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RECORD WITH 168TH CAP

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Modi dares Opp to bring back Art 370

Rahul says PM, Shah diverting attention from real issues

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The hither-to somewhat drab electioneering for the October 21 Maharashtra Assembly polls picked up pace on Sunday, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit the campaign trail and exchanged barbs on the annulment of Articles 370 and 35A on one hand and farmer-unemployment issues on the other, respectively.

Without naming Rahul, the Prime Minister dared the Opposition parties to declare in their respective manifestos that they will bring back Articles 370 and 35A which gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir.

On the other hand, Rahul hit out at Modi and BJP national president Amit Shah for diverting the attention of the people from the real issues like the farmers' distress and unemployment which had reached highest-ever level during the 40 years. "What Modi and Shah are doing is to divert the attention of the people from the real issues and focus on Corbett Park, Moon, China, Pakistan, Japan, Korea and all other places," he said.

Addressing an election rally at Jalgaon in north Maharashtra, Modi picked up from where he had left at a public rally marking the conclusion of Chief Minister



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a public meeting ahead of Maharashtra Assembly election at Sakoli village of Bhandara on Sunday PTI

Devendra Fadnavis' 4,000-kms long "Mahajanadesh Yatra" that he had addressed at Nashik on September 19, to harp the issue of abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution.

Invoking the legacies of Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji, architect of the Constitution late BR Ambedkar and social reformer Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Modi said, "From the land of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Chhatrapati Shivaji, I dare the Opposition parties that if they have the courage to take a clear stand (on the annulment of Article 370 and 35A). Those Opposition parties which are talking all kinds of bad

things about Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh should declare in their manifesto of this election as well as the next elections that they will bring back Article 370 and 35A which the BJP-led NDA Government abrogated on August 5."

Charging that the Opposition parties were merely shedding "crocodile tears" and in the process making fool of the people, Modi asked, "Do these people have courage to restore Articles 370 and 35A? Will the people of the country allow them to restore these Articles? Even if they try to do, will they survive? Will their political fate remain intact? Will the country accept it? When they know that they

WAR OF WORDS

- What Modi and Shah are doing is to divert the attention of the people from the real issues and focus on Corbett Park, Moon, China, Pakistan, Japan, Korea and all other places, Rahul said
- We have taken such a big decision. We will restore normalcy in Kashmir in the next four months, the PM said

can not have their way, why are the Opposition parties shedding crocodile tears?

Modi said the decision to abrogate Article 370 mirrored the cultural of the BJP. "Our decision on Jammu & Kashmir is firm. The question of our going back on our decision does not arise," he said.

Modi said the Opposition were speaking the same language as Pakistan on the issue of Article 370 abrogation.

"We have taken such a big decision. We will restore normalcy in Kashmir in the next four months," the Prime Minister said.

Addressing an election rally at Ausa in Latur district, Rahul said, "When the youth ask for jobs, the Government tells them to watch the moon. The Government speaks about (scrapping special provisions of) Article 370 and moon, but is silent on the problems plaguing the country."



Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi addresses a joint Congress-NCP rally at Dharavi Ground in Mumbai on Sunday PTI

Rahul said unemployment is at its highest level in the last 40 years. "Auto sector, textile sector, diamond industry is finished but you don't see anything in media. Modi doesn't speak about this at all. This is highest unemployment in 40 years," the former Congress president said.

"The Government is talking about 'Make In India', but only Chinese industries have swamped India, which is killing jobs in this country... The worried youth have no hopes of the future," Rahul said.

Alluding to Modi's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Rahul wanted to know, "When they were having tea

and snacks the other day, did the PM ask him about the aggression in Doklam? No...!"

Rahul said the current economic status of the nation is "just the beginning" and predicted dire consequences in the coming six-seven months for the economy.

"You go anywhere in the country... People only talk about joblessness, farmland crises, the economy... Where are the promised 'achche din' (happy days)? They have not come... After demonetisation, nobody knows how much black money was recovered, but only the poor, honest masses suffered," Rahul hit out.

Continued on Page 4

Delhi air sinks to very poor

Stubble burning in neighbouring States of Punjab, Haryana sees upward trend

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After cases of stubble burning in neighbouring States of Punjab and Haryana witnessed an upward trend, the overall 'Air Quality Index' (AQI) of the national Capital, deteriorated further and touched the 268 mark on Sunday, which falls in the 'poor category'.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted, "All the gains achieved so far on pollution front will be nullified. Whereas, we need to do a lot in Delhi and we are trying, however, all Governments and all agencies need to work to stop crop burning also (sic)."

On Saturday, Kejriwal had said smoke from crop residue burning in neighbouring States has started reaching Delhi and the air quality has started deteriorating. "It has been widely reported that the smoke coming to Delhi is due to the burning of stubble in Karnal, Haryana," he had said.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) in Anand Vihar, Wazirpur, Vivek Vihar, Mundka, Bawana, Jahangirpuri was 327, 323, 317, 309, 302 and 300 was respectively, according



to Central Pollution Control Board data.

The air quality in neighbouring Ghaziabad (320) and Noida (310) in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana's Alipur Khalsa (351) and Panipat (339) also turned "very poor" by 4.30 pm. Faridabad, Greater Noida, Baghpat, Murthal recorded an AQI at 290, 233, 280, 259 and 245 respectively.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The Centre-run System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research said smoke from stubble burning will make up six per cent of Delhi's pollution by October 15, when GRAP comes into force in the Delhi-NCR region.

Continued on Page 4

Two held for mugging Modi's niece, stolen items recovered

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two youths for allegedly snatching the handbag of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's niece Damyanti Ben Modi, police said on Sunday.

Damyanti's bag, containing cash of ₹56,000 and two mobile phones, was wrenched from her grasp by two persons when she was alighting from an auto-rickshaw on Saturday morning.

Based on a complaint by her, police registered a case and later identified the two snatchers, one of whom Gaurav (21) alias Nonu was arrested from Sonipat where he was staying at a relative's house, police said. Gaurav is a resident of Sadar Bazar in Delhi but sometimes stayed in Nabi Karim here, they said.

"Badal (22) was arrested from Sultanpuri here later in the evening," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Monika Bhardwaj.

The two persons, who were on a scooter, snatched her purse, mobile phones, some documents and other valu-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's niece Damyanti Ben Modi



ables around 7 am when she got down at the Gujrati Samaj Bhawan in North Delhi's Civil Lines area, a senior police officer said.

The stolen items, including the ₹56,000 and some of the documents, have been recovered, said the officer, adding that the scooter was seized from the house of Gaurav's aunt where he had gone after the incident.

The two men were identified after examining CCTV camera footage. They were not wearing helmets.

During interrogation, Gaurav told police that he had spotted Damyanti in an auto-rickshaw, a kilometre before targeting her, the officer said.

Damyanti is the daughter of the Prime Minister's brother Prahlad Modi. Police said Gaurav was previously involved in a fight and it is being checked if he has any other cases against him.

The incident occurred a few kilometres away from the residence of Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal and Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a much needed relief for Meerut Expressway commuters, who often complain of being issued e-challans for speed driving, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has decided to write to the Delhi Police for raising the speed limits up to 120/100 kmph.

Currently, the speed limit at the expressway is 70 kmph for Light Motor Vehicle and 40 kmph for goods carrier, according to the speed limit signboards. In view of the complaints being received from the general public, the traffic inspector of Kalyanpuri Circle, Delhi Police, wrote a letter to the NHAI for installation of speed limit signboards with the maximum speed of 60 kmph in September and sent a reminder after a few days, according to an RTI reply by the NHAI.

The penalty for overspeeding has been raised from ₹400 to ₹5,000, according to the new Motor Vehicles Act which came into effect from September 1.

According to RP Singh,

- Currently, the speed limit at the expressway is 70 kmph for Light Motor Vehicle and 40 kmph for goods carrier, according to the speed limit signboards
- The penalty for overspeeding has been raised from ₹400 to ₹5,000, according to the new Motor Vehicles Act which came into effect from September 1



General Manager (Tech)/Project Director at the NHAI Ghaziabad Project Implementation Unit (PIU) which looks after the expressway, a letter suggesting to upgrade the speed limits to 120/100 kmph for expressway portion and 70/50 kmph for the

National Highway on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway would be sent to the Delhi Police Commissioner soon.

"The letter would be sent from the NHAI headquarters in Delhi. A decision to send the letter was taken during the inauguration of the Delhi-

Meerut Expressway phase-3 last month," Singh told PTI.

"Currently, we have placed signboards limiting the maximum speed to 70/40. Since the stretch, which is 8.72 km long 6-lane expressway/8-lane NH 24 from Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi to Ghazipur border has

already been completed in June 2018, the speed should be upgraded to 120/100 kmph on the expressway and 70/50 kmph on the NH as per Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRT&H) guidelines," he said.

Previously, a letter to upgrade the speed on the expressway was sent to the Special Commissioner of Police (Traffic) on September 13 by the NHAI, according to the RTI reply.

In the letter, the NHAI said the Delhi-Meerut Expressway has been designed for a speed of 120/100 kmph as per the MoRT&H guidelines through a gazette notification dated April 6, 2018.

"This expressway section is completely access controlled and barricaded by concrete crash barriers on either side.

"Being an urban stretch and other packages of the Delhi-Meerut Expressway being under construction, the speed limit sign boards are placed limiting the speed limits at 70/50 kmph.

Continued on Page 4

India's GDP growth rate to fall to 6%: World Bank

Washington: After a broad-based deceleration in the initial quarters of this fiscal year, India's growth rate is projected to fall to 6 per cent, the World Bank said on Sunday.

In 2018-19, the growth rate of the country stood at 6.9 per cent. However, the bank in its latest edition of the South Asia Economic Focus said the country was expected to gradually recover to 6.9 per cent in 2021 and 7.2 per cent in 2022 as it assumed that the monetary stance would remain accommodative.

The report, which has been released ahead of the annual meeting of the World Bank with the International Monetary Fund, noted India's economic growth decelerated for the second consecutive year.

Detailed report on P10

13K IT Shakhas help RSS shed orthodox image

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when the RSS is witnessing a 20 per cent annual increase in its number of regular shakhas, which at present stand at an impressive 60,000 across the country, another similar story is unfolding in another area of Sangh activity. It's the rapid increase in the number of Information and Technology Shakhas of the RSS.

These shakhas are popularly known as the IT Shakhas and are conducted weekly. Their numbers stand at around 13,000 and many top-notch IT professionals are connected with them, helping the Sangh to shed its "orthodox and conservative" image.

The RSS is looking at the rapid urbanisation and growth of metropolises and the young professionals working with it, particularly in the IT industry. The Sangh which has 'opened up' itself to the outer world

under its present head Mohan Bhagwat seeks to cultivate the new-generation IT professionals in an apparent bid to embrace the modern technological changes which has not

been the strongpoint of the 94-year-old organisation.

"There are around 13,000 IT Shakhas in Pune, Bangalore and Hyderabad where IT professionals attend the evening

shakhas and exchange views on issues ranging from security to sanitation," said RSS sources.

The sessions tagged as 'IT milans' work out plans and programmes for the expansion of

such shakhas in the villages nearby the metropolises. The first IT 'shakhas' were started in 2006 in Pune and since then they are on the priority list of the organisation.



"Last year in Bangalore several IT professionals took eight-day holidays to be in the villages and engaged in contact programmes, discussing solutions to the issues like water conservation, environment and agriculture. Environment and water conservation are seemingly the focus areas of RSS outfits as recently spelled out by its chief. The RSS is to soon open 'Ati Prabhat' Shakhas for the professionals first in Mumbai and then in Telangana," they said.

Claiming that the Nagpur outfit aims to increase the number of its 'shakhas' up to one lakh with "high growth States" like Kerala and West Bengal, RSS sources maintained that in the coming years the organisation would draw its substantial cadre from the large cities. "There are number of young working couples who have joined urban evening shakhas and working proactively during the week-ends", they claimed.

CAPSULE

MAN BEATEN TO DEATH BY WIFE IN DELHI'S NARELA

New Delhi: A 35-year-old man was beaten to death allegedly by his wife in outer Delhi's Narela following a quarrel over his drinking habits. P4

JAWAN KILLED AS PAK VIOLATES CEASEFIRE

Srinagar: An Army jawan was killed on Sunday when Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire along the LoC in Baramulla district of Jammu & Kashmir, an Army official said. P4

FORGET KASHMIR, FIGHT TERROR: RAJNATH TO PAK

Chandigarh: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday told Pakistan to forget Kashmir and instead fight an "honest battle" against terrorism, warning that no power can stop its disintegration if it continued with its rant and did not mend its ways. He said India was ready to assist Pakistan in the fight against terrorism if it cannot do so on its own. P4

Modi’s niece snatching case concerns Kejriwal

Strict punishment should be given to convict, tweets CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Day after two youths snatched purse of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s niece and fled away with cash and two mobile phones in Delhi, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday expressed serious concern about the incident and called for stringent action against the convicts.

“The security of people is very important, he said, adding that strict punishment should be given to convict irrespective of his religion, caste and creed,” tweeted Chief Minister said.

His remarks came after Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari on Sunday held illegal immigrants responsible for 80 per cent crimes in the national Capital. Tiwari said his demand for national register for citizens

(NRC) exercise in Delhi is for identifying and evicting such illegal immigrants involved in crimes. “As many as 80 per cent crimes involve illegal immigrants in Delhi. That’s why I have been demanding NRC but whenever I do so, Arvind Kejriwal rises as their shield,” Tiwari claimed It may be noted while replying to a question on NRC implementation in Delhi, Kejriwal had said, “Tiwari will be the first to be evicted if the exercise is started in the city”.

Tiwari said the responsibility of law and order and crime control lied with the Delhi Police and he was not trying to protect it by naming the illegal immigrants. “But it needs to be worked out how is the Delhi Police going to control crime in Delhi when a large number of illegal immigrants are living in different parts of the city,” he said.

Damayanti Ben Modi, daughter of the prime minister’s brother Prahlad Modi, became a victim of snatching in the national capital with her purse

containing cash of Rs 50,000 and two mobile phones wrenched from her grasp by two persons when she was alighting from an auto-rickshaw on Saturday.

Delhi Police arrested the snatcher indentified as Gaurav from the neighbouring Sonapat while his accomplish identified as Badal is on the run. Delhi Police officials claim that a sustained crackdown has been launched against snatchers and lifters. Statistics available with Delhi Police reveal that incidents of snatching have come down as compared to the last year and around 4,000 criminals have been arrested till September 15 of this year. “In 2017, there were 6,466 incidents of snatching till September 15, which has been brought down to 4,516. All the districts police chiefs and the Station House Officers (SHOs) have been asked by the Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik to increase patrolling and ensure that criminals, outlaws are brought to justice”, said a senior police officer.

Centre failed to curb crimes in city: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over ‘law and order’ in Delhi, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Centre, saying that it has failed completely in improving the situation in the national Capital.

The Chief Minister had written a letter to the Central Government and appealed to them to take effective steps to improve law and order situation in Delhi, Singh said, adding that the law and order situation in Delhi is deteriorating rapidly and this is a matter of concern for everyone.

Addressing media persons he said, recently, nine murders took place in 24 hours, there have been thousands of rape and sexual harassment cases besides frequent snatching cases including the recent one in which PM’s niece was robbed in Civil Lines area.

Citing example of the recent incident, he said the



BJP’s Leader of Opposition’s wife was also looted in broad daylight, even after the BJP instead of putting an end to crime is indulging in dirty politics.

Singh said, “Regardless of who committed the crime, irrespective of religion or caste, whether it was an infiltrator or a local, they need to catch the perpetrators and punish them.” It was CM Kejriwal who got CCTV cameras installed across the city. Today, the criminals who robbed PM Modi’s niece have been identified and nabbed because of the cameras installed by the Delhi Government,” he said.

7TH SUNDAY OF GOVT’S DENGUE DRIVE

CM asks Delhiites to inspect homes for 3 more Sundays

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia, Ministers Rajendra Pal Gautam and Gopal Rai and several Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs carried out ‘10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute campaign’ against dengue on Sunday. This was the seventh Sunday as part of the awareness campaign launched by the Chief Minister to fight the menace of dengue and other vector-borne diseases that have been a major cause of concern.

The main aim behind the campaign was to create awareness among the people to inspect their homes for clean water to prevent breeding of Dengue mosquitoes.

Kejriwal, along with his wife Sunita, posted a video of the inspection on twitter and appealed to the people to inspect their homes for three more Sundays. “A large number of people have joined the campaign against Dengue. Recently, former cricketer Virender Sehwag also supported this campaign. If Delhi’s families can be continued to be protected from Dengue for the rest of the season if they inspect their homes until mid November,” he said.

AAP Government also claimed that this campaign has led to a major reduction in the number of Dengue cases in Delhi. As per the official data,



Deputy CM Manish Sisodia inspects stagnant water — part of AAP’s drive against dengue
Pioneer Photo

Number of dengue cases in one week	74
Total no of cases (up to first week of October)	356
Total no of dengue cases in 2018 (up to first week of October)	650

only 74 fresh cases of dengue were reported last week. Besides, a total number of 356 have registered till first week of October, while it was 650 cases in the same period in 2018.

Sharing a picture of inspection at his home, Deputy CM Sisodia posted a tweet, “10 Hafte10Baje10Minute again this morning, and every Sunday for the fight against Dengue. Now there is no spot left for mosquitoes to breed.”

Ministers such Rai and Gautam also shared their photos, videos on Twitter. “The war

on Dengue continues for the seventh consecutive week. All of Delhi is joining this campaign and making Delhi Dengue-free. You should also join the campaign and help in making Delhi ‘Dengue-free.” Referring to the Champions campaign, Gautam said, “#10hafte10baje10minute, call your ten friends and make them aware of the fight against Dengue,” posted Rai.

Many MLAs of Delhi also shared their photos on social media and said, “Dengue will lose, Delhi will win!”

HARYANA ASSEMBLY POLLS 2019

Rahul to address rally in Nuh today

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM



Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi will lead the Congress campaign for the upcoming Haryana Assembly polls. He is slated to address a rally at the ITI Maidan in Nuh on October 14.

Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson Vedprakash Vidrohi said “Rahul Gandhi will address a rally in support of Congress candidates from Nuh and former minister Aftab Ahmed, Ferozepur Jhirka candidate Maman Khan Engineer, Punhana candidate Mohammad Ilyas, Sohna candidate Shamsuddin and Congress candidate from Hathin Mohammad Israel.”

The election rally by Rahul Gandhi is aimed to highlight the failure of the BJP-led Manohar Lal Khattar government. It will also focus on urban as well as rural voters of Nuh district constituency to connect with the party so that its candidates perform well in the upcoming assembly polls.

Haryana is going to polls on October 21. The last day for filing nomination was October 4. The final results will be declared on October 24 after counting of votes.

“It is the first public meeting organised by the Congress party in the state. This rally will give a huge momentum to the Congress campaign in Nuh. This rally will increase the

morale of party leaders and workers. Party is working to ensure a bigger margin of victory,” said Vidrohi.

The party leaders claimed that Congress’s position in Nuh, Ferozepur Jhirka, Punhana, Hathin and Sohna assembly constituency is quite strong and this position will be further strengthened after the arrival of Rahul Gandhi. Congress is confident that its candidates will win from the above five seats.

The party’s think tank is expecting that its candidate will perform well as there is no strong candidate from Nuh district constituency this time around. The spokesperson said the key focus of the rally would be to highlight the failure of the present government, added that BJP transformed Gurugram from the Millennium city to world’s most polluted city.

The rebel appealed to the people of Haryana not to rely on conspiratorial BJP leaders and protect your own and Haryana’s future and openly supports Congress candidates for better future of Haryana and Haryana.

Body of 18-yr-old with limbs tied found in Dilshad Garden

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



An 18-year-old youth was found murdered in a park in Dilshad garden area. His hands and legs were tied up and the body was dumped inside the Deer Park in Dilshad Garden on Sunday morning, police said. The man was identified as Sahil, a resident Kalandar Colony, they said. Police later arrested the accused identified as one Arshad, a resident of Ghaziabad on the charges of murdering Sahil.

A police patrolling team was informed about the incident by a passerby, following which they rushed to the spot and found the body, a police official said. The body had deep cuts on head and neck, the official said.

Sahil’s family told police

that he left his house on a scooter on Saturday at around 11.45 pm and did not return home since then, the official added. Police said the scooter was found outside the park.

The accused, Arshad (22), a resident of Shaheed Nagar in Ghaziabad, was known to Sahil and had borrowed Rs 50,000 from his family which he failed to return, a senior police official said.

“A case of murder has been registered and Arshad has been arrested in connection with the killing,” said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Amit Sharma. During interrogation, the accused told police that he was not able to repay the money he had borrowed from Sahil’s family as he incurred losses at his grocery store.

Under the pressure of not being able to return the amount, he decided to kill Sahil. On Saturday night, the two went to the Deer Park where the accused killed him using a blade and a brick, the officer said. The blade used in commission of crime and the bloodstained clothes worn by him at the time of incident has been recovered, the police said.

Separate magistrate appointed to ensure Hindon river cleaning

New Delhi: The Ghaziabad administration has appointed an exclusive magistrate to look after the cleaning of Hindon River and keep a close eye on the renovation and beautification work of its banks by timely supervising of the project.

Additional City Magistrate Satyendra Kumar Singh has been designated as ‘Hindon



Magistrate’ to ensure quick cleaning of water hyacinth from the river and renovation of its “dilapidated banks” before Chhath Puja, said Ghaziabad District Magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey.

He said Singh will monitor the work of irrigation department, municipal corporation and the recently constituted Hindon sanitation force. A stretch of the Hindon river between railway over-bridge and NH-58 has been clogged by water hyacinths and its banks, which had been renovated earlier, are in a dilapidated condition, the DM had said.

The 400 km-long Hindon, a tributary of Yamuna, originates in Saharanpur and passes through six districts in western Uttar Pradesh. **PTI**

Prepare action plan to tackle pollution, EDMC officials told

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In order to combat air pollution in the national Capital, Commissioner of East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) Dr Dilraj Kaur has directed concerned officers to prepare a detailed action plan and arrangement in advance to tackle the issue.

Kaur has also directed the officials to take action against illegal factories, burning of garbage, coal and woods and ensuring regular water sprinkling on roads, removal of construction and demolition waste and monitoring of construction activities etc to curb air pollution.

The corporation also decided to engage 40 water sprinkling tankers and 10 mechanical road sweeping machines as part of mitigation process.

Over 2.5K held in last 18 months for power theft

New Delhi: As part of a crackdown on electricity theft that causes annual losses running into hundreds of crores of rupees, the power distribution companies in Delhi have filed over 5,500 complaints in the last one and half years leading to arrest of more than 2,500 violators.

Over 4,500 FIRs were registered on the basis of the complaints and there have been more than 200 convictions in the same period, discom sources said.

There are three power discoms - BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL), BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) and Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL) - providing electricity to over six million consumers in Delhi.



“In the last 18 months in Delhi, over 5,500 power theft complaints have been lodged, leading to registration of over 4,500 FIRs. Over 2,500 have been arrested and more than 200 accused convicted,” said a power discom source.

Power theft attracts heavy penalty along with jail term of up to five years. In August-September this year, the special electricity court of Karkardooma had directed attachment (and sealing) of 21 properties in East Delhi in connection with power theft cases.

Since privatisation of power distribution in 2002 in Delhi, the discoms have been able to bring down aggregate technical and commercial losses from as high as 55 per cent to 8 per cent currently.

“Still, it is estimated that even now power theft is causing an annual loss of over Rs 400 crore to the Delhi discoms,” the discom source said.


There are dozens of localities in North, West, East and Central Delhi, where the losses still range between 25-40

per cent, they said. The discoms face challenges in curtailing power theft in areas from where incidents of attack on inspection teams have been reported many times.

“The only way to tackle power theft in these chronic and hostile areas is the support of dedicated law enforcement agencies. Earlier, for about two years (2007-2009), each of the three Delhi discoms had one battalion of CISF available with them. This helped them to crack down on power theft even in hostile areas,” the discom source said.

According to the sources, creation of dedicated police stations for power theft, such as in Gujarat and West Bengal, will help preventing the losses.

Unauthorised use of electricity is a cognisable offence, under the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003. Setting up of special courts, under the Electricity Act 2003 for speedy trial of electricity theft cases also helps in creating an effective deterrent to it. **PTI**



e-TENDER NOTICE NO. GLDB-BPC- 03/2019-20
Board Purchase Committee, Gujarat Livestock Development Board,
Podium, Krishibhavan,
Sector 10-A, Gandhinagar - 382010, Gujarat.
Phone : 079-23257916, 18, 19, Fax : 079-23244618 (gldb.gandhinagar@gmail.com)

e-Tenders with reverse auction are invited by the undersigned for Establishment & Operation of Semen Sexing Facility at Frozen Semen Station- Patan, Gujarat.

Sr. (1)	Particulars (2)	Information (3)
1	(a) Tender ID (b) Eligibility (c) Amount	3/2019-20 Only the companies having their own machinery/proven technology for production of sexed/sex sorted semen Tender Fee : 25,000/- Estimated Value of tender : Rs. 44,50,00,000/- EMD: Rs. 1,33,50,000/- All above to be paid in form of Demand Draft / Banker's Cheque / Pay Order / Manager's Cheque/ Bank Guarantee(for EMD) in favour of Gujarat Livestock Development Board, payable at Gandhinagar
2	Name &. Address of office to which Tender Fee, E.M.D. Technical Supporting Documents shall be submitted Physically	The Chief Executive Officer, Gujarat Livestock Development Board, Gandhinagar Podium Level, Krishibhavan, Sector 10/A, Gandhinagar-382010, Gujarat

The details of all the above mentioned Tender Documents are available on the website <https://nprocure.com> as per the following schedule

Sr.	Particulars	Date and Time
1	Tender Document's ONLINE Downloading : Start Date and Time	14/10/2019, From 11.00 Hours onwards
2	Pre-Bid Meeting Date and Time	18/10/2019, 12.00 Hours
3	Tender Document's ONLINE Downloading : End Date and Time	13/11/2019, Up to 12.00 Hours
4	Tender Documents ONLINE Submission : End Date and Time	13/11/2019, Up to 17.00 Hours
5	Date of Physical submission of Tender Fee, E.M.D., Technical Supporting Documents	14/11/2019 to 16/11/2019 11.00 to 17.00 Hours
6	Online Opening of Technical Bid (At Gujarat Livestock Development Board, Podium, Krishibhavan, Sector 10-A, Gandhinagar)	18/11/2019, From 11.00 Hours onwards
7	Reverse auction will be carried out after opening of commercial bid and bidders eligible for reverse auction will be intimated separately	

Date : 11/10/2019
Place : Gandhinagar
No/INF/VPN/2019/G/1295
Chief Executive Officer
Gujarat Livestock Development Board



WESTERN RAILWAY
RAILWAY RECRUITMENT CELL

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INDICATIVE NOTIFICATION FOR
Employment Notification No. RRC/WR/02/2019 (Cultural Quota) dated 19/10/2019

Applications are invited ONLINE from eligible candidates for filling up of Two (02) Posts i.e. **One Harmonium Player with Proficiency in Synthesizer & One Violin Player in Level - 2 of VII CPC Pay Matrix (₹ 19900 - 63200)** against Cultural Quota for the year 2019-2020 over Western Railway.

For further details, refer **Employment Notification No. RRC/WR/02/2019 (Cultural Quota) dated 19/10/2019** published in Employment News dated 19/10/2019 or log on to RRC/WR Website <https://www.rrc-wr.com>

Chairman-RRC/WR
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Public Notice

It is notified to General Public that our clients Sh. Sumit Kakkar, S/o Arun Kumar Kakkar, r/o T-1 Palika Nilay Building, RK Ashram Marg, Delhi-1 are purchasing a Built-up free hold property No. D-14-B first floor, Vijay Nagar Delhi-110009 without roof right consisting of ground floor, first floor & second floor measuring area 100 sq. yards without roof/terrace rights situated at Vijay Nagar, New Delhi-110009 vide agreement to sell with Sh. Sh. Kiran Kumar, S/o Sh. late Shri Mool Chand. All persons claiming an interest in the said built up flat or plot or any part thereof by way of sale, gift, lease, inheritance, exchange, mortgage charge, lien, trust, possession, easement, attachment or otherwise howsoever are hereby required to make the same known to the undersigned at his office at:- 20, Old Market, Ramesh Nagar, New Delhi-110015 within 15 days from the date hereof, failing which the said sale will be completed, without any reference to such claim and the same, if any, shall be considered as waived.

Saksham Bhayana (Advocate)
20, Old Market, Ramesh Nagar,
New Delhi-110015 # +91-9999904687

दिल्ली सरकार

आप की सरकार

फरिश्ते बनिये

YOU TAKE ROAD ACCIDENT
VICTIMS TO THE HOSPITAL,
WE PAY FOR THE TREATMENT



DELHI GOVERNMENT BEARS COMPLETE EXPENSES FOR TREATMENT OF ROAD ACCIDENT VICTIMS

UNDER THE DELHI GOVERNMENT'S FARISHTEY INITIATIVE:

- As soon as an accident takes place, take the victim to the nearest hospital, irrespective of the cost of treatment. The chances of a victim's survival increases manifold if they are taken to the hospital at the earliest.
- Delhi Government will bear the complete expenses of the victim's treatment, since every life is precious
- Victims of any road accident that happens within the boundaries of Delhi will be eligible for this scheme
- The person who takes a victim to hospital will be rewarded and felicitated with a Farishtey Certificate.
- Road accident victims will be admitted for treatment in any hospital without any questioning.

“I salute you - Dilli ke Farishtey”

- Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi



Rajnath to Pak: Mend ways or face disintegration

Chandigarh: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday told Pakistan to forget Kashmir and instead fight an “honest battle” against terrorism, warning that no power can stop its disintegration if it continued with its rant and did not mend its ways.

He said India was ready to assist Pakistan in the fight against terrorism if it cannot do so on its own, but added that Islamabad’s intentions were deceitful.

Addressing poll rallies in Haryana’s Pataudi and Chief Minister M L Khattar’s home constituency Karnal, Singh also slammed the Congress party for criticising him on doing “shastra puja” of the Rafale jet on Dussehra, saying the remarks by the opposition party only emboldened Pakistan.

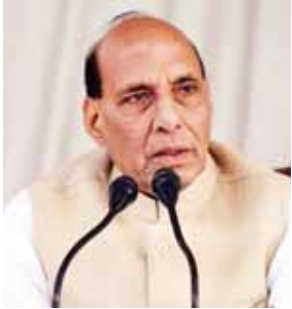
He asked why Congress was objecting to “Om” being written on the aircraft.

Singh hit out at Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan for saying he will continue to raise Kashmir issue on international forums, despite India warning that it was its internal matter.

“Forget it. Don’t even think about Kashmir. You have paid the price. In 1947, you divided India into two because of two-nation theory—In 1971, Pakistan got divided into two,” he said.

“Pakistan should stop its Kashmir rant. Kashmir was, is and will be our integral part of India and no power in the world can separate it from us,” he said.

“I want to suggest Pakistan: bring a change in thinking or else if you keep going on like



this, no power in this world can stop Pakistan from disintegrating,” he warned.

Asking Pakistan to wage and “honest battle” against terrorism, instead of using it to weaken and break India, the defence minister said if Islamabad was finding it difficult to tackle the menace, India was ready to help its neighbour.

“We will extend cooperation to them to fight terrorism. But Pakistan’s intentions are deceitful,” Singh said.

The Defence Minister’s statements come amid tensions between India and Pakistan following the abrogation of the special status of Kashmir under Article 370 in August.

Referring to India getting the Rafale jets from France, he said, “Now, we don’t have to enter their territory to wipe out terrorists, now sitting here in India only we can do ‘Jai Shri Ram.’ But, he reiterated, the fighters were meant only for self-defence and not for aggression.

At another poll rally in Karnal, Singh defended performing ‘shastra puja’ on Rafale aircraft. “I wrote ‘Om’ on it,

broke a coconut (as per tradition), tied a ‘raksha bandhan’ around the plane. But Congress

raked up a controversy, saying we have become communal. They have objection to even ‘Om,” Singh said.

“Is ‘Om’ not written in your homes? Sikh brethren sitting here, I want to ask do they not chant Ek Onkar,” the senior BJP leader said.

“Do our Christians not say Amen, do our Muslim brothers not say Amen... Questions are being raised on this. When I was performing ‘puja’, there were people of various faiths present there, including Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. All of them were cooperating,” he said.

He said rather than welcoming it, Congress started criticising the ‘shastra puja’.

“They keep saying (things) without paying heed to what they say. And if anyone gets emboldened with their statements, it is Pakistan.

That is why I say they should be taught a befitting lesson in these Assembly polls, like you did in Lok Sabha elections,” he told the rally organised in the run up to the assembly polls on October 21.

The Congress and the BJP have been engaged in a war of words over Singh’s visit to France to receive the first Rafale fighter jet and performing shastra puja on the aircraft, with opposition party leaders slamming it as a “drama”.

At a ceremony in France on Tuesday, Singh formally took the delivery of the first of the 36 long-awaited French-made aircraft acquired by the Indian Air Force. He also took a sortie in the two-seater jet.

The Opposition party accused the BJP of politicising a defence acquisition. **PTI**

Expulsion of 6 Maha varsity students who wrote to PM revoked

Nagpur: The expulsion of six students of a Wardha-based university for organising a function without permission on campus and writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over contentious issues like mob-lynching and rape cases against political leaders was revoked on Sunday.

The students, from Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya (MGAHV), were expelled on October 9 after varsity officials accused them of violating the code of conduct in force statewide for the October 21 Assembly polls.

The students had planned a gathering at Gandhi Hill in the university campus on October 9 to mark BSP founder Kanshi Ram’s death anniversary.

However, they went head with the programme despite being denied permission by university officials and were

later that night given expulsion orders after being accused of violating the poll code, one of the six students said.

In its order on Sunday, MGAHV Acting Registrar Kadar Nawaj Khan said the expulsion was cancelled due to “technical anomalies” and in the view of natural justice to students.

On October 10, a day after they were expelled, the six posted a letter to PM Modi, one of the students said.

The students had claimed that the university officials had denied them permission to write to the PM but had not mentioned anything about the code of conduct.

The expulsion had caused widespread resentment in the students’ community as well as Opposition parties like the Congress which had complained to Maharashtra Chief Electoral Officer against university officials. **PTI**

Fadnavis hits out at Pawar on hand gesture with ‘Natrang’ jibe

Jalgaon: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday attacked NCP president Sharad Pawar for a certain hand gesture over the former’s remark that the Opposition was nowhere in contest for the October 21 Assembly polls.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi in attendance at the rally, Fadnavis said BJP leaders do not make gestures like ‘Natrang’ (a 2010 Marathi film centred on a stage actor playing effeminate roles). He said Pawar’s “conscience” was

weakening sensing defeat in the polls.

Addressing a poll rally in Solapur’s Barshi on Saturday, Pawar had hit out at Fadnavis over the latter’s remark that the BJP’s “wrestler” (poll machine) was ready to fight, but there was no opponent.

“The Chief Minister said their wrestler is ready, but there is none (to fight). But you fight with a wrestler, and not with ‘such’ (making the hand gesture) people,” Pawar had said.

Passengers on board Vande Bharat Express stranded after train develops technical snag

New Delhi: Passengers on board the Varanasi-Delhi Vande Bharat Express were on Sunday stranded inside the train for around an hour without fan, air conditioning and lights when its auxiliary converter failed, officials said on Sunday.

The train’s AC stopped working 10 minutes before reaching Allahabad station at 4:50 pm. The defect was rectified, cooling ensured and it left at around 6.00 pm, they said.

During this time, the train was without basic facilities stranded at Allahabad.

In an earlier incident in March, a minor fire broke out in the transformer of a coach of the railways’ ambitious train.

Earlier this year, the production of this self-propelled engine-less train sets was stopped over allegations of favouritism and lack of transparency. In July, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal met representatives of manufacturers and promised a transparent level-playing field to all of



them. On February 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the New Delhi-Varanasi Vande Bharat Express, popularly known as Train 18.

It is an indigenous electric multiple unit (EMU) manufactured by the Chennai-based Integrated Coach Factory (ICF). The semi-high speed train that can run up to a maximum speed of 160 km/hour has electrically operated, auto-

matic sliding doors similar to those in metro coaches. Built at a cost of Rs 100 crore, each train has 16 compartments, with two first class coaches.

A day after its inaugural run in February, the train ran into trouble when a malfunction of the brake system jammed the wheel near the Tundla railway station, some 200 km from Delhi. **PTI**

BJP leaders feel Rafale guilt: Rahul

Mumbai: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday questioned the ‘purpose’ of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh’s “unprecedented” visit to France to receive the first Rafale fighter jet, saying BJP leaders are bearing “guilt” in their minds for making “mistakes” in the controversial deal.

Addressing a poll rally in Chandivali assembly constituency in Mumbai, his second in the day, Gandhi also raised the alleged fraud in the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank which has led to restrictions on withdrawal of money by depositors.

“It seems the Rafale deal is still hurting the BJP. (If not) Why Rajnath Singh went to France to receive the first fighter jet?” he asked the audience.

In Chandivali, sitting Congress MLA Naseem Khan is seeking another term against Shiv Sena’s Dileep Lande.

In the run-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Gandhi had alleged “irregularities” in the Rafale deal under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“There has been some guilt



in the minds of BJP leaders that they have made a mistake in the Rafale deal. Even Defence officials had claimed that PM Narendra Modi is interfering in the Rafale fighter jet deal. No one can run away from this truth, neither Narendra Modi, nor Amit Shah or the BJP. The truth will catch them one day,” he said.

He said everyone knows that the Rafale deal was controversial and “some kickbacks were given”.

“The deal still hurts (the BJP) and hence our Defence Minister went to France to

collect the first fighter plane. So far, no one ever had gone to the supplying nation to collect the fighter plane like this,” Gandhi said.

The Defence Minister on Tuesday received the first Rafale fighter jet from France on behalf of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Singh, who attended the handover ceremony of the first Rafale fighter jet at aircraft maker Dassault Aviation facility in Merignac, southwestern France, called it as “historic” moment and said that it would boost strategic ties between India and France.

Gandhi also accused the BJP of “dividing and looting” the country like the British did in pre-Independence period.

The “BJP is dividing and looting India like the British did in pre-Independence period. Wherever BJP leaders go these days they cause division and unrest,” he alleged.

Accusing the BJP of “favouring” certain corporate houses, Gandhi said it has become apparent that they also are looting the country.

“There was a time when

the US president was saying that Indian economy can compete with the US economy. Nobody now says it,” Gandhi said.

He also hit back at Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for her statement that Goods and Services Tax (GST) cannot be altered as it is an Act passed by Parliament.

“If you cannot change the GST in the name of it being an Act, do not forget that MNREGA was also an act which you had changed. The Food Security Act was also altered and you intend to change the Adivasi Act (to free their land-holdings). This is not good,” he said.

Gandhi also sought to highlight the “connection” between some directors of the fraud-hit PMC Bank and the ruling BJP.

“If Narendra Modi, Shah and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavs are not talking about the core issues of Maharashtra, at least they should talk about the PMC bank. They should talk about the board of directors and their alleged links with BJP

Cong objecting to writing Om, emboldening Pak: Rajnath

Karnal: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday hit back at the Congress which criticised him for going to France to receive the first Rafale fighter jet and doing Shastra Puja, saying the opposition party was only emboldening Pakistan by such statements.

Addressing election rallies in Karnal and Pataudi in Haryana, the BJP leader also questioned why the Congress has an “objection” to writing the word ‘Om’ on the aircraft and noted that when he was performing ‘puja’ in France, people of various faiths were present there including Muslims, Christians and Sikhs who were all “cooperating” during the ceremony.

After getting Rafale jets from France, he said, “we don’t have to enter their territory to wipe out terrorists, now sitting here in India only we can do ‘Jai Shri Ram’”. But he reiterated the jets were meant only for self-defence and not for aggression.

Singh said the Congress should have been happy that the country is being strengthened but it could not do so as

its “intentions were wrong”.

His remarks came on a day Congress leader Rahul Gandhi again raised the Rafale issue, questioning the “purpose” of the Defence Minister’s “unprecedented” visit to France to receive the first Rafale fighter jet and saying BJP leaders are bearing “guilt” in their minds for making “mistakes” in the controversial deal.

Attacking the Congress for raising aspersions on the Rafale deal, Rajnath Singh said it should be taught a “befitting lesson in these Assembly polls, like in Lok Sabha elections”.

“I come from an ordinary background. I said we are getting a powerful plane to fight. Before we use it, we should perform a ‘puja’.

“I wrote Om (tilak) on it (the aircraft), broke a coconut (as per tradition), tied a raksha bandhan’ around the plane. But Congress raked up a controversy, saying we have become communal. They have objection to even ‘Om’ being written,” Singh said.

Haryana goes to polls on October 21 and ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has set a target to win over 75 of the 90

Dalit men in Tihar Jail sit on hunger strike for being denied permission to observe Valmiki Jayanti

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad and scores of Dalit men lodged in the Tihar Jail on Sunday sat on a hunger strike protesting against the jail authorities who allegedly denied them permission to observe Maharishi Valmiki Jayanti.

However, the Tihar jail authorities denied the allegations and said they were granted permission to observe Valmiki Jayanti. They also performed ‘hawan’ and distributed sweets.

The Dalit group threatened to gherao Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal’s residence on Monday on the issue.

Bhim Army spokesperson Kush Ambedkarwadi said scores of Dalit inmates in the Tihar Jail had on Saturday demanded the jail authorities to provide them a poster of Maharishi Valmiki to offer tributes on the occasion.

“The jail authorities didn’t give us a poster. Hundreds of Dalit men lodged along with Chandrashekhar Azad have proceeded on a hunger strike against this,” he said.

“It’s a violation of our fundamental rights guaranteed in

Bhim Army Spokesperson Kush Ambedkarwadi Said Scores of Dalit Inmates in the Tihar Jail Had on Saturday Demanded the Jail Authorities to Provide Them a Poster of Maharishi Valmiki to Offer Tributes on the Occasion

the Constitution. What’s more disappointing is that Delhi Jail Minister Satyendar Jain and Social Welfare Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam, who has been vocal on Dalit issues, has been keeping mum,” Kush claimed.

A tweet from Chandrashekhar Azad’s Twitter handle read “the Bhim Army will gherao the resident of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal if he failed to make arrangements to observe Valmiki Jayanti in the Tihar Jail”.

Man beaten to death by wife in outer Delhi’s Narela

New Delhi: A 35-year-old man was beaten to death allegedly by his wife in outer Delhi’s Narela following a quarrel over his drinking habits, police said on Sunday.

Javed, a welder by profession, was a drunkard and his wife Salma used to fight with him often over his drinking habits, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer North) Gaurav Sharma said.

On Saturday, Javed returned home in drunken state and had a quarrel with his wife who then beat him up, Sharma said.

He went to bed afterwards and was found dead today at around 6 am by his younger brother Ajim (25), he added.

Sabra, the victim’s mother alleged that her daughter-in-law used to hit and threaten her as well asserting that she was working with the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW). Ajim too accused Salma of killing Javed, the DCP said. **PTI**

8 killed, 1 missing as jeep falls into gorge

Gopeshwar: Eight persons were killed and one went missing while five others were seriously injured on Sunday when the jeep they were travelling in fell into a deep gorge in Tharali area of Chamoli district.

The mishap occurred near

Ghes village of the district when 14 persons were going in the jeep to Dewal to attend a funeral, said police.

The deceased were identified Jasbir Singh (32), Surendra Singh (30), Madan Singh (60), Darban Singh (48), Madan

Singh (38), Kailash Singh (40), Gopal Singh (35) and Dharam Singh (55).

The one who has gone missing is Jai Singh Danu, 48.Five injured persons, including the driver, were hospitalised. **PTI**

MODI DARES OPP TO BRING BACK...

From Page1
Rahul came down heavily on the Government for waiving bad loans of around 15 top industrialists to the tune of Rs 5.50 lakh crore in past few years. He demanded to know that while the Government doled out a ‘divali gift’ of tax benefits to the rich industrialists worth Rs 1.25 lakh crores last month, when it came to the beleaguered farmers, the Government said it had no funds of barely Rs 35,000 for MNREGA scheme.

Rahul slammed Modi and BJP national president Amit Shah for diverting the attention of the people from the real issues like the farmers distress and unemployment which had reached highest-ever level during the forty years. “What Modi and Shah are doing is to divert the attention of the people from the real issues and focus on Corbett Park, Moon, China Pakistan, Japan, Korea and all other places,” he said.

Delhi-Meerut e-way limit at...

From Page1
“Now this stretch has been completed on June 28, 2018 and other stretches are likely to be completed by the end of December 2019, it is suggested to upgrade the speed limits... 120/100 kmph for expressway portion and 70/50 kmph for National Highway on this Delhi-Meerut Expressway,” the letter, a copy of which is in possession of PTI, reads.

In the letter, the NHAi said that 2/3-wheelers/motorcycles/tractors/light commercial vehicle and other slow moving vehicles, which are not permitted, are the main reasons of accidents on this section.

It also requested the Delhi Police to deploy sufficient traffic police on the expressway so that the road users follow the traffic rules for which the expressway has been designed, according to the letter written by Singh. The 82-kilometre long

expressway connects Delhi with Meerut in western Uttar Pradesh. A sum of ₹8,346 crore is likely to be spent on the project.

The ambitious project will help in decongesting the National Capital Region (NCR) and bring significant reduction in pollution level.

The Delhi-Meerut Expressway project is being implemented in four packages — an 8.72 km long 6-lane expressway/ 8-lane NH 24 from Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi to Ghazipur border, already completed in June 2018 under Phase-I, a 19.28 km long 6-lane expressway/ 8-lane NH 24 from Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi to Ghazipur border to Dasna in UP which is 60 per cent done under Phase-II.

A 22.23 km long 6-lane NH 24 with 2+2 lane service roads on either sides from Dasna to Hapur in UP was inaugurated last month under Phase-III, and 57 per cent work is done under Phase-IV of the 31.78 km long greenfield 6-lane expressway from Hapur to Meerut.

Cong for fresh talents in UP to revitalise party

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the change in organisational structure in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress is looking forward to rope in 'fresh talents' to revitalise the organisation.

Based on the suggestions by party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, who had been travelling across the Hindi heartland at regular intervals, the party will initiate talent hunt at block level and give opportunity to people who could not make it into politics due to family background or financial constraints.

Congress appointed Ajay Kumar Lallu as its Uttar Pradesh president, replacing Raj Babbar, and revamped the state unit, bringing in four vice presidents, 12 general secretaries and 24 secretaries. The party has set up an advisory council to the general secretary comprising senior leaders such as Mohsina Kidwai, P L Punia and R P N Singh. It also named an eight-member working group for strategy and planning.

Lallu on Sunday said he is banking on 'Sampark' (contact), 'Samvaad' (dialogue) and 'Sangharsh' (struggle) to strengthen his party and exud-



ed confidence that it will form the government in the State after linking more students and youth with itself.

"The biggest challenge is to make the Congress the only alternative to the BJP. For this, we have to infuse enthusiasm and self-confidence among the party workers, and work closely with them. For emerging as the only alternative to the BJP, the path is struggle. If we stand up to the expectations of the people and win their trust, we will not only become the only alternative to the BJP, but also form the Government in the state," Lallu stated.

Senior Congress leader Jitin Prasada said the road ahead for the Congress in UP was very "long and tough", but the party would remain unfazed by "short-term" setbacks as it was confident of

winning back the people's confidence eventually. Prasada however also mentioned the revamp of the State unit will be a "mix of the old and new".

Prasada, who was named as a member of the working group for strategy and planning, said Priyanka Gandhi as General Secretary is giving direction to the party cadre which is determined to expose the forces who have gained people's support due to a false narrative. "This has already begun and the Congress has gone ahead with the change in its Uttar Pradesh president and a new team that has been put in place," Prasada said. As part of the strategy under Priyanka Gandhi, the grand old party's platform will be for the people who have not been given a chance — be it in decision-making, politics and elections.

Netherlands King, Queen on five-day India visit from Sun

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Netherlands King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima will arrive here on Sunday for a five-day visit during which they will hold meetings with the top Indian leadership to boost bilateral economic and political cooperation.

King Willem-Alexander's trip would be his first State visit to India, following his ascension to the throne in 2013. King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima will arrive here on Sunday night for the visit at the invitation of President Ram Nath Kovind, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

The King and Queen will visit New Delhi, Mumbai, and Kerala during their visit. On Monday, the Dutch royals will meet President Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will call on them. The King and Queen will be accompanied on their visit by a senior ministerial delegation. After the official programme in Delhi, King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima will also visit Mumbai from Wednesday and reach Kerala on Thursday. The royal couple will head home on Friday.

India and the Netherlands have a bilateral trade turnover of USD 12.87 billion (2018-2019). The Netherlands is the fifth largest investor in India with a cumulative investment of USD 23 billion for the period 2000 to Dec 2017, the MEA said.

The Dutch Royal couple will also attend the Inaugural Session of 25th Technology Summit in New Delhi on Tuesday. The Netherlands is the partner country for this Summit.

The Royal couple would be accompanied by about 140 business houses for this technology and innovation fair, representing various sectors, including agriculture, water, health-care and climate change. The visit is expected to boost economic and political cooperation between India and the Netherlands, the MEA said.

From Mumbai, on October 17, they will visit Mattancherry palace and Dutch company Ned Spice in Kochi in Kerala. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will host a dinner for the royal couple.

On October 18, the Royal couple will enjoy a boat ride at Alappuzha and address the media before their return in the afternoon.

RAJIV GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION

TN Cong: We will oppose move to release convicts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Tamil Nadu unit of the Congress on Sunday said it would strongly oppose any move to release any of the seven convicts, held guilty in former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination case.

"There are so many prisoners including convicts in prisons of Tamil Nadu. Why is there a motivated demand for releasing Rajiv's killers only?" Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K S Alagiri said. He said any decision to release the convicts would set a "bad precedent" and "highly disturb the social order and peace in Tamil Nadu".

Alagiri was reacting to a recent meeting that NDA-ally PMK's founder president S Ramadoss and his son and Rajya Sabha member R Anbumani had with Prime Minister Narendra Modi here for his intervention for the release of Rajiv Gandhi's killers.

Questioning the bids of "intervention in the justice system", Alagiri said the law of the land should be allowed take its own course. It is for the court to decide the matter, he added.

Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on May 21, 1991 during an election meeting at



Sriperumbudur near Chennai by a suicide bomber of the banned LTTE. In a memorandum to Prime Minister Modi, Ramadoss had argued that the Supreme Court last year had allowed the Tamil Nadu Government to decide on the release of seven convicts — Murugan, Santhan, Perarivalan, Robert Payas, Ravichandran, Jayakumar and Nalini.

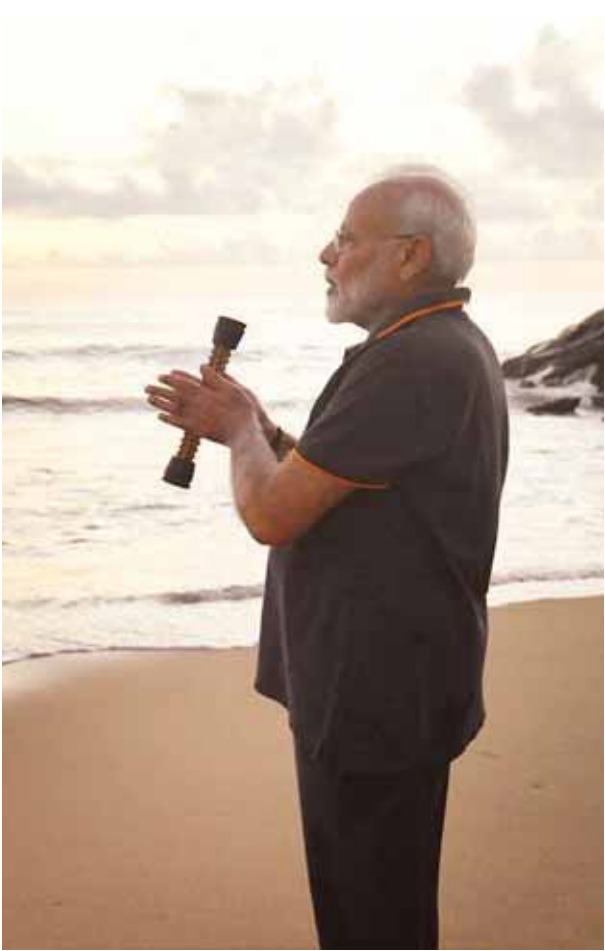
The Tamil Nadu Government later on September 9, 2018 had passed a Cabinet resolution recommending to Governor Banwarilal Purohit for the release of convicts, but his office has been delaying the matter, he said.

"Tamils all over the world expected that the Governor

would take a decision shortly. But even after one year and one month after receiving the letter, the office of Tamil Nadu Governor has not taken any decision and is procrastinating this matter. This has disappointed and distressed millions of Tamils all over the world," Ramadoss said.

"It is rather unfair," he said, adding the seven convicts were in prison for the last 28 years and keeping them in jail any further without any strong reason would be a serious violation of the human rights. Rajiv Gandhi's widow Sonia and son Rahul have "categorically said they have no objections to the release of seven Tamils," the PMK had said.

Was carrying acupressure roller while plogging at Mamallapuram beach: PM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ending the curiosity of people over the stick-like object he was holding while plogging on the Mamallapuram beach, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said it was an acupressure roller that he often uses. "Since yesterday, many of you have been asking - what is it that I was carrying in my hands when I went plogging at a beach in Mamallapuram. It is an acupressure roller that I often use. I have found it to be very helpful," Modi tweeted.

He also posted pictures of the acupressure roller he was

holding at the beach.

Modi was in the coastal town for a two-day informal summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping. On Saturday, the last day of the summit, the prime minister was seen cleaning up a beach by picking up plastic litter and other waste during his morning walk.

Modi on Saturday had released a three-minute video of his plog on the beach where he was seen collecting waste and urged the people to ensure that public places are clean and tidy. Picking litter while jogging is referred to as plogging.

Amit Shah to address ATS officials today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will on Monday address top officials of the Anti Terrorism Squads (ATS) from various States. The conference, also to be addressed by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, is expected to formulate a comprehensive counter-terrorism action plan and how to enhance cooperation among ATS of different States.

"The Home Minister will deliver the inaugural address where he is likely to highlight the central government's outlines for the emerging terror threats," a Home Ministry official said. The top officials of ATS of the states will give presentation on their own anti-terror strategies and the action plans put in place to deal with any kind of emergencies.

The conference is being organised by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Prasad withdraws comments on economic slump after facing flak

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Facing flak after he cited ₹120 crore business done by three movies on a single day to rebut suggestions of an economic slump in the country, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Sunday withdrew his comments.

Prasad's comments in Mumbai on Saturday coupled with his criticism of an NSSO report on high unemployment rate and IMF's report of a slowdown in India had attracted flak and the senior BJP leader was also tormented online.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Prasad claimed that one part of his statement had been "completely twisted out of context", and said "being a sensitive person, I withdraw this comment".

"My comments made yesterday in Mumbai about three films making ₹120 crore in a single day - the highest ever, was a factually correct statement. I had stated this as I was in Mumbai — the film capital of India. We are very proud of our



film industry which provided employment to lakhs of people and contributes significantly by way of taxes.

"I had also explained in detail about the various measures the Government has taken as pro-people move to strengthen our economy. Government of PM Narendra Modi always cares for the sensitivity of common people. Entire video of my media interaction is available on my social media. Yet I regret to note that one part of my statement has been completely twisted out of context. Being

a sensitive person, I withdraw this comment," Prasad said.

Prasad on Saturday said three Bollywood movies generating business of ₹120 crore on the October 2 holiday suggested a "sound economy" even as he dubbed "wrong" the NSSO report which had reportedly pegged unemployment rate at 45-year high in 2017.

Days after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said the economic slowdown is more pronounced this year in India and Brazil, Prasad said the measurement was incomplete.

Comment he alleged that some people were misleading people over the unemployment scenario. "I was also told that on October 2, which is observed as one of the national holidays, three Hindi movies garnered ₹120 crore business. Unless the economy is sound in the country how can three movies alone collect so much business in a single day?" Prasad asked, while speaking to reporters.



Union Minister for Railways and Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal releases a publication at the closing ceremony of the 'India International Cooperatives Trade Fair' at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on Sunday

Sena free to express views but Assembly polls under Fadnavis' leadership: Bhupender

New Delhi: Shiv Sena is free to express its views and the desire of having its own Chief Minister but Maharashtra election is being fought under the leadership of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and it has been conveyed to the allies, BJP General Secretary and in-charge for the Assembly polls Bhupender Yadav said.

Responding to questions about Shiv Sena leaders' remarks that there will be a Maharashtra Chief Minister from their party in the future, Yadav said political parties are free to talk about their desires.

"Every party can talk about its future and express its desires. But this election is being fought

under the leadership of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. It has been cleared to the entire alliance," Yadav told PTI.

On the issue of seat sharing, he said the BJP believes in a politics "where there is role and space for its allies". And this is visible in the Government at the Centre where despite getting a thumping majority, the BJP has given representation to its allies, Yadav said underlining that Shiv Sena is a very old and natural ally of the party.

He expressed confidence that the BJP-led alliance which includes Shiv Sena and some small parties will come back to power with a thumping



majority.

"The BJP-led alliance in Maharashtra is in a very strong position and will get three-fourths majority in the State

Assembly elections," he said.

Talking about Maratha reservation, Yadav said the party believes in all round development of the society,

unlike the opposition parties in the State which aimed for growth of one specific segment of society or region.

"The BJP has always supported reservation under the ambit of the Constitution. The reservation was required as there was inequality in the State, which happened as the state was ruled by the Congress for so many years," Yadav said.

On the question of leaders from other parties joining the BJP, Yadav said those who come into the party without compromising its ideology help in "social and geographical expansion" of the organisation.


He claimed that continuing

with the same chief minister for the full term, which is rare in case of Maharashtra, is also working in favour of the party and there is a "wave" in favour of the BJP-led alliance.


Yadav, a key strategist of the party, has been its in-charge in various assembly elections which the party won including in Rajasthan in 2013 and Gujarat and Jharkhand in 2014.

He had also played a role in party's massive victory in Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. However, in Bihar the party lost the 2015 Assembly elections to the alliance of JD(U), RJD and the Congress when he was the in-charge.

PTI



SOUTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION



NOTICE INVITING TENDER

No.-D/EE/(M-III)/SDMC/2019-20/TC/12

Dated:- 11.10.2019

South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) invites **Tenders** from eligible Contractors/Agencies for the work as per details given under :-

Name of Work:- "(1). Improvement of Road by pdg RMC from H.No. WZ-67A Gurunak Nagar to WZ-118/3 Santgarh (Tyagi Road) in ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (2). Improvement of Road by pdg RMC from H.No. WZ-69 Old Shah Pura to WZ-35D Prithvi Park & from WZ-42 to WZ-40 Prithvi park & from WZ-50A Prithvi Park to Tilak Vihar School in ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (3). Improvement of lane by pdg CC Paver Block from H.No. WZ-66 to WZ-63 (Gali No. 26) and from WZ-75 D to WZ-274F (Gali No.33) in Santgarh in ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (4). Improvement of lane by pdg CC interlocking tiles from H.No. WZ-40 to WZ-176B (Gali No.8) in Guru Nanak Nagar & WZ-80B to WZ-75B/1 (Gali No.27) in Santgarh & WZ-124 to WZ-129 in Old Shah Pura and WZ-960 to WZ-964-965 in Guru Nanak Nagar in ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (5). Improvement of lane by pdg CC interlocking tiles from H.No. WZ-120D to WZ-128 (Gali No.29) in Santgarh and from H.No. WZ-300A to WZ-285 & WZ-30C to WZ-68B/1 (Gali No.2) in Guru Nanak Nagar in ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (6). Improvement of lane by pdg CC interlocking tiles from H.No. WZ-57 to WZ-193 & WZ-41 to WZ-48 (Gali No.6) in Guru Nanak Nagar and from H.No. WZ-159 to WZ-163 (Gali No.4A) in Old Shah Pura and from WZ-32A to WZ-35D (Gali No.6) in Prithvi Park in ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (7). Improvement of lane by pdg CC interlocking tiles from H.No. WZ-50/1 to WZ-10B (Gali No.24) in Santgarh & WZ-171 to WZ-175 (Gali No.3A) in Old Shan Pura and H.No. WZ-325 to WZ-30 (Gali No. 18) in Santgarh in ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (8). Improvement of lane by pdg CC Paver Block from H.No. WZ-107 to WZ-90 (Gali No.12) in Old Shah Pura & WZ-59A to WZ-58 (Gali No.5) in Santgarh & WZ-112 to WZ-29 in Prithvi Park in ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar." E.C.- Rs. 1,41,63,000/-, EM- Rs. 2,83,000/-, HOA- XL-VIII-S(d), TC:- Rs. 1000/-

Name of Work:- "(1). Construction of walk way and imp to boundary wall of park near Hs No. 24/27 Tilak Nagar by providing kerb stone, interlocking tiles, Grit wash & improvement to park near Hs No. 7/39 & 13/36B Tilak Nagar by providing concertina coil fencing & imp to side berm Near Hs no. 1/30 Tilak Nagar in Ward No. 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (2) Imp of footpath by pdg Kerb stone, interlocking tiles in park near Super market and opp. SDMC Staff Quarters, Ashok Nagar in Ward No. 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (3) Construction of boundary wall of park near Hs No. 7/10 Tilak Nagar by providing Grit Wash and Brick work in Ward No. 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (4) Construction of walk way in park near Hs No. 55G Block Tilak Vihar by providing kerb stone, interlocking tiles and improvement to walkway in park near Hs No. 52A in D-Block Tilak Vihar by providing interlocking tiles and improvement to boundary wall of park Near Hs No. 34A in C-Block tilak Vihar in Ward No. 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (5) Construction of walk way by providing kota stone & interlocking tile in park near H No. 60/8 Ashok Nagar in Ward No 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (6) Construction of walkway and imp of boundary wall of park near Hs No. 18/5 to 18 Block tilak Nagar by pdg Kerb stone, interlocking tiles, grit wash in Ward No. 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (7) Construction of walkway and Imp of Boundary wall of park near Hs No. 12/46 Tilak Nagar by pdg. Kerb Stone, Interlocking tiles in ward No. 13-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (8). Construction of Footpath inside park, 7m high MS Jaal for Sports area inside park and Acupressure track with SS Railing in Mother Dairy Park Opp. D-106 Ajay Enclave in Ward 013-S/WZ Tilak Nagar. (9). Providing and placing of Precast RCC Benches (Chair Bench with Arm Rest) in Various locations, Parks,Streets under AC-29 in Ward No. 12-S, 13-S, 14-S West Zone. E.C.- Rs. 1,11,95,900/-, EM:- Rs. 2,24,000/-, HOA:- XL-VIII-S, TC:-Rs. 1000/-

Name of Work:- (i) Imp/Dev of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC brick work, from C-69 to C-59 and C-33-34 to C-46 C-Block Arya Samaj Road in 018-S Milap Nagar. (ii) Imp/Dev of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC brick work, from C-39 to C-145, C-26 to C-45, C-Block Arya Samaj Road in 018-S Milap Nagar. (iii) Imp/Dev of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC brick work, from C-40 to WZ-144C and D-125 to D-129 Arya Samaj Road in 018-S Milap Nagar. (iv) Imp/Dev of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC brick work, from WZ-37 to B-114 Arya Samaj Road in 018-S Milap Nagar. (v) Imp/Dev of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC brick work, from A-113 to A-122 (Gali No. 39) Arya Samaj Road in 018-S Milap Nagar. (vi) Imp/Dev of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC brick work, from F-6 to F-52 (Gali No. 6) and F-3 to F-64 (Gali No. 7) F-Block Arya Samaj Road in 018-S Milap Nagar. (vii) Imp/Dev of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC brick work, from F-2 to F-59 (Gali No. 8) and F-1 to F-70 (Gali No. 9) F-Block Arya Samaj Road in 018-S Milap Nagar. (viii) Imp/Dev of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC brick work, from F-1 to F-45 F-Block Arya Samaj Road in 018-S Milap Nagar. (ix) Imp. Of drainage system from Sonia Studio (E-142) to Goel Sons (F-146A) Arya Samaj Road in Ward No. 018-S Milap Nagar. (x) Improvement/Development of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC, brick work from WZ-43A to RZ-38 (gali No 13) Prem Nagar in 018-S Milap Nagar. (xi) Improvement/Development of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC, brick work from RZ-65 to RZ-57 (gali No 16) Prem Nagar in 018-S Milap Nagar. (xii) Improvement/Development of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC, brick work from RZ-75 to RZ-70 (gali No 17) Prem Nagar in 018-S Milap Nagar. (xiii) Improvement/Development of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC, brick work from RZ-76 to RZ-84 (gali No 20) Prem Nagar in 018-S Milap Nagar. (xiv) Improvement/Development of lane and both side drain by pdg RMC, brick work from C-70 to C-39 & C-69 to C-75 C Block Jeevan park in 018-S Milap Nagar. E.C.- Rs. 1,22,09,100/-, EM:- Rs. 2,24,000/-, HOA:- XL-VIII-S, TC:-Rs. 1000/-

Detailed NIT/Eligibility Conditions can be seen on www.tenderwizard.com/SOUTHDMCETENDER. All details of revision, clarification, corrigendum/addendum, time extension etc, if any in respect of above tenders will be uploaded on about mention website. Bidders should regularly visit the website to keep themselves updated in respect of these tenders.

Ro No. 72/DPI/IS/19-20

Ex. Engineer (M-III)/WZ

MAHARASHTRA POLLS

Shah: PM Modi united J&K with mainstream

PTI ■ KOLHAPUR

Further sharpening the BJP's narrative for Maharashtra Assembly polls on nationalism, BJP president Amit Shah on Sunday praised the "man with 56-inch chest" in Prime Minister Narendra Modi for nullifying Article 370 and integrating Jammu & Kashmir with the mainstream.

Addressing an election rally in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, he said the previous Governments never had the courage shown by Modi.

He appealed to people to ask Congress and NCP leaders, when they come to seek votes, whether they support the NDA Government's decision to abrogate the provisions that gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir.

He targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and NCP chief Sharad Pawar for questioning the Government's move to abrogate Article 370.

"After people of the country and Maharashtra voted



him for the second term, Modiji did something for which the entire country was waiting for 70 years...He abrogated Article 370 on August 5 and joined Jammu & Kashmir with the country's mainstream," Shah said.

Shah said since the days of Jan Sangh, they have been hearing that there cannot be two prime ministers, there cannot be two symbols and two constitutions, but "it was the Congress which, by imposing Article 370, stopped the process of integrating Jammu & Kashmir with India for several years".

"As a result, thousands of our people lost their lives due

to terrorism, but still there was no intention of any party to remove Article 370," he said.

"Several Governments came and went, several prime ministers came and went, no one had the courage to abrogate Article 370. But, the man with the 56-inch chest scrapped it in one go," Shah said.

He said during the UPA rule, terrorists from Pakistan used to infiltrate and kill Indian soldiers.

"They used to decapitate our soldiers, but the then Prime Minister 'Mouni baba' Manmohan Singh never used to utter a single word. But after the Uri and Pulwama attacks, Modiji showed the courage of killing terrorists in their den through surgical strike and air strikes," he said.

He further hit out at the opposition over the Government's decision to ban the practice of triple talaq.

Our schemes meant for people's welfare: Yogi

PTI ■ AURANGABAD

Initiatives of BJP-Shiv Sena Government in Maharashtra are about people's welfare while those of previous Governments were about grabbing public money for the benefit of a few, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said at a poll rally in Maharashtra's Hingoli district on Sunday.

Maharashtra Assembly polls are slated for October 21 and results will be announced on October 24.

"Funds allocated for schemes and farmers were grabbed. Deals were cut while providing jobs. Development was limited to development of a family," Adityanath said attacking the opposition.

Speaking on the revocation of provisions of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, he said the move by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a tribute to icons like Babasaheb Ambedkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji who fought for justice.

"The Congress included Article 370 in the Constitution in 1952 despite opposition from Dr Ambedkar. Its abrogation is a tribute to Babasaheb Ambedkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji



'Funds allocated for schemes and farmers were grabbed. Deals were cut while providing jobs. Development was limited to development of a family,' Yogi said attacking the Opposition

Maharaj who always fought for justice," he said.

Adityanath praised the Devendra Fadnavis Government over the state's law and order situation and said it, along with the Centre, had taken strong steps to curb terrorism.

The UP CM was campaigning for BJP's Tanaji Mutkule who is seeking re-election from Hingoli Assembly seat.

PM, Shah roaming in Maha as BJP senses defeat: Pawar

PTI ■ NJALGAON

NCP president Sharad Pawar on Sunday asked why Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis were holding a large number of rallies if they saw "no fight" from the Opposition in the Assembly poll.

Addressing a poll rally in Chalisgaon, Pawar said the BJP has lost sleep as the youngsters were gearing up to defeat the ruling party.

Pawar congratulated the BJP-led Central Government for abrogating Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir, but also asked whether it had the courage to scrap Article 371 which gives special rights to some north-eastern states.

"The Chief Minister said he could not see an opponent for the BJP's wrestler in this poll battle. I am the president of Maharashtra grapplers association. Our grappler fights with another grappler and not others," Pawar said at a poll rally in Jamner.

"Why is the Prime Minister holding 9 rallies, Union Home Minister 20 rallies and Chief Minister 50 rallies if they think there is no fight? They have lost sleep as youngsters are up for defeating them. Hence, they are roaming in Maharashtra," he asked.

On Shah asking him to list what he



has done for Maharashtra, Pawar said he strived to make the State number one in all areas, and took steps for growth of industries and, thereby, employment.

"I was Chief Minister when the employment guarantee scheme was implemented in Maharashtra in 1978," Pawar said.

Among others, Pawar also said the women were given reservation in local governing bodies when he led the State.

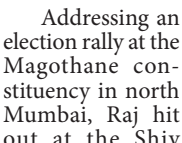
Pawar reiterated he was named in a money laundering case by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the alleged Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank scam despite not being a member of the bank.

Pawar alleged that factories and business have shut down on the BJP's watch. The former Union agriculture minister claimed 16,000 farmers committed suicide during the BJP-Shiv Sena's rule.

Rajtakes swipe at BJP Govt's 'poor' report card

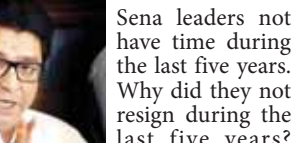
TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Lamenting that the people chose to vote for political parties not on the basis of their work but on emotive issues, MNS chief Raj Thackeray on Sunday poked fun at the BJP-led NDA, saying while on one hand the principal ruling party never got tired of repeating "Abki bar Modi sarkar", but on the other hand after the advent of the Modi dispensation, scores of industrial units have closed down. "How do you explain the performance of the BJP?, he asked.



Addressing an election rally at the Magothane constituency in north Mumbai, Raj hit out at the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance for making Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji an issue in the polls. "Instead of indulging in politics over Shivaji statue, these political parties should consider strengthening the forts built by the Maratha warrior," he said.

Singling out the Shiv Sena for its line on its hoarding "This is the right time", Raj said: "If that is the case why did the



Sena leaders not have time during the last five years. Why did they not resign during the last five years? Why were they merely handing out threats of resignations? It is only when their work got stalled in the government, they talk of resignation. Why did they never talk about resignations in matters relating to the people's issues?"

"Election after election, we see the same issues. We face this situation because we are used voting on the basis of emotive issues. The ruling BJP-

Shiv Sena alliance leaders are not talking about the real issues in the elections. It is rather unfortunate, voting does not happen on the basis of work but it happens on the basis of emotive issues," he said.

Coming down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his demonetisation decision, Raj said: "Because of a wrong decision taken by Modi, three crore people have lost jobs. Why is it so that when the Modi government is in office, so many industries and businesses have closed down? The Government has failed in stopping the farmers' suicides.

Polls being held because Cong saved democracy, says Kharge

PTI ■ AURANGABAD

Senior Congress leader and former Lok Sabha MP Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday claimed people were able to vote and fight polls because his party saved democracy.

Addressing a rally in Ausa in Latur, he lashed out at the ruling BJP for questioning the contribution of the Congress in the country's progress. "The BJP is asking what has Congress done till now. We can answer it. We saved democracy. Hence people are contesting elections today. And we can see Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah campaigning in Maharashtra," he said.

"We have saved the country and Constitution. The BJP should tell the country what it has done in the past five years and we will tell them what we did in five decades," he added.

BJP to launch Gandhi Sankalp Yatra in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In sync with its shifting tack on Gandhism and apparently with a view to expand base ahead of the next year's civic elections the Bengal BJP on Sunday announced a 12-day yatra christened after Mahatma Gandhi even as the ruling Trinamool Congress pooh-poohed the saffron outfit for its "hypocritical" ways.

The march called "Gandhi Sankalp Yatra" is also projected as a protest against rising violence in Bengal. State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said.

"Keeping in view the rising violence and falling law and order situation in the State we have decided to conduct a 12-day Gandhi Sankalp Yatra so as to hammer home the basic tenets of Gandhism that hinges on non-violence and not what the TMC does in Bengal," Ghosh said.



condition in Bengal Gandhi's non-violence has become all the more relevant. Not only the people, but the State Government will also get a message through the Yatra about its duties," he said.

The Yatra will commence on October 15 and continue till October 26, he said adding, "we will cover all the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies and almost all the villages and blocks in all the 12 days. Every day we will cover 15 km in each district and every such daily yatra will culminate into a public meeting. In this way we will cover more than 7,000 km."

The Yatra will be held also as a part of 150 anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi,

he maintained.

Pooh-poohing BJP's Yatra named after Mahatma Gandhi senior Trinamool leader and State Minister Tapas Roy said, "This Yatra or whatever they call it marks height of BJP's hypocrisy because it is the same saffron party that worships Gandhi's killer Nathuram Godse."

On the one hand "they worship Godse and on the other they worship Gandhi ... who are they trying to make fool of ... the people ofBengal are politically conscious enough to read through their political cunning and hypocrisy," Roy said asking the BJP to "first condemn Godse and then adopt Gandhism."

Reminding how "their senior leader and Home Minister had once calledGandhiji a cunning businessman," Roy said "the people of Bengal will never accept their political duplicity."

MURSHIDABAD MURDER CASE

BJP wants probe by Central agency

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal police is working on the "personal grudge" angle behind the brutal murder of Bandhu Paul and his family members even as the State BJP on Sunday demanded investigation by a Central agency to crack themurder case in which they find a political angle.

The killers of the alleged RSS worker and his family members were still at large while the police were questioning one of his close associates on suspicion "some kind financial transaction as the mainreason behind the murder."

A 35-year-old school teacher Bondhu Paul, his wife Beauty and an eight-year-old son Arya were found dead on Vijaya Dushmi Day inside their house at Jiaganj in Murshidabad some 250 km

'It is the question of three persons of a family including a small child getting brutally killed by some assassins'

north of Kolkata. Soon the RSS claimed that Paul was one of their workers who had joined the organisation about a year ago. All the three victims were repeatedly stabbed, sources said.

Once again demanding probe by some central agency State BJP president Dilip Ghosh on Sunday said "it is not the question whether it is apolitical or non-political murder. It is the question of three persons of a family including a small child getting brutally killed by some assassins. The State police already has proved its worthlessness. So now we want the Government to get the probe be conducted by some central agency."

BJP creating 'talent pool' for 2021 Bengal polls

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Looking to consolidate the gains made in West Bengal in the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year, the BJP's State unit is creating a "talent pool" to identify candidates from among its cadre for the crucial 2021 Assembly polls.

According to party sources, the exercise is aimed at grooming BJP cadre as strong ground-level leaders and is expected to be completed by year end or early 2020.

The saffron party won 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal in the April-May parliamentary polls, only four less than the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress's (TMC) 22.

This was a significant

improvement for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) compared to just two seats that it bagged in the state in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

"We have started the process of identifying four members of our party from each constituency for the talent pool. The chosen partymen will be groomed as future organisational leaders and probable candidates for the 2021 Assembly polls," West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh told PTI.

The exercise is aimed at grooming party cadre as both organisational and mass leaders and making them the party's face in their respective areas, said a senior party leader who did not wish to be named.

DMK claims 30 EVMs for bypoll in TN shifted suddenly



PTI ■ CHENNAI

The DMK on Sunday alleged 30 Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) meant for the October 21 Nanguneri Assembly bypoll in Tamil Nadu have been "suddenly shifted" for "unknown reasons."

DMK Organisation Secretary and party's Rajya Sabha member RS Bharathi wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo seeking an enquiry into the matter.

He urged the EC that the EVMs be restored back to their original place and be kept under adequate protection without giving room "for any suspicious activities.

Restoring postpaid services to help return of normalcy in Kashmir: Guv adviser

PTI ■ JAMMU

With the postpaid mobile telephony set to be restored in Kashmir from Monday, Jammu & Kashmir administration has expressed hope that it would help achieve normalisation in the Valley.

Normal day-to-day activities has been disrupted across Kashmir since August 5, the day the Centre revoked the state's special status after negating the Article 370 of the Constitution and providing for reorganisation of the State into two Union territories of J&K and Ladakh from October 31.

The State administration announced on Saturday that about 40 lakh postpaid mobile phones will become operational from Monday noon.

Over 20 lakh prepaid mobile phones, besides the mobile and other internet services, however, will remain suspended for now.

"When the curbs on the



cell phones have been taken away, we are expecting large number of tourists to come there (Kashmir). We are also expecting that people, if they are somehow not able to do normal activities, have no more excuse not to do that," Governor Satya Pal Malik's advisor Farooq Khan told reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

Asserting that radicalisation does not have any place in Jammu & Kashmir, he said the Valley youths have given a go-by to the radicalisation despite the best possible efforts by Pakistan which has left no stone unturned to destroy the beautiful State.

Security beefed up in Srinagar after grenade attack

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Security was beefed up in several areas of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday following a grenade attack by suspected militants in a city market that left seven people injured, police said.

More security personnel, along with the flying squad, were deployed in Lal Chowk, Jehangir Chowk, Hari Singh High Street, Regal Chowk, TRC Chowk, Polo View and the areas around the city centre, a police official said.

He said random checking of vehicles and frisking of people was being done as part of the security drill.

The deployment of more security personnel was done in the wake of a grenade attack in Hari Singh High Street market – a few hundred metres from the city centre - on Saturday in which seven people were injured, the official said.

'Message politics' won't last for long: Ashok Gehlot's swipe at Modi

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday said people were too sensible to fall for the "message politics" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi whom he accused of "trampling democracy", a day after his party claimed AICC employees were targeted in Income Tax raids.

Gehlot also reacted to PM Modi plogging at a beach in Tamil Nadu's Mamallapuram. He said there is no problem if Modi wants to give a message through plogging. "Everybody is inspired if someone does a good job. But under the garb of all this, if you trample democracy through 'message politics', then the people of the country are sensible enough," Gehlot told reporters in Jodhpur.

Plogging means picking up trash such as used plastic bottles while jogging or running. Modi had released a video in which he was seen collecting the waste at the beach as he walked barefoot on the sand, and urged the people to ensure that public places are clean and tidy.

The Congress leader said "such kind of politics" does not last for long. He alleged that AICC employees were being targeted through IT raids and government agencies are under pressure today.

Angry with waterlogging, people gherao Bihar Deputy CM's house

PTI ■ PATNA

Irked over the problems of waterlogging and accumulation of trash in some areas of the city, a group of people on Sunday gheraoed Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi's residence here.

The State capital was pounded by heavy rain late last month leading to waterlogging in areas such as Rajendra Nagar, Kankar Bagh and Patliputra Colony.

Even after a fortnight, water has not fully receded in some low-lying localities and garbage has not been cleared in some pockets.

"Around 50-60 people took out a march to Sushil Modi's house (in Rajendra Nagar area) and returned after some time," City Superintendent of Police (Central) Vinay Tiwari told PTI.

On September 30, Modi and his family members were rescued by an SDRF team from his flooded residence in Rajendra Nagar. However, they returned later to the house.

The BJP leader, however, was not present during the protest, official sources said adding that security has been beefed up at Modi's residence. Modi could not be contacted for his comment despite several attempts. Angry people, carrying placards, shouted anti-Modi slogans and demanded action against officials who failed to flush out water fully in Rajendra Nagar area, making their lives difficult.

Modi has time to campaign for US Prez but not for visiting flood-hit K'taka: Siddaramaiah

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Sunday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging he had time to campaign for US President Donald Trump, seeking a second term in the General elections there in 2020, but not to visit flood-ravaged Karnataka.

Terming the BJP as "fascist" and "dictatorial," the former Chief Minister accused the State Government of 'colluding' with the Assembly Speaker in restricting the media from covering the proceedings of the House.

"This time it was unprecedented floods in the state along with drought in some parts. Central Government gave aid only after 60 days that too ₹1,200 crore. According to me damage suffered is more than ₹1 lakh crore," Siddaramaiah said.

Speaking to reporters in Chikkamagaluru, he said, "Modi did not visit Karnataka, he instead was touring foreign countries and had gone to



campaign for US President Donald Trump"

"Narendra Modi tweets as soon as there were floods in Bihar, expressing sympathy.

In Karnataka when there were about 90 deaths and four to five people are still missing due to floods, he did not express sympathy," he added.

As many as 2,798 villages in 103 taluks of 22 districts in the state were affected by floods, in which around seven lakh people were shifted to safe areas.

About 3400 cattles and 91 people died during rains and floods in August.

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Finding an old connect

Modi and Xi have settled down on a new grammar of negotiation despite trust issues over historical baggage



There were optics aplenty, of sipping coconut water, sightseeing tours of heritage sites, lavish local dinner, culture shows, long walks and an umbrella swamp of Indian hospitality. But Chinese President Xi Jinping, a hard-boiled supreme leader of his nation with aspirations to be the hegemonic anchor of an Asian century, is hardly expected to find India incredible enough. However, he does realise its materiality in the Chinese design and its bridge value with the rest of the world. Yes the informal summit in Mamallapuram, as it did in Wuhan, did enable both him and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to use their personal equation as a showpiece of neighbourhood understanding and co-existence. It did help in simmering down tension, then over Doklam and now Kashmir, but this relationship hereon will be one based on realism rather than expectation, need-based practicality rather than high-sounding hyperbole. To that extent, there's a new "connect" as Modi said and a "heart-to-heart" candour as Xi admitted. India cannot expect China to abandon Pakistan on its terms. Xi has to stand by his all-weather ally and cannot de-couple Kashmir to the extent that its changed status and talk of reoccupying lost territories in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have left it worried about Shaksgam Valley, which Pakistan ceded, and Aksai Chin. But now that India has the larger world opinion on Kashmir as its internal matter, including that of the US, China realises its strategic heft. It further realises that pushing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) mischievously for border incursions won't work anymore. Which is why Modi, too, confidently announced that there would be no further escalation of disputes. India has now stared back at that threat to its territorial integrity and even resisted all attempts to be encircled by China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Not only that, by engaging with multi-lateral fora like the Quad and even Southeast Asian nations bilaterally, India has subtly but determinedly challenged China's diplomatic sway in the region. Besides, Xi had watched the "Howdy Modi" event in the US closely and wanted a counter-optics, if not a counterweight. Given its trade tussle with the US, China also needs India's absorptive market to keep its momentum. Besides, it is itself under international scanner on its rights issues with the Uighur Muslims, Hong Kong and Tibet and does not want to face a counter-charge of violating UN resolutions, considering that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Gilgit-Baltistan is in disputed territory, too. No wonder Xi kept away from mentioning Kashmir. While China realises that Pakistan can only be Kashmir-centric, forcing it into embarrassing posturing, he has figured out larger issues for the bilateral arc. Without mentioning Pakistan, Modi and Xi did discuss combatting terrorism and radicalisation. This is a small but forward-looking tweak.

Trade is the biggest takeaway despite China's simultaneous breakthrough with the US on the subject. The mutual deficit there is nearly \$400 billion and President Donald Trump would want to appear tough in an election year. So China would still need a big market like ours. Xi seems ready for sincere action to address our trade deficit, which stands at \$53.56 billion out of a two-way trade of \$87 billion. In its desperation to make India sign the mega free-trade pact, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), China has agreed to a high-level, trade-facilitator mechanism. From China, it will be led by the Vice Premier, Hu Chunhua, and from India it will be Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. At least now, there is a seriousness about a give-and-take rather than just a dump-your-goods formula. There will also be an attempt to fatten up the import basket from India. Besides defence cooperation is what China is looking for as a lucrative option. Of course, New Delhi has to look into byproducts like a glut of Chinese goods in an open market scenario, issues of security and spying if allowing Huawei and so on. Much depends on the volume and nature of Indian goods and services that China allows in its home market. Still, there is a consensus on both sides that confrontation between the two economies could only harm both. Also, by citing historical trade routes, both nations feel that they can together command the world economy like they did in the past. What is good about Mamallapuram is that there is an open acceptance of wrinkles in the silk that Modi gifted and also a solution offered in the form of "strategic communication" which both sides want to continue. Of course, they must be implemented, too. Trust may not be easy to earn given the baggage of boundary issues but surely there is a new grammar of negotiation.

Superhuman feat

Kenya's Kipchoge broke a marathon record by running 42.195 km in less than two hours. This is remarkable



A relatively healthy adult human can keep up a pace of around a kilometre every 10 minutes for half-an-hour. Those with a degree of physical training can go faster and for a longer duration. Yet, normal human beings tire out — the build-up of lactic acid in our muscles makes them ache and pain — but some, particularly long-distance runners, manage to fight this. A physically fit person, who can traverse 42.195 km of a marathon in around four hours, would be considered very fit indeed. Athletes, particularly those primed for long-distance running, usually complete marathons in just over two hours. Even the best long-distance runners from East Africa clock that time, which is why what the Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge has achieved in Vienna is the "four-minute mile" of our era — he ran the marathon in less than two hours. Sure, it was a race specifically designed for him to break the record. Kipchoge had no competitors to worry about and other runners in the field were there to ensure he kept his pace up. Even they melted away as the kilometres piled on but Kipchoge carried on and on, relentlessly, never seeming to run out of energy like a long-lasting human battery. This superhuman achievement was cheered on by the crowds in Vienna, who realised the magnitude of what was happening. This was indeed heartening to see. And thankfully, the organisers did not have plans for the event to happen behind closed doors with the public and a worldwide audience giving Kipchoge wings.

It was 75 years ago when Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier for running one mile. Kipchoge's pace was only slightly slower than Bannister's but he maintained it over 26 times the distance and still managed to crack a smile and give interviews afterwards. Several physiological experts believed that two hours were an unbreakable mark and many had predicted that Kipchoge would never achieve his vision. But through his willpower and sheer physical determination, he did break the record. May be one day, someone will shatter his mark of 1 hour 59 minutes and 40 seconds but until that day comes, all of humanity should celebrate this superhuman feat. One that will become as legendary as the breaking of the "four-minute mile." Kipchoge's name will be remembered much like Bannister's is to this day.

Missing out on deliverables

Despite informal summits like Mamallapuram, both India and China will have to live with certain realities, which are seemingly irrevocable even though they breed mistrust



VIVEK MISHRA

It wasn't surprising that the just-concluded informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping was high on optics and low on concrete deliverables, which is why it holds the potential to remarkably transform the bilateral relationship between both nations. Given the choice of the locale in the picturesque, the ancient heritage and coastal city of Mamallapuram, India's historical connect with China, together with the UNESCO recognition to the southern city, provided a fitting landscape for overwhelming optics. On the other hand, the meeting was expectedly low on deliverables, owing to the fraught nature of bilateral issues like trade, border dispute and now China's open support to Pakistan on the internal reorganisation of the former State of Jammu & Kashmir — all of which require more than a quick-paced informal meeting to be resolved.

As such, the Mamallapuram summit builds on the tradition of informal engagements between the two countries after the Wuhan summit in 2018 and can be seen as an overarching framework to further Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs). The eased setting of such summits has the potential to create grounds for discussions on issues that could otherwise irk the other nation. The decision to issue separate statements on the summit defends its "informal" nature and, therefore, calls for both nations to not make every minute details of the meet public.

Even though the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India, described the visit of the Chinese President as "highly productive", doubts remain regarding countable deliverables specific to this visit. In his brief to the media, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said that from the Wuhan summit in 2018 to the Mamallapuram summit in 2019, India and China have made "visible progress." If one were to deconstruct the ambiguous reference to "progress", the only visible stride appears in the area of trade through a "mechanism" proposed by President Xi. Joint assurances to fighting terrorism and radicalism, which were part of the discussion, have been referred to in the past, too, through forums such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Therefore, they do not necessarily qualify as "progress."

India's need for greater market access from China and lowering its trade deficit found traction in this summit mainly because the Middle Kingdom is already under pressure on the trade front, owing to its ongoing trade dispute with the US. The Trump administration in no mood to step back. As such, granting larger market access to India could be the prominent and possibly the only countable deliverable in the near term from this summit. Progress on issues such as India joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), 5G technology involving Huawei and Kashmir, even if discussed, is hard to imagine. During the Wuhan summit, both nations



agreed to jointly cooperate on projects in third countries. Although cooperation between the two sides in Afghanistan has shown potential, little progress has been made. The lack of substantial progress in Afghanistan from the last agreement must have prevented any further discussion on this issue.

Resolution of disputes and big-ticket outcomes were not expected in this summit as in matters concerning bilateral issues of Indian concern, China is either at an advantageous position *vis-a-vis* India or has a clearly different position than us. In trade, too, numbers are highly favourable to China, leaving India to seek balance. On the issue of border dispute, Beijing has little appetite for resolution, which was very much evident by the progress made in the talks held by the Special Representatives of both nations.

The lack of any joint communicate also signals a conscious projection of optics over substance. It is evident that China's projected intentions in Mamallapuram can be seen as distinct from an otherwise different Chinese State behaviour. This was on display hours even before the Modi-Xi meeting took place, especially apropos China's stand and steps on the Kashmir issue. This strand in the Chinese behaviour is also evident in the

nuanced dichotomy between its stated positions and actions on ground *vis-a-vis* India. For instance, there is a clear disjuncture in its projections at the border — in subtle ways through certain elements of the Chinese military — which is in variance with Beijing's stated position. This allows China to either deny or distance itself from the activities of such actors, with the State itself having tacitly approved such behaviour.

While the Mamallapuram summit gracefully displayed India's cultural diplomacy girded up by elements of *Atithi Devo Bhava* (the guest is equivalent to god), it tacitly legitimised the acceptance of China's flip-flopping positions on issues sensitive to India, especially Kashmir. This is important both in the context of China's recent steps and rhetoric on Kashmir as well as from the point of view of current geopolitics, where diplomacy, to a great extent, is also about symbolism, optics and messaging. China's growing relations with Pakistan are increasingly dragging India in bilateral dynamics. The summit could have been used to send a subtle message to China *vis-a-vis* the latter's relations with Pakistan.

As such, when dealing with China, India should continue to assert the principles that it stands for and unflinchingly project its

standard positions on issues that are of global concern. To be sure, for China, Pakistan is a strategic leverage point, bound as they are by economics and not an iron-clad alliance. That China had to finally relent on its move to block the listing for Masood Azhar as a terrorist at the UN, shows that the China-Pakistan relationship has scope for tweaks when there is enough international pressure and criticism.

The short history of China's relations with Pakistan has shown that when India puts its foot down on an issue, China is likely liberal in its relations with Pakistan, to the disadvantage of Islamabad. This is exactly how most relations of dependence between affluent and manipulative major powers and developing economies have shaped themselves through history.

The pros and cons of such relationships get affected by the extent of separation between major powers' affluence and their manipulative intentions and the state of economic, political and military clout of the dependent State. China's investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and their consequences have blurred the line that separates strategic intentions and economic goals for China in Pakistan. For the latter, the state of its economy, which lies in an uncertain zone —

between that of a Least Developed Economy and a developing economy — has made the terms of engagement with China more unfavourable for itself.

Despite informal summits like Mamallapuram, both India and China will have to live with certain realities, which are seemingly irrevocable, even though they breed mistrust. Just as India's decision to internally reorganise the former State of Jammu & Kashmir has become China's concern but cannot be rescinded, so have China's investments in the CPEC for India, parts of which pass through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) region. India's relations with China will have to factor in a continued tenuous relationship on the one hand and sustained bilateral trade on the other. These dynamics will continue to have substantive scope of scepticism from either side.

What has also come to the fore is the need for an uplift in India's international diplomacy with regards to China. While Beijing has upped the ante against us and has taken unprecedented steps, India remains painstakingly accommodating of such criticism. It is time India's regional and global aspirations and role match its pitch in international diplomacy.

(The writer is Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs)

SOUNDBITE

If you say anything to an establishment or a person, will they like it? I cannot think of an establishment which, when criticised, feels happy about it.

Lyricist-writer
—Javed Akhtar



Both streaming and cinema can happily co-exist. It's ultimately what the viewers want and what we know is that they want both.

Actor
—Ajay Devgn



Pakistan has an important role to play in stabilising Afghanistan, engaging in robust counter-terrorism efforts and strengthening the global economy.

US Senator
—Maggie Hassan



India's meaningful engagement with China started with (former) Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit in 1988 and his dialogue with then Chinese leader.

Congress spokesperson
—Anand Sharma



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Draining public money

Sir — That the State Bank of India (SBI) has written off bad loans amounting to ₹76,600 crore is not so welcoming for the simple reason that a sizeable amount of taxpayers' money has been pocketed by 220 defaulters. Likewise, there may be many other banks, which have their share of bad loans to write off.

Political meddling in the lending policy is one of the main causes of bad loans. How come banks lend money without adequate collateral security? A startling revelation is that 980 borrowers have been listed by the Reserve Bank of India, whose debts of more than ₹100 crore each have to be written off. Of these, 220 accounts — more than one-fifth of the total number — belonged to the SBI.

Taxpayers would feel cheated if the Government uses the tax collected for loan waivers and bad loan write-offs at a later date. The Government should use the taxpayers' money to create infrastructure and strengthen national security.

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

The Kashmir conundrum is far from over

This refers to the editorial, "Polls to what end?" (October 11). No doubt, our security forces have done well to maintain peace post the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir but the clampdown in the Valley, the arrest of political leaders and grass-root workers and the alleged rights violations have undermined the core values of Indian democracy. The moot point is not that the detention of top leaders in Kashmir discredits Indian democracy but that the Abdullahs and others of their ilk considered Jammu & Kashmir as their fiefdom with loyalty to India subject to enjoying power.

However, for the restoration of normalcy, the Centre should let political activism take wings and hold elections to the Assembly. But winning locals round to back New Delhi once again may now be difficult. Pakistan is all out to disturb India's hold on the Valley. Entrusting the task of restoration of tranquility to novices has its own pros and cons. Under such circumstances, usher-



J Akshobhya
Mysuru

Low-key affair

Sir — The atmosphere for the Modi-Xi informal meet in Mamallapuram was far from ideal. China's support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue has put a big strain on New Delhi-Beijing ties. The long shadow of Pakistan continues to disrupt India-China ties. Despite going ahead with the

second informal summit, Pakistan will be the elephant in the room.

China and Pakistan have been close strategic allies since independence. Now, with the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the centrepiece of Xi's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, and China's comments on Jammu & Kashmir, the

relationship has grown even stronger.

Unlike in Wuhan where the Modi-Xi meeting led to de-escalation in Doklam, this time nothing dramatic happened. At best, both Prime Minister Modi and Chinese Premier Xi Jinping remained focussed on improving ties in areas such as trade.

K S Jayatheertha
Hassan

Respect the elderly

Sir — President Ram Nath Kovind was right when he said that elderly citizens symbolise our legacy. Speaking at an event marking the International Day of Older Persons, Kovind said that only by respecting senior citizens can the younger generation and the nation progress.

The President's words provide a valuable lesson. Whatever we are today is because of the love, care and sacrifices of our elders. It is, therefore, our duty to make sure that they are cared for.

It is unfortunate that nowadays many old people have to find a place in old age homes owing to the nuclear family system and the lack of time among youngsters, who are busy chasing greener pastures. Let the old Indian tradition of respecting the elderly not die out. Let us make them feel that their contributions to the family, the society and the nation have indeed been very useful.

M Pradyu
Kannur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Fight professional fatigue

There is a dire need to restore the passion and purpose in jobs supporting strategy formulation for the country



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Methods of calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), developmental indicators and chartered accountancy are again in focus and suggestions on how to make them more reliable are few. Auditing itself often serves as a threat held out by the powerful in running an organisation. It is often used to keep the recalcitrant at bay rather than creating new organisational or developmental patterns. A discussion with policy analysts is in many ways enlightening on the differing psyche of finance and accounting experts. In an era where the corporate world feels extremely stressed, chartered accountancy breeds monotony. It is, therefore, understandable that a lot of chartered accountants feel depleted. In a dualism of the order enumerated above, it's very difficult to be a strategist with a role in driving business or development forward.

There is a need to restore the passion and purpose in professions supporting strategy formulation. How deep the tedium runs can be gauged by the fact that there is a three-day summit in Sri Lanka, starting today and ending on October 16, on the theme of "Finding your mojo: A journey of self-discovery." This is meant for chartered accountants. Mojo is widely understood to indicate internal magic that translates to external success. Nothing would move without mojo. On October 18, the Institute of Internal Auditors, Delhi chapter, is holding a conference on strategic risk management and the topic is: "Enhancing strategy selection through risk management." The outcome will show the worth of the effort but the effort itself is worth it. Passion is the biggest source of energy but like everything else, it has a price. Those who are not passionate about their work deeply resent the style of those who are. Those who are passionate are often intolerant of the sluggishness of the routine approaches. The catch 22 here, of course, is how does one save oneself from becoming a victim of professional sluggishness?

At the end of the day, much of strategy formulation is a political process. Those who reject the approach of the leader (if not the chief himself) will resent the idea of the head being carried through. The ability to conspire to prevent is often higher than the ability to plan for strategic optimisation.

The times also call for unorthodox methodologies. Audit as a profession is known to work on algorithms to find the delicate balance between creating breakthroughs and pulling formula. This is a complicated one. It is heartening to see that sometimes people get together to create a passion for attempting it, nevertheless. The number of accountants and auditors is rising and so is the doubt, at times, in their ability to deliver.

It is obvious, that in the current context, financial analysts and chartered accountants are facing multiple challenges in performing their roles in and outside policy confabulations/board rooms. The need to update knowledge is universal and financial analysts and gatekeepers are no exception. At the end of the day, the individual often feels left out in observing the mandate of the so-called directives of the "institute."

It is obvious that business prosperity cannot be made surrogate to outdated principles. Similarly, reliability and conviction must continue to call the shots. The possible direction of the financial analysts and auditors is often far beyond the broadband of auditing principles. There are sectoral imperatives and nuances of functionality. Consider for example plantation management. The initiatives by top management dealing with the agro business must build into it, on behalf of the owners, considerations of climate. An assessment of internal and external productive environment — rooted in time tested principles of achieving of goals — has some strange touchstones of success. In an era where goals themselves become variable, the enunciation of strategy becomes sticky. It does not just remain a science but becomes an art. Business execution and administration become the wheels on which strategy rolls and would impact operations in marketing and finance.

This has to be leavened by competencies, which alone can formulate winning strategies. Among them, the prominent ones would include pattern recognition and isolation of exceptions using machine learning. This would include all relevant patterns to be examined for root cause; continuous elimination of root causes using continuous auditing; regular reporting of "unusual" transactions and in all things keeping the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) apprised of the developments. This is unlikely to happen unless preventive action, continuous monitoring, discipline and continuous forward planning are in sync. Not strangely, all this gets ensconced in the calculation and rollout of GDPs and strategy formulation at the national policy level. The impact of regional and national policy on specialised, sectoral performance is immense. The price of misguidance can be huge and it often becomes the cause of ill-founded doubts at the policy level.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

SANDEEP SENT ME A LETTER AND I FORWARDED IT TO THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT. THERE IS NOTHING PERSONAL. IT'S A POLITICAL CONVERSATION. —AICC IN-CHARGE PC CHACKO



THIS IS A BETRAYAL OF FAITH. WE WERE AGHAST TO SEE THE LETTER BEING DISCUSSED. WE HAD ASKED HIM NOT TO PASS COMMENTS ON SHEILA// —DELHI CONGRESS LEADER KIRAN WALIA

China's Himalayan ploy

Though the bonhomie between Nepal and China may seem minimal compared to India's age-old ties, the message to the global community is not in our favour



RISHI GUPTA

Chinese President Xi Jinping's two-day trip to Nepal, coming on the heels of the informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India, reflects the priority Beijing accords to the little Himalayan kingdom. The visit, which was closely watched by New Delhi, too, was the first by a Chinese President in 23 years since Jiang Zemin landed in Kathmandu in 1996.

Nestled between India and China, Nepal is a strategically critical neighbour for the two big nations and in the last 60 years, New Delhi and Beijing have interacted with it differently.

Geographically, Nepal has worked as a safeguard for India from any aggression that could possibly come from the north. During the brutal expedition launched by China in Tibet in 1950, there were fears that Chinese aggression might reach Nepal, too. However, India asserted that any offensive against the Himalayan neighbour would be treated as an aggression against it. With Tibet falling into Chinese clutches, Nepal had approached India for help in training the Royal Nepal Army as well as for arms and ammunition. Though the two nations did not forge a formal defence relationship, an informal security umbrella from India to Nepal was agreed upon with the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950.

Prior to the Tibet saga, the two century-long reign of the ruling Shah family was threatened by the control of the Rana Prime Minister. As a result, King Prithvi Narayan Shah had escaped to India and sought help. With India's assistance, a new political order was established in the Himalayan country. Though India was at the forefront of re-establishing the Shah dynasty, it had ensured respect for the sovereignty of Nepal, leading to the "special relationship" between the two nations.

On the other hand, China from day one of its arrival in Tibet, has been attempting to gain political and strategic clout in Nepal. While Prithvi Shah was wary of Chinese intentions, his successor King Mahendra began to change the course of Nepal's diplomatic ties and formalised relations with China in 1955. After the demise of King Mahendra, his son Birendra, too, had tried to alter Nepal's equation with India.

Advised by China to review the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India, Birendra had invited global leaders to recognise Nepal as a "Zone of Peace" (ZoP). Despite it being endorsed by more than 50 countries, India had declined to accept the ZoP citing the 1950 treaty because an endorsement of the ZoP would have threatened India's security, especially from the north.

Having battled for more than 15 years to bring India on board, Birendra had to shelve the plan. Again in 1988, China supplied arms to Nepal in complete violation of India's security concerns that had been accommodated in the 1950 treaty. During this time India-Nepal diplomatic ties touched a low and from 1955 to 1990, Chinese leaders intensified efforts to marginalise New Delhi's "special relations" with Kathmandu.

In the post-Cold War era, significant economic reforms were carried out in India and a broader regional economic integration also took place. After the South Asian Association

“THE CHINESE APPROACH IN NEPAL HAS BEEN BASED ON GAINING STRATEGIC DEPTH BY OPENING UP ITS DEEP POCKETS AND ALSO SUBVERTING INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH KATHMANDU. CLEARLY, THESE ACTS BY CHINA ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE ITS STRONG POSITION IN NEPAL. PRECISELY TO KEEP A CLOSE VIGIL ON SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING INDIA”



for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in 1985, India reiterated its responsibilities towards the region. This was reflected in the "Gujral Doctrine" based on the principles of unconditional cooperation to neighbours without expecting reciprocity. The doctrine considerably is one of the most significant milestones in India's approach towards its neighbours, which is being continued by the present Government in its "Neighbourhood First Policy." The deep India-Nepal relations have been based on close cultural, religious, people-to-people ties and respect for democratic values and non-aggression towards each other.

But over the last 30 years, political developments in Nepal have been marred by instability in governance. The introduction of the first democratic system in Nepal in the 1990s had opened the gateway for greater public participation. However, Maoist insurgency from 1994 to 2006 led the country into more profound political instability. In 2008, Nepal emerged as a democratic country, marking a complete end of the monarchical system and India was one of the few countries to have played a crucial role in supporting this transition.

However, a chain of events in the last five years damaged India's image in the Himalayan kingdom. While India was the first country to have provided help during the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, it was in the same year that a blockade at the Indo-Nepal border had affected emergency supplies, leading to an anti-India movement on social media like #GoBackIndia.

Kathmandu had also accused India of causing delay in the implementation

of a new Constitution. As soon as the draft of the Constitution was tabled in the Constituent Assembly, people belonging to Nepal's southern belt, the Madhesi, had led a violent movement against the Government on grounds of poor representation and alleged human rights violations. Fearing an exodus to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, due to the Madhesi movement, India had sent the then Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar to raise India's security concerns in Kathmandu. However, this did not go down well with the people of Nepal. Ever since then, Kathmandu has been attempting to shift from its "special relations" with India to "new relations" with China. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and joint military exercises between Chinese and the Nepal Army are the latest examples of this shift.

Though the recent bonhomie between Nepal and China may seem minimal compared to India's age-old ties, the message to the global community is not in our favour and New Delhi needs to be cautious in this regard. On the other hand, the Chinese approach in Nepal has been based on gaining strategic depth by opening up its deep pockets and also subverting India's relations with Kathmandu. Clearly, these acts by China are intended to ensure its strong position in Nepal, precisely to keep a close vigil on South Asian countries, including India.

To do so, it has exploited every low phase in India-Nepal relations, including by supplying arms to Nepal in 1987 and providing \$1 million military assistance along with truckloads of weapons to King Gyanendra in 2005 for suppressing people's demand to introduce full democracy.

At present, amid global criticism of its alleged neo-colonist \$60 billion BRI, China is leaving no stone unturned to ensure its success globally and in the region. Other than India and Bhutan, every South Asian country has joined the BRI. In fact, India has made it amply clear that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is in complete violation of its sovereignty as it passes through disputed areas with Pakistan; hence, it cannot be part of any such initiatives.

In Nepal, the proposal to construct the trans-Himalayan corridor, connecting Kathmandu with Tibet has been in discussion for the last two years. However, considering the high terrain of the two countries, implementation of the project will be a litmus test for the economy of Nepal.

The leadership in Nepal needs to carefully look at the Chinese master plan on its soil and consider the viability and mood of the people as Chinese assistance is a debt-trap rather than being a grant-in-aid.

A key example of this strategy is the Hambantota Port that was built with Chinese assistance in Sri Lanka. The port is now under Chinese control after Sri Lanka failed to pay off loans that were taken from Beijing for building it.

Xi's recent visit to Nepal came at a critical hour to ensure the success of the BRI and its other strategic interests there. Hence, Nepal needs to put the aspirations and well-being of its people at the forefront instead of going by interests of individuals and political parties. It also has a responsibility to ensure regional balance and harmony.

(The writer is doctoral candidate, Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Pak must go beyond banter about extremism

Imran Khan's rhetoric against extremism abroad can only find traction if it is balanced by taking initiatives towards ending the harassment and violence that minority communities face at the hands of radicalised elements within the country's majority religious community



NADEEM PARACHA

Many moons ago, when I was a kid living with my parents and grandparents in a house in Karachi's Bath Island area, we had a neighbour who everyone called "Kachra chacha" (Garbage uncle). Of course, no one called him that to his face but I am sure he knew. This middle-aged man had this curious habit of scolding everyone he would come across about the manner in which they disposed their garbage. It was actually an admirable trait but strangely enough, in his own house, he was not practising what he preached.

I remember when my cousins and I would visit his house to play with his nephews, there would be lit-

ter strewn all over his garden and piles of trash in the large round balcony which stood just above the garage. I have no idea why this was so but the memory of this gentleman came to mind immediately after watching Prime Minister Imran Khan's impassioned speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 27. I must admit, I was impressed by the way the Prime Minister addressed the issue of State repression being faced by Muslims living in Kashmir. But I'm afraid, a lot else about the same speech triggered that obscure memory of "Kachra Chacha."

It is rather easy to negate and contradict much of what Khan said in his speech and in the interviews he gave to the media in the US. His critics have already done that, questioning the current state of repression being faced by the Pakistani media and against Khan's political opponents in the country.

They have also called him out for doing precious little to address the harassment and violence that the

country's various minority communities continue to face at the hands of radicalised elements within the country's majority religious community.

Therefore, his detractors believe that Khan's pleas against hate speech, racial and religious bigotry and especially, Islamophobia in Western societies ring hollow.

They fear that such views will never be able to find any worthwhile traction in the West or from outside his excitable constituencies in Pakistan. How can one point at garbage outside his home when he cannot (or refuses to) do much about the garbage piled up inside his own house?

Nevertheless, as I mentioned above, the way the Prime Minister sweepingly condemns issues such as Islamophobia in the West and repression on the basis of ideology and faith against Muslims outside Pakistan, it is rather easy to counter such condemnations by simply putting forth the many episodes of violence against members of minor-

ity groups in Pakistan and also between Muslim sects that have been reported for decades now.

It is a fact that even when a Pakistani Prime Minister or President was willing to actually do something about this, he or she could not (and cannot), because the nature of certain laws and clauses within the country's constitution — mostly penned in the document between 1974 and 1986 — is such that initiating effective reform in this context is next to impossible.

This is why, even while one can argue that certain Western countries, infested with problems such as Islamophobia and racial bigotry, do not have the right to point fingers at Muslim countries such as Pakistan for failing to curb religious violence and harassment against minorities, one can always stress the fact that, unlike Pakistan, their constitutions do not have laws that can encourage and even shield acts and actors hell bent on inflicting violence in the name of faith.

Khan has been diluting his oth-

erwise impactful narrative on Kashmir and the Narendra Modi regime's "fascism" by coupling it with rhetorical spiels about Islamophobia. Apart from being riddled by the inherent contradictions discussed above, this is largely woven from a hodgepodge understanding of Edward Said's idea of post-colonialism, which is now struggling to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world.

More disconcerting is the possibility that the narrative being erected by Khan may as well be the result of either the complete failure and discarding of a narrative which the State and Government was trying to build (to counter radicalisation and the spread of extremism) through the National Action Plan (NAP); or Khan was never really on board when the plan was authored and approved by the military and political parties in January 2015.

Indeed, it is clear that the Modi regime's arrogance towards Pakistan has generated the need within the State and Government of Pakistan

to intensify their rhetoric on the issues of Kashmir and Hindu nationalism. But this can only be effective if it is balanced by initiatives which would show Pakistan as doing more to curb extremism in its own backyard compared to India, where Hindu extremism has been allowed to infiltrate mainstream politics and society.

Otherwise, it will only end up being nothing more than a bantering game between two countries infested by extremism, with one labelling the other "a terrorist State," and the other responding by calling it "fascist."

It is surprising that, despite the fact that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) dedicated a lot of space to the NAP in its manifesto for the 2018 election, Khan has frequently negated the nature of reforms suggested in that document. First, by continuously claiming that the war which the Pakistan military fought against religious extremist groups was "not our war," Khan is undermining the chaos and destruction created by the extremists.

This sentiment is also dismissive of the manner in which the extremists were tackled by the military.

There is absolutely nothing new or insightful about lecturing the US about how it had helped Pakistan create Islamic militants in the 1980s (before dumping them). The US Government itself has repeatedly admitted this ever since former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Pakistan in 2011.

Most of Khan's ideas are still cemented in the many apologia that emerged from a muddled potpourri of anti-West narratives developed during the last three decades. These were narratives that aided those who were unwilling to recognise their own incompetence, complacencies and mistakes, by putting the blame on others regarding extremism. This can be a popular way of explaining things on Twitter, but it can certainly not — and should not — become part of the State and Government policy.

(Courtesy: The Dawn)

World Bank cuts India's growth projection to 6%

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

After a broad-based deceleration in the initial quarters of this fiscal year, India's growth rate is projected to fall to 6 per cent, the World Bank said on Sunday.

In 2018-19, the growth rate of the country stood at 6.9 per cent.

However, the bank in its latest edition of the South Asia Economic Focus said the country was expected to gradually recover to 6.9 per cent in 2021 and 7.2 per cent in 2022 as it assumed that the monetary stance would remain accommodative, given benign price dynamics.

The report, which has been released ahead of the annual meeting of the World Bank with the International Monetary Fund, noted India's economic growth decelerated for the second consecutive year.

In 2018-19, it stood at 6.8 per cent, down from 7.2 per cent in the 2017-18 financial year.

While industrial output growth increased to 6.9 per cent due to a pick-up in manufacturing and construction activities, the growth in agriculture and the services sector moderated to 2.9 and 7.5 per cent, respectively.

In the first quarter of 2019-20, the economy experienced a significant and broad-based growth deceleration with a sharp decline in private consumption on the demand side

and the weakening of growth in both industry and services on the supply side, the report said.

Reflecting on the below-trend economic momentum and persistently low food prices, the headline inflation averaged 3.4 per cent in 2018-19 and remained well below the RBI's mid-range target of 4 per cent in the first half of 2019-2020. This allowed the RBI to ease monetary policy via a cumulative 135 basis point cut in the repo rate since January 2019 and shift the policy stance from "neutral" to "accommodative", it said.

The World Bank report also noted that the current account deficit had widened to 2.1 per cent of the GDP in 2018-19 from 1.8 per cent a year before, mostly reflecting a deteriorating trade balance.

On the financing side, significant capital outflows in the first half of the current year were followed by a sharp reversal from October 2018 onwards and a build-up of international reserves to USD 411.9 billion at the end of the fiscal year.

Likewise, while the rupee initially lost ground against the USD (12.1 per cent depreciation between March and October 2018), it appreciated by about seven per cent up to March 2019, the report said.

"The general Government deficit is estimated to have widened by 0.2 percentage points to 5.9 per cent of the GDP in 2018-19. This is despite the Central Government



improving its balance by 0.2 percentage points over the previous year. The general government debt remained stable and sustainable — being largely domestic and long term — at around 67 per cent of GDP," the report said.

According to the World Bank, poverty has continued to decline, albeit possibly at a slower pace than earlier. Between 2011-12 and 2015-16, the poverty rate declined from 21.6 to 13.4 per cent (\$1.90 PPP/day).

The report, however, said disruptions brought about by the introduction of the GST and demonetisation, combined with the stress in the rural economy and a high youth unemployment rate in urban areas may have heightened the risks for the poorest households.

The significant slowdown in the first quarter of the fiscal year and high frequency indicators, thereafter, suggested that the output growth would not exceed 6 per cent for the full fiscal year, the bank said.

The report said the consumption was likely to remain depressed due to slow growth in rural income, domestic demand (as reflected in a sharp drop in sales of automobiles) and credit from non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

However, the investment would benefit from the recent cut in effective corporate tax rate for domestic companies in the medium term, but also will continue to reflect financial sector weaknesses, the report said.

"Growth is expected to gradually recover to 6.9 per cent in 2020-21 and 7.2 per

cent in 2021-22 as the cycle bottoms-out, rural demand benefits from effects of income support schemes, investment responds to tax incentives and credit growth resumes. However, exports growth is expected to remain modest, as trade wars and slow global growth depresses external demand," the report said.

The main policy challenge for India is to address the sources of softening private consumption and the structural factors behind weak investment, the bank said.

"This will require restoring the health of the financial sector through reforms of public sector banks' governance and a gradual strengthening of the regulatory framework for NBFCs, while ensuring that solvent NBFCs retain access to adequate liquidity.

"It will also require efforts to contain fiscal slippages, as higher-than-expected public borrowings could put upward pressure on interest rates and potentially crowd-out the private sector," it said.

According to the bank, the main sources of risk included external shocks that result in tighter global financing conditions, and new NBFC defaults triggering a fresh round of financial sector stress.

To mitigate these risks, the authorities would need to ensure that there was adequate liquidity in the financial system while strengthening the regulatory framework for the NBFCs, the bank added.

B'desh, Nepal ahead of India as growth in South Asia slows down: WB report

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Bangladesh and Nepal are estimated to grow faster than India in 2019, according to the World Bank, which said that overall growth in South Asia is projected to slow down this fiscal in line with a global downward trend.

Pakistan's growth rate is projected to deteriorate further to a mere 2.4 per cent this fiscal year, as monetary policy remains tight, and the planned fiscal consolidation will compress domestic demand, it said.

Growth in South Asia is projected to fall to 5.9 per cent in 2019, down 1.1 percentage points from April 2019 estimates, casting uncertainty about a rebound in the short term, the World Bank said in its latest report.

The latest edition of the South Asia Economic Focus, Making (De)centralization Work, finds that strong domestic demand, which propped high growth in the past, has weakened, driving a slowdown across the region.

Imports have declined severely across South Asia, contracting between 15 and 20 per cent in Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



In India, domestic demand has slipped, with private consumption growing 3.1 per cent in the last quarter from 7.3 per cent a year ago, while manufacturing growth plummeted to below 1 per cent in the second quarter of 2019 compared to over 10 per cent a year ago.

"Declining industrial production and imports, as well as tensions in the financial markets reveal a sharp economic slowdown in South Asia," said Hartwig Schafer, World Bank Vice President for the South Asia Region.

"As global and domestic uncertainties cloud the region's economic outlook, South Asian countries should pursue stimulating economic policies to boost private consumption

and beef up investments," he said.

The report noted that South Asia's current economic slowdown echoes the decelerating growth and trade slumps of 2008 and 2012.

With that context in mind, the report remains cautiously optimistic that a slight rebound in investment and private consumption could jumpstart South Asia's growth up to 6.3 per cent in 2020, slightly above East Asia and the Pacific and 6.7 per cent in 2021.

In a focus section, the report highlights how, as their economies become more sophisticated, South Asian countries have made decentralisation a priority to improve the delivery of public services.

FM to meet CEOs of PSU banks today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will hold a review meeting with CEOs of public sector banks (PSBs) on Monday to discuss various issues, including progress on credit offtake, as part of efforts to prop up the economy.

The meeting is expected to review fund flow to stressed NBFC and MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) sectors, sources said.

Banks are expected to present report card on partial credit guarantee scheme and fund raising from market to enhance their capital base.

The Centre in August issued guidelines on operationalising Rs 1 lakh crore partial guarantee scheme under which PSBs can purchase high-rated pooled assets of financially sound non-banking finance companies (NBFCs).

NBFCs, including housing finance companies (HFCs), came under stress following a series of defaults by the group companies of IL&FS in September last year.

Besides, the meeting will also assess the progress of first phase of outreach programme held across 226 districts across the country.

This will be the second meeting of Sitharaman with CEOs of PSU banks in less than a month.

The first phase of 'Loan Mela' for providing credit to agriculture, vehicle, home, MSME, education and personal categories ended on October 7.

During the annual performance review earlier this



month, PSBs decided to undertake outreach exercise in 400 identified districts. Later, the private sector too expressed willingness to join the initiative.

The second phase will be held in 209 districts between October 21 and October 25, just before Diwali.

Additionally, the Centre will also review loan delivery through 'psbloansin59minutes' portal.

The platform has helped reduce turnaround time for loan processes in such a way that MSMEs can get an eligibility letter and in-principle approval in 59 minutes and can choose the bank of their choice.

After the approval letter is received, the loan is expected to be disbursed in 7-8 working days.

Touted as the country's largest online lending platform, the portal was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2018 with an aim to make credit access and banking for MSMEs transparent and hassle-free.

The portal sanctioned loans worth over Rs 35,000 crore in less than four months from its launch.

As on March 31, 2019, more than 50,706 proposals had got in-principle approval and 27,893 proposals had been sanctioned.

Cooperative sector needs regulatory mechanism: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leaders of cooperative sector should think of a self-regulatory mechanism to strengthen it and prevent recurrence of scams like Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank case, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

He said that whistleblowers should come forward wherever such things are happening, as several people must have been involved in such a scam.

"I do not think that such a scam can happen without involvement of hundreds of people. Several accounts must have been opened, funds must have been diverted. Branches and some employees must have been involved in this," Goyal said.

It would not be possible for the government to look at every institution and issues, the minister said here at India International Cooperative Trade Fair.

India still fast-growing economy with lot of potential: Economist

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India has been relatively hit hard by the recent global slowdown resulting in its projected growth dropping to 6.0 per cent in 2019, but it's still a fast-growing economy with a lot of potential, a top World Bank economist said on Sunday.

"It's still a fast-growing economy. So even with the recent slowdown, it has growth numbers that are higher than in most countries of the world. It's still a fast-growing economy with a lot of potential," World Bank's Chief Economist for South Asia Hans Timmer told PTI.

In its latest edition of the South Asia Economic Focus, the World Bank said that India's growth rate is projected to fall to 6 per cent this fiscal. However, it said the country was expected to gradually recover to 6.9 per cent in 2021 and 7.2 per cent in 2022.

"It has been hit relatively hard by the recent global slowdown in their investments in durable consumption. And so that means that they have to deal with severe problems," Timmer said in response to a question on India's economy, whose growth rate in 2016 was 8.2 per cent and in the next two years it dropped by 2.2 percentage points.

"No, it's not the biggest (drop), but it is comparable to what we saw in 2012 where there was also a slowdown. It's somewhat less than what we saw in 2009. But it's a serious slowdown. That is true," Timmer said.

There are many signs of a sharp slowing of the Indian economy, recently, he noted. "We saw that with the last numbers on quarterly GDP, but it's even stronger when you look at the components of GDP. If you look at the investment then the annual growth

now is 9 per cent below what it was a year ago. There was a sharp decline in consumption. And so that's mainly durable consumption," he said.

"If you look at the growth of domestic demands that's slowing much faster than the growth of GDP because imports are slowing fast also. It's a typical case where investors both in companies and in households are cautious to invest.

"In our view, that is very much in line with what is happening in the world, because everywhere in the world you see that investments very quickly are coming down and debt is driven by a sentiment that spreads across the world driven by uncertainty in global markets," he said.

Timmer said that, the World Bank in its estimates, has found that "80 per cent of the slowdown" in India could be coming from the international causes.

Iran discovers gas field near Gulf: State media

Tehran: Iran has discovered a gas field near the Gulf with enough reserves to supply the capital for 16 years, state media reported on Sunday. The Eram field contained 19 trillion cubic feet (538 billion cubic metres) of natural gas, the National Iranian Oil Company said, cited by official news agency IRNA.

The oil ministry's Shana website said the field was located in Fars province, about 200 kilometres south of Shiraz.

"Given the volume of 19 trillion cubic feet reserves of in-situ gas and 385 million barrels of gas condensate in Eram field, the revenue from this field will be \$40 billion," IRNA quoted an NIOC official as saying. **AFP**

\$60 bn investment coming in gas infrastructure: Pradhan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is investing over \$60 billion in developing natural supply and distribution infrastructure as it chases the target of more than doubling the share of natural gas in its energy base to 15 per cent by 2030, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Sunday.

Natural gas currently constitutes 6.2 per cent of all energy consumption in the country. Stating that the government has laid emphasis on developing a gas-based economy, he said natural gas is gradually becoming a bridging fuel for low carbon economy in India.

The Government is giving special impetus to develop gas

infrastructure across the length and breadth of the country connecting north to south and east to west parts of India, he said.

"I am happy to inform you that as we speak, an estimated investment of 60 billion US dollars is underway in building gas pipeline and terminal infrastructure that are nearing or in advanced stages of completion," he said in his opening remarks at the third International Think Tank Meeting (ITT) here.

City gas distribution network will soon cover 70 per cent of India's population, he said. "Our Government is exploring strategic partnerships for overall development of oil & gas sector.

California walnut growers hope US-India trade deal will reduce tariffs

PTI ■ TIBURON (US)

California walnut growers are hopeful that the US and India will soon strike a trade deal that will reduce the retaliatory tariffs imposed by New Delhi on American walnuts, a top industry official said.

India imposed retaliatory tariffs on 28 US products, including walnuts, almonds and apples from June 5, after the Trump administration revoked its preferential trade privileges.

California Walnut Commission's (CWC) Senior Marketing Director, Pamela Graviet said that tariff change definitely made a difference and it's very

expensive for the importer. "Twenty per cent retaliatory tariff is an issue," she said.

"We are hopeful that the two countries will come to some kind of a trade agreement and the 20 per cent retaliatory tariffs then goes away. Trade negotiations are still on," she told *PTI* here.

"We are looking for fair trade and are not expecting all countries to drop their tariff rate to zero," she added.

The US terminated India's designation as beneficiary developing country under Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme.

India has been the single biggest beneficiary of the GSP programme, allowing the coun-

try to export \$5.7 billion worth of duty-free goods in 2017, according to figures from US Congress.

The US walnuts entered Indian market nearly four years ago and the industry in India has grown ever since to meet the growing demand. With this current tariff, it's challenging to meet the demand, she said.

The retaliatory tariffs imposed by India are causing deep concern among the nut growers in California, which produces 99 per cent of the crop.

"Trade negotiations are complex process... We were hopeful of an announcement when Prime Minister Narendra



Modi was here (in the US in September) but they have not reached any agreement that is best for both the parties. So, we know they are still into discussions that is very positive for both the countries," Graviet

said. "There will be eventually some kind of agreement, it's just a matter of when and what that trade agreement will look like," she added.

The US is the second



largest producer of walnuts in the world.

India ranked 10th as an export destination in 2016-17. However, it fell to 11th position in 2017-18 crop year when the tariff rate was increased to 100 per cent, she said.

But, during last crop year (2018-2019) India dropped to

16th position due to retaliatory tariffs, she added.

Given the size of the population, and the love of nuts and dried fruit in India, the California walnut growers anticipate that over the next few years, India would climb up and regain its position.

The overall demand for walnuts in India is growing steadily. The CWC has exported 10468.43 tonne in 2017-18. The top export markets for the CWC are Germany, Turkey, Spain, China and the UK, she said.


The California walnut industry, California Walnut Commission (CWC), is made up of over 4,800 walnut growers and 88 walnut handlers

processors.

The walnut crop year is from September-August. India produces around 30,000-35,000 tonnes of walnuts in Jammu and Kashmir, according to official data.

For India, which has very high proportion of vegetarian people, walnut is a good nutritional choice and also it helps in managing health issues like diabetes, hypertension, obesity among others, Graviet said.

Indian importers prefer in-shell walnuts. They hire people within India to remove the shells, which in a way creates jobs... So when imports drop, those people doing their jobs will also lose their source of income, she added.

Scheme	NAV	1Yr%													
DSP World Gold Fund-Reg(G)	13.87	27.93	Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)	116.37	11.89	Consumption Fund(G)			Fund-1-(G)			ICICI Pru Global Stable Equity Fund(G)	15.87	-0.31	
Tata Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	19.39	26.54	HDFC Nifty 50 ETF	1184.5	11.84	ICICI Pru Nifty Low Vol 30 ETF	89.52	8.4	ICICI Pru Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	310.65	4.48	HDFC Equity Opp Fund-Sr 2-1126D-May 2017(1)-Reg(G)	9.87	-0.42	
Sundaram Fin Serv Opp Fund(G)	42.71	23.81	Axis Nifty ETF	1163.78	11.8	ICICI Pru NV20 ETF	55.17	8.39	Nippon India India Opp Fund-Sr-A(G)	9.99	4.46	L&T Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	14.86	-0.47	
Axis Bluechip Fund(G)	30.85	23.35	DSP 3Y Close Ended Equity Fund-Reg(G)	15.49	11.8	Canara Rob Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	42.82	8.38	JM Large Cap Fund(G)	66.21	4.38	HDFC Infrastructure Fund(G)	14.49	-0.52	
BNP Paribas India Consumption Fund-Reg(G)	12.03	22.82	Tata Value Fund-Sr-1-Reg(G)	9.84	11.74	IDBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	10.17	8.31	Principal Dividend Yield Fund(G)	50.95	4.28	ICICI Pru Focused Equity Fund(G)	28.39	-0.8	
Axis Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	12.31	22.49	IDFC Nifty ETF	116.84	11.67	SBI Equity Opp Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	15.73	8.17	UTI-Nifty Next 50 ETF	272.85	4.25	IDBI Long Term Value Fund-Reg(G)	9.86	-0.9	
SBI Tax Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	25.97	22.2	Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	14.36	11.66	IDFC Multi Cap Fund-Reg(G)	91.73	8.15	L&T Large and Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	45.05	4.23	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-II-Reg(G)	7.82	-1.09	
JM Multicap Fund(G)	33.35	20.68	Edelweiss Large Cap Fund(G)	35.46	11.61	IDFC Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	31.89	8.14	Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	75.47	4.18	Aditya Birla SL Infrastructure Fund(G)	28.3	-1.12	
SBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	17.87	20.45	UTI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	74.1	11.61	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	38.96	8.01	IDFC Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	42.56	4.03	IDBI Small Cap Fund(G)	8.69	-1.14	
BNP Paribas Large Cap Fund(G)	93.06	20.17				PGIM India Large Cap Fund-2-Reg(G)	12.13	7.99	SBI PSU Fund-Reg(G)	9.68	3.97	HDFC Capital Builder Value Fund(G)	267.9	-1.26	
JM Tax Gain Fund(G)	17.63	20.16					Invesco India Tax Plan(G)	49.9	7.99	Nippon India Capital Builder Fund-IV-A(G)	9.37	3.82	IDBI Midcap Fund(G)	9.89	-1.3
Canara Rob Consumer Trends Fund-Reg(G)	40.23	19.84					Nippon India Growth Fund(G)	1059.37	7.93	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-3-(G)	10.12	3.79	ICICI Pru Value Fund-8(D)	9.89	-1.4
Baroda Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	23.15	19.7					ICICI Pru S&P BSE 500 ETF	148.16	7.89	Baroda Mid-cap Fund(G)	8.57	3.75	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-I-Reg(G)	7.62	-1.4
DSP Equity Fund-Reg(G)	40.31	19.49					Parag Parikh Long Term Equity Fund-Reg(G)	24.93	7.88	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-3(DP)	9.84	3.69	DSP Natural Res & New Energy Fund-Reg(G)	30.37	-1.5
Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)	46.7	18.58					Aditya Birla SL Equity Fund(G)	698.2	7.83	ICICI Pru Value Fund-15(G)	10.16	3.57	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-IV-Reg(G)	8.76	-1.57
Invesco India Financial Services Fund(G)	56.68	17.94					Sundaram TOP 100-Sr VI-Reg(G)	12.2	7.77	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-5-Reg(G)	26.81	3.52	SBI Contra Fund-Reg(G)	97.65	-1.57
Kotak World Gold Fund(G)	9.89	17.79					Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	15.93	7.75	L&T India Value Fund-Reg(G)	33.68	3.52	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series VIII-Reg(G)	12.09	-1.61
Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)	85.22	17.74					Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	16.12	7.7	Franklin India Equity Fund(G)	557.14	3.48	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-III-Reg(G)	8.44	-1.61
SBI Tax advantage Fund-II(G)	37.34	17.25					SBI Magnum Comma Fund-Reg(G)	35.62	7.69	UTI MNC Fund-Reg(G)	190.47	3.46	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series IX-Reg(G)	12.02	-1.69
Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)	22.48	17.17				Nippon India Quant Fund(G)	25.22	7.67	UTI LT Adv Fund-IV(G)	9.6	3.36	Templeton India Value Fund(G)	224.88	-1.69	
BNP Paribas Long Term Equity Fund(G)	38.99	17				UTI MEPUS	104.43	7.65	Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(G)	29.87	3.28	ICICI Pru Value Discovery Fund(G)	136.75	-1.77	
Tata Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	204.25	16.94				Tata Resources & Energy Fund-Reg(G)	13.98	7.64	Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(ELSS U/S 80C of IT ACT)(G)	29.87	3.28	IDFC Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	13.62	-1.8	
SBI Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)	142.41	16.64				ICICI Pru Growth Fund-2(DP)	11.85	7.63	UTI Nifty Next 50 Index Fund-Reg(G)	9.47	3.15	Tata India Pharma & Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	8.63	-1.85	
Axis Midcap Fund(G)	37.83	16.54				Canara Rob Emerg Equities Fund-Reg(G)	88.93	7.59	ICICI Pru Nifty Next 50 Index Fund(G)	23.58	2.98	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-VII-Reg(G)	9.82	-1.94	
SBI Magnum Equity ESG Fund-Reg(G)	106.4	16.45				Sundaram Diversified Equity(G)	97.23	7.58	ICICI Pru Value Fund-16(G)	10.84	3.14	Aditya Birla SL Midcap Fund(G)	258.9	-1.98	
JM Core 11 Fund(G)	9.09	16.45				Nippon India Multi Cap Fund(G)	90.77	7.5	IDBI Nifty Junior Index Fund(G)	20.09	3.05	Sundaram Value Fund-VIII-Reg(G)	10	-2.21	
DSP Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	48.38	16.22				Sundaram TOP 100-Sr VII-Reg(G)	11.98	7.46	ICICI Pru Midcap Fund(G)	89.42	2.89	DSP Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	49.41	-2.25	
Axis Focused 25 Fund(G)	29.07	15.91				HDFC Top 100 Fund(G)	466.49	7.46	ICICI Pru Value Fund-13(D)	10.34	2.89	Nippon India Tax Saver (ELSS) Fund(G)	49.19	-2.81	
SBI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	15.07	15.83				UTI LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)-Reg(G)	83.65	7.4	Franklin India Bluechip Fund(G)	12.62	2.84	ICICI Pru Dividend Yield Equity Fund(G)	11.8	-3.04	
Canara Rob Bluechip Equity Fund-Reg(G)	25.36	15.59				SBI Large & Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	213.03	7.36	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-3-Reg(G)	435.89	2.83	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series X-Reg(G)	9.89	-3.07	
Tata India Tax Savings Fund-Reg(G)	17.91	15.55				HDFC Equity Fund(G)	625.38	7.2	India Fund-3-Reg(G)	10.94	2.53	DSP US Flexible Equity Fund-Reg(G)	25.62	-3.14	
Nippon India Consumption Fund(G)	66.07	15.34				UTI Focussed Equity Fund-IV(G)	9.21	7.17	Principal Multi Cap Growth Fund(G)	133.27	2.37	UTI LT Adv Fund-VII(G)	7.93	-3.4	
ICICI Pru Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	61.45	15.18				Nippon India Large Cap Fund(G)	32.83	7.16	Principal Tax Savings Fund	193.88	2.26	DSP World Mining Fund-Reg(G)	8.17	-3.87	
DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)	23.37	15				Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity Fund(G)	216	7.1	ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	10.86	2.26	Edelweiss Eur Dynamic Equity Off-shr Fund-Reg(G)	10.94	-3.95	
Sundaram Multi Cap Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	10.23	14.94				Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-2-Reg(G)	11.5	7.08	HDFC TaxSaver(G)	488.69	2.15	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-V-Reg(G)	8.9	-4.04	
Sundaram Services Fund-Reg(G)	11.53	14.94				Templeton India Equity Income Fund(G)	44.81	7.02	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-4-Reg(G)	9.53	2.14	Franklin India Smaller Cos Fund(G)	48.15	-4.07	
SBI LT Advantage Fund-V-Reg(G)	10.11	14.9				ICICI Pru Growth Fund-1(DP)	10.84	7.01	PGIM India Global Equity Opp Fund(G)	18.41	2.11	Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	12.8	-4.12	
Sundaram Multi Cap Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	10.25	14.78				Aditya Birla SL MNC Fund(G)	735.46	6.98	ICICI Pru Nifty Next 50 Index Fund(G)	23.58	2.98	Sundaram Value Fund-VII-Reg(G)	7.87	-4.37	
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-VI-Reg(G)	9.66	14.62				Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	391.13	6.84	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-4-Reg(G)	9.53	2.14	Nippon India Small Cap Fund(G)	36.35	-4.4	
IDBI India Top 100 Equity Fund(G)	24.37	14.57				Tata Equity P/E Fund(G)	130.44	6.81	ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	10.86	2.26	IDFC Equity	7.12	-4.81	
SBI Magnum Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	48.97	14.45				ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	11.85	6.76	HDFC TaxSaver(G)	488.69	2.15	Opportunity-4-Reg(G)	44.34	-4.93	
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-III-Reg(G)	14.18	14.39				IDFC Equity	10.13	6.74	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-4-Reg(G)	9.53	2.14	IDFC Sterling Value Fund-Reg(G)	71.11	-5.55	
Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	34.7	14.26				Opportunity-6-Reg(G)	12.77	6.74	ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	10.86	2.26	Sundaram Small Cap Fund(G)	71.11	-5.55	
DSP Top 100 Equity Fund-Reg(G)	207.14	14.09				UTI Focussed Equity Fund-I(G)	12.77	6.74	ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	10.86	2.26	UTI LT Adv Fund-VI(G)	7.63	-5.61	
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-V-Reg(G)	9.86	14.04				Franklin India Taxshield(G)	547.82	6.71	ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	td					

Germany urges Turkey to immediately end Syria offensive

Berlin: German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday urged Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to halt Turkey's offensive in northern Syria immediately, warning it could spark further destabilisation of the region and a resurgence of the IS jihadist group.

In a phone call with Erdogan, Merkel "spoke in favour for an immediate end to the military operation", the chancellor's office said in a statement.

The operation threatens to drive large parts of the population from their homes, she said, noting that it would also risk "destabilisation of the region and lead to a resurgence of the ISIS".

Germany and France on Saturday said they were suspending arms exports to Turkey over its offensive in Syria against the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

Turkey sees the YPG as a terrorist off-shoot of Kurdish rebels in its own territory, but Western powers used the Kurds as the main ground force against the ISIS group in Syria. **AFP**

Arms embargoes won't stop Turkey's Syria operation: Erdogan

Istanbul: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday that threats of sanctions and arms embargoes by Western powers would not stop Turkey's military offensive against Kurdish militants in Syria.

"After we launched our operation, we have faced threats like economic sanctions and embargoes on weapons sales. Those who think they can make Turkey turn back with these threats are gravely mistaken," Erdogan said in a televised speech.

France and Germany said Saturday that they were suspending arms exports to Turkey over its offensive in Syria against the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

Turkey sees the YPG as a



terrorist off-shoot of Kurdish rebels in its own territory, but Western powers used the Kurdish forces as the main ground force against the Islamic State group.

Erdogan said the Turkish military and its Syrian proxies now controlled the border town of Ras al-Ain while Tal Abyad was being besieged from two directions. **AFP**

Turkey and proxies advance deep into Syria

Qamishli (Syria): Turkish forces and their proxies pushed deep into Syria on Sunday, moving closer to completing their assault's initial phase, while Washington announced it was pulling out 1,000 troops from the country's north.

The Kurdish administration in northern Syria said that Turkish bombardment near a camp for the displaced led to nearly 800 relatives of IS members fleeing.

Fighting raged but Turkish-backed forces made significant progress along the border on the fifth day of an offensive that has provoked an international outcry and left dozens of civilians and fighters dead.

Kurdish authorities and foreign powers have warned repeatedly that the hostilities could undermine the fight against the Islamic State group (IS) and allow jihadists to break out of captivity.

Fighting has engulfed the area since Wednesday when Ankara launched a long-threatened offensive against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), who it considers "terrorists" linked to insurgents inside Turkey.

US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said Sunday that President Donald Trump had ordered the withdrawal of up to 1,000 troops from northern Syria.

"I can't give a timeline because it changes hourly. We want to make sure that we do so in a very safe, deliberate manner," he told the CBS network.

Trump has been accused of abandoning a loyal ally in the fight against IS after ordering American troops to pull back from the border, which Ankara took as a green light to move in.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor



Turkish-backed Syrian opposition fighters advance in Tal Abyad, Syria on Sunday

AP

reported on Sunday that 19 more civilians had been killed in fighting.

More than 50 civilians have now died on the Syrian side, with Turkish reports putting the number of civilians dead from Kurdish shelling inside Turkey at 18.

The Observatory said pro-Ankara fighters "executed" at least nine civilians on Saturday near the Syrian town of Tal Abyad. The Kurds said a female Kurdish party official and her driver were among those killed.

Aid groups have warned of another humanitarian disaster in Syria's eight-year-old war if the offensive is not halted.

The UN humanitarian agency OCHA said the exodus sparked by the fighting had grown to 1,30,000 people and it was preparing for that figure to more than triple.

"We have moved into a planning scenario where up to

4,00,000 people could be displaced within and across the affected areas," spokesman Jens Laerke told AFP.

Some 12,000 IS fighters — Syrians, Iraqis as well as foreigners from 54 countries — are detained in Kurdish prisons, according to official Kurdish statistics.

Displacement camps meanwhile host some 12,000 foreigners — 8,000 children and 4,000 women.

"The brutal military assault led by Turkey and its mercenaries is now taking place near a camp in Ain Issa, where there are thousands (of people) from families of IS," a Kurdish administration statement said.

"Some were able to escape after bombardments that targeted" the camp.

It said the Ain Issa camp was "now without guards" and 785 relatives of IS jihadists had fled.

The SDF, a coalition of Kurdish and Arab fighters, was the main partner on the ground in the US-led campaign against IS. According to the Observatory, at least 104 of its fighters have been killed since the start of the Turkish offensive.

According to Turkish media, Ankara aims to take control of a territory 120 kilometres (75 miles) long and 30 kilometres into Syria, up to the towns of Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain.

Turkish forces and their proxies captured Tal Abyad on Friday afternoon, which left Ras al-Ain, further east, as the last major target in the offensive.

The fighting was intense in and around the town and the Observatory reported that a convoy, which included journalists and civilians, was hit by artillery.

Nine people were killed, five of them civilians, the monitoring organisation said.

Turkey announced it had seized the key M4 highway, which looks like it might mark the southern limit of its advance in this initial phase of the invasion. It lies 30 to 35 kilometres deep in Syrian territory.

SDF fighters have taken mounting losses against the vastly superior military firepower of Turkey, which has defied mounting international protests and the threat of US sanctions in pressing on with its offensive. **AFP**

TRUMP RELEASES \$50 MILLION IN STABILISATION ASSISTANCE FOR SYRIA

Washington: US President Donald Trump on Saturday released \$50 million in stabilisation assistance for Syria to protect persecuted ethnic and religious minorities and advance human rights, the White House said.

This funding will provide emergency financial assistance to Syrian human rights defenders, civil society organisations and reconciliation efforts directly supporting eth-

nic and religious minority victims of the conflict, White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

It will also go towards increasing accountability, removal of explosive remnants of war, community security, documenting human rights abuses and international humanitarian law violations and support for survivors of gender-based violence and torture, she said. **PTI**

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT

Pentagon chief vows to cooperate with probe

Washington: US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said on Sunday the Pentagon would cooperate with the congressional impeachment inquiry — in an apparent break with President Donald Trump's policy to thwart the probe.

Esper said his department would try to comply with a subpoena from House Democrats seeking records relating to the withholding of US military aid to Ukraine.

"We will do everything we can to cooperate with the Congress," Esper said on CBS's Face The Nation.

Esper's reassurance came days after the White House announced it would not cooperate with the Democratic-led House of Representatives, calling its impeachment push illegitimate and unconstitutional.

Trump himself has been using Twitter to bombard the public with conspiracy theories about a secret "deep state" trying to remove him from power. Democrats slapped subpoenas Monday on the Pentagon and White House budget office, demanding documents tied to Trump's withholding of military aid to Ukraine.

The chairmen of three House panels leading the investigation are seeking information related to Trump pressing his Ukrainian counterpart to uncover dirt on 2020 US pres-



idential contender Joe Biden — and the alleged conditioning of aid on that favour.

The materials are "necessary for the committees to examine...". The

behind the White House's decision to withhold critical military assistance to Ukraine

that was appropriated by Congress to counter Russian aggression," they said.

Esper told Fox News Sunday that administration officials and Trump himself may place restrictions on the release of documents demanded by the subpoena. **AFP**

Trump backs Giuliani, but some aides wish he would cut ties

Washington: President Donald Trump on Saturday stood behind personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, one of his highest-profile and most vocal defenders, amid reports that federal prosecutors in the city Giuliani led as mayor are eyeing him for possible lobbying violations.

Behind the scenes, however, many of Trump's closest aides and advisers, inside and outside the White House, quietly wish the president would cut ties with Giuliani, whose leadership of New York after the

September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks earned him worldwide admiration and the moniker of "America's mayor."

Giuliani was a force in Trump's defense during the lengthy Russia investigation by the special counsel.

Yet the effort to undermine special counsel Robert Mueller led Giuliani to Ukraine, which now entangles the former federal prosecutor and mayor in legal jeopardy and is central to the danger threatening the presidency he labored to protect. **AP**

Typhoon leaves 33 dead as Japan continues rescue

Tokyo: Helicopters, boats and thousands of troops were deployed across Japan to rescue people stranded in flooded homes Sunday, as the death toll from a ferocious typhoon climbed to as high as 33.

One woman fell to her death as she was being placed inside a rescue helicopter.

Typhoon Hagibis made landfall south of Tokyo on Saturday evening and battered central and northern Japan with torrents of rain and powerful gusts of wind. The

typhoon was downgraded to a tropical storm on Sunday.

Public broadcaster NHK said 14 rivers across the nation had flooded, some spilling out in more than one spot.

The Tokyo Fire Department said a woman in her 70s was accidentally dropped 40 meters (131 feet) to the ground while being transported into a rescue helicopter in Iwaki city in Fukushima prefecture, a northern area devastated by the typhoon. **AFP**

XI JINPING WARNS DURING MAIDEN VISIT TO NEPAL

Any attempt to split China will be 'crushed'

Kathmandu: President Xi Jinping warned on Sunday that anyone attempting to "split" China will be "crushed" as he held wide-ranging talks with Nepal's top leadership here and the two countries elevated their bilateral ties to strategic partnership and signed a slew of agreements, including a plan to build a trans-Himalayan railway line.

During his meeting with Nepalese counterpart Bidya Devi Bhandari on Saturday, President Xi announced a support of 3.5 billion RMB equivalent to Nepalese Rs 56 billion to Nepal over the next two years to help the development pro-

grammes, officials said.

Xi, the first Chinese president to visit Nepal in 23 years, also pledged to upgrade the Arniko Highway linking Kathmandu with Tatopani transit point - which was shut down following the devastating earthquake of 2015 - and open more customs points facilitating connectivity.

He said a feasibility study of trans-Himalayan railway will soon start and China will also support construction of the Kerung-Kathmandu tunnel road.

During his meeting with Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Sunday, Xi said



that "anyone attempting to split China will be crushed and any external force backing such attempts will be deemed by the Chinese people as pipe-dreaming," China's official Xinhua news agency reported.

Xi's comments came as

Beijing is putting pressure on Kathmandu to rein-in pro-Dalai Lama Tibetans in Nepal.

Nepal shares a long border with Tibet and is home to around 20,000 Tibetan exiles. Every year some 2,500 Tibetans illegally enter Nepal crossing Tibetan border on their way to Dharanmshala to meet the 84-year-old Dalai Lama.

Beijing views the India-based Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, as a separatist trying to split the Himalayan region from China.

Oli said Nepal firmly supports China in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity and stands firm in

upholding the one-China policy. Nepal, added Oli, will never allow any force to use its territory for separatist activities against China, the Xinhua report said. Xi stressed that his country appreciates Nepal for its firm adherence to the one-China policy and its staunch support for China on issues concerning China's core interests.

Calling Nepal and China true friends and partners, Oli said the two countries have always respected each other, supported each other and never interfered in the internal affairs of the other, adding that their traditional friendship is unbreakable. **PTI**

GLOBE TROTTER

9 KILLED, 10 INJURED IN GAS EXPLOSION IN CHINA
Beijing: At least nine people were killed and 10 others injured on Sunday in a gas explosion at a street food restaurant in eastern China, official media here reported.

74 MIGRANTS RESCUED OFF LIBYAN COAST

Rome: Humanitarian groups on Sunday said they have rescued 74 migrants on a rubber boat in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya while Tunisian authorities reported blocking a smuggling boat carrying 110 migrants from setting off for Italy. The groups said six children were among those rescued.

Hong Kong: Riot police clashed with anti-government protesters across Hong Kong Sunday as masked activists vandalised businesses deemed sympathetic to Beijing in another weekend of chaos in the financial hub.

Rallies erupted in multiple neighbourhoods, with some protesters blocking roads, sabotaging train tracks, and trashing pro-China businesses.

Police said an officer was taken to hospital after his neck was slashed. Local television networks also broadcast footage of a man beaten bloody by protesters after they found a baton in his bag and suspected him of being an undercover officer.

Police have increasingly posed as protesters, scoring some tactical suc-

cesses and sparking widespread paranoia among frontline demonstrators.

During cat-and-mouse encounters on Sunday officers made dozens of arrests, but there were fewer protesters than have taken to the streets more recently during the four-month long protest movement.

In Mongkok, a bustling shopping district on the Kowloon peninsula, officers burst from an unmarked van over a blockade of bamboo scaffolding and quickly chased down multiple protesters.

Later, an AFP reporter in the neighbourhood saw protesters beat a woman earlier accused of helping police clear barricades.

The woman was struck with fists and umbrellas, and also had her face

smeared with mud.

Protesters have increasingly turned on their ideological opponents in recent weeks, while Beijing loyalists have attacked democracy activists throughout the summer.

Online forums used to organise the largely leaderless movement advertised Sunday as a "blossom everywhere" day, encouraging activists to gather in malls across the city.

Protests and clashes were reported in half a dozen neighbourhoods, with police saying they fired tear gas during two incidents.

While the crowds were thinner, the flashmob tactics stretched police resources and still brought chaos to parts of the city for a 19th consecutive weekend. Throughout the day, police found themselves berated and heck-

led by bystanders as they made arrests, highlighting how the force has become loathed and pilloried by large parts of the population. "I'm furious," a female protester, who gave her surname as Chan, told AFP. "I want the government to disband the entire police force."

Hong Kong has been shaken by four months of massive democracy protests which have seen increasingly violent clashes between hardcore demonstrators and police, as well as regular transport disruptions.

The protests were sparked by opposition to a now-scrapped proposal to allow extraditions to mainland China, but have since morphed into a larger movement for democracy and police accountability. **AFP**



Police chase a protester in Hong Kong on Sunday

AP

Trend Slazer

Exciting time to be an actor: Lara

Actor **LARA DUTTA BHUPATHI** is all set to make her OTT debut in an untitled web series and she feels right now is a very exciting time to be an actor because there are work offers in films as well as the digital platform.

“OTT platforms are providing great content to the audience. Now, all the mainstream actors are working in web series. The lines are blurring and now an actor doesn't think in terms of whether he or she wants to concentrate only on films or on digital platform. There is so much content happening. It's a very exciting time to be in the business,” said Lara.

The forthcoming Hotstar web series also features **Karan Wahi**.



'I am excited about Abhinandan's biopic. I think the story of Balakot and Indian Air Force needs to be told. When a film like Top Gun gets released in America, an entire generation there gets inspired seeing the strength of their Forces. I feel this is an opportunity for us and also a responsibility to show the amazing work the Indian Air Force has been doing.

—Vivek Oberoi

The season 13 of the reality show **Bigg Boss** has been mired in controversies right from its launch. Many organisations, including Confederation Of All India Traders (CAIT) have sought ban on the show, raising objection over the concept of “Bed Friends Forever.” Many have alleged the show is obscene and it maligns Indian culture.

In the wake of the complaint, the Mumbai police has tightened the security outside the show host Salman Khan's house.

According to online portal Bollywood Hungama, 20 people were arrested for protesting outside **SALMAN KHAN**'s house.



Being Cruella was fun: Emma

Actor **EMMA STONE** says her take on the infamous villain in the forthcoming *Cruella* film will be very distinctive. Set in 1970, Disney's forthcoming live-action *Cruella* will delve into the backstory of *101 Dalmatians* villain Cruella de Vil, and try to find an answer to the question, “How did she get here?”

There will be comparisons with Glenn Close's avatar as the iconic Cruella de Vil in 1996's *101 Dalmatians*, but Stone says the time-line of both the films is different. She says, “It comes long before her



UK-based storyteller **EMILY HENNESSEY**'s narration of the goddess was a joyfully told tale of a powerful woman and her journey of transformation, transcendence and rebirth, says **CHAHAK MITTAL**

She is naked and intoxicated — dark and dishevelled yet terrifyingly beautiful — wearing nothing but a garland and a waistband of demon heads and a girdle of human hands, holding several weapons. With her tongue rolled out, she stomps on the prostrate body of Shiva, who is also her husband. She is the redeemer of both nature and humankind. And amid all this, even though goddess Kali's image, with skulls and corpses, represents all symbols of death and destruction, her femininity is incomparable. She presents an answer to the question — what happens when a woman says enough to all the injustice around her?

When UK-based storyteller Emily Hennessey single-handedly began narrating Kali's story and her victory against demon Raktabija on the stage at the Kathakar Storytelling Festival, there was a surge of electric energy around, swaying across the Sunder Nursery. It touched each one present in the audience and had them in awe of the goddess' grotesque yet subdued aura. It looked as though she was very much present. She made sure all the eyes were glued to her bewitching narration till she was done. And when I tell Emily that the performance was electrifying, she exclaimed, “Well, it's Kali! Isn't it?”

She began her act by questioning — How is it possible for a mother to both create and destroy? When she watches young Kartikeya fighting alone in the battlefield against Raktabija, who doesn't seem to be getting easily defeated as his name translates to 'blood-seed', she questions the gods above — Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and Shiva. And they all seem to have been “too busy” in their respective chores as Emily passes a contemporary joke at the right moment. Her story, though drawn from the colourful and ancient Hindu mythology, presented a melange of modern humour and took digs at the contemporary lifestyle.

She also showcased the demon asking the gods to make him more powerful by saying, “The world needs demons just like feast needs hunger.” And hence, a new demon emerges with every drop of blood that falls off Raktabija's body after Kartikeya finally slits his throat. At last, when nobody comes to



The Kali trance



his rescue, Parvati steps up and enters the battlefield. With the right mix of both reverence and mischief, she says, “I only have to go and kill the demon now.” Emily said, “Kali is quite a well-known goddess for her vehement strength. But I was very much interested to explore her softer side. I have heard of many different manifestations of the goddess like Parvati, Sati, Uma, who showcase their journey traversing from creation to destruction. I wanted to show how out of a motherly concern, she steps in the battlefield in the avatar of the powerful goddess, and at the same time, how a woman can destroy the world and its cruelty when the time comes.”

Emily's understanding of Kali itself made it evident of how overwhelmed she is of her style. So how did she begin telling the ancient Indian tales and how did she get fascinated by them? Well, she was 18 when she went to Nepal for a few months to work as a volunteer. “I sold the images of all the gods and goddesses for the first time then. And somehow, these stayed with me. I was curious to know what are their stories,” she said and added that it grew further when she started working with storyteller Dr Vayu Naidu, who narrated stories from Indian epics. She said, “I saw her tell the *Ramayana*, the birth of Ganesha, and a lot of epics and stories about different Indian gods and goddesses. And that really fed my fascination. Then there were a lot of trips to India too.”

She said that her fascination with Indian mythology also grew when she looked at the number of gods and goddesses present. “There are over a million of them. It's extraordinary! And they all have different manifestations of each other. They are very three-dimensional and human because even we have all these different energies within us. I found these stories so colourful, bright and cosmic and yet full of universal truths. Some of these are even love stories, which are so beautiful. These stories are very close to my heart because they are full of love and colour,” said she.

Even as though Kali triumphs over Raktabija, the gods and Shiva ponder that Parvati has drank a demon's blood, which is making her energy omnipresent and she trembles with outrage. Shiva, after a number of tricks to bring back her warmth, finally lies beneath her feet to reduce her angst.



Seeing her consort beneath her foot, Kali realises that she had gone too far. To showcase this, Emily, hitting the right note, uttered, “Oh! What happened to you husband? Why are you lying there?” and acted like nothing had happened. She also questioned the destruction around and when she asked Shiva, he said, “Oh honey! It's a long story.”

So how is it that she brings such intricate emotions so deeply and aptly? Emily said, “Before the performance, giving space for the story to be alive is very important. By not learning the script, the story would come out differently every time. For me, it just has to be alive within me. Hence, I need some time and space before bubbling over. Then, the story takes over and I don't know what's happening. It is the story that's in charge.”

The storyteller said that she reads as many versions of the same folktale as possible to gain a broader perspective. She said, “Apart from reading various versions, I also ask from people on my visits to India, especially in the temples of Kolkata. I go around asking people to tell me their versions of the same stories and then, piece together the bits of stories that I like the most to make my own version.”

Emily recalled the Kathakar festival in 2016, when she saw a performance based on Kali for the first time, which immensely inspired her. “I got instantly interested in the performer's amazing energy. When the goddess Kali came to life on stage, she was absolutely present! There was a huge and powerful fire that they lit up. The performer had seemed to completely go into a trance. His eyes were shaking as though he was completely possessed with the goddess. It was so powerful. I wanted to know what is this power that she has?” she told us.

As her narration ended, after Kali goes back to being Parvati again, Emily questioned, “And Kali? What happened to her? Where is she?” Later, she answered, “Kali is omnipresent. Time and again, she will come when the moment is right and fight off a thousand Raktabija-like demons in the world.”

There are various versions of the same epics but they have all been told through a general perspective or mostly by the men in it. However, recently, there have been authors who have penned the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* through the perspectives of Draupadi and Kunti, and Sita. However, Kali seems new. She has often been misunderstood and not been explored much. Emily said, “It is always important to tell the story of a woman and be aware of the gender inequality that we have had for centuries. Telling the story through a woman's perspective also fights this very patriarchal way of collecting, writing or telling stories. So this is a challenge. I just open my heart and do it. I just let them speak for themselves as humans and as women.”

Well, Emily's performance certainly seemed like a joyfully told tale of a woman and her journey of transformation, transcendence and rebirth.

Runway of the millennials

Young Guns, an initiative to empower the young designers, enabled them to showcase their diverse collection at IFW day 4

They are young yet old in the experiences that they shoulder. They are technologically savvy yet emotionally distant. Their gadgets often last longer than their relationships. Whatever you say about the millennials, the opposite is also equally true. And it is this band of people and their spirit of achieving a sense of balance in their lives that formed the inspiration for FDCI's India Fashion Week 2019 day 4. ‘Young Guns’ an initiative to encourage young designers gave them a free run of the ramp.

Designer Niharika Gupta often raided her brother's wardrobe as a child, drawn to the comfortable fabrics and functionality of menswear silhouettes. Her label, Notebook, gave contemporary update by re-engineering shirting fabrics and tailoring techniques into a line of polished urban uniforms. Her workwear and casuals were inspired by Indian and Middle-East. The collection was a balance of sophisticated formal cuts and utilitarian details with pops of colour and comfort.

Whereas fashion designer Sameer Madan's collection encapsulated or rather entrapped a periodic transition. He said, “This spring/summer, we make the old meet the new, concocting a melange of renaissance with the cosmopolitan. An emotion as timeless as each individual design. The renegade of fusion folklore as we embark upon this reminiscent journey and contribute our a lit-

tle token to the time capsule.” His collection aimed to metamorphose basic into boisterous, simple into sophisticated. Madan's agenda was to transform beauty into simplicity by engulfing complexity in a way which looks subtle.

From using handwoven fabrics to natural dyes, right down to circular textiles derived from recycled PET bottles, designer Aman Singh fused Indian craft techniques with sustainable materials to create modern wardrobe mainstays. Singh's Bareek amalgamated two distinct craft elements, namely *Jamdhani* from West Bengal and *Ikat* from Telangana. The zany yet sharp collection propelled itself straight out of a self-written graphic sci-fi novel titled *Intergalactic Luum*. Inspired by the motifs reminiscent of old-school arcade games, the collection featured distant star clusters, exacting aerial battles, mysterious nebulas and a certain lone ranger named LUUM, all of which find place in this space saga. He said, “*Intergalactic Luum* will be a prêt-à-porter line that is a distinct sub-label and will be placed in a segment above the label's ‘Bareek Essentials’ line that focusses on menswear quality basics, made of natural fabrics ranging from Khadi to GOTSTM certified organic cotton.”

His team works with under-utilised craft clusters, value-adding to their dead stock and also joins hands with societies/groups that are known for mastering a particular craft. Another collection, *Beyond the Clouds* by Countrymade drew inspiration from nature in the designs and motifs.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar



WEBBED



MODERN LOVE

An unlikely friendship. A lost love resurfaced. A marriage at its turning point. An uncertain date. An unconventional new family. These are unique stories about joys and tribulations of love, each inspired by a real-life personal essay from the beloved New York Times column. Starring Anne Hathaway, the series releases on October 18 on Amazon Prime Video.



LIVING WITH YOURSELF

Burned out on life, Miles undergoes a strange procedure at a strip mall spa and wakes to find he's been replaced by a better version of himself. Created by Timothy Greenberg and starring Paul Rudd, Aisling Bea and Desmin Borges, the series will release on October 18 on Netflix.



JUST ADD MAGIC

When Kelly and her two best friends stumble upon a mysterious cookbook, they discover that the book's recipes are far from ordinary — magical. Starring Olivia Sanabia, Abby Donnelly, the series releases on October 25 on Amazon Prime Video.



Bamboo huts with thatched roofs, open areas with cots and trees in front, a vegetable garden in the backyard, walls covered with a mixture of cow dung, dirt and grass, *rangolis* at the entrance, hospitable people with a shine and curiosity in their eyes... all this, and more are noticeable in the sweep of an eye when one enters Mirzapur, recently made famous by a web series.

But while that is the reel, there are stories of hope, development and progress, which form the warp and weft of the real in the area, which remains ignored as it is imagined, falsely, of course, that the rural sector lacks in entrepreneurship because the majority of the populace is illiterate. However, delving deeper reveals that there are a number of innovative minds who can do wonders when provided the right guidance. And specially given the fact that there is an increase in the number of unemployed youth each year and if there is an emphasis on changing the outlook from a job-seeker to a creator, it can transform the area. Development Alternatives, a social enterprise, is working towards the same goal through its *Work 4 Progress* programme, which is a platform for encouraging entrepreneurship.

The programme commenced in 2017 and since then, it has impacted several lives. We were here to witness that change and ensure that other people could see the transformation in Mirzapur, which is far-removed from the gun and mafia culture perpetuated by the eponymous series.

The journey began from a school in Kantit Gramin village. From afar, we could hear girls laughing, giggling and clapping among themselves. When we

BE THE CHANGE

A community programme in Mirzapur has made palpable difference in empowering anyone who has a workable idea to become an entrepreneur, discovers SAKSHI SHARMA

entered, they were so excited to take this forward that they all shouted, “Sister, we will first sing a song.” This was followed by details of how the programme had empowered them. Mamta Yadav, an 18-year-old, said, “We now understand the role education plays in shaping a child’s future. Not only this, we are also aware about child marriage and child rights.” She recalled an incident where she, along with a group of girls, stood for the rights of an underage girl from a nearby village, who was being forced to get married. As she shared this, the classroom echoed with claps from every corner. Another girl, Kavita Patel, a student of BA first year, said, “The programme has empowered us and we feel more confident now. Earlier, we fumbled for words even when we discussed our basic

needs.” However, when asked about their parents’ reaction to all this, a girl from the corner of the class promptly answered, “*Mere papa ab mere dost ban gaye hai* (My father is my friend now).” She explained that earlier their parents didn’t allow them to study and wanted them to invest their time in household chores.

To solve this issue, an inclusive programme was conducted for father-daughter and mother-daughter separately to make the parents understand the importance of education. Though initially rigid for about six months to a year, they finally understood the need to adapt to the changing times. The transition from the programme was such that the girls who could barely speak for themselves began fighting for the rights of



others. The ones who had been confined within the four walls were now saying out loud that they wanted to become an IAS officer, a teacher, a doctor or a singer.

We then headed towards a closed room in the narrow lanes of the village filled with mud and cow dung. It was Tara Mani and his wife, Malti Devi’s home, which was more like a home-cum-shop, as it had a bed on one side and machines on the other. They had a small business where they sold vermilion. Tara said, “Earlier, I only made *sin-door* boxes but the programme has made us aware about the Startup Village Enterprise Programme (SVEP), which provides loan to the rural women to motivate them for small-scale businesses.” So Malti took a loan and set up a machine to make vermilion too. She

added, “Our vermilion and its box has a special shine. People from far away come to buy it.” As she said this, her head became a tad more alert, her shoulders straightened up and there was no mistaking the hint of pride in her statement.

Another entrepreneur was Asha Devi, a strong-headed middle-aged woman, whose success clearly reflected in her personality. Her idea had come to fruition, which also added revenue to her family earnings. In March 2018, she decided to set up a vermicompost enterprise, which now runs successfully and was supported by the programme during ideation. Today, she even makes profit out of her business and runs it without debts. She said, “A lot of effort has gone into bringing this business to the level where it is today,” and made sure that we were made aware about her online presence before we took her leave.

While the assistance from the programme helped, the people themselves were not lacking in enterprise. The way to Mamta Devi’s ice-cream manufacturing unit of Dhanipatti village might not have a proper road as there were was a smattering of bricks on the wet mud to ensure that people did not soil their footwear or their feet but the petite woman had expanded her business to employ seven people. “I am not stopping here. I also want to set-up a chips packaging machine,” she said as we all looked at her in wonder.

The day also saw a village entrepreneurship fair — *Taragram Mela* in the National Convent Public School — where people from all walks of life who had started something of their own were present. Clearly, there is no stopping of ideas.

The eternal connection

Meditation and yoga can lead to such a level of remembrance that the soul can relate to god silently and personally without needing any physical image or idol, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

In spirituality, remembrance is said to be the highest state of connection, wherein an individual recollects their divine self which is the supreme soul. This releases a transformative energy, thereby, empowering the individual for a spiritual consciousness. Most of the people recognise this need when they want to be more peaceful, respectful and happier in life. However, the human consciousness is so overloaded with negative energies such as anger, fear, arrogance, possessiveness that from time to time this negativity explodes in emotional, verbal and physical violence.

We are so used to the violence in the world nowadays, that we have accepted it as a norm of life. But, there is also an instinct for harmony and peace, deep within the human spirit. That’s the reason many people consistently strive for peace and mutual respect.

However, fears and grievances hijack a person into a state of turmoil and stress even if they don’t want to. Under such a scenario, meditation works as a healing process that helps the person reconnect with his original self through understanding and remembrance. Through the remembrance of the Supreme soul, the human spirit can heal, purify and liberate itself from the treacherous habits that constantly sabotage its life. It is the basis of relationship of souls with their master — the Supreme soul. The steps for such remembrance are understanding, connection, concentration and absorption. When one absorbs themselves in the pure being of God, the divine energy is transferred into one’s body which purifies and empowers the self. This absorption helps the self to re-emerge its original qualities.

To remember the one who is eternally loving, truthful and peaceful, is called the art of Rajyoga. Traditionally, it has been said that Rajyoga is the most difficult yoga but it is probably the easiest wherein the self, soul and God are understood as a form of light. Though they have separate forms but are united through thought and feeling.

This connection with God is based on subtle love and not on anything visual or physical. There is no discrimination on the basis of nationality, culture and religion because it is a connection of pure feeling. For inner liberation, such kind of remembrance is paramount. It is regarded as the truest form of spirituality for cleaning and fulfilling the soul. One should not forget that God is available and accessible to all. You don’t need any position, role or nationality to connect with him instead the only thing that matters is a clean motive.

Yoga has become a very common word today. However, the word remembrance pinpoints the relationship with the Divine. A relationship that includes the feeling of a companion. After the soul connects with God, one is able to concentrate on the eternal friend’s divine qualities and absorb them within themselves. So, beyond meditation and yoga is such remembrance where the soul is able to relate to God silently, personally and constantly, beyond any physical or subtle image, and feels fully connected and empowered.



Why train your dog with food rewards? A growing body of research says it’s the easiest and most effective way to train.

“Using treats during training is the best way to guarantee that your dog will repeat the behavior you want,” says the American Kennel Club.

Other methods don’t work as well, experts say, and can even harm your dog and the pet-owner relationship.

Erica Feuerbacher, an assistant professor in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science at Virginia Tech, did a study that compared a food reward to the reward of petting and praise. Dogs were clear about what they preferred: “They’ll work harder and respond faster for food than for social interaction,” she says.

Dogs do love to be with us, but our monkey chatter doesn’t mean that much to them: Feuerbacher has found that dogs will stay near a person who’s praising them for the same amount of time as if they’re being ignored.

And if you want your dog to obey just because they love you, get real.

“If only it was like that!” says Zazie Todd, author of the forthcoming *Wag: The Science of Making Your Dog Happy* (Greystone Books, 2020). “If

Feed a little more

Using treats during training is the best way to guarantee that your dog will repeat the behaviour you want, suggest experts



your boss stopped paying you, you’d probably stop going to work pretty quickly. You need to motivate your dog too.”

Dog trainers also talk about life rewards like getting to play or go for a walk. These can be useful, especially to maintain

behaviours you’ve already trained, but are more complicated and take longer.

“For most everyday behav-

iours that ordinary people want to teach, food is quicker and easier,” says Todd.

“You want to find a trainer-er who’s using modern reward-based methods, and that means they’ll be using food to train a dog,” she says.

Consider the alternatives that don’t involve rewards. Punishment also works to change behaviour. After all, in nature, animals that don’t avoid painful experiences aren’t going to live long.

However, research has shown that using punishment in dog training has serious side effects. “The risks include fear, anxiety and stress,” says Todd, “and they include an increased risk of aggression, because the dog may react badly to punishment or the threat of punishment.”

It also affects the human-animal bond. One study found that dogs trained with aversive methods looked at their owners less frequently than dogs trained with positive reinforcement. That’s the opposite of what you want when you’re training. “They associate you with bad things, and become fearful of you,” says Feuerbacher.

Although some trainers use language that obscures this, Feuerbacher says that if you look closely, you’ll see that what’s actually getting their

results is something aversive, like a leash jerk. “Often their ‘energy’ is a looming physical threat that bad things will happen if you don’t comply,” she says.

By contrast, giving a dog food has good side effects.

“If you have a fearful dog, using food is especially important because it builds a positive association through Pavlovian conditioning with the person providing it,” Feuerbacher says. Translation: The way to a dog’s heart really is through its stomach.

Some pet owners say their dog won’t work for food; Feuerbacher says those dogs might be overfed. Food used for training should be part of their ration of calories, not an addition. So feed a little less to make sure your dog isn’t too stuffed to want more.

While some dogs will work for just a portion of their kibble, for most, you have to offer something better. Feuerbacher says, “Break out the spray cheese or liverwurst — people may need to be creative.” Research has shown that even dogs get tired of the same flavour all the time.

Also, it’s possible for a dog to be too frightened to eat, so if you have a fearful dog, avoid training in a situation where he’s overwhelmed by unfamiliar sights and sounds.

—AP

“We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world.” —Gautama Buddha

EYE DROPS TREAT EYE DISEASES

Researchers have identified the presence of a specific type of antibody, called anti-citrullinated protein autoantibodies or ACPAs, in human tear fluid.

They also demonstrated that patients with dry eye disease experienced reduced signs and symptoms of the condition in response to a new eye drop treatment — made from pooled human antibodies — that targets ACPAs, said the study published in the journal *The Ocular Surface*.

“The burden of autoimmune dry eye is much greater than just having an occasional feeling of dryness, it can severely compromise quality of life to the point of disability and can compromise a person’s vision,” said Indian-origin researcher and study’s author Sandeep Jain, Professor at the University of Illinois, Chicago. In the study, the researchers identified ACPAs as another cause of eye inflammation that also contributes to the development of these webs, which Jain calls “a vicious cycle of inflammation.” The new eye drops treat dry eye disease by knocking the immune system out of this cycle.



INCREASED STRESS LINKED WITH ACNE

Poor dietary habits, increased stress and harsh skincare routines were among the most significant factors associated with acne, according to a study. The research presented at the 28th European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology Congress in Madrid evaluated the exposure to different worsening factors on acne on more than 6,700 participants across six countries.

“For the first time, this study allows us to identify the most important exposome factors relating to acne from patient questioning prior to any treatment prescription,” said the study’s lead researcher Brigitte Dreno from the University Hospital of Nantes in France.

The results showed that significantly more individuals with acne (48.2 per cent) consumed dairy products daily compared to individuals who did not (38.8 per cent).

Surprisingly 11 per cent of acne sufferers consume whey proteins vs seven per cent without acne and 11.9 per cent of acne sufferers consume anabolic steroids versus 3.2 per cent without acne. Exposure to pollution or stress was also more frequently observed in participants with acne.



WATCH YOUR WEIGHT OR FACE CANCER RISK

Researchers have found that being overweight before the age of 40 could increase the risk of various cancers in adults.

“Obesity is an established risk factor for several cancers. In this study, we have focussed on the degree, timing and duration of overweight and obesity in relation to cancer risk,” said study author Tone Bjorge, Professor at University of Bergen in Norway.

The researchers used data for 2,20,000 individuals from the Me-Can study, with participants from Norway, Sweden and Austria. Around 27,881 individuals were diagnosed with cancer during follow-up, of which 9,761 (35 per cent) were obesity-related.

The study showed that if you were overweight before age 40, the risk of developing cancer increases by: 70 per cent for endometrial cancer, 58 per cent for male renal-cell cancer, 29 per cent for male colon cancer and 15 per cent for all obesity-related cancers (both sexes).



LIGHT SMOKING TOO DAMAGES LUNGS

People who smoke fewer than five cigarettes a day cause long-term damage to their lungs, according to a new research.

“Many people assume that smoking a few cigarettes a day isn’t so bad but it turns out that the difference in loss of lung function between someone who smokes five cigarettes a day versus two packs a day is relatively small,” said study lead author Elizabeth Oelsner, Assistant Professor at Columbia University Vagelos College in the US.

The researchers could see differences in lung function among light smokers (less than five cigarettes per day) and heavy smokers (more than 30 per day).

Their analysis found that lung function in light smokers declines at a rate much closer to that of heavy smokers, as compared to non-smokers. This means that a light smoker could lose about the same amount of lung function in one year as a heavy smoker might lose in nine months.

According to the researchers, light smokers may have a greater risk of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).



PHYSICAL HEALTH SEEN AS MORE IMPORTANT

A majority of Indians, at 75 per cent, are preoccupied about their physical well-being, over mental at 62 per cent, a survey by global market research agency Ipsos has found.

The survey, conducted to coincide with the World Mental Health Day, found 64 per cent Indians believe that is equally important to have both, physical and mental health.

Indians want a clear shift in the handling and perception of mental illness. As many as 64 per cent Indians want the stigma attached with mental health issues to go and they would prefer if it was treated like any other illness. Further, 74 per cent Indians exhort adoption of a more tolerant attitude towards those with mental illness in the society.

The survey also shows a more positive and empathetic change coming about towards those with signs of mental health conditions with 64 per cent urban Indians believe seeing a mental health specialist or therapist, as a sign of strength.





Manju Rani (in red) punches Ekaterina Paltceva during World Championship final PTI

PTI ■ ULAN-UDE

Indian boxer Manju Rani's stupendous debut run at the Women's World Championships ended with a Silver medal on Sunday after she lost the light flyweight (48kg) final to Russia's Ekaterina Paltceva here. The Haryana-boxer, who was seeded sixth, went down 1-4 to the second-seeded local favourite in the first final of the day. Rani, who turns 20 on Saturday, was the lone Indian to make the

Manju's run ends with Silver

finals after six-time champion MC Mary Kom (51kg), Jamuna Boro (54kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) settled for Bronze medals. In case of Borgohain, it was her second successive third-place finish. There was very little separating Rani and her rival, both of whom looked to attack in the first round. The Russian stood out for her near perfect left hooks in the opening three minutes. In the second round, the Indian connected some good straights and seemed to have the upperhand over the crowd favourite. The proceedings slowed down in the final three minutes when both the boxers adopted a cautious approach. There was quite a bit of

holding, requiring the referee's intervention quite a few times. However, at the end of it the Russian emerged victorious perhaps for her a shade sharper reflexes. The Indian contingent was however visibly upset after the Paltceva's hand was raised as the victor. Rani broke into the national camp only this year by winning the

national crown for Punjab after not getting the selection nod in Haryana. Earlier this year, she won a Silver medal on debut at the prestigious Strandja Memorial Tournament, one of Europe's oldest and most competitive boxing events. Rani hails from Rithal Phogat village in the Rohtak district of Haryana. The youngster lost her father, a Border Security Force officer, to cancer in 2010.



Joginder Narwal (Dabang Delhi), Fazel Atrachali (U Mumba), Pawan Sehrawat (B'luru Bulls), Nitesh Kumar (UP Yodhya), Dharmaraj Cherlathan (Haryana Steelers), Esmail Nabibakhsh (Bengal Warriors) pose with the PKL-7 trophy before the start of knockouts

SANJAY FINDS BRACE IN INDIA'S WIN
JOHOR BAHRU: Sanjay struck twice in Indian junior hockey team's dominating 8-2 win over New Zealand in Sultan of Johor Cup, here on Sunday. Apart from Sanjay (17', 22'), Dilpreet Singh (6'), Shilanand Lakra (14'), Mandeep Mor (22'), Suman Beck (45'), Pratap Lakra (50') and Sudeep Chirmako (51') scored for India while Dylan Thomas (28', 44') notched two goals for New Zealand. It was India's second win in the tournament and they face Japan in their next round robin league-stage match on Tuesday.

UK ROUT SIKKIM BY 253 RUNS
DEHRADUN: Medium pacer Sunny Rana returned with a career-best 5/26 as Uttarakhand bowlers bundled out Sikkim for just 52 to script a massive 253-run victory in their Plate Group Vijay Hazare Trophy fixture here on Sunday. A target of 306 proved too big for the Sikkim batsmen who tumbled like a pack of cards to fold their innings in 21.1 overs with Rana being the wrecker-in-chief and was well-supported by Mayank Mishra (2/2) and Pradeep Chamoli (2/15). Uttarakhand (26 points) jumped to the top of the Plate Group standings with a two-point lead over Pondicherry, who however have a match in hand.

MAHARASHTRA BEAT HP BY 3 WICKETS
VADODARA: Azim Kazi produced a timely half century to guide Maharashtra to a thrilling three-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in a Group B match of the Vijay Hazare. After Maharashtra suffered a top-order batting collapse while chasing a modest 202, Azim scored 84 off 82 balls to take side past the finish line. After his dismissal, Nikhil Naik (32 not out) and Shamsuzzama Kazi (21 not out) played a late cameo to took the side home with eight balls to spare at the Gujarat State Fertilizer Corporation Ground. Arpit Guleria (2/24) was the pick of the bowlers for Himachal Pradesh.

22 DALYERS NAMED FOR NAT'L CAMP
NEW DELHI: Hockey India on Sunday named 22 players for the national coaching camp ahead of the crucial FIH Olympic Qualifiers to be held on November 1 and 2 in Bhubaneswar. The players will report to chief coach Graham Reid for the camp that commences from today at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. The team is coming from a successful Belgium Tour where they beat the hosts thrice (2-0, 2-1, 5-1) and also emerged victorious twice against Spain (6-1, 5-1). They will take on Russia in the crucial two-match Tokyo Olympic Qualifiers next month.

JAPAN FLOOR SCOTS TO REACH WC Q/F
YOKOHAMA: Japan's "Ferraris" hit top gear on Sunday as the hosts beat Scotland 28-21 in a barnstorming Rugby World Cup clash to create history by reaching the quarter-finals. Rampaging wingers Kotaro Matsushima and Kenki Fukuoka did the damage for Japan, who survived a late fightback to advance as Pool A winners along with Ireland. The Brave Blossoms will face two-time world champions South Africa in Tokyo next weekend after making it a perfect four wins out of four, roared on by a crowd of 67,000. AGENCIES

Dutee closes season with 200m Gold

PTI ■ RANCHI

Dutee Chand completed a sprint double in the season-ending 59th National Open Athletics Championships, clocking the fastest time in 200m by an Indian this year with a 23.17 second burst here on Sunday. Having set a national record in the 100m on Friday, Dutee added the half-lapper Gold to her collection, showing her challenger Archana Suseendran (23.41) a clean pair of heels. The Odisha athlete not only topped Archana's time of 23.18 seconds clocked in the AFI Grand Prix in Patiala on August 16 but also came up with her own second fastest time behind the 23.00 timed in the Asian Games last year. Dutee was also adjudged the best female athlete while shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, who broke his own national record on Saturday, was named best athlete in the men's category. There was intense competition at the triple jump pit, even in Asian Games Gold medalist Arprinder Singh's absence. Abdulla Aboobacker challenged his Services team-mate Karthik Unnikrishnan till the very last jump in an event that saw the top six competitors cross the 16m mark. Karthik Unnikrishnan, who took the lead with a 16.61m in the third



Dutee Chand celebrates after win PTI
round, leapt 16.78m on his final try to win the Gold. Chinta Yadav emerged a surprise winner of the women's 3000m steeplechase, outspringing her Railways team-mate Parul Chaudhary in a time of 10 minutes 11.70 seconds. Railways' PU Chitra was another athlete who completed the double, adding the women's 800m crown to the 1500m title she won earlier this week. With Lili Das dropping out, Chitra did not have to worry much in winning the two-lap race in 2 minutes 04.59 seconds.

AFP ■ ROME/OSLO

Italy became the second team to qualify for Euro 2020 after a 2-0 win over Greece on Saturday, while three-time champions Spain edged closer to the finals despite conceding a stoppage-time equaliser away to Norway.

Chelsea midfielder Jorginho dispatched a second-half penalty as Italy, wearing green kits for just the second time in history, registered a seventh straight win in Group J.

The Azzurri, who failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, added a second in Rome on 78 minutes through a deflected strike from Juventus forward Federico Bernardeschi.

Roberto Mancini's side joined Belgium in the draw for next year's finals, where Italy will play their first two group games at the Stadio Olimpico.

"We managed to create a team in a short period of time. It wasn't easy but you have to thank the players, who have quickly developed an understanding between themselves," said Mancini, who took over as Italy coach 18 months ago.

"It's a team with character that fights and plays with the ball but one that must also improve. Now we have a year to try and get better."

"We have a lot of work but we're not very far from the best European teams. I'm happy and proud to have helped the national team come through a tough patch."

Spain dropped their first points in Group F as Joshua King converted a 94th-minute spot-kick to rescue a 1-1 draw for Norway following a foul by Kepa Arrizabalaga on Omar



Italy teammates Marco Verratti and Lorenzo Insigne stare each other before the start of second half of play during Euro 2020 qualifiers AP

Elabdellaoui. The visitors led when Saul Niguez slammed home from 20 yards moments after half-time but Spain were denied a seventh win in a row as King's equaliser kept Norway in the running. "It's a real pain to lose points in the final seconds. It's complicated

to play against a team who knew that if they lost they were pretty much out," said Spain captain Ramos.

Norway last qualified for a major tournament at the 2000 European Championship and are fourth in the group, four points adrift of neighbours Sweden with

three games to play. Sebastian Larsson netted two spot-kicks as Sweden cruised to a 4-0 rout of Malta to reclaim second place behind Spain. Marcus Danielson broke the deadlock on 11 minutes in Ta' Qali and home skipper Andrei Agius also scored an own goal.

Neymar limps off in friendly draw

AFP ■ SINGAPORE

Neymar's return to Champions League action may be delayed after the Paris Saint-Germain forward limped off after just 12 minutes of Brazil's friendly against Nigeria on Sunday.

The 27-year-old, who played the full 90 minutes against Senegal on Thursday, clutched his hamstring after eight minutes and was replaced by Philippe Coutinho shortly after.

Neymar, who was playing his 101st international, is now a doubt for PSG's Champions League meeting with Club Brugge on October 22. He has missed the first two rounds



Neymar returns to dugout after getting injured

AFP ■ SUZUKA

Valtteri Bottas jumped from third to first with an electric start to win the Japanese Grand Prix on Sunday ahead of Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel and Mercedes teammate Lewis Hamilton.

With only Bottas now able to overtake Hamilton in the standings, Mercedes clinched an unprecedented sixth successive drivers'-constructors' world championship double.

"I'm happy, very happy," said flying Finn Bottas, who ended a six-month wait for his third victory of 2019 after winning the season-opener in Australia and the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in April.

"Starting third isn't easy. I had a really nice start, managed to get the lead and then the pace was super good, I could really control the race," he added.

"I'm really proud to be part of the team. A sixth title is really impressive."

"Firstly congratulations to the team," said Hamilton, who now leads the drivers' standings by 64 points from Bottas. "That's the main point. I just wanted to bring home good points for the team."

Emotional Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff dedicated his team's achievement to Formula One legend Niki Lauda, who died earlier this year.

"We want to dedicate this to Niki because he's just been such an important part from the beginning of the journey," said Wolff.

Victorious Valtteri

Bottas wins Japanese Grand Prix as Mercedes clinch record sixth successive constructors' title



Winner Valtteri Bottas, right in white cap, and third placed Lewis Hamilton, left, celebrate with Mercedes crew at their garage after the Japanese F1 Grand Prix at Suzuka Circuit in Suzuka AP

Ferrari had enjoyed a front row lock-out in the morning qualifying session caused by Typhoon Hagibis but that was as good as "Super Sunday" got for them as their race unravelled right from the start.

Vettel twitched before the lights went out and his hesitation enabled the fast starting Bottas to leapfrog from third into the lead.

"It was my mistake," admitted Vettel who escaped a penalty for his false start. "It was worse than a poor start. It was a really poor start. With the lack of pace today, second place today was probably the maximum." Meanwhile Leclerc's miserable day was completed by being relegated from sixth place to seventh behind Daniel Ricciardo's Renault.

Ramos sets Spain record

AFP ■ OSLO

Sergio Ramos broke the Spanish international appearances record on Saturday as he won his 168th cap in a 1-1 draw against Norway to overtake Iker Casillas.

The Spain captain was named in the starting line-up in Oslo for the Euro 2020 qualifier by coach Robert Moreno, 14 years since making his debut in a 3-0 friendly win over China.

The 33-year-old was part of the Spain sides which lifted the 2010 World Cup, Euro 2008 and Euro 2012 titles.

He took over the Spain captaincy in 2016 after goal-keeper Casillas' final match. The centre-back equalled

Casillas' mark of 167 games last month against the Faroe Islands.

"All that is personal is a little secondary," said Ramos after the game.

"I would have happily traded this 168th cap for a victory. It was not the case. But this record is a great reward after so many years and it's a great source of huge pride.

"I am emotional every time I put on this shirt. That will not change and I hope to continue doing so for many years."

Ramos is now only eight caps short of the European record held by Italian stopper Gianluigi Buffon (176) and 16 adrift of Egyptian Ahmed Hassan's world record of 184.

Romania remain a point behind Sweden following a 3-0 win in the Faroe Islands secured by second-half goals from George Puscas, Ionut Mitrita and Claudiu Keseru.



SCHMEICHEL STARS

Kasper Schmeichel produced a series of excellent saves as Denmark defeated Switzerland 1-0 to climb level with the Republic of Ireland in Group D.

Leicester City goalkeeper Schmeichel pulled off superb stops to deny Granit Xhaka, Admir Mehmedi and Ricardo Rodriguez before Yussuf Poulsen grabbed an 84th-minute winner.

The Danes moved up to 12 points alongside group leaders Ireland, who drew 0-0 away to Georgia, while Switzerland are

four points off the pace but with a game in hand.

Mick McCarthy's Ireland couldn't establish any momentum earlier in the day in Tbilisi and were left frustrated by wayward finishing from their few opportunities to break the deadlock.

Bosnia and Herzegovina reignited their qualification hopes in Italy's group with a 4-1 win over second-placed Finland.

A brace from Juventus midfielder Miralem Pjanic and goals from Izet Hajrovic and Armin Hodzic pushed Bosnia to within two points of Finland.

Armenia blew the chance to move level with the Finns as Liechtenstein substitute Yanik Frick cancelled out Tigran Barseghyan's effort in a 1-1 draw in Vaduz.

Player coordination will be key in playoffs

The experience of playing with Haryana Steelers in Pro Kabaddi League season seven has been simply incredible and we are very excited to play against U Mumba in the playoffs in Ahmedabad today. The team has gelled very well throughout the season and our hard work has paid rich dividends. We have gone through ups and downs, but the important thing is that all players have always believed in their ability.

We had hopes of finishing in the first two spots when the team had a long winning streak during the league, but unfortunately, we couldn't achieve direct qualification for the semi-finals. However, it doesn't make a big difference for us as we can win the quarter-finals and reach the last four stage. All teams are equal in this competition, so it doesn't matter which opponent we face at whichever stage of the tournament. We will try to do our best in every match we play.

There is certainly a different feel to a playoff match. We have to be mentally ready for the fact that we can be out of the tournament after a single loss. We cannot afford to make too many mistakes in the knockouts. These are crucial matches. So, we have to be very careful with the way we approach each and every move during the matches. We will work out our strategies and follow them properly.

There will be a slight change in our training regime for the playoff matches. We have played exceedingly well during the tournament, so we don't need to change much in our game. We will just focus on what we have been doing right throughout this edition and we are confident that we will pull through in all tough situations.

Our captain Dharmaraj Cheralathan keeps talking and motivating us during tight



—PRASHANTH KUMAR RAI

matches. The players of the team have also gained experience as the season has progressed, so all of them have also become equipped to thrive in pressure situations.

Our offense and defense has been terrific throughout the season. We will rectify our mistakes after every match. However, if I have to point out one aspect which should work on is coordination between the players. I feel coordination on the mat will be the key in the playoffs. The team which coordinates well with each other has been triumphant most times in PKL-7. So, we will focus on talking to each other during the playoff matches.

I was in the Haryana team in the fifth season. I have played with Vikash Kandola and Dharmaraj Cheralathan for a few years, so I have a great understanding with them on the mat. All of us complement each other very well. We will try our best to reach the final. After working so hard throughout the tournament, we shouldn't stumble in the last stage. The team has made multiple comebacks in this edition and therefore we are aware that a match is never over until the final whistle.

(The writer represents Haryana Steelers in Pro Kabaddi League season 7)

2-0! India win series

Virat & Co crush South Africa by an innings and 137 runs to seal record consecutive 11th series at home

PTI ■ PUNE

The Indian juggernaut continued to roll as the hosts humiliated South Africa by an innings and 137 runs in the second Test to clinch a record 11th consecutive series victory at home, here on Sunday.

The struggling South Africa batsmen surrendered yet again against the Indian bowlers, who asserted their supremacy in all conditions.

The comprehensive victory, coming on the fourth day, has consolidated India's top position in the World Test Championship table. India now have 200 points in their kitty, a handsome 140 points away from nearest-rival New Zealand.

Competing in his 50th Test as captain, Virat Kohli has now led India to their 11th consecutive series at home, a world record.

After being asked to follow-on, South Africa were all-out for 189 in 67.2 overs just after the tea break.

Following a superb effort from the batsmen, it was an all-round effort from India's five-pronged bowling unit with comeback man Umesh Yadav claiming 3 for 22.

Ravindra Jadeja (3/52), Ravichandran Ashwin (2/45), Mohammed Shami (1/34) and Ishant Sharma (1/17) played their part in the comprehensive victory.

Like in the first innings, Vernon Philander (37) and Maharaj (22) again came together to delay the inevitable adding 56 runs in 21.2 overs.

Once Philander was caught down the leg-side by Wriddhiman Saha, the resistance was over in a flash.

In the morning, the stodgy Dean Elgar (48 off 72 balls) put up some stiff resistance before Ravichandran Ashwin (2/45) snuffed him out, in what was a decisive blow to the Proteas, just before lunch.

After going wicket-less in the first innings, Ishant Sharma (1/17 struck with the very second delivery of the morning, a full-length in-dipper that struck Aiden Markram's pads (0) and umpire Nigel Llong had no hesitation in raising his finger.

The opener had the ignominy of bagging a 'pair' in this Test.

However it was Wriddhiman Saha's superb keeping skills that had everyone on the edge of their seats. He showed why he is so highly-rated in world cricket.

On the third morning during South African first innings, poor Theunis de Bruyn (8) had suffered trying to play an expansive cover drive off Umesh Yadav (1/14 off 5



Indian captain Virat Kohli, center, celebrates with teammates after winning the second Test against South Africa in Pune on Sunday



Umesh Yadav celebrates after taking wicket of Kagiso Rabada during fourth day play

I owe Saha treat for stunning catches: Umesh

PTI ■ PUNE

Paceman Umesh Yadav said he owed Wriddhiman Saha a "treat" since the wicketkeeper plucked catches out of thin air when his leg-side deliveries could have gone to the boundary line, in the second Test.

Umesh returned figures of 3 for 22 in South Africa's second innings and the pacer admitted that the credit for his first two wickets entirely goes to Saha for his brilliant display behind the stumps.

"I think I should treat him for those wickets down leg-side and that first catch, and I think those two wickets are *Wriddhi bhai's* wickets," Umesh said after the match.

Saha's superb keeping skills once again stole the show. On the third morning during South African first innings, poor Theunis de Bruyn (8) tried playing an expansive cover drive off Umesh but a diving Saha held a sensational catch in-front of the first slip.

And on the fourth day again, Saha pulled off two stunners down the leg-side off Umesh's bowling in South Africa's second innings to dismiss De Bruyn and Vernon Philander.

"When you put the ball outside leg stump you think it'll be a boundary, but if there is a little bit chance to convert a catch, we know he will take it," Umesh said of Saha.

Meanwhile Saha, who was making a comeback in the Test playing XI after being sidelined for more than a year, said keeping against quality pacers at nets makes life easy for him during match situations.

"The ball wobbles for all three — Umesh, Ishant, Shami. We practice for that. But ultimately you have to come into the match and do it," he said.

"Our trainers help us out with stretches, ice-baths, and we are trained for the match-day really well, so credit to them for my fitness as well as my wicket-keeping performance," added Saha.

Youngsters need to be better than us'

PUNE: There is no dearth of talent in India but the youngsters have a fair idea that they have to be better than the existing bunch of seasoned campaigners to break into the national side, reckons Umesh Yadav. The Vidarbha speedster feels that the current lot has gained rich experience over the years and is setting the benchmark for the next batch of players.

"Most of the boys in this set-up, at least 7-8 have played 40 plus Tests. So when the youngsters, who are coming up, see the kind of hard yards seniors are putting in, it's not easy for them. They know that they need to get better than us to be in the side," Umesh said after the match.

MOST CONSECUTIVE TEST SERIES WINS AT HOME					
Team	Series	Period			
India	11	Feb2013-Oct 2019			
Australia	10	Nov 1994-Nov 2000			
Australia	10	July 2004-Nov 2008			
West Indies	8	March 1976-Feb 1986			
England	7	May 2009-May 2012			
South Africa	7	March 1998-Nov 2001			
MOST WINS AS SKIPPER IN FIRST 50 TESTS					
Skipper	P	W	L	D	Success%
Steve Waugh (AUS)	50	37	8	5	79.00
Ricky Ponting (AUS)	50	35	6	9	79.00
Virat Kohli (IND)	50	30	10	10	70.00
Faisal Features					

VIRAT KOHLI BECAME THE FIRST INDIAN CAPTAIN TO ENFORCE A FOLLOW-ON AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

ENGLAND WERE THE LAST SIDE THAT HAD ENFORCED A FOLLOW-ON AGAINST THE PROTEAS IN JULY 2008 AT LORD'S

overs) that Saha had plucked from thin air in-front of the first slip.

On the fourth morning, De Bruyn tried playing a delicate glance after Umesh had drifted on the pads. To his horror, he saw an airborne Saha pull off an acrobatic

stunner that left everyone stunned.

Elgar and skipper Faf du Plessis (5 off 54 balls) added 49 runs and were ready to show patience, especially the skipper, who was presenting dead bat.

However, the ultra defensive tactic didn't work for a lengthy period as Du Plessis got out trying to drive an Ashwin off-break. The bat-pad inside edge kept low but Saha's sharp reflexes meant that he pounced it on the fourth attempt.

Elgar, who lost a bit of concentration, tried to play a lofted shot but didn't get his timing right as Umesh ran back from his mid-off position to take a fine running catch as India got the decisive breakthrough.

Linde in for Maharaj

PTI ■ PUNE

Left-arm spinner George Linde will replace an injured Keshav Maharaj in South Africa's squad for the third Test in Ranchi, starting on Saturday.

According to a CSA media release, Maharaj sustained an injury to his right shoulder while fielding on day two of the second match and MRI results revealed that he will not be fit in time to play in the final Test match.

"An MRI scan revealed that Keshav has sustained an injury to a muscle in his right shoulder. He was re-assessed this morning, particularly with regards to bowling, and he showed significant discomfort in this latter discipline," team doctor Ramjee Hashendra commented.

"Based on this morning's assessment and the findings of the scan, the medical team feels, he will not be fit in time for the next Test match in six days' time. The nature and extent of the injury would mean that he will probably return to play in 14 to 21 days based on his progress during the rehabilitation phase."

WE'LL GO FOR 3-0 SERIES WIN: KOHLI



Virat Kohli, right, celebrates with teammates after India win the second Test

PTI ■ PUNE

Sounding a warning to the rivals, India captain Virat Kohli on Sunday said they will not "take their feet off the gas" and will aim for a whitewash when the final Test begins in Ranchi.

"Looking at the larger picture of the Test Championship, every game has value, whether it is at home or away, that is the format. So, we're not going to take our foot off the gas in the third Test," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

"No one is going to relax at any stage, we are going to go for a result in the third Test and hopefully make it 3-0, that's a guarantee," he said.

South African captain Faf du

Plessis conceded that India are deserving series winners and his side was found wanting in the contest.

"They are very tough to beat at home, their record speaks for itself. We know in the subcontinent your first innings is really important. The runs you put on the board gives you a chance," he said.

"But the way India batted, especially Virat with 250, it takes a lot of mental toughness. Two days in the field can wear you down. Especially that second evening, the batsmen were a bit weak in the mindset. From then it's playing catch-up."

He said Kohli was too good and his hunger for runs stood out. He was not satisfied with 100, 150."



PTI ■ PUNE

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis on Sunday acknowledged that the difference between his team and India in the ongoing Test series has been the "inexperience" of the Proteas as it's not possible to replace world class players like Hashim

Amla and AB de Villiers overnight.

"I think, it's purely a case of inexperience. I said before this Test series, your best Test teams are the teams with the most experience. When it comes to this Indian team, there's a lot of experience in that dressing room, there's a lot of Test matches

behind their names," a dejected Du Plessis said after losing the series and Gandhi-Mandela Trophy.

"We are at this stage where we have lost almost all of our experience. Dale Steyn, Morne Morkel, Hashim Amla, AB de Villiers, all of them were seasoned campaigners. You

don't replace those guys overnight.

"And now it's a new group of guys, who have played 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15 Test matches. That will take time. If you take the best players out of any team, they would find the same challenges," Du Plessis explained.

He put his hands up and

said that as captain he needs to show the way along with Quinton de Kock and Dean Elgar.

"For us, it is important as a senior player group to make sure that we put in performances ourselves. Myself, *Deano* (Elgar), *Quimmy* (De Kock), we can't expect other guys to make

runs.

"We need to make sure we make the runs first and then the others guys to chip in with us. In a time like this, it is important that your big guys really, really take control and make sure that they put in the bulk of the work," said Du Plessis, putting across his point clearly.

Lakshya wins Dutch tourney

PTI ■ ALMERE

Rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen on Sunday clinched his maiden BWF World Tour title by winning the Dutch Open men's singles title after beating Yusuke Onodera of Japan in the summit clash here on Sunday.

The 18-year-old Indian rallied from a game deficit to defeat his world No 160 opponent 15-21, 21-14, 21-15 in a final that lasted 63 minutes.

The Dutch Open is a BWF World Tour Super 100 tournament.

In the opening game, Lakshya fell behind early on and could not erase the deficit, despite coming as close as 10-11 and 13-14. Onodera managed to keep his nose ahead and pocketed the opening game to earn the bragging rights.

The second game started on a competitive note with the pair trying to outwit each other. The Indian grabbed a 8-5 lead at one stage but the Japanese clawed his way back.

Lakshya again managed to move to 12-8 with four straight points. Onodera narrowed it



Lakshya Sen in a file picture

BWF/Fansite down to 11-12 but Lakshya jumped to 18-11 and then roared back into the contest.

In the decider, Lakshya came up with a clear strategy and managed to keep his rival at a distance. He led 9-4 before making it 11-8 at the break.

After the interval, Lakshya continued to move ahead and slowly marched ahead to shut the door on Onodera.

Lakshya, currently ranked 72nd, had won the Belgian Open last month and reached the finals of Polish Open this year.

Medvedev seals Shanghai Masters

AFF ■ SHANGHAI

Daniil Medvedev won his fourth title of a spectacular year with a thumping 6-4, 6-1 victory over Alexander Zverev in the Shanghai Masters final on Sunday.

Victory for the 23-year-old Russian, contesting a sixth final in a row, was more evidence that he is the prime contender to join the "Big Three" of Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

The US Open finalist is also able to say that he has finally beaten the German Zverev, another young contender at 22, at the fifth attempt.

This was an emphatic statement from the world number four, needing just 74 minutes to seal the crown.

"I think the stadium was full today and you guys are amazing support, starting from my first match," Medvedev told the crowd.

"You gave me good energy to win this tournament. Thank you very much, Shanghai will always be a



Daniil Medvedev and Alexander Zverev pose with their trophies

special place in my heart." Zverev, long touted as the best of the new generation of men's tennis stars, was error-prone, but had no complaints.

"As I said yesterday, you are probably the best player in the world right now," the world number six told Medvedev.

"How you are playing is unbelievable." The next generation has stamped its authority on

Shanghai with Djokovic and Federer — beaten by Zverev — both going out in the quarter-finals.

Medvedev said that he is a better player than he was at the start of the year, but has really sparked since the summer.

Starting with Washington, DC, in July, the Russian has reached six finals on the spin — including the US Open — winning three of them.

First WTA title for Coco

AFF ■ LINZ

Teenage prodigy Coco Gauff won her first WTA title on Sunday following a 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 win over Jelena Ostapenko in the final in Linz that saw her hold her first trophy aloft aged 15.

Gauff, who only entered the field as a lucky loser after failing to qualify, completed a dream week in Linz in front of a supportive crowd to become the youngest player to win a WTA event since Czech Nicole Pietrangeli, who triumphed in Vancouver and Tashkent two months apart in 2004.

"I'll remember this day for the rest of my life," the delighted Gauff said after receiving a minutes-long standing ovation from 3,000 spectators.

"I had an amazing week and I hope to be back in the future."

Biles extends record to 25 world medals



Simone Biles performs during Worlds

AFF ■ STUTTGART

Al conquering American gymnast Simone Biles won her fifth Gold, her second of the day, at the world championships on Sunday in the women's floor final to extend her own all-time record to 25 worlds medals.

Having earlier won the beam final, the 22-year-old also extended her own record of 19 world championships Golds after success earlier this week in Stuttgart in the team, all-round and vault events with the USA.

Biles was crowned world floor champion for the fifth time in her career after winning the final by a full point from team-mate Sunisa Lee, who earned Silver with Russia's Angelina Melnikova taking Bronze.

Her double Gold success came within a two-hour spell after earlier winning the beam final with China's Liu Tingting, 19, taking Silver with 16-year-old team-mate Li Shijia in Bronze place.

Her victories on the beam and floor makes Biles the most decorated gymnast in history, surpassing the previous all-time record of 23 world medals won by men's star Vitaly Scherbo of Belarus in the 1990s.

This is the first time Biles has finished a world championships with five Gold medals having said she is "99 percent" sure Stuttgart will be the fifth and final worlds of her career.

The only blot on Biles' near-perfect record in south-west Germany came in Saturday's uneven bars final when she finished fifth.