

OPINION 8
THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

WORLD 12
PRISON RIOT IN TAJIKISTAN LEAVES 32 DEAD

SPORT 16
PAK INCLUDE AMIR, WAHAB RIAZ IN WC SQUAD

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY MAY 21, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



NCW ASKS VIVEK TO EXPLAIN TWEET 14 VIVACITY

Cong fears toppling bid in MP

As LoP writes to Gov, Nath says ready for floor test; K'taka Govt too alarmed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress fears the destabilisation of its Government in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka if the Modi regime returns to power as predicted by the exit polls. On Monday, Leader of Opposition in Madhya Pradesh Assembly Gopal Bhargava said the party will ask Governor Anandiben Patel to convene a special session of the State Assembly "to discuss important issues and test the Congress Government's strength".

MP Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Monday said he is prepared to go for a floor test.

At the same time, there are apprehensions that the return of Modi "sarkar" will precipitate the ongoing political crisis in Karnataka, where the Congress and its alliance party, Janata Dal (S), have been at loggerheads for months.

"I am writing a letter to the Governor for convening a special session of MP Assembly shortly. We want discussion on important issues like the farm loan waiver and (to) test the Government strength," Bhargava told PTI.

He said the Congress,

There is a lot of confusion prevailing over the stability of the Congress-led Government in MP, says BJP

Two short of the majority mark on its own, the Congress has the support of the BSP and the SP in the House

The LS poll results on May 23 could determine the future of the Karnataka's Congress-JD(S) Government, which has been subsisting on a wafer-thin majority



have already told them...The BJP is trying it for long. I have proved majority in the House four times in the last five months and I am ready for floor test again
KAMAL NATH

I am writing a letter to the Governor for convening a special session of MP Assembly shortly. We want discussion on important issues like the farm loan waiver and (to) test the Government strength
GOPAL BHARGAVA



instead of debating issues in the House, was dumping papers at former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's residence, claiming that loans of 21 lakh farmers in Madhya Pradesh have been waived.

The Congress is skirting debate on important issues, Bhargava said. During decisions and financial matters, we are going to seek division to test whether the weak Congress Government enjoys its support in the House, he said.

We have not drawn up a

strategy for the floor test of the Government, he said. There is a lot of confusion prevailing over the stability of the Congress-led Government in MP, he added.

The BJP said the Kamal Nath-led Congress Government should prove majority in the Assembly.

The BJP demand comes a day after as many as six exit polls predicted a 300 plus seats for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the Lok Sabha elections.

The exit polls also said the BJP will win maximum number of Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh.

In elections for the 230-member Assembly last year, the Congress won 114 seats and the BJP came a close second with 109. The Bahujan Samaj Party has two seats, the Samajwadi Party one and the Independents four seats.

The Congress had wrested power from the BJP in Madhya Pradesh after 15 years of the saffron rule. Two short of the

majority mark on its own, the Congress has the support of the BSP and the SP in the House.

The Congress accused the BJP of attempting to destabilise the Kamal Nath Government in Madhya Pradesh through use of "corrupt practices" and said in doing so they are trying to negate the mandate of people of the State.

Congress general secretary incharge of Madhya Pradesh Deepak Babariya said the people of the State had rejected the BJP and voted them out in the Assembly elections.

Babariya said the people had rejected the BJP Government's policies and had voted them out of power due to their "malgovernance".

The result of the Lok Sabha elections on May 23 could also determine the future of the Congress-JD(S) Government in Karnataka, which has been subsisting on a wafer-thin majority over the past year.

At least half a dozen Congress MLAs are reportedly in touch with the BJP for weeks and post-May 23 Lok Sabha poll results they could actively try, with the help of the BJP, to topple the State Government, sources said.

Rajbhar dismissed from Yogi govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik on Monday accepted Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's recommendation and dismissed Om Prakash Rajbhar from the post of Minister for Backward Class Welfare and Divyangjan Empowerment with immediate effect.

The Chief Minister had sent his recommendation to the Governor on Monday morning following which Ram Naik sacked Rajbhar from the Cabinet, sources in the Raj Bhawan said.

The portfolios held by the dismissed minister have temporarily been handed over to Minister of State Anil Rajbhar.

The decision to remove Rajbhar from the Cabinet was taken after the seventh and last phase of polls ended on Sunday.

The government also sacked six Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party leaders who had been appointed in public sector units as chairperson/member and were enjoying the status of minister of state.

"I have been punished for fighting for the rights of the backwards," a disgruntled Rajbhar told reporters after he was removed from the Cabinet.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party could not dare to expel me from the Cabinet 20 days ago as elections were in progress and they waited for the polls to be over," the former minister said.

He also questioned the grounds on which his demand for total prohibition was turned down by the government.

Om Prakash Rajbhar, president of Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP), an ally of the BJP in UP, had rebelled against the ruling party and fielded 39 candidates of his party in the state. He also fielded his party candidate against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Varanasi.

With the sacking of Rajbhar from the Cabinet, the BJP has snapped all ties with



the SBSP, which has four MLAs in UP Assembly.

The sacked minister claimed that he had already resigned from the Yogi Adityanath Council of Ministers on April 13 but the Chief Minister had not accepted his resignation.

The SBSP chief welcomed the decision of the Chief Minister but hit back at the BJP government for "betraying the OBCs by delaying the implementation of the report on sub quota to the Most Backward Castes (MBCs) in the list of other backward classes."

"I welcome the decision of the Chief Minister. It's a good decision. If the struggle for the rights of the disadvantaged and oppressed social groups in society is rebellion then I am a rebel and my struggle for the emancipation of the MBCs will continue," Rajbhar said.

He added, "The Yogi Adityanath government formed a Social Justice Committee but dumped its report. I request the Chief Minister to implement the Social Justice Committee's report as quickly as he took the decision to expel me from the Cabinet."

Rajbhar said the BJP forced him to contest on the party symbol (lotus) from Ghosi Lok Sabha constituency "but the day I refused, I knew my fate as Cabinet minister has been sealed."

The SBSP president said

that his fight against the BJP would continue and though he was no more in the state Council of Ministers, his struggle for the cause of the most backwards would not die.

"How can the 27 per cent reservation given to the OBCs be grabbed by just 3-4 castes while others get nothing even when the backwards comprise 54 per cent of the population?" he asked, adding that the schoolchildren of the most backwards were denied scholarships.

The dispute between the BJP and the SBSP started the day it joined the government in March 2017. SBSP MLAs openly defied the BJP direction and voted against the party candidate in the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council polls.

In March 2018, Rajbhar was unrelenting in his tirade against the BJP leaders and the Chief Minister. During the campaign for the Lok Sabha elections he had even asked his party cadre to beat the BJP leaders with shoes.

Rajbhar had also predicted that Narendra Modi would not be the next prime minister and that "Dalit Ki Beti" would be the next prime minister.

He had also extended support to candidates of Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance and Congress in constituencies where polling was held in the sixth and seventh phases of the Lok Sabha elections.

Naidu calls on Mamata

TDP chief Naidu refuses to give up hopes, meets Mamata to keep Opp chances afloat

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee called upon the anti-BJP forces to remain closely united in the face of "made up" exit poll reports putting the saffron outfit ahead of the opposition parties her Andhra Pradesh counterpart Chandrababu Naidu on Monday came calling at her Kalighat residence where the two leaders reportedly discussed a host of issues including the situation that could arise after the elections.

Though the two leaders would not make any official statement after their 45-minute meeting, inside sources said they discussed a whole lot of issues that could arise after the elections. The leaders reportedly discussed ways to keep the smaller opposition outfits united in the wake of "made up" exit poll reports "intended at breaking the opposition unity."

The two leaders also discussed on the issues that should find focus on a possible common minimum programme "should a situation arise" where an opposition government become a possibility.

Sources said the leaders also discussed about ways to keep all the constituents of the grand alliance sometimes referred to as Federal Front by the Bengal Chief Minister united under one umbrella.

Though the leaders would not dwell on the issue insiders said they did not rule out inclusion of Congress in the grand alliance so to say. Naidu had already met Congress president Rahul Gandhi, NCP chief Sharad Pawar and other lead-



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and Telugu Desam Party president N Chandrababu Naidu with West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee at her residence in Kolkata on Monday

ers before coming to Kolkata. Bengal Chief Minister had on Sunday rejected the claims made in exit poll reports stating the NDA led by the BJP was once again set to make a comeback at the Centre.

Meanwhile, violence continued even after the conclusion of seventh phase of general elections with the voters from many villages making appeals to the Election Commission for

delaying the departure of central forces from post-poll Bengal.

"We want the CRPF to stay in Bengal for another one month otherwise they will torch our houses and loot our belongings," said Sona Mondal of Mathurapur. "Our houses have been looted and our men have been badly beaten up by the TMC men. They have threatened to loot and torch our houses after the CAPF

Shah to host dinner for partners today

BJP strategises Govt formation activities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With exit polls predicting a comfortable victory for the NDA in the Lok Sabha elections, BJP president Amit Shah will host a dinner for leaders of the alliance partners on Tuesday to discuss the Government formation exercise at the Centre. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to be present at the dinner.

Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray and Lok Janshakti Party head Ram Vilas Paswan are likely to attend the meeting, which will take place two days before the counting of votes for the Lok Sabha polls on May 23.

A meeting of key BJP leaders, including Union Ministers, is also scheduled to be held at

the party headquarters before the dinner meeting with allies.

The BJP's decision to start the Government formation exercise before the election results stems from six exit polls predicting 300 plus Lok Sabha seats for the NDA. Several BJP leaders asserted on Monday that the party will get a majority on its own, repeating the unprecedented feat it achieved in 2014 by winning 282 seats.

Confident of winning the polls, Modi has reportedly asked the PMO to be ready with programmes for next 100 days.

While the BJP leadership is supremely confident of returning to power, the Opposition has not given up hopes despite the fact that the exit polls has predicted a grim scenario for the Congress and other regional parties.

leave the State," she said.

Mondals and many other families were currently taking shelter in Kolkata some hundred km from Mathurapur.

On the other hand supporters of TMC accused the BJP of attacking their supporters for defying voting in favour of the Bengal voting outfit at Joynagar. At least 15 people have been injured in sporadic clashes since Sunday night.

Incidents of violence came in from Dum Dum where a man was hit with a sharp weapon by alleged TMC supporters as his son is a BJP member, he complained. The Trinamool denied the allegations. Houses and clubs were ransacked even as BJP, TMC workers fought among them at

Maniktala in North Kolkata, sources said.

Violence also continued at Baruipur, Howrah and Bhatpara which witnessed incessant bombing from two sides following clashes after Assembly by-elections for the Bhatpara seat. The EC on Monday clamped Section 144 at Bhatpara even as TMC leader and contestant Madan Mitra threatened to launch a Satyagraha if the violence did not stop and repolling was not ordered in five booths.

Elsewhere by-elections were conducted at two Assembly seats of Naoda and Kandi in Murshidabad district. The polling was reported to be peaceful with negligible commotion, sources said.

NaMo TV goes off air after Lok Sabha polls

New Delhi: NaMo TV, a BJP-sponsored channel that publicised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rallies, has gone off air, party sources said.

A BJP leader, requesting anonymity, said, "NaMo TV was meant as a tool of BJP campaign for the Lok Sabha election. With the polls over, it is no longer needed, so effectively from May 17, when all campaign has to be paused, it has also gone off air."

The channel was mired in controversy ever since it went on air. The chief electoral officer of Delhi had sent a notice

to the BJP for "airing election-related content" on NaMo TV even after the silence period began, but the party rejected the allegation of code violation.

In April, after the Election Commission had directed that all recorded programmes displayed on NaMo TV be pre-certified, the Delhi poll body asked the BJP not to air any content on the platform without its certification.

The chief electoral office in Delhi had also said since NaMo TV was sponsored by the BJP, all recorded programmes displayed on the platform be pre-

certified by media certification and monitoring committee of Delhi and all political publicity contents displayed without pre-certification be removed immediately.

The commission had issued a notice seeking a report from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry on NaMo TV, launched just weeks ahead of the general election, after opposition parties, including the Congress, asked the poll body to direct the ministry to suspend the channel in violation of the poll code.

Akhilesh, Maya meet

Lucknow: BSP supreme Mayawati and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav met here on Monday after exit polls indicated gains for their alliance in the politically important state of Uttar Pradesh.

Yadav, who had formed a coalition with the BSP and the RLD to take on the BJP, drove to the residence of Mayawati and the closed door talks lasted for almost an hour.

Details of what transpired between the two top leaders was not known immediately.

On Saturday, TDP president Chandrababu Naidu had met both Yadav and Mayawati in the UP capital separately to discuss possibility of non-BJP parties coming together in the event of a fractured verdict.

As part of the alliance agreement, the BSP had contested 38 seats and the SP 37 seats leaving 3 for a smaller RLD while deciding not to field any candidate in Rae Bareilly and Amethi, the stronghold of UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Congress president Rahul Gandhi respectively.

The meeting between the SP and BSP bosses on Monday came a day after exit polls projected 300 plus seats for the NDA in the 17th Lok Sabha.

■ Details on Page 2

Liquor mafioso kills SI in E Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi Police Sub-Inspector (SI) Raj Kumar was killed by a liquor mafioso in East Delhi on Sunday night. The cop, a resident of Delhi's Kasturba Nagar, was filming illegal trade of liquor in the area when he was fatally assaulted by a bootlegger. Earlier also, the SI was threatened by criminals for trying to stop illegal liquor trade, said Raj's bereaved family members.

Shahdara Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Meghna Yadav said, "On May 19 at 10.06 pm, a police control room (PCR) call was received regarding a quarrel at Vivek Vihar police station. Acting on a call, a police team reached the spot, where on enquiry it was found that around 9.00 pm, a fisticuffs had taken place between SI Raj and Vijay, alias Bhuri, a historysheeter of Vivek Vihar police station, in Kasturba Nagar."

"After the quarrel, Raj reached his home and proceeded towards a nearby hospital (Garg Hospital) driving his own scooter, along with his daughter. On way to Garg Hospital, Raj fainted. However, his daughter managed to take him to the hospital, where the hospital authorities suggested taking him to the Max Hospital in Patparganj," said the DCP.

"On reaching Max Hospital, Raj was declared brought dead by the doctors. The examination of the body of the deceased revealed a

superficial cut injury below the chin and a blunt injury mark on the chest," said the DCP.

"We have seen the CCTV footage and it has been found that no gruesome or continuous assault has taken place. There was fight and there is a possibility that the deceased might have had some internal injuries as no other injury mark besides, one superficial cut below the chin and a blunt injury mark on the chest were found on his body. The post-mortem report will reveal the exact cause of death," said the DCP.

"A case under section 302/34 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at Police Station Vivek Vihar. The accused Vijay has been arrested in the case. Police are also investigating whether other people were also involved in the incident. Further investigation is going on," said the DCP.

Raj Kumar had joined Delhi Police as a Head Constable in 1990 in communication cadre. He is survived by a wife and two daughters aged 30 and 28 years old.

He was previously posted in traffic wing, PCR and Special Branch. Sources said Raj died due to cardiac arrest but according to his family, he had gone for a walk after dinner when he had a fight with some miscreants because police had set up a permanent picket in the area where bootleggers lives and sell illegal liquor in the area.

Sensex soars 1,422 points on exit polls euphoria

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Riding a wave of optimism, the Sensex Monday vaulted 1,422 points to close at a record 39,352.67 as investors cheered the exit polls predicting a clear mandate for the Narendra Modi-led NDA in the Lok Sabha elections. The NSE Nifty surged over 421 points to log its best single day gains in over 10 years.

The 30-share BSE gauge also registered its biggest one-day rise in the last six years besides marking its all-time intra-day record of 39,412.56.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped by Rs 5,33,463.04 crore on Monday. As of Monday's close, total valuation of BSE-listed companies stood at Rs 1,51,86,312.05 crore.

A majority of exit polls have predicted a clear majority for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which is expected to win over 300 seats in the parliament election.

The counting of vote will take place on May 23.

Analysts believe the Modi's BJP retaining power will ensure a continuation in reform measures initiated during the NDA's first term.

■ Details on Page 11

Akhilesh, Mayawati discuss exit poll projections

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Apparently rattled by the exit poll predictions that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance was going to retain power at the Centre, the SP-BSP alliance leaders in Uttar Pradesh met here on Monday to discuss the possible political 'fallout' after the counting of votes on May 23.

Some exit polls also indicated gains for the SP-BSP-RLD alliance in the politically important state of Uttar Pradesh. The exit polls showed the alliance wresting several seats from the BJP in UP. Some of them even predicted that the SP-BSP-RLD alliance was likely to trump the BJP in UP.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav rushed to the residence of Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on Monday for a meeting which lasted for about 75 minutes. There was no official word on the agenda of discussions held between both the leaders.

Details of what transpired between the two top leaders was not known immediately.

Akhilesh Yadav ducked a volley of questions from the media persons waiting outside the residence of Mayawati. He, however, said, "I will talk to you in detail on May 23". Counting of the votes of the Lok Sabha elections will be taken up on that day.

A Samajwadi Party leader said "it was a formal meeting between the two leaders and



SP president Akhilesh Yadav and BSP chief Mayawati at the latter's residence in Lucknow on Monday

when two senior leaders meet they do discuss all relevant issues".

According to sources, Akhilesh Yadav had a long discussion with Mayawati at her Mall Avenue residence where they deliberated over the exit poll projections and the possibility of a third front government at the Centre. They also exchanged messages of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, who recently met them in Lucknow separately over the formation of

a third front government. Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav were scheduled to leave for Delhi on Monday but the visit was postponed.

Naidu has convened a meeting of the leaders of opposition parties in Delhi on Tuesday. The TDP leader is making hectic efforts to cobble a coalition of opposition parties to prevent the Bharatiya Janata Party from coming to power at the Centre. The TDP leader was in Lucknow on May 18 and had met Akhilesh

Yadav and Mayawati.

As part of the alliance agreement, the BSP had contested 38 seats and the SP 37 seats leaving three for smaller RLD while deciding not to field any candidate in Rae Bareilly and Amethi, the stronghold of UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Congress president Rahul Gandhi, respectively.

There are 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP and the BJP along with its ally Apna Dal had won 73 seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

BJP senior leaders in UP back CM's decision to sack Rajbhar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Senior leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh have supported Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's decision on Monday to sack Suheldeo Bhartiya Samaj Party president Om Prakash Rajbhar from the Cabinet, saying it is a right decision taken a bit late.

In a statement issued here, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said Om Prakash Rajbhar is not a leader of backwards but of his family.

"Rajbhar only took benefits for his family and staged a drama for the backward community. The entire backwards were with Narendra Modi in the (parliamentary) election," he said.

Maurya said despite the SBSB president hurling vitriol at the BJP and the Chief Minister time and again, the BJP observed the alliance dharma. "All efforts were made to make him see the reason but he refused. The fact is Om Prakash Rajbhar became MLA because of BJP but he never acknowledged it," the Deputy Chief Minister said in the statement.

Maurya said, "Though the action should have been taken earlier, we believed that he would mend his ways and work for the uplift of the backwards. But it never happened. It was an appropriate time to show the real face of Rajbhar to the people."

Sources claim that the BJP leadership had made up mind



BJP leaders watch TV at the party office in Lucknow on Monday

PTI

to sack Rajbhar last year after a member of the SBSB cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha election. But following intervention of BJP president Amit Shah, the decision was shelved.

The reason was that had Rajbhar been sacked from the Cabinet at that time, he would have gone to the people, claiming himself to be a martyr. To avoid that piquant situation, the SBSB president was given a long rope.

The SBSB has four MLAs in the state assembly.

Maurya said that five senior members of SBSB were accommodated in different corporations and Om Prakash Rajbhar's son was made chair-

man of a state-run corporation. He said that despite enjoying government patronage, the SBSB president's behaviour was not acceptable.

Meanwhile, BJP state president Mahendra Nath Pandey said his party always honoured and respected smaller parties but the SBSB president violated all norms of coalition dharma forcing the Chief Minister to take such a harsh decision.

Welcoming the decision of Yogi Adityanath to sack Rajbhar, Pandey said even after being a Cabinet minister, the SBSB chief continued to give statements against the government and violated Constitutional norms. "The BJP had given all respect to Rajbhar after being inducted in the Cabinet in March 2017, but he demanded more facilities for his family members," he said.

UP seeks 200 cos of central forces for counting

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday requested the Centre to deploy 200 companies of central forces in the state to maintain law and order during counting of votes on May 23. Barring sporadic incidents of violence, polling in the seven-phased elections for 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh ended on a peaceful note on May 19.

Director General of Police OP Singh made the request on apprehension that 50 per cent of the Lok Sabha constituencies in Uttar Pradesh could witness a cut-throat contest and the winning margin could be very small. Keeping this mind, the state police are taking no chances on maintaining law and order.

Sources here on Monday said that against the demand of 200 companies of central forces, the state has received 80 companies so far. The central forces were sent for departure from the

state by May 21 after conducting the seven-phase polls. But now it has been requested by the DGP that the central forces should stay in the state till May 25.

Constituencies where there is apprehension of violence during the counting are mostly in western UP.

Meanwhile, all opposition parties issued a circular to their district and city units asking their cadres to prepare for the counting of votes. Fearing irregularities during counting of votes, the high commands of the opposition parties have asked their cadres not to be lax in maintaining security of the strongrooms where the electronic voting machines (EVMs) have been kept. The party workers have been advised to keep vigil at the strongrooms in eight-hour shifts to prevent tampering with or replacement of EVMs and also during counting as the administration could engage in foul play to facilitate victory of the ruling party candidates.

Babbar dismisses exit polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Congress president Raj Babbar is not convinced with the exit poll projections and says that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party government will be ousted by Thursday evening after the results of the Lok Sabha elections are announced.

"Channels are showing exit polls but it is the people's heart that will reflect in the results on coming Thursday. People will surely tell their 'Mann Ki Baat' to Prime Minister Modi. This time, it has been ensured that Prime Minister Modi and the BJP government will be in power till 6 am on May 23 and after 6 pm they will not be in power," Babbar said while speaking to a news agency.

He was reacting to the exit poll predictions shown by the electronic media.

The UP Congress president, who is again trying his luck from Fatehpur Sikri in Agra, also took a dig at Modi's Kedarnath visit and the traditional Garhwali outfit which he sported while offering prayers at the temple.

"I wore several traditional outfits in my acting career and



A view of the Congress office in Lucknow, Monday

PTI

even went to sacred pilgrimage. I believe one should not comment on an individual's religious sentiments but this was too much," he said.

Several opposition leaders, including Congress president Rahul Gandhi, have targeted Modi for his visit to Kedarnath and Badrinath temples, saying that his action was a clear violation of the Model Code of Conduct and an attempt to influence voters through public display of his personal religious activities.

Prime Minister Modi on

Saturday offered prayers at the Himalayan shrine of Kedarnath, a day after campaigning for the Lok Sabha polls came to a close. After meditating for over 15 hours inside a holy cave of Kedarnath, Modi visited Badrinath, another temple in Uttarakhand's revered Char Dham on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee spokesman Brijendra Kumar Singh disclosed here on Monday evening that leaders and workers of the party would gather at party state headquarters on

Tuesday to pay homage to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi on his death anniversary. He said that the day would be observed as Balidan Diwas.

The Congress leaders would garland the statues of Rajiv Gandhi at Kalidas Marg crossing and at Mall Avenue and organise a 'Vichar Goshthi' to remember the contribution of the former prime minister.

The security forces across the country will also observe the day as Anti-Terrorism Day and would take pledge to fight against subversive forces.

Exit polls a big farce: says PUCL member

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

"Exit polls are nothing but a big farce and one should take their outcome with a bucket full of salt," said a senior office-bearer of Lucknow chapter of People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) after a number of television channels aired analysis

of exit as the marathon polls in India ended on Sunday evening.

It was not the exit polls but the variance in their projections that baffled the viewers. Nine channels aired exit polls out of which six projected that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance would get between 300 and 350 seats while three predicted 287 to 242 seats for it.

The majority halfway in 543-member Lok Sabha or Lower House is 272.

The variance is also visible in Uttar Pradesh, the largest state of India, where the pollsters have given between 68 and 22 seats to the BJP.

The PUCL leader said that one of the news channels increased the seat projections for BJP in Uttar Pradesh by 10. Earlier it predicted 22 seats for the BJP in UP but an hour later it jacked it up by 10 saying BJP would win 32 seats. "How and why that increase no one knows," he said.

Another news channel said

Aam Aadmi Party vote share in Uttarakhnd would be 2.5 per cent though AAP is not contesting from this hill state, he said.

The exit polls have thrown up confusing numbers. While some have given upper hand to SP-BSP-RLD mahagathbandhan, others say BJP will sweep the polls in the state. The range for BJP varied from 22 to 68 seats.

In the 2014 parliamentary election, BJP and its ally Apna Dal (Sonelal) had won 73 seats in UP which has 80 Lok Sabha seats.

As per the exit polls, Times Now CVoter has given BJP 38+ seats in UP, gathbandhan 40 seats, and Congress two seats while ABP Nielsen has projected 56 seats for the alliance, 22 for BJP and two for Congress.

News18 IPSOS has predicted that BJP and allies getting will get between 60 and 62 seats, SP-BSP-RLD alliance between 17 and 19 seats, and Congress between one and two seats.

NDTV's poll of polls has predicted BJP+ winning 46 seats, the alliance winning 31 seats, and Congress winning three.

What raises eyebrows is the strong caste foundation of gathbandhan that centres around DMY - Dalit, Muslim and Yadav - combination, counted on the solidarity of the Backward and Dalit castes - along with the undisputed support from the strong Muslim population.

With Jat added to this combination in western UP through RLD, the caste arithmetic looked favourable for the alliance.

For BJP, its campaign rested on Modi. There was no wave in favour of the ruling party. "Everyone knows that there was no wave then how come BJP has done so well, if we take exit poll outcome as a final result," Congress leader Amarnath Agarwal said.

There is something fishy, he said.

PSPL Agra (North) candidate resigns from party

Lucknow (PNS): In a setback to Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) led by Shivpal Singh Yadav, its Agra (North) Assembly bypoll candidate Dilip Baghel resigned from the party on Monday. The polling for the by-election was held on Sunday along with the seventh phase of Lok Sabha elections in the state.

In his resignation letter, Baghel has alleged that the party leaders did not cooperate with him in the bypolls.

He alleged that the area in which the party's youth wing president resides, no one was deployed at the polling booths while the district party office-bearers did not participate in his electioneering.

The PSPL leaders denied the charges.

"I am resigning from all party posts with immediate effect," Dilip Baghel said in the letter sent to Shivpal Yadav.

Continental Chemicals Ltd. (CIN: L24123UP1984PLC014111) Regd. Office: A-7, Sec-7 Noida 201301 Ph: 0120-2423316 fax: 0120-2423316 E-mail: info@continentalchemicals.com www.continentalchemicals.com

NOTICE NOTICE pursuant to the regulation 29B and 47 SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations, 2015 is hereby given that the meeting of Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Wednesday, 29.05.2019 at registered office of the Company, inter alia, to approve the audited financial results for the quarter and year ended on 31st March, 2019.

Note: The detail notice is also available at BSE website (www.bseindia.com) and Company website (www.continentalchemicals.com).

By order of the Board of Directors Sd/ Pratinama Agarwal Company Secretary ACS No.: A31276

Place : Noida Date : 20.05.2019

NOTICE Notice is hereby given by the undersigned for and on behalf of LIC Housing Finance Ltd. Area Office, Shahbazpur, Lucknow pursuant to Circular No. 422/Annexure-1 of LIC HFL that the Original Sale deed dated 21-03-2007 executed by Shivanish Sekhari Goh Nirmal Anand Samrat Ltd. in favour of Smt. Ganga Singh W/o. Shalendra Singh. The said sale deed is registered in the office of Sub Registrar Ind Lucknow in Book No. 1, Volume 8498 on pages 1908 Serial No. 2830 and Original sale deed dated 26.02.2013 executed by Smt. Ganga Singh W/o. Shalendra Singh in favour of Gajesh Agarwal S/o. Hanishchandra Agarwal and Pawan Kumar S/o. Ratan Lal and Anil Kumar Madhani S/o. Late Harshchandra. The said sale deed is registered in the office of Sub Registrar Ind Lucknow in Book No. 1, Volume 13622 on pages 2672/24 Serial No. 2715 in respect of Plot No. 5 Kharsa No. 996 area 278.82sq.mtr. and Original sale dated 26.02.2013 with LIC HFL, and as such any person claiming to be the said property covered by the said document may file claim before me within 15 days from the date of publication of notice falling which it will be presumed that the property in question is free from any encumbrance and any claim in respect thereof against the applicant as mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15 days of publication of the notice.

Mahendra Mohan Mishra, Advocate Chamber: Shop No. 4 & 5, Ground Floor, Krishna Tower, Near CMO Office, Keesarbagh, Lucknow, Mob: 9415426214, 9559862554

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY
KANKE, RANCHI-834006 (JHARKHAND)

ADMISSION TO THE POSTGRADUATE COURSES - 2019 SESSION

Stray Vacancy Round for the eligible candidates listed for Central & Deemed University for Stray vacancy (Medical) available on MCC website (www.mcc.nic.in) will be held in the Teaching Block of CIP, Ranchi at 2.00 p.m. on 31.5.2019 for admission to the following postgraduate degree/diploma courses:-

1. MD (Psychiatry) : 01 Seat (OBC)
2. Diploma in Psychological Medicine : 08 Seats (02 seats (UR), 03 seats (OBC) & 03 seats (SC))

All the candidates who desire to join the course are directed to report on 31.5.2019 at 10.00 a.m. to attend the Stray Vacancy Round counselling along with AIPGMEE, 2019 Rank letter and all original documents. The number of seats may vary at the time of counselling.

Sd/- Director
CIP, Ranchi

North Eastern Railway E-Tendering Tender Notice

Opened E-Tender based on Two Bid system (Technical & Financial bid) (E-Tender Notice No. M/C&W/06/2019-20 dt. 17.05.2019) are invited by Divisional Rail Manager/Mech./C&W/Varanasi/N.E. Railway for and on behalf of President of India for following work:-

Description of works	Approx. Value (Rs.)	E.M.D. Money (Rs.)
Mechanized Cleaning of coaches in nominated CTS trains along with watering of nominated trains & Mechanized cleaning (Interior Clg.), watering, Padlocking in platform return/RBPC trains at CPR Platform and Mechanized Cleaning (Interior & Exterior), watering & Padlocking of coaches of train No. 15113/14 at Washing Pit/CPR and provision of OBHS in train No. 15113/14 & 15115/16 for the period of four years.	10,87,59,126.49	6,93,800.00

Cost of Tender Forms - Rs. 10,000/-

Period of Work - 04 Year from the date of commencement of work.

Date and Time for closing of E-tender : 17.06.2019 at 14.30 Hrs.
Date and Time for opening of E-tender : 17.06.2019 at 15.00 Hrs.
• Tenderer may submit their tenders online up to 17.06.2019 at 14:30 hrs.
• Please visit the website www.ireps.gov.in, to see the complete details and upload the tender.

CPRO/Mech-38 Sr. DME/C&W/BSB

About any Passenger Amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No. 09794845955

Do not cross unmanned level crossing with loud music on a vehicle.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr.DCM/NR/LKO acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites following E-Tenders closing date 19.06.2019 upto 15:00 hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

N.I.T. No.	C/LKO/PA/NEW TENDER POLICY/ATM/GSS/2019 dt. 20.05.2019
Name of work	E-tenders for installation & operation of Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) at railway premises of Lucknow-02 (Station-01, Divisional Office-01), Varanasi-01, Amethi-01 and Prayag-01 Northern Railway, Lucknow Division for a period of Five (05) years.
Maximum Area Permitted for ATM	Station premises : 06 Feet x 06 Feet Offices, Institutes & Colonies : 7.5 Square meter.
Reserve Price	Nil, To be Offered/Quoted by Bidder.
Security Deposit	Security deposit kept it as 6 months Licence Fees for Final Year of contract.
Earnest Money	Rs. 10,000/- (Rs. Ten Thousand only)
Completion Period	05 years.
Bidding Start date	20.05.2019
Tender Closing Date and Time	19.06.2019 at 15:00 hrs.
Tender Opening Date and Time	19.06.2019 at 15:30 hrs.
Website	www.ireps.gov.in
Cost of Tender document form	Rs. 5,900/- Rs. Five Thousand Nine Hundred only (inclusive GST @ 18%)
Eligibility criteria	As detailed in Tender Document

SEPARATE BID TO BE SUBMITTED FOR EACH ATM/STATION

Note :- "No post tender correspondence for submission of additional documents shall be entertained after opening of offers. Even suo-moto post letters of the tenders shall be treated as NULL & Void."

1524/2019

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Bada Mangal: Heat no deterrent as temples expect huge crowd

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The city is all set for the first Bada Mangal celebrations. Hanuman temples in the city are expecting huge crowds despite the heat wave conditions which are currently prevailing. The denizens are already looking forward to the large number of bhandaras which will dot the city and offer a delicious meal of 'puri' and 'sabzi'.

On the eve of Bada Mangal, mayor Sanyukta Bhatia inaugurated a website to bring Bada Mangal on a global platform. The website will also facilitate those who were holding the bhandaras because they could register themselves on the website free of cost. The mayor said that the Lucknow Municipal Corporation could reach these bhandaras and assist them in cleaning them if they were registered on the portal. She said that cleanliness was one aspect which the bhandara organisers in the city should keep in mind.

"It is important for those holding a bhandara to ensure that they have gunny bags which are fixed in the dustbins which can be removed and then kept separately when they get filled up. Thereafter they can be replaced by other gunny bags. It will not only be convenient for the Nagar Nigam staff to pick them up but also help in curbing the stink of the garbage."

She also appealed to the organisers of bhandaras to join the campaign and make it more effective. "Those who will help in maintaining cleanliness will be felicitated for it-the tagline is 'Mahapur karenji samman jo rakhega Mangal ka maan'. When asked that normally people litter the area and do not get themselves registered, she said that in that case the Nagar Nigam teams would move in the city and remove the garbage themselves.

On being asked whether the Nagar Nigam would remain strict in terms of the usage of polythene and plastic on the occasion, she said that it would show some laxity with it primarily because it was a religious affair. "Besides it is very hot and even if a tanker is provided for drinking water the people will not be able to



Temples being spruced up in Lucknow on the eve of Bada Mangal. (Below) Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia launching a website



drink it if they did not have glasses. We will see what happens on the first Bada Mangal and then plan how to manage things accordingly during the second Bada Mangal," she said.

CEO of the trust of Naya Hanuman Mandir (Aliganj) Anil Tewari said that 200 volunteers had been brought here who would be looking after the arrangements.

"There will be about 20 cadets from the NCC who will help us organise the Bada Mangal and 20-odd Scout volunteers for the same purpose," he said. He said that arrangements had been made for the mist fans and a private company would be making a provision for providing cool drinking water to the devotees.

"The local people will also serve water and the temple will organise bhandaras which are carried out by the contribu-

tions of the devotees and the funds are not taken from its corpus. 'Halwa' and 'puri' will be distributed at 8 am to the devotees as prasad, at 10.30 am a bhandara for the public will begin with the serving of 'puri' and 'sabzi', and sherbet and 'bindi' items, which will be prepared in pure desi ghee and from 12.30 onwards after the bhog prasad there will be a bhandara for the general public, the volunteers and the other associated people," he said.

He said that this time extensive restoration and renovation work had been carried out at the temple with respect to the existing building and structures. "We have also carried out beautification through lights. All this is giving a new look to the temple," he said. He pointed out that it was difficult to give the exact number of



Temples being spruced up in Lucknow on the eve of Bada Mangal. (Below) Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia launching a website

'Use Metro to avoid snarls, beat the heat'

Lucknow (PNS): LMRC officials said Lucknowites were all geared up for this year's Bada Mangal festivities and Metro can prove to be a boon for devotees going to two of the most revered Hanuman temples of the city. The LMRC officials said that to avoid traffic snarls, Metro was the best option.

Officials said that LMRC had been receiving queries from passengers about the nearest Metro stations and the exit gates to Hanuman Setu and Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Temple.

"Keeping in mind the traffic jams and route diversions, travelling by Metro would not only save the devotees from getting stuck in bottlenecks and

be carrying out an inspection of the areas surrounding the Hanuman temples in the city to ensure that the prasad which was being served was of a good quality. "Hygiene and purity of the prasad is important. On the occasion of Bada Mangal we will carry out a follow-up action to check the quality of the prasad," he said.

jams but also provide a comfortable travel experience," they added. "Hanuman Setu Temple and Dakshinmukhi temples in Hazratganj are on the North-South corridor from CCS Airport to Munshipulia and devotees can enjoy a comfortable, AC Metro ride, beating the scorching heat," the officials said. For Hanuman Setu, passengers must disembark at the Vishwavidyalaya station and exit from gate number 1 of the station to reach Hanuman Setu Temple which is at a walking distance from there.

To reach Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Temple, the passengers must disembark at Hazratganj Metro station and exit from gate number 4 to reach the temple on foot.

devotees who visited the temple on the first day. Tewari said that he was in consultation with some people if some device could be installed which could give the exact number of those who visited the temple. The designated officer, FSDA (Food Safety and Drug Administration), TR Rawat, while talking to *The Pioneer*, said that they would

Devotees unaware of many ancient Hanuman temples

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

There is a 'Ziddi Hanuman Temple' and then there is 'Lete Hanumanji Ka Mandir' in the city which not many people may be aware of.

Noted Lucknow chronicler Yogesh Praveen told *The Pioneer* that there were several ancient temples of the city which the people were unaware of and these belonged to the Nawabi and the pre-Nawabi eras. He said that the devotees visited the Ziddi Hanuman Temple located in Krishnanagar because they believed that the wishes of a person which were not fulfilled anywhere else would get fulfilled here.

"The Ziddi Hanuman is known to fulfil the wishes of the devotees with his stubbornness," he said.

The lying down pose of Lord Hanuman can be seen in a temple near the Lal Pul (Hardinge Bridge) and has been restored by the Hanuman devotee, Sunil Gumber. "This is a temple which is on the banks of Shukla Ghat, adjacent to Panchvati and Chitrakoot ghats and we used to visit it quite often in childhood. The idol was in a bad shape and broken too. It was restored and now it has become one of the popular temples of the city," he said. He said that the pose of Lord Hanuman showed him resting after having destroyed Lanka and this is the only temple which has Hanuman in this pose in which he is resting.

Among the other lesser known ancient temples of the city, he says there is a temple which is called the 'Tadiyan Hanuman Temple' at Rajajipuram where the word 'Tadiyan' signifies the name of the village.

"A very ancient temple and much revered by the people it belongs to the pre-Nawabi time," he said. Praveen said that there was another temple in Rajajipuram which was called the 'Jabti Bagiya ka Mandir'.

"The story which is associated with this temple is that



Nawab freed a land which was encroached upon and when it was dug a Hanuman idol was found there which was taken out and established at this point. "Nawab Asafuddaula constructed the gate of this temple," he added.

The litterateur said that two ancient temples existed on the Nandan Mahal Road. "One is called the Panchmukhi Hanuman which is very famous and the gate of this temple was also made by Nawab Asafuddaula."

He said that the idol of Lord Hanuman which was of the Panchmukhi Temple was found in Motijheel. In the medieval period when temples were being destroyed by the invaders then the people hid their idols in the waters of

ponds and lakes because this ensured their safety," he added.

He said that yet another ancient temple was the Lanka Dahan one which was situated on the Nandan Mahal Road. "The important thing about this temple is that the face of Lord Hanuman is a little blackish denoting the post-fire scene of Lanka burning when his face was touched by smoke. This temple is from the Nawabi period," he said. One of the well-known temples was also the one at Gosainganj which sees a heavy rush of devotees. On being asked why people were not aware about these temples, he said that most of them were a part of the villages and became a portion of the state capital when the city widened its limits.

21-year-old girl raped, held captive for over eight hours

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A 21-year-old girl was allegedly held captive for over eight hours and raped at a house, which she shared with her boyfriend Shiv Kumar, in Aziz Nagar under Madaion police station on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday.

A native of Sitapur, she was said to be in a live-in relationship with her boyfriend and lived in one portion of the house on the first floor while the other portion was occupied by a man, identified as Imran.

As per reports, Shiv Kumar left for Bakshi-Ka-Talab on Sunday evening to attend the wedding of a relative while the girl stayed back. Shiv told her that he would be

back on Monday morning.

Incidentally, three friends of Imran also came to meet him in the evening. As she came out of her room to attend nature's call around midnight, she was grabbed by Imran and his accomplices and was dragged to his room. She was allegedly raped by Imran twice. She told the police that she was not gangraped but only Imran was involved in the act.

After eight hours, Imran let her go around 8.30 am. When Shiv came back around 10.30 am, she narrated her ordeal to him. He took her to the Madaion police station to lodge a complaint. The police shoed them away, suspecting that the couple were making it up to settle scores with Imran over some issue. Later,

Shiv went to the office of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kalanidhi Naithani to lodge a complaint. However, he could not meet the SSP as he was not in the office. However, he managed to convince the senior officers who asked inspector (Madaion police station) Santosh Kumar Singh to reg-



ister a case and start investigations. Shiv told the police that he was in love with the girl for the last four years when she was 17. He said he could not marry her then as she was a minor. He said he brought her to Lucknow from Sitapur and they were living together in Aziz Nagar.

In her statement, the girl said she was happy with her boyfriend and there had been no problems between them so far. Shiv said his parents agreed to accept her as their daughter-in-law and they were likely to get married later this year. Imran and his accomplices are said to be absconding and the landlord also had no idea about his whereabouts.

Singh said the girl had been sent for a medical test and further investigations were underway.

Mercury to come down after 3 days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

There is some relief in store for residents as the weatherman has forecast a slight dip in the maximum temperature after three days. However, mercury will continue to soar until then. Met director JP Gupta said that the dip in the temperature would be because of the western disturbance after three days. "The temperature will be continue to rise by a notch till then," he said.

Gupta said the South-West monsoon was expected to be on time, in the third week of June. "The monsoon is likely to be normal and, till now, expected to be on time," he added.

For city residents, stepping out in the sun continued to be a demanding task. On Monday, Lucknow recorded the maximum temperature at 41.2 degree Celsius, which was one degree above normal. The minimum temperature (24.6 degree Celsius) was just a notch below normal. At 43.6



Girls braving the blazing sun on a city road on Monday

degree Celsius, Banda was the hottest in the state. The forecast for Lucknow

and neighbourhood is mainly clear sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures are

expected to be around 43 degree Celsius and 24 degree Celsius, respectively.

FORM No. - 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
 600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow - 226007
 (Area of Jurisdiction-Part of U.P. and Uttaranchal)
SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE
 By PUBLICATION

OA No. 1335 / 2018 Date: 16.04.2019
 (Summons to defendant under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of debts due to the Bank and Financial Institution Act 1993 read with rules 12 and 13 of the Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)

BANK OF INDIA ...APPLICANT
 (Jankipuram Vistar, Lucknow- 226021)

VERSUS

Shri Rohit Srivastava & Anothers ...DEFENDANT

To,

- SHRI ROHIT SRIVASTAVA** son of Sri Birendra Pratap Srivastava, resident of LS 2/603, Sector F, Jankipuram, Lucknow - 226021.
- Mrs. RUPALI SRIVASTAVA** wife of Sri Rohit Srivastava, resident of LS 2/603, Sector F, Jankipuram, Lucknow - 226021.
- SHRI KSHITIJ SAXENA** son of Sri Vinay Kumar Saxena resident of House on Plot no. 08-A, Keshav Nagar II, Sitapur Road, Lucknow.
- M/s Sakchi Electronics** through its proprietor Shri Rohit Srivastava Registered office at LS-2/603, Sector F, Jankipuram, Lucknow - 226021.

...DEFENDANTS

In the above noted application you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 11.06.2019 at 10:30 AM failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

REGISTRAR
 Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

Man held for setting wife ablaze

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Sandeep Chowdhary, a resident of Pandey Tola falling under Aliganj police station, was arrested from near his house on Monday afternoon for attempting to kill his wife Nandini by setting her ablaze for dowry last month. He had been demanding a four-wheeler since their engagement in 2017. Nandini, on the other hand, asked him to bear the expenses for her treatment. In her complaint lodged at the Aliganj police station last week, she alleged that she was tortured and humiliated for not fulfilling the promise made at the time of engagement.

She said that she or her parents did not lodge a complaint against Sandeep or any of his family members earlier as they thought it would bring bad name for the family.



She said she had to lodge a complaint after her husband set her ablaze in a bid to eliminate her. Nandini said she had not spent a single day at her husband house in peace. "My husband started harassing me from day one," she added.

The Aliganj circle officer, who was investigating the case, found Sandeep guilty of torturing and injuring his wife for not bringing a car as dowry. He was picked from near his house after the probe report was submitted. Meanwhile, an elderly man was killed while three others

injured when the driver lost control of a car (UP32 AR3676) which rammmed into a road divider and then overturned near 'Fauji Dhaba' on Sitapur Road on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday.

The deceased was identified as Sohan (75), who was a resident of a Madaion village, while those injured as Munna Rawat, Bansai and Naumi Lal.

Investigating officer GC Yadav said they were going to attend a wedding. Rawat, who was driving the car, lost control of the vehicle and all of a sudden and it resulted in a mishap.

They were rushed to a nearby private nursing home where Sohan succumbed to injuries while others were referred to KGMU Trauma Centre. The condition of Rawat and Lal was said to be critical while Bansai was stable.

Hobby camp kicks off at Science City

Lucknow (PNS): The first batch of vacation hobby camp kicked off on Monday as the participating students showed great enthusiasm at Regional Science City. Nearly 100 students from different schools are participating in nine disciplines — Creative Art, Science Sparkle, Exploring Nature, Astrolab, Scientific Toy Making, Robotics, Arduino Workshop, Electronics Workshop, and Mobile App Development.

On the first day, former senior scientist (CDRI) PK Srivastava explained the importance of science and skill development with the help of scientoons. He also elaborated the role of hobby

camps in development of scientific temperament and logical thinking amongst students.

Organisers of the camp said that the main objective was to provide a platform for children to nurture their creative talents and to train them hands on in innovative science projects which would help them in understanding the concepts and use their creative ideas to develop the models further at their homes. The whole course is designed in a way to help the children in their school curriculum too. On the first day, all the participants were introduced to the camp and were provided with course material.

LUACMAT-2019
 Lucknow University Associated Colleges Management
Admission Test - 2019
 Conducted By
NATIONAL P.G. COLLEGE
 Autonomous, CPE & NAAC Grade 'A' College of Lucknow University
 2, RANA PRATAP MARG, LUCKNOW
 Tel.: 0522-2618312 www.npgc.in

PARTICIPANT COLLEGES

- College of Innovative Management and Science
- Dayal Group of Institutions 3. Goal Institute of Higher Studies 4. ICCMRT 5. LBS Girls College of Management
- Lucknow Public College of Professional Studies
- Modern Girls College of Professional Studies
- National P.G. College 9. School of Management Science 10. Sherwood College of Professional Management 11. Shri Ramswaroop Memorial College of Management 12. Techno Institute of Higher Studies

BBA-500, BBA(MS)-50, BBA(T)-50, BCA-540, BCOM (H)-500, BAJMC-240, BVOC(BF)-50, BVOC(SD)-100, TOTAL-2310

Candidates can also apply ONLINE on - www.npgc.in
Last Date June 5, 2019

BJP seeks repolling in violence-hit Bengal seats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A BJP delegation, led by Union Minister Piyush Goyal, met the Election Commission (EC) on Monday and demanded that repolls be held in some constituencies where violence occurred in West Bengal and Central forces be deployed for free and fair counting in the State.

"We have met the Election Commissioners and informed them about the violence that had taken place in all the seven phases of the Lok Sabha polls and requested for re-polling in all the violence-affected constituencies," Goyal said after meeting EC officials. He was accompanied by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and senior BJP leaders.

Goyal said party candidates and agents, deployed in West Bengal, were being threatened and the Election Commission should take strict action against the culprits. "We have enlisted with the EC some constituencies for repolling," he said.

Accusing West Bengal CM of threatening BJP candidates, poll agents and party sympathisers, the BJP leader said that Mamata Banerjee has been



BJP leaders Piyush Goyal, Nirmala Sitharaman and others talk to the media after meeting with the Election Commission of India at Nirvachan Sadan in New Delhi on Monday

repeatedly threatening the people of the State that 'chunao ke baad sabak sikhayengi' (she will deal with them after election) and the kind of violence seen till seven phase of general elections, it is apprehended that violence may take place again.

"We saw incidents of violence took place till the last phase of polling. There is possibility of violence even after counting of votes. So, we have requested the

Commission to deploy the central forces in Electronic Voting Machine strong rooms till the end of counting to allow free and fair counting," he said.

It is required that the EC should deploy central forces at all EVMs strongrooms. Till the Model Code of Conduct is in force, personnel already deployed should remain there so that people are reassured that no violence will be tolerated," Goyal

added.

The senior BJP leaders also appealed to the poll panel to ensure the sanctity of the counting process in Odisha, Karnataka, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

"Independent observers must be sent in these states and CCTV cameras must be installed in all counting stations in the five States," he said.

TDP urges EC to ensure YSRCP doesn't disturb counting process

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The TDP on Monday wrote to the Election Commission urging adequate security in the counting premises to ensure the "YSRCP members do not disturb the counting process" in the State. The letter from TDP Rajya Sabha member K Ravindra Kumar came a day after YSR Congress Party approached the poll body seeking free and fair counting of votes.

YSR Congress Party national general secretary V Vijayasai Reddy had written to the EC alleging that the TDP has "trained some unruly elements and appointed them as their counting agents to disturb the counting process in case their candidates are trailing in the State".

Accusing YSRCP of mischievous game plan like the deletion of genuine voters of TDP by filing applications in bulk in the name of unknown persons from



places like Pune and Kolkata, TDP wrote: "We request the Election Commission to provide adequate security in the counting premises to ensure the YSRCP doesn't disturb the counting process."

The letter further states: "As the political parties are not allowed to carry food inside the counting hall premises, necessary arrangements have to be made by the concerned Returning Officers (ROs) to provide food and water to the counting agents also along with other counting person-

nel...Therefore, instructions may be issued to all ROs to provide food and drinking water to the counting agents during the period of counting."

The TDP leader also requested the EC "to issue instructions to the concerned officials to permit the counting agents to carry Form 17C Part-I /account of votes recorded, Form 17C part-II / scrolling sheet for recording the votes counted and required white papers and pen to make any representation on the counting issues."

IN SHORT

TBP SHOWS DISPLEASURE OVER CPWD'S WORK SPEED

New Delhi: Indo-Tibetan Border Police Inspector General Vijay Kumar Singh has expressed displeasure over the slow pace of construction of residential quarters and barracks by the CPWD. In a letter to the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) Director General, Prabhakar Singh, last week, Singh said out of the 1,970 residential quarters sanctioned in 2016-17, only 753 have been constructed, while 1,217 are still under construction.

MINISTERS CLEAR ALL DUES: MoHUA

New Delhi: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) on Monday clarified that all earlier dues have been cleared by the respective Ministers. "The raising of demands for dues on account of use of furniture in official accommodations provided to the Ministers/MPs is a continuous process. The demands for dues are raised on quarterly basis and settled regularly," the Ministry said.

SUSHMA TO ATTEND SCO MEET IN BISHKEK

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will attend a two-day meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), beginning on Tuesday, in Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, during which several pressing issues including threat of terrorism are expected to be discussed. The MEA said the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) will exchange views on topical issues of international and regional importance, besides reviewing the preparation for the SCO Summit in Bishkek from June 13-14.

CHINA BEGINS SHARING HYDROLOGICAL DATA

New Delhi: China has begun sharing hydrological data with India on the Brahmaputra river for this year's monsoon season. It is also expected to start sharing data on the Sutlej River from June 1, the start of monsoon season in the country. New Delhi: Blue Rose Publishers has released a book "Knock Knock Let's Talk" written by Dr Anika Sapan Marjadi. The book, covering topics like how to remain positive in life, also provides some health related tips but the main theme of the book is based on 'Pregnancy' and 'Teaching good qualities to unborn'.

Count all VVPATs, if EVM figures mismatch: Yechury

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Monday demanded that VVPAT slips should be fully counted if there is any discrepancy with EVM figures.

"On VVPATs & the EVM tally, the EC is yet to come out with a procedure in case there is a mismatch! Even if there is one mismatch in the VVPAT samples picked for counting and EVMs, to maintain integrity of the electoral process, all VVPATs in that Assembly segment must be counted," he tweeted.

With the exit polls predicting a debacle for the Left Front in the Lok Sabha election, the leaders of various Left parties are set to play a waiting game as regards joining the UPA or being part of a non-Congress federal front. A majority of the exit polls have predicted 14-16 seats for the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF)



in Kerala, 4-6 seats for the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and one seat for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In West Bengal, a State ruled by the Left Front for 34 years, a majority of the exit polls have given no seats

to it, which could mean the worst ever performance of the front in the State. "It is very clear that an Opposition front and its strategy can only be formed after the election results on May 23. One thing is clear that a secular, alternative Government will be formed at the Centre. Who will make it and how will it be created will be decided after the results," Sitaram Yechury told reporters here.

Meanwhile, Communist Party of India (CPI) general secretary S Sudhakar Reddy said they would sit in the Opposition if no party got a clear majority. "We have our national executive on May 27-28. We will not take any decision before that. If no party gets a majority, we will sit in the opposition," he said.

CPI national secretary D Raja conceded that this could be the Left's worst poll performance in years. "What role we will play will be decided post May 23," he said.

IF EXIT POLLS MATCH FINAL RESULTS

Opp's fake EVM charge will lose credibility: Jaitley

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after pollsters predicted a second term for the Narendra Modi-led NDA Government, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Monday pointed out that EVMs play no role in exit polls and if the actual results of the general election are in consonance with the projections, "the Opposition's fake issue of the EVMs would also lose its non-existent rationale".

"Many of us may continue to squabble over correctness and accuracy of the Exit Polls. The hard reality is that when multiple Exit Polls convey the same message, the direction of the result broadly would be in consonance with the message," Jaitley said in a blogpost titled 'The Message of

Exit Polls'.

"If the Exit Polls are read along with the 2014 election results, it would be clear that there is a huge maturing of Indian democracy taking place. The electorate keeps national interest paramount before exercising a choice on whom to vote for. When well-meaning people with similar ideas vote in the same direction, it leads to the making of a wave," he said.

Referring to the Congress, Jaitley said that the Gandhi family has become a liability for the grand-old party. "... In the Congress the first family is no longer an asset but an albatross around neck of the Party. Without the family, they don't get the crowd, with it they don't get the votes," he said.

He also said the personalised campaign against Prime Minister Modi did not cut much ice in 2014 and may not cut any ice in 2019.

"Leaders are judged on merit and not on caste or family names. Thus, the Prime Minister's style of rising above caste and concentrating on performance related issues received far more acceptability with the electorate," Jaitley said.

He said the voters are no longer willing to trust 'Coalition of Rivals' as their alliances are untenable.

The arithmetic of caste coalitions is no longer valid and has yielded place to national interest. "Fake issues only satisfy the 'manufacturers of fakery'. The voters don't buy them," Jaitley added.

Terror funding: NIA raids 10 locations in Tamil Nadu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday conducted searches at 10 locations of the accused persons at Muthupattinam, Keelakarai, Devipattinam, Lalpet and Salem in connection with investigation of the Keelakarai case, related to conspiracy to procure arms for their terrorist gang, raise funds to wage armed struggle, facilitate escape of terrorists from jail and wage war against the country.

During the searches, the NIA seized a number of digital devices including three laptops, three hard discs, 16 mobile phones, eight SIM cards, two pen drives, five memory cards and one card reader besides two knives and a large number of incriminating documents.

"The case relates to a group of ten persons from different parts of Tamil Nadu who had formed a WhatsApp group named 'SHAHADAT IS OUR GOAL'. In 2018, they conspired together to procure arms for their terrorist gang, to raise funds to wage armed struggle, to facilitate the escape of terrorists from jail and to propagate their ideology, to act against the State, the NIA said in a statement.

The case was initially registered on April 2, 2018 at Keelakarai police station of Ramanathapuram district of Tamilnadu, under Crime No. 46/2018 under various Sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Arms Act 1959 against ten accused, out of which nine accused were arrested earlier. One accused is

still absconding. Later, all the 9 arrested accused were released on bail by the Court.

IPC sections relating to criminal conspiracy, religious or sectarian incitement apart from the UA (P) sections relating to waging war against the country for violation of the Arms Act.

During the last few years, South India has emerged as a major hub for transnational radicalisation groups that are working at the behest of international terrorist groups like the Al Qaeda and ISIS. Various new forms of recruitment methods are adopted by such groups including through virtual technologies like social media and also through an organization like Street Dawah that seeks to attract the gullible youths to its fold by imparting radicalized sermons on Islam.

FROM SUPREME COURT

Centre's plea on applicability of black money law to be heard today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court agreed on Monday to hear on Tuesday the Centre's plea challenging the Delhi High Court order staying its notification to allow the 2016 black money law to operate with retrospective effect from July, 2015 to book and probe offenders.

The Centre is also aggrieved by the interim order of the high court that restrained the Income Tax (I-T) department from taking any action against VVIP chopper scam accused Gautam Khaitan, against whom a black money case has been lodged.

The high court, in its order, said the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of

Tax Act, which was enacted in April 2016, could not be allowed to operate with retrospective effect from July, 2015.

A vacation bench of justices Indira Banerjee and Sanjiv Khanna took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the government, that the high court erred in staying the Centre's notification to invoke the black money law with retrospective effect.

"It will be listed tomorrow," the bench said when Mehta said CBI inquires were launched on the basis of the law's applicability.

The bench refused to entertain the plea of senior advocate N K Kaul, appearing for Khaitan, that the matter be

listed for hearing after a week as Khaitan's advocate-on-record was not available during the week.

"You (Kaul) mention this (non-availability of lawyer) before the bench tomorrow," it said.

On May 16, the high court had restrained the I-T department from taking any action against Khaitan.

On invoking the black money law with retrospective effect, it had said Parliament, in its wisdom, had enacted the Act which was to come into force from April 1, 2016 and as the date was expressly decided by Parliament, it could not be made applicable with retrospective effect by the way of a notification. **PTI**

Saradha Scam: Bengal top cop seeks extension of protection

New Delhi: Former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar moved the Supreme Court on Monday seeking extension of the 7-day protection granted to him by it in connection with the Saradha chit fund scam case in view of lawyers' strike in Kolkata.

Kumar's counsel mentioned the matter for urgent listing before a vacation bench comprising Justices Indira Banerjee and Sanjiv Khanna and said that since lawyers in Kolkata are on strike, the protection granted to the IPS officer should be extended.

The counsel said due to the strike, Kumar was not able to move the competent court for

seeking relief and hence, the protection granted to him be counted from the time the strike ends.

The lawyer told the bench that the top court had on May 17 granted seven days time to Kumar to approach the competent court for legal remedies but four days have already elapsed and they needed time to approach the competent court there.

However, the bench said since the May 17 order was passed by a three-judge bench, Kumar's counsel can approach the apex court registry or the secretary general for listing of the matter before an appropriate bench. **PTI**

India adopts new standards for 4 base units

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday adopted a global resolution to redefine four of the seven base units — kilogramme, kelvin, mole and ampere, a move expected to usher in changes in educational textbooks.

A resolution to redefine four of the seven base units was passed by representatives of 60 countries at the General Conference on Weights and Measures (CGPM) of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), Paris on November 16 last year.

However, it has been implemented across the world on May 20 — World Meteorology Day, Shekhar Mande, Director General of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), said at an event here.

Over 100 countries have



adopted the metric system of measurements, also known as the International System of Units (SI), which has been in practice since 1889. The other base units are — second, metre and candela.

Mande said that quantum computing, artificial intelligence (AI), industry 4.0, and space enabled communications are some of the international challenges of the near future.

The fundamental constants are invariants of time and space and have successfully replaced the artifact based units, and aptly opened up the new era for quantum world by linking all seven base units to fundamental constants or quantum standards, added K Aswal, Director of the National Physical Laboratory (NPL), one of the oldest scientific institutes in the country that also takes care of setting metrology standards domestically.

The purpose of system units is to enable worldwide coherence of measurements. The International System of Units (SI) was formalised in 1960 and has been updated several times to account for development in measurement technology.

"Since the 1960s, we have to rely ever more heavily on advanced science and engineering in our day-to-day lives, and also in manufacturing, healthcare and science. The proposed changes in the unit definition have been designed to have no immediate consequences," he said.

The unit redefinitions represent a profound change of perspective and they are expected to form the foundations of improved measurements for decades to come as science and technology continues to develop in a way we cannot currently foresee, Aswal

said. However, this "may not change anything drastically", he pointed out adding it will matter when it comes to measurements less than a kilogramme. For instance, measuring smaller diamonds.

The NPL has also sent recommendations on the proposed changes to be incorporated in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to implement them in contemporary education.

Recommendations on the proposed changes have also been sent to the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs), and other academic institutes to be incorporated in syllabi of metrology courses in graduate engineering and academic courses, Aswal added.

ASI to take applications online for public related services from June 1

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

From June 1, 2019, no more hassles of running around the local offices of the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) for seeking permission — whether it is related to export permit for antiquity or shooting of films, photography or holding cultural events at the national monuments protected under the Central agency.

To ensure accountability and transparency as well as reduce paperwork besides convenience of the public, the premier archeological body under the Union Culture Ministry has decided to entertain applications online for granting permissions for its various public related services.

For instance, those seeking no objection certificates (NOC)

for mining or for construction of power plant near the monuments or looking for registration of antiquity too will have to apply through the ASI's portal for permission. Their applications will be scrutinised and accordingly replied. "In case the application is accepted, the applicant will be asked to deposit the fee, if case any. The fate of rejected applications will be informed online only," said a senior official from the Ministry.

Issuance of temporary export permit for antiquity, proposal for excavation and exploration from the archeologists will be accepted online only, he said adding that the move is the part of the government's Digital India programme.

All the ASI offices across about 70 across the country have already been informed to be pre-

pared for the online job and ensure that the applicants are informed of the development so that they do not have to go through the hassle of paper works like sending documents to the offices.

Meanwhile, as the part of the Digital India, the ASI has already expanded e-ticketing services to its 26 more monuments including Hauz Khas in Delhi from April 1.

Prior to these 26 monuments, Taj Mahal, Agra and Humayun's Tomb, Safdarjung Tomb, Tughlakabad Fort, Old Fort (Purana Qila), Red Fort, Kotla Firozshah, Jantar Mantar, New Delhi were already covered under the e-ticketing facility (online and at site).

There are 116 ticketed monuments and 32 monuments under the protection of ASI.

India Inc mum on exit polls

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Majority of India Inc on Monday chose not to react to exit polls, giving a second term to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as they await elections results on May 23.

When reached out, major industry chambers Ficci, CII and Assocham declined to comment on the exit polls.

Responding to a tweet by Chief Economist of Mahindra Group Sachchidanand Shukla on what to look forward to this week, group Chairman Anand Mahindra said, "This week will have only one 'Thing' we'll all be looking out for!" hinting at the May 23 results.

Apart from the election results, Shukla had listed US Fed's policy meeting on May 22-23, European Parliament Elections on May 23-26 and PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) numbers for Japan, the US and Eurozone, among the global events to watch out for.

Reacting to the exit polls, industry body PHDCCI President Rajeev Talwar told PTI, "All of us in India must respect the mandate of the



voter. If they deem it fit to give a second term to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, then it is much better than any opinion of anyone else".

The Indian voter has changed regimes whenever they have felt appropriate. They have also given a repeated term in their own wisdom. Therefore, probably if Modi gets a second term, it is best for the Indian economy, India's prestige and a peaceful Indian society, he said.

"As an industry representative I believe there are a

number of reforms which have happened and ones which need to take place. This is a decisive government and the reforms must continue, (if) we are to become a USD 7 trillion economy in the next five years," Talwar said.

RPG Enterprises Chairman Harsh Goenka, who is known for his witty and humorous tweets, said that now one thing is sure, "the next PM's initial starts with 'N!'".

He also shared a joke from Whatsapp, "Based on #Exitpolls there will be a STA-

BLE government and no HORSE trading necessary. No wonder, PM's residence is on RACE COURSE Road."

Brokerage Edelweiss Securities said if the NDA returns to power with a clear majority in line with exit polls, markets would rejoice the policy continuity. "Besides, NDA is seen to be relatively more fiscally disciplined and less populist in nature, which should augur well for inflationary dynamics," it said.

Why Kumaraswamy is annoyed with exit poll?

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy is annoyed with the exit poll results which have predicted land slide victory to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP. With a desperate and annoyance Kumaraswamy who runs a coalition government along with the congress has expressed concerns over the vulnerability of the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

Tweet after tweet he hit out at exit poll predictions and blamed the media as biased and alleged that the "artificially engineered" or "manufactured" Modi wave is being used by the BJP to lure regional parties well in advance to fill any shortfall after the results on May 23.

He said in a tweet "Entire Opposition political parties had expressed concern over credibility of EVMs under PM @narendramodi's rule. Opposition parties even knocked the doors of the Supreme Court asking for a traditional ballot paper election-avoid defective EVMs that are vulnerable to fraud."

"World wide, even developed countries have opted for traditional polls through paper

ballets. The exit poll surveys on May 19 only reiterated the serious concern of the Opposition parties on misuse of vulnerable EVMs for electoral gains by the ruling party," he said in another tweet.

With most exit polls forecasting another term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP almost sweeping Karnataka in the Lok Sabha polls, chief minister H D Kumaraswamy looks desperate and also bogged down by the infighting within the coalition demanding for a change.

He said "The entire exit poll exercise was an effort to create false impression of a wave in favour of one particular leader and the party. As they say, it is just an exit poll, not exact poll."

Most exit polls on Sunday predicted that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party led National Democratic Alliance will comfortably cross the halfway mark of 272 seats in the Lok Sabha. Some even projected that the NDA will get more than 300 seats.

After the exit polls prediction a sweep for the saffron party in Karnataka, with pollsters claimed that the BJP was likely to win over 21 of the total



HD Kumaraswamy

28 seats. The jubilation is evident in the Karnataka BJP which went to polls under the Lingayat strong man BS Yeddyurappa. However, he said people of the country as well as Karnataka have supported Modi and the exit polls giving 22 seats to the saffron party in the state was a proof of that.

Stressing that many tall leaders of Congress-JD(S) will lose, he said, "Let's see what will happen after May 23, fighting is on between Congress and JD(S) already, let's see where it will reach." The Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) leaders questioning the EVMs shows their desperation," he added.

In the 2014 general election, the BJP had won 17 seats

while the Congress and the JD(S) had bagged 9 and 2 seats respectively. However, in the bypolls held in November last year the BJP had lost the Ballari seat to the Congress.

Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara too raised doubts over the EVMs, saying that the BJP had sponsored the exit polls as the ground reality was different. He also noted that the United Progressive Alliance will come to power at the Centre this time.

"Most of the exit polls are the reflection of the wishes of news channels. There is a Modi wave in the news channels but the actual result will be out when the (ballot) boxes are opened," congress leader BK Hariprasad told reporters. "They have shown BJP losing 40 to 45 seats in Uttar Pradesh. In rest of the places, these channels tried to fill the void. Exit polls are not exact polls. We will get exact poll when the counting happens," he added.

Speculation is rife in the political circles that any adverse results for Congress-JD(S) alliance in the polls will have its implications on the longevity of the Kumaraswamy-led government in Karnataka.

Chief of Northern Army Command warns Pak not try to violate LoC

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Ahead of the declaration of Lok Sabha poll results on May 23, one of the senior most army commander based in Northern Command headquarters in Udhampur, Monday warned Pakistan to dare not try and come anywhere near the Line of Control (LoC) to carry out any actions.

"Should there be any misadventure by the Pakistan, they will be given a befitting reply," stated GoC-in-C Northern Command headquarters Lt-Gen Ranbir Singh on the sidelines of a program in Udhampur.

"Indian Armed Forces have the capability, resolve and operational plan to take any challenge from the Pakistan whenever it arises" he added.

Addressing a press conference, Lt-Gen Singh also clarified that the first surgical strike happened in September 2016. He said, I don't want to go into what political parties say, they'll be given an answer by the government. What I told you is a statement of fact.

In April 2018, DGMO had clarified in response to a RTI query, "data pertaining to surgical strikes, if carried out before 29 September 2016, was not available in the headquarters".

Referring to February 26 air strikes in Balakote by the Indian Air Force, Lt-Gen Singh said, "The action by IAF for carrying out air strikes in Balakote terrorist infrastructure was indeed laudable. Our aircrafts penetrated deep into their territory and carried out attacks on launch pads and camps".

Referring to Pakistan's posturing along the LoC, Lt Gen Singh said, "they carry out their operations close to the LoC and were given befitting reply". He said, "our deterrence, our articulation and our military strategy have always been clear".

"In case they mean business, they got to dismantle, the terror infrastructure, launch pads and

camps which are very close to the LoC," he added and said, "we are keeping continuous watch on the LoC and whenever any wrong activity is carried out by the Pakistan Army or Armed Forces, suitable response will be given to them," the Army Commander asserted.

Commenting on the overall security situation in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Lt Gen Ranbir Singh said, "The security situation in Jammu and Kashmir is well under control".

"During this year, we have been able to neutralize 86 terrorists so far & our operations continue in the same manner. Nearly 20 of them have been apprehended, we've also been able to bring back many of them to the mainstream".

Lt-Gen Ranbir Singh said, "Pakistan has continued with activities, which are mainly anti India like promoting cross border infiltration, ceasefire violations, drug trafficking, narcotics and circulation of fake Indian currency".

He added that all their actions are ensuring the proxy war waged against India is in continuation, adding, "But I assure you that our actions to counter them are in place and the Pakistan will not be allowed to succeed in their designs".

He said, "As far as the hinterland is concerned, we have recently finished with the elections in the state. It is to the credit of the security forces, administration in the state that we have very peaceful, free and fair elections". Referring to local youth joining ranks of different terror outfits, Lt Gen Singh said locals in Kashmir joining militancy "remains a matter of concern for all of us".

"Local recruitment remains a matter of concern for all of us. Last year, we had 217 local youth who had picked up militancy. This year, the number has significantly reduced and as on date there are only 40 youth who have picked up arms".



Macaque monkeys quench their thirsts from roadside water-tanks during a hot summer day at Kishangarh near Ajmer in Rajasthan on Monday

Stalin: Centre, TN Govts have 'tied' hands of EC 'from behind'

PTI ■ CHENNAI

DMK President M K Stalin Monday charged the Central and Tamil Nadu governments with having "tied" the hands of the Election Commission of India (ECI) "from behind" and urged his partymen to keep a vigil on May 23 when votes polled in the Lok Sabha elections will be counted.

The BJP and AIADMK "will go to any extent in their quest for power" and DMK workers and agents should mount additional vigil on Thursday during counting of votes, he said.

"The Central (BJP) and

ones counted matched and seek redressal if they come across any anomalies, Stalin said.

"We should not ignore the warnings issued by various opposition parties about the possible EVM frauds," he added.

"Our counting centre agents, party district secretaries and candidates should be extra vigilant during every round of counting," he added.

Earlier, Congress President Rahul Gandhi, TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her Karnataka counterpart H D Kumaraswami had questioned the EVMs.

Maharashtra enacts Maratha quota Ordinance for medical admissions

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a big relief to students seeking admission to medical and dental under-graduate and post graduate courses under Maratha reservation quota, the Maharashtra government on Monday promulgated the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) (Amendment and Validation) Ordinance, 2019 to facilitate reservations to the students concerned.

Maharashtra Governor Ch Vidyasagar Rao signed the ordinance on the basis of an advice given by the Maharashtra Cabinet that such an ordinance was necessary to provide the benefit of reservations in admissions to SEBC classes in Medical and Dental under-graduate and post-graduate courses.

"There shall now be reservations in favour of the candidates belonging to SEBC classes from the educational year 2019-20 and also for admissions to other educational courses including under-graduate courses requiring the passing of the NEET or any other National Entrance Test," a statement issued by Raj Bhavan said in the evening.

The ordinance has been necessitated by the stay granted by the Bombay High Court on the 16 per cent quota offered to the Maratha community under the socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC) category for admission in this year's postgraduate medical courses.

The Nagpur bench of the high court had on May 2, said that the notification dated March 8 on the implementation of the new 16 per cent reservations for the Maratha community under the SEBC quota, would not be applicable to the post-graduate medical admission process which had begun earlier.

The high court agreed with the petitioners Shivani

ORDINANCE FACILITATES ADMISSIONS UNDER MARATHA QUOTA TO STUDENTS SEEKING ADMISSIONS UG, PG MEDICAL COURSES IN MAHA

category. It may be recalled that the PG medical courses had started on May 2, but on May 5, the students were informed that their admissions were cancelled, though they had paid full fees and joined duties.

They had secured admissions on the basis of the Maratha quota (SEBC) while cancelling their seats got through the All India Quota, but the SEBC quota has been declared invalid for the current year, he added.

The State government had last week assured the affected students that it would promulgate an ordinance to ensure the admission process was not affected in the Maratha reservations category.

Meanwhile, in its SLP filed before the apex court, the state government has submitted to the court that two rounds of the admission process has already been held and preparing a revised list now, will be unjust. The government also brought to the court's notice that the SEBC students, who cracked the two rounds of the admission process, have not made any representation before the High Court.

The state government has argued that deciding on the writ petition without involving the 'to be affected' parties results in violation of the principle of natural justice.

On its part, the State government had written a letter to the DMER on March 8, 2019 to incorporate and implement the SEBC quota from the academic year 2019 in their post-graduate medical courses.

However, the High Court, in its ruling, said that the government's notification of March 8, 2019 regarding the SEBC quota in health science courses will not be applicable for postgraduate admissions in dentistry and medicine since the registration process for NEET began on October 16 and November 2 in 2018, respectively.

Seshan, the ultimate Chief Election Commissioner

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The name Tirunellai Narayana Iyer Seshan many not strike any chord with the new generation. But you say TN Seshan and even the brash among political leaders may stand up in reverence. It is no exaggeration if one tells that people in the country learnt about the significance of the post of Chief Election Commissioner only after Seshan assumed the post in December 1990. For six years when Seshan was the boss of Nirvachan Sadan, booth capturers and vote merchants disappeared altogether.

"I am like a football referee. I don't have any role except supervising the match so long the players stick to the rules of the game. I'll not interfere. But the moment I am convinced that the play is going out of control, I'll pull out the yellow



and red cards from my pocket and show it to the persons who err. If they continue with breaking of rules, I may have to sound the whistle and call off the match," said Seshan immediately after taking over as the Chief Election Commissioner.

True to his warning, he sounded the whistle during the 1991 Lok Sabha election, one of the most violent elections the country has seen.

"I am like a football referee. I don't have any role except supervising the match so long the players stick to the rules of the game. I'll not interfere. But the moment I am convinced that the play is going out of control, I'll pull out the yellow and red cards from my pocket and show it to the persons who err. If they continue with breaking of rules, I may have to sound the whistle and call off the match"

TN SESHAN, FORMER CEC

Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who was campaigning at SriPerumbudur near Chennai was killed by a human bomb owing allegiance to the LTTE. Seshan, who is a seasoned astrologer had told his friend Rajiv Gandhi to be careful as the stars were not in favourable constellation. The next six years saw the election process undergoing major changes under the watchful eyes of Seshan. Politicians went

of what is happening around. Seshan keeps track of all events through newspapers and radio," said Swamy Sunil Das of Sneham Charitable Trust, who is in touch with the former CEC on a daily basis.

Seshan stays at Jaya, a house which he purchased after retirement from IAS at St Mary's Road, Alwarpet, Chennai. His spouse Jayalakshmi passed away on 2018. A group of aides are always in attendance to help the 'master' who has not stopped roaring commands. Election Commissioners and Chief Election Commissioners would come and go. But each general election brings to mind the name of Seshan, who streamlined the complex election process in India. Malayatoor Ramakrishnan, himself a former IAS officer, had written a short story with Seshan as central character. What does a public servant want in life?



Student from an Art College pose with painted portraits of Indian cricket team members ahead of World Cup 2019, outside CST terminal, in Mumbai on Monday

If Sidhu can't work with Capt, he should resign: Punjab Min

Chandigarh: Punjab Minister Sadhu Singh Dharamsot on Monday asked Navjot Singh Sidhu to resign from the State Cabinet if he cannot work with Amarinder Singh, a day after the Chief Minister accused the cricketer-turned-politician of "damaging" the Congress just before polls.

As the tension between Amarinder Singh and his Cabinet Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu continues to simmer, more Ministers have come out in support of the Chief Minister.

Amarinder Singh had on Sunday lashed out at the Punjab Tourism and Cultural Affairs Minister for his comments against him and the Congress leadership in the state claiming that Sidhu was perhaps "ambitious" and "wants to be the chief minister".

Following State Health Minister Brahm Mohindra backing the chief minister, Forest Minister Dharamsot told reporters here Monday that Sidhu's recent remarks were "against party discipline" and one that could "harm the party".

"Sidhu's remarks came at a time when entire Congress was untidely fighting to ensure that the party wins all the 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab. The party high command should take notice of his comments. If Sidhu thinks he cannot work with Capt Amarinder ji, then he should resign immediately," Dharamsot said.

"I think his ambitions are very high and he remains dis-satisfied wherever he goes. When he was in the BJP, he was not

satisfied there. Today, he may be eyeing chief minister's post, tomorrow even prime minister's chair may not satisfy him. So, wherever he goes, he has problems," he added.

Dharamsot said the Congress gave more to Sidhu than he deserved and that he should not hanker for posts and berths.

"Politics is a serious business, we are all here with a purpose of bringing about a positive change in people's lives and uplifting poor and weaker sections. Hanking for posts and berths should not be the aim... Personally, I think Sidhu got more than he deserved," he said.

In his attack on Sidhu, Amarinder Singh had said that if the minister was a real Congressman, he should have chosen a better time to air his grievances, instead of just ahead of voting in Punjab.

The chief minister's statement had come on a day when all 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab went to polls on May 19.

Soon afterwards, Mohindra hit out at Sidhu for his "out-of-turn and untimely outbursts against the party leadership, chief minister and the government", saying it amounted to "sabotage".

On May 17, Sidhu had appeared to corner the Congress government in the state over the issue of desecration of religious scriptures and questioned why no FIR was lodged against the Badals in connection with the 2015 sacrilege and police-firing incidents.

Sidhu, who was campaigning in favour of Congress nominee Amrinder Singh Raja

Warring in Bathinda, had even said that he would resign if action was not taken against those behind the 2015 desecration incidents.

Amarinder Singh had said that it was for the party high-command to decide on any action against Sidhu, adding that the Congress, does not tolerate indiscipline.

The differences between the chief minister and his cabinet colleague came to the fore in August last year when Amarinder Singh advised Sidhu against attending the swearing-in ceremony of Imran Khan as the Pakistan Prime Minister.

However, the cricketer-turned-politician not only attended the event but also hugged the Pakistan Army chief which was disapproved by Amarinder Singh.

The relation strained further when months later, Sidhu said that Congress chief Rahul Gandhi was his captain and that the Gandhi scion was the "captain of the captain" referring to Amarinder Singh.

Several Punjab ministers had hit out at Sidhu, questioning the "tone and tenor" of his remark.

On Monday, Anil Vij, Health Minister in the BJP led government in neighbouring Haryana, too chimed in advising Sidhu to join the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf—the political party of the country's prime minister Imran Khan.

"Navjot Singh Sidhu having (been) snub (bed) from all parties including BJP & Congress is left with no choice except to join Imran Khan Party—Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (sic)," Vij tweeted. **PTI**

#MeToo: Akbar denies calling Ramani in hotel room in 1994

New Delhi: Former Union Minister MJ Akbar told a Delhi court on Monday that he did not ask scribe Priya Ramani, who has accused him of sexual misconduct in #MeToo campaign, to see him in his hotel room in 1994 in connection with her alleged interview to join a newspaper of which he was the editor.



Akbar, who had resigned as minister on October 17 last year following the allegations levelled during the campaign, vehemently objected to the questions of Ramani's counsel about other women scribes who had also accused him of sexual misconduct.

The scribe-turned BJP politician was being cross-examined by senior advocate Rebecca John, counsel for Ramani, before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal, in connection with his private criminal defamation complaint against Ramani.

"It is incorrect to suggest that I called Priya Ramani to come to my room. It is wrong to suggest that she was hesitant or that I insisted... I do not know whether it was the first job interview by Priya Ramani after her graduation.

"I am not sure whether Priya Ramani was offered a job

lawyers of the parties.

The magistrate allowed Ramani's lawyer to keep asking questions to Akbar and also agreed to record the objections of Akbar with regard to such queries.

During the cross-examination, questions were put to him regarding other women journalists, including Ghazala Wahab, Kadambari M Wade, Majlie de Puy Kamp, Sonali Khullar Shroff and Harinder Baweja, who had accused Akbar of sexual misconduct.

Akbar said he had refuted the allegations levelled by Wahab in an article.

In response to another query, Akbar said he could not recall whether Wade worked with him as the matter was 20-year old.

Regarding allegations made by Kamp, he said "there was absolutely no question of harassment of the lady Kamp. I recall there might have been a mention of some misunderstanding which was accepted".

Akbar said he did not recall whether Shroff worked with him and that he had not read any tweet written by her in regard of sexual harassment.

The cross-examination of Akbar by Ramani's counsel remained inconclusive and would resume on on July 6. **PTI**

Pranab Mukherjee hails EC, says polls were conducted 'perfectly'

New Delhi: At a time when the Election Commission is under fire from Opposition parties for being biased, former president Pranab Mukherjee on Monday lauded the role of the poll panel saying the 2019 Lok Sabha polls were conducted "perfectly".

Speaking at a book launch event here, he said that right from the first election commissioner Sukumar Sen to the present election commissioners, the institution is working very well.

He said all the three commissioners are appointed by the executive and they are doing their job well. Mukherjee said, "you cannot criticise them, it was a perfect conduct of elections".

"If democracy has succeeded, it is largely due to perfect conduct of elections by election commissioners starting from Sukumar Sen to the present election commissioners," Mukherjee said at the launch of the book 'Defining India: Through Their Eyes' by NDTV's Sonia Singh.

His remarks come a day after Congress president Rahul Gandhi alleged that the Election Commission's "capitulation" before Prime Minister Narendra Modi is obvious and the poll watchdog is not feared and respected anymore. **PTI**

Harassment case: CBI visits house of accused

Coimbatore (PTI): CBI officials on Monday visited the house of an accused in the case of sexual harassment of women by a gang in nearby Pollachi as part of investigation, police said. Two officers from the Central Bureau of Investigation, which has taken over the probe from Tamil Nadu CB-CID police recently, visited the house of Sabarirajan, among the five people arrested in the case. They questioned the accused's parents, who were in the house, police said.

On visit to Oman, six of Maha family go missing in flash flood

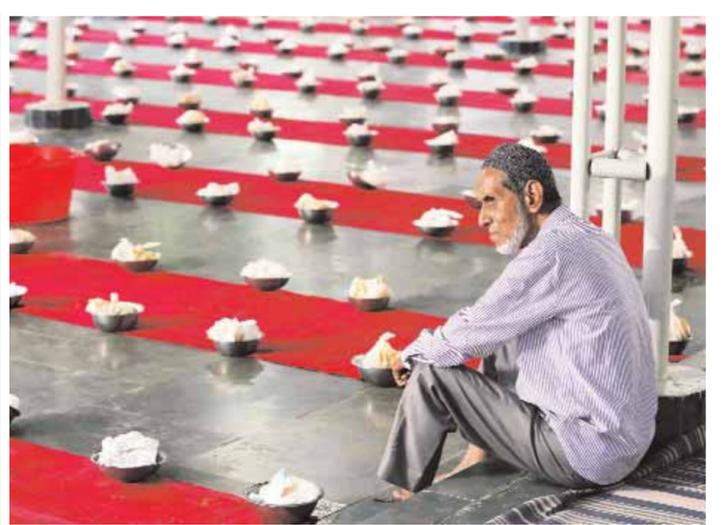
Mumbai: Six members of a family from Maharashtra's Beed district have been swept away in flash floods in the Gulf nation of Oman where they had gone on a visit, the Mumbai Police said on Monday.

The mishap occurred on Saturday when the family of Khairulla Khan, a retired teacher in Bukhari School in Beed's Majalgaon, was on a visit to Wadi Bani Khalid, a famous tourist destination, 126 kilometers from Oman's capital Muscat, an official said. "Khan, his wife Shabana, their daughter-in-law Arshi and three grandchildren, including a 28-day-old man, had gone to Oman where his

elder son Sardar Fazal Ahmed had been working as a pharmacist for the last two years," Inspector S A Sayyad of Majalgaon police station said Monday.

2 Rohingyas held in Assam

Hailakandi (Assam): Two suspected Rohingyas, including a woman, were arrested in Hailakandi district when they were coming from Myanmar on Monday, police said.



A Muslim man waits to break his day-long fast during Ramadan in Hyderabad on Monday **AP**

After controversial remarks, Pragma opts for 'silent' penance

Bhopal: BJP's Bhopal Lok Sabha seat candidate Pragma Singh Thakur, who recently kicked up a row with some of her remarks, on Monday apologised for it and said she is observing "silence" for 63 hours as a mark of penance.

Thakur, an accused in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, said she felt it was now time for some "soul searching".

The BJP leader last week courted controversy by calling Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse a "patriot". Prior to it, she claimed that the then Maharashtra ATS chief Hemant Karkare was killed in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks due to her "curse".

Taking a dim view of her remarks on Godse, the BJP said it did not agree with her. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he will never forgive Thakur for insulting Mahatma Gandhi.

NRC: Rajnath, Sonowal review Assam situation

New Delhi: Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday reviewed the security scenario in Assam besides preparation to deal with any possible law and order situation which may arise after the publication of the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) on July 31.

Six Hindu Mahasabha men held for celebrating Godse birthday in Guj

PTI ■ SURAT Six Hindu Mahasabha activists were arrested for allegedly celebrating the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse at a temple in Surat's Limbayat area on Sunday, police said. Godse was born in Baramati in Pune district, then part of the Bombay Presidency, on May 19 in 1910.

Godse was born in Baramati in Pune district, then part of the Bombay Presidency, on May 19 in 1910. The Hindu Mahasabha

activists had organised the celebration in the premises of Suryamukhi Hanuman temple in Limbayat area of city, following which they were arrested on Monday, said Surat Police Commissioner Satish Sharma. "During the celebration of Godse's birth anniversary, these Hindu Mahasabha members lit up diyas around Godse's photo, exchanged sweets and sang bhajans in the temple premise. They even made videos and took photographs of the event," said Sharma. "Their act of revering Godse, who had killed Gandhiji, deeply hurt the sentiments of citizens. It was an attempt to incite people and disturb peaceful atmosphere," said Sharma.

AAP, Cong question veracity of exit polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI Day after exit polls forecast a clean sweep for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in all seven Lok Sabha seats in the national Capital, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress questioned the veracity of such an exercise before counting of votes even as an elated Delhi unit of the saffron party hoped that the predictions will come true.

Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari thanked people of the national capital and hoped that the exit poll predictions will be replicated in the actual results. "As per the exit polls, we are winning all the seven seats in Delhi. We thank the people of Delhi for this trend and believe that the predictions will be replicated in the results of Lok Sabha polls on May 23," Tiwari said.

However, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh raised questions over the entire process. "Is EVM the real

game? Were the exit polls sponsored? BJP is winning in UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Delhi, Bengal, who will believe it? All the parties should demand cancellation of the elections on irregularities of VVPAT-EVM match," Singh said in a tweet.

Sex racket busted

New Delhi (PNS): The Delhi Commission for Woman (DCW) busted a 'sex racket' on Monday being run in a Spa situated in City Centre Mall. The commission has received a complaint on woman helpline number 181 about the 'The Attraction Spa', of conducting illegal 'prostitution'. DCW Chief Swati Maliwal has also issued a notice to Delhi Police to ascertain reasons for not making any arrests.

TEMPORARY CANCELLATION / DIVERSION OF TRAINS DUE TO TRAFFIC BLOCK

In order to further upgrade the safety standards, Lucknow Division of Northern Railway will construct a Limited Height Subway in lieu of Level Crossing Gate No. 82/C between Raghurajsingh & Takia stations on Unnao-Unchahar section on 22.05.2019. To execute this work smoothly, following trains will be affected as under :-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Dates of Cancellation from originating stn.	
14101/14102 Prayag-Kanpur Central-Prayag Intercity Exp.	22.05.2019	
54153 Raebareli-Kanpur Central Passenger	22.05.2019	
54154 Kanpur Central - Raebareli Passenger	21.05.2019	
54211 Raebareli-Kanpur Central Passenger	22.05.2019 & 23.05.2019	
54212 Kanpur Central-Raebareli Passenger	21.05.2019 & 22.05.2019	

DIVERSION OF TRAIN		
Train No. & Name	Diverted Route	Date(s) (from originating stn.)
14218 Chandigarh - Prayag Ghat Unchahar Express	via Kanpur Central - Lucknow - Raebareli - Unchahar Jn	21.05.2019

Note:- For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

Security Helpline No. 182 and Passengers Complaint Helpline No. 138

Beware of Touts Always buy your tickets from Railway Counters or authorised rail travel agents only.

Please join us on **NORTHERN RAILWAY** visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

1527/2019 **SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

Vote for leadership

Be it Modi at Centre or Mamata and Patnaik in States, exit polls favour leaders who are byproducts of immediate contexts



While some scepticism remains about the range of margins and the swing factors of exit polls, that is a debate of psephological granularity and arithmetical precision. But in totality, the numbers seem to point towards a decisive uniformity about renewing faith in a muscular leadership that didn't quite have an equally fiery challenger. And this kind of hierarchical hold across cross-sections of society defies existing logic that prime ministerial aspirant Narendra Modi has gained just

by setting bipolar contexts, identity politics or the religious card. For while these could be contributors, the tidal support for a leadership that holds despite the hostile conditions created by his under-performance on key economic issues, shows that the electorate is willing to give him one more chance. And from the young voter to the old, he is being seen as the best embodiment of an aspirational high in the absence of a robust alternative that is needed to steer the country out of its present morass. In that sense, perhaps this election embodies the classic TINA (There Is No Alternative) factor in parliamentary democracy. Somehow, Modi has been able to justify himself among the thousands of farmers and the jobless, a dissatisfied lot that was expected to rebel, that five years were too short a time but he could lead them to a proverbial El Dorado if they threw in their collective lot with him for five more years of transactional benefits. After all, he has given them something back in the form of the Awas Yojana, the toilet revolution and last mile connectivity to civilisation through roads and rural electrification. Or is it that the issues that have been in ferment for the last couple of years been subsumed to the presidential-style and hypnotic construct of bigger issues? Like hyper-nationalism, which breeds on humoring the non-privileged majority as stakeholders in a narrative which has so far been seen as exclusively endearing to minorities and outliers and dictated by the out-of-touch elite. Maybe he has reconciled this middle ground to a different idea of India and has harvested it through a smart demagoguery. And in a post-globalised world marred by protectionism and ultra-radical leaders, Modi is seen as an option to establish competitive relevance than risk oblivion, bargain on strengths than fritter them away.

This capability has no doubt been built up with a subtle cooption of institutional mechanisms and even the media. French President Emmanuel Macron had once hinted at US President Donald Trump with his remark, "Nationalism is a betrayal of patriotism." Sadly, that's the new oeuvre of global geopolitics and India is not immune to it. Particularly economic nationalism, one that is defined by prioritising domestic industry, manufacturing, jobs and economy over global corporations. Modi's zeal for "Make in India" has much congruence with the "Build America first" theme and perhaps, this *modus operandi* washes with the younger electorate. Also, we must remember that the emergent electorate is disconnected from historicity and reacts to contemporary contexts that apply to its immediate reality, like Balakot. This mindset has reduced the liberals and rationalists into the realm of lost tribalism. This trend also explains why fiercely regional leaders, who articulate similar aspirations and are equally muscular about local contexts, are holding ground. Be it KC Rao of Telangana, Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh, Stalin in Tamil Nadu, Mamata Banerjee in Bengal or Naveen Patnaik in Odisha, they are holding their States albeit they may be dented in a "nationalist" surge of the Lok Sabha. It is also true that they will be expected to negotiate in case of a dominant single party at the Centre but if they hold on to their core appeal and knit their grassroots understanding the same way the BJP has in the heartland, they are not blowing in the wind too soon. As for Modi's expected second stint in leadership, the question is whether he will be magnanimous about seeking a legacy run or merely get territorial, seeking to build a pan-India narrative with the turncoat politics of power play? For somebody who is sagacious enough and seems to have crafted his strategy well — first harping on benign development, then upping aggressive posturing of identity politics and now widening the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's) fringe appeal to an easily harvestable core base — he has a fertile ground for his play. With the cushion of numbers, he could make the difference between being a statesman or dictator.

Trouble in the skies

Even as promoters of IndiGo resolve problems, other airlines are cribbing that it is being favoured over flying rights



The news last week was that IndiGo's two promoters, Rahul Bhatia and Rakesh Gangwal, have had some differences and were trying to resolve them. In a way, this was actually a positive for the airline that its promoters had recognised their problems and were trying to get things back on track before things got out of hand. The markets, however, disagreed and India's largest and most valuable airline, worth over ₹50,000 crore, lost almost a tenth of its value while stock markets exuberantly expected another term for Narendra Modi. But now IndiGo seems to be in another spot of bother as its rival private airlines are accusing the government of being partial to it as Jet Airways' old routes get carved up, albeit 'temporarily', according to the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Jet Airways had built a very strong network of routes between India and the Arabian peninsula, particularly from Kerala, and while it had cancelled these flights as it went into a financial tailspin, they are extremely valuable. Although Air India has the first option on many of these routes, the national carrier is deeply short of aircraft. It has increased capacity on some routes but IndiGo, by virtue of being India's largest airline, stands to gain the most, particularly since it has several extra aircraft at the current time and with more pilots coming on board, will be able to offer new services very quickly.

The other airlines are understandably aggrieved about this and have a point when they argue that the routes should be divided equally among all of them. International routes are usually far more profitable than domestic sectors for airlines. With Jet Airways' barely on life support and with the next government almost certain to pull the plug on it, the need of the hour actually is helping air travellers. The collapse of the airline with its international network has meant airfares shooting up on flights to Dubai, London, Singapore among other places. The Indian government must try and be fair to all airlines but it should also understand that high fares could damage the industry in the long run. There is a lot of room for growth for all of India's airlines and a route map in new sectors must also be promoted with equal zeal. The Civil Aviation Ministry is keen to start new flights to China, South East Asia, Iran and elsewhere in Arabia. Even if IndiGo gets a lion's share of the old routes, these other sectors hold a lot of promise.

The Italian connection

BG Deshmukh's revelations in his book, *A Cabinet Secretary Looks Back*, shows how security protocols in the Rajiv era weren't entirely above board



A SURYA PRAKASH

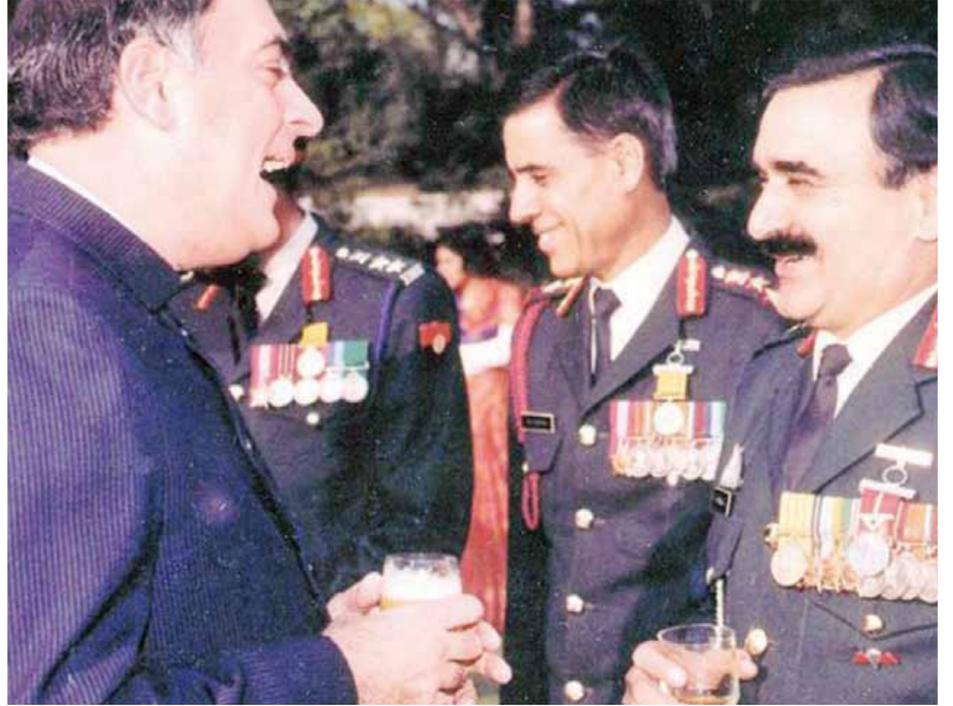
There is much talk of how Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister took his Italian relatives on a holiday to Lakshadweep and compromised national security by misusing the aircraft carrier *INS Viraat* and other Navy assets and also had naval officers in attendance to cater to the needs of the holiday-makers.

But there is an even greater scandal concerning the wholly illegal involvement of his Italian brother-in-law in the so-called training of the Special Protection Group (SPG) that managed the proximate security of the Prime Minister — a matter which would have certainly compromised the protocols of the special force and exposed it to foreign agencies.

Former Cabinet Secretary BG Deshmukh narrated the story of how the SPG became vulnerable to unknown and unauthorised foreigners in his autobiography, *A Cabinet Secretary Looks Back*. He said that as Cabinet Secretary, the special force was under his charge and one day in October 1986, he was told by an officer of this force posted in the Prime Minister's residence that a few of them were going to Italy for "special training." He immediately checked with Rajiv Gandhi and the latter said this was being arranged by the "Prime Minister's House." Deshmukh was not at all happy with this arrangement because the special force was a force that protected the Prime Minister of India, not Rajiv Gandhi, the individual. Therefore, he said the expenses must be borne by the Government. He also told Rajiv Gandhi that the Intelligence Bureau could handle it but later suggested that the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) be entrusted with the job and the payments be made from the secret funds.

Rajiv Gandhi asked him to speak to Capt Satish Sharma, his close friend. Sharma told Deshmukh that Joshi, Director, RAW, should speak to a certain Italian (whom he named) and settle the details." When Deshmukh asked Sharma who this Italian was, the latter "had a hearty laugh" and said Joshi would know. "Joshi ...said, it might have escaped my memory that this person was Rajiv Gandhi's brother-in-law." Later, Deshmukh said, Joshi came back to him after a week and said when RAW's Geneva office asked the Italian to pick up the amount in US dollars, the Italian said Joshi should himself "make arrangements to bring the amount in Italian currency and deliver it in Italy."

Deshmukh recounted what happened next: "Joshi was not at all happy with this as it would entail carrying about a quarter of a million dollars in Italian currency in a big suitcase, which was sure to invite trouble." The Cabinet Secretary told Rajiv Gandhi that the arrangement was not acceptable, "specially because the amount was so large. He (Rajiv Gandhi) flushed and told me to forget the whole affair." Later, Deshmukh learnt that officers did not go to Italy but an Italian expert



came to India — "of course, he became rather unpopular with the SPG for he would throw his weight around." Deshmukh also realised that thereafter instructions had gone out to keep him out of the loop on all such "sensitive (read family) matters!"

In other words, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi wanted RAW to pay a quarter of a million dollars to his brother-in-law in Italian currency supposedly to train the SPG. And what were the qualifications of this brother-in-law with regard to proximate security of a Prime Minister? No one had a clue!

Deshmukh included his narration of this shocking incident by saying that "in the Mughal-darbar-like functioning of the Gandhis, he had committed the cardinal sin of checking with the king himself, the message he conveyed to me through his aides."

Deshmukh is a credible and reliable witness to the Rajiv Gandhi era in national politics. He belonged to the Maharashtra cadre of the IAS. He was called by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to Delhi in 1986 and appointed Cabinet Secretary. A year later, the Prime Minister was coping with the Bofors scandal. In 1989, he was appointed Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. "Therefore, when the Bofors kickbacks allegation became public in April 1987, he was in the thick

of it, participating in key meetings and advising Rajiv Gandhi on the way forward when the Opposition mounted an attack on the Prime Minister and accused him of taking bribes for the Swedish company.

The senior civil servant said he became aware of the fact that the Prime Minister's House had access to funds from abroad when the question of hiring Rajiv Gandhi's Italian relative to "train" the SPG came up. There were two sources for these funds — money stashed away by the family in foreign banks consequent to garnering commissions on foreign deals and the other being the secret funds of the Government of India. The secret funds are deployed for such purposes because they are not subject to inquisitive probes by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

Hailing as he did from Maharashtra, Deshmukh was aware of how the Congress collected funds in the state. In the initial years of her prime ministership, Indira Gandhi depended heavily on Maharashtra leaders like Rajini Patil and Vasantrao Naik. Later, when she gained complete control of the party and the Government, she decided that it was far better to collect funds for the party by "claiming cuts from foreign deals."

Consequently, trusted offi-

cers were posted in key Ministries like defence production. Also, Deshmukh said the practice of taking kickbacks earned India notoriety in foreign countries. So much so that when India decided to buy submarines from West Germany, the German Defence Ministry told the supplier the amount of commission that it would have to pay. The general talk in international circles was that in Latin American and African countries, the commission was above 10 per cent. India was placed in the five to 10 per cent bracket.

So, the scandal about commission payments by Bofors was no surprise. Deshmukh said that although he did not believe Rajiv Gandhi took the money, he said there was strong circumstantial evidence that he (Rajiv Gandhi) knew the names of the recipients but was reluctant to expose them. One could only surmise that the beneficiaries could be the Congress "or a close relative or friend of the Prime Minister's family", Deshmukh concluded. Indeed, he says a lot here without taking names. It appears, the *dramatis personae* of *L'Affaire SPG* were once again the same! For the sake of our Prime Minister's security, all this needs to be probed.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal)



THE SENIOR CIVIL SERVANT SAID HE BECAME AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE HAD ACCESS TO FUNDS FROM ABROAD WHEN THE QUESTION OF HIRING RAJIV GANDHI'S ITALIAN RELATIVE TO 'TRAIN' THE SPG CAME UP



SOUNDBITE

I am in a same-sex relationship and I don't think there is anything wrong with it. I believe in individual freedom.

Indian athlete —Dutee Chand



Exit polls are not the final decision but are indications. By and large, what comes out in the exit polls also reflects in the results.

Union Minister —Nitin Gadkari



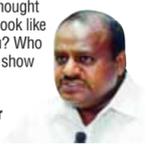
What are we supposed to celebrate about Cannes 2019? The cinema that's being celebrated or just the clothes our actors wear and the parties they attend?

Director —Onir



What have you (media) thought of us politicians? Do we look like cartoon characters to you? Who gave you the authority to show everything humorously?

Karnataka Chief Minister —HD Kumaraswamy



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gear up for World Cup

Sir — The Indian cricket team is one of the favourites to lift the World Cup on July 14. Most of the players who have been selected to play in the tournament being hosted by England and Wales have proved their mettle in the Indian Premier League (IPL). The sole exception seems to be Vijay Shankar, who played poorly in the League. The IPL, of course, is entirely different from the World Cup, but most players took the League seriously. Shankar's failure throughout the tournament merits concern. Hopefully, Shankar will rise to the occasion. Here's wishing our heroes the very best for the World Cup.

M Pradyu
Kannur

Save elephants

Sir — Tedious temple celebrations take a massive toll on our gentle pachyderms. The heat, sound and the crush of bodies cause them suffering. Not just animal rights activists but every citizen must do something to relieve

temple elephants of their burden. The man-animal conflict is the result of human deprivations in forests. Enough emphasis is not being laid on protecting wildlife corridors and extending the arc of the protected forests.

Anoop Hosmath
Mysuru

Role model for true friendship

Amid the verbal garbage and extreme loose cannons from political rivals in the just-concluded general elections, bonhomie and camaraderie were rare commodities. Muck was thrown at each other with gusto by contestants. There was no limit for personal criticism. Families, too, were not spared. Decency was thrown to the wind by most political rivals. But somewhere in distant Patna, *khamoshi* prevailed. In the Patna Sahib constituency, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and his friend and Congress candidate Shatrughan Sinha were pitted against each other. Before the "campaign battle" began, the two friends vouched not to humiliate each other by raking up the past. Only speaking about policies was their *mantra*. Both exuded 'personal respect' towards each other describing either as a "good man." Apparently, both Prasad and Sinha were comfortable in silence.

Ironically, when Prasad desired to test his fate in the electoral battle, he chose Patna Sahib because he belongs to Bihar and more importantly, from the Kayastha community of which he is an important member. However, Sinha is also a well-known if not a cult figure



of the community, which has as much as four lakh votes in the constituency. The two have been known as thick friends from childhood. Insiders say any attempt to ruffe each other's personal space could have brought some deep secrets out. That said, Kayastha voters are fiercely pro-BJP and are also smitten by the charisma of Sinha. Will Prasad breach the Sinha fort by dethroning his friend? The mutual respect and love between old friends hopefully will stay.

Ganapathi Bhat
Akola

In India, all exit polls have indicated a landslide victory for the BJP-led NDA. The exit poll results cannot be brushed lightly. Prime Minister Modi has won the confidence of the people by running a corruption-free Government and focussing on good governance. The negative campaigning by the Opposition that focussed only on dislodging the BJP with no other agenda on the cards is sure to have a telling effect on the results. The Opposition should craft a workable strategy.

Sravana Ramachandran
Chennai

Easy target

Sir — Amid competitive politics and conflicting political narratives, it is no surprise that the EC finds itself bombarded with a barrage of complaints of alleged violations of the model code of conduct. But given the reality of today's polarised politics, the EC will always be found wanting by someone or the other.

Rohit
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Inculcate smart farming practices

Data-driven agriculture can help India manage droughts better and improve long-term profitability of produce



VENKAT MAROJU

News about Fani and the trail of devastation in large parts of coastal Odisha put the spotlight on cyclones and with it extreme weather-related events that impact agriculture came into focus. Arguably, one of the most frequently experienced weather events in India is drought, which has, unfortunately, become commonplace. But with new trends in this sector like data-driven agriculture and precision farming, drought situations can be combated and negative impact on yields and farmer incomes can be minimised.

Farming and data seem to occupy opposite sides of the spectrum but the link between the two is at its strongest ever, giving rise to the concept and practice of 'data-driven agriculture', which is a result of the need to participate in a globally competitive and market-oriented system of agriculture. What it entails is the thoughtful use of big data to supplement on-farm precision agriculture. It means having the right farm data at the right time to make better decisions to improve long-term profitability. Precision agriculture is another buzzword and it specifically refers to the use of data that has been generated on the farm. Data-driven agriculture combines this on-farm data with other statistics that is compiled by a third party, catalysing it into useful information that helps make correct decisions. Data here is both an input and a product and putting them to use can resolve many issues. When it comes to different types of data that are generated as a result of the entry of digital technologies into agriculture, there are many. And combating drought is supported not directly by a single set of data but by applying a combination of them — some indirect parameters and others more straightforward. The types of data generated range from analysing weather patterns to advice on when to plant, to analyse prices and to advice on when to harvest. These decisions are subject to a variety of influences. The best combination of data needs to be applied to arrive at the right decision. Looking at the types of data in greater detail, in the normal case, there are two streams of data used by farmers. The first relates to data that is generated and collated on the farm, to be used on the farm itself. This is 'localised' and includes soil data — form, depth and composition, seed and fertiliser use, date of sowing, production practices, water use and the like. This kind of data can both be generated and managed by the farmer or by an agent. The farmer 'owns' this data. The second stream is data generated and collated off the farm for use on the farm. Examples are climatic data and market prices that have been interpreted and customised for on-farm use. This is called 'imported' data.

When it comes to combating drought, direct data available will be of weather forecast which is available through weather advisory services that farmers may subscribe to. But this must be combined with other data such as soil moisture, soil type and type of crops to grow, when to sow and when to harvest. It may also help to know the pricing patterns as well. Even the farmer's access to financial services like banking, credit and insurance will have a bearing, helped on by data-driven services that ease access to finance. Fortunately, remote sensing satellite data combined with unmanned aerial vehicles and mobile weather stations are providing a huge amount of data that models can integrate. Hyper-localised analysis and recommendations are becoming available more easily, with GPS-enabled phones that provide exact latitude, longitude and elevation — all of which can sharpen decision-making.

Taking a deeper look into how such weather data can be collected, the good news is that infrastructure to collect weather and rainfall data has drastically improved. There is a system in which meteorological stations send out field staff to collect localised weather data and transmit it into a central repository. Adding to this are automated weather data collection systems using sensors, which are also evolving. Other features like ground water monitoring and monitoring of water flow in canals are also carried out and captured. All this data put together helps in 'water budgeting', which in turn can reduce the damage due to drought. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra are some States investing in this area.

An app developed by ICRISAT in collaboration with Microsoft does just that. The app advises farmers on the best time to sow crops depending on weather conditions, soil and other indicators. Using business intelligence tools with a dashboard provides important insights around soil health, fertiliser recommendations and seven days' weather forecast. There are more than 500 million farmers worldwide who play a vital role in food production. Unlike earlier times, it has become possible to bring them into the fold of data-driven farming because of the spread of mobile technology and ubiquitous connectivity, irrespective of whether they are literate or not. While this diversity enhances resilience, it can also become a challenge to data-driven service providers whose business models need to match delivery of precise and personalised services with the need to reach many farmers at low costs.

(The writer is CEO of a farm software solution company)

I AM WRITING TO THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A SPECIAL SESSION OF ASSEMBLY. WE WANT DISCUSSION ON ISSUES TO TEST GOVERNMENT STRENGTH.

—LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN ASSEMBLY
 GOPAL BHARGAVA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THEY (BJP) HAVE BEEN TRYING THIS SINCE DAY 1. I HAVE WANTED THE MAJORITY AT LEAST FOUR TIMES. THEY WANT TO DO IT AGAIN, WE HAVE NO PROBLEM.

—MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER
 KAMAL NATH

Matches we never played

With some imagination and greater investment of time and trust, India and Australia will find that the sea between them is not a barrier, it is their shared border



RAJA KARTHIKEYA

India's southern neighbour Australia wants more from the bilateral relationship. But this may require a lot more investment and imagination from both sides. The Australian continent and the Indian sub-continent have been tied together since the ice age but the ice between them has only begun to break in recent times. This has been buoyed up by an increasingly prominent Indian diaspora in Australia (so prominent that the last two Australian ambassadors to India have been of Indian origin) and by growing appreciation over there about India's potential as an economic and strategic partner. More recently, the two countries' strategic relationship has been in the news after the resumption of the Quad.

Driven by diaspora but not dollars: The Indian diaspora in Australia is highly visible in the coastal cities and is the second largest Asian-origin diaspora there (after the Chinese) with some families almost six generations old. With their above-the-median-level education levels and wealth, Indian-Australians are now entering politics and policy-making in a big way. For its size (seven lakh in a population of 2.5 crore), Indian-Australians punch above their weight. In terms of economics though, two-way trade languishes at \$21 billion, equal to a fifth of Australia's trade with China. Trade deficit is decidedly in Australia's favour. However, it is not so much the deficit that is troubling as is the under-realisation of the potential of the relationship. India-Australia ties continues to be driven by Governments and inadequately by businesses. Australian corporates are too conservative to invest in what they perceive as a "risky" and "volatile" business environment in India. Barely 0.3 per cent of Australia's outward FDI in 2017 came to India. There is a perception among Australian corporates, perhaps far more than European or American counterparts, that Indian business environment is tumultuous with frequent Government interventions. On the other hand, large Indian corporates appear to view Australia largely as a market but not as an investment destination. Part of the challenge is that despite being a country endowed with natural resources, Australia's GDP is largely driven by the services industry and Indian corporates need significant knowhow to muscle their way into it.

Australia's resource paradox: The lure of Australia's commodities continues to attract Indian investment, albeit at a slower pace. The single-largest Indian overseas investment proposal till date, Adani Group's gambit to buy the Carmichael coal deposit in Queensland for over \$16.5 billion, ran into a political storm and had to be considerably scaled down last November. Though political parties have largely supported the acquisition, environmental activists lobbied against the project. The controversy is symbolic of a larger paradox in Australia's energy policy, which sits on some of the world's largest coal deposits but a large part of its population now opposes using coal due to concerns about carbon emissions. Australia is, thus, turning away from coal-fired plants and is increasingly adopting renewables even as it remains the world's second largest exporter of coal.

In fact, the Australian economy is so closely tied to coal exports that its currency went into a downward spin in February over rumours of China blocking its coal imports, after ships bear-



ing Australian coal were delayed off Dalian. Australia's biggest markets for coal, China and India, are now keen to move up the value chain to own the sources of production. But the fact that Chinese and Indian efforts have aroused more attention than Australia's domestic coal production among the Australian public and the continuing dilemma of economics vs environmental responsibility in Australian politics, will play in the minds of Indian investors intent on Australia.

Australia is counting big on becoming a top destination for Indian students for higher education. The report, 'An India Economic Strategy to 2035: Navigating from Potential to Delivery' by Australia's former Ambassador to India, Peter Varghese, stressed the potential for Australia in skilling India's workforce for rapid economic growth. However, the value of an Australian degree in the Indian job market is not yet seen on par with an American degree. It's also an open secret that for many Indian students headed to Australia, education is the first step towards settling down in the country. On the face of it, this appears to be a win-win solution for Indians as well as for Australia since the latter is under-populated, direly needs population in its interiors and would benefit from a skilled immigrant workforce. In fact, foreign students, who opt to attend universities in smaller cities like Adelaide, are even being awarded extra points when they apply for permanent residency.

However, there appears to be some reluctance in Australia to fully acknowledge in policy this linkage between foreign students, who come for education and the latent immigration aspirations of the foreign students. This may lead to mismatched expectations at some point: Australia welcomes Indian students so that it economically helps the local education industry and expects that they would return home after their study; but Indian students see Australian education as a conduit for migration.

The Peter Varghese report, released in April 2018, has won bipartisan support by both the Liberal and Labour parties. The report calls for targeted engagement with 10 Indian States. There is also a call for a regular Strategic

Economic Dialogue between the Finance Ministers on both sides. In an upcoming parallel report by Amb Anil Wadhwa, India may similarly identify a set of priority areas. For the economic relationship to take off, Canberra and Delhi would merit coming up with a list of mutual actions based on these reports.

Learning political values from each other: Politically, the two democracies appear to move along parallel longitudes of history albeit in different hemispheres of reality. While India's electorate is 60 times that of Australia's, the latter's electoral system, a full century older than the former, has had more time to mature. Despite the vicissitudes of unstable Governments, stable State institutions keep the economy ticking in Australia. India has had its share of coalition Governments and despite a stable Government, the even-handedness of State institutions remains a concern.

There's much that both nations can learn from each other. Australia's democracy with its compulsory voting rule has much to be envied. One can get a ticket to contest as MP in Australia by applying to a political party with your resumé, something that is unthinkable in the Indian political scene. Transparency in Australian politics is awe-inspiring. Australia has only recently begun to turn its back on a history of racial exclusionism. Social justice is a demand in both countries but the way India dissolves the layers in its stratified caste system is likely to be very different from the way Australia handles historical injustices against the native Aborigines. What both nations can, however, concur on is the undebatable need to ensure equality of opportunity — in India for women and socially under-privileged communities and in Australia for the people in the rural interior. In both cases, youth is an asset, which, if not managed deftly, can become a real challenge. The threat of extremism and disaffection from the mainstream is for real. If polarisation levels along religious grounds are likely to pose a clear and present challenge in India for years to come, the recent massacre in Christchurch by an Australian suggest the latent fury in a small section of its society that cannot be ignored. Given

the way hate-mongers are sharing ideas across borders, the policy establishment in both countries needs to brainstorm together on ways to address cyber-radicisation, irrespective of the ideological tint, and without sacrificing democratic freedoms.

Future areas for cooperation: Looking ahead, the bilateral relationship needs a heavy dose of imagination. Notwithstanding India-Australia cooperation in the high seas, including the recent bilateral naval exercises off Visakhapatnam, there is great scope for collaboration in other forms of international commons. In the internet, India's IT power can be boosted manifold with Australia's edge in cyber security technologies. And yet, private sector cyber collaboration may just not be enough.

Both democracies remain highly vulnerable to cyber-attacks. In February, Australia's Government and political parties were hit by a cyberattack attributed to a "sophisticated state actor." In March, the website of the ruling party in India was hacked. In an era where elections are won and lost over social media, cyber-security awareness needs to be ramped up among leaders of both countries. It is not just about protecting EVMs but about protecting all instruments that shape elections — from party websites to insulating against any foreign attempt to subvert election through fake news. Both will do well to collaborate here.

Space is another frontier. Despite a MoU between India and Australia, joint space collaboration remains nascent. Australia's space agency, established in July 2018, stands to gain from working together with ISRO on missions such as oceanography and remote sensing in the Indian Ocean region. Climate change is arguably the most under-appreciated area for collaboration. India is reeling from a rise in Extreme Precipitation Events (EPEs) such as the recent Kerala floods and unseasonal droughts. For the last seven years, Australia has been faced with below-average rainfall and drought even as rising acidity levels in the ocean have been destroying the Great Barrier Reef. While the countries may differ in climate negotiations about ways to address carbon emissions, they acknowledge that climate change is a reality. Hence, there should be no hesitation in collaborating on developing and benchmarking climate adaptation policies that range from building regulations to forestry to addressing the security impact of internal displacement of people due to climate change.

Building trust bilaterally: For far too long, Australia and India have been bound together by a third country. Pre-independence, it was the British empire that ensured that troops from both countries fought and bled together in theatres as diverse as Gallipoli and Tobruk. In recent years, shared interests with the US have brought the nations closer. But is there a scope to enhance this relationship without a third country? This requires Australian and Indian civil servants and politicians to overcome some long-standing trust issues. A deep perceptual shift is needed. This goes beyond targeted measures to enhance security cooperation. Australians must understand that India will remain a land of paradoxical images which work together — democratic freedoms co-exist with disrupted Parliament sessions, water supply problems co-habit a land with anti-satellite weapons. The deeper, systemic stability of India needs to be understood for what it is. Indians, too, should understand that Australia today sees its future far closer to Asia than the Americas. The familiar bonding over cricket can co-exist with the strangeness of Australian National Football.

(The writer was a participant in the 2019 Australia-India Youth Dialogue. These views are personal)

Bridge the gap on patent rights

It's unfortunate that the USTR, the US trade body, has put India on a 'priority watch list' for intellectual property rights violations. For now, the rift appears too wide and requires adjustments by both sides. Protection of IP rights isn't always inimical to public interest



UTTAM GUPTA

The US Trade Representative (USTR) has placed India on its Priority Watch List (PWL), alleging lack of "sufficient measurable improvements" to its Intellectual Property (IP) framework on long-standing and new challenges that have negatively affected American right holders. It has warned of enforcement actions under Section 301 of the Trade Act or pursuant to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or other trade agreement dispute settlement procedures, necessary to combat unfair trade practices.

The long-standing IP challenges facing US businesses in India include those which make it difficult for innovators to receive and maintain

patents in that country, particularly for pharmaceuticals, insufficient enforcement actions and lack of an effective system for protection against unfair commercial use as well as unauthorised disclosure of undisclosed test or other data generated to obtain marketing approval for agrochemical products.

The biggest challenge is Section 3(D) in the amended Indian Patent Act (2005), which bars grant of patents to new forms of known substances unless the new form results in significant enhancement in efficacy over known substance. The applicant should demonstrate that the "new form" gives substantially higher "efficacy" over a previously known compound. Indian law-makers had justified this as a step to rein in tendencies to seek "frivolous" patents on some minor modifications to an existing substance or "ever-greening".

The Constitutional validity of Section 3(D) was upheld by the Supreme Court of India in the case of Glivec (an anti-cancer drug) in 2013, the beta-crystalline form of pre-existing compound 'imatib

mesylate', for which Swiss major Novartis AG had sought a patent. It virtually shut the door to "incremental" innovations such as "new dosage form" and "new delivery systems." This is what worries global R&D companies and the USTR.

A perception that this will tantamount to "ever-greening" is a myth. Patent protection is confined only to a "new form" of "known" substance. The latter on completion of its patent term is already available to "generic" players for manufacture and marketing. Moreover, any company other than the inventor of a "known" compound, including Indian firms, can come up with a "new form" or a "new dosage" or "delivery system" and take patent cover.

While getting a patent is difficult, securing its enforcement is even more daunting. A major factor here is the use of compulsory licence — a flexibility available to developing countries under trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) agreement — which is often misused. A compulsory licence authorises a

generic firm to manufacture and market a patented product without prior consent of the patent holder.

Under Section 84 of Indian Patent (Amendment) Act 2005, a compulsory licence can be issued for "private commercial use" if it is found that the patent holder has not taken required steps to make patent product available in "sufficient" quantities or price charged is not "affordable." Further, under Section 92, the Government can issue the compulsory licence citing circumstances of "national emergency or extreme urgency or in case of public non-commercial use."

In 2012, using Section 84, compulsory licence was granted to Natco Pharma to make cheaper version of Bayer's kidney and liver cancer drug sorafenib (brand name: Nexavar). This was upheld by the apex court in 2014. With regard to protection of registration data, Article 39.3 of the TRIPs agreement states as under: "Members, when requiring, as a condition of approving the marketing of pharmaceutical or of agricultural products, which utilise new

chemical entities, the submission of undisclosed test or other data, the origination of which involves a considerable effort, shall protect such data against unfair commercial use."

In February 2004, the Government had set up an inter-ministerial committee under the chairmanship of Secretary, department of chemicals and petrochemicals, to "consider the steps to be taken in the context of the provisions of Article 39.3 for protection of undisclosed test or other data submitted to the regulator for seeking market approval of agrochemicals and pharmaceuticals."

In its report submitted on May 31, 2007, the committee recommended three years of data protection for agrochemicals and also suggested protection of information against unauthorised disclosure/use of agrochemicals and pharmaceuticals. In Pesticides Management Bill (PMB) introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 2008, the then Government had proposed data protection for three years. The Bill is still pending. In all the aforementioned three

areas, the gulf between the US and India is a bit too wide. While USTR wants Section 3(D) in the amended Indian Patent Act, 2005, to go or substantially diluted, India is in no mood to yield. On compulsory licence though, the latter had used it only once, its being on the statute makes the former scary. On data protection, with process of enacting the PMB going nowhere, the US has become jittery. No wonder, USTR has declared India as a repeat offender.

Both countries need to make efforts to bridge the gulf. India should expedite passing a law on data protection, dilute provisions of Section 3(D) and instill confidence that compulsory licence will be sparingly used. For this, it will have to shed a mindset that views protection of IP rights as being inimical to public interest. On its part, US-based MNCs will have to demonstrate that they won't exploit these rights to the detriment of patients and Indian farmers. However, for now, this seems to be a remote possibility.

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



FOREIGN EYE



BREXIT OPTIONS: GETTING STARKER

The odds seem slim on Mrs May snatching any sort of victory from the jaws of defeat before she is chased off into retirement. Yet the attempt to pass a bill is an important moment. Without some kind of convergence next month, it seems unlikely that Brexit can be resolved in the current parliament. But that does not make it any more likely that it can be resolved in the next parliament either.

(The Guardian Editorial)

CaffeineFactor

Drinking coffee keeps the bowels moving because it changes gut bacteria and improves ability of intestines to contract, researchers say. But they do not pinpoint any specific reason or mechanism for this



DOCYARD

DR RN KALRA

Cardiologist, Medical Director & CEO
KALRA HOSPITAL, SRCNC



Be hale and hearty

Heart attack rates are increasing among adults in their 20s and 30s. This is a worrying trend in India. Experts recommend extensive cardiac screening at high schools and colleges as an effective preventive measure.

Changing lifestyle, food habits, high stress in urban areas, binge drinking and use of narcotics have increased the risk factors among youth and now experts are not surprised to see a teenage or 25-year-old becoming a victim of a heart attack.

Number of young Indians is suffering from this life-threatening disease and the reason behind this is a sedentary lifestyle. If this continues the future looks even more dangerous. These days we are not surprised while handling patients between age groups of 25-35 with heart attack cases and emergency. It is a worrying trend and there is an urgent need to educate the younger generation about preventive measures.

According to the ICMR State Level Disease Burden Report, among all age groups, the prevalence of heart disease has increased by over 50 per cent from 1990 to 2016 in India, with an increase observed in every state. Heart disease contributed 17.8 per cent of total deaths.

The risk factors for a heart attack include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, use of addictive substances, Diabetes, poor diet, obesity, inactive lifestyle and excessive drinking

The most common heart issues, ailing at the young generation, is coronary artery disease. Another severe condition is characterised by enlarged cardiac muscle cells which are abnormal and associated with further problems, including heart failure, irregular heart rhythms, and an increased risk of angina and heart attack.

Genetic mutation of the genes causes another rare heart muscle disease called left ventricular noncompaction (LVNC). The biggest cause of heart diseases in young people is willful ignorance towards a proper healthy lifestyle, which thereby increases the risks of uninvited heart attacks. The risk factors for a heart attack include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, use of substances (narcotics), Diabetes, poor diet, obesity, inactive lifestyle and excessive drinking.

Youngsters have a tendency to undermine the risk factors. Sometimes ignoring routine checkup leads to the younger suddenly succumbing to the disease. Despite this, vast majority of youngsters and adults fail to identify the warning signs - Chest pain, breathiness, undue fatigue, acidity and lack of stamina, chest pressure, shortness-of-breath, cold sweats individually, asthma or even the side effects of an emotional outburst. And this can lead to tragic outcomes.

As a preventive measure, we are also calling for wider cardiac screening high schools and colleges. Even sportspersons should be included in the screening. Screening of cardiac condition among youth should include a review of risk factors, blood pressure, heart-related symptoms, family history, and other stress-related issues.

A study conducted at a Government-run heart institute on 2,000 heart attack cases in the last two years revealed that 40 per cent of them did not have any conventional risk factors. Hence cardiac screening among teenagers and youth and regular check-up by all age group can prevent and reduce heart attacks.

SUMMERCoolERS

LYCHEE: Lychee is a small fruit with a sweet smell and taste, which is available in the summer. Litchi has anti-cancer properties. This fruit has flavonoids in the pulp which helps to fight fatal and lethal diseases like cancer. It contains Flavones, quercetin and kaemferol which are powerful compounds in reducing the proliferation of cancer cells.

Litchis help to nourish the skin oils which reduce the growth of acne. It also refines the skin and leads to less spots on the skin. It is also good for people who want to lose weight because of the absence of fats and cholesterol.

It also keeps the digestion strong, maintains a clean stomach, improves appetite and cures heartburn and burning sensation in the stomach.

Lychees are a very good refreshing fruit for the summers as it keeps you hydrated because of the high water content in them.



Don't be SAD

Doctors and counsellors tell TEJASWINI MITTAL how to deal with social phobia

Khushi Kumar, a 14-year-old school-goer always loved sharing her stories and views in front of her classmates. She was confident and outgoing, and everyone loved her for it. However, this time, as she waited for her turn to present her first assignment in Class X, she couldn't stop trembling. Her classmates were reading out the stories they had written in their creative writing class for a peer review and she was next.

She kept her head down, hoping that the teacher would skip her name, but no such luck. It was now her turn, she made it to the front of the classroom and began reading out her story. The beginning was smooth, but she eventually began to fumble over her words. Feeling the eyes of her classmates on her, she felt like an animal put on display at the zoo, under the scrutiny of her peers.

"I'm sorry, I can't do this" she said and promptly went to sit back down on her seat. She was disappointed and felt like everyone was judging her, silently making fun of her in their heads. Especially her friend Maanvi who had turned to another classmate Ria after a huge fight with her. Ever since, Khushi had started feeling more nervous and jittery around other people as Maanvi, her only support system for the last three years suddenly wasn't there for her anymore. She had no other actual friends and was completely alone which affected her in ways that she couldn't point out yet.

Social phobia, which is also known as Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD), is a serious mental health problem in the country. SAD is

caused by the effects of not fitting in, being bullied, rejected or ignored. Shy adolescents or avoidant adults have emphasised unpleasant experiences with peers or childhood bullying or harassment. Popularity is also found to be negatively correlated with social anxiety, and children who are neglected by their peers report higher social anxiety and fear of negative evaluation than other categories of children. It is an intense, persistent fear of being watched and judged by others. This fear can affect work, school, and other day-

Comorbidity Survey, social phobia has an incidence of 2.79 per cent and prevalence of 1.47 per cent in India. A survey conducted by them where mental disorders were studied in a large sample of 1,0148 adolescents aged 13 to 17 years clearly showed that the level of social anxiety was higher in children in their early teens, standing at 11.94 per cent in 14 years old, 17.02 per cent in 15 years, 6.4 per cent in 16 year olds and 0.0 per cent in 17 year-old teenagers. This shows that the incidence of social anxiety is high in the mid-teens. It is what Khushi is experiencing without any knowledge of it yet.

One doesn't get social anxiety in one go. It manifests itself in small ways, like sudden shyness in talking to new people, having trouble in opening up in a group; it just keeps building up. "Social anxiety can often be mistaken for common shyness," says Dr Mitali Suri, a psychology teacher at The Heritage School, Gurgaon.

"Many people suffering from social anxiety often believe that the fear they are experiencing is just shyness and that they will eventually overcome it as time passes. However, social anxiety disorder needs to be properly treated or it can last for many years or a lifetime and prevent a person from reaching his or her full potential," she tells you.

There are two main methods that can be used to treat social anxiety disorder. Psychological counselling or psychotherapy are the most common methods which help to improve the symptoms in people with social anxiety. Here, one learns how to recognise and change negative thoughts about

ONE DOESN'T GET SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER IN ONE GO. IT MANIFESTS IN SMALL WAYS, LIKE SUDDEN SHYNESS IN TALKING TO PEOPLE AND HAVING TROUBLE IN OPENING UP IN A GROUP

to-day activities.

With regard to Khushi's situation, some people with the disorder do not have anxiety in social situations but have performance anxiety instead. They feel physical symptoms of anxiety in situations such as giving a speech, playing a sports game, or dancing or playing a musical instrument on stage.

According to National

DadiKaKehna

Summer months come with many problems — dry skin and chapped lips — which is not only unattractive but painful causing discomfort.

ROSHANI DEVI shares home remedies to treat it



Nobody likes to have chapped and dry lips.

Those who have a dry skin usually face problems in summers as well. More so if you are out in the sun most of the times. But there are a few simple tricks that one can follow to keep them soft and moist so that you can smile all the time.

The most important thing to keep in mind is to not lick your lips. While licking may take away the dryness, your saliva will only irritate the skin more.

Another key point to keep in mind is to breathe through the nose. Most of us don't realise that sometimes we tend to breathe through our mouth

leading to dryness. Use coconut oil which is rich in Vitamin E. It can hydrate your lips and repair damaged cells.

Sometimes not drinking enough water can lead to dryness. Keep yourself well hydrated by drinking lots of water.

Rose petals and raw milk can nourish your lips and help you treat your cracked lips naturally. Soak 5-6 rose petals in the milk for about two or three hours. Mash it to get a smooth consistency, like that of a paste, and apply it on your lips.

Leave it for 20 minutes and wash with cold water. Do this every day for a week.



TIPTOP

Medicover, a European healthcare service provider has opened its 16th fertility clinic in the Capital. With the launch of a state-of-the-art fertility clinic in Preet Vihar, the clinic has ensured the availability of the best of technology and medical experts to childless couples in East Delhi and adjoining areas. It brings best European practices, trust, transparency and high-quality compassionate service to all its patients across all the centres.

Also, in recognition for providing the world class service to patients, Medicover Fertility CEO Gaurav Malhotra was awarded Healthcare CEO of the Year Award by Economic Times NOW. Malhotra said: "We are happy that we are getting recognised for our dedication to help people improve and maintain their health. Our clinic is committed to bring

in the best clinical practices, trust, transparency and high-quality service. We pledge a new level of care based on compassion, sophisticated clinical skills and advanced technology and equipment."

The clinic has qualified IVF specialists across India and are offering best solutions for fertility problems faced by men and women. The firm is dedicated to providing care of the highest quality, delivered with integrity, kindness and respect. The chain is committed to serve the patient with the best of the technology and has the advantage of having medical experts who are the best in the industry.

With over 24 years of clinical experience, the clinic is amongst the best fertility clinic across the globe. In India it has presence in 11 cities.



SLIMLINE

Limiting evening exposure to blue-light emitting screens on smartphones, tablets and computers can reverse sleep problems and reduce symptoms of fatigue, lack of concentration and bad mood in teenagers, after just one week, says a study.

The researchers found that those who had more than four hours per day of screen time had on average 30 minutes later sleep onset and wake up times than those who recorded less than one hour per day of

screen time, as well as more symptoms of sleep loss. "Adolescents increasingly spend more time on devices with screens and sleep complaints are frequent in this age group," said study co-author Dirk Jan Stenvers from Amsterdam UMC hospital in the Netherlands.

Lack of sleep doesn't just cause immediate symptoms of tiredness and poor concentration but can also increase the risk of serious long-term health issues like obesity, diabetes and heart disease. — IANS

YOGA FOR YOUTHFUL FACE

Facial yoga is a natural way to make your face look younger. MANSI GULATI tells you how



A face yoga specialist has created a 20-minute daily programme — natural face lift. The programme has to be carried out daily, six times a week. Together with massage, acupuncture, yoga and facial exercises to give safe anti-ageing results and a natural face lift.

We affirm that anyone can benefit from fewer lines and wrinkles, and get firm jaw line with improved skin tone, plus reduced headaches and eye strain which in turn eases tension, and gives best and healthy glow on your face.

Just as your body needs regular exercise to stay toned and firm, there are 57 muscles on your face and neck which also needs to be exercised. As they become stronger, they are lifted and firmed and the skin attached to the muscles gets tautened, reducing lines and wrinkles. The massage moves increase circulation, lymph flow and remove toxins, improving skin tone, reducing puffiness and dark circles.

The benefits of regularly doing face yoga are reduction of lines and wrinkles, improved skin tone, reduced headaches and eye strain, release of tension, an energetic appearance and a healthy glow on the face. Face yoga also gives a holistic feeling of well-being which can benefit the mind and body.

It's all natural. From creams and serums to injections and surgeries, there are plenty of anti-ageing strategies to maintain a youthful look. The problem is that these methods often use chemicals or surgical procedures to get results. Facial yoga is as natural as it gets — who-knows-what ingredients or what effects are there by keeping under a laser or scalpel.

It releases tension. You might be surprised at how much tension you hold in your face and neck. Facial yoga teaches you to become more aware of those muscles so you can relax them anytime you feel tightness creeping up.

It helps reduce wrinkles. Some wrinkles come with age. Some come because we're constantly tensing muscles in the face, like those around the eyes or mouth. Facial yoga builds awareness so you can release the unhealthy tension that's carving crows' feet and other wrinkles.

It may promote collagen production. The muscle activity might boost collagen production, keeping the skin younger looking.

The writer is Face Yoga expert



STUDYCENTRE

Teenage drivers diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are significantly more likely to engage in rash driving, violate traffic rules and crash as compared to their contemporaries without ADHD, says a study.

In the study published in the journal Pediatrics, the researchers from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), Pennsylvania, found that teenagers with ADHD are more likely to engage in risky driving, such as driving while intoxicated, not wearing seat belt and speeding.

"What this study suggests is that we have to go beyond current recommendations of medication and delaying the age of getting license to decrease crash risk for teens with ADHD," said Allison E Curry, lead author of the study and a senior scientist at CHOP.

"Their higher rate of citations suggest that risky driving behaviours may account for why they crash more," Curry added. For the study, the researchers included identified 1,769 newly-licensed teenage drivers with childhood-diagnosed ADHD and compared their crash and traffic violation records with those of the drivers without ADHD.

The study's findings showed that among teen drivers with ADHD, nearly 37 per cent were issued a traffic violation and nearly 27 per cent a moving violation within their first year of driving, as compared to 25 per cent and 18 per cent respectively, among those without ADHD. — IANS

Sensex vaults 1,422 pts as exit polls predict NDA win

Benchmark Sensex zoomed over 1,422 points and the NSE Nifty surged 421 points after most exit polls showed that the Narendra Modi-led NDA was returning to power with a thumping majority in the Lok Sabha elections.

The 30-share index ended 1,421.90 points, or 3.75 per cent, higher at 39,352.67. During the day, the gauge hit a high of 39,412.56 and a low of 38,570.04.

In a similar movement, the broader NSE Nifty soared 421.10 points, or 3.69 per cent, to 11,828.25.

A majority of exit polls ON Sunday forecast another term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with some of them projecting that the BJP-led NDA will get more than 300 seats to comfortably cross the majority mark of 272 in the Lok Sabha. The results of the seven-phase polls will be announced on May 23. Analysts believe the Modi's BJP retaining power will ensure a continuation in reform measures initiated during the NDA's first term.

Top gainers in the Sensex pack include SBI, IndusInd Bank, Tata Motors, L&T, Yes Bank, HDFC, M&M, Maruti,

ONGC, RIL, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank, rising up to 8.64 per cent.

On the other hand, Bajaj Auto and Infosys ended in the red.

The broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices ended in line with benchmarks, rallying up to 3.57 per cent.

"The domestic equity markets witnessed unprecedented and remarkable surge, across all sectors and segments, after the exit polls indicated a higher probability for the current dispensation to come back to power with a clear majority," said Joseph Thomas, Head of Research at Emkay Wealth Management.

"What would help the markets sustain the momentum is factors that are fundamentally important, like decisive policy initiatives from the new government, faster land and labour reforms, and also the unfinished task of quick consolidation and re-organisation of the banking system," he added.

Meanwhile, market regulator Sebi and stock exchanges have beefed up their surveillance mechanism to check any manipulative activities in the market this week in view of the high-octane election related events lined up.

INVESTOR WEALTH SOARS ₹5.33L CRORE

Investor wealth soared by more than ₹5.33 lakh crore as the benchmark BSE Sensex sprinted more than 1,422 points on Monday. Tracking the sharp uptrend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped by ₹5,33,463.04 crore on Monday. At the end of Monday's trading session, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies stood at ₹1,51,86,312.05 crore against ₹1,46,58,709.68 crore on Friday.

This is the third consecutive session of gain for domestic stocks and in these three trading sessions the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies has jumped by ₹7.48 lakh crore.

"The exit polls would be seen as a modest positive for the Indian stock market as the market was largely factoring in the return of the BJP-led NDA government," Kotak Institutional Equities said in a research note.

The report noted that market was largely factoring in return of BJP-led government. "We could see a small rally post

May 23 election results if the results are in line with the market's expectations," it noted.

As many as 40 stocks touched their 52-week high levels on BSE. Some of the stocks that touched 52-week highs include Bajaj Finance, DCB Bank, Federal Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, SRF, Titan, Kotak Mahindra and PVR.

Of the 2,286 scrips traded, 1,718 advanced, 440 declined and 129 remained unchanged.

As many as 40 securities touched 52-week high levels, while 87 fell to their respective one-year low levels that included Biocon, Binani Industries, Jubilant and Monsanto. The number of securities that hit the upper circuit limit was 115, while 119 scrips touched their respective lower circuits, according to BSE.

The Indian rupee also appreciated by 49 paise, the biggest single-day gain in two months, to close at 69.74 against the US dollar. Brent crude, the global benchmark, was trading at 72.61 per barrel, higher by 1.40 per cent.

Globally, bourses in Asia ended on a mixed note, while those in Europe were trading in the red in their respective early deals.

FSSAI allows small organic growers to sell produce without certification till 2020

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food safety regulator FSSAI has permitted small organic producers, having an annual turnover of over ₹12 lakh, to sell their produce directly to end consumers without certification till April 2020, but will not be able to use 'Jaivik Bharat logo' on their products, a latest report says.

The Jaivik Bharat logo is an identity mark to distinguish organic products from non-organic ones.

A similar relaxation has been given to 'aggregators' having an annual turnover of ₹50 lakh. However, the organic food retail firms have to comply with the certification norm.

Under the 2017 organic regulation, sale of organic produce directly to end consumer has been allowed only with the certification of the National Program for Organic Production (NPOP) and Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) India.

In its latest order, the Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) said the norms were relaxed after it examined several representations regarding challenges faced in the implementation of regulations by organic food business operations including small original producers.

Tata Motors Q4 net dips 49% to ₹1,109 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Homegrown auto major Tata Motors on Monday reported a nearly threefold jump in consolidated net profit to ₹1,108.66 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹2,175.16 crore in the same period previous fiscal, it said in a regulatory filing.

Total income during the period under review stood at ₹7,285.64 crore as against ₹9,163.44 crore in the year-ago period. For the entire 2018-19, the company posted a consolidated net loss of ₹28,724.20 crore, compared to net profit of ₹9,091.36 crore in 2017-18.

Total income stood at ₹3,04,903.71 crore for the last fiscal as against ₹2,96,298.23 crore in 2017-18, the filing said. The company's domestic business posted standalone net profit of ₹106.19 crore for the fourth quarter as against net loss of ₹499.94 crore during the same period previous fiscal.

Standalone total revenue from operations stood at ₹18,561.41 crore as compared to ₹19,173.46 in the fourth quarter a year ago. For the fiscal ended March 31, the company's standalone profit stood at ₹2,398.93 crore against a net loss of ₹946.92 crore in the preceding financial year.

Total revenue from operations for the full 2018-19 was ₹69,202.76 crore, as compared to ₹58,689.81 crore in 2017-18.

BHARAT FORGE Q4 NET PROFIT UP THREEFOLD

Auto components major Bharat Forge on Monday reported a nearly threefold jump in its standalone net profit to ₹299.5 crore for the March quarter. The company had posted a standalone net profit of ₹100.33 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago, Bharat Forge said in a regulatory filing. Its total income stood at ₹1,718.72 crore as against ₹1,500.83 crore in the year-ago quarter, it added. For the full year 2018-19, the firm's consolidated net profit stood at ₹1,032.59 crore as compared with ₹753.97 crore a year ago, a growth of 36.95 per cent, it said.

Total consolidated income for the year was ₹10,348.52 crore as compared to ₹8,556.68 crore in the previous fiscal. Bharat Forge chairman and managing director BN Kalyani said the financial year 2018-19 had been a record year for the company with strong growth in revenue and profit. "During the year, the company has secured business wins of USD 50 million across sectors and geographies. An encouraging trend is the large proportion of wins driven by our work on new product develop-

ment," he added. The company said its board of directors in its meeting on Monday recommended a final dividend of 125 per cent at ₹2.5 per equity share of ₹2 each for the financial year ended March 2019.

GSK PHARMA Q4 NET PROFIT RISES 16.56%

Drug firm GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals on Monday reported a 16.56 per cent rise in its standalone net profit to ₹123.03 crore for the quarter ended March 31. The company had posted a net profit of ₹105.55 crore for the corresponding period of the previous fiscal. GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals said in a filing to the BSE. Its standalone revenue from operations stood at ₹751.22 crore for the quarter under consideration. It was ₹748.62 crore for the corresponding quarter a year ago.

For the fiscal year ended March this year, the company posted a net profit of ₹425.36 crore as against ₹351.98 crore for the previous fiscal year. Standalone revenue from operations for the fiscal year ended March 2019 stood at ₹3,128.53 crore. It was ₹2,895.88 crore for the year-ago fiscal. The company board has recommended a dividend of ₹20 per equity share on a face value of ₹10 each for the year ended March 31.

NIFTY 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

BSE 500

Table with columns: Script, Open, High, Low, LTP. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

Table with columns: 674.00, 687.90, 674.00, 680.85. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

Table with columns: 2816.00, 2836.00, 2805.40. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

Table with columns: 209.00, 213.55, 200.05, 201.15. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

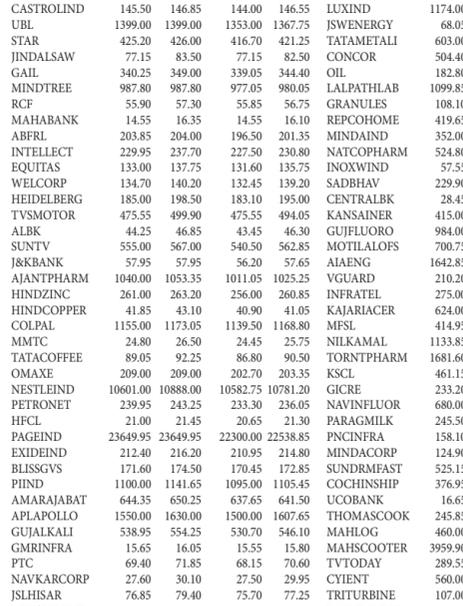
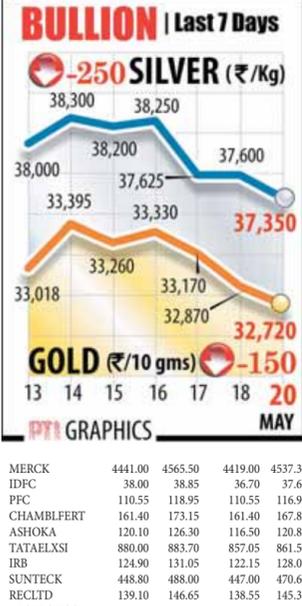
NIFTY NEXT 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

Table with columns: Script, Open, High, Low, LTP. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

Table with columns: 4441.00, 4565.50, 4419.00, 4537.30. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

Table with columns: 911.30, 927.00, 911.30, 960.90. Lists various stocks and their price movements.



Trump: If Tehran attacks, it will be 'official end of Iran'

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has issued an ominous warning to Iran, suggesting that if the Islamic republic attacks American interests, it will be destroyed.

"If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran. Never threaten the United States again," Trump said in a tweet.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have been on the rise as the United States has deployed a carrier group and B-52 bombers to the Gulf over what it termed Iranian "threats." This account has been met with widespread skepticism outside the United States.

The White House has sent mixed signals in recent days, amid multiple US media reports of infighting in Trump's cabinet over how hard to push Washington's arch foe Iran.

The Trump administration has ordered non-essential diplomatic staff out of Iraq, citing threats from Iranian-backed Iraqi armed groups, and sent an aircraft carrier and heavy B-52 bombers to the region.

On Sunday, a Katyusha rocket was fired into Baghdad's

Green Zone housing government offices and embassies including the US mission. It was not immediately clear who was behind the attack.

According to US media reports, Trump's long-hawkish national security advisor John Bolton is pushing a hard line on Iran, but others in the administration are resisting.

Trump himself said recently that he has to "temper" Bolton.

Iran's foreign minister downplayed the prospect of a new war in the region on Saturday, saying Tehran opposed it and no party was under the "illusion" the Islamic republic could be confronted.

"We are certain... there will not be a war since neither we want a war nor does anyone have the illusion they can confront Iran in the region," Mohammad Javad Zarif told state-run news agency IRNA at the end of a visit to China.

Iran-US relations hit a new low last year as US Trump pulled out of a 2015 nuclear deal and reimposed unilateral sanctions that had been lifted in exchange for Tehran scaling back its nuclear program.

Saudi Arabia called Sunday for emergency regional talks to



In this photo released by the US Navy, sailors partake in a foreign object and debris walk-down on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln in the Arabian Sea

discuss the mounting Gulf tensions, saying that it does not want war with Iran but is ready to defend itself.

It comes days after mysterious sabotage attacks on several tankers in highly sensitive Gulf waters and drone strikes on a Saudi crude pipeline by Yemen rebels who Riyadh claimed were acting on Iranian orders.

King Salman invited Gulf leaders and Arab League member states to two emergency summits in Mecca on May 30 to discuss recent "aggressions and their consequences", the kingdom's official SPA news agency reported late Saturday.

Saudi Arabia's minister of state for foreign affairs, Adel al-Jubeir, said Sunday his country does not want to go to war with

Iran but would defend itself.

Saudi Arabia "does not want a war, is not looking for it and will do everything to prevent it," he said.

"But at the same time, if the other side chooses war, the kingdom will respond with strength and determination to defend itself and its interests." The kingdom's regional allies welcomed the Saudi invitation.

The United Arab Emirates' foreign ministry said the current "critical circumstances" require a unified Arab and Gulf stance.

Oil producing countries met Sunday in Saudi Arabia to discuss how to stabilise a volatile oil market amid the rising US-Iran tensions, which threaten to disrupt global supply.

Oil supplies are sufficient and stockpiles still rising despite massive output drops from Iran and Venezuela, said Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates said at the meeting in Jeddah.

Qatar Sunday weighed in on the escalating tensions, saying it did not believe the US or Iran wanted a war in the region.

"US President Donald Trump has said he does not want war, and I do not think Iran wants war or instability in the region," minister of state for foreign affairs Sultan al-Muraikhi told AFP on the sidelines of a Qatar Fund for Development briefing.

"I think if we move away from the childish regimes in the region, all troubles will be settled," Muraikhi said Doha - which remains isolated by neighboring former allies in a long-running diplomatic dispute - has not yet received a formal invitation to either meeting. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt are among the countries that cut ties with Qatar in June 2017 over accusations it supports terrorism and seeks closer ties with Tehran.

Clerics warn Iraq could be pulled into Iran war

Dubai (AP): Two influential Shiite figures in Iraq are warning from pulling their country into a war between the United States and Iran, saying it would turn Iraq into a battlefield and inflict much harm.

Their comments came few hours after a rocket was fired into the Iraqi capital's heavily fortified Green Zone, landing less than a mile from the sprawling US Embassy.

No injuries were reported. Iraq's populist Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr said in a statement on Monday that any political party that would involve Iraq in a US-Iran war "would be the enemy of the Iraqi people."

Qais al-Khazali, the leader of an Iranian-backed group, said he is opposed to operations that "give pretexts for war."

As US-Iran tensions escalate, there've been concerns that Baghdad could once again get caught in the middle.

Four ships including two Saudi oil tankers were damaged in mysterious sabotage attacks last Sunday off the UAE's Fujairah, near the Strait of Hormuz - a vital maritime

route for oil exports which Iran has threatened to close in the event of a war.

That incident was followed by drone strikes Tuesday claimed by Yemen's Iran-aligned rebels on a major Saudi oil pipeline built as an alternative export route if the Strait of Hormuz were to be closed.

Saudi Arabia accused Tehran of ordering the pipeline attacks, targeting "the security of oil supplies... and the global economy".

Pak needs aggressive diplomacy to exit FATF grey list: Official

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan needs to launch an aggressive diplomatic effort to secure enough support to come out of the grey list or prevent itself from falling into the black list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) next month, a senior government official has said.

The official's remarks came after a 10-member Pakistani delegation attended a two-day meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) of the Paris-based global watchdog FATF in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou where it defended Pakistan's efforts against money laundering and terror financing.

The senior official, who participated in the APG meeting in Guangzhou last week, told the Dawn newspaper that the coming FATF Plenary and Working Group meetings in Orlando, Florida, scheduled for June 16-21, would be crucial for Pakistan to get rid of the grey list or falling into the black list and having serious economic repercussions.

The Orlando plenary will actually set the stage for Pakistan's future even though a formal

announcement would come out at the next FATF plenary due in Paris on October 18-23, he said.

Hence, an aggressive diplomatic effort over the next four weeks is required to secure enough support and votes to exit the grey list, the report said.

Pakistan was now fully compliant with the related United Nations resolutions, the official said.

Pakistan has taken aggressive steps over the last two months in terms of regulatory and monitoring mechanism to meet the FATF requirements and its legal system is generally up to the mark, except some amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) 2010 pending before the National Assembly's standing committee on finance and revenue, the report said.

"We believe we have generally delivered on the technical side i.e legal and administrative action, regulations, monitoring, enforcement and inter-agency and stakeholder coordination and now require more of the diplomatic push to counter the adversaries," said the official.

He said Prime Minister

Imran Khan was expected to get a briefing on the Guangzhou meeting and on the way forward on Monday.

The official said it was expected Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi would now coordinate with stakeholders on a strategy to reach out to the world capitals in difficult diplomatic environment where the US-India grouping has greater influence and non-aligned members of the FATF prefer to abstain than siding with Pakistan.

According to the report, Pakistan required about 15-16 votes to move out of the grey list and a minimum of three votes to avoid falling into the blacklist. The FATF currently comprises 36 members with voting powers and two regional organisations, representing most of the major financial centres in all parts of the globe. The FATF plenary had formally placed Pakistan in the grey list in June 2018 after the country could not secure a minimum of three votes.

On May 3, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said India will ask the FATF to put Pakistan on a black-

list of countries that fail to meet international standards in stopping financial crime.

China is set to secure FATF presidency next year while Saudi Arabia representing the Gulf Cooperation Council is to become a full FATF member.

Turkey was the only member that stood by Pakistan despite a strong campaign launched by the US, the UK, India and Europe.

Pakistan's seriousness to act against proscribed terror outfits and its efforts to curb money laundering and terror financing were questioned by members of a regional affiliate of the FATF at the Guangzhou meeting.

The official said the Pakistani delegation presented a robust case before the APG panel on the country's progress on the 10-point action plan committed with the global watchdog despite tough questioning from some participants.

The APG would now submit its findings, based on Pakistan's report and question-answer session, to the FATF in its June 16-21 Plenary and Working Group meetings in the United States.

PM Morrison set to form majority govt

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison could form a majority government as the ruling conservative coalition was on course to win some more seats in the election which defied exit polls to deliver a shock defeat to the opposition Labor Party, forcing its leader Bill Shorten to resign.

A party needs 76 seats for a simple majority in the 151-member House of Representatives, the lower house of Parliament.

Before the election, the Coalition held 73 seats, while Labor 72. According to ABC, the Liberal party led by Prime Minister Morrison was expected to secure Bass, Chisholm, Boothby and Wentworth seats that could lead the Coalition to secure majority with at least 77 seats.

On Monday morning, another Liberal candidate of Indian-origin Dave Sharma raced ahead of the independent candidate Kerryn Phelps.

Phelps later conceded that she had lost the eastern suburbs Sydney seat to Sharma who was leading the sitting MP by 2572 vote.

So far, coalition has won 75 seats as compared to Labor's 65.



"As far as I'm concerned, on the numbers to come, Bass will be the 76th seat. Postals and absent votes favour the coalition in Bass and they're already ahead," ABC chief elections analyst Antony Green was quoted as saying.

"At some time today, Bass will tick over to become the 76th seat, delivering the government a majority," he said.

Green further said that he was expecting Chisholm to become the 77th seat, with Boothby and Wentworth already in the Liberal count.

Backed by "quiet Australians" and defying exit polls, the ruling conservative

coalition staged a "miraculous" victory in the general election on Sunday, devastating the opposition Labor Party and forcing its leader Shorten to step down. The Labor party has started looking for a new leader.

Former deputy prime minister Anthony Albanese and deputy leader Tanya Plibersek are both considering their options as the next Labor party leader.

"I believe I'm the best person to lead Labor back into government. We've lost three elections in a row. That has an impact on those Australians who rely upon us to improve

their education, to look after their health care, to build public transport infrastructure," Albanese said.

Apart from Plibersek who has been the deputy leader for six years and held the foreign affairs, Shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen was also considering running for the Labor leader.

"We have an obligation as Labor Party people to keep fighting for a fairer Australia, for a strong economy and a fair society. We'll keep doing that," Plibersek said.

Nawaz Sharif re-files bail application in Islamabad High Court

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Monday moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking bail on medical grounds in the Al-Azizia corruption case.

The Supreme Court earlier this month dismissed the 69-year-old three-time prime minister's review petition seeking permanent bail on medical grounds and the permission to go abroad for treatment. Sharif returned to the Kot Lakhpat jail on May 7 to serve his seven-year prison term in the case after the end of his six-week bail, which was granted to him on medical grounds with a condition that he would not leave Pakistan.

Opinions of specialist doctors from Switzerland, the US and the UK have been included in the petition filed at the high court by Sharif's counsel Khawaja Haris, the Express Tribune reported.

"According to the medical board, Nawaz is suffering from numerous diseases," the petition said.

According to the reports, doctors recommended that Sharif's condition is life-threatening. Tension and stress can prove to be threatening to his life, it added.

Even Sharif's blood and sugar levels have not normalised, the petition went on to add.

The petition stated that all members of the special medical board, along with doctors associated with doctors hospital Lahore, Sheikh Zayed Hospital Lahore and National Hospital Lahore as well as medical specialists from UK, USA and Switzerland were unanimous that Sharif's treatment is not possible in jail premises. The former premier, who has been serving a seven-year prison term at Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail since December 24, 2018, was granted a six-week bail on March 26 to get medical treatment. However, Sharif filed a civil review petition against the order on April 27.

The petition requested the court to allow Sharif get medical treatment abroad, claiming that the former prime minister was suffering from acute anxiety and depression that would lead to 'sudden death'.

It said the medical professionals seeing the former premier in Pakistan recommend that he should be treated by his regular practitioners in the United Kingdom. It also said that there was a difference between the apex court's March 26 oral order and the written order.

Prison riot in Tajikistan leaves 32 dead

PTI ■ DUSHANBE (TAJIKISTAN)

A riot at a prison in Tajikistan has left 32 people dead, including 24 members of the Islamic State militant group and three guards, authorities said Monday.

Five of the inmates and the three guards were killed by IS prisoners during the riot that erupted on Sunday evening, the justice ministry said in a statement.

The prison in Vakhdat, 17 kilometres east of the capital Dushanbe, holds 1,500 inmates. It said the prisoners first stabbed to death three guards, and then five other inmates "in order to intimidate" the others.

They then took other prisoners hostage before opening fire on the jail's medical facilities.

"Following a reprisal operation, 24 members of this group were killed and 25 others arrested. The



hostages were freed" and calm restored to the prison, the statement said.

Among the leaders of the riot, the Tajik authorities identified the

20-year-old son of the former head of Tajik special forces who became a member of the IS leadership in Syria, where he was killed in September 2017.

In November 2018, another riot claimed by IS left 26 people dead in Khujand, a city of 700,000 people in the northeast of the country.

The riot had been initiated by a former IS member seeking to spark a mass escape.

Tajikistan, a country of 8.5 million people bordering Afghanistan, has suffered severe conflict since it gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Tens of thousands of people were killed in the country during a five-year civil war in the 1990s when rebel groups including Islamists rose up against the government.

Authorities in the majority-Muslim country have said that more than 1,000 Tajiks, including a high-ranking police officer who defected in 2015, joined IS in Syria and Iraq in recent years.

Novel robotic drone can fly, drive

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

Scientists have developed the first Srobot drone that can fly like a quadcopter, drive on tough terrain and squeeze into tight spaces using the same motors.

The hybrid FSTAR (flying sprawl-tuned autonomous robot), created by researchers at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) in Israel, can fly over obstacles or run underneath them.

The sprawl, which adjusts from a flat configuration to 55 degrees allows the robot to transform its movement from a flying quadcopter to a car-like robot, researchers said.

It also adjusts its width to crawl or run on flat surfaces, climb over large obstacles and up closely-spaced walls, or squeeze through a



tunnel, pipe or narrow gaps, they said.

"We plan to develop larger and smaller versions to expand this family of sprawling robots for dif-

ferent applications, as well as algorithms that will help exploit speed and cost of transport for these flying/driving robots," said David Zarrouk, a senior lecturer at BGU.

It can run on the ground at a speed of up to 2.6 metres per second. That combined with low energy consumption using the same motors makes FSTAR ideal for a broad range of applications that may require longer work time.

Possible commercial uses are package deliveries since it can quickly fly to a target zone and then drive using its wheels safely and quietly to reach the recipient's doorstep.

FSTAR can also be used for search and rescue applications as it can fly over various obstacles and crawl between or underneath cracks where a regular drone cannot fly. The robot can also be used in agriculture, maintenance, cleaning, filming, and entertainment, as well as law enforcement and anti-terrorist applications.

Sweden requests detention order for Julian Assange

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Swedish authorities on Monday issued a request for a detention order against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who is now jailed in Britain, a Swedish prosecutor said.

Prosecutor Eva-Marie Persson says if the Swedish court decided to detain Assange "on probable cause suspected for rape ... I will issue a European Arrest Warrant."

The development sets up a possible future tug-of-war between Sweden and the United States over any extradition of Assange from Britain. Assange was evicted last month from the Ecuadorian Embassy where he had been holed up with political asylum since 2012. He was then immediately arrested by British police on April 11 and is currently serving a 50-week sentence in Britain for jumping bail in 2012.

The Australian secret-spiller also faces a US extradition warrant for allegedly conspiring to hack into a Pentagon computer.

Persson said Monday that British authorities will decide any conflict between a European arrest warrant and US extradition request for Assange.

On May 13, Swedish prosecutors reopened a preliminary investigation against Assange, who visited Sweden in 2010, after two Swedish women said



they were the victims of sex crimes committed by Assange.

While a case of alleged sexual misconduct against Assange in Sweden was dropped in 2017 when the statute of limitations expired, a rape allegation remains. Swedish authorities have had to shelf it because Assange was living at the embassy at the time and there was no prospect of bringing him to Sweden.

The statute of limitations in the rape case expires in August next year. Assange has denied wrongdoing, asserting that the allegations were politically motivated and that the sex was consensual.

Persson said the day and time for the detention hearing at the Uppsala District Court north of Stockholm that will make the decision has not yet been decided.

"However, in my view, the Swedish case can proceed concurrently with the proceedings in the UK," Persson said in a statement.

Comedian Zelensky steps in as Ukraine president

AFP ■ KIEV

Comedian Volodymyr Zelensky stepped into his new role as Ukrainian president with his inauguration on Monday, launching a new era for the country wracked by war and economic difficulties.

A month after scoring a landslide election victory against incumbent Petro Poroshenko, the 41-year-old became Ukraine's youngest post-Soviet president.

In a ceremony in parliament, he placed his hand on a copy of the constitution and the Bible and pledged to "protect the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine."

He used his inaugural speech to announce that he is dissolving parliament, after wrangling with lawmakers in the lower house, in order to call early parliamentary elections, which had originally been scheduled for October.

"People must come to power who will serve the public," Zelensky said.

Critics had questioned whether Zelensky would be able to govern without a parliamentary majority. Even setting a date for his inauguration



Ukrainian President-elect Volodymyr Zelensky swears on the Bible as he takes the oath of office during his inauguration ceremony in Kiev on Monday. AP

took weeks of negotiations with hostile lawmakers, whom Zelensky exasperatedly called "petty crooks."

He also vowed that his first task was to bring a ceasefire in the conflict with Moscow-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine that has so far caused some 13,000 deaths.

"We didn't start this war but it is up to us to end it," he said. The separatist authorities have indicated that they could be ready to negotiate with Zelensky. Dressed in a dark suit and tie, the president took a non-traditional route to his inauguration — walking on foot from his home nearby, after saying he wanted a less pompous ceremony.

In a sign of his more informal style, he exchanged high fives with supporters waiting outside and took selfies with them. So far little is known about his precise policies after a campaign that capitalised on public disillusionment with the political establishment and promised to "break the system."

Uniquely for a first-time president, Zelensky had played the inauguration scene before — for laughs. He starred as a history teacher who was unexpectedly elected president in a television comedy series, "Servant of the People."

Just a few months ago, the idea that Zelensky would be inaugurated for real seemed equally unlikely.

Hundreds protest Alabama abortion law

AFP ■ MONTGOMERY (US)

Around 400 people took to the streets in the capital city of the southern US state of Alabama on Sunday to rally against the nation's most restrictive bans on abortions in decades.

Women's reproductive rights defenders gathered in Montgomery, as well as in Birmingham, Anniston and Huntsville where hundreds more were estimated to have joined in denouncing the "Alabama Human Life Protection Act" or HB314, which virtually outlaws terminations of pregnancy.

Protesters in Montgomery held up signs reading "her body, her choice" and "we are not ovary-acting." There were no counter-demonstrators.

A woman wearing beige underwear that made her look naked had a drawing of her reproductive system attached to her abdomen and a banner reading: "More than an incubator." Several other women were dressed as characters forced to bear children in the dystopian novel and television series "The Handmaid's Tale." One of them, who gave her name only as Amanda, accused Alabama's legislators of "trying to imprison women and doctors."

"Wearing the



'Handmaid's Tale' outfit is sending a message that you're trying to turn us into slaves, reproductive slaves," the 40-year-old lawyer told AFP.

"They're trying to fill prisons, more private prisons so that women will do hard labor after they get convicted of these 'crimes' of abortion." Last week, Alabama passed a law that prohibits all abortions — even in cases of incest and rape — unless there is a risk of death for the mother.

"Our call center's been getting hundreds and hundreds of phone calls from concerned citizens asking us what this means," said Barbara Ann

Luttrell, director of communications and marketing for Planned Parenthood Southeast.

Planned Parenthood is not currently providing abortion services in Alabama. "We'll be having abortion services up and running again as soon as possible," she said.

There are only three clinics that perform the procedure. None of them responded to requests of comments.

The Alabama law is likely to be blocked in state courts before its November launch date but Republican Governor Kay Ivey acknowledged when she signed it that it was part of as a wider Republican offensive

to get the issue relitigated on the national stage.

"We're going to return to the back alleys. We're going to return to where women will do abortions to themselves," 81-year-old Maralyn Mosley told the Montgomery Advertiser. She had an abortion at 13, after her uncle raped her.

"We will return to the coat hangers and perforated uterus. We will return to where women will bleed to death," she warned.

Conservative activists hope to get a Supreme Court decision against the landmark 1973 ruling Roe v Wade that said unduly restrictive state regula-

tion of abortion is unconstitutional.

Conservatives are counting on support at the highest court in the land, where liberal justices are in a minority after the arrival of two conservative members appointed by President Donald Trump.

Trump appeared to suggest Alabama lawmakers had gone too far in a series of tweets late Saturday in which he described himself as "strongly Pro-Life, with the three exceptions - Rape, Incest and protecting the Life of the mother." He urged the anti-abortion side to "stick together and Win for Life" when it comes to voting in 2020.

While the Alabama measure is seen as particularly draconian, at least 28 US states have introduced more than 300 texts since the start of the year limiting abortion rights, according to activists.

Kentucky and Mississippi have banned abortions as soon as a fetus's heartbeat is detectable, or around the sixth week of pregnancy. Similar measures are being adopted in Georgia, Ohio, Missouri and Tennessee.

A judge has blocked the implementation of the Kentucky law, while the Mississippi law is set to come into effect in July.

US envoy makes rare visit to Tibet; China seeks 'unbiased judgement'

PTI ■ BEIJING

China, which granted a rare permit for US Ambassador Terry Branstad to visit Tibet, on Monday hoped that the American envoy would make an "unbiased judgement" about the conditions in the Himalayan region especially on religion and the Tibetan culture.

Branstad was travelling to China's Qinhai province and the bordering Tibet Autonomous Region from May 19 to May 25, making the first trip by an American envoy to the highly restricted area in four years.

During his visit, Branstad is due to have meetings with local officials and visit religious and cultural heritage sites.

His visit is taking place amid escalating trade war between the world's two largest economies. China's permission to him came after US earlier this year passed Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 warning equal and reciprocal measures if Beijing denied access to American citizens, government officials and journalists to Tibet, the homeland of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

The new law would impose a visa ban on Chinese officials who deny American citizens, government officials and journalists access to Tibet.

Currently, foreign tourists need a special travel permit to visit Tibet in addition to a Chinese visa.

Asked why China, which denied permission for US Ambassador to visit Tibet last year decided to do so now, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told the media on Monday that "we welcome Ambassador Branstad's visit so that he can see the major changes which took place in Tibet for past 60 years after the peaceful liberation."

Commenting on US embassy's statement that the visit is a chance for the ambassador to engage with local leaders to raise longstanding concerns about restrictions on religious freedom and the preservation of Tibetan culture and language, Lu said China hopes the envoy could make unbiased judgement on the prevailing situation in Tibet.

"As for the comments from US embassy, we hope this visit can help them make unbiased judgement that is fact based especially on the religion, culture, heritage and history. We hope he can make his own



In this file photo, US Ambassador Terry Edward Branstad (left) shakes hands with China's President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The US ambassador to China is making a rare visit to Tibet to meet local officials and raise concerns about restrictions on Buddhist practices and the preservation of the Himalayan region's unique culture and language. AP

judgement instead of being misguided by rumours," Lu said.

"We welcome all those who has an objective view of China's economic and social development, including Tibet to this region. His request was denied (last year). I don't know what you mean by that. All the diplomatic personnel in China if they have this need to visit the

regions in China, they need to apply to relevant authorities first," he said.

In March, China issued a white paper defending its policies and highlighting major economic development and improvement of lives of people in the remote Himalayan region since a failed uprising against Beijing's rule 60 years ago.

Google and Android system start to cut ties with Huawei

AFP ■ SAN FRANCISCO

US internet giant Google, whose Android mobile operating system powers most of the world's smartphones, said it was beginning to cut ties with China's Huawei, which Washington considers a national security threat.

The move could have dramatic implications for Huawei smartphone users, as the telecoms giant will no longer have access to Google's proprietary services — which include the Gmail and Google Maps apps — a source close to the matter told AFP.

Reports also emerged Monday that several US chip-makers providing vital hardware for Huawei's smartphones have stopped supplying the Chinese firm.

In the midst of a trade war with Beijing, President Donald Trump has barred US companies from engaging in telecommunications trade with foreign companies said to threaten American national security.

The measure targets Huawei, the world's second-biggest smartphone maker, which has been listed by the US Commerce Department among firms that American companies

can only trade with if authorities grant permission.

The ban includes technology sharing. Google, like all tech companies, collaborates directly with smartphone makers to ensure its systems are compatible with their devices.

"We are complying with the order and reviewing the implications," a Google spokesperson told AFP.

"We assure you while we are complying with all US gov't requirements, services like Google Play & security from Google Play Protect will keep functioning on your existing Huawei device," Google's official @Android account tweeted.

Due to the ban, Google will have to halt business activities with Huawei that involve direct transfer of hardware, software and technical services that are not publicly available.

That means Huawei will only be able to use the open source version of Android.

It will need to manually access any updates or software patches from Android Open Source Project, and also distribute the updates to users itself, a source told AFP.

In a statement, Huawei said it would "continue to pro-



vide security updates and after-sales services" to all existing smartphones and tablets globally, including those not yet sold.

A person familiar with the matter who requested anonymity told Bloomberg News that Huawei will be unable to offer Google's proprietary apps and services in the future.

China's foreign ministry said it was actively following the situation.

"At the same time, the Chinese side supports Chinese enterprises in taking up legal weapons and defending their legitimate rights," said spokesman Lu Kang.

Huawei is a rapidly expanding leader in 5G technology, and currently has the most advanced and cheapest 5G capacities in the world.

Its smartphones outsold Apple's iPhones in the first quarter of this year, seizing the California company's second-place spot in a tightening smartphone market dominated by Samsung.

But the Chinese firm remains dependent on foreign suppliers.

It buys about USD67 billion worth of components each year, including about USD11 billion from US suppliers, according to The Nikkei business daily.

Sudan army rulers, protesters plan more talks

AFP ■ KHARTOUM

Sudan's army rulers and protest leaders said more talks were planned for Monday on finalising the make-up of a new ruling body, after hours of negotiations through the night ended without agreement.

Both sides have been at loggerheads over the new governing body that would rule Sudan for a three-year transitional period after the ouster last month of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir.

The latest discussions were launched Sunday evening following pressure from world powers to install a civilian-led governing body — a key demand of demonstrators.

After continuing into the early hours of Monday, the ruling military council announced the talks would resume at 9:00 pm (local time).

"The structure of the sovereign authority has been discussed" Lieutenant General Shamseddine Kabbashi, spokesman of the military council, told reporters.

"It's agreed to resume negotiations today (Monday) evening... hoping to reach a final deal." The Sudanese Professional Association — the group that initially launched the protest campaign against Bashir in December, said

Monday that it was in no rush to finalise the deal.

"We are not in a hurry for the crucial victory... whatever be the outcome, it will be a step forward," it wrote on Twitter without elaborating.

The agreement had been expected on Wednesday, but the military council suspended the negotiations for 72 hours. Ahead of Sunday's talks, the umbrella protest movement — the Alliance for Freedom and Change — raised the ante by insisting that the country's ruling body be "led by a civilian as its chairman and with a limited military representation".

The existing military council is headed by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the generals insist that the overall new body be military-led.

On the eve of the talks, hundreds of supporters of Islamist movements rallied outside the presidential palace in Khartoum warning they would reject any deal that would exclude sharia — Islamic law — from the country's political roadmap.

"The main reason for the mobilisation is that the alliance is ignoring the application of sharia in its deal," said Al-Tayieb Mustafa, who heads a coalition of about 20 Islamic groups.

Mideast peace meet doomed?

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Any American peace plan that ignores the Palestinian people's political aspirations for an independent state is doomed to fail, a senior Palestinian official said Monday — boding poorly for a Mideast peace conference planned next month.

The comments by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' spokesman immediately cast a cloud over the conference, which is expected to take place in late June in the tiny Gulf Arab state of Bahrain.

"Any plan without a political horizon will not lead to peace," Nabil Abu Rdenah said.

The White House announced Sunday it will

unveil the first phase of its long-awaited Mideast peace plan at the conference, saying it will focus on economic benefits that could be reaped if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved. The plan envisions large-scale investment and infrastructure work, much of it funded by wealthy Arab countries, in the Palestinian territories.

But officials said the June 25-26 conference will not include the core political issues at the center of the conflict: final borders, the status of Jerusalem, the fate of Palestinian refugees or Israeli security demands.

The Palestinians, who severed ties with the US over a year ago, have repeatedly expressed fears that the White

House will try to buy them off with large sums of investment in exchange for freezing their demands for an independent state. They believe the US is trying to rally support from other Arab countries to bully them into accepting a plan they see as unacceptable.

In a joint statement with Bahrain, the White House said the gathering will give government, civil and business leaders a chance to rally support for economic initiatives that could be possible with a peace agreement.

"The Palestinian people, along with all people in the Middle East, deserve a future with dignity and the opportunity to better their lives," President Donald Trump's senior adviser and son-in-law,

Jared Kushner, said in a statement Sunday.

"Economic progress can only be achieved with a solid economic vision and if the core political issues are resolved," Kushner and Trump's Mideast envoy, Jason Greenblatt, have been leading efforts to draft the plan, but after more than two years of work, they have not released any details.

A senior administration official in Washington told reporters Sunday that invitations to the conference are being sent to individuals in the United States, Europe, the Gulf, the wider Arab world and "some" Palestinian business leaders. The official spoke on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement.

US billionaire promises to pay off 400 students' loans

PTI ■ NEW YORK

America's richest black billionaire and a prominent philanthropist stunned an entire graduating class at a college in Atlanta when he promised to pay off nearly 400 students' loans estimated at USD 40 million.

Robert F Smith, 56, made the announcement on Sunday while giving an address at Morehouse College, a historically all-male black college. "On behalf of the eight generations of my family who

have been in this country, we're going to put a little fuel in your bus," Smith, told the graduates before saying his family was creating a grant to eliminate their student loans.

The announcement was met with a standing ovation, the CNN reported.

"Now, I know my class will make sure they pay this forward. I want my class to look at these (alumni) — these beautiful Morehouse brothers — and let's make sure every class has the same opportunity going forward because we

are enough to take care of our own community. We are enough to ensure we have all the opportunities of the American dream," he said.

The total amount covered for the 396 students is up to USD 40 million, said Morehouse President David A Thomas. He described Smith's gesture "a liberation gift". "When you have to service debt, the choices about what you can go do in the world are constrained. (Smith's gift) gives them the liberty to follow their dreams, their pas-



sions," Thomas was quoted as saying in the report.

Founder of the investment firm Vista Equity Partners, Smith is worth about USD 5 billion, according to Forbes,

which reports he is the richest black person in America.

Students couldn't believe their ears when Smith made the announcement.

Student Elijah Nesly Dormeus is the first of nine kids to graduate college. His mother made many sacrifices working minimum-wage jobs to provide for him and his eight siblings after Dormeus' father died when he was 5.

In addition to the 22-year-old New Yorker's own USD 90,000 debt, he said his mother took out a loan to help get

him through school.

"All her serving, all her giving was not in vain," Dormeus said when asked what Smith's gift meant to his family.

"We're looking at each other like, 'Is he being serious?' That's a lot of money," said Robert James, 21, recalling his reaction to the announcement.

"It'll sink in as the years go on. I know that for a fact. I still don't really have words. ... It makes a great day just that much better," Jonathan Epps, 22, said, terming it a "tremendous blessing".

Trend Slazer

Ananya gets playful with AbRam

Student Of The Year 2 actress ANANYA PANDAY, who is said to have called Shah Rukh Khan her "second dad" recently, got playful with the superstar's youngest son AbRam.

Ananya showcased her ability to touch the tip of her nose with her tongue. She took to social media and shared a video clip which also features AbRam.

In the video, she is seen teaching the little boy how to do the gorlin sign.

On the work front, Ananya will next be seen opposite Kartik Aaryan in the remake of *Pati Patni Aur Woh*.



'I even got my ears pierced for the role, which I was worried about initially. My hair has grown a lot. It bothered me throughout summer, when I was shooting in Rajasthan's sweltering heat. It took me 40 minutes to two hours sometimes to just get into hair and make-up for the part.'
—Saif Ali Khan



The Rajasthan High Court served fresh notices to Bollywood stars TABU, SAIF ALI KHAN, SONALI BENDRE, NEELAM KOTHARI and DUSHYANT KUMAR, a local resident, in the 1998 blackbuck poaching case following the state government's appeal against their acquittal.

The court asked all the five respondents to reply to the notices within eight weeks.

In its plea filed on April 5 last year, the Rajasthan government questioned the acquittal of the five persons for lack of evidence, when actor Salman Khan, who was accompanying them, was proven guilty.

'GOT shaped me as a woman'

Actress EMILIA CLARKE, who is known for her role of Daenerys Targaryen in *Game of Thrones*, says the show has shaped her as a woman.

She wrote on social media, "Finding the words to write this post has left me overwhelmed with how much I want to say but how small words feel in comparison to what this show means to me. The mother of dragons chapter has taken up the whole of my adult life. I've sweated in the blaze of dragon fire, shed many tears at those who left our family early, and wrung my brain dry trying to do Khaleesi and the masterful words, actions (and names) I was given, justice. GOT has shaped me as a woman, as an actor and as a human being."



A SIXER OF A TRIP

Karishma is a cricket fan, her husband loves tennis instead. So as part of their couple therapy and compromise, they are flying into London this summer, she to catch India in action and he to watch a legend smash it at the Centre Court at Wimbledon. Then the two will take a small break in Portugal, end up in Paris and fly back home.

One of the largest and fastest growing segments of the tourism industry — sports tourism and the notion of people travelling to watch sporting action live — has been an established revenue stream for quite some time. But "the concept is now fast gathering momentum among Indians and is booming to a great extent," says Heena Akhtar, co-founder of tripXOXO. In fact, the Indian Premier League generated its own travelling fan base across venues, which is now getting replicated for big ticket international events, too.

With less than a month for the ICC World Cup to commence, tourism players have recorded an increase in the number of Indians travelling to witness the biggest cricket event. Indians' unparalleled passion for the game can be attributed as one of the key drivers for sports/cricket tourism in India.

British High Commission's (BHC) spokesperson apprises us that besides the seasonal increase in Indians travelling to the UK during the peak summertime, the demand for visas is "even higher due to the world cup this year."

The demand is such that the BHC's visa services partner, VFS Global, is receiving more than 3,500 applications a day from India. They have already processed over 2,00,000 UK visa applications. In March and April alone, over 1,32,000 applications were submitted, which accounted for 65 per cent of the overall count in January to April.

Karan Anand, head relationships, Cox and Kings, too, feels that the demand has increased exponentially. He says that if we compare the numbers to the previous tournaments, there is a 30 per cent hike in the percentage of bookings, all thanks to the peak tourist season of Europe being coupled with the biggest sporting event.

"While about 65 per cent of the travellers come from metro cities, there are a considerable number of cricket lovers covering the long mile from the tier-2 cities as well. The highest demand is for dates around India Vs Pakistan (June 16) and India Vs Australia (June 9)," he

adds.

According to ICC research, India constitutes 90 per cent of one billion cricket fans. Balu Ramachandran, head of air and distribution, Cleartrip says that, with such a large cricket fan base, the World Cup would be a major attraction for travelling to England this June.

The World Cup is the proverbial cherry on the cake for those planning a vacation to UK. Sunil Gupta, managing director and co, Avis India, estimated the hike as 40-50 per cent, thanks to the craze for cricket among Indians.

Anand Menon, brand leader, travel tours, FCM Travel Solutions, says that they have also witnessed a surge in the bookings and enquiries with the onset of the World Cup. There's 44 per cent increase in travellers. England, Wales and Ireland are the destinations that are in demand now owing to the mega event. He further adds that this is synonymous to the last time, when the event took place in Australia and New Zealand in 2015.

The British-Irish visa scheme has played a significant role in providing added impetus to the increase in demand for Indians travelling to Ireland this year.

WITH THE ICC WORLD CUP ROUND THE CORNER, TRAVEL TO UK HAS SEEN A SHARP SPIKE.
BY TEAM VIVA

NCW asks Vivek to explain 'misogynist' tweet



The National Commission for Women (NCW) sought a response from actor Vivek Oberoi for his "misogynistic" tweet on exit polls that unnecessarily referenced the various relationships of actress Aishwarya Rai, including the one she had with him. Earlier the Maharashtra State Women's Commission (MSWC) had found the post "disrespectful" to the dignity of women.

Demanding a "satisfactory explanation" from the actor, the NCW noted that the "insulting and misogynistic" post, carrying the picture of a minor girl and a woman, drew a sly comparison between the poll results and a woman's personal life. It said that the post made is "extremely offensive, unethical and shows disrespect towards the dignity and respect of women in general."

The Maharashtra women's rights body had also taken cognisance of the tweet. "Yes, We have studied the tweet and it is prima facie found to be objectionable. We shall serve him notice to explain himself," MSWC Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar said.

Vivek landed himself in a huge controversy over a meme he tweeted virtually mixing politics and films by dragging in the personal lives of prominent Bollywood bigwigs.

His tweet showed a set of three photos — one referring to 'opinion poll' having a picture of Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai, next was the 'exit poll' depicting himself with the actress and the third showing Aishwarya Rai Bachchan with her husband Abhishek Bachchan and their seven-year-old daughter Aaradhya.

The meme was originally shared by someone else but Vivek picked it up for his own comment, "Haha! Creative! No politics here, just life."

As social media went into a frenzy, Nationalist Congress Party women wing chief Chitra Wagh and others demanded stringent action against Vivek for the meme.

"He has insulted the dignity of Aishwarya Bachchan. The MSWC must lodge a complaint against Oberoi and he should be arrested for crossing his limits of decency towards women," Wagh said.

Celebrities Sonam Kapoor Ahuja, Jwala Gutta and Madhur Bhandarkar slammed Vivek's tweet too. —IANS

CANNES DIARIES

Beyond the red carpet

Directors and producers question why Indian films are missing from competitive sections and the industry is settling for too many promotions

As many as 1,854 feature films were submitted to be part of the 2019 official Selection at the Cannes Film Festival from across the world this year. As many as 39 nations are represented as production or co-production countries. India is missing.

Filmmaker Onir rightly questioned: "What are we supposed to celebrate about Cannes 2019... The cinema that's being celebrated or just the clothes our actors wear and the parties they attend. Somehow that is all that seems to be talked about."

Barring the overwhelming red carpet or party looks of Bollywood actresses making a splash on social media, an India Pavilion, organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Ficci, is doing its bit to forge international partnerships in distribution, production, pitch India as a shooting destination and promoting film sales and syndication.

India may be one of the largest film producers in the world, but no film from the country made it in the competition categories. There was nothing to boast about in the key sidebars — Director's Fortnight, Un Certain Regard and Critics' Week this year — either, but for one respite: Achyutanand Dwivedi's three-minute short film *Seed Mother* which won the third prize in the international section of Nespresso Talents 2019.

National Award-winning filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar, who is a part of the government-led delegation, found it "unfortunate" that Indian cinema had no presence at the gala, but said the prerogative of the festival line-up lies on the jury.

"The jury decides what films should be shown, and we should respect what they want. We should be proud because people have taken India seriously in terms of our cinema, our digital content... People are watching Indian cine-



ma in a big way. They know our stars very well.

"The overseas business of our films with big stars has escalated in a huge way. We are taking steps ahead and that's a good thing. There are other countries whose movies aren't there, but the prospects, initiatives and interaction are very essential to have India on the global map," Bhandarkar said.

To make inroads into such a festival, Bhandarkar said it was essential that Indian filmmakers follow the Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak kind of cinema with "Cannes value."

Mira Nair was the first Indian to win the Camera d'Or in Cannes for *Salaam Bombay* in

1988. The last Indian film to compete for the coveted Palm D'Or at the prestigious gala was Shaji N. Karun's *Swaham* in 1994.

Southern film actor-writer-director Adivi Sesh had raised a pertinent point in a Twitter thread about the lack of India's presence at Cannes: "I hope people don't assume that India with all of its diverse culture, languages and dialects, wasn't able to produce a single film worthy of Cannes. Probably, it has a lot more to do with the infrastructure needed to get a film there."

Producer Guneet Monga, who has leveraged the power of co-productions, said creative collaborations with producers across the

world play a major role.

"When you get more creative collaborators and you structure films internationally like with Europe, there's a lot of mentorship that comes with it in terms of storyline and process. That's what we did with *The Lunchbox* and *Masaan* (both of which were shown at Cannes). I genuinely feel co-productions help with the quality of filmmaking and the eye for it for a global launch.

"It challenges us to make better versions of our own stories, and I would highly encourage people to do more co-productions to be able to tell more Indian stories to the world," said Monga, whose co-production *Period. End Of Sentence* won an Oscar this year.

She said film festivals in general take movies with very high quality and originality in storytelling. "It's not something that can be questioned or reasoned out. We just need to keep pushing ourselves. Co-productions, I'd say, go a long way in shaping the narrative of the film in a globally accepted way."

Actress Huma Qureshi, whose two-part film *Gangs Of Wasseypur* was showcased at the Director's Fortnight sidebar at the film jamboree a few years ago, is at the gala this year — representing a dose of 'desi girl power' as part of a brand association with Grey Goose.

She said, "In 2012, my first film *Gangs of Wasseypur* was

AISHWARYA TURNS GOLDEN MERMAID

Actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has enthralled her fans with her golden mermaid look. Dressed up in metallic gold gown with a long trail, Aishwarya looked no less than a mermaid at the gala.

She was accompanied by her daughter Aaradhya, who wore a yellow asymmetrical dress.

With nude lip shade, bold mascara, contoured cheeks and sleek straight hair, Aishwarya was shining all the way in Jean-Louis Sabaji ensemble.

—Agencies



DIANA TAKES THE ELEGANT ROUTE

Actress Diana Penry, who walked the ramp with her shimmering, feathery-ends strapless gown at the red carpet, said that while discussing about her look with her stylist, she realised that she should take the "elegant route, channelling all the classic French Riviera styles." She added, "Cannes is one of the most glamorous red carpets in the world and I wanted to pay homage to that; elegant but with a modern twist!"

The actress said that she used a lot of trends but in a very classic way. We played with faux feathers and textures in our choice of dress. What made it special is that most of my looks were custom made with the highest level of couture and workmanship.



showcased at Cannes, and it was a fine example of an Indian film making waves in the French Riviera. There have been a few others over the years like *Masaan* and *Manto*. But the fact is that we as an industry are not making and supporting enough films like these. "If we really want to be noticed and showcased at world festivals like Cannes, are we ready to make films where 'Art is celebrated for Art sake'?"

Malayalam filmmaker Sanal Kumar Sasidharan finds a silver lining in Bollywood stars glittering on the red carpet. "This is the only reason when a film goes to Cannes, even in a sidebar section, the media gives some attention." —IANS

Mbappe wants responsibility, 'maybe at PSG, maybe elsewhere'

AFP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain star Kylian Mbappe fuelled speculation surrounding his future on Sunday, saying that he wants "responsibilities, maybe at PSG, maybe elsewhere".

The 20-year-old backed up his excellent 2018 World Cup, where he scored four times as France won the trophy, by netting 38 times for PSG this season.

He was named as the Ligue 1 player of the season on Sunday, but did not deny that a potential move away from France could be in the offing.

"It (the award) is an important moment for me, a turning point in my career... The moment of having more responsibilities, maybe at PSG, maybe elsewhere," he told *BeIN Sports*.

Mbappe did not back down on his comments when asked about them in the mixed zone a few minutes later.

"For me, it was the moment to say it... When I say something, I think about it," he said, reiterating his desire to have more "responsibilities".

"If it's at PSG, it's good, if it's elsewhere, it will be elsewhere for

a new challenge."

Mbappe has been regularly linked with a potential move to Real Madrid since breaking through with Monaco's 2017 Ligue 1 title-winning team, but instead made the switch to PSG, initially on loan, and then for 180 million euros.

But since Zinedine Zidane's return to the Real dug-out earlier this year, rumours about Mbappe joining his fellow Frenchman at the Santiago Bernabeu have intensified.

This term, Mbappe has stepped up another gear with teammate Neymar out injured for much of the campaign.

Mbappe has followed in Neymar's footsteps by winning the player of the season accolade in France, although he needs to score five in the last league game of the season against Reims next weekend to snatch the European Golden Shoe from Lionel Messi.

"I tell myself that even if I lose, I lose to Messi, one of the greatest players in history," he said.

"To think that maybe I kept up with him until the last game, that's a source of pride too, but it's not over."



India eye KO stage at Sudirman Cup



Japan survive scare after Momota gamble backfires

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

Japan gambled by resting top-ranked Kento Momota and nearly paid the price, suffering a huge scare before battling back to beat Russia 3-2 in their Sudirman Cup opener here on Monday.

The top seeds are bidding to win the mixed-team world championships for the first time, but a major shock was on the cards when the Japanese went 2-1 down.

The unfancied Russians enjoyed surprise victories in the men's singles and men's doubles, before the Japanese fought back.

Japan, who along with the hosts are the favourites, decided to rest world champion Momota along with their first-choice men's pairing.

They were initially unaffected and won the mixed doubles in the opening rubber. But Russia then took advantage of Japan's weakened side with Vladimir Malkov, ranked 62, beating Momota's replacement Kenta Nishimoto — 10th in the world — and also winning the men's doubles.

But Japan's women saved the day for them, world number two Nozomi Okuhara thrashing Natalia Perminova in the women's singles to make it 2-2 in the tie.

The women's duo of Yuki Fukushima/Sayaka Hirota saw off Ekaterina Bolotova/Alina Davletova to save Japan from embarrassment.

"It was a relief to get the winning point," said Fukushima.

"In the end it worked out well for us."



PTI ■ NANNING

India will start as favourites against a young Malaysian team sans legend Lee Chong Wei when they clash in a group 1D match of the Sudirman Cup here on Tuesday.

India, who had reached the quarter-finals twice in the 2011 and 2017 editions, will have to overcome Malaysia, the 2009 semifinalists, when they begin their campaign. Any hiccups against Malaysia will make their next clash against the mighty China a must-win battle.

Malaysia were thrashed 0-5 by China in the opening match and a loss against India will see them bow out of the competition.

The 13-member Indian team, seeded eighth this time, chances during the mixed team championship will depend on the quality singles players such as PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, Kidambi Srikanth and Sameer Verma.

Malaysia will be led by Goh Jin Wei and Soniia Cheah in women's singles, while Lee Zii Jia will be entrusted with the responsibility in men's singles in the absence of Chong Wei, who is still recovering from nose cancer.

While India hold the edge in both, given the way Soniia stretched All England Championship Chen Yufei on Sunday, it will be interesting to see who

India will select to field between World No 5 Sindhu or Saina, ranked 9th.

Srikanth has consistently reached the quarters but struggled to go beyond in 11 of his last 13 tournaments. He had a runner-up finish at the India Open and is expected to hold the edge against Zii Jia.

Malaysia will need their doubles to put up a good performance to salvage hopes of making it to the knockout stage.

Malaysia saw some promising performances this year from Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik and Ong Yew

Sin and Teo Ee Yi in men's doubles, Chow Mei Kuan and Lee Meng Ye in women's doubles and Goh Soon Huat and Shevon Jemie Lai and Tan Kian Meng and Lai Pei Jing in mixed doubles.

For India the return of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy after an injury gap will fuel India's hopes in both men's doubles and mixed doubles.

Satwik, who recovered from a shoulder injury to make a title-winning comeback at the Brazil International Challenge recently, will form a formidable men's doubles pair with Chirag Shetty, while pairing with the experienced Ashwini Ponnappa in mixed doubles.

If India can quell the Malaysian challenge, they can go with a relaxed mind against the 10-time champions China on Wednesday.

SINGLES

SAI CLEARS OPEN TRIALS FOR ASIAN C'SHIP

NEW DELHI: Top gymnasts, including Dipa Karmakar and Rakesh Patra, breathed a sigh of relief after the Sports Authority of India cleared Gymnastic Federation of India's proposal to have an open trial for the Asian Championships on June 7 at the IG stadium. Over 12 senior gymnasts had written to SAI, Sports Ministry and GFI, expressing concerns regarding the trials, which were announced on May 17, with just a two-day notice for the Mongolia event to be held from June 19 to 22. GFI had said that the selection trials were not open but limited to just 8-10 gymnasts, who were selected for the National Coaching Camp during the trials conducted by SAI on April 12 and 13. However, SAI decided to postpone the trials after a meeting with the GFI officials. "There will be an open selection trials for seniors on 7th June 2019 at IG Stadium, New Delhi for selecting the team for the Senior Asian Championships," GFI vice president, Riyaz Bhati said.

TIGERS TAME NORTH MUMBAI PANTHERS

MUMBAI: Shams Mulani's unbeaten 60 helped Aakash Tigers Mumbai Western Suburb beat North Mumbai Panthers by six wickets in their T20 Mumbai League game here on Monday. Arjun Tendulkar also made a notable contribution for the Tigers, first by returning with figures of 3/27 and he later scored 28 off 24 balls, striking four fours. Mulani took a wicket conceding 33 runs and then his unbeaten 60 off 31 balls, in which he struck three hours and four sixes, guided Tigers to a win. Mulani with his left-arm spin put the brakes on a dangerous Panthers opening partnership that was running away with the game early on before Tendulkars timely blows with his left-arm pace restricted the Panthers to 169 for six.

ALONSO FAILS TO QUALIFY FOR INDY 500

INDIANAPOLIS: Fernando Alonso's latest bid for Indianapolis 500 glory ended in failure on Sunday after the two-time Formula One world champion failed to qualify for the US motorsport showpiece. The 37-year-old Spaniard was eliminated by young US driver Kyle Kaiser on the final run of the rain-delayed "Last Row Shootout" qualifying session at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. McLaren driver Alonso had been chasing a victory at the Brickyard in a bid to become only the second driver after Britain's Graham Hill to claim the Triple Crown of motorsport, with wins in the Monaco F1 Grand Prix, 24 Hours of Le Mans endurance and Indy 500. But Alonso's attempt to add the last remaining piece of the treble to his trophy cabinet was snuffed out in a dramatic qualifying session.

INDIA BEAT KOREA 2-1 IN TOUR OPENER

JINCHON: Indian women's hockey team defeated hosts South Korea 2-1 in the first match of the three-match bilateral series to begin its short tour on a confident here Monday. Young striker Lalremisiami (20th minute) and Navneet Kaur (40th) scored for India, while Shin Hyejeong (48th) found the net for Korea. "Considering this was our first match, I think the result was good but the performance can be better. We tried some new things in the match and it was interesting to see how we handled the change," India's chief coach Sjoerd Marjine said after the game. **Agencies**

Siwach leads way as all Indians advance

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Former world youth champion Sachin Siwach outclassed his Argentine rival Ramon Nicanor Quiroga as all seven Indians in fray had a smooth sailing on the opening day of the Indian Open boxing tournament here on Monday.

Fresh from a Bronze at the GeeBee Boxing tournament, Siwach used his height to full advantage, dominating the bout right from the first round en route a 5-0 win by a unanimous decision in the 52kg men's category at the Karmabir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Indoor Stadium.

Siwach will next face former world championship Bronze medalist Rogan Ladon in the quarterfinal and aiming to avenge his semifinal defeat by a split-decision in the President's Cup.

"It was a narrow defeat last time. But now I've now improved my speed and skill and I will look forward to settle scores this time," Siwach said.

Siwach features in the bottom half of the draw that has Commonwealth Games Gold medalist Gaurav Solanki, while the top-half in the 52kg draw features Asian Games Gold medalist Amit Panghal.

"When it comes to Indians we all know each other's strengths and weaknesses. It's a tough road ahead as flyweight is highly competitive. But as of now my focus is on the next round against the Filipino boxer," the 20-year-old talented boxer from Haryana said.

Siwach was the only Indian in the fray in the men's section, while the women's category saw all of them making the next



round. Former world championship Silver medalist Sonia Lather began her campaign with a 5-0 win over Chandra Kala Thapa to reach the quarterfinals in the 57kg.

In the women's 60kg, Preeti Beniwal put up a robust display to outclass her Nepalese opponent Sangita Sunar in a unanimous 5-0 victory to make the quarters.

Making her competitive debut in the 60kg, Shahshi Chopra too had an easy outing defeating Bhutan's Tandin Choden 5-0 by unanimous decision.

Manisha Maun defeated Nesthy Petecio of Philippines 4-1 in the 57kg category. Jyoti Gulia and Anamakia also made the quarterfinals with easy wins over their respective opponents.

MARY NIKHAT BATTLE

Six-time world champion Mary Kom may have a possible semi-final face-off with Asian Championships Bronze medalist Nikhat Zareen in 51kg. As per the draw,

released on Sunday. As many as 10 Indian boxers are already confirmed of a medal each with six in men and four in women entering the semi-finals straightaway because of the smaller size of the draw.

Brijesh Yadav and Sanjay are already in the 81kg semi-finals, and so are Naman Tanwar and Sanjeet in 91kg while Satish Kumar and Atul Thakur are in +91kg.

In women's boxing, Lovlina Borgohain and Anjali are already assured of medals in 69kg while Bhagyabati Kachari and Saweety Boora are through to the last-four in 75kg by virtue of a first round bye.

"We have at least a couple of Indian boxers in each category and the competition is very close. It will be a very interesting tournament and the exposure for the boxers will stand them in good stead ahead of the World Championships," Raffaele Bergamasco, the Performance Director of Indian women's boxing, said.

ATALANTA SNATCH POINT AT ALLEGRI'S FAREWELL

AFP ■ ROME

Departing Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri bid farewell to the Turin fans in the team's final home game this season on Sunday, a 1-1 stalemate against Atalanta that kept the visitors' hopes of a first-ever Champions League qualification alive.

The Juventus fans paid tribute to Allegri, who the club's management have decided will not be their coach next season, despite winning 11 trophies in five years, but missing out on winning the Champions League.

Juventus have already wrapped up their record eighth consecutive title, which was Allegri's fifth.

The team were officially presented with this year's Serie A trophy — the first for Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo.

Former World Cup winner Andrea Barzagli played his final home game after eight years in Turin, and received an rousing ovation when he came off after an hour.

On the pitch, forward Mario Mandzukic struck ten minutes from time to cancel



out Josip Ilicic's 33rd-minute goal for Atalanta.

The point keeps Atalanta's hopes of a first Champions League campaign alive, which they can seal if they beat Sassuolo in their final game next weekend.

Atalanta moved third ahead of Inter Milan on head-to-head after Luciano

Spalletti's side lost 4-1 at Napoli.

Juventus and second-placed Napoli are already through to the Champions League next season.

AC Milan are just one point behind Inter and Atalanta in fifth after Krzysztof Piatek and Suso struck in a 2-0 win over Frosinone.

Inter will play their final match against Empoli, who are trying to avoid relegation. Polish striker Piatek got back scoring on 57 minutes at the San Siro, with Spanish winger Suso adding a second nine minutes later.

Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma saved a Camillo Ciano penalty before Piatek broke his five-match scoring drought with his 22nd goal of the season.

Milan are at least assured of a place in next season's Europa League, along with Roma, who were held to a goalless draw at Sassuolo on Saturday.

The two teams benefited from seventh-placed Torino's shock 4-1 defeat at Empoli, which ended the northerners' European hopes.

Lazio, in eighth, are sure of playing in the Europa League group stage thanks to their Coppa Italia victory.

Empoli moved out of the relegation zone at the expense of Genoa, who were held 1-1 by Cagliari, and are now 18th ahead of next week's clash with Fiorentina, themselves just three points off the drop zone.



Former Indian cricketer RP Singh inaugurating Sir Padampati Singhania Sports Academy at Kursi Road on Sunday. Director of the academy Ashish Chauhan said that RP will come every month to give tips to the budding cricketer

MAN CITY NEED TO WIN CL: GUARDIOLA

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Pep Guardiola admits Manchester City will ultimately be judged on whether they win the Champions League despite wrapping up an unprecedented domestic treble with a 6-0 whipping of Watford in the FA Cup final.

The 48-year-old Spaniard said in the immediate aftermath of Saturday's rout the domestic treble is more difficult than winning the Champions League because it demands greater consistency over a gruelling season.

"I said before that I know we will be judged at the end

on whether we win the Champions League," said Guardiola, who twice conquered Europe as Barcelona coach.

"I know unless we do that it will not be enough." "This comes with me. I know that. I arrived in Barcelona, we were lucky we won it two times in four years and the people expect I am something special, that we have to win the Champions League and it's still true."

Guardiola, who has not tasted European success since 2011, having drawn a blank during his spell with Bayern Munich, said what sets the



GUARDIOLA AND CITY, WHO HAVE NEVER WON THE COMPETITION, HAVE FAILED TO MAKE IT PAST THE QUARTER-FINALS SINCE HE TOOK OVER IN 2016

Champions League apart is the level of the opposition.

Guardiola and City, who have never won the competition, have failed to make it past the quarter-finals since he took over in 2016.

They lost to Monaco in the last-16 in 2017 and exited in the last eight to Liverpool last year and Tottenham this season.

"In this club, the points record and the domestic competitions is incredible," he said.

"But the Champions League we don't win quite often compared to the other ones because the teams are so good, the competition is so demanding but we want to win it."

Amir, Wahab recalled for WC

PTI ■ KARACHI

Experienced left-arm pace duo of Muhammad Amir and Wahab Riaz were included in Pakistan's final 15-member World Cup squad following their 0-4 loss to England in the ODI series.

Both the bowlers were not included in the initial World Cup squad announced last month but Amir, who is yet to recover from chickenpox, was named for the one-day series against England which Pakistan completed on Sunday.

The selectors have axed allrounder Faheem Ashraf and left-arm pacer Junaid Khan from their initial World Cup squad to make way for the two senior players.

The selectors had discarded Wahab from the tour to England but after the thrashing given to the Pakistani pacers in the one-day series they apparently had a change of mind.

Wahab, who turns 34 next month, last played a one-day international for his country in the opening match of the 2017 Champions Trophy against India going for 87 runs without a wicket and than limping off with an injury.

Since then the selectors have ignored him for 50-overs cricket while Amir also didn't feature in the series against England after contracting chickenpox and his form remains a concern after he took just five wickets in his last 14 ODIs since the Champions Trophy.

According to the cricket board, Amir has recovered from his chickenpox and he and Wahab will be available for the warm-up matches against Afghanistan and Bangladesh this week.

In another major decision, the selectors have dropped young batsman Abid Ali from their World Cup squad to make way for the hard-hitting Asif Ali.

Ali was initially not part of the World Cup squad and went to England for the ODI series where he scored two half centuries.

"The lack of potency of our frontline bowlers in the recent ODI series meant that a change was needed. In addition, we now know that we will encounter batting wickets throughout the World Cup campaign," Chief Selector, Inzamam-ul-Haq said.

"The combination of these elements, meant that we believed right now, utilising the World Cup experience and knowledge of Wahab was the correct

choice," he said.

"Wahab has been training and playing club cricket, and the player of his calibre will not face much problem in adapting and adjusting to the gruelling demands of the World Cup," Inzamam said.

On the exclusion of Abid Ali, Inzamam said: "It was not an easy decision to leave him out particularly after he got only one opportunity on the tour. But, he was our third choice opener. After both struck early form, we preferred Asif Ali as he brings firepower to the team that can strengthen our chances in the tournament," the Chief Selector said.

Abid, despite being a member of the initial World Cup squad, was given just one opportunity on the entire tour.

Inzamam said the final 15-member squad was announced in consultation with the captain and head coach.

Wahab has been included in the squad in place of allrounder, Faheem Ashraf while the experienced left arm pacer, Junaid Khan has also been dropped after playing in just two ODI matches against England.

Pakistan World Cup squad: Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Babar Azam, Haris Sohail, Asif Ali, Shoaib Malik, Muhammad Hafeez, Sarfaraz Ahmed (Capt), Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Wahab Riaz, Muhammad Amir, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Muhammad Hasnain.



Bumrah can burn opposition with pace: Jeff Thomson

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In his prime, his USP was raw pace that terrorised batsmen across the globe and no wonder Jeff Thomson is impressed with Jasprit Bumrah's ability to "burn opposition with raw pace".

Bumrah has been rated as the world's best bowler by Sachin Tendulkar and the legendary Dennis Lillee's former new ball partner's words only add to the Gujarati slinger's exponentially growing reputation.

"Bumrah is really good. He is someone, more that he has bowled, the better he has got. That's how it should work," Thomson, the world's fastest bowler in the 1970s alongside Malcolm Marshall, said. "He has got raw pace to burn opposition as and when he wants to but he mixes it up. And he is awkward too to read. I haven't seen batsmen reading him well. He is unorthodox and that's what makes him different," said Thomson.

According to Thomson, Bumrah, along with Kagiso Rabada, will be the two bowlers to watch out for as they can put their hand up and respond to situations.

Talking about pace bowling, Thomson is a touch worried about Mitchell Starc's form but agreed that the left-arm quick would be a vital cog in Australia's wheel.

"I hope Mitchell Starc is on song during World Cup as of late he has been all over the shop like last summer," Thomson said about Australia's senior most pacer.

However, given his quality and ability to run through opposition sides, Thomson is confident that he will find form.

"Starc, if he can bowl well can be as good as anybody in the world. He is a precious man. He needs to bowl quick and at the same time be accurate. He gave too much away in the past," he added.

Thomson, however, is not happy that Josh Hazlewood is not in the bowling unit even though it seems quite decent.

"Pat Cummins is not a problem in my books. He has talent. We don't have Hazlewood but he could have been there. Still I would say our bowling attack is pretty good," he added.



POOR FIELDING WORRIES ARTHUR

IANS ■ LEEDS

After conceding a 0-4 series defeat against England, Pakistan head coach Mickey Arthur admitted that his side did not perform well in the bowling and fielding departments which led to their loss in the five-match rubber.

On Sunday, hosts England comfortably defeated Pakistan by 54 runs in the final ODI of the series and made sure that their World Cup preparations were on track and they remain the hot favourites for the showpiece event.

Pakistan, who are usually termed as a very good bowling side, lacked bite and conceded totals in excess of 300 in the four completed matches. And towards the end of the series, their poor fielding, which saw regulation catches being put down and a slew of misfields, also

raised questions over their World Cup chances with less than two weeks to go.



"Our fielding has been very disappointing. That has been a massive difference between the two sides," ESPNcricinfo quoted Arthur as saying

after the loss at Leeds.

"At Southampton and Nottingham, it was anybody's game going into the last five overs. We competed really well. The one difference has been our fielding and that's a real worry for me," he added.

The Pakistan head coach was, however, happy with the way the batters performed against the number one ranked ODI side.

"We sit here and take a hell lot of the positives out of this series. Our batting has gone to another level and we have batted extremely well. That's given our dressing room a massive amount of confidence. When we were coming to England, people were saying we were a 280 team. I am taking a fair amount of positives certainly in that department out of this series," said the South African.

"Our bowling and fielding has been average at best. Another thing is that we played against a team which is number one in their own conditions. I don't think there are too many other teams around in England as prepared as we are in terms of the competition we played against and match fitness, which is something very important," he added.

Despite the humiliating series loss, the 51-year-old insisted that he was confident that his side will perform well in the World Cup.

"We've got a couple of days now to regroup, two warm-up games and then we'll go. I'm very, very confident with the players we've got. We need to sharpen up on a couple of disciplines but we'll certainly get there. We'll be good," he said.

Every side will be wary of Australia: Waugh

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former captain Steve Waugh said Australia may not be the favourites to win the upcoming World Cup but the return of Steve Smith and David Warner will make other teams "wary" of the five-time winners.

Immediately after returning to action after an year-long international exile, Warner sounded warning bells to the rival bowlers with 692 runs from 12 innings in the IPL, while Smith showed glimpses of his old touch in the three warm-up matches against New Zealand in Brisbane recently.

"Every side will be wary of Australia. They know the potential of the Australian side. There's been turmoil in Australian cricket over the last 12 months, but that has been put aside now. We've got our best players available to be picked in Smith and Warner," Waugh was quoted as saying by the ICC website.

The defending champions seem to be peaking at the right time. Starting in 2018, Australia had won just three out of 18 ODIs before they turned their fortunes around during the limited-overs tour of India.

Trailing 0-2, Australia posted a hat-trick of wins to register a remarkable come-from-behind series victory against the favourites and hosts India in



March. Then, they blanked Pakistan 5-0 at the United Arab Emirates, proving that their success against India was no fluke.

"Their form was very poor, but all of a sudden, they've won their last eight matches, and they've got Smith and Warner in the team. And that is ominous for other sides, they know how good these sides are."

"Australia will be one of the teams... probably not the favourite for the tournament, but the team that other sides will be probably most fearful of. They could do some damage. So I think

Australia could go really deep in the tournament," Waugh said.

The 53-year-old, however, picked hosts England as the firm favourites to clinch the coveted trophy.

"England to me are probably the favourites - their form has been outstanding over the last couple of years. They are playing at home. Sometimes, that creates more pressure, but they've got a really good coach in Trevor Bayliss to keep the players grounded. So I think England would be favourites, and probably Australia and India on that second line of favouritism," said Waugh.

Need to stop doing Superman things & cope with fear of failure: Du Plessis

PTI ■ DUBAI

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis has urged his teammates to avoid doing "Superman things" and instead focus on overcoming the "fear of failure" ahead of the World Cup.

South Africa have a reputation of losing big matches which has earned them the label of chokers. The Proteas are yet to reach the finals of the World Cup having been knocked out at the semi-final stage four times in the past.

"In previous World Cups, we wanted to do

Superman things. We thought we had to be more special, we had to do something more than we usually do, and we did not do what was good enough before," Du Plessis was quoted as saying by the ICC.

"We haven't always got that right in the past, to play our best cricket at the World Cup, because we put so much pressure on ourselves. We want to just focus on enjoying our cricket," he added.

Du Plessis, who will be competing in his third ODI World Cup, stressed on the need to be mental-



ly prepared for the tournament which will be imperative for the team's success in England.

"There's a reason why we want the guys to play freely — because we don't want them to have a fear of failure, which is what the World Cup is for some of them."

"Our success in England over the next couple of months depends on how well we release that aspect of our play — we need that for the team to be at our best. Each player needs to find out his own strengths," he said.

Everyone in team wants to impress Ponting: Finch

PTI ■ LONDON

Australia's cricketers in front of Ricky Ponting are "like eight-year-old girls around Justin Bieber", feels the team's World Cup skipper Aaron Finch about the batting great, whose mere presence gives them a fillip.

In February, Ponting was appointed as an assistant coach for Australia's World Cup campaign, specifically working with the limited overs batsmen.

Ponting has previously worked short-term with Australia's ODI and Twenty20 squads.

"The boys all want to impress 'Punter'," Finch was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au.

"Everyone wants to impress Punter, you should see them — it's like eight-year-old girls around Justin Bieber when Punter's around the change room," he said, drawing comparisons between Ponting and the famous Canadian singer-songwriter.

"It's embarrassing, but it's great," Finch said of the legend who won the World Cup three times including twice as captain.



Langer defends Hazlewood's omission

IANS ■ MELBOURNE

Australia head coach Justin Langer has defended the decision to exclude Josh Hazlewood from the upcoming World Cup squad, saying the pacer didn't play enough white-ball cricket in the recent time to make his case for the showpiece event.

"He just hasn't been playing any cricket," cricket.com.au quoted Langer as saying.

"He's come off a second stress fracture in his back and while he's just starting to get up and running in the nets now — I think he's played six white ball games in the last 18 months — that's T20 and one-day cricket."

"We know he's a great bowler. He's a brilliant bowler, but it was just such bad timing for him," he added.

Hazlewood played a vital role in Australia's successful campaign in the World Cup four years ago and was also the number one ranked bowler in ODIs in 2017.

The right-arm pacer had last week expressed his disappointment over the snub after Kane Richardson was



preferred by selectors following the shoulder injury that forced Jhye Richardson out of the squad.

"It was obviously bitterly disappointing. It only comes around every four years. I was lucky enough to experience it on home soil last time. It'll probably hit me a bit once the tournament starts and you're watching on TV," Hazlewood had said.

"It's pretty hard. It's not just a normal ODI series, it's a World Cup," he added.

Afghan coach Simmons to quit after World Cup



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former West Indies allrounder Phil Simmons will step down from his position as Afghanistan coach after the end of the ICC men's World Cup.

Simmons, who took over the position in December 2017, said he has achieved his target of taking Afghanistan to the World Cup and the time is ripe for him to leave.

"I have thought about it and I have actually given the ACB my notice that I will not be renewing my contract. I will move on to something different once my contract expires on July 15," Simmons told ESPNcricinfo.

Simmons' contract with Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) runs until the end of the World Cup and he might have been given an extension given Afghanistan's rise under his guidance.

"I signed up originally for 18 months and I think I have done a lot in this period. It is time for me to

move on to something else now. To want to get to the World Cup - that was ACB's goal at the time they appointed me," Simmons said.

"My goal is always to leave things better than when I joined; the way we practice, the way we think about the game, the way we assess other teams. I've tried to help the players in all those areas," added the 56-year-old, under whom Afghanistan won the World Cup Qualifier last March.

Last month, ACB had controversially appointed Gulbadin Naib as ODI captain in place of Asghar Afghan.

Simmons said he had no clue about the decisions and he was not consulted before making those changes.

"No, I was not aware of it. I was not given any reasons. It was the decision of the Afghanistan Cricket Board and the selectors," Simmons said.



I don't know the final 15: Morgan on WC selection

IANS ■ LEEDS

England captain Eoin Morgan has admitted that he is still unsure about the final 15 who will be selected in the squad for the upcoming World Cup beginning May 30.

After the final match of the five-ODI series against Pakistan which England won by 54 runs, Morgan said the continuous improvement in performance by the players has made the selection meeting extremely difficult.

"I don't know the 15," ESPNcricinfo quoted Morgan as saying on Sunday after the match. "Every one of these guys should be proud of what we've achieved so far. The continuous improvement of performances makes the selection meeting extremely difficult."

"But every single member of the 17-man squad here will play some role, due to the nature of injuries and illness and call-ups," he added.

Meanwhile, Chris Woakes, who bagged the Man of the Match award for his five-wicket haul in Leeds, admitted he would be anxiously waiting for the confirmation.

Woakes finished on top of the series bowling charts, with 10 wickets in four matches and made a strong case for being selected in the final 15 for the showpiece event.

"Everyone will be wary of that phone call," Woakes said. "Even if you feel like you've got a good chance to be in the squad, until you hear it from the selectors' mouths, it's not quite set in stone. You're still probably a little bit on edge, particularly with these 16 and 17 players, because everyone has performed at some point. It's a tricky decision for the selectors. Everyone will be looking at their phones tomorrow I suppose, if that's when we find out," he added.