best finisher among the young players. He always opens up the game for us. He has been doing very well. Unfortunately, he could not finish it for us, but Keemo did well in the end," Shaw said at the post match press conference.

Shaw said while playing in the middle he concentrates on choosing the bowlers who he can hit.

"While you're playing in the middle it is simple — just

play your game and chose bowlers that we want to hit first and obviously Nabi and Rashid were the best bowlers on their side. It was an interesting game and I'm happy that we won."

On how he plans to tackle Chennai Super Kings bowlers in the Qualifier 2, to be held on Friday, Shaw said the Delhi players have faced the defending champions in previous IPLs and they understand the game.

"The team will have a plan after reaching Chennai. How to face which bowler like Harbhajan (Singh) bhai, Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) sir or (Imran) Tahir sir. We will have to plan. We will look to do what we've done earlier."

Shaw said that it is not about who plays who but depends on how prepared the team is for the game.

"Personally, whichever ball is loose, I will smash that ball. Even with Harbhajan bhai and Tahir sir is bowling, I will obviously smash it," Shaw added.

When asked about Delhi's tendency to lose wickets at the most crucial moments, the batsman said, "I think we like to make every game interesting. Every time things are going well, we give away two-three wickets."

"But I think that's the charm of T20 cricket. Till the time you don't feel the pressure, it's not as much fun."



'Kohli doesn't have Dhoni's match-reading skills'

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Virat Kohli might be world's best batsman but when it comes to match-reading skills, he is still a few notches below Mahendra Singh Dhoni, feels former India skipper's childhood coach Keshab Ranjan Banerjee.

It has been seen that during death overs, it is Dhoni who takes over the field placements with Kohli manning the deep.

"In terms of match-reading and forming strategies, Dhoni is still unparalleled. Even Kohli doesn't have that. So Kohli needs to take some advice. If Dhoni would not have been part of the Indian team, there would be nobody to help him."

"Virat still needs time as captain and advice from Dhoni would only help him," Banerjee told reporters during the summer camp launch of MS Dhoni Cricket Academy Clinic.

India will open their campaign in the World Cup against South Africa on June 5 and there's been a lot of talk about a weak middle order, especially with no specialist at No 4. Dhoni is the answer to the No 4 riddle, Banerjee opined.

"I feel Dhoni should bat at No 4 in the World Cup. It is a

team management decision but that's my personal opinion. If he bats at No 4, batsmen after him can play freely," he said about the India's 2011 World Cup winning captain.

"When he bats at No 4, he has the luxury of spending some time and then bat freely. But he has to hit right from ball one, if he drops down at 5 or 6. Then he has to take risks," he reasoned.

Dhoni would turn 38 during the upcoming marquee event in England and when asked whether his famous ward would call it quits after the World Cup, he dismissed it with a laugh.

"Do you want him to retire? Haven't you seen his fitness level," the former games teacher of Jawahar Vidya Mandir Ranchi, said.

"Fitness is everything. But I cannot say about his retirement, not even his father or wife," he said, citing example of Dhoni's surprise Test retirement announcement on December 30, 2014 in the middle of their away series Down Under.

Banerjee also spoke about young Rishabh Pant's omission from the World Cup squad and said: "It's too early to give him a chance. Our bench strength is huge and his (Pant's) chance will come."

JEMIMAH STEALS SPOTLIGHT IN JAIPUR

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Teenager Jemimah Rodrigues struck an unbeaten 77 to help Supernovas post 142 for 3 in their Women's T20 Challenge match against Velocity here on Thursday.

Rodrigues struck 10 fours and a six from 48 balls in her aggressive innings after the Supernovas were sent into bat in their must-win match.

Coming out to bat in the fifth over after the fall of opener Priya Punia (16) when the team score was 29 for 1,

RODRIGUES (77*) STRUCK 10 FOURS & A SIX FROM 48 BALLS IN HER AGGRESSIVE INNINGS TO HELP SUPERNOVAS POST 142 FOR 3

Rodrigues was involved in two substantial partnerships as she anchored the Supernova innings admirably well.

She first had a 55-run stand with Sri Lankan Chamari Atapattu (31) for



the second wicket before stitching another partnership of 50 runs with Sophie Devine (9) of New Zealand for the third wicket.

The 18-year-old Rodrigues, a member of the semifinalist Indian side in the 2018 Women's T20 World Cup, was most severe against paceswoman Komal Zanzad (0/29) who was hit for four boundaries.

Rodrigues hit the only six of her unbeaten knock off the bowling of Jahanara Alam (0/34) in the 18th over. Captain Harmanpreet

Kaur also remained not out on 1 from five deliveries.

The Supernovas, however, failed to accelerate in the second half of their innings after they were 63 for 1 at the end of 10 overs. They added just 33 in the last five overs.

For Velocity, New Zealander Amelia Kerr took two wickets for 21 runs from her leg-spin while paceswoman Shikha Pandey got one.

Brief scores: Supernovas 142/3 in 20 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 77 not out, Chamari Athapattu 31; Amelia Kerr 2/21)

'Eng will be better team with Archer'



AFP ■ LONDON

Liam Plunkett said England would be a "better team" if Jofra Archer made it into their World Cup squad after his fellow fast bowler again impressed on international duty.

Archer continued his late bid for a World Cup berth with a hostile opening spell against Pakistan at The Oval on Wednesday.

He took one wicket and conceded

just six runs in four overs before rain meant there was no result in the first one-day international of a five-match series.

Barbados-born Archer was not included in England's preliminary squad for the World Cup but could force his way into their final 15 via his displays in this five-match series.

"He's obviously a class act," Plunkett, one of England's established quicks, told reporters afterwards.

"He showed today, he's rocked up and bowled really nicely with pace and smashed the right good areas, picked up a wicket in the first few overs, beating the left-hander (Imam) on the outside edge."

Plunkett added: "It looks easy for him, he ambles in and bowls 93 mph, he makes it look effortless."

Questions have been raised about the effect on team morale of catapulting Archer, only recently qualified on residency grounds, into England's World Cup squad.

But Plunkett said: "With him in your squad, you're going to be a better team."

"Whoever performs best should be in the squad. If it wasn't Jofra, someone else would be knocking on the door... If they come in and bowl well, they deserve to be there."

STAGGERED VAUGHAN

Michael Vaughan says he will be "staggered" if rising star Jofra Archer plays no part in this season's Ashes series even though the fast bowler has yet to make his Test debut for England.

"I would be absolutely staggered if he's not taking part in the Ashes series as well as the World Cup," Vaughan told reporters in London on Thursday.

"He's just got a gift and when you get that kind of quality you have to get those players involved in all formats of the game," the former England captain added.

"He'll win England World Cup games, he'll win them T20 games and I'm very, very confident that he'll have a big say in winning Test matches this summer as well as down the years."

Joe Root, the current England Test captain, was understandably more guarded when asked about Archer's Test prospects.

"When you watch him play in these games, you are always looking towards the Ashes," he said.

"It will be interesting to see how he develops throughout these games and how he handles everything but so far I think he's been fine." Vaughan acknowledged that Root, in his position as skipper, had to be more guarded as he thinks ahead to the five-match series against Australia.

Adapting to English wickets will be key during WC: Lee



IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Twin World Cup-winning pacer Brett Lee believes that defending champions Australia have got it in them to go the distance in the upcoming 2019 World Cup in England and Wales starting from May 30.

Speaking about it Lee said that an injury to fast bowler Jhye Richardson shouldn't cause the Aaron Finch-led side too much trouble as the likes of former skipper Steve Smith and David Warner have returned to bolster the squad.

"They can go as far as they want to go. They are a good team. There has been an injury for one

of the fast bowlers and Jhye Richardson is out of the World Cup, but Kane Richardson has been brought in. Look, any side that goes to the World Cup will be very well prepared. It's all about who adapts well to the English wickets," Lee said.

Pacer Jhye Richardson had suffered a dislocated shoulder during the series against Pakistan in the UAE and is only expected to return to full fitness for the Ashes tour that takes place after the World Cup.

Lee also stated that one shouldn't be tricked into thinking that pacers will have a great time at the World Cup simply because it is in England. "We've got to keep in mind what time the tournament will be played. It is in June and July and the wickets over there aren't really conducive to fast bowling at that time of the year," the pacer explained.

"So a lot of people think it will be a bowler's wicket, but it's not necessarily the case. I think they will be okay with the brand new ball, but once the shine goes from the ball it's going to be hard work for the fast bowlers," he said.