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ROHIT'S 117 POWERS
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USUALSUSPECTS
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Bapu's disrespect in UK is insult to India

Among the many functions of the media, one that strikes me as being significant is its ability to give publicity to those who least deserve it. The media, thanks its innately competitive character, tends to highlight the bizarre and the weird. Increasingly, outlandishness is becoming a foolproof way of guaranteeing publicity.

Last Thursday's edition of *The Times* (London) – thanks to the online editions you no longer have to wait for the deliveries of the hard copy – contained a characteristically bizarre news item. It seems that there is a proposal to instal a statue of Mahatma Gandhi outside the Manchester Cathedral to both commemorate the Mahatma's 150th birth anniversary and the horrible terrorist incident that led to the deaths of 22 concert-goers in 2017. Gandhi was sought to be commemorated as the apostle of non-violence.

There may understandably be differences over the choice of the Mahatma as the most appropriate personification of peace and goodwill outside a Christian church. Some may have felt that something more abstract would fit the sensibilities of the 21st century. These debates can be never ending and differences of opinion are bound to persist.

In any case, the relevant people decided in their wisdom that in the multi-ethnic surroundings of Manchester, a statue of Gandhi would fit the bill. Consequently, and without too much fuss, the decision was taken to instal his statue and a donor was found to underwrite the costs.

Unfortunately, the story does not end here. A bunch of publicity seekers in the Manchester University Student's Union have initiated a "Gandhi must fall" campaign to prevent the Mahatma from having a prominent presence in the city. Taking their cue from the "Rhodes must fall" campaign that was waged in Oxford University to remove all traces of the adventurer and colonist who bequeathed a part of his massive fortune to his alma mater, the student activists decided that now was the turn of Gandhi. The problem with Mahatma it would seem was his inability to include black

Africans in his battle for civil rights in South Africa. Additionally, Gandhi had apparently made some disparaging comments about South African blacks.

How should we react if some people in Manchester become so frightened of causing offence that they withdraw the offer to instal a statue of the Mahatma outside Manchester Cathedral? It is the sovereign right of the civic authorities in that English city to either have the statue or not have it. However, I don't think we in India should let it rest it at that. We should make it very clear that any second thoughts on the statue would be construed as an act of insult to India

The tendency to judge history in terms of the standards of the present is very tempting. It avoids the more difficult business of trying to locate the past within an earlier context. Everything can be readily packaged in a contemporary garb on the assumption that the present constitutes the highest stage of human achievement. This is of course an unhistorical approach but it is also patently ridiculous. It is about as pathetically absurd as approaching a literary text of the past without any reference to the context in which it was written.

Tragically, this seems to have become a fashion in some campuses and among some academics. This was the logic behind

the removal of a Gandhi statue from the University of Ghana a year ago. Now the same thing is being attempted in Manchester.

Hopefully nothing more will come of this and having secured their five minutes of fame in the media the impetuous students will move to their next obsession. That may well happen but it is also time that the rest of society starts taking note of the rising level of absurdities that are defining public life all over the world.

The point to note is that there is a mad rush to detect behaviour that somehow or the other has caused offence. Prickliness has become the norm so that almost everything is being treated as offensive to someone or other. People have even begun determining their own gender status. For example, if a man decides he is actually a woman but someone describes him as a man, that is considered evidence of offensive behaviour. In some Western countries, even the police force is being sensitised to take into account such individual quirkiness on the ground that a man who chooses a self-image of being a woman may be scarred for life and suffer trauma in case he is referred to as 'he' rather than 'she'.

Frankly, all this is getting rather tiresome. While everyone recognises the importance of stopping gratuitous insults on individuals, it is becoming more and more difficult keeping pace with everything that is potentially offensive. Last week, a writer in a Kolkata daily berated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Good Samaritan act of removing litter from a beach in Chennai. This obsession with tidiness, we were informed, was a characteristic of Adolf Hitler. The implication was clear: Swachh Bharat was a fascist act. I guess sooner or later we will also be told that vegetarianism is inherently fascist because Hitler shunned meat.

The question is: How should we react if some people in Manchester become so frightened of causing offence that they withdraw the offer to instal a statue of the Mahatma outside Manchester Cathedral? It is the sovereign right of the civic authorities in that English city to either have the statue or not have it. However, I don't think we in India should let it rest it at that. We should make it very clear that any second thoughts on the statue would be construed as an act of insult to India. India did not ask for that statue to be installed. But once it was decided to instal it, any U-turn counts as a gratuitous insult to a man we revere. It should also be made clear that we will view any disrespect to Gandhi as an unfriendly act against India. It is time to stop this great onslaught of rubbish.

Safe zones set up for apple dealers in J&K

RAHUL DATTA/MOHIT KANDHARI ■
NEW DELHI/JAMMU

Taking a serious note of the killing of three outsiders involved in apple trade in Kashmir earlier this week despite the large presence of security personnel, the security establishment has revisited its strategy by providing a safety umbrella in the hinterland dotted with apple orchards.

The Army and paramilitary forces have fanned out in such areas besides population centres to instill confidence among masses and deny terrorists time and space to move.

However, setting up of safe pickup points for collection of apple crops in the wake of the killings have created problems for the orchard owners located far away. While traders have been advised to use smaller vehicles for apple transportation from interiors of the district, they are finding it difficult to ferry their produce to these mandis due to lack of smaller vehicles. If this is cutting into their profit margins, it is also affecting the timely transport of the produce to markets outside Kashmir.

On an average, one truck carries 800 to 1,000 apple boxes. Transporters are charg-



A security person patrolls as trucks stand parked at a safe zone for fruit dealers in Shopian on Saturday.

PTI

ing ₹135-140 per box compared to ₹80-90 earlier.

Kashmir produces over 20-24 lakh metric tonnes of apple worth ₹10,000 crore annually. The attacks on apple traders and truck drivers in Shopian have triggered a fresh wave of terror among the truck drivers and large number of non-local workers engaged in the laborious task of packing, loading and unloading of apple boxes.

Effort is to ensure that apple traders in the hinterland of major apple growing centre

of Sopore, which has Asia's biggest mandi for this fruit, Shopian, Pulwama and Anantnag in South Kashmir are able to continue with their routine economic activities.

In the meantime, a positive development has come in the way of the security forces as intelligence flow about militants has improved in the last few days. Explaining the significance of this factor, officials said since August 5, the local police and intelligence agencies were concentrating on main-

Forces revisit plan for secure trade in Valley after terrorists kill traders

taining law and order anticipating unrest like mass protests and violence. Also the snapping of mobile services impacted intelligence gathering and information flow came down by at least 70 per cent, they said.

With the restoration of mobile services earlier this week and virtually no mass protests as feared, the local police, which provide the real time intelligence about terrorists, has now re-established its counter-terrorism grid.

BJP-Sena win certain, but rebels may play spoilsport

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena combine's return to power in Maharashtra becoming more or less certain, the debate preceding the State Assembly polls scheduled for Monday has narrowed down to numbers. Notwithstanding the saffron alliance's confidence of winning more than 220 out of total 288 seats, the numbers are quite not adding up if reports from the ground are anything to go by.

The questions being asked are: Will the BJP and the Shiv Sena at all cross the 200 mark? Will the BJP retain 122 seats it had won in the 2014 State Assembly polls? Will there be a drop or an increase in the number (63) of seats won by the Shiv Sena in the previous Assembly polls separately?

The BJP and the Shiv Sena, which had contested the 2014 Assembly polls separately, had together won 185 out of the total 288 seats, as against 83 seats bagged collectively by the Congress (42) and the NCP (41).

It is the rebel factor that is threatening to play a spoilsport for the ruling saffron alliance in the polls. Nearly 50 rebels,



belonging to both the BJP and the Shiv Sena, are in the poll fray in as many constituencies across the State. Almost all the rebels are contesting the polls against the saffron alliance's official nominees after having been denied tickets by their respective parties. At least 30 to 35 of the rebels have the potential to sabotage the chances of the official candidates of the two parties. The BJP is facing the brunt of rebels in the fray.

The presence of such a large number of rebels in the poll fray should be seen in the light of the fact that the BJP and the Shiv Sena had contested the 2014 Assembly polls separately. The BJP had contested 260 out of 288 seats, while the Shiv Sena had put up candidates in 282 seats.

While the BJP and its allies are contesting 164 seats, the

Sena is contesting 124 seats.

Sensing a certain victory, a large number of candidates had sought tickets from their respective parties, especially the BJP, even in seats that have gone to the other saffron party in the alliance.

Two days ahead of the withdrawal of nominations, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had sent out stern message to rebels to opt out of the fray and said that there would be no place for rebels in the BJP-led "Maha-Yuti".

Campaigning in Haryana ends

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The campaigning for the Haryana Assembly elections ended on Saturday evening with Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing two rallies in Rewari and Ellenabad on the last day.

The elections will be held on October 21, results of which will be declared on October 24. Of the over 1.83 crore voters, over 83 lakh are women.

100 new Mohalla Clinics open



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is undergoing the blood pressure check after the inauguration of Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinic near Sangam Vihar Flyover, Wazirabad, in Delhi on Saturday

PTI

50 booked for deterring public servants from discharging duties

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The police have booked 50 persons for deterring public servants from discharging their duty in Vidisha after crowd went berserk over a road accident in which six cows were mowed down by a speeding truck late on Friday.

Superintendent of Police Bharat Bhushan Sharma on Saturday told media persons that 50 persons have been booked by the police on charges of obstructing government work and other sections of the IPC.

He confirmed that a speeding truck had killed some cows on highway after which locals went on rampage. The angry mob had set the truck on fire and staged Chakka Jaam at Sagar-Bhopal highway. Police on the receipt of the information had reached the spot and disperse the mob using mild force. After the incident the traffic on highway remained obstructed for around one hour and administra-

tive officers including SDM Pravin Prajapati, SHO and the tahsildar had to take things into their control. Police force was deployed in the area to keep things under control. The angry mob had also pelted police team and administrative officers with stones. Locals claimed that a rashly driven truck was moving towards Bhopal from Sagar on Friday night and hit a group of cows close to Ashish Mangal Vatika. Total six cows had died in the incident and others were injured in the accident. Soon local residents and members of right wings reached the spot creating ruckus. The agitated locals were demanding arrest of the truck driver and establishment of Police post on the square.

The truck driver was also beaten up by the angry locals. The police later rescued him and sent him for treatment at nearby hospital. The police later booked truck Driver Rakesh Ahirwar and also 50 locals who were part of the protest after the accident.

SHOW TIME

Powered by
Saif Ali



LAAL KAPTAAN
*ing: Saif Ali Khan, Manav Vij, Zoya Hussain, Deepak Dobriyal, Simone Singh, Sonakshi Sinha
Rated: 6/10

There are a few problems that *Laal Kaptaan* has. First, the look that Saif Ali Khan supports. While the make-up artist who painstakingly worked on giving this look to the actor, there is need to understand that there is no need to copy. Some elements are familiar — inspired from Captain Jack Sparrow. We fell in love with that look but it doesn't mean we want it replicated.

Second, from the opening scene we understood that the film is about revenge and that the victim needs to meet his Maker in the manner that was avowed. What follows in the next 155 minutes leads to sheer boredom.

Third, the storyline is weak and is stretched out. Some slick editing could have taken *Laal Kaptaan* on a fasttrack.

Fourth, a big disappointment is

Manav Vij who spends the entire time grunting and nothing much even though he has so much screen presence.

Director Navdeep Singh may not have been to tell a compelling story of revenge by keeping it on a fasttrack with a backdrop in 18th Century but he does manage to redeem himself by keeping the audience guessing how a boy who was strung up on a tree and assumed dead managed to survive just to spend the next 25 years hunting for the man who betrayed the entire nation against a war with *firangis*.

Then there is the fact that there are no songs. While the story has been told a thousand times and we know that the hero will win, yet one is glued to the seat due to some great performance by Saif Ali who dons a new look and plays a Naga sadhu helms and powers this film.

Another person who needs a special mention here is Deepak Dobriyal who plays the mad-hatter tracker is absolutely brilliant.

— Shalini Sakseena

Beautiful and full
of colour

MALEFICENT: THE MISTRESS OF EVIL
*ing: Angelina Jolie, Michelle Pfeiffer, Harris Dickinson, Elle Fanning, Sam Riley, Ed Skrein, Imelda Staunton, Juno Temple, Lesley Manville
Rated: 7.5/10

Malificent is back; the evil witch is back; her wrath in full form against the human race. In the middle of all this is her Goddaughter— a human — whom she raised as her own. Those who watched Part 1 would have a fair idea of what is happening here. Familiar faces and certain references to what happened earlier, (*Maleficent*), make it a rad easier to follow the thread in thus one. However, fret not if one has not seen the earlier movie.

Malificent:Mistress of Evil can be enjoyed even otherwise such is the storytelling by director Robert Stromberg.

But that is not the only good thing about this film. It is full of colour, the brilliant, vibrant and wonderful hues that exist in Nature. Add the fairies, pixies and all creatures magical and there is a heady combination of wonder that keeps you in a story that is nothing new new but told excellently. It is a fight of good over evil. No guesses who wins and yet one watches with baited breath for what is to come.

Angelina Jolie as Malificent is brilliant. Her attempts and rehearsal to smile and be pleasant to her Goddaughter's would be in-laws is not only sweet but makes one smile as well. Her getting teary eyed at the climax is the icing on the cake. Michelle Pfeiffer as the Queen of Ulstead is just as good.

What makes this film a must for those who love Nature is that there is a message that this one has to convey — Man is the evil here, ruining Nature. But all is not lost here. There is time. Humans need to find a way to co-exist with Nature otherwise it is bound to destroy us.

— Shalini Sakseena



‘Music is my soulmate’

ANU MALIK talks to MUSBA HASHMI about the latest season of Indian Idol and how reality shows open doors to opportunities for singers

■ This year the theme of Indian Idol is Ek Desh Ek Awaaz. Can you explain more?

In simple words, we are a radical country and we have a lot of talent in every nook and corner. The theme — *Ek Desh Ek Awaaz* — encapsulates the fact that we are only looking for talent irrespective of his background or race. We believe that the talent unites us through a musical manner. We welcome each and every voice in the show without focusing on a particular form of music.

■ What things do you keep in mind while judging?

All the three of us — Vishal Dadlani, Neha Kakkar and I are looking for out of the box talent that is realistic. In this world, you can't look for Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle or Mohammad Rafi, no one can beat them. They are the best. They are just one of a kind. And I had the chance to work with them when I was 18. Now I am 55; its time to move on and get fresh voices. If someone has something different to serve on the table, we are welcoming them with open hearts. I believe that we have found what we were looking for — magical singers.

A case in point is Azmat, who won a singing reality show when he was just 10-11 years old. Then he stopped singing and fell in bad company. But, he was brave enough to come up and accept that he lost the track at some point. We gave him a second chance. This is what *Indian Idol 11* is all about.

■ You have been judging the show since a long time. How has the journey been?

The audience has started saying that this is the best trio of judges on *Indian Idol* so far. The reason being we get along very well. We do have difference of opinions sometimes but that's fine. The

journey has definitely been a great one.

■ Do you see any difference in the talent from five years ago and now?

Talent is talent. Music is ingrained in the DNA of Indians. But, when I look at the youngsters today, technology has made a lot of difference. The youngsters are doing a lot of *riyaaz* before coming for the auditions. They are well-prepared but they also know that there's a lot of competition. The youngsters know that technology is available for everyone and they are trying to walk an extra mile to make a difference. They are committed to their work much more than we ever were.

■ Do you think reality shows can be a turning point in a singer's career?

Yes. Today's generation is blessed to have reality shows. We never had this opportunity in our time. When you are talented and you are on a show, you come into everyone's radar. If you win the show or are in the top 10, you are suddenly in demand. You start getting work. I always joke about this on the show too that Salman Ali's (winner of *Indian Idol 10*) passport is thicker than mine.

■ What does music mean to you?

Music is everything to me. It is my soulmate and the only thing that has been with me through my highs and lows. Apart from my daughters, music is the only thing that has kept me alive all this while. It is a tool to remove any pain that a person is going through. When I made *Moh Moh Ke Dhuage*, people called me up and said that the song is healing them. That was a big compliment for me.

■ Do you have a favourite song?


It's yet to come. (laughs)

■ What was the most challenging project?

The *qawwali* from *Main Hoon Na* was quite challenging. I wanted to make a *qawwali* that would set a trend and after that many composers started making *qawwalis*. Before that there were no *qawwalis* and then suddenly *Kajra Re Kajra Re* came and many more followed.

■ An advice for the aspiring singers?

Just a simple one: Nothing can help anyone except for hard work and commitment towards your work. A lot of people ask me how have you survived in the industry for 42 years? I started when I was only 16 and I kept working since then. Also *riyaaz* is the key. I keep on making songs irrespective of the fact that whether it will be used in the film or not. And there has been not even a single day when I haven't made a song. Everyone is working hard so you have to work even harder. Nothing comes easy. It is tough, but it is worth it.



मध्यप्रदेश शासन

अपील

कमल नाथ, मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

15

YEARS OF CELEBRATING THE MAHATMA

प्रिय भाईयो एवं बहनो,

डेंगू, चिकुनगुनिया एवं जीका वाहक जनित रोग हैं जो एडीज मच्छर के द्वारा फैलते हैं। इस वर्ष प्रदेश में सामान्य से अधिक वर्षा हुई है। प्रायः यह देखने में आया है कि घरों की छत पर रखी अनुपयोगी सामग्री, गमले के नीचे रखी हुई ट्रे, सीमेंट की पानी की टंकी, घरों के बाहर रखे कूलर, पक्षियों के पानी के लिये रखे जाने वाले सकोरे इत्यादि में वर्षा जल एकत्र हो जाता है। इनमें सात दिन से अधिक समय तक ठहरे हुए जल में एडीज मच्छर पलते-बढ़ते हैं। यह एडीज मच्छर दिन के समय काटता है तथा इसके द्वारा डेंगू, चिकुनगुनिया, जीका इत्यादि वायरस द्वारा होने वाले रोगों का संक्रमण फैलता है।

डेंगू, चिकुनगुनिया, जीका जैसी बीमारियों से बचाव के लिये आवश्यक है कि किसी भी स्थान पर जल का जमाव एक सप्ताह से अधिक समय तक नहीं होने दें। इस तरह के छोटे-छोटे जलभराव रोकने के प्रयास से आप स्वयं एवं आस-पास के निवासियों को डेंगू, चिकुनगुनिया और जीका से बचने में मदद कर सकते हैं। इन बीमारियों से बचने के लिये हमें अपने घरों के आस-पास के परिवेश को स्वच्छ रखना चाहिए। हम अपने घर, कार्यस्थल अथवा खुली जगह पर जल का जमाव नहीं होने दें। सभी जल स्रोतों की सफाई का ध्यान रखें और मच्छरदानियों का उपयोग अवश्य करें। हम स्वयं और दूसरों को जागरूक रखकर अपने घरों एवं आस-पास के क्षेत्र को मच्छर मुक्त करने में अपना पूर्ण सहयोग प्रदान कर सकते हैं।

इन बीमारियों के लिए सभी शासकीय स्वास्थ्य संस्थाओं में निःशुल्क जांच एवं उपचार की सुविधा उपलब्ध है। बुखार आने पर निकट की शासकीय स्वास्थ्य संस्था में चिकित्सक से परामर्श अवश्य लेवें तथा चिकित्सक की सलाह के अनुसार ही जांच एवं उपचार करायें। ऐसे समय पर अपनी मर्जी से दवा का सेवन नहीं करना चाहिए।

डेंगू, चिकुनगुनिया एवं जीका के नियंत्रण में आप सभी का सहयोग आवश्यक है।

शुभकामनाओं के साथ।

भवदीय

(कमल नाथ)

D-11194/19

TELLYTALE

ADITI'S INSPIRATION IS MADHURI



It isn't just Bollywood actors who go the extra mile to prepare for their roles. Today, TV stars are also opting for a method-oriented preparation for their roles. We have numerous instances of movie stars learning and mastering a new language or sporting a different look or taking inspiration from veteran actors to get into the skin of their characters!

Yes, actor Aditi Sharma who has been roped in as Roshni the lead actor of the show, has recently done something similar to this. For her new show *Yehh Jadu Hain Jinn Ka*, she has taken inspiration from the gorgeous actor Madhuri Dixit's cult movies *Devdas* and *Kalank*.

Commenting on the same, beautiful Aditi said: "Roshni is a good-looking, happy go lucky girl with a dark past associated with her. I am extremely happy to play this character as for the first time, I would be playing such an audacious role which would be pivotal in delivering the show's core message. Therefore, I did in-depth research on the community which would help me portray my character convincingly. Madhuri Dixit has always been an inspiration to me. To adapt the language and gestures of the character, my biggest inspiration came from watching Madhuri Dixit's popular movies *Devdas* and *Kalank*. I tried to borrow some nuances from these two films."

SAMTA DONS CHEF'S HAT

One thing that binds everyone is good food. It is said that a family that eats together stays together and the cast of &TV's *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari* proudly and lovingly exhibits this saying in its true form. And one person who brings the food and everyone together, is the actor and writer, Samta Sagar. She is not only the co-writer of *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari* but also essays the role of Sarla, Gudiya's



mother in the show. Apart from being a fantastic actor and writer, she also a fabulous chef.

Being from a modest background with conservative upbringing has equipped Sagar with culinary skills that are par excellence. The actor who learned to cook at a very young age, always makes it a point to cook her own meals and known to be a wonderful host, despite her hectic work schedule. So much so, she often whips up some delicious dishes to pamper and feed her co-stars who love eating *ghar ka khana*. And one person who absolutely gobbles up all the food is our *chatori* Gudiya (Sarika Bahroliya), who is an absolute foodie, and loves Indian delicacies. On many occasions Sagar has also gone out of her way to cook on sets with a small stove that is usually used to prepare tea/coffee for the crew. Sagar's *gatte ki sabzi* and *aloo puri* are an absolute hit amongst the crew.

Talking about the motherly love and the delicious food that Sagar pampers her with Sarika Bahroliya aka Gudiya said: "With Samtaaji around I rarely miss home (smiles) and my home-cooked meals. She isn't just the best cook but also the warmest soul on the set. She treats me like her daughter, and most of the time get me home-cooked food as I live alone in Mumbai. Her food is absolutely delicious, and the best part is that she is extremely quick, she can whip up a dish in a matter of minutes."

Sharing her love for cooking Sagar said: "Not many know that I am really passionate about cooking and I find it quite therapeutic. But apart from cooking and I also love being a good host and feeding people with delicious meals. It simply makes me happy to see people enjoying and relishing a good meal. Whenever I have some time on my hand, I try preparing some dishes and I prepare it in more quantity to take it on the sets. We always make it a point to eat our lunch together and most of the people on sets including my co-stars have become a part of my extended family."

PATHBREAKERS SEASON 4

After three successful seasons, MN+, the gold class of Hollywood movies, announced the 4th season of its marquee property, *Pathbreakers* that airs every Monday to Thursday at 9:00 pm.

To make the experience more relatable for the viewer, a pathbreaker in her own right, the global icon, Priyanka Chopra Jonas is the face of *Pathbreakers Season 4*. Taking forward the spirit of her character from her highly appreciated real-life drama, *The Sky is Pink*, she encourages viewers to celebrate stories that redefined cinema and are etched in gold forever. The property will be promoted extensively across the Network brands, with complimenting radio, ambient, social media and cinema screens across key metros. Earlier seasons have been helmed by stalwarts like Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan and Farhan Akhtar.

Commenting on the announcement, Vivek Srivastava, President — Strategy and

Business Head — English Entertainment Cluster, Times Network said: "After three successful seasons, MN+ *Pathbreakers* has risen to become the ultimate destination for Hollywood's iconic movies, that pioneered change and broke stereotypes, influencing moviemakers and movie lovers for decades to come. I am confident that this new season will continue to outdo viewers' expectations, setting a new benchmark in the category."

ROSHNI'S FAIRY TALE MOMENT

Every girl dreams of having a fairytale story for oneself and experiencing even a single moment close to one of your favorite imagination is like a dream come true. Same was experienced by Roshni Walia *aka* Tara Mane during her shoot for the grand premier of the upcoming reality show in *Tara from Satara* — Dancer No 1. The show is all set for a grand opening along with the performances of super talented and versatile Sanam Johar and dancing legend Sudha Chandran.

The reality show Dancer No 1 will soon



incept and along with the performances of various contestants audience will witness a special dance of Tara. The young girl has got herself a job as the volunteer of the show and goes for her assistance on the stage at the mid of the show. The sound check being on, suddenly a song is played and Tara being Tara could not stop herself from twirling on the tune. The darkness on the stage and the music take Tara to her own world where she dances with her broom but the sudden exposure to light breaks it all and she finds herself standing in front of all the audience.

Speaking about this sequence Roshni said: "The short dance sequence was like my own *Cyndrella* moment in which I danced my heart out with my partner, that is my broom. I was in my own dreamworld until those lights are switched on and I find myself in the limelight. Someone shouts at me to abandon the stage and I had to run away. This was actually so similar to one of my favorite fairy tales and when I was initially told about this sequence that very moment, I got excited about shooting for it as I related. Since my childhood I had dreamt of experiencing something similar and the dream has finally come true. I am sure that it would remain one of my favorite shoot till the end."

Ahead of Diwali, criminal activities on rise in Gwalior

PNS ■ GWALIOR

As the shoppers' crowd has increased in view of the approaching Deepavali, the criminals too have become extra-active in the city, especially in the crowded markets and malls. There have been reports of 51 vehicle thefts during the past 17 days. This is in addition to the scores of pick pocketing, chain snatching and thefts of mobiles, and other valuables that have been reported during this fortnight.

This alarming number of vehicle thefts shows that the city has become extremely unsafe for parked four-wheelers and two-wheelers with nearly 3 vehicles being stolen in a day on an average. Most of the incidents of vehicle thefts have occurred outside banks and hospitals.

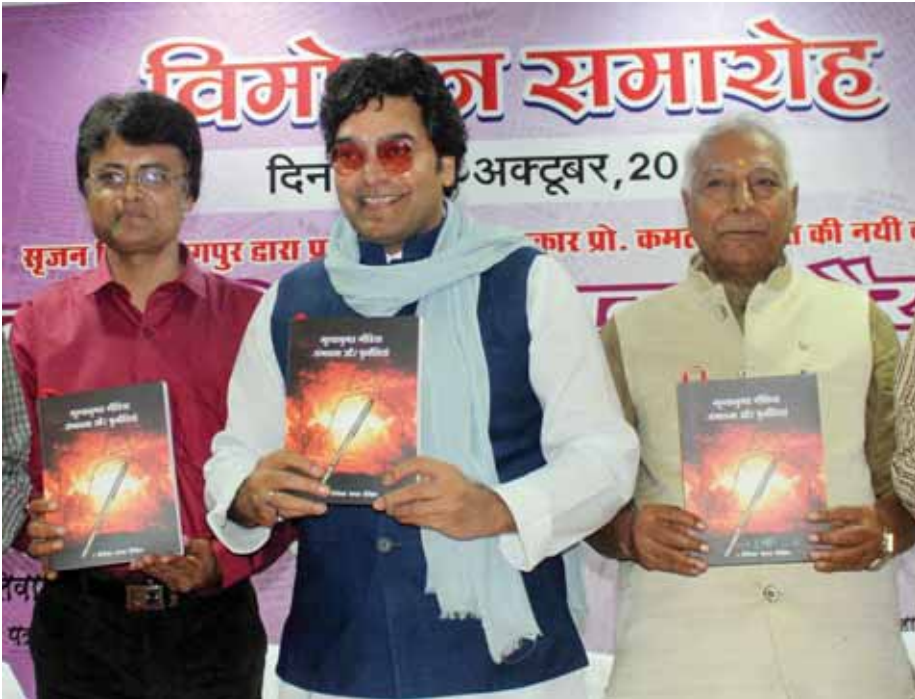
There has been an increase in chain snatching incidents also that has sparked fear in the public, especially the women. Many victims have also suffered grievous head injuries due to these incidents. Even while the police claim to have recovered CCTV footage of many incidents, the chain snatchers continue to roam around in bikes, snatching chains and purses.

Speaking to the media persons, Gwalior SSP Navneet Bhaseen said that, in view of the approaching rush during Deepavali, the police depart-

ment is taking all precautionary measures to thwart attempts by anti-social elements, especially thieves and pickpocketers.

He added that an additional force of 300 policemen will be deployed in the market places with instructions to look out for anti-social elements involved in stealing, picking pockets and robbing valuables by diverting attention of the shoppers.

The SSP has also appealed to the public to be more vigilant while buying things in the market. He added that the public can give information about any untoward incident on his mobile number 7049110100.



Bollywood actor Ashutosh Rana releases a book written by veteran journalist and writer Prof Kamal Dixit at a programme in Bhopal on Saturday

Health department to hold health diagnosis camps across State



STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Health department will organise health diagnosis camps at various districts of the State next month. Identified poor urology patients can also be operated in the free urology camps of the Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital.

This was suggested by Principle Secretary Health Pallavi Jain Govil here on Saturday. She came here to take overview of 95 th Free Urology camp. On the occasion Managing Trustee IC Janiyani, Trustees Hero Gyanchandani, TD Adwani, Hero Keswani were also present.

Pallavi Jani Govil was told that 76 urology patients have been operated in Two days. She visited in general and recovery wards of the hospital and specially enquired about the well-being of women and child urology operated patients. She enquired that how could they know about this free camp and what is the level of the quality of services and facilities.

Patients told that the quality of cleanliness and services are very good. Behavior of paramedical staff, volunteers and surgeons is very soft to the patients. The PS also discussed with American and local urology surgeons Dr Shibban Warikoo, Dr Amar Singh, Dr Jitendra Amlani and Dr CP Dewani. Later she took an overview of eye care wing of the hospital also. She discussed with senior ophthalmologist Dr Rashmi Apte. She was told that Sewa Sadan Hospital is undertaking eye care services in eight nearby districts. This hospital has launched eight Vision Centers in nearby towns and cities.

Fifteen new vision centers will also be opened very soon in the periphery of 200 km of Bhopal. It was told to the PS that Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital will very soon achieve the target of cataract free 10 villages of kurawar town of Rajgarh district. She was told that this year SSEH is going to establish Ratinopathy of paediatrics department in the hospital.

Pallavi Jain Govil expected that the doctors serving in Govt hospitals should also be invited in your hospital so as they should also be encourage for selfless services to suffering humanity.

Govil also wrote her comments in the visitor book that it was a pleasure, Privilege and learning experience to visit urology camp being held at SSEH. Dedication of the serving team is exemplary. All surgeons are committed.

"My felicitation for good work being done here," she added, wishing all the best for the hospital. Later she went to the Kutia of Paramhansa Sant Hirdaram Sahibji and paid her tributes this great soul.

Inter-School speech competition held at Vikram Higher Secondary School

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under the auspices of Vigilance Department and BSM Division of BHEL Bhopal, an Inter-School speech competition was held on Saturday at Vikram Higher Secondary School on the theme 'Integrity –A Way of Life'.

Principal Ruby Kundu welcomed all the guests. BHEL's Head of Vigilance, AGM Amit Sharma, shed light on the purpose and importance of celebrating vigilance awareness week.

On this occasion, Chief Guest M Isadore, GM (HR) said in his address that everybody has got equal opportunity in our nation, and it is our duty to work with full integrity towards our own and our nation's prosperity.

Isadore also distributed prizes to the winners. Surabhi Sharma and Cheshta Singh of Carmel Convent School, and Nitya Sharma of Jawaharlal Nehru School bagged first Prize in their respective groups. DGM (Vigilance), Pankaj Jha proposed the vote of thanks. Other senior officials of BHEL, Sanjay Dhavle, AGM (Vigilance),

Sagar Public School Katara Extension witnesses signature event of day camp

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Sagar Public School Katara Extension witnessed its signature event of day camp with great zeal, enthusiasm and excitement. The camp is aimed to foster personal growth, confidence, attain life skills and learning beyond classrooms to over 300 Sagarites of grade KG II to VII.

The day camp of school was based on the theme 'Jingle in Jungle' with decoration of school on jungle theme. The camp safari commenced with lighting the lamp by Sagarites in presence Jaishree Kanwar, Director Sagar Public School, Vice Principal Prachi Verma highlighting school's theme 'Living the Virtue' with

Sagarites in animal teams namely - Monkey, Bear, Elephant and Kangaroo depicting values of Wisdom, Bravery, Modesty and Generosity.

The journey of jungle safari began with welcome of Sagarites followed by zumba dance and group photo sessions of teams. Post breakfast, competition sessions began between the teams by showcasing their value in activities of adventure zone, story enactment, action songs, aqua zumba, dance, story rhymes etc. 'Trash to Treasure' an art and craft session marked the beginning of festival celebrations with Sagarites launching the 'Joy of Sharing' campaign.

(Vigilance) were also present on this occasion.

In our knowledge system, every problem has a solution: Guv

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Addressing the three-day 64th conference of the Akhil Bhartiya Darshan Parishad at the RCVN Noronha Academy of Administration and Management on Saturday, Governor Lalji Tandon said that in our knowledge system every problem has a solution.

The truth of the entire creation is found in the Indian philosophy. The need is for research and study to present its scientific outlook to the society. He said that social and political changes took place in the entire world with bloodshed but in our country political and social problems were solved through discussion.

Tandon said that the essence of Indian philosophy is 'Yat Pinde, Tat Brahmande', which means, what is in the body, is in the universe. He said that the thousands of years-old belief of immortality of the soul is relevant even today. Tandon said that the richness of philosophical knowledge of the Indian public is amazing.

In the era when all books, libraries and schools were burnt, the Indian knowledge

system continued in that era also. The Governor expected that the contemplation in the Darshan Parishad conference will be a meaningful effort in this direction.

Professor Sangeet Kumar Ragi said that while Western knowledge has been successful in the field of materialism, Indian knowledge is a big success in the field of spiritualism. He said that philosophy is the spiritual science of learning from experience.

It needs to be linked to today's science. Chairman of Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Prof Ramesh Chandra Sinha said that the role of philosophers in giving direction to the society is widespread.

In the modern scenario, philosophy cannot be limited to the world of humans. Giving the beej vaktavya of the session, Prof Abhimanyu Singh stated the insight, nature, diversity and need for philosophy.

He told that philosophy is an ideological structure, which incorporates different forms of seeing and understanding the same object. President of the Parishad Prof Jatashankar told that in the last 6 decades many

such books have been published in Hindi by the Parishad, which have been useful for research scholars. The Governor released the souvenir of the 64th conference of the Council in the inaugural session and honoured the scholars with awards. Principal Secretary, Commercial Taxes Manu Shrivastava and a large number of philosophers, visuals and students were present on the occasion.

In the modern scenario, philosophy cannot be limited to the world of humans. Giving the beej vaktavya of the session, Prof Abhimanyu Singh stated the insight, nature, diversity and need for philosophy



Traders of New Market demonstrate as they closed down their establishments protesting against alleged encroachment by the street vendors, in Bhopal on Saturday

Two vehicle lifters nabbed

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Bhopal Crime Branch has nabbed two vehicle lifters from BHEL Gate. No 5 and recovered more than nine two-wheelers worth ₹5 lakh from their possession on Friday.

Acting on a tip off two vehicle lifters were nabbed near BHEL Gate no. 5 and failed to provide details of the scooter without registration number. They confessed that the scooter was stolen from Govindpura area.

The two nabbed were identified as Ishwar Patel (45) of Piplani and Amit Noria

(35) of TT Nagar. Later in the investigation the two confessed stealing of other vehicles and recovered nine two wheelers worth ₹5 lakh from their possession.

During the investigation accused confessed that they are active in stealing vehicles for the past one and a half year. They have stolen vehicles from Govindpura and others parts of Bhopal.

Ishwar works as electrician and Amit works as driver. The two were unemployed. Amit planned to steal vehicles and accompanied Ishwar who agreed and later they targeted vehicles from different areas.

The accused parked the stolen vehicle at parking spaces used rarely and where the employee of parking spaces paid less attention towards vehicles.

Four vehicles two each were parked at their houses which were recovered by the police. Police said that the accused were trying to sell the vehicles but failed to sell vehicles and were nabbed.

Both Ishwar and Amit have been arrested for vehicle lifting. Ishwar was arrested by MP Nagar police for stealing vehicle and Amit has been arrested for vehicle stealing by TT Nagar police.

Congress workers put up posters in Indore, calling Savarkar a traitor of freedom movement

PNS ■ INDORE

As Bhartiya Janata Party has claimed of considering Veer Savarkar's name for the highest civilian honour—Bharat Ratna—some Congress Party workers put up posters in Indore for opposing the proposed move calling Savarkar a traitor of freedom movement.

Indore municipal corporation staff reached the site to remove the posters, congressmen did not lag behind in threatening them with their influence.

Finally, the police force had to be deployed and the posters where removed by the civic body staff.

In the publicity material the local leaders claimed that the BJP has pledged to handover Bharat ratna to Savarkar, who according to them was a traitor in freedom movement and even apologised to the British.

The Congress leaders in the posters pleaded Bharat Mata not to pardon the BJP wishing sanity for them.

The Civic staff had reached the Regal square to remove the controversial posters, but the Congress leaders had heated

IN THE PUBLICITY MATERIAL THE LOCAL LEADERS CLAIMED THAT THE BJP HAS PLEDGED TO HANDOVER BHARAT RATNA TO SAVARKAR, WHO ACCORDING TO THEM WAS A TRAITOR IN FREEDOM MOVEMENT AND EVEN APOLOGISED TO THE BRITISH. THE CONGRESS LEADERS IN THE POSTERS PLEADED BHARAT MATA NOT TO PARDON THE BJP WISHING SANITY FOR THEM

arguments with them and even accused them off bearing BJP mentality.

The Congress leaders also intimidated the Civic employees claiming it was their government in the state.

They even asked the Civic body staff to leave the spot. Senior administrative officers then intervened and deployed Police Force in the area, then only the posters could be removed.

To add Bharatiya Janata Party had on October 15 released its election manifesto for Maharashtra assembly polls in which the party made a promise to the public that it would demand handing over of Bharat Ratna to freedom fighter Veer Savarkar, social workers Jyotiba Phule and Savitri Bai Phule.

Former MLA's missing daughter appears through social media

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Former BJP MLA's daughter Bharti Singh, who had gone missing four days ago, has now appeared through social media accusing his family of harassing her. She claimed that she has filed a petition in Madhya Pradesh High Court, seeking protection from her family.

On the other hand, her father Surendranath Singh has claimed that Bharti was mentally unstable. Even in the missing complaint filed with the Kamla Nagar police in Bhopal, the family had said that Bharti was mentally unstable.

Twenty-six-year-old Bharti had been reported missing by her family since October 15. A 'missing person' complaint was lodged by her parents three days ago.

Since Saturday morning, her two videos went viral on Whatsapp in which she said she had left home on her own will and does not want to return home, as she was being harassed by her family.

ON THE OTHER HAND, HER FATHER SURENDRANATH SINGH HAS CLAIMED THAT BHARTI WAS MENTALLY UNSTABLE. EVEN IN THE MISSING COMPLAINT FILED WITH THE KAMLA NAGAR POLICE IN BHOPAL, THE FAMILY HAD SAID THAT BHARTI WAS MENTALLY UNSTABLE

Bharti said in the video that she was totally normal and not mentally unstable as claimed by her family. She also mentioned the name of her maternal cousin Sushil who, she alleged, had beaten her up. Bharti said she had been facing harassment for the last 10 years and she had left home on earlier too.

She said she was not with any Christian or Muslim person as was being rumoured, and requested that it should not

be turned into a caste (religion) issue.

Later, on Saturday evening, former MLA Surendranath Singh told media persons at his residence that his daughter was mentally unstable and for the purpose, she was undergoing treatment and there was nothing more to the issue. Regarding Bharti's claims on videos, Singh said that she is giving such statements probably because she has not taken her medicines.

One booked for rape, accused absconding

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Piplani police has booked a miscreant for keeping a 16-year-old girl in captivity, sexually assault and blackmail using video clips and photographs. The alleged incident had taken place at a hotel in Ayodhya bypass area. The victim was raped when she had gone with her brother's friend to Bhojpur.

Police said that the victim is a resident of Piplani area and is a class 9 student. She was sexually assaulted by the accused Nasir Khan who is a friend of victim's brother. Nasir captured her photographs and video and used to blackmail her.

The victim frustrated from the harassment by the accused lodged a complaint with the Piplani police. Based on the complaint, police registered a case under sections 376 and 506 of the IPC and

sections of POCSO Act. Police have started search for accused.

The victim in her complaint stated that the accused used to visit the house frequently as he was her brother's friend. In the month of August this year he accompanied her to Bhojpur and while on their way back he took her to a hotel in Ayodhya bypass and sexually assaulted her.

He took photographs and video and threatened her of life and left the victim. Few days ago the accused took her to a secluded place and sexually assaulted the victim and later pressurized her to meet him which she refused and later reported the incident to her mother.

Police have raided the house of the accused and a few places but the accused managed to escape and is still absconding.

IN BRIEF

SBI LADIES CLUB DONATES PRINTER, TABLE

Bhopal:The SBI Ladies Club donated printer, table and almirah at Government High School, Habibganj in BHEL.

Venus Arora, President of SBI Ladies Club, presented the equipments to Usha Bhaduria, Principal of the school, at a dignified ceremony held at the Government High School Habibganj BHEL.

In her address on the occasion, Arora said that the State Bank Women's Club under its social obligation provides assistance to government and non-government institutions to meet the needs of the needy. The activities of THE SBI Women Ladies Club are mainly focused on education, health and environmental protection and promotion to help the disabled and the underprivileged.

Arora lauded the efforts being made by the school management for the development of education and well- being of the children and motivated the children to become responsible citizens and be useful to the society while wishing them a bright future.

Also present on the occasion were Vandana Saxena, Vice-president, Diksha Bansal,Secretary and other office bearers of SBI Ladies Club along with the students of the school.



INTER-SCHOOL SPEECH COMPETITION HELD

Bhopal: Under the auspices of Vigilance Department and BSM Division of BHEL Bhopal, an Inter-School speech competition was held on Saturday in Vikram Higher Secondary School on the theme 'Integrity – A Way of Life'. Principal Ruby Kundu welcomed all the guests. BHEL's Head of Vigilance, AGM Amit Sharma, shed light on the purpose and importance of celebrating vigilance awareness week. On this occasion, Chief Guest M Isadore, GM (HR) said in his address that everybody has got equal opportunity in our nation, and it is our duty to work with full integrity towards our own and our nation's prosperity.

Isadore also distributed prizes to the winners. Surabhi Sharma and Cheshta Singh of Carmel Convent School, and Nitya Sharma of Jawaharlal Nehru School bagged first Prize in their respective groups. DGM (Vigilance)

Pankaj Jha proposed the vote of thanks. Other senior officials of BHEL, Sanjay Dhavle, AGM (Vigilance), Ashutosh Chatterjee DGM (MEX) and Secretary BSM, and BN Choudhary Sr Engr (Vigilance) were also present on this occasion.

EDU MIN ATTENDS PARENTS-TEACHERS MEET

Bhopal: School Education Minister Prabhuram Chaudhary attended the Parents-Teachers Association meetings in Government schools of Sehore district. He went through the answer sheets of the students and interacted with the parents.

Chaudhary said that NCERT course will be implemented in Class IX and X standard in all government schools from next academic session. He informed that teachers are being recruited in vacant posts in schools soon. In a discussion with parents, Chaudhary said that in order to improve the standard of education in government schools, Parents-Teachers Association meetings will be held once in every three months, in which parents and teachers will have an open discussion on students' education and their problems. Chaudhary said that Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country, where the tradition of transfer of teachers as per their convenience has been started online.

The School Education Minister issued instructions for the construction of auditorium and boundary wall in the school. He said that school grounds must be kept free from encroachments.

MINISTER LISTENS TO PROBLEMS OF RESIDENTS

Gwalior: Food-Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar visited the areas of Shanti Nagar, Laxmibai Colony and other areas in Gwalior city and heard the problems of the residents and also ensured their redresal.

Tomar inspected the cleanliness arrangements in the colonies. He gave a message of cleanliness to the residents by joining in the cleaning process with the sanitation workers in local ward-36.

The Minister reached Government Girls School at Gende Wali Road and had meals with the children to assess the quality of food. He announced a grant of Rs 5 lakh from the voluntary fund to develop the park during his visit to Shanti Nagar.

MINISTER ORDERS UNINTERRUPTED POWER SUPPLY

Bhopal: Energy Minister Priyavrat Singh has instructed officials to ensure uninterrupted power supply in the entire State from October 25 to 29 in view of the festival of Diwali. During this period, no line or sub-center should be shut down for maintenance and construction work.

The Energy Minister directed that all sub-centres, Fuse of Call Centres and other important places should deploy employees and officers. Resolve consumer complaints immediately. He told to ensure that all maintenance and construction work is completed before October 25.

Cong destroyed nation with wrong policies: PM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH / ELLENABAD/REWARI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday targeted the Congress for the second consecutive day in Haryana campaign, alleging that their wrong policies had destroyed the nation and injustice was continuously done with Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing two rallies on the last day of campaigning, Modi targeted the party on Article 370, saying it was a temporary provision, but for 70 years the Congress did nothing about it.

"I ended this temporary provision. When you made me permanent for five years, why would I allow this temporary thing," he asked. The Prime Minister said four lakh Kashmiri Pandits were forced to leave their homes in the Valley. He also targeted the Congress on the Kartarpur Corridor issue, saying that for 70 years the devotees had to seek 'darshan' of the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara using binoculars. He said the inability to bring the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara into the Indian territory during Partition was a mistake.

Modi announced a movement to

eradicate drug menace. He said that the youth that is getting addicted to drugs whom, his government will bring back to mainstream under the project of "Yuva fit India". With the youth of Haryana winning over the drug addiction will become an ideal for whole country.

He said that Pakistan has been trying to disturb our country by sending terrorists. Having failed to satisfy its urge, Pakistan is now sending loads of Drugs in the country to spoil our youth. The PM called upon the youth of the country not to fell in the trap and teach a lesson to Pakistan by defeating it on this front too.

He said that as the people of Haryana made the mission of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, he is very much confident that they will also make the mission of 'Fit India' and defeat the drug attack of the enemy.

The Prime Minister said that the whole world is celebrating the 550th Prakash parv of Guru Nanakdevji. BJP government is trying its best to make this moment historical that whole world would be remembering forever. He said that the highway constructed at Kapurthala would be known by the name of Guru



Nanakdevji.

He said that the plight of viewing the Gurughar by binoculars is going to end soon. Had the previous governments taken the matter on their agenda this discomfort of the devotees for the last 70 years would have ended even prior to BJP government. But now the plight is over since the Kartarpur Corridor is nearing completion. On this matter he also alleged Congress of not taking the issue at the right stage. Because at the time of division of the country, the Gurughar merely at four kilometers from India would have been included in the

Indian territory. It is because Congress never had respect for religious feelings and emotions of the people of India. He said that same was the thought level of Congress in case of Jammu and Kashmir.

PM said that the water flowing from the rivers of India to Pakistan will be diverted towards the fields of Haryana as the farmers of our country has a right on it. He also referred the revival of Saraswati river in Haryana by the Manohar Government. He reminded the people that understanding the value of water, his government has created a separate Ministry for water. For ensuring that each household gets its share of water, a project of Rs.350000 crores is proposed. Talking of the interests of the farmers, Modi said that the income of the farmers will be doubled by 2022 for which Government is working on some projects. He said that the process has already been started and the money has been started coming to the bank account of the farmers. Free vaccination of the cattle is already under progress. Pension scheme for traders and farmers attaining age of 60 years is already started under which they are getting an

amount of Rs.3000 per month.

Prime Minister said that the youth of the state were also being cheated by the previous governments. Government jobs were allocated on the policy of favoritism. But with the BJP coming to power the jobs are given on the basis of merit.

PM also talked about the number of scams that featured during the regime of congress in Haryana. He said that the corruption was so high that congress family used the Haryana land to cultivate money and not crop. He also commented on the JJP and INELO. He said that the people who used to take Haryana their own fort, are not able to solve their infight. It is not the fight for the interest of the state but for self interest.

Modi reminded people that in the year 2013, he promised to resolve the issue of OROP for defence personnel. On attaining majority, he took the matter on priority and got it passed.

Speaking in Rewari, PM said that the land is of great freedom fighter Rao Tularam. He said that he started his election campaign in 2013 from Rewari. He said that Bajra and Chach of this land kept me energetic enough to keep moving forward.

75K security personnel mobilised for poll duty in Hry

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a bid to make full proof arrangement, over 75,000 police personnel have been mobilised as part of the security arrangements for the October 21 Haryana Assembly election, State police chief Manoj Yadava said on Saturday.

In a statement here, the director general of police said the force has taken all measures to ensure that the election is carried out in a peaceful manner. As part of election preparedness, the neighbouring states will also deploy maxi-

mum force in their territory to ensure sealing of inter-state borders before the polls, he said.

All the Range ADGPs and IGs, commissioners of police and district superintendents of police have already been instructed to leave no stone unturned for maintaining law and order at their respective places of postings.

Giving details about the security arrangement, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Navdeep Singh Virk said 130 companies of Central Armed Police Forces have been

deployed in every nook and corner of the state.

Additionally, 26,896 state police personnel, 22,806 home guard volunteers, 7,936 special police officers and 6,001 police trainees are on poll duty to ensure tight vigil and security at all polling stations in the state, he said.

Virk said 21 senior police officers along with additional forces have been deputed in different districts apart from those already posted there to deal with any law and order situation.

Monitoring has been intensified by the flying squads and

other surveillance teams to prevent violation of model code of conduct especially distribution of cash, liquor and other inducements, the police officer said.

Tough contest likely for Capt Abhimanyu in Narnaund

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH



Despite the BJP seemingly doing well all over the state, Narnaund seems to be a slightly difficult proposition for the party candidate and Haryana Finance Minister Capt Abhimanyu.

In this Assembly election 2019, it is BJP versus JJP in the primarily rural Jat-dominated Assembly segment in Hisar district with state's Finance Minister Capt Abhimanyu making a spirited effort to retain the seat on development plank. JJP has named Ram Kumar Gautam, former BJP leader who was an MLA in 2005 from this seat.

"People have made up their mind to give another term to the Chief Minister as the State is achieving new heights. The opposition parties including the Congress, INLD and the newly floated JJP are in a disarray and unable to give a fight to the BJP," Abhimanyu claimed.

The caste arithmetic favours Capt Abhimanyu with over 45 per cent among the total voters belonging to the minister's Jat community. Abhimanyu, however, downplayed the role of the caste, claiming that the BJP believed in the principle of 'Haryana ek, Haryanvi ek'.

What seems to have cemented the mistrust for BJP is the February 2016 Jat reservation agitation. During the Jat reservation protests, Abhimanyu's house in Rohtak was burnt down by protestors. In Narnaund, home constituency of BJP Jat leader and Haryana's finance minister Captain Abhimanyu, the angst is evident.

Attacking the Congress, Abhimanyu had earlier said the violence during the Jat stir in the State was not caste-based or related to the issue of reservation, but the leaders of the Congress had used the youth of the state to spread unprecedented political and criminal violence in a well planned manner. "Former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, had mentioned

on to win the elections. But in the Assembly polls held after four months, voters ensured the BJP's victory," said Abhimanyu.

In his election rally, Abhimanyu said that the BJP is going to win 75 per cent of the seats in the Jat-dominated region of the State and will sweep the districts of Hisar and Jind. "It is a 'false propaganda' of the Opposition parties that the Jats don't vote for the BJP in Haryana. Party will win all seats in Hisar and Jind and most of the seats in Rohtak, Sonipat and Jhajjar," he added. He said that he results of the Lok Sabha polls just four months ago showed that Jats and all other communities are against dynasty politics in Haryana of the Hooda father-son duo and are with the BJP government.

Abhimanyu said there "was absolutely no competition" and dismissed the challenge from the Jat-centric party of JJP led by Dushyant Chautala, claiming that "the JJP will not win even a single seat in Haryana".

Dr Anand Kumar, Associated Professor, Institute of Integrated and Honours Studies, Kurukshetra University said that JJP is banking on dominant Jat votes as it had made inroads into the Jat community, the vote bank which was once with their parent organisation — INLD.

JJP leader Gautam, a prominent non-Jat leader, also seems to be banking on the caste calculations. Besides development, the BJP is also hoping to get votes on the national issues like abrogation of Article 370 and its cadre vote. The BJP could not do well in Jat dominated area in the 2014 assembly elections but won all the 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana in 2019. Hooda himself lost from Sonipat by a huge margin of over 1.5 lakh votes while his son Deepender Hooda lost from Rohtak. This election is going to very interesting and close contested between BJP leader and JJP candidate is expected, he said.



Students take part in an inter-school clay modeling competition organised by St Joseph's co-ed school in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

Confident Khattar looks for massive victory from Karnal

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

As the political tussle heats up ahead of polling on October 21, Chief Minister and BJP contestant from Karnal, Manohar Lal Khattar is a confident man now and has been using every tool at his disposal, from social media to crowded election rallies, to drive his re-election pitch.

The BJP is looking at a "historic win" for the chief minister in the assembly election with a margin of more than 100,000 votes, as the opposition appears to have given up on the Karnal seat.

The main face of BJP's campaign for the Haryana assembly elections, Khattar, has been touring the entire state to campaign for party candidates. Given his schedule, the

CM has not been able to devote as much time to campaign in his own assembly seat, Karnal, and this is where support from within the saffron party is helping him.

The BJP came to power on its own in Haryana for the first time in 2014, winning 47 of the 90 seats with a vote share of 33.2 per cent. Khattar contested his first election and was also the party's first chief minister in Haryana. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the party's vote share jumped to more than 58 per cent in the state and it won all 10 parliamentary constituencies. This time, the BJP is eyeing more than 75 seats in the 90-member state assembly and has given the slogan "Ab ki baar 75 paar".

The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), which won the

second highest number of seats in the 2014 assembly polls, has not fielded any candidate against chief minister on Karnal seat.

Khattar (65), former RSS 'pracharak' said the state BJP government worked on the principle of "Haryana Ek, Haryanvi Ek" (united Haryana, united Haryanvis) to take everyone along the path of the development. He says that his rivals long mocked him as an "anari" before acknowledging him as a "khilladi" after seeing his government's performance, but he would like to shun the monikers of novice and player to just be a "sevak", a servant of the people.

Khattar won the election in 2014 with a margin of nearly 64,000 votes with former Congress leader and two-time

MLA from Karnal, Jai Prakash Gupta finishing second while contesting as an independent. Gupta joined the BJP earlier this year and is now actively part of the CM's campaign in the constituency while Khattar is on a whirlwind tour of the state. Earlier, Sumita Singh of the Congress had won from Karnal in the 2005 and 2009 polls.

The Congress has now fielded Tarlochan Singh, former chairman of the state minority commission, and the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) has given a ticket to Tej Bahadur Yadav. Then a BSF constable, Yadav made headlines in 2017 when he uploaded videos on social media complaining about the quality of food served in the force. Later, he was dismissed from the BSF. Tej

Bahadur had sought to contest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Lok Sabha polls from Varanasi in 2019, but his nomination was rejected by the Election Commission.

Khattar has not campaigned much in the constituency, coming only to file his nomination and for an event on Dussehra. The state unit of the BJP has launched a campaign, 'Main Bhi Manohar' (I, too, am Manohar), with young party activists campaigning in Karnal sporting the slogan and pictures of the CM.

A BJP leader said, "The mood in Karnal reflects in the entire "GT Belt" of the state, from Sonapat to Panipat, Karnal and Kurukshetra, a region which the party had swept in 2014 as well."

Cong will win all four seats, says Capt; Sukhbir trashes

PNS ■ MUKERIAN / CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday concluded the electioneering for Monday's bypoll with total confidence of a clear Congress victory in all four constituencies, trashing Akali chief Sukhbir Badal's charges of no development in Punjab under the current regime.

During a Mukerian roadshow, the Chief Minister ridiculed Sukhbir's statement that he (Amarinder) was not accessible to the people, and pointed to the surging crowds to counter the Akali leader's claims that his roadshows had received poor public response.

"Sukhbir is either blind or is doing an ostrich act to avoid facing the harsh reality that the people have rejected him and his party," said Amarinder.

The entire Akali leadership is a spent force, and now they have nothing but lies to give to the people, the Chief Minister asserted

He assured the people that he would take care of the constituency as his own, and take forward the vision charted by ex-MLA Rajnish Kumar Babbi, who had passed away after a prolonged illness. Babbi's wife and current Congress candidate Indu Bala will translate all the promises made by him to the people of Mukerian, said the Chief Minister.

Confident of a clean sweep in all the four assembly segments headed for voting on Monday, Amarinder said while victory and defeat was a way of politics, the mood was clearly in favour of the Congress. He rejected the suggestion that Dakha and Jalalabad were 'hot' seats, saying he did not see them as unique segments in any way, and did not perceive either the BJP or SAD to be a strong opponent in these constituencies or in Phagwara and Mukerian.

Amarinder, who has been campaigning in all these seats for the past five days, said he strongly believed that all the four seats were set for a Congress win, with no other

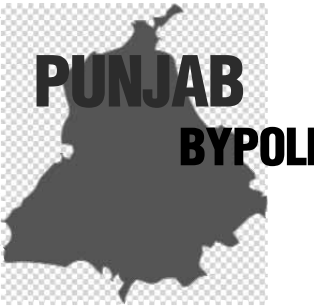
party standing a chance. The development work done by his government in the past two and a half months speaks for itself, he said, asserting that the people wanted progress, which they had discovered that no other party except Congress could deliver in Punjab.

The chief minister was accompanied by PPCC President, Sunil Jakhar, Cabinet Minister, Tripat Bajwa and other senior leaders in the campaign.

SUKHBIR SAYS CM HAS ACCEPTED DEFEAT

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Singh Badal on Saturday said by stating categorically that the by-

elections' result would not be a referendum on his govern-



ment the chief minister, Capt Amarinder Singh had admitted defeat outrightly.

"Also by stating that the Congress party will fulfill its election manifesto in the next

two years Capt Amarinder has admitted that none of the promises made to the people have been fulfilled till now," he said, alleging that there was complete failure of all the three roadshows organized by him which were attended by security personnel in the absence of people.

Badal said 'bhaicharak sanjhi' would triumph in the by-elections with the people reposing faith in the SAD-BJP alliance. He said Punjabis understood that they had been deceived by Capt Amarinder and his false oath in the name of holy Gutka Sahib and 'charan' of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. "People know that path-

breaking development coupled with unique social welfare benefits had been initiated under the leadership of Parkash Singh Badal's government.

He said the Congress government stopped all development work immediately after taking over the reins of the State. Money sent to villages by the previous SAD-BJP government was recalled. In the last nearly three years the Congress government has discriminated against each and every section of society. Farmer loans were not waived leading to 1400 suicides. The youth who were promised Ghar Ghar naukari have not been given any government jobs. Dalit students have been deprived of

SC scholarships. Girls are not getting cycles. School children are not getting mid-day meals. Employees are being denied Dearness Allowance even as contractual employees are not being regularised.

Asking the people to teach a lesson to the corrupt Congress government which had created lawlessness in the State and was discriminating against the Dalits and backward classes, Badal said "this is the only way to give a jolt to this government and force it to fulfill the promises made to the people.

The by-elections are going to be held on the assembly seats of Phagwara, Dakha, Mukerian and Jalalabad on October 21.

PM only remembers Art 370: Sibal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Prime Minister Narendra Modi espousing the nationalism cause by highlighting the abrogation of Article 370 from Jammu & Kashmir during the campaigning for Haryana and Maharashtra Assembly polls scheduled for October 21, the Congress on Saturday sought to counter it by projecting its own tough image by pointing out how India under it split Pakistan and created Bangladesh.

Modi ji only remembers (Article) 370. He does not know when Pakistan split and who did it. It was we (Congress) who split Pakistan's integral part from it... Where were you (Modi) then? senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal asked.

"Tell the people of Haryana that it was because of the Congress that Pakistan's integral part was split from it. This happened under the Congress rule. Praise the Congress, but you don't have the guts to do that," he said.

Training his guns at Modi, the Congress leader asked what has the BJP Government under him done for implementation of Article 47 of the

Constitution which states that raising the level of nutrition and the standard of living and improving public health is the duty of the state.

"You only remember Article 370 but you do not keep in mind your constitutional duties. Around 93 per cent children are not getting proper nutrition and your entire focus is on Article 370," he said. "You are doing this because of the Assembly polls... You do not know about the people who are suffering," Sibal said.

He further attacked Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah over their remarks that Jammu and Kashmir lagged in development because of Article 370.

Citing poverty, infant mortality and unemployment rates, along with gross enrolment ratio in higher education and human development index rank of Haryana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat to Sibal said, "These states did not have Article 370, but most of the corresponding figures of Jammu and Kashmir were way better."

Referring to data from a US Customs and Border Protection report, Sibal claimed that in the last three years the

number of Indians arrested for trying to enter the US illegally has "tripled".

This means a lot of poor Indians are leaving the country in search of employment opportunities, the Congress leader said, adding, "Modi ji please respond why is this happening as you have been running the country for the last five-and-half years."

He also took potshots at the Prime Minister over India ranking 102 in the Global Hunger Index, saying Modi should concentrate less on politics and more on the people of the country.

Citing the latest GDP growth projections by international agencies, Sibal said, "Despite India's GDP growth rate slipping to a six-year low of 5 per cent in the April-June quarter, the Modi Government

still insists that all is well with the country's economy and that it remains among the fastest growing in the world."

"But revised projections for India's GDP growth rates this year alone indicate otherwise. In fact, some analysts have dropped growth projections for 2019-20 from 7.5 per cent all the way to just 6 per cent," he said.

Improve economy, do not run circus: Priyanka to Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday hit out at Union Minister Piyush Goyal for his remarks on Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee with its leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra saying the Government's job is to improve the "collapsing" economy and not to run a "comedy circus".

Goyal on Friday said Banerjee supported 'NYAY', a minimum income scheme proposed by the Congress, which was rejected by the Indian voters and there was no need to "accept what he thinks".

The 'NYAY' scheme was one of the highlights of the Congress manifesto for the April-May Lok Sabha polls.

The Union commerce and industry minister, at a media briefing in Pune, also described Banerjee as a "Left-leaning" person. Lashing out at Goyal for his remarks, Priyanka Gandhi said instead of doing their work, BJP leaders are try-



ing to belie the achievements of others. The Nobel laureate did his work honestly and won the Nobel Prize, she said in a tweet in Hindi.

"The economy is collapsing. Your job is to improve it, not to run a comedy circus," the Congress general secretary said.

She also tagged a media report which claimed that the slowdown in the auto sector continued in September.

Banerjee, an Indian-American who has been critical of the Narendra Modi government's economic policies, won the 2019 Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences.

Raids on 'Kalki' Bhagwan's properties yield ₹93 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Searches in multiple premises of firms and trusts founded by spiritual guru 'Kalki' Bhagwan — whose original name is Vijay Kumar Naidu — have led to the detection of undisclosed income of nearly ₹500 crore including unaccounted cash receipts of about ₹409 crore.

A total of ₹43.9 crore in cash and US currency worth ₹18 crore were seized. The total value of the seizure is about ₹93 crore, which includes gold and diamonds, a tax department official release said. About 88 kg of undeclared gold jewellery, valued at ₹26 crore, diamonds amount to 1,271 carats worth about ₹5 crore, have also been seized.

The raids were conducted after a tip-off from the Intelligence Bureau that Kalki's son Krishna is suspected to have made huge investments in several ventures of his associates including real estate with the use of illegal finance.

Besides the sprawling headquarters of Kalki Bhagwan near Chittoor bordering Tamil Nadu, searches were also on at 20 places in Chennai and other

premises in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Around 300 personnel of Income Tax (IT) department are involved in the searches which commenced early on Wednesday morning continued through Thursday and are expected to last till Friday, officials familiar with the development maintained. According to IT officials, besides cash, IT officers also seized incriminating documents about shady investments and purchase of vast tracts of land in Tamil Nadu and even in Kenya in violation of rules.

During IT raids, it was found that Krishna also runs a few construction firms in the name of White Lotus, Golden Lotus, Blue Water and Dream View among others. Krishna, resides in Chennai, is said to have invested heavily in the business ventures of his associates, which too have come under the scanner. According to sources, nearly 20 of Krishna's business associates are under investigation.

The 70-year-old Naidu started his career in 1971 as a clerk at Life Insurance of India and then joined J

Krishnamurthy Foundation during the '80s. But he was expelled from the foundation and later set up his own trust.

He had gone into hiding following a business failure in 1989 and later emerged as Lord Vishnu's 10th avatar 'Kalki' in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. He also claimed that his wife was the incarnation of the lord's consort. He got name and fame after many top brass politicians, industrialists and celebrities started coming to his ashram. The Chittoor ashram also hit the headlines in 2008 when five people died and many were injured in a stampede.

At the ashram, an ordinary darshan of the couple is priced at ₹5000 and special darshan at ₹50000. Similarly, the meditation classes offered at Oneness Temple starts from ₹50,000 onwards and these sessions attract a huge number of foreigners.

During the late '90s, the self-proclaimed spiritual leader set up a campus in Chennai called Somamangalam, and also started 'Oneness University' in Chennai's Varadaiahpalem.

India invites heads of foreign missions to visit Golden Temple

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Government prepares to celebrate the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak, India has invited the heads of foreign missions based in New Delhi to visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

"Over 90 Resident Heads of Missions in New Delhi are expected to travel to Amritsar on 22 October. The visit is being organized by the ICCR (Indian Council of Cultural Relations) in collaboration with the state

Government of Punjab and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

The committee is responsible for the management of Gurudwaras in the states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, besides the Golden temple in Amritsar.

Hardeep Singh Puri, minister of state for civil aviation, housing and urban affairs and minister of state for commerce and industry and Vinay

Sahasrabuddhe, president, ICCR, will accompany the heads of missions, the statement said.

Guru Nanak Dev's teachings of love, peace, equality and brotherhood have universal appeal and convey the message of spirituality, humanity, devotion and truth," the statement added. India and Pakistan are also working on opening the Kartarpur corridor to facilitate pilgrims visit Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in the Narowal district of Pakistan's Punjab province.

Govt rules out separate flag, Constitution for Nagas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ruling out a separate flag and Constitution for the Nagas as demanded by the NSCN-IM, the Centre has made it clear that the endless negotiations with the insurgent group under the shadow of guns were not acceptable.

The Central Government is also determined to conclude the 220-year-long peace process without delay, interlocutor for the Nagas talks and Nagaland Governor RN Ravi said in a statement.

Ravi said a mutually

agreed draft comprehensive settlement, including all the substantive issues and competencies, is ready for inking the final agreement. "Unfortunately at this auspicious juncture, the NSCN-IM has adopted a procrastinating attitude to delay the settlement raising the contentious symbolic issues of separate Naga national flag and constitution on which they are fully aware of the Government of India's position," the statement, issued on Friday night, read.

Ravi's statement bears sig-

nificance as the central government on August 5 announced abrogation of special status given to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 and bifurcated the state into Union territories.

With the annulment of the special status, the separate flag and the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir cease to exist. The ruling BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on many occasions had made it clear that they believe in only one flag and one Constitution for whole India.

Ravi said the NSCN-IM has "mischievously" dragged in the Framework Agreement and began inputting imaginary contents to it.

The framework agreement was signed on August 3, 2015 by NSCN-IM general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah and the government's interlocutor Ravi in presence of Prime Minister Modi.

Some NSCN-IM leaders through various media platforms are misleading the people with "absurd assumptions and presumptions" over what they have already agreed with

the Government of India, he said.

In view of such unfortunate attitude of some NSCN-IM leaders, Ravi held a detailed consultation meeting with the primary stakeholders of the Naga society on October 18 in Kohima.

The meeting was attended by the apex leadership of all the 14 Naga tribes of Nagaland, all the minority non-Naga tribes of Nagaland, the Nagaland Gaon Burha Federation, the Nagaland Tribes Council, church leaders and civil society organisations.

PM meets Bollywood stars, discusses ways to mark Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday met Bollywood actors and filmmakers, including Shah Rukh Khan and Aamir Khan, to discuss initiatives to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

In an interaction with them at his official residence here, the prime minister said several people from the world of films and television have been doing great work when it comes to popularising the ideals of Gandhi. Referring to Gandhi, he said the power of creativity is immense and it is essential to harness this spirit of creativity for the nation.

Among others present in the meeting were Sonam Kapoor, Kangana Ranaut, directors Rajkumar Hirani, Rajkumar Santoshi, Ashwini Iyer Tiwari, Nitesh Tiwari and



producers Ekta Kapoor, Boney Kapoor and Jayantilal Gada.

The prime minister pointed out that members of the film industry had come with a lot of suggestions.

"I am happy to share that we have addressed them to ensure more people can see the brilliant work done by our film personalities," the prime minister's office said in a series of tweets quoting him.

During the course of inter-

action, the prime minister urged those present to encourage tourism in the country.

The prime minister told the gathering that they do great work but perhaps they are not aware of its global influence. "Your work has reached all corners of the world. On the part of the government, I am happy to help in anyway to ensure maximum impact of your creative initiatives," Modi said.

DNA Technology Regulation Bill referred to Parliamentary Standing Committee

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The DNA Technology Regulation Bill, which seeks to control the use of DNA technology for establishing the identity of a person, has been referred to a Parliamentary Standing Committee for examination, the Lok Sabha Secretariat has said.

The bill that seeks to control the use and application of the deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) technology for establishing the identity of certain categories of persons, including offenders, victims, suspects and undertrials, was passed by the Lok Sabha in July.

The bill has been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests by Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu. "Members are informed

that the Chairman, Rajya Sabha in consultation with the Speaker, Lok Sabha has referred the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019, as introduced in Lok Sabha, to the Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests for examination and report within three months," the Lok Sabha secretariat said in a bulletin on Friday.

The chairman of the committee, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, has invited suggestions from the public on the Bill.

A similar bill was passed in the Lok Sabha in January last year but it could not be cleared in the Rajya Sabha. The bill had then lapsed with the dissolution of the previous Lok Sabha.

The bill provides for establishment of a national DNA data bank and regional DNA data banks.

India to host 91st Interpol General Assembly in 2022

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will host the 91st Interpol General Assembly in 2022 after a proposal in this regard was cleared with "overwhelming support" from members countries of the international police cooperation body. According to an Ministry of Home Affairs press note, voting in this regard took place today at the 88th General Assembly of the Interpol at Santiago Chile with India winning with an overwhelming majority. The Interpol is an international organisation with 194 member-states and has 100 years of experience of international cooperation in Policing.

Home Minister Amit Shah had proposed to host the General Assembly in India to Interpol Secretary General Jurgen Stock when the two met here on August 30. The biggest

congregation of law enforcement officers will coincide with country's 75th Independence anniversary celebrations, they said.

The officials said that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director Rishi Kumar Shukla moved this proposal before the 88th General Assembly in Santiago, Chile which got over Friday, they said.

The CBI represents the Interpol in India as the country's National Central Bureau.

India will get a chance to host the General Assembly of International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) after 25 years since 1997 when it was hosted here, the officials said.

Delhi Police commissioner Amulya Patnaik and Madhya Pradesh Police chief V K Singh also accompanied the CBI director at the general assembly, which got over on

Friday.

The general assembly of Interpol is an annual exercise hosted by member countries. All major decisions affecting general policy, the resources needed for international cooperation, working methods and finances are deliberated and discussed by representatives.

Based in Lyon, France, Interpol is an international police cooperation organisation with 194 member states and 100 years of experience of international cooperation in policing.

The organisation has 90-million records spread across 17 database.

Equipped with secure global data communication channel I-24/7, incident response teams, command and control centre, a worldwide network of NCBs, the organisation assists law enforcement agencies of member countries.

Reconstructing mosque against justice: Hindu group in Ayodhya land case

AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

Lawyers representing "Ram Lalla Virajman", or the infant Lord Ram, in the politically sensitive Ram Jannbhoomi - Babri Masjid case filed a relief affidavit with the Supreme Court on Saturday, asking that the disputed land be handed over for the construction of a Ram Temple.

The group's lawyers argued the Muslim petitioners were entitled to neither land nor equitable relief as the Babri Masjid no longer exists. The lawyers also said the Nirmohi Akhara should not be awarded the land because it had questioned whether Ram Janmasthan - the birthplace of Lord Ram - could be considered a juristic entity.

"Ayodhya is a sacred place and it is a place of pilgrimage. It is the faith of the Hindus that Ayodhya has divine and spiritual significance even in the absence of temple or idol,"

the Hindu group said in its affidavit.

"Reconstructing the mosque at the disputed site is inequitable, unjust and contrary to Hindu Dharma, Islamic Law and all principles of justice. The area which is under dispute is one integral unit and is indivisible, so the whole area should be given to offer worship at Ram Janmasthan," the affidavit read.

Muslim parties also submitted a relief to the Supreme Court today but did done so in a sealed cover after divisions within the Sunni Waqf Board were exposed this week. However, lawyers for the Hindu group objected.

"Moulding of Relief" given in sealed cover by Muslim petitioners is not permissible. This encourages address to the court in secrecy and keeps other parties in the dark. It prejudices the rights of other petitioners," the lawyers said today.

Delhi Cabinet approves ₹36 crore expenditure for anti-pollution drives

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Cabinet on Saturday has cleared a proposal of its environment department to carry out a mass awareness campaign on pollution and pollution-control measures. The Cabinet has approved an expenditure of ₹36 crore from the Budget of the Directorate of Information and Publicity (DIP) towards the mass awareness campaigns mentioned above.

"One of the challenges faced by any government in such a situation is regarding compliance and participation of the citizens in such emergency measures as these often intrude upon the regular day-to-day life of people and hence mass awareness campaign is necessary," Delhi Government said.

It is pertinent to mention here that level of harmful pollutants have recorded three times higher than their prescribed standards. Center run pollution monitoring agency SAFAR advised masses to keep door and windows closed of homes and office to avoid



exposure. Central pollution Control Board (CPCB) also recommends corporate employees to work from home. "Air pollution is one of the most serious public health concerns faced by the citizens of Delhi. Rising pollution levels, especially in the winter months, affects the health of all citizens but especially that of children and senior citizens," Delhi Government said in a statement.

While Delhi government has claimed 25 percent reduction in air pollution but due to unfavorable Meteorological conditions and stubble burning, Delhi has recorded higher levels of PM 2.5 in city

atmosphere.

"One of the major reasons behind this increase in pollution levels is the stubble burning that happens in the neighbouring states of Delhi, something over which the Government of NCT of Delhi has no control. Therefore, the only option available to the people of Delhi are emergency measures to severely cut down on any sources of pollution emanating from Delhi, as well as to find mechanisms by which people can cope with the rising pollution levels," Delhi government said in a statement.

To encourage people not to fire crackers on Diwali, AAP Government is arranging a laser show as a community Diwali celebration in Central Park. "Various measures being taken by the Government of NCT of Delhi include Odd-Even rule from 4th-15th November, distribution of free masks to citizens of Delhi via school children, as well as encouraging a cracker-free Diwali by organising a laser show," Delhi government said in an official statement.

More than 250 Delhiites participate in Walk for Freedom

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Over 250 people participated in the Delhi edition of the global Walk for Freedom to raise awareness against human trafficking. The event is happening for the first time in the national Capital.

According to a statement released by an NGO, Delhi and nine other Indian cities, along with 450 locations across 50 countries, simultaneously hosted the global, silent Walk for Freedom in public spaces on Saturday.

More than 4,600 people participated in the walk in 10 Indian cities, it said.

Over 250 citizens from corporates, colleges and NGOs participated to raise awareness about human trafficking at Delhi, Mumbai, Shillong, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Kochi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Panjim and Pune, the statement added.

Security stepped up along city border ahead of Haryana Assembly polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of Assembly polls on Monday in neighbouring State Haryana, Delhi Police on Saturday has increased vigilance along the city borders.

According to a senior police official, police teams have started checking of vehicles along the Delhi-Haryana border in order to prevent the transportation of illicit liquor during dry days in the poll-bound State.

"Generally in elections, the borders are sealed 24 hours before the conduct of polls but this time Delhi Police have started it early and intensified the checking," said Shalini Singh, Joint Commissioner of Police, Western Range.

The polls to the 90-member assembly will be held on October 21 and the results will be declared on October 24. On October 18 night, Police Control Room (PCR) van patrolling near Delhi Hirankundna area, adjacent to Haryana border nabbed a 20

year-old bootlegger with 444 quarters of illicit liquor in his possession.

The man identified as Saurabh, a resident of Delhi's Budh Vihar area, was nabbed at around 9:40 PM on Friday.

"PCR vans deputed on the borders areas are keeping eye on each and every vehicles passing through the border. On Friday night PCR van in the area observed that an auto-rickshaw coming from Tikri Border, seeing police took a u-turn and sped away. Finding activity suspicious police team on PCR followed the auto-rickshaw and stopped it," said Sharat Kumar Sinha, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), PCR.

"On checking of the vehicle police team recovered nine boxes of illicit liquor containing 444 quarters. The man was handed over to Mundka police station and a case under section 33/38/58 of Delhi Excise Act was also registered against the accused," the DCP added.

Trump backs Turkey ceasefire even as it appears shaky

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump is pushing back at criticism that his Syria withdrawal is damaging US credibility, betraying Kurdish allies and opening the door for a possible resurgence of the Islamic State.

He touted a cease-fire agreement that seemed at risk as Turkey and Kurdish fighters differed over what it required and whether combat had halted.

“We’ve had tremendous success I think over the last couple of days,” Trump declared Friday. He added that “we’ve taken control of the oil in the Middle East” — a claim that seemed disconnected from any known development there.

He made the assertion twice Friday, but other U.S. Officials were unable to explain what he meant.

Calling his Syria approach “a little bit unconventional,” the President contended that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as well as the Syrian Kurdish fighters the Turks are battling agree that the U.S. brokered cease-fire was the right step and were complying with it.

“There is good will on both sides & a really good chance for success,” he wrote on Twitter.

That optimism seemed at odds with Erdogan’s own words. He told reporters in Istanbul that Turkish forces would resume their offensive in four days unless Kurdish-led

fighters withdraw “without exception” from a so-called safe zone 20 miles (30 kilometers) deep in Syria running the entire 260-mile (440-kilometer) length of the border with Turkey.

There was no sign of any pull-out by the Kurdish—led forces, who accused Turkey of violating the cease-fire with continued fighting at a key border town.

They also said the accord covers a much smaller section of the border. And some fighters have vowed not to withdraw at all, dismissing the deal as a betrayal by the U.S., whose soldiers they have fought alongside against the IS.

Eric Edelman, a former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey who served as the Pentagon’s top policy official during the George W. Bush administration, said he doubts Turkey and its Syrian proxies could control the entire border area from the Euphrates to Iraq without help from Russia or others.

“That’s a very big expanse of territory to hold, albeit a lot of it is uninhabited,” Edelman said. “That probably means they’ve cut already some deal with the Russians and the Iranians.” Even so, Trump insisted peace was at hand.

“There is a cease-fire or a pause or whatever you want to call it,” he said. “There was some sniper fire this morning,” as well as mortar fire, but that was quickly halted and the



area had returned to a “full pause,” he said.

Trump also asserted that some European nations are now willing to take responsibility for detained IS fighters who are from their countries.

“Anyway, big progress being made!!!!” he exclaimed on Twitter. Trump said nothing further about the European nations he now contends have agreed to take some of the IS fighters, a demand he has repeated often.

No European Government announced an intent to take control of IS prisoners.

Speaking in Brussels after briefing NATO ambassadors on the Syria situation, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, “We’ve seen comments today from a number of countries who said they may well be

prepared to take back these fighters.” He, too, identified no such countries.

At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said U.S. Troops are continuing their withdrawal from northern Syria. He also said no U.S. Ground troops will participate in enforcing or monitoring the cease-fire.

“The force protection of our service members remains our top priority and, as always, U.S. Forces will defend themselves from any threat as we complete our withdrawal from the area,” Esper told reporters. One important unknown in the wake of Turkey’s military incursion, which began Oct. 9, is whether IS fighters who have been held by U.S.-allied Kurdish fighters known as the Syrian Democratic Forces will escape in large numbers.

Syrian Kurds accuse Turkey of scuppering US-brokered deal

AFP ■ BEIRUT

The commander of Kurdish forces in Syria accused Turkey of sabotaging a US-brokered truce on Saturday by blocking the withdrawal of his forces from a flashpoint border town in northeastern Syria.

In a wide-ranging interview with AFP, Mazloum Abdi, head of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), said he still wished to see a role for the US in Syria to counterbalance Russian influence, while recommitting his forces to countering the Islamic State group.

“The Turks are preventing the withdrawal from the Ras al-Ain area, preventing the exit of our forces, the wounded and civilians,” Abdi said in a phone interview from Syria.

Under a US-brokered ceasefire announced Thursday evening, SDF forces are meant to withdraw from a key strategic area near the Syrian-Turkish border within five days.

But Abdi said he could not abandon his forces in the town, which is besieged by Turkish troops and their Syrian allies.

The US had been allied with SDF forces in northern Syria until President Donald Trump announced last week he would withdraw American troops ahead of a Turkish offensive.

Critics have accused him of abandoning the Kurds, with whom the US fought a bloody campaign to destroy the Islamic State in Syria.

Abdi said he was disappointed by the withdrawal, which prompted his forces to make a deal with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to help protect Kurdish-controlled territory, but still wanted the US to have an influence in Syria.

Turkey accuses Syrian Kurd forces of violating ceasefire

AFP ■ ISTANBUL

Turkey on Saturday accused Kurdish forces of violating an agreement to suspend its Syria offensive if they withdraw from a “safe zone” along the border.

“The Turkish armed forces fully abide by the agreement” reached on Thursday with the United States, the defence ministry said in a statement. “Despite this, terrorists... Carried out a total of 14 attacks in the last 36 hours.” The ministry said 12 of the attacks came from the border town of Ras al-Ain in northeastern Syria, one from Tal Abyad and another from Tal Tamr region, adding that various light and heavy weaponry including rockets were used.

Turkey had agreed to suspend its Syria offensive for five days but President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned on Friday he would resume a full-scale operation against Kurdish forces if they do not withdraw from a border “safe zone.” “If the promises are kept until Tuesday evening, the safe zone issue will be resolved. If it fails, the operation... Will start the minute 120 hours are over,” Erdogan said.

But he added the agreement was holding and that had been no issues so far. The defence ministry said “for the agreement to hold soundly and to keep the calm with exception of self-defence”, Turkey was coordinating with the United States.

Hong Kong anti-Gov protesters vow to hold ‘unauthorised’ rally

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong anti-Government protesters are set for another weekend of civil disobedience as they prepare to hold an unauthorised protest march to press their demands.

Supporters held a prayer rally on Saturday night to call for international help for their cause. The protest march is planned for Sunday, with organisers vowing to hold the event even though it failed to win approval from police, who cited risks to public order.

As the semi-autonomous Chinese territory’s political crisis extends into a fifth month, protesters are trying to keep the pressure on the Government to respond to their demands,

including full democracy and an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality.

They’re also using Sunday’s rally to raise a more recent demand for the government to scrap a ban installed this month on face masks at public gatherings. Organisers said demonstrators would defy the police because Hong Kong’s constitution guarantees the right to protest. “We don’t think that because police haven’t given their approval we shouldn’t demonstrate,” Figo Chan, vice-convenor of the Civil Human Rights Front, told reporters.

“Even though they have rejected our appeal, there will surely be many residents taking to the streets.”

Meanwhile, a bipartisan group of US lawmakers including Republican Sen. Ted Cruz and Democratic Rep. Alexandra Ocasio Cortez wrote to tech company Apple and video game studio Activision Blizzard to condemn what they called protest-related censorship on behalf of China.

Hong Kong says Murder suspect wants to surrender to Taiwan

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong’s leader says the murder suspect whose case inadvertently helped ignite the city’s protest movement wants to surrender to authorities in Taiwan.

Carrie Lam told reporters Saturday that she had received a letter from Chan Tong-kai requesting help to give himself up.

Chan is wanted by Taiwan authorities for allegedly killing his girlfriend during a trip to the self-ruled island. He was not sent back to face charges because of the lack of an extradition agreement.

He was however jailed in Hong Kong on money laundering charges and is due to be released this week.

In an attempt to close the loophole, Lam proposed extradition amendments.

But that sparked massive protests over fears it would put residents at risk of being sent into mainland China’s Communist Party-controlled judicial system.

UK in historic Super Saturday Parl session to vote on new Brexit deal



PTI ■ LONDON

In a historic weekend Parliament session, the first in 37 years, British MPs on Saturday began debating British Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s Brexit deal struck with the European Union (EU).

The debate is set to be followed by what has been characterised as a knife-edge vote in the House of Commons on the so-called divorce arrangements between the UK and the 27 remaining members of the economic bloc.

Johnson opened the session with a plea for all sides of the House to come together behind the “great deal.”

“Let us come together as democrats to end this debili-

tating feud. Let us come together as democrats behind this deal, the one proposition that fulfils the verdict of the majority but which also allows us to bring together the two halves of our hearts, to bring together the two halves of our nation,” said Johnson in his statement to the Commons.

In reference to the 52 per cent versus 48 per cent vote in favour of Brexit in the June 2016 referendum, he said: “Let’s speak now both for the 52 and the 48. Let us go for a deal that can heal this country, let’s go for a deal that can heal this country and allow us all to express our legitimate desires for the deepest possible friendship and partnership with our neighbours.”

UK Brexit vote amendment would allow fresh delay

AFP ■ LONDON

The British Parliament may end up forcing Prime Minister Boris Johnson to request another Brexit delay on Saturday and give only provisional support to his divorce deal with the EU.

An amendment penned by former Government Minister Oliver Letwin would have the effect of forcing Johnson to write a letter to Brussels requesting an extension of the Brexit deadline until January 31 of next year.

Johnson is currently required to ask for an extension if parliament votes down the revised withdrawal agreement he struck with EU leaders in Brussels this week. But Letwin’s amendment, which was selected by House of Commons Speaker John Bercow for a vote, would decline to approve Johnson’s deal in full “unless and until” every other part of the formal Withdrawal Agreement Bill is passed.

Anti-Brexit activists march to Parliament as MPs debate deal

AFP ■ LONDON

Tens of thousands of pro-EU protesters from across Britain wielding banners, placards and flags converged on parliament on Saturday, as MPs debated the Government’s Brexit deal.

Beneath largely clear blue skies, demonstrators rallied near Hyde Park in central London before marching to Westminster to call for a second referendum on Britain’s planned EU departure.

Walking behind a pink banner proclaiming “together for the final say”, they chanted: “What do we want? People’s vote! When do we want it? Now.” “The first referendum was jumping on a train without a destination,” said Douglas Hill, 35, from Oxford, south central England, with his Estonian wife and their baby daughter.

“Now that we have a destination, we need to have a second referendum.” Another attendee, Theodor Howe, a 20-year-old student in Dundee,

eastern Scotland, conceded another poll could be divisive but insisted it was still necessary.

“People should have a say in what is going to happen,” he told AFP, expressing hope that MPs reject Johnson’s deal and that he is forced to ask Brussels for another delay.

Politicians including John McDonnell, from the main opposition Labour party, and London Mayor Sadiq Khan, were due to address the crowds.

Organisers from the People’s Vote pressure group laid on 172 buses to bring people to the British capital, with the cost covered by supporters from sport, business and entertainment, it said.

Former prime ministers John Major, a Conservative, and Tony Blair, of Labour, feature in a film set to be broadcast to the crowds once they arrive in Parliament Square.

“Whatever is the outcome, no deal or bad deal, it should not pass without the final say resting with the people,” they said in a statement on Friday.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for general information of public that: **Mr. Rajinder Kumar Oberai**, S/o Late Shri Sohan Lal Oberai, Present Address:- WZ-22 Ram Garh Colony, Moh Nagar, Delhi-110015 & Permanent Address:- A-80, Vihar Colony, Civil Lines, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh-244001 who was earlier working with **M/s. Ascent Group of Companies** is absconding from the organization since Sep 2019 and now he is not associated with the Group, in any manner, whatsoever. Further he has no right and authority to deal with anybody or any organization, on behalf of the Group. Any individual, person, firm, company or its agents, nominees, successors dealing with **Mr. Rajinder Kumar Oberai** well do so at his one's its own risk and cost without fastening any liability whatsoever upon **M/s. Ascent Group of Companies**.
For **M/s. Ascent Group of Companies** Authorized Signatory

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1. Description of Property:
Make: TOYOTA INNOVA GX 7 SEATER
Reg No: UP16BN4019
Manuf Year: 2017
Reserve Price: Rs. 10, 80,000
EMD- Rs. 1,08,000

2. Date and Time of Auction: Nov 08, 2019

3. Auction Venue: Ridhi Godara Vard, Katatia Chowk Sector 17, Sukhrai Gaon Behind Air Force Station, Gurgaon

4. Manager: Shankar Kapoor Mob No: 9650193259

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Interested bidders shall be required to deposit an Earnest Amount mentioned above against the respective vehicle by way of pay order/Demand Draft payable at Delhi and in favour of ICICI Bank Ltd., Delhi. Successful highest bidder shall have to deposit balance amount within 5 days from the approval shared with them.

In Case of failure to deposit the amount as mentioned above, the amount of Earnest Money deposited shall be forfeited.

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Shifting explanations from White House alarm Republicans

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The shifting White House explanation for President Donald Trump’s decision to withhold military aid from Ukraine drew alarm on Friday from Republicans as the impeachment inquiry brought a new test of their alliance.

Trump, in remarks at the White House, stood by his acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, whose earlier comments undermined the administration’s defense in the impeachment probe.

Speaking Thursday at a news conference, Mulvaney essentially acknowledged a quid pro quo with Ukraine that Trump has long denied, saying U.S. Aid was withheld from Kyiv to push for an investigation of the Democratic National Committee and the 2016 election. He later clarified his remarks.

Trump appeared satisfied with Mulvaney’s clarification and the president dismissed the entire House inquiry as “a terrible witch hunt. This is so bad for our country.”

But former Ohio Gov. John Kasich, who ran against Trump in the 2016 Republican primary, said he now supports impeaching the president. Mulvaney’s admission, he said, was the “final straw.” “The last 24 hours has really forced me to review all of this,” Kasich said on CNN.

In Congress, at least one Republican, Rep. Francis Rooney of Florida, spoke out publicly, telling reporters that he and others were concerned by Mulvaney’s remarks.

Rooney said he’s open to considering all sides in the impeachment inquiry. He also said Mulvaney’s comments cannot simply be undone by a follow-up statement.

“It’s not an Etch-A-Sketch,” said Rooney, a former ambassador to the Holy See under President George W. Bush.

“The only thing I can assume is, he meant what he had to say — that there was a quid pro quo on this stuff,” he said.

The tumult over Mulvaney’s remarks capped a momentous week in the impeachment investigation as the admission, from highest levels of the administration, undercut the White House defense and pushed more evidence into the inquiry.

GOP leaders tried to contain the fallout. But four weeks into the inquiry, the events around Trump’s interaction with the Ukraine president, which are at the heart of impeachment, have upended Washington.

A beloved House chairman, Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., a leading figure in the investigation, died amid ongoing health challenges.

Sri Lanka removed from FATF’s Grey List

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has been removed from the “Grey List” of the international terror financing watchdog FATF, according to a media report.

The island nati on will no longer be subject to the Financial Action Task Force’s monitoring under its on-going global anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) compliance process, the Colombo Gazette reported on Saturday.

The FATF, whose five-day

plenary concluded in Paris on Friday, said Sri Lanka made significant progress in addressing the strategic AML/CFT deficiencies identified earlier, the daily said.

In October 2016, the FATF announced that Sri Lanka will be subjected to a review of the International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) of the terror financing watchdog to assess the progress of AML/CFT effectiveness in the country.

The Paris based organisation indicated Sri Lanka had

not made sufficient progress in four parameters — international cooperation, supervision, legal persons and arrangements and targeted financial sanctions on proliferations (North Korea and Iran), the daily said.

At its meeting at Buenos Aires, Argentina in October 2017, the FATF listed Sri Lanka as a jurisdiction with strategic AML/CFT deficiencies which is more commonly identified as “Grey List” and provided a time-bound action plan, the report said.



A Catalan pro-independence protestor throws a stone during clashes with police in Barcelona, Spain on Friday

Catalan leaders demand talks with Madrid after violent clashes

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Separatist Catalan leaders on Saturday called on the Spanish Government to enter into talks as Barcelona braced for fresh violence after days of clashes between police and protesters.

Nearly 200 people were hurt in another night of clashes with radical separatists hurling rocks and fireworks at police who responded with tear gas and rubber bullets.

A hardcore movement of young separatists, Arran, called for a new demonstration “against repression” for 1600 GMT in central Barcelona.

“We exhort the head of the government to fix today a day and hour to sit with us for unconditional talks,” regional president Quim Torra said in a speech.

His demand for “unconditional” negotiations, addressed to Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, appeared to be aimed at ensuring that a referendum on independence, currently a non-starter for Madrid, is up for discussion.

Barcelona has been rocked all week by protests against a Spanish court’s jailing of nine separatist leaders on seditious charges over a failed independence bid.

Emergency services said Saturday that 152 people were injured in overnight clashes in Barcelona, and dozens more hurt elsewhere in Catalonia, taking the total to 182.

Authorities had already

reported 500 injured since protests started on Monday even before the latest clashes erupted.

The interior Ministry said 83 people were detained in the overnight violence, in addition to 128 arrests police had reported previously.

“This can’t go on, Barcelona does not deserve this,” said Ada Colau, the city’s leftist mayor on Saturday, condemning “all kinds of violence.”

Air in the Catalan capital was heavy with a burning stench as municipal workers cleared the streets of broken glass, rocks and rubber bullets, and repaired pavements where bricks had been ripped out.

“All this is very sad, and is not helping our cause,” said Assumpcio Segui, a 75-year old pro-independence pensioner.

Torra urged demonstrators to remain calm, saying “the defense of rights and freedoms must always be expressed peacefully.”

Around half a million people had rallied in Barcelona on Friday in the biggest gathering since Monday’s court ruling as separatists also called a general strike in the major tourist destination.

While most marchers appeared peaceful, hordes of young protesters went on the rampage near the police headquarters, igniting a huge blaze that sent black smoke into the air as police fired teargas to disperse them, an AFP correspondent said.

Rohit, Rahane, Ranchi & Rain

Sharma (117*) scores third hundred in his fourth innings as Test opener & adds unbeaten 185-run for 4th wicket with Ajinkya (83*) to put India front after top-order failure

PTI ■ RANCHI

Rohit Sharma continued his sensational run as a Test opener with his third hundred of the series, allowing India to regain control of the proceedings after a top-order collapse in the third and final game against South Africa at Jharkhand State Cricket Association (JSCA) stadium on Saturday.

With India reduced to 39 for three, Rohit (117 batting off 164 balls) and Ajinkya Rahane (83 batting off 135) shared an unbeaten 185-run stand to stage the home team's remarkable recovery.

India were 224 for three before bad light, followed by rain, forced an early end to play on day one with only six overs possible in the final session.

With his stellar effort, Rohit, who hammered 14 boundaries and four sixes, became the first Indian opener since Sunil Gavaskar to score more than two centuries in a Test series. Gavaskar had achieved the feat way back in 1970.

Rohit's Test century number six came with a massive six off spinner Dane Piedt. It was a typical knock from India's limited overs vice-captain as he exercised caution when Kagiso Rabada was steaming in the morning before going for his strokes.

If that was not enough, Rahane matched him at the other end and brought up his 21st half-century off just 70 balls.

Piedt, who was included in place of Senuran Muthusamy, cut a sorry figure against Rohit's fury, giving away 43 runs in his six overs.

Debutant left-arm spinner George Linde, who replaced an injured Keshav Maharaj, ended the day with tidy figures of 11-1-40-0. Such was the Indian duo's dominance after lunch that Rabada, who had a fiery opening spell of 7-4-15-2, looked listless in the second spell that read 4-0-30-0.

Rahane matched Sharma shot for shot and at one point even had

Rain forecast today

PTI ■ RANCHI

Rain may affect the second day's proceedings as well in the final India-South Africa Test, the local weatherman predicted on Saturday.

"There is a possibility of thundershowers and lightning at isolated places in Ranchi. Chances are less by Monday onwards," an official of the Indian Meteorological Department, Ranchi, said.

a better strike rate than his explosive Mumbai partner as he notched up his fastest half-century in India.

Sharma, however, had a testing opening session as he survived on seven after reviewing an LBW successfully.

He also survived a run out chance when he was out of crease but Zubayr Hamza's throw from point missed the stumps.

Uneven bounce with a few staying really low greeted the Indian openers in the morning as Rabada and Lungi Ngidi made full use of the conditions to give the visitors their best start of the series.

Rabada got rid of opener Mayank Agarwal (10) and Cheteshwar Pujara (0) inside the first-hour of play.

The first breakthrough came in Rabada's third over when the pacer swung it away with Agarwal edging it to Dean Elgar at third slip.

Rabada went on to dismiss Pujara for a duck in his fifth over following a successful review by the South Africans after the on-field umpire Richard Illingworth turned down an lbw appeal.

But it was Nortje who earned the biggest wicket as he sent back Pune Test's double centurion Kohli after the skipper failed to read one that came back in sharply.

Kohli took the review but only to be turned down with an umpire's call and the skipper went back to the pavillion frustrated.



Ajinkya Rahane, right, pats on the helmet of teammate Rohit Sharma to congratulate him on scoring century

Mental adjustments key to Hitman's success

RANCHI: India's batting coach Vikram Rathour on Saturday attributed Rohit Sharma's success as Test opener, in the ongoing series, to mental adjustments.

"He is such an experienced player. I don't think you need to change anything with his technique. The only adjustment I think he had to make was his game plans," Rathour told reporters after the first day's proceedings.

"I always believed he is too good a player not to be playing in any format. It was a good call to make him to open. With the amount of runs he has scored, he has settled the issue for the time being," Rathour added.

"Somebody of his experience and the kind of cricket he plays, if he starts coming good top of the order, it changes everything for the Indian team, even when you're touring."

Rohit looked tentative early on and was given LBW on seven by umpire Richard Illingworth, but survived following a successful review, which showed a faint inside-edge.

"In Tests, you need to play through those tough spells that you will get. I think he's doing that well in this series. Once he's set, he's a phenomenal player, we all know that he can really punish you."

Rohit started to break

free towards the end of first session when he pulled Anrich Nortje for the first of his four sixes, while Ajinkya Rahane too came on his own in a difficult second session for the visitors.

"Ajinkya showed great intent today. Whenever he bats with this intent, he looks a really good player. As I said earlier also, they bowled in good areas initially and there was help in the wicket, so Rohit had some problem early on.

"Of course, as a batsman, you need to survive that time, which Rohit did really well. Anybody will look uncomfortable because those were tough conditions." **PTI**

'Not now' Proxy captain

FIANS ■ KOLKATA

A video of unbeaten Acenturion Rohit Sharma shouting 'not now' as the skies turned grey just before he smashed a six to reach his third hundred of the series took social media by storm.

Rohit reached the three-figure mark with a six as he was batting on 95 in the 45th over. The limited overs vice-captain brought up his third century of the series, his sixth overall, off Dane Piedt's bowling. Just before that, Rohit shouted 'not now' when it started to drizzle and the groundsman set

themselves up to bring the covers.

He took the single off the second ball of the over to reach 95 and at the same time, the rain started coming down.

Batting as an opener for the first time in this series, Rohit added yet another feather to his cap by becoming the batsman to hit the most number of sixes in a Test series.

During the ongoing three-Test series, he has so far hit 17 sixes and has surpassed Shimron Hetmyer's tally of 15 which came during the two-match series between West Indies and Bangladesh in 2018/19.

RANCHI: In a bid to end his losing streak at the toss, South Africa skipper Faf du Plessis on Saturday brought Temba Bavuma as proxy captain for the third and final Test.

However, luck did not favour South Africa as the coin landed in favour of India skipper Virat Kohli who chose to bat for the third time in the three-match series.

After winning the toss, even Kohli couldn't help but laugh at Faf's helplessness.

"It shows that it isn't meant to be (win the toss with a proxy captain)," du Plessis said after losing his 10th consecutive toss in Asia.

Graeme Smith, however, didn't seem impressed with du Plessis' idea of coming out with a proxy captain and said it reflected the mindset of the visitors who have been struggling to get going in the ongoing series. **PTI**



PTI ■ RANCHI

South African pacer Anrich Nortje on Saturday rued letting India off the hook after reducing them to 39 for three on the opening day.

Hoping to avoid a 3-0 whitewash, South African bowlers gave a good account of themselves by taking three wickets quickly, but Rohit Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane shared an unbeaten 185-run partnership to take India to

224/3 in 58 overs when bad weather forced an early stumps.

"We were definitely better as in the previous Test. We just tried to control the game little bit better. Unfortunately, we couldn't get another wicket... It would have been nice to have them four-five down," Nortje said after the first day's play.

"We had one or two overs where we went on top, later on we just pulled it back again. So, maybe, here and there we lost but, in general, a good effort by

everyone.

"Overall, it was a good effort by the bowlers. There was little bit in it this morning, tried to utilise as much but one or two overs didn't go our way."

Kagiso Rabada was the pick of the attack with 2/54 in 14 overs, while Nortje (1/50 from 16 overs) picked up the wicket of India skipper Virat Kohli.

"I was hoping for a wicket somewhere and to get him was unbelievable, but just try

and come with a plan. I try and put as much pressure as possible and finally got the wicket."

He said there's still hope in the side as they look to bounce back.

"I think there were quite a lot of opportunities right through the series. Lots of nicks going through the gaps or falling short. Something happened today here there, that's normal to cricket. We have to take it forward going from here. Just keep on asking those questions and control the controllables, I guess."

Kohli could be rested from B'desh T20s

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India skipper Virat Kohli could be rested from the three-match T20 series against Bangladesh, beginning here on November 3.

Kohli has been playing almost non-stop, featuring in 48 of India's 56 games

since October last year. The squad for the Bangladesh series will be picked in Mumbai on October 24.

"There is a possibility that Virat could be rested keeping the workload management programme in mind. But the selectors will only speak to Virat once the Test match (against

South Africa) ends," a source close to the selection committee said.

"It will also depend on how the skipper himself feels. He knows his body the best and if need be he can himself ask the selectors for rest," the source added.

After the first T20 in Delhi, Rajkot and Nagpur will host the second and third game on November 7 and 10 respectively.

Selection consistency led to better understanding: Rani

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Indian women's hockey team captain Rani said on Saturday that consistency in selection has helped her team members in understanding each other better ahead of the Olympic Qualifiers.

She said that home support will be a huge boost for them when they compete in the upcoming FIH Olympic Qualifiers.

An 18-member women's team was announced here on Friday by chief coach Sjoerd Marijne, which saw the Dutchman retain the players who represented India in their preparatory tour of England earlier this month.

"We have a group of players who have played together for a good period of time, and that obviously helps in building a good understanding between all the team members."

"We know each other in and out, and all of us understand each other both on and off the field, so I believe it has also helped us a lot. We are now preparing to be at our best when we take on USA in the Qualifiers here," said Rani.

Looking back at her experience of representing the national team in front of home support, Rani said the support in the

city will be a huge boost for her side.

"Some members from this team have played in India before but that was way back in the FIH World League Round 2 in 2013, but the crowd that comes out to watch hockey in Bhubaneswar is nothing like that."

"We know we will be cheered on from the first minute of the match, and we are all looking forward to playing at home. It is a good moment in your life when you play such a huge match in front of your home crowd, and the team is looking forward to producing a great performance and enjoying it on the field," she said.

Rani said there is pressure, but her team members have huge belief in themselves, and are focusing on doing the basics right in both the matches.

"We all know how important these matches are, but we cannot let them get to us. We have played in huge matches before and we now have the experience of coping up with the pressure. "We will play our own game, and focus on the basics. If we can continue with the way we have been playing, and play according to our plans, we will be able to produce good results."



Indian athletes eye course record bonus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Top Indian elite athletes, including women's course record holder L Suriya, on Saturday said they would look to break the course record in the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon here today.

Suresh Kumar Patel, Srinu Bugatha, Pradeep Chaudhary in the men's category and Suriya, Parul Chaudhary and Priti Lamba in the women's category are the top domestic athletes vying for honours in the prestigious IAAF Gold Label race. There will be 23 women and 22 men Indian elite athletes taking part in the race. Suriya, who created the course record in 2017 with a time of 1 hour 10 minutes 31 seconds, said she enjoys running in ADHM.

"The route at the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon is very nice. In 2017, I really enjoyed the run as the weather was also good. Therefore, I put up a good performance that year. I am looking forward to another great experience in ADHM. Hopefully, I will

break the course record again," said Suriya.

The runners of the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon will be awarded ₹1 lakh as a bonus prize if they break the course record this year.

Parul Chaudhary, who is keen to make an impression this year, was delighted about the bonus cash prize on offer. "It's great that the runners will be rewarded with a bonus cash prize for breaking the course record. We are very happy and I will definitely give it my all to achieve a bonus prize this year," said Parul.

Speaking about the conditions, Pradeep Chaudhary said that the weather has changed for the better since Friday and hopefully the conditions will suit the runners today.

"The weather suddenly changed on Friday. It was very windy making the conditions very cool and suitable for runners. I am looking forward to a great run and good weather on a beautiful track will be an added bonus," said Chaudhary.

AFF ■ ANTWERP

Former world number one Andy Murray reached his first semi-final since the 2017 French Open with a battling three-set win over Romania's Marius Copil in Antwerp on Friday.

The 32-year-old British star, steadily rebuilding his career after major hip surgery earlier this year, defeated qualifier Copil 6-3, 6-7 (7/9), 6-4.

"I feel OK, it's more how you pull up the following day," said Murray, who is two wins away from a first title since Dubai in March 2017.

"The good thing about the indoor matches is that the points are fairly short so it doesn't take as much out of you as on some of the slower courts outside."

Murray, now ranked a lowly



Andy Murray plays a return shot during Antwerp Open quarterfinal match

AFF

243 in the world, had the chance to wrap up the quarter-final when he had a match point in the second set tiebreak.

He eventually sealed victory after more than two and a half

hours on court with an ace for his third win in three meetings against the 92nd-ranked Copil.

Murray goes on to face France's world number 70 Ugo Humbert who put out

Not scared to fight Zareen in trials: Mary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

"I am not scared to face Nikhat Zareen," Lavowed celebrated boxer MC Mary Kom, saying it would just be a "formality" to beat her in the trials for the Olympic qualifiers.

Mary Kom (51kg) found herself embroiled in a controversy with Zareen demanding a trial bout against her before the Indian squad for next year's Olympic qualifiers is decided.

This was after the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) stated that it intends to pick six-time world champion Mary Kom (51kg) for the event in China on the back of her recent Bronze medal winning performance at the World Championships in Russia.

"The decision has been taken by BFI. I can't change the rule. I can just perform. Whatever they decide, I will go with that."

I'm not scared to face her, I am fine with the trials," said Mary Kom on the sidelines of a felicitation program.

"I have defeated her many times since SAF Games but she keeps challenging me. I mean, what is the point? It is just a formality. BFI also knows who can win a medal at Olympics."

Mary Kom said "people are jealous of me".

"It has happened with me in the past also. Perform on the ring, that is the real thing. BFI sends us for exposure trips so comeback with a Gold, prove yourself," she said.

"I am not against her. She might be good in

future, let her have the experience and focus on preparation for the highest level. I have been fighting for last 20 years. To challenge is easy but to perform is difficult."

In women's competition, BFI had said in August that only the Gold and Silver winners at the World Championships in Russia would be selected directly for the Olympic qualifiers in February.

However, BFI now has decided to call a selection committee meeting next week to discuss Zareen's plea.

Mary Kom said there should be gender quality in the selection criteria.

"I don't care about all this. Let BFI take the decision. There should be gender equality, can't have separate rules for men and women."





The Historian's Eye

A photographic record of William Dalrymple's travels across the country over the last two years

2



4

Watch your thought pattern

Our perception has a role to play in how intelligently, or otherwise, we deal with contrarian forces

My life is good because I am not passive about it. I invest in what is real. Like real people, to do real things, for the real me
— Gwyneth Paltrow



FROM THE INSIDE

Rich in fibre, protein, B vitamins and other nutrients, Millets are making a big comeback in urban diets as an extremely versatile and sustainable food choice, writes KAVITA DEVGAN, as she makes a case for these forgotten superfoods

MIGHTY MILLETS

What's old is new again. And this is great news. Suddenly, whole grains with ancient pedigrees are being embraced by home cooks and restaurants and are widely available in the supermarkets. And, leading the pack are millets.

As a nutritionist, I have always believed that millets duly deserve space on your plates. Rich in fibre, protein, B vitamins and other nutrients, these ancient grains are extremely versatile and can be swapped for pasta or rice in dishes, added to salads and power bowls, and cooked like oatmeal for a warm breakfast bowl topped with fruit and nuts. Plus, for the environmentally conscious people, the feel good factor is that millets require little water, grow well in arid and semi-arid regions of the world and thus, consuming them amounts to you leaving a lower carbon print in the world. This could be your contribution to ensuring that we leave behind some food for the future generations as well.

THE HEALTH BONUS

For the starters, the dense, earthy flavour takes some getting used to, especially since our palate is more used to the bland softness of wheat and white rice. But, there's a lot going for them. Millets are gluten-free grains and that makes them a boon for those who are gluten resistant and even for those who wish to reduce the gluten load in their diet. Additionally, it is now a well-proven fact that consuming millets on a regular basis can help you lose weight, owing to the rich content of fibre and bioactive compounds in them.

MY TOP FIVE PICKS

Sorghum (*jowar*)

Our grandmothers preferred *jowar rotis* over regular wheat *rotis*. There was a reason for that. While the calcium content found in *jowar* is very close to the content in wheat and rice, it packs in a neat punch of iron, protein, and fiber. *Jowar* is also rich in policosanols, which help in reducing bad cholesterol in the body.

Pearl millet (*bajra*)

There's lots going for this millet. *Bajra* is an excellent detoxing agent and contains catechins like quercetin that help the kidney and liver function properly by excreting the toxins from the body.

It's particularly great for monsoon season when digestion gets a little sluggish. It's high fibre, gluten free properties help kick the digestive process into action. In fact, this millet is particularly loaded with insoluble fibre that provides bulk to the stool and keeps constipation, a common problem during this season, at bay.

It is also a friend of the heart. *Bajra* works on three fronts: It is rich in magnesium (that helps keep the heart healthy); has lots of potassium (which makes it a good vasodilator and helps reduce the overall blood pressure); and fibre rich (helps reduce the LDL or bad cholesterol). Magnesium present in *bajra* also helps

control the glucose receptors in the body and keeps diabetes away.

Finger millet (*Ragi*)

This underrated gluten-free grain has a lot going for it. It is a rich source of calcium and iron and its main protein fraction eleusin, has a high biological value, meaning it is easily absorbed and used in the body.

It helps the digestion immensely and is packed with cellulose, a type of dietary fibre that helps keep our digestion humming along, constipation away and cholesterol levels in check.

Plus, like barley, *ragi* is an ideal food for diabetics, and overweight people as its digestion is slow and glucose is released from the intestines very slowly into the blood.

Foxtail millet (*kangini* or *thinnai*)

It is loaded with smart carbohydrates, the kind which don't increase the blood sugar levels immediately, but slowly release glucose into the bloodstream. Additionally, it is rich in dietary fibre, and minerals like iron and copper. These help reduce the levels of bad cholesterol and keep the immune system strong as well

Barnyard millets (*ghangora*)

It tastes similar to broken rice when cooked and is called *samak ke chawal*. This nutrient dense millet has high fibre content, which can effectively help in losing weight.

It is a rich source of calcium and phosphorous, which helps in bone building, and has more fibre than most other grains and delivers both soluble and insoluble fibre that helps in preventing constipation, excess gas, bloating and cramping. It also has the highest amount of iron compared to other grains.

BOOST THEIR SUPERPOWER: SPROUT THEM

To make the most of the millet goodness, sprout them and consume. Sprouts have been the buzzword for healthy eating for a long time now. But somehow sprouting is limited to lentils — *moong dal*, *chana*, *lobia*... And even though other grain sprouts have been around for a while, they really have not become mainstream yet. It's now time to change that.

Sprouting increases the nutritional value by leaps and bounds as the process boosts vitamins, minerals and antioxidants of the food. There is an increase the concentration of a key nutrients like B vitamins, vitamin C, and folate. Plus, these nutrients become more bio-accessible (more easily assimilated and absorbed by the body) too. This is extremely helpful in the case of iron in particular, a mineral that is difficult to absorb from vegetarian sources.

A study conducted at the Central Food Technological Research Institute in Mysore, India, measured the changes caused by sprouting finger millet (*ragi*), wheat and barley. They found that sprouting millets increased the bioaccessibility of iron (> 300%) and manganese (17%), and calcium ("marginally"). The food also becomes of lower GI



BE CAREFUL THOUGH

There is no doubt about millets are one of the superfoods in our diet and nutrition chain but those who are suffering from thyroid need to go easy on them. "While millet is gluten free, it contains goitrogens, compounds in the food that suppress or reduce the thyroid activity. Goitrogens are usually reduced by the cooking process. Whereas, in millets, the cooking actually increases the goitrogenic effect. Thus, if one switched over completely to millets, the thyroid suppressing effects can be profound. If gluten is an issue then it is recommended, one shifts to another grain that is free of gluten and is non goitrogenic such as amaranth, buckwheat or cassava," points out Noida based nutritionist Himanshu Kapoor, founder of C.Green Organic Future Foods.

Plus, millets also contain certain enzyme inhibitors and phytic acid, which binds important minerals, not allowing the body to absorb the nutrients and minerals. So the rule to follow is to make them a part of your diet, but no to over do them.

RECIPES

● Ragi Kuzhu (Porridge)

Boil water. Slowly add 30 gm *ragi* powder to the boiling water and stir constantly to avoid forming lumps. Keep it boiling until it forms a medium thick fluid. Add salt (to taste), stir and put off the flame. Add lemon juice (1 lemon) and salt to 250 ml butter milk. Add butter milk to the thick *ragi* fluid and have it with lime pickle. You can even cook *ragi* at night and leave overnight in the fridge; in the morning add buttermilk to it and have.

● Bajra Pongal

Slightly dry roast the broken *bajra* till a bit hot. Pressure cook the green gram dal, roasted broken *bajra* (*bajra:dal* should be 70:30 ratio), and salt with 3 cups of water till soft. Heat some *ghee* and add cashews. When slightly golden brown, add cumin seeds, pepper, curry leaves and ginger paste and add it to the *pongali*. Have with *Chach* (buttermilk).

From *Ultimate Grandmother Hacks* by Kavita Devgan (Rupa Publications)

(Glycemic Index) and is better digestible due to the enzyme activity that peaks during sprouting, and the starchy carbs in the seed on sprouting get converted into energy. So the resulting sprouted food has a higher ratio of protein and fibre to carbs. Proteins also become more digestible when the food is sprouted. And the biggest benefits is that sprouting helps decrease the presence of anti-nutrients (like physics acid, enzyme inhibitors, lectins, saponins etc), the naturally occurring compounds that are found in plant seeds that interfere with our ability to digest vitamins and minerals within the plants. In fact, one big benefit of sprouting grains is that studies have found that there are widespread changes in gluten concentrations of the grains when they are sprouted. Looking at how much grains we consume today (a big chunk of our diet is made of these), it is a good idea to naturally reduce gluten consumption this way. So which grains can be sprouted?

You can sprout any kind of whole grains — the important thing is that the grain should be a whole grain, with the germ and bran intact. Refined grain cannot be sprouted.

Sprouted grains can be eaten raw, lightly cooked, ground into flour or made into a bread. So throw in a handful of sprouted grains like sprouted quinoa in your salad, add some sprouted rice to your stir fry or soup, or simmer sprouted buckwheat, quinoa, or millet in your milk to make a porridge, they hold a lot of good for your system.

CHEFS' FAVOURITE

Chef Anahita N. Dhondy, Chef Partner, SodaBottleOpenerwala CyberHub says she loves using millets in her recipes because she finds them versatile, easy to cook and add value to all dishes. "They are yummy as a salad where you can add crunch. In a soup, or even make a main course," she says. In the restaurant, she serves okra millet salad, millet soup, *ragi* bread and at home she keeps boiled millets (particularly *ragi* (finger millet) and barnyard millet (*samak ke chawal*)) in her fridge. Easy to toss and use. According to her they might be becoming popular as a culinary trend in restaurants today all over again, but they've been cooked in Indian homes forever. She herself discovered them at her grandmom's home ages ago.

THE MARKET FORCES

Millets in India have always enjoyed prime importance, as we are one of their largest producers in the world, but somehow the market forces recognised its potential only recently. Over the last few years, new age entrepreneurs decided to revive the culture, and are getting a good response too from the consumers. When

Delhi based Meghana Narayan and Shauravi Malik decided to become entrepreneurs, they conducted extensive market research, product research and development, put in a lot of thinking and then decided to follow their heart and focus on millets. This is how they launched Slurrp Farms in 2015. Realising that the answers to healthy cooking lay in our own grandmother's kitchens, they dug out old recipes to make their brand cookies using millets. Today, besides cookies, they offer cereals (for toddlers), dosa and pancake mixes, and munch — all made from millets.

Bengaluru based snacks brand Soulfull is another success story. Inspired by the the rising popularity of quinoa, during his stay in the US, Prashant Parameswaran, CEO and MD of the brand, struck upon the idea to come back to India and promote the humble Indian grains — Millets. He decided to make this enriching and nutritious lineage palatable for the daily consumption needs of the modern consumer. Today the band offers multiple millet-based options like millet Muesli and Smoothix including *ragi*, *jowar*, foxtail millet and *bajra*. They also combine the power of millets with a healthy mix of various grains, such as *ragi* with Bengal gram.

Definitely, there is an increased awareness of the importance of millets for our well-being. A lot of nutrition experts are talking about them. There is an increased impetus by the government too to educate people on how millets are not only nutritious but how they help the environment and farmers, thereby creating a sustainable ecosystem.

According to Parameswaran the biggest marketing challenge in making millets 'hot' with the millennials is to position millets right to meet their lifestyle needs. That is a tall order, but entirely doable as these brands are proving. The need of the hour is to use unorthodox, creative measures to boost the popularity of millets via education, and by making them an appealing proposition for people (and the planet). This can be done by making fun foods with millets that appeal to today's generation. Millet noodles anyone? Minus the preservatives, of course!

The writer is a Delhi-based weight management consultant, nutritionist and author of Don't Diet! 50 Habits of Thin People and Ultimate Grandmother Hacks



BLACK AND WHITE IS ABSTRACT; COLOR
IS NOT. LOOKING AT A BLACK AND WHITE
PHOTOGRAPH, YOU ARE ALREADY
LOOKING AT A STRANGE WORLD
— JOEL STERNFELD



The swing, Mehrauli Archaeological Park, Delhi; Archival Pigment Print

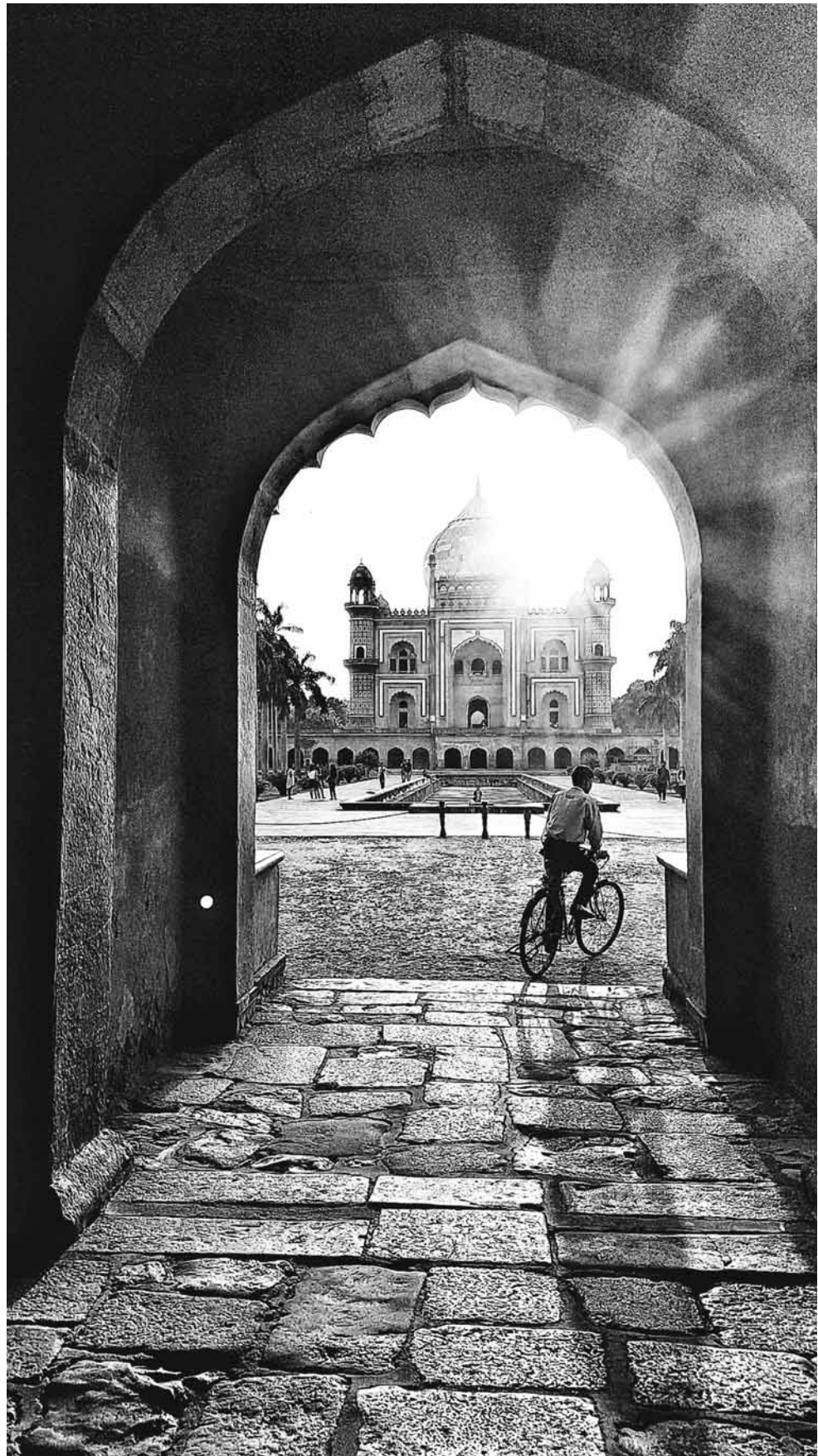
THE HISTORIAN'S EYE

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE is well-known and recognised for his writing, but photography, he claims, is his first love. An exhibition at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi presents a photographic record of Dalrymple's travels across the country over the last two years while researching his latest book titled, *The Anarchy* (published by Bloomsbury in September 2019). This exhibition of black-and-white photographs, chronicles people and places, and the inter-relationships among them.

"I've been visiting all the places where this history took place — the battlefields and ruins, the mosques, sufi shrines and temples, the paradise gardens and pleasure grounds, the barrack blocks and townhouses, the crumbling Mughal *havelis*, the palaces and forts," he says. For sure, each photograph captured by Dalrymple reveals a narrative tension within itself, between stillness and movement, history and reality, creating a wrinkle in time that highlights an intermingling of the monumental past and fleeting present. A Photofeature.



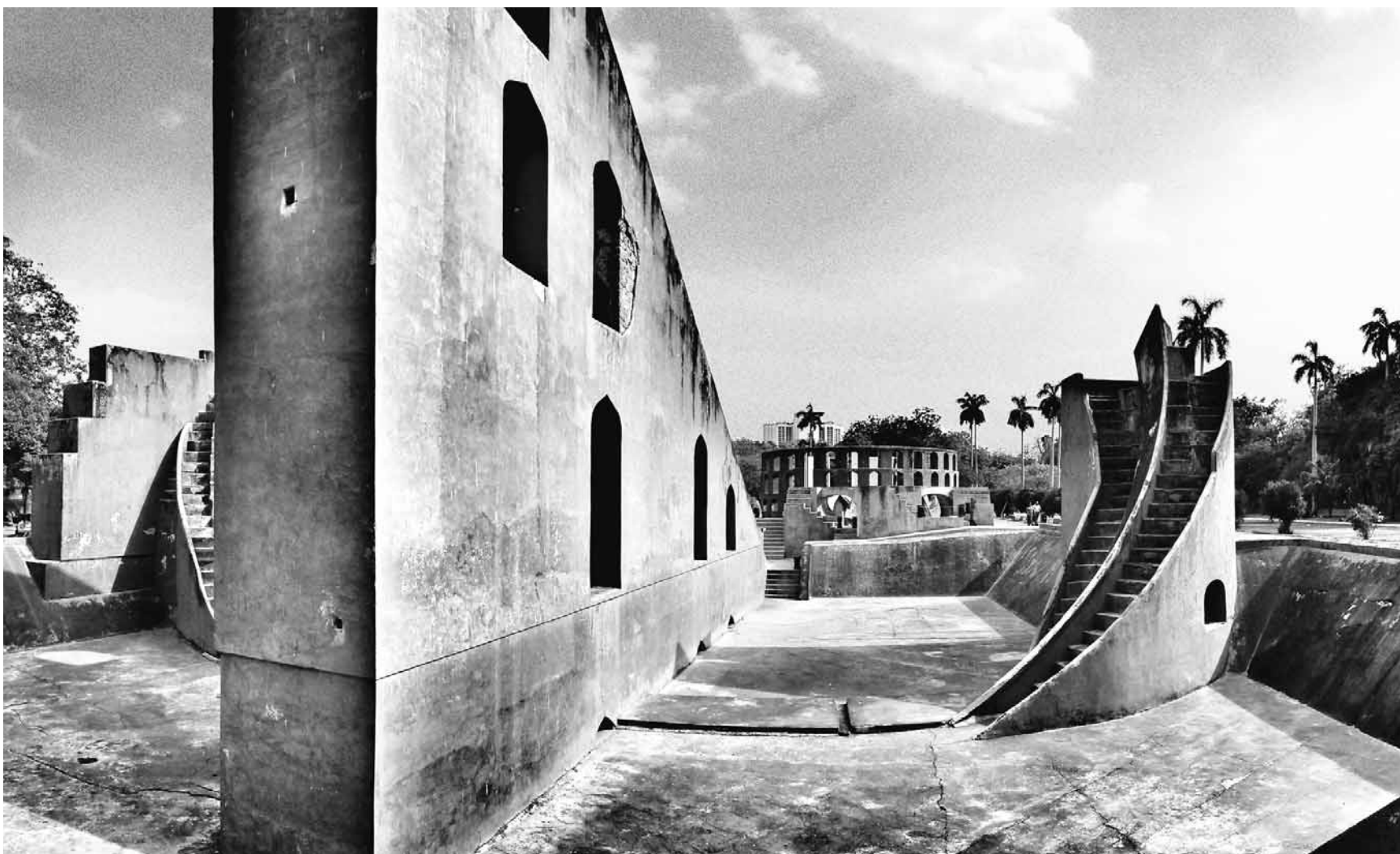
Untitled; Digital print on photorag bright white paper



Monsoon afternoon, Safdar Jung's Tomb, Delhi; Archival Pigment Print



Early morning, Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur I; Archival Pigment Print



Jantar Mantar, Delhi; Archival Pigment Print



Jantar Mantar, Jaipur; Archival Pigment Print

Killing off Kurds to resurrect ISIS?



In this October 17, 2019 file photo, Syrians who were displaced by the Turkish military operation in northeastern Syria, carry their belongings as they walk to receive a tent at the Bardarash refugee camp, north of Mosul, Iraq.

AP

The recent happenings in Iraq and Syria have given the ISIS a new lease of life. The US pullback, leaving Kurds fighters — thousands of whom laid their lives to crush the Islamic terrorists — in the lurch and thus paving the way for Turkey's long-wished assault on Kurds, is set to turn the safest part of Syria into a war zone



SWARN KUMAR ANAND

Ten days after launching a long-anticipated military assault on the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) militia in northeastern Syria, Turkey on October 18 agreed to the US-brokered five-day ceasefire on the condition that the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) would withdraw from the proposed "safe zone" within the stipulated period. However, the terms and conditions, set by Turkey, hint at an ominous future for the region. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to escalate Operation Peace Spring if the SDF fails to leave the safe zone buffer along the Turkish border. "If the promises are kept until Tuesday evening, the safe zone issue will be resolved. If it fails, the operation will start the minute 120 hours are over," he said.

However, claims and counterclaims about the ceasefire conditions have already doomed the agreement. Soon after the truce declaration, the SDF claimed the deal covers only a 12-km stretch, disputing Erdogan's announcement that the "safe zone" would spread 30 km deep inside Syria and 440 km along the border with Turkey.

Moreover, the sanctity of the agreement has been disrespected with both the sides accusing each other of violating the ceasefire agreement. European countries, particularly France, which condemned Turkey's invasion, are sceptical of the intention of the Erdogan Government. According to European Council President Donald Tusk, the ceasefire "is a demand (for the) capitulation of the Kurds", and the world community must not abandon the Kurdish partners.

In fact, Turkey-Kurds conflict has a long history and the

root of the present crisis lies in the regional power dynamics in Turkey. Though the immediate trigger for the Turkish invasion of northeastern Syria was Erdogan's long-cherished desire to fill the vacuum created by the US pullback from Syria, Ankara admitted that its goal was "to destroy the terror (YPG) corridor" being established by Kurdish forces in Syria along Turkey's southern border. However, the real aim of Turkey's involvement in Syria is to "crush the heads" of the Kurdish fighters who aspire to form an autonomous state for the Kurds in south-eastern part of Turkey.

Kurds — the biggest stateless nation primarily spread across Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran, and the fourth-largest ethnic group in the West Asia & North African (WANA) region — have been given false promises by vested interests at various treaties for over a century for the creation of a Kurdistan.

In the recent years, Kurds' successful military campaigns against Islamic terrorists and enemies of the US paid dividends and raised its stature as a trusted partner in the fight against terror. However, the rise of the might of the Kurds has threatened the Turkey Government which fears it might be forced to meet the demand for a Kurdish autonomous State. This is why Ankara had opposed Kurdish independence in Iraq in anticipation that their success in northern Iraq would encourage the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) — which has strong ties with the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) that was internationally acclaimed for being instrumental in wresting large stretches from the ISIS in Syria and Iraq — to strive for independence in the

neighbouring Turkey.

However, the present crisis in Syria is caused by Trump's hasty decision to withdraw military from Syria, thus triggering the Turkish assault on America's Kurdish partners in Syria and jeopardising the efforts to contain the ISIS. In fact, Kurds have almost always failed to read the intentions of America that has been espousing contradictory goals in the WANA region.

While the successive US administrations have maintained that the States' boundaries in the WANA region must not be changed, they have sought support of the Kurds in fight against the erstwhile USSR, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and currently the ISIS in Iraq and Syria. But, when the Kurds were pinning their hopes on the Donald Trump administration to help them keep the part of Syria in their safe hands, they have been left in the lurch. It has also caused the Trump administration loss of credibility as a reliable partner in fight against terror. Reports have come that Israel is apprehensive and keeping tabs on the situation.

No matter how much Trump defends his decision on Syria, he is being criticised by Americans and others for abandoning their Kurdish allies in fight against the ISIS. Slamming the US administration, French President Emmanuel Macron said the US decision to withdraw and abandon the Kurdish forces "weakens our credibility to find partners in the field who will fight with us, thinking that they are protected".

Now the moot question is whether the ceasefire will sustain. The northeastern region of Syria was considered by the locals the safest place to live in the country till the Turkey

invasion turned it into a full war zone, forcing mass exodus in Iraq.

Despite agreement to pause fighting, it is doubtful that Turkey will leave the region any soon. As per the plan, once the safe zone buffer is established, Turkey's military will set up 12 observations posts to ensure that Kurdish forces don't make a comeback. In this situation, the expectation from the stateless Kurds to bear Turkish highhandedness for long is unrealistic.

Therefore, the edgy calm in the northeastern Syria is replete with severe repercussions. First, there is no plan to handle the ISIS prisoners who were under control of the Kurdish forces till the Turkish invasion. It has been reported that several of them have already fled the makeshift jails in prisonbreaks. There is no agreement on the transfer of the custody of the terrorists from the SDF to the Turkish forces. Moreover, ironically the US President seems least concerned about the ISIS prisoners' custody and many a time he called fugitive prisoners "least dangerous".

The Syrian territory, now in Turkish control, may fall into the hands of the ISIS which has been emboldened by the US withdrawal and SDF's scheduled departure. Moreover, if Turkey leaves northeastern Syria without giving control to an able force, it can only lead to further destabilisation in the region.

While, the military pullout is Trump's gift to the ISIS, the Turkish invasion, and the so-called five-day ceasefire are a win-win situation for Ankara and the terrorist force. Erdogan's sole focus is to "crush the heads" of the Kurdish fighters.

(The writer Associate Editor & News Editor, The Pioneer)

Syria pullback strategic nightmare, says US Senate majority leader

US Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell on Friday attacked President Donald Trump's decision to pull troops from Syria as "a strategic nightmare" that will help Washington's foes and hurt its allies.

"Withdrawing US forces from Syria is a grave strategic mistake," McConnell, the top Republican in Congress, wrote in an op-ed published in *The Washington Post*.

"It will leave the American people and homeland less safe, embolden our enemies, and weaken important alliances." His comments come after Trump on Wednesday defended his decision to pull US troops out of Syria as "strategically brilliant."

McConnell, usually a staunch supporter of the President, had earlier in the month condemned Trump's withdrawal of troops from northeast Syria, which sparked a week-long Turkish offensive against the Kurds who were allied with the US in the fight against Islamic State.

Fighting has continued despite a temporary ceasefire Vice President Mike Pence bro-

kered with Ankara.

"The combination of a US pullback and the escalating Turkish-Kurdish hostilities is creating a strategic nightmare for our country," McConnell wrote in his opinion piece.

"Even if the five-day ceasefire announced on Thursday holds, events of the past week have set back the US' campaign against the Islamic State and other terrorists," he said.

McConnell did not mention Trump by name, though he did liken the Syria withdrawal to the foreign policy of Trump's Democratic predecessor Barack Obama.

"We saw the Islamic State flourish in Iraq after President Barack Obama's retreat. We will see these things anew in Syria and Afghanistan if we abandon our partners and retreat from these conflicts before they are won," McConnell wrote.

"America's wars will be 'endless' only if America refuses to win them," he added in an apparent jab at Trump's insistence that the withdrawal was necessary "to get out of these ridiculous Endless Wars."

AFP



In this image provided by Turkish Red Crescent, a woman carries aid being distributed by Turkish Red Crescent in Ras Al-Ayn, Syria on October 19, 2019

AP

