

OPINION 8

THE NEW
INDIAN IDENTITY

WORLD 12

PROTESTERS DEFY HK POLICE
AFTER ACTIVISTS ATTACKED

SPORT 15

ANDY MURRAY WINS
ATP TITLE

NEW DELHI, MONDAY OCTOBER 21, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



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13 VIVACITY

India razes Pak terror launch pads

6-10 Pakistan soldiers killed in Indian Army action, says Gen Rawat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army on Sunday carried out punitive strikes on Pakistani Army posts across the Line of Control (LoC) after two Indian soldiers and a civilian were killed in Tangdhar when Pakistan violated ceasefire and tried to push in terrorists from across the LoC.

Army Chief General Bipin Rawat said around six to ten Pakistani soldiers and as many terrorists have been killed in the action.

Firing from across the LoC began in early hours when the Pakistan Army tried to push in terrorists into Jammu & Kashmir by giving them covering fire. Two Indian soldiers and a civilian were killed in the Pakistan firing. The Indian Army then hit terrorist launch pads and Pakistani Army positions, Army officials said later here in the day.

They said the Indian Army had to resort to punitive action after Pakistan resorted to heavy "unprovoked firing on civilians" on Saturday night.

"As a result, calibrated escalation of area weapons was undertaken by the Indian side in which terrorist launch pads, Pakistan Army posts giving protection to these launch pads and certain gun positions were hit," an Army spokesperson said.

The action was taken against Pakistan Army as it initiated unprovoked Cease

Fire Violation (CFV) to assist infiltration by terrorists into Indian territories, the spokesperson said.

"Last evening an attempt was made in Tangdhar to infiltrate terrorists and we retaliated. Pakistan carried out attack by firing at our post in which we did suffer, but before they could attempt the infiltration it was decided that we target that terror camps across," said General Rawat.

"In the retaliatory action, we have caused severe damage to terrorist infrastructure. Terrorist camps opposite Tangdhar sector have been destroyed. On the basis of reports that we have been getting, six to ten Pakistani soldiers have been killed, three camps have been destroyed. Similar number of terrorists have also been killed..." he added.

Pakistan, however, has rejected reports that the Indian Army targeted their terror camps in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and said it can arrange a visit of diplomats from P5 nations to the area to expose India's "falsehood".

Rejecting reports, Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal said, "Pakistan categorically rejects Indian media reports about alleged launch pads being targeted by India along the LoC."

The Foreign Office said Pakistan has called upon the P-5 countries (permanent mem-

- Indian Army had to resort to punitive action after Pakistan resorted to heavy "unprovoked firing on civilians"
- Pakistan Army tried to push in terrorists into Jammu & Kashmir by giving them cover
- Two Indian soldiers and a civilian were killed in the Pak firing
- Pakistan, however, has rejected reports that Indian Army targeted their terror camps in POK
- Pakistan summons Indian envoy Gaurav Ahluwalia to condemn the firing by Indian troops



bers of the United Nations Security Council) to ask India to provide information about the terror launch pads. It said Pakistan is willing to arrange a visit of the P5 diplomats to those locations.

Pakistan Army spokesperson Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor also rejected the reports saying the Indian media is "falsely claiming" targeting of alleged terror camps.

Meanwhile, Pakistan sum-

moned Indian envoy Gaurav Ahluwalia to condemn the firing by Indian troops that it said killed five civilians along the LoC in Jura, Shahkot and Nausehri Sectors.

Giving details of the punitive action, the Army said one civilian Mohammad Sadiq was killed and three others were injured belonging to Ghundhishat village of Tangdhar district in "Pakistan Army artillery firing."

The spokesperson said Indian Army "retains the right to respond at a time and place of its choosing" in case the Pakistan Army continues to assist terror activities across Indian borders.

Defence sources said four launch pads in POK were targeted after civilians casualties in Tangdhar district on the Indian side. "It was a direct assault at the same time using heavy artillery. At least six

Pakistani soldiers were killed in the firing," said one source, adding each launch pad had over 15-20 terrorists waiting to infiltrate.

The launch pads were located South of Zura in POK and posts included Athmuqam and Kundalshahi and sources confirmed that Indian Army has used 155mm heavy artillery guns. Usually during ceasefire violations, small arms are used and as caliber escalation happens heavy mortar is used eventually leading to the use of heavy artillery which has been intermittently used by both sides on the LoC in recent times.

During the day, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh spoke to General Rawat who apprised Singh of the developments and the situation along the LoC.

Tangdhar is one of the traditional infiltration routes in North Kashmir. The ingress routes there will be closed in the next few weeks after snowfall and therefore the Pakistan army is desperate to push in as many terrorists possible before it.

Moreover, the punitive action on Sunday is one of the biggest since abrogation of Article 370 giving special status to Jammu & Kashmir on August five. So far, more than 2,300 cease of fire violations have taken place since January this year as compared to 1,600 odd last year.

Continued on Page 4

Assembly polls in Maharashtra, Haryana today

Bypolls in 51 Assembly, 2 LS seats in 18 States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Polling will be held on Monday in all 288 Assembly constituencies of Maharashtra and the 90 Assembly seats of Haryana as the ruling BJP, a good five-months after its win in the Lok Sabha elections, is looking for a second consecutive terms in both the States.

While abrogation of Article 370 and anti-Pakistan rant has

been the main poll planks of the BJP, the Opposition claimed that economic slowdown, unemployment and general anti-incumbency could work in their favour.

Bypolls will also be held to 51 Assembly seats and two Lok Sabha constituencies spread across 18 States. Eleven of these bypolls would be in Uttar Pradesh where poll results would be seen as a litmus test for the Yogi Adityanath Government which has completed 30 months in office.

BJP's incumbent Chief Minister in Maharashtra Devendra Fadnis and Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar in Haryana are seeking second term, but the campaign face for the ruling BJP is Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Continued on Page 4



Election officials walk through a damp field as they leave for their respective polling stations on the eve of Maharashtra Assembly elections in Sangli on Sunday. PTI

Slain Tiwari's kin seek death for killers

Family meets Yogi, demands Govt job for son, security; UP CM assures all help

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Family members of the Hindu Samaj Party leader Kamlesh Tiwari, who was killed two days ago, met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and demanded capital punishment for the killers.

Tiwari's mother, wife and three sons met the Chief Minister at his official residence of 5, Kalidas Marg, and stayed there for over 30 minutes.

The Chief Minister assured the family of all help and said police are doing their job and the guilty will not be spared.

Officer privy to the meeting told this reporter that the CM intently listened to the family members who demanded a Government job for Tiwari's son, security to the family and an arms licence to them for security purpose. They also demanded that Khurshid Bagh should be renamed as Kamlesh Park and a statue should be installed at the park.

Speaking to reporters after meeting the CM, the slain leader's wife Kiran said, "Yogi has assured every possible action in the matter. We feel satisfied after meeting him. Our demand is that the killers should be given capital pun-



Family members of slain Hindu Samaj Party chief Kamlesh Tiwari meet Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his residence in Lucknow on Sunday. PTI

ishment."

Tiwari's mother Kusuma Tiwari said, "I told the CM I want justice for my son and strict punishment should be given to the killers. We have been assured by the CM."

However, after reaching Sitapur she changed her statement and said she was not happy after meeting Yogi because he did not look serious and concerned about our plight and his reaction was not sympathetic towards us.

"We were forced to go to

Lucknow and meet the CM. The local administration was after us saying the CM wants to meet us. As per Hindu ritual family does not move out of house before *tehravi* (13-day ritual) still we were forced to go there," Kusuma told reporters in Sitapur here on Sunday.

"I wanted to ask the CM why his security was reduced but was not allowed to ask this question. The response we wanted or we were looking for from CM was not there," she said.

Recently a video has surfaced where Kamlesh is seen castigating Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi for reducing his security. In that video he was seen saying he would be killed as some Muslim fundamentalists are after him.

Hindu Samaj Party chief Tiwari, 45, earlier associated with a faction of the Hindu Mahasabha, was killed at his home in Khurshid Bagh here on Friday.

Continued on Page 4

E-booking for Kartarpur delayed over \$20 fee demand by Pakistan

Consensus on other issues yet to be arrived

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The online registration of devotees visiting Kartarpur Gurudwara could not start on Sunday as India and Pakistan failed to agree on a number of issues, including Islamabad's insistence of charging \$20 from each pilgrim. Non-completion of infrastructure connecting to India from Pakistan side also is cited as big hurdle in formalising agreement.

India and Pakistan were supposed to sign a pact on Saturday on a few unresolved issues of the pilgrimage, but that did not happen yet.

"Since some issues are yet to be resolved, the online registration for the Kartarpur pilgrimage could not be started on Sunday," an official privy to the development said. Key unresolved issues include Pakistan's insistence of charging \$20 from each pilgrim and the timing of the pilgrimage every day (first entry and last exit time).

India had asked Pakistan to



reconsider the decision on charging \$20 per pilgrim, allow 10,000 pilgrims on special occasions and an Indian protocol officer to accompany the delegation that visits Kartarpur every day. Pakistan is yet to respond to India's requests, the official said.

On October 16, chairman of the Land Ports Authority of India and Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs Govind Mohan had said the online registration for pilgrims visiting Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur is expected to commence on October 20, provided a pact is signed on remaining issues.

Last month, India and Pakistan agreed on visa-free travel of Indian pilgrims to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib using the Kartarpur corridor. Pilgrims will only have to carry their passports to visit the revered gurdwara in Pakistan.

Persons of Indian origin holding OCI (Overseas Citizenship of India) card too can visit the Gurdwara using the Kartarpur corridor.

It was also decided that 5,000 pilgrims can visit the shrine everyday and that additional pilgrims will be allowed on special occasions, subject to capacity expansion of facilities by the Pakistan side.

Both sides agreed to build a bridge over the Budhi Ravi channel near the border crossing point. Pending the construction of the bridge on the Pakistan side, both parties agreed to the crossing point coordinates of the temporary service road. India has constructed a four-lane highway in Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district in Punjab connecting the 'zero point' on onward journey to Pakistan.

A state-of-the-art passenger terminal with facilitation centre to host government officials responsible for ensuring hassle-free travel of pilgrims, food kiosks, parking areas and security points will also come up by November 8 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will formally inaugurate the much-awaited Kartarpur corridor.

Continued on Page 4

Bodies of Stephen's teacher found on railway tracks, mother in house

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An Assistant Professor, who taught Philosophy at St Stephen's College of Delhi University, was found dead under highly mysterious circumstances on Saturday evening.

His highly decomposed and decapitated body was found on the railway tracks at Sarai Rohilla Railway Station and his mother Lissy (55) was found hanging from a ceiling fan in her house with her mouth stuffed with cloth at their flat in Ashiana Apartment in Pitampura.

"Preliminary investigation suggests that the young guest Assistant Professor identified as Allen Stanley (27) first killed his mother and then ended his life by jumping before a running



train. It appears to be a case of matricide and suicide as well," said a senior police officer on Sunday. However, no suicide note was recovered with Stanley's body, but a note written in Malayalam was found at the flat.

Police said they have registered a murder case under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code at the Rani Bagh Police Station after they found his mother's body in the flat.

It has been learnt that the mother-son duo was in depression because of an abetment-to-suicide case pending against them in Kerala, and both were out on anticipatory bail. A few days ago, Stanley — who hailed from Kottayam in Kerala and was also pursuing his PhD from IIT Delhi — had shared about the case with his friends who tried to convince him to not take any extreme step, a police officer said.

Stanley was living in Delhi for the last five years and his mother came to stay with him seven months ago. Witness said Stanley was suicidal and they said he had told them five days ago that he had tried to force his mother to commit suicide but she refused.

Continued on Page 4

Seat of Nagvanshi kings gets ASI protection

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

After a long wait, the Centre has brought Navratangarh, a magnificent 900-year-old dilapidated nine-storey fort located in Jharkhand's Gumla district under the fold of the Archeological Survey of India (ASI).

Situated 80 kms from Ranchi, the seat of Nagvanshi kings who ruled the Chota Nagpur region from the 1st century in Sisai block of the district has historic significance as the kings there had a link with Mughal emperor Jahangir.

An official from the country's premier conservation Central agency said a notification to bring the monument under the ASI was issued recently. The ASI tag would ensure much-needed maintenance as well as conservation measures to the monument



shrouded with mysteries.

Navratangarh is also referred to as 'Doisagarh' for its location in Doisa, the second capital of the Nagvanshi kings. Though it is visited in big numbers by tourists and historians, the heritage site has been in a dire straits.

According to Amitabha Gupta, a heritage enthusiast and blogger, the interiors of the palace are in a shambles and it is difficult to say how many rooms there were in each storey. "There is a ruined structure with a small hall flanked by two rooms adjacent to the palace. There is a gate in the middle of this structure which leads to the palace.

"The watch tower that was visible from a distance is now within reach. The upper storey of the two-storey tower was once accessed by a staircase.

Continued on Page 4

Sisodia bats for making vocational courses as main subject in schools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After implementing 'internship programme' for students, pursuing vocational courses, the Delhi Government is planning to introduce 'vocational' courses as one of the main subjects of the curriculum and not as additional ones.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the 'education portfolio' has announced that the AAP Government will start vocational courses as part of the syllabus in all Delhi Government run schools.

"All schools should be having vocational subjects in their curriculum. And these subjects should be treated at par with the regular subjects. We aim to make vocational subject as a main subject and not an additional subject. We will be talking to CBSE about this soon," Sisodia said.

"When we came to power, the condition of vocational education was bad. I am delighted to see the

improvement it has made in all these years,' the Deputy Chief Minister announced at the 'internship celebration event' at Thyagraj Stadium.

It may be recalled that the AAP Government has recently announced to start a 'Skill and Entrepreneurship University' in Delhi. "Preference will be given to students of vocational subjects for admission in this university," he said.

The internship event was led by Education and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia. Many other senior officials, companies, teachers and students were also present in the celebrations.

The event also saw the presence of leading company and hotels such as Radisson Blue, Taj hotel group, Maruti, Decathlom, State Bank of India (SBI) and others. "It was a great experience for me as I got a lot of exposure while working with the Taj. They taught me how to make chocolates and all that I had learnt in my vocational classes; I also got the opportunity to apply

them in the real world. This was a great practical learning for me," said Swati, a student of Sarvodya Co-ed School, Munirka, who had done her internship Taj Palace Hotel.

Another student Samya said, "I had the best 15 days of my life while interning with Taj. I worked with renowned Chefs and interacted with guests. I also got the opportunity to work in the linen department and later on in the laundry department. I developed more confidence while dealing with guests and supervisors. It has helped me to shape my personality."

"We loved the experience of providing opportunity to school students. Students were curious and worked hard," project manager of Taj hotel group. While, head of the Department (HOD) of Radisson Blue's Human Resource (HR) team, said, "We are happy that we could partner with the Government on this wonderful initiative, the students were very curious and learned a lot."

Kejriwal inspects house during anti-dengue drive

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday inspected his home for stagnant water as part of the special awareness campaign '10 Hafte, 10 Baje 10 Minute' to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.

"One more Sunday inspection done this morning. Delhi's fight to defeat Dengue continues Just 2-3 years ago, who could have imagined Dengue can be defeated?" Kejriwal tweeted.

Kejriwal had launched the campaign in September, urging people to inspect their house for any standing water. The



campaign to combat dengue has garnered a massive support from public and several other well-known personalities across the country, including cricketers, Bollywood actors

and famous journalists.

Kejriwal had said participation of these public personalities will inspire common people to take precautions in combating vector-borne disease. He had also directed his colleagues in the Cabinet to work towards encouraging mass participation in the third week of the campaign. According to data released by SDMC last week, total number of patients suffering from malaria has reached to 419 this year with at least 51 fresh cases reported last week of October. While the number of dengue cases reported till October 5 stands at 356 with 74 fresh cases reported last week.

CM thanks Goel for 'power subsidy remark'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday thanked the BJP for making its intentions clear that it will withdraw electricity subsidy if voted to power, saying it will give a chance to people to choose between 'two conflicting models'.

Addressing party volunteers at a gathering in East Delhi, Kejriwal said he was "pained" to read the interview of Delhi BJP leader Vijay Goel that BJP intends to withdraw electricity subsidy if voted to power.

Kejriwal said, "The BJP leader never made any demand to withdraw the power subsidy given by the Centre to MPs, but is now opposed to benefits being provided to the people. He continues to accept massive

subsidies on food, even as the people suffer. But I want to thank him for saying this publicly before the election. Now the people can choose between the two conflicting models."

Kejriwal said he introduced all the facilities for the common man whether it was healthcare or education because he understands the pain of the common man.

He urged the volunteers to take leave from work and start preparations for the upcoming polls in Delhi which are to be held early next year. He asserted that each and every individual living in the national Capital has been benefited by the policies of his Government and, because of the work done by them in the last five years, even Congress and BJP workers will vote for AAP in the upcoming polls.

AAP party spokesperson Raghav Chadha also hit out at the BJP, saying these comments should be treated as "desperate and patently anti-poor" BJP announcements that it will fight the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections on the agenda of electricity "subsidy wapsi".

Senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh also slammed the BJP for "opposing" the Government's scheme to provide free electricity up to 200 units to the residents of the national Capital.

Referring to the statement of senior BJP leader Vijay Goel, Singh said "Today BJP leader said that if they come to power then they will withdraw the scheme of free electricity up to 200 units. It is clear now that the BJP is anti-poor, anti-people. The BJP will take away

pro-people schemes if come to power," he added.

He said that at the time when everywhere the price of electricity is on the rise and people in other States are getting electricity in ₹8,9,12 or 14, while the AAP Government is giving free electricity.

"I want to ask the BJP leaders that have they ever given any benefit in terms of education, health, electricity or water for the people in the States they are in power? But the BJP has waived ₹5.5 lakh crore loan of the industrialists in the last five years," he alleged.

The BJP has also allowed ₹10.50 lakh crore as NPAs (non-performing assets) by the banks to the industrialists that have devastated the banks and lastly, the BJP has taken 1.76 lakh crore from the RBI to manage this situation," said Singh.

Fate of 54 candidates to be decided today

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The district administration has completed all preparations for the Haryana Assembly General Election-2019 to be conducted in a peaceful, free and fair manner in the district.

On Monday, 12,10,398 voters of the district will decide the fate of 54 candidates. These include 5,323 service voters.

This time 6,40,835 male and 5,69,529 female voters and 34 transgender will exercise their franchise in Gurugram district. Polling will begin at 7.00 am and will continue till 6.00 pm.

The 54 candidates in Gurugram district will contest in four Assembly constituencies. These include 11 candidates in Patauli constituency, 15 in Badshahpur, 16 in Gurugram and 12 in Sohna.

According to District Election Officer and Deputy Commissioner Amit Khatri, a total of 1172 polling stations have been set up in the district

ASSEMBLY POLLS

for polling, on which polling the staff of 1407 have been deployed to conduct polling in district Gurugram peacefully out of which 292 in Patauli assembly constituency, 286 in Sohna assembly constituency, 395 in Gurugram assembly constituency and 434 in Badshahpur assembly constituency. Apart from these, 8 Pink Booths Sakhi Booth and 8 Model Booth have also been constructed this time.

"At Pink booths, the entire staff will be of women, while special arrangements will be made at the model booth for the convenience of voters such as installing signboards, wheelchairs for the disabled, voter facilitation centres and beautification of booths," Khatri said.

"To ensure peaceful and fair elections at all polling stations, 44 zonal magistrates have been appointed in district Gurugram. Similarly, 88 Sector Officers, 25 Flying Squad Teams, 17 Static Surveillance

Teams, 4 Video Viewing Teams, 4 Video Surveillance Teams, 4 Accounting Teams and 4 Expenditure Observers have been deployed in District Gurugram," the DC said.

The commission has also deployed micro observers at some polling stations to monitor law and order, which will periodically report the voting to the commission. 31 Patauli assembly constituencies, 39 in Gurugram assembly constituency, 41 in Badshahpur assembly constituency and 28 micro observers have been appointed in Sohna assembly constituency.

"In the district, the duty of 285 officers and employees has been put up for counting, out of which the staff of 114 officers and employees have been deployed in Badshahpur assembly constituency while 57-57 each in other three assembly constituencies. Also, the officers and staff posted on election duty, a staff of 619 people has been kept in reserve," he asserted.

INSHORT

VOTING ON HEALTH, EDUCATION ISSUES: CM
New Delhi: Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said the elections will take place on issues related to schools, hospitals and electricity which is a good sign for the Indian democracy. In a tweet, Kejriwal said there is a huge pro-incumbency in favour of the AAP. Assembly elections in Delhi are slated for early next year.


NEW SET OF CLUSTER BUSES REACH CAPITAL
New Delhi: Another set of new 25 orange coloured standard floor buses under cluster system arrived at Dwarka cluster depot. The buses are being purchased under the cluster scheme for people of Delhi especially the physically handicapped persons. These are standard floor buses with hydraulic lifts.

BANGLA SAHIB TO BECOME DIVYANG-FRIENDLY INFRA
New Delhi: The iconic Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, the largest Sikh Shrine in Delhi will be made divyang and senior citizen friendly by ensuring barrier-free access for cognitively, physically, socially disabled and elderly devotees in commemoration of 550th birth anniversary of founder of sikh religion Guru Nanak Dev. It has decided to strengthen infrastructural facilities for disabled and elderly devotees at all Delhi Gurdwaras and has identified three such ancient Gurdwaras namely Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib, Gurdwara Sis Ganj and Gurdwara Nanak Piou that witness very high pilgrims footfall.

COPS ARREST SNATCHER, MAN FOR FAKE NO PLATE
New Delhi: In separate incidents, the PCR unit of Delhi Police arrested a snatcher and a person for forging the number plate and owning two vehicles with same number. DCP (PCR) Sharat K Sinha said, on the intervening night of Oct 19, 20 the staff of West Zone responded to information regarding two Hyndai i-20 cars having same registration number plate, make and colour. A person namely Parminder Singh who claimed to be the owner of both the cars failed to explain as how he has similar numbered cars in his possession and was nabbed. Further in Seemapuri area the MPV staff apprehended a snatcher after hearing the hue and cry of the victim. The snatcher was identified as Arif and the snatched phone was recovered from his possession, DCP said.

DILLI HAAT CELEBRATION ON DIWALI FROM OCT 16
New Delhi: Delhi Tourism is organising a grand Diwali celebrations at Dilli Haat INA from 16-27 October. Festivals have always been an attractive part of tourism where visitors get to the experience the culture at its best. With Diwali around the corner and Dilli being the capital, it is only befitting that Delhi Tourism curates and offers the choicest of festive experiences at its Dilli Haats, the official said.

"Alongside the ornate handicrafts that the Dilli Haats are renowned for, the festival will offer various products for Diwali including diyas, handcrafted lamps, candles, decorative items and the like," he added.

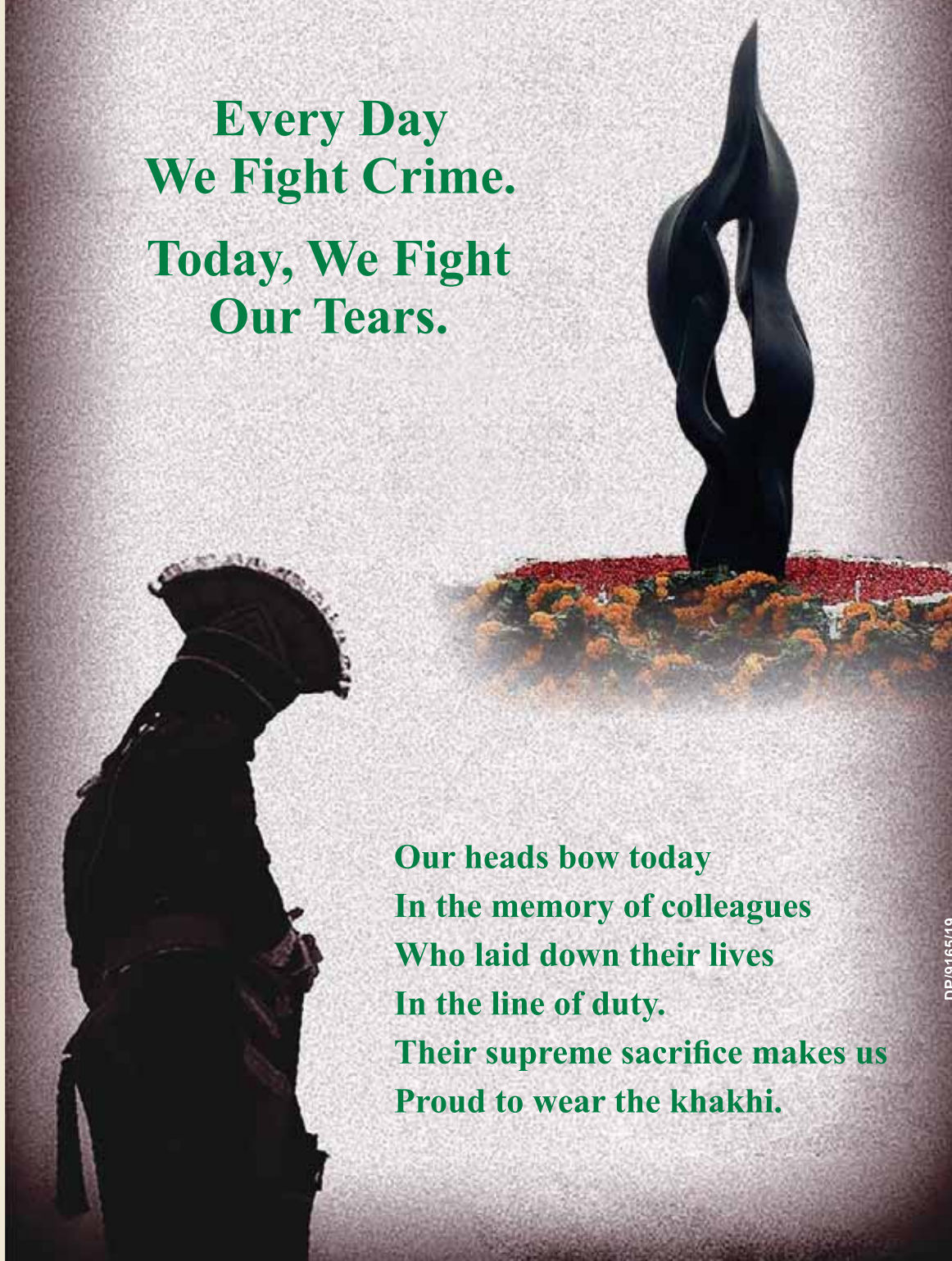


DELHI POLICE
SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

Police Commemoration Day

21st October, 2019

Every Day
We Fight Crime.
Today, We Fight
Our Tears.



Our heads bow today
In the memory of colleagues
Who laid down their lives
In the line of duty.
Their supreme sacrifice makes us
Proud to wear the khakhi.

DP/9165/19

Woman dies, 3 hurt after truck hits vehicle; driver held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old woman died, three had a narrow escape after the scooter on which they were riding was allegedly hit by a speeding truck in northwest Delhi, police said on Sunday.

Arjesh Kumar, his wife, Rangeela Devi and two children were returning home on a scooter when it was hit by the truck on Gurudwara road at Bhalswa Dairy on Saturday afternoon, the police said.

The truck driver, Anujpal, 25, has been arrested. A case has been registered against the driver under Section 279 (rash driving) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the IPC, the official added.

Ragpicker held for raping Goa woman at bus stand, 1 on run

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A month after a woman from Goa was allegedly raped and assaulted when she was waiting at a bus stand in the city, the Delhi Police said it has arrested a man, while another suspect is still on the run.

The incident happened on September 16 and the arrest was made last Wednesday. Police said 4,000 vagabonds were verified to establish identity of the suspects, ragpickers from Uttar Pradesh's Raebareli. The woman, a native of Goa, was to catch a bus from the Sarai Kale Khan bus stand but she reached early and decided to spend the night at nearby Indraprastha Park bus stop, police said.

While she was sleeping, two men -- Abdul Khalid and Munna -- dragged her to the

bushes behind the bus stop, which is located on the Ring Road, and allegedly raped her. They also assaulted her when she tried to resist, officials said.

The woman managed to escape with the help of a motorist who stopped on hearing her screams. Khalid and Munna too fled the spot.

Police said they have arrested Khalid from the Sarai Kale Khan area following a tip-off, while a hunt is on for Munna.

Khalid has confessed to the crime and said that he and Munna were in an inebriated state on the night of the incident, police said.

"During investigation, clothes of the survivor in torn condition, her slippers and a 'gamchha' were recovered from the spot," DCP (Southeast) Chinmoy Biswal said.

City's air quality turns poor

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital's air quality turned 'poor' on Sunday as wind direction changed to northwesterly, increasing the contribution of smoke from stubble burning in neighbouring states to the pollution in the city. Westerly and northwesterly winds bring dust from western regions and smoke caused by burning of crop residue in the neighbouring Punjab and Haryana to Delhi-NCR.

After fluctuating between "poor" and "very poor" for over a week, the city's air quality had improved to "moderate" category on Saturday, mainly due to a squall in Delhi that dispersed pollutants and rainfall in neighbouring areas that subdued the effect of stubble burning.

However on Sunday, pollution levels in Delhi shot up by around 100 points at air quality index (AQI), the Central Pollution Control Board data showed. The AQI, which was 161 on Saturday, rose to 258 by Sunday afternoon. Higher the AQI of an area, the higher the

pollution level.

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 Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality forecast and research service, SAFAR, said, "The overall air quality of Delhi is back in the poor category. The surface and boundary layer wind direction is northwesterly now."

"An increase in stubble burning in the northern part of India has been observed. The circulation pattern is supportive for efficient biomass plume transport to Delhi," it said in a report.

The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) said the share of smoke from stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 concentration was 13 per cent on Sunday, the highest in over a week. It was zero on Saturday and is likely to increase to 19 per cent on Monday.

"A considerable increase in biomass share in pollution

contribution is expected over the next two-three days. AQI is forecast to deteriorate to very poor category by Monday," SAFAR said.

Kuldeep Srivastava, a senior scientist at the India Meteorological Department, said strong surface winds clocking 15-20 kilometers per hour blew across Delhi, which is favourable for dispersion of pollutants.

"But the direction will completely change to northwesterly October 21 onwards," he said.

According to CPCB data, more than 3,000 stubble burning incidents have occurred in Punjab and Haryana since the harvesting of paddy crop started around September 25. During the corresponding period last year, the count was around 2,600.

The period between October 15 and November 15 is considered critical as maximum number of stubble burning incidents take place in this span in Punjab and adjoining states and is one of the main reasons for the alarming spike in pollution in Delhi-NCR.

दिल्ली सरकार

आप की सरकार

फ़रिशते 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 FARISHTHEY 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



Kamlesh Tiwari murder case

Truth almost out: UP Dy CM

PTI ■ INDORE

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday supported his State police's findings in Hindu Samaj Party (HSP) leader Kamlesh Tiwari's murder saying the truth in the case is "almost out".

He said the allegation levelled by deceased Tiwari's mother that a local BJP leader was involved in her son's killing over a land dispute must have been made in "anguish".

Tiwari, 45, earlier associated with a faction of the Hindu Mahasabha, was killed at his home in Lucknow on Friday. Five people were detained, including three in Gujarat's Surat, in connection with his murder.

Uttar Pradesh police had said on Saturday that the suspects were "radicalised" and appeared to have targeted him for his inflammatory remarks made in 2015.

Talking to reporters at the BJP office in Indore, Maurya said, "Kamlesh Tiwari murder



case has been cracked. The truth of this incident has almost come out before the country."

Tiwari's mother Kusuma has accused a local BJP leader of killing her son over a land dispute.

When asked about this, Maurya said, "Tiwari might have had enmity with someone. But this is a different side. Tiwari's mother is definitely in great anguish. We respect her." "Tiwari's murder is being investigated very closely. I think the culprits who killed him will be sent to the gallows. Uttar Pradesh Police will take all necessary steps in this direction," he said.

On the BJP's Maharashtra election manifesto raising the demand for the Bharat Ratna for Hindutva icon V D Savarkar, he said, "Mahatma Gandhi and Savarkar were not opposed to each other. There was no difference of opinion on the issue that the country should be freed from the British."

To a query on Congress describing Savarkar as one of the accused in Mahatma Gandhi's assassination case, Maurya said, "When Savarkar was acquitted of all charges in this case, should you (the media) ask a question about this? Questions should not be raised about such a personality (Savarkar), who struggled to give us the right to live as citizens of an independent country."

"We have honoured Bhimrao Ambedkar and Sardar Patel. Now we are going to honour Savarkar. When the time comes, we will also honour Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule and other great leaders," Maurya, who is BJP's co-

incharge for Maharashtra elections, said.

In view of the retaliatory action of the Indian Army near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir, the BJP leader accused the Congress of always raising questions about the bravery of the country's Army.

"Congress should welcome our Army's success. But they (Congress leaders) ask for a certificate of this success. Whenever the country needs to convey a message of solidarity, Congress starts using the language of neighbouring country to benefit Pakistan," he said.

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

Asked about this, Maurya said, "Priyanka should be asked why her brother Rahul Gandhi lost the Amethi seat in the last Lok Sabha elections."

Plot to kill hubby backfires

New Delhi: A woman and her male friend were arrested in East Patel Nagar area for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to kill her husband and portray his death as an accident as they thought him to be an "obstacle" in their relationship, police said on Sunday.

Anita, 30, and Arjun Mandal, 38, were arrested recently in connection with the killing, they said.

The body of 42-year-old Dayaram with grievous injuries on his head and other parts was found lying in the shaft of a lift of an under construction building in central Delhi's East Patel Nagar area on October 17, police said.

According to police, Mandal and Dayaram, who were labourers, knew each other and the duo had worked together. He started coming to his house and eventually developed intimacy with his wife around three years ago.

"The duo considered Dayaram as an obstacle in their relationship and planned his murder to portray it as an accidental death," police said.

Police found a bag containing tiffin box, muffler and a mobile battery, slippers from

the spot while a bottle of whisky, two paper juice glasses, a plastic polythene, a silver foil pouch of eatable snacks, a paper plate were found scattered on the building's terrace.

A case was registered and a probe initiated, they said.

The identity of the body was confirmed by Anita, who worked as a domestic help, and other relatives.

However, investigations arose suspicion on Anita as she attempted to mislead police and was quite evasive during the interrogation. During call detail record analysis of mobile phones of Dayaram and his wife, one number was found to be the common link, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Mandeep Singh Randhawa.

"Dayaram had last called on the same number and even his wife had several calls with the suspected number overnight when the body of the deceased was found at the site. Even the suspected number and the mobile phones of Dayaram and his wife were at the same location between 6.30 pm to 6.40 pm on October 16," the officer said.

The user of the suspected



number was identified to be of Mandal, he added.

During interrogation, Anita and Mandal confessed to the crime after they were confronted with evidence and call detail records.

"It was revealed that Anita had an extra-marital affair with Arjun for the last three years. Both were planning to eliminate Dayaram for the past few months. To execute their plan, Mandal called Dayaram at the Patel Nagar Metro Station at the instance of Anita. He invited him for drinks," the DCP said.

Mandal took him to the terrace of an under construction building in East Patel Nagar at about 7.00 pm, where they drank together. After spending almost an hour on

the roof top, he pushed Dayaram from the stairs of the rooftop in the shaft of an open lift hole, following which he succumbed to injuries, he said.

To destroy the evidence, Mandal even took out Dayaram's mobile phone from his pocket and threw its battery in the shaft. After that, Arjun went to Farid Puri and handed over the mobile phone to Anita. Mandal also threw his blood-stained slippers and clothes in Karol Bagh, the officer said.

Dayaram's mobile phone, blood-stained clothes and slippers of Mandal have been recovered, police said, adding that the mobile phones of both the accused have been seized. **PTI**

Values of India's civilisation can ensure peace, friendship: Kovind

Manila: The values of India's civilisation can ensure peace and friendship among people and countries in the times of strife and violence, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Sunday, calling on the Indian community in the Philippines to promote the country's heritage.

Speaking at the Indian community reception in Manila, Kovind appreciated the contribution of the diaspora to the economy and society of the Philippines and to the image of India and Indians. The President is on a five-day visit to the Southeast Asian country.

"Our community in the Philippines has been a strong bond of friendship between our two countries for decades. The size of the diaspora has grown remarkably over the last few years," he said at the event.

"To meet our people in far-away lands is an emotional and special experience for me, one that you have when you meet your near and dear ones," he said.

Appreciating the Indian community for maintaining its culture and traditions in the Philippines, Kovind said, "you

must do your best to promote our heritage and knowledge for the well-being and happiness of all."

The President said that it is a matter of immense pride for us that wherever our community goes, it takes with it the values of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" — the whole world is one family.

"In these times of strife and violence, it is these values of our civilization that can ensure peace and friendship among peoples and countries," he said.

"You have also done well to keep our languages alive in your daily lives, be it Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi or Gujarati. I understand that yoga is very popular in the Philippines and ayurveda is also gaining ground," Kovind said while praising the community.

The President also called on the community to avail opportunities that India offers for innovation, investment, research and education.

The flagship initiatives such as Make in India, Digital India, Skill India, Ganga Rejuvenation Project, Swachh Bharat Mission, Smart Cities and Jal Jeevan Mission seek



your partnership, Kovind said.

Highlighting that the India-Philippines trade has risen to nearly 2.5 billion US dollars, he said that the economic engagement between the two countries in terms of investment and presence of Indian companies in the Philippines is on the upswing.

He said that the quantum of the bilateral trade is still modest and there is much potential which needs to be tapped.

"I am sure with your initiatives and enterprise; we can do much more to bring prosperity to the two countries," he said.

Kovind retreated India's commitment to strengthen its bond with the diaspora and highlighted the steps taken by the Indian government in this

direction, including relaxation of rules and regulations for obtaining Overseas Citizenship of India cards, making consular service delivery people-sensitive and people-friendly and offering seats in educational institutions in India. He said that the Indian Embassy in the Philippines will soon begin printing of passports in Manila and this will drastically reduce the time taken for issuance of new passports.

Speaking about the Indian places of worship in the Southeast Asian country, Kovind said that apart from Hindu temples, as many as 26 Gurudwaras exist throughout the length and breadth of the Philippines.

He also conveyed good wishes to the Sikh community on the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

Highlighting the Philippines being a hospitable and friendly country for Indians, Kovind stressed that the signing of a Tourism Promotion Agreement promises to bring the people of the two countries further close.

"As professionals, as entrepreneurs and as technocrats you have freely pursued your

profession and contributed to the progress and prosperity of this country. The people here have been warm and welcoming to you. And so have they been to the thousands of students from India studying medicine here," he said.

Underlining that India-Philippines relations are driven by shared values such as commitment to democracy, secularism and pluralism, Kovind said that the ties between the two nations are both old and new. "We cannot but be proud of our seafaring forefathers who more than a millennium back established cultural and commercial ties between India and the South East Asia," he said.

"With regard to the Philippines, these ties are yet to be fully explored and documented. But we do know that old artifacts have been unearthed in the Philippines that are distinctly of Indian influence," Kovind said.

President Kovind also recalled his meeting with his Philippines counterpart Rodrigo Duterte where the latter appreciated Indian community's role in the development of the Philippines. **PTI**

London Mayor condemns plans to hold anti-India march over Kashmir on Diwali

London: London Mayor Sadiq Khan has condemned plans to hold an anti-India march here on the Kashmir issue on Diwali next Sunday, saying it would deepen divisions in the UK capital and called on the organisers and prospective participants to cancel the protest rally.

According to Met Police details on the permissions sought for the proposed march, an estimated 5,000-10,000 protesters plan to commence their march from Richmond Terrace near Downing Street and converge outside the Indian High Commission in London.

In response to a letter by Indian-origin London Assembly member Navin Shah, Mayor Khan said, "I absolutely condemn the plans for a protest march to take place on the auspicious day of Diwali, in the vicinity of the Indian High Commission in London."

"This march will only deepen divisions at a time when Londoners need to come together. That is why I am calling on those organising the

march and all those considering taking part in it to think again and cancel their plans," said the Pakistan-origin London Mayor in the letter dated October 18.

He said that his City Hall office would be working with Scotland Yard to ensure a "robust" policing plan was in place for such a march.

In response to Shah's request to consider seeking permission to ban the protest due to public disorder fears, he added: "As you know, the power to ban marches of this nature lies solely with the Home Secretary, not with me as the Mayor of London. I am copying this letter to both the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Cressida Dick, so they can clearly see the extent of my concerns about this march."

Shah, in his letter, recalled the violent clashes outside the Indian mission on August 15 between diaspora groups marking Independence Day and British Pakistani and separatist

groups.

"I understand why many British Indians are so deeply concerned. Many have felt deeply threatened and worried since the previous protests outside the Indian High Commission. I can assure all Londoners that anyone who acts unlawfully will be accountable to the police," Khan responded.

The so-called President of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Sardar Masood Khan, and PoK "Prime Minister" Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan are expected to participate in the march dubbed the "Free Kashmir" rally.

The latest letter exchange over the issue of Kashmir in the UK comes as Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn issued his response to another letter issued on behalf of over 100 British Indian organisations, condemning the party's stance on Jammu & Kashmir in the wake of the Indian Government's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu & Kashmir. **PTI**

E-booking...

From Page 1
A total of 55 immigration counters are being set up at the passenger terminal.

The corridor will connect the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India's Punjab with the gurdwara at Kartarpur, just about four kilometres from the international border, located at Shakargarh in Narowal district of Pakistan's Punjab province. Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, had spent more than 18 years at the Kartarpur gurdwara, located on the banks of the river Ravi. India and Pakistan had planned to open the corridor before the year-long celebrations to mark the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev beginning next month. In November 2018, India and Pakistan had agreed to set up the border crossing linking Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, the final resting place of Guru Nanak Dev, to Dera Baba Nanak.

Seat...

From Page 1
Very little remains of it exist now and what does exist doesn't exactly afford access to the top," said Gupta in his blog.

India razes...

From Page 1
Also, nine Indian soldiers have died in ceasefire violations so far since August 5.

Responding to the Army's statement, Pakistan accused India of resorting to unprovoked ceasefire violations targeting civilians. Pakistan's Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) said on Twitter that Indian unprovoked firing in Jura, Shahkot and Nousehri sectors deliberately targeted civilians.

The legend is that the King Durjay Sal after his release from Mughal captivity established this beautiful palace. He got inspired from the Mughal architecture and built a nine-storey fort from which this place got its name "Navratangarh", of which only three storeys are left at present.

The Jharkhand Government had identified Navratangraha as one of the 27 selected heritage sites for conservation a few years ago. The ASI official admitted that this site has the potential to be a tourist place as a number of legends associated with this place need recognition.

J-K chief secy chairs high-level meet to review tourism promotional campaign

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam reviewed on Sunday promotional campaigns for wooing tourists, days after the state administration withdrew its August 2 security advisory for holiday-makers and Amarnath pilgrims. **PTI**

Bodies of Stephen's teacher...

From Page 1
"The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination and further investigation was being carried out to ascertain facts that could have led Stanley to take extreme step," said a police officer tasked with the probe.

"We learnt about the tragic news this morning. We are in shock. I had interacted with him when we were speaking to teachers in the lead up to Delhi University Teachers' Association polls. We do not know what prompted him to take such a step. He was teaching Philosophy at the college," said professor Nandita Narain, who was Stanley's colleague at Stephens.

Slain Tiwari's kin seek death for killers

From Page 1
His cremation was delayed as his family members were adamant on meeting the Chief Minister to put forth their nine demands, including a probe by the National Investigation Agency, a Government job for one of the victim's sons and security for them. The probing team recovered blood stained saffron clothes and a blood stained knife from a hotel in Kaiserbagh police station area in the intervening night on Saturday and Sunday. The teams also got CCTV footage of the suspects donning saffron clothes and carrying a sweet box in a saffron colour carry

bag. The hotel manager in police interrogation told that two suspects had checked in a hotel room on October 17 and left the hotel around 11 am.

Sources in the team probing the case disclosed that the miscreants had fixed a meeting with the slain leader in the morning on same day. "The prime accused who was leading the operation had befriended Kamlesh through facebook and posted message which suited to the slain leader ideology," they said.

Well placed sources said the teams had netted the suspects and they were being interrogated at some undisclosed location.

On Saturday, police had a breakthrough in the murder case after three persons including the mastermind were taken into custody in Surat city of Gujarat in a joint operation of the police forces of the two States. Two more arrests were made in Bijnor district of UP where Muslim clerics Mohammed Mufti Naem Kazmi and Imam Maulana Anwarul Haq were held after being named in an FIR lodged by Tiwari's wife Kiran. Tiwari was cremated at his native place in Mahmoodabad after the district administration succeeded in convincing his family members that their demands would be fulfilled.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ayush Sharma, S/o. Hari Om Sharma, R/o. B-30, Garima Garden, Pasonda, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, UP-201001 have changed my name from Ayush Sharma to Mohammad Ayush on 16.10.2019 for all purposes.

PD(8645)A

CHANGE OF RELIGION

I, Ayush Sharma, S/o. Hari Om Sharma, R/o. B-30, Garima Garden, Pasonda, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, UP-201001 have changed my religion from 'Hinduism' to 'Islam' on 16.10.2019 for all purposes.

PD(8646)A

Assembly...

From Page 1

Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's son Aaditya Thackeray is making his debut in the electoral politics by contesting Assembly poll from Worli in Mumbai. The 29-year-old Thackeray is the first in the family to take plunge in electoral politics.

Counting of votes for both the Assembly polls and bypolls will be held on October 24.

In Maharashtra, where the 'Mahayuti' alliance of BJP, Shiv Sena and smaller parties is against the 'Maha-agadhi' led by the Congress and the NCP, a total of 8,98,39,600 people, including 4,28,43,635 women, are eligible to vote.

As many as 3,237 candidates, including 235 women, are contesting in 288 seats and 96,661 polling booths are in

place with 6.5 lakh staff for the voting exercise.

The ruling BJP is locked in a contest with the opposition Congress and the fledgling JJP for the 90 assembly seats in Haryana which has over 1.83 crore voters, including 85 lakh women and 252 transgenders, while 19,578 polling stations have been set up.

Polling will be held from 7 am to 6 pm. Tight security arrangements have been made with deployment of more than three lakh personnel from state police and central forces in Maharashtra, while over 75,000 security personnel have been mobilised in Haryana.

The high-voltage electioneering by the BJP saw participation of a galaxy of leaders led Modi and his cabinet colleagues Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, as it continued to aggressively raise the nationalism plank by focusing on scrapping of Article 370 provisions on special status to Jammu and Kashmir and targeted the

opposition on national security and corruption.

The opposition tried to corner the BJP governments at the Centre and in the states on the handling of the economy with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi blaming the ruling party for the economic slowdown and unemployment and highlighting issues like 'failure' of demonetisation and GST rollout.

The BJP, which is seeking a second straight term under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Maharashtra, is contesting 164 seats, which include candidates of smaller allies contesting on its lotus symbol, while Sena has fielded candidates on 126 seats.

On the other hand, the Congress has fielded 147 candidates and the ally NCP 121. Among other parties, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), led by Raj Thackeray, has fielded 101 candidates, the CPI 16, the CPM 8. The BSP has fielded candidates in 262

constituencies. A total of 1400 Independents are also in the poll arena.

The opposition campaign was, however, lacklustre as both the Congress and the NCP were plagued by infighting and desertions in the run-up to the polls.

The high-pitch campaign by the BJP has prompted its taciturn ally Shiv Sena to ask if Chief Minister thought there was no opposition in the state poll why BJP had deployed its all big-wigs in the campaign trail.

The campaign in Maharashtra was marked by personal attacks and sharp exchange of barbs between the chief minister and NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who hit the hustings at the age of 79 and addressed a number of rallies. However, the Congress and NCP failed to hold even a single joint rally.

While Modi addressed nine rallies across the state, Rahul Gandhi spoke at six

public meetings.

The campaign also saw an undertone of jostling for supremacy between the BJP and the Sena, which had fought the last assembly elections separately, winning 122 and 63 seats respectively. The Congress had bagged 42 and the NCP 41 seats.

In the April-May Lok Sabha elections, the BJP-Sena alliance won 41 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra, while the Congress won one and NCP four seats.

Prominent candidates in the fray are Chief Minister Fadnavis and his predecessors from Congress, Ashok Chavan, who is in fray from Bhokar in Nanded district, and Prithviraj Chavan seeking re-election from Karad South in Satara district.

In Haryana, the Congress is hoping to make a comeback following a change in guard in the state, while the BJP led by Khattar has set a target of winning 75 seats out of 90 in which

1,169 candidates of various political outfits are contesting. Currently, the BJP has 48 members in state assembly.

The Dushyant Chautala-led Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), a breakaway faction of the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), is also hoping for an improvement in its prospects following the Lok Sabha debacle.

The party had emerged on the scene following a feud in the Chautala clan in December last year.

The BSP, AAP, INLD-SAD combine, Swaraj India and the Loktantra Suraksha Party (LSP) have thrown their hat into the ring, though none of them is fighting on all 90 seats.

Prominent amongst those in the contest are Chief Minister Khattar (Karnal), former chief minister and Congress Legislative Party leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda (Garhi Sampla-Kiloi), Randeep Singh Surjewala (Kaithal),

Kiran Choudhary (Tosham) and Kuldeep Bishnoi (Adampur) and JJP's Dushyant Chautala (Uchana Kalan).

The BJP has fielded three sportspersons -- Babita Phogat (Dadri), Yogeshwar Dutt (Baroda in Sonipat) and Sandeep Singh (Pehowa) -- besides TikTok star Sonali Phogat (Adampur).

In Haryana, among the few women in the fray Latika Sharma of the BJP is well poised to retain her seat from Kalka. Latika practiced law in Panchkula courts before she got into politics and won from Kalka in 2014 assembly polls. She counts of a host of developmental works, especially road and bridge construction, that has helped in transforming the face of the small town that is gateway to Himachal Pradesh.

While Prime Minister Modi addressed seven rallies in the state, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressed two election meetings.

Efforts being made to demonise tech: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday cautioned against efforts to “demonise” technology, saying attempts are being made to create an atmosphere of fear.

Addressing a gathering at his official residence at the launch of a book, he said “major effort is being made to demonise technology. Attempts are being made to create an atmosphere of fear”.

Specially in the context of India, technology is being presented as a challenge to the country’s demographic dividend, the Prime Minister said.

He said the debate should not be on the dangers of artificial intelligence or when will robots outsmart humans. “But the debate should be on how to create a bridge between artificial intelligence and human intentions.”

The Prime Minister stressed on the need to understand that technology is a bridge not a divider. “Technology builds bridge



Prime Minister, Narendra Modi unveils book ‘Bridgital Nation’ authored by Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran and co-authored by Roopa Purushothaman in the presence of Ratan Tata on Sunday

between aspirations and achievement, demand and delivery, government and governance in order to achieve ‘sabka saath, sabka vikas’ (with all, for everyone’s development),” he said according to a

statement issued by his office. The book ‘Bridgital India’ has been co-authored by N Chandrasekaran, the chairman of Tata Sons, and Roopa Purushothaman, the Chief Economist at Tata Sons.

Ratan Tata, Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons, was also present on the occasion. Talking about the need to convert challenges posed by technology into opportunities, the prime minister cited the

- ❖ Debate should not be on the dangers of artificial intelligence or when will robots outsmart humans. But the debate should be on how to create a bridge between artificial intelligence and human intentions.
- ❖ Technology builds bridge between aspirations and achievement, demand and delivery, Government and Governance in order to achieve ‘sabka saath, sabka vikas’
- ❖ The book ‘Bridgital India’ has been co-authored by N Chandrasekaran, the chairman of Tata Sons, and Roopa Purushothaman, the Chief Economist at Tata Sons



example of the creation of India Post Payments Bank. He said the disruption caused by technology to the entire postal organization was converted into a technology

intensive banking system, benefiting millions through postal bank which transformed “dakiya” (postman) into a “bank babu” (banker), the statement said.

25,000 of 1 lakh NRIs voted in 2019 LS polls: EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 25,000 of the nearly one lakh overseas Indians who had registered themselves as voters flew down to India to exercise their franchise in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, according to data released by the Election Commission.

As many as 99,807 overseas Indians, who are living abroad and have not surrendered their citizenship, are in the voters’ lists of various States. The figure include 91,850 men, 7,943 women and 14 transgenders.

Out of the 25,606 who voted in the Parliamentary polls, 24,458 were men and 1,148 women.

In the national capital, 336 overseas Indians, including 231 men and 105 women, had registered as voters but none came to cast their votes, according to the EC data. The Union Territory of Puducherry also recorded a similar trend with none of the 272 overseas electors casting their votes in the General Elections this year.

In West Bengal too, where 34 overseas Indians were

recorded in the State’s electoral rolls, none voted.

However, the case was entirely different in Kerala which has the maximum number of overseas Indians in the voters’ list as well as highest level of participation in the polls.

Kerala has 85,161 overseas Indians on its electoral rolls and 25,091 persons voted in the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year.

Overseas Indians are free to cast their votes in the constituencies they are registered.

According to Ministry of External Affairs estimates, there are about 3.10 crore Non Resident Indians (NRIs) living in different countries across the world.

An expert committee of the Election Commission had in 2015 forwarded the legal framework to the Law Ministry to amend the electoral laws to allow the overseas Indians to use proxy voting.

Not many overseas Indians turn up to cast their votes as they do not want to spend foreign currency to come to India for the purpose, officials said.



Participants seen at Rajpath during the 15th Airtel Delhi Half Marathon on Sunday in New Delhi

Herbal drug Fifatrol may stop overuse of antibiotics: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As antibiotic-resistant bacteria, known as “superbugs,” are becoming more numerous and more virulent owing to rampant overuse of antibiotics, researchers are exploring herbal medicines as an alternative to these increasingly ineffective drugs.

In this direction, researchers from Bhopal-based AIIMS have found that Fifatrol, a herbal drug can be a good substitute to allopathic antibiotics to treat bacterial and fungal infections, and that too without causing any side effects.

“Fifatrol, an ayurvedic

drug, enriched with immune-enhancing herbs has been found to be effective in curing major bacterial infections such as dreaded staphylococcus species of bacteria,” said Dr Samran Singh, Director of AIIMS Bhopal.

Staphylococcus species causes fever, cold and cough, skin diseases, etc and if not treated in time can be fatal.


Beside these, the Fifatrol drug has also been found suitable in controlling spread of infectious diseases caused due to echolalia, pneumonia, klebsiella aerogenes, etc.

Talking about the research, Dr Singh said that normally, the ayurvedic medicines have

been seen as supplements to increase immunity, but Fifatrol has shown very promising results against bacteria too. It has been found effective against bacteria P Ruzinivosa too.

“We are in the midst of doing detailed research to arrive at the final result.” These are compelling evidence that medicinal herbs can be a first line of defense against infectious diseases.

Singh, who heads the team of researchers, further explained, “Staphylococcus bacteria is responsible for skin, respiratory and stomach infections. In people who have weak immune system, its infection can also be fatal.”



NRIs

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❑ Out of the 25,606 who voted	

INSHORT

NSDC PARTNERS WITH SARTHAK EDU TRUST
New Delhi: To generate awareness about skill trainings in the disability sector and to remove barriers of social inclusion, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) partnered with Sarthak Educational Trust to enable the participation of 40 persons with disability (PwD) in Airtel Delhi Half Marathon on Sunday. Dr Manish Kumar, MD and CEO, NSDC said, “We believe, all individuals must be given equal rights to live with dignity and be given equal opportunities. We are working to provide PWDs respectful livelihood and to eliminate the environment of social exclusion.”

NAIDU PRESENTS AWARD TO EX-AGI
New Delhi: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday presented ‘Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award’ to legal luminary, scholar and former Attorney General of India, K Parasaran at a function here. arasaran was honored with the Award on the occasion of the Elder’s Day celebration of Age Care India, an organization working for the welfare of the elderly.

AIIMS DIRECTOR RELEASES BOOK

New Delhi: AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria and Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government, K Vijaya Raghavan recently released “A Dragonfly’s purpose”, an autobiographical account of Dr Sujata Sharma’s recovery from an autoimmune disease, Guillain Barre Syndrome at an event here. Professor in AIIMS, Dr Sharma is the recipient of the National Bioscience Award for Career Development, one of the highest Indian science awards, for her contributions to biosciences, in 2011.

1 IN 4 INDIANS WILLING TO TAKE ALTERNATIVE
New Delhi: Only one in four Indians are willing to take a lower carbon footprint alternative to air travel, even at the cost of inconvenience and additional expense, according to a new World Economic Forum study.

Parl panel to examine accidents involving Defence assets, assess procurement policy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary panel headed by former Union Minister Jual Oram will assess the cases of accidents involving defence assets and also examine the defence procurement policy currently in vogue.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has selected a number of subjects for examination, which include reviewing the selection procedure of officers in the armed forces, according to the Lok Sabha secretariat’s bulletin.

“Accidents involving defence assets — a critical review, an assessment of defence procurement policy” are also among the subjects selected by the panel for examination, the bulletin said.

The committee had, in its report tabled in Parliament



last year, said accidents had become a continuous feature in the Navy.

The Indian Navy witnessed 62 accidents between 2007 and 2017, and 177 officers were found guilty during inquiries ordered into such incidents, according to the report.

As many as 44 aircraft and helicopters — 26 fighter jets, six

helicopters, nine trainer aircraft and three transport planes — of the Indian Air Force were lost in crashes since 2014-15, in which 46 personnel were killed, according to official data.

The details of the crashes were provided in the Lok Sabha by Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik, while replying to a question.

Over 380 Ladakhi-origin policemen to be transferred from J&K to Ladakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 380 police personnel belonging to Ladakh and working in different places in Kashmir and Jammu regions will soon be transferred to Ladakh and posted under the administrative control of the new Union Territory. The new Union Territory of Ladakh will come into existence on October 31. The Ministry of Home Affairs has given nod for the transfer of police personnel working in different wings of the Jammu & Kashmir Police.

“Approval has been given for the transfer of about 385 Ladakhi-origin police personnel to Ladakh and they will function under the new UT which will come into existence on October 31,” a Ministry official said. The police personnel will work with the Ladakh UT Police, which will be under the direct control of the MHA. The police personnel — from the rank of constable to inspector — will also get the pay and perks available to police personnel of other UTs like Chandigarh and



Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

According to The Jammu & Kashmir Re-organisation Act 2019, Ladakh will not have a legislative assembly. The Act says cadres of IAS and IPS for the existing state of Jammu & Kashmir, on and from the appointed day (October 31), shall continue to function on existing cadres. However, in future, the all India service officers to be posted to UTs of Jammu & Kashmir or Ladakh shall be from the Arunachal, Goa, Mizoram, Union Territory cadre, more popularly known as UT cadre.


India seeks UN action to combat anti-microbial resistance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has expressed its concern on the global emergence of anti-microbial resistance (AMR) and called upon the relevant United Nations agencies to contain this threat to public health. India has one of the highest rates of resistance to antimicrobial agents used both in humans and food animals. The environment, especially the water bodies, has also reported the presence of resistant organisms or their genes.

While attending the G20 Health Ministers’ meeting held in Japan’s Okayama, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan participating in the deliberations on health risk and health security, made an intervention on AMR, seen as a serious emerging threat to global public health.

According to an official statement, while voicing his concern on AMR, he called upon all relevant UN agencies to align themselves in their endeavour to combat antimicrobial resistance.

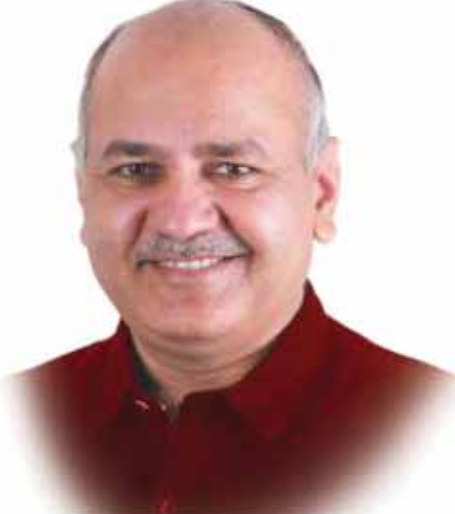


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Venue: Thyagaraj Stadium, INA, New Delhi




Manish Sisodia
Dy. Chief Minister, Delhi



दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

Directorate of Education
Government of NCT of Delhi



दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

NRC PLAN IN BENGAL

Hindus will bear brunt of NRC: Cong's Adhir

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Chowdhury has expressed apprehensions about his future citizenship status going by the fact that his family too hails from Bangladesh and considering the “vindictive approach” of the Central Government in its plans regarding the implementation of the National Register of Citizens. Warning that the Hindus will have to bear the brunt of NRC more than any other community, the senior Member of Parliament from Behrampur on Sunday said at the end of an anti-NRC rally in Kolkata that “no one will be spared. More so the Hindus... The Hindus will be more affected by NRC than any other community,” citing the example of Assam where more than 11 lakh Hindu Bengalis had been targeted by the NRC.

Warning the citizens against “devastating impact of the proposed Citizens (amendment) Bill and NRC,” in Bengal,

Chowdhury, a highly vocal politician with a long history of struggle both against the Left Front and the Trinamool Congress, said a whole cross-section of the society will be affected by the NRC that the BJP was planning to implement in Bengal. “The NRC (BJ) they are planning will target every section of the society be it a celebrity or a common man,” he said apprehending the torment his own family might have to go through on account of political victimisation in the name of NRC as “my family too hails from Bangladesh.”

He said “I openly acknowledge that I too am a refugee in that sense as my father had migrated from that side of the border to India. I am also apprehensive of my citizenship future on account of the political persecution that one is expected to suffer in the name of NRC,” he maintained.

“Will they throw me out? Will they throw my family out of India?” he asked saying how-

ever that the BJP will not be allowed to amend the Constitution the way it likes. “Our Constitution has been drafted in such a manner that it cannot be amended the way the BJP wants it to be,” he said adding his party would continue to fight against the saffron outfit’s “nefarious designs.”

Meanwhile, in a separate development State Congress leader Sanmay Banerjee who was arrested for allegedly violating Cyber laws was released on bail on Sunday.

Banerjee was arrested for allegedly writing “defamatory statements” against some of senior Trinamool Congress leaders. All the opposition parties including the Left, Congress and the BJP had raised their voices against Banerjee’s arrest.

Accusing the police for arresting Sanmay Banerjee for circulating posts against TMC leaders, Adhir Chowdhury said the Congress leaders arrest was a classic example of intolerance of the highest order.

POLL CODE VIOLATION

FIR against Bihar BJP chief, Kishanganj party candidate

Kishanganj (Bihar): An FIR has been lodged against Bihar BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal and Sweety Singh, the party’s candidate for Kishanganj Assembly bypoll, for allegedly violating the model code of conduct, an official said.

The FIR was registered at Sadar police station on Saturday evening following a written complaint by Kishanganj Sadar Circle Officer Shafi Ahmad after a video surfaced on social media purportedly showing Jaiswal exhorting businessmen to close their establishments on the polling day, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Shanawaz Ahmad Niyazi said.

Jaiswal had also allegedly promised to pay Rs 500 to employees of business firms for voting in favour of the BJP.

The state BJP chief allegedly made the remarks, in the presence of the party candidate, during a meeting of local businessmen on Thursday at the residence of Kishanganj



Municipal Council vice-chairperson Aanchi Devi.

Reacting to the FIR lodged against her and Bihar BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal, Sweety Singh said that the state chief’s statement had been “misconstrued”.

“Jaiswal had talked about giving money for food and snacks to party workers but his statement has been misconstrued,” the Kishanganj party candidate said.

Jaiswal, a Lok Sabha member from West Champaran, could not be contacted for his comment.

Bypolls to Kishanganj and four other Assembly seats in Bihar will be held on Monday as the incumbent MLAs were elected to Parliament in the April-May general election. **PTI**

Nitish flags off ‘rath’ to inform farmers about Govt schemes

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday flagged off ‘Krishi Jagrukta Mahabhiyan and Beej Vikas Vahan Rath’ to create awareness among farmers about Government schemes being run for them during the Rabi season.

Kumar flagged off 76 raths for all the 38 districts — two ‘raths’ each for every district — at a function held in front of CM Secretariat on the occasion of ‘Krishi Jagrukta Mahabhiyan (Rabi season 2019-20) and Beej Vahan Vikas Rath, an official release said.

The ‘raths’ would travel to blocks, gram panchayats and villages to tell the farmers about the schemes being run by the Agriculture department during Rabi season, it said.

The raths will be move in six districts of Patna division to create awareness among farmers asking them not to burn stubble (crop residue), go for crop residue management and about benefits of other schemes being run by Agriculture department. Farmers would be made aware by showing them the documentary film, it said. **PTI**

Cong decries BJP’s plan to bestow Bharat Ratna on Savarkar

Mangaluru: The Congress in Karnataka on Sunday deplored the BJP’s proposal to confer Bhara Ratna on Veer Savarkar.

Addressing reporters here, KPCC spokesman Ivan D’Souza MLC said the saffron party’s agenda was to score gains in Maharashtra Assembly elections by mootng such a proposal.

The BJP was attempting to promote ‘traitors’ as patriots only during elections.

The BJP Government should not choose a person like Savarkar for the nations highest award, despite the fact that he was named in the conspiracy case to eliminate Mahatma Gandhi, he said.

The Maharashtra BJP unit had said in its election manifesto that the party would ask the Centre to confer the Bharat Ratna on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, popularly known as Veer Savarkar.

Pointing out that Savarkar had written six letters to the British revealing his wish to surrender within two weeks of landing in jail, D’Souza sought

Pointing out that Savarkar had written six letters to the British revealing his wish to surrender within two weeks of landing in jail, D’Souza sought to know how such a person could be called a freedom fighter

to know how such a person could be called a freedom fighter.

He wanted the Centre to consider former State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah’s proposal to confer Bharat Ratna on Siddaganga seer Shivakumara Swami.

The BJP was creating unnecessary narratives during polls just to divert attention of the people from the real issues, he alleged.

Former mayor Kavitha Sanil was also present. **PTI**

Akhilesh asks Yogi to meet kin of those killed due to ‘bad law and order situation’ too

Lucknow: Shortly after Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday met the family members of the little-known Hindu outfit’s chief Kamlesh Tiwari, Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav asked him to meet the kin of those killed in the State “due to bad law and order” too.

“The CM’s meeting the family members of the victim who was murdered in Lucknow is a welcome step. I hope the CM will visit Allahabad, Kannauj, Jhansi and Meerut also where family members of those killed due to bad law and order resides.”

Separate murder incidents were reported in Allahabad, Kannauj, Jhansi and Meerut

districts in past few days.

Tiwari’s family members had earlier met the chief minister at his residence and demanded capital punishment for his killers.

Tiwari’s distraught mother, his wife and three sons spent around 30 minutes with the chief minister.

Sources said the chief minister assured all possible help to the family during the meeting, assuring them that the police are seriously probing the case and the guilty persons will not be spared. The Samajwadi Party had on Saturday targeted the state government over Tiwari’s murder in the State capital and sought a reply from the chief minister on this. **PTI**

NDA may lose ally in Tamil Nadu

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The already fragile National Democratic Alliance in Tamil Nadu is all set to deteriorate further with one of the constituents expressing its displeasure and thinking loudly of possible alternatives.

Puthiya Tamilagam, a Dalit outfit led by Dr K Krishnasamy, which is a prominent partner of the AIADMK-led NDA in Tamil Nadu may quit the front on its own as the alliance has failed to address an important demand raised by the party. Dr Krishnasamy, a medical doctor-turned-politician wants the Centre and State Governments to remove seven sub sects from the list of Scheduled Caste and elevate them to the status of Other Backward Community (OBC). This is the first of its kind demand in South India where most castes

prefer to be designated as SC or Scheduled Tribe to enjoy the benefits of reservation in education and employment.

Dr Krishnasamy, who belongs to the Pallar community is of the view that his caste was designated as scheduled caste erroneously by the then British colonial masters, a mistake which was not rectified by the post-independence governments. He says there are seven such sub sects designated as SC by the colonial government. “We want to save our community from this imposed identity and to reclaim the history of the community,” Dr Krishnasamy told The Pioneer.

The communities Pallar, Kudumbar, Pannadi, Kaaladi, Kadayar, Devendra Kulatar and Vadhiriyyar are the communities which were listed as Scheduled Caste communities. “All these communities should be integrated as Devendra Kula

Vellalar and re-designated as OBC,” said the doctor.

Quoting from authentic history books, records and archive materials, the doctor says that all these sects and sub sects were land-owning communities. “Our communities were engaged in wet-land farming. The Chola-Chera-Pandya dynasties arose from the Devendra Kulla Vallalar communities. But over a period of time, we came under invasion and all our land were annexed by the aggressors. Thus we lost our position as rulers,” explained Dr Krishnasamy.

He said the community members lost rights to their own land because of a rule enacted during the Chola period. “The Kudi Neeki system introduced by the Chola rulers mandated that those who could not pay taxes would not have any rights on their lands and they were denied even citizenship. The

Devendra Kula Vellalar community members who were in dire straits following the loss of their farm lands couldn’t pay taxes and thus ended up as victims of many atrocities perpetrated on them. During the British rule, we were designated as marginalized and poor sections and listed as Scheduled Caste,” he said.

The then leader of the community, Sreenivasan Pillai, wrote to the British authorities in 1927 itself stating that they were culturally and traditionally different from Adi-Dravidar. “The Nadars too had been facing this discrimination. But they took up the matter and travelled to London for meeting the Simon Commission. Since our community had been ruined financially, the leaders could not mobilise money for the London meeting with the Simon Commission,” he said.

Former Union Minister Nagmani quits JD(U)

Patna: Six months after joining the Janata Dal (United), former Union Minister Nagmani resigned from Nitish Kumar’s party on Sunday, giving a call to replace the Bihar Chief Minister with a ‘Koeri’ leader in the next year’s Assembly polls.

Nagmani, who had joined the JD(U) in April after being sacked as RLSP national working president in February, also charged the chief minister with neglecting the Koeri community to which he belonged.

“My only objective is to install a son of Koeri to the post of chief minister of Bihar after assembly elections in 2020. I will take sanyas from politics if I fail to do it,” he said after announcing his resignation from the JD(U) at a meeting attended by his supporters and community members. Nagmani said he has

dedicated his life for the betterment of the Koeris and announced to hold a mega meeting of the community in Patna on February 29 next year.

Nagmani said he would take out ‘Jagdeo Rath’ named after his father late Jagdeo Prasad from December 1 with a slogan ‘Nitish Bhagao, Koeri Lao’. The rath would visit every assembly segment to unite the community members, he said.

Nagmani had won the Chatra seat in 1999 on an RJD ticket but engineered a split in the party headed by Lalu Prasad and joined the BJP-led NDA, becoming a minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government at the Centre. After the NDA lost power at the Centre, he switched over to Ram Vilas Paswan’s LJP before crossing over to the JD(U). **PTI**

Mathrubhumi institutes ₹5L Book Of The Year award



PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A Prominent Malayalam daily, Mathrubhumi, has instituted a ₹5 lakh ‘Book Of The Year’ award. The first award will be presented at the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters (MBIFL) in Thiruvananthapuram from January 30-February 2, 2020, said the newspaper’s Joint MD Shreyams Kumar.

“The House of Mathrubhumi has been the mother lode that has enriched Malayalam literature since our inception in 1923. For close to a century, the best of writing in the world and in Indian languages has been mined by us for the enrichment of Keralites. Thus was envisaged the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters. It hosts the brightest and the best from across the world, debating, discussing and dissenting on concepts, ideas and thoughts,” Shreyams Kumar explained.

“The Mathrubhumi Book of the Year award is a commitment from Mathrubhumi to honour the best in Indian literature every year. We are inspired to honour and celebrate brilliant works, and encourage the publishers to look for the best writing by Indian authors,” Shreyams Kumar said.

The award is open to Indian writers whose works are published in India. Works in regional languages should be translated to English to be eligible for the award. Kerala’s prominent newspaper Mathrubhumi was launched in 1923, supporting the freedom movement in the country. This award is considered as biggest in the publication sector in India.

Modi Govt to give ‘true’ self-rule, autonomy to J&K: Jitendra Singh

Kathua (J&K): Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday that Jammu & Kashmir would get “true” self-rule and autonomy under the Modi Government, and it would be quite different to the “frivolous slogans” of such demands raised by Kashmir-centric political parties.

Addressing a meeting of BJP candidates contesting the block development council (BDC) election, Singh said it is important for party workers to understand and also make others understand that this is for the first time after Independence the concept of three-tier grassroots democracy comprising panchayats, BDCs and district councils and is being introduced in the State.

“Jammu & Kashmir will get true self rule and true autonomy under the Modi government, and that will be quite in contrast to the frivolous slogans of self-rule and autonomy raised by Kashmir-centric political parties, which have been befooling the people of the state for decades, only to perpetuate their dynasty rule generation after generation,” the BJP leader said.

Singh said the question to be asked to the “champions of so-called autonomy” is whether they have any moral authority to “fool” the people of Kashmir by making such demands after they boycotted the panchayat and BDC elections, which he said are meant to confer autonomy to the representatives elected at the village level.

The “champions” of self-rule, he said, must reply which self-rule they are talking about when their own Government “resisted” all efforts to hold panchayat elections and, when the election did happen during the Governor’s rule, they boycotted it.

The Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) said the response to both panchayat and BDC elections had

been “enthusiastic” in Kashmir, adding that the highest number of candidates for the BDC election were not from any district in the Jammu region, but from Kupwara and Baramulla districts in the valley.

According to the minister, the central grant has started reaching directly to the local bodies for the first time, due to which many of the panchayats have already received ₹20-30 lakh in the first phase itself, which is “more than the total amount” received by them in the last several decades.

“Will the Congress party answer why they were hesitant in introducing this provision in Jammu & Kashmir even though it was brought in by their own Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi,” Singh asked. “And, whether by doing so, were they not hand in glove with the Kashmir-centric dynasties seeking to appease certain section of voters at the cost of the poor man living in rural areas?” **PTI**

have gone up appreciably due to the long holiday interval.

The local tourism industry is alarmed at the lack of concern and general apathy towards streamlining vital civic amenities.

“When tourists, particularly those from the developed world, arrive in Agra, they are aghast at the dismal conditions. This results in short visits, same-day return by most visitors,” says President of the Agra Hotels and Restaurants Association, Rakesh Chauhan.

The rains have exposed the claims of the city administration of having patched up or filled all potholes and completed repair work on most roads.

The municipal corporation commissioner Arun Prakash says filling of potholes is continuing. Mayor Navin Jain has assured citizens that prompt



A woman busy in making earthen lamps in preparation for Diwali in Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh on Sunday

PTI

Bumpy roads in Agra dampen tourists’ spirit

Agra: Lack of infrastructure and civic amenities are deterring tourists from visiting several significant historical monuments in Agra, the city immortalised by the Taj Mahal, say a group of local industry leaders.

Though the number of tourists at the historical monuments in Agra show an encouraging trend, hoteliers and travel agents complain of pathetic lack of civic amenities.

“Tourists generally avoid visiting other monuments in the city after a ‘darshan’ (seeing) of the Taj Mahal, because they are too scared of bumpy roads,” tourist guide Ved Gautam said.

An estimated 35,000 tourists visited the Taj on Saturday, said data on the ASI website.

While Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the district administration to complete patch work



and road repairs within a fortnight, the Agra Municipal Corporation, is still dragging its feet.

“To an outsider, Agra appears, as if it’s ravaged by a war since most roads have developed potholes and cracks after the monsoon rains. The continuous digging by one government department or the other not only raises a lot of dust but makes mobility difficult,” a local resident said.

The city administration is yet to wake up to repair and clean up the roads in the city which have not only become a safety hazard but also assault the aesthetics,” complains hotelier Surendra Sharma.

A new tourist season has begun, and the number of vehicles bringing in tourists via the Yamuna Expressway or the Agra-Lucknow Expressway,

remedial measures would be taken to ensure safe mobility. Even during the festival season, nothing was being done. Many stretches still require patchwork treatment to avoid accidents,” said Pandit Jugal Kishor.

The city police has failed to demolish encroachments around monuments.

“All they do is to send notices. For want of police force, no action to evict illegal occupants is possible. You also need political will,” Goswami Nandan Shrotriya of Yamuna Kinara Road said.

The city appears in shambles, with heaps of garbage dumped along railway tracks, the dry Yamuna river bed and pollution, but the official agencies entrusted with the task of transforming Agra into a smart city dry continue to show no urgency. **IANs**

Goa stray cattle turning non-vegetarian: BJP Min

Panaji: Stray cattle in Goa’s tourism savvy coastal belt, which includes popular beach villages like Calangute and Candolim, have “turned non-vegetarian” and only eat scraps of chicken and fried fish, claims the state’s Garbage Management Minister Michael Lobo.

Lobo, who is a BJP MLA from Calangute Assembly constituency, also said that 76 stray cattle from Calangute village, impounded and relocated to a gaushala, were refusing to eat vegetarian food and that specialist veterinarians had been roped in to wean them of their meat fetish.

“We have lifted 76 cattle from Calangute and taken them to the gaushala run by the Gomantak Gosevak Mahasang

in Mayem village, where they are being well looked after. We always say cattle are vegetarian. But cattle from Calangute have turned non-vegetarian and do not eat grass, gram or the special cattle feed given to them,” Lobo said, on the sidelines of a village function in Arpora village in North Goa on Saturday.

“The cattle from Calangute and Candolim are used to eating non-vegetarian food like leftover chicken scraps, stale fried fish from restaurants. Due to consumption of such non-vegetarian food, their system has become like that of humans. Earlier they were vegetarian, pure vegetarian. They would smell non-vegetarian food and move on, but now cattle from Calangute only eat non-vegetarian food,” he said. **IANs**

PAPER WITH PASSION

Tale of returnees

The deportation of 311 Indians by Mexico shows that old and wily job cartels can no longer sell a golden dream



The US has its compelling reasons for enforcing strict norms to phase out illegal refugees and asylum seekers and bolster homeland security. But reverberations of the Trump Administration’s tough immigration rules are finally being felt back home, where cartels for years have resorted to underhand means to smuggle the lesser privileged aspirants from the hinterland into the US. This is why the deportation of 311 Indians, including a woman, from Mexico, is significant for it means old hoodwinking habits and unscrupulous border crossings will simply not work. Hopefully, it will also awaken migrants to be realistic and not entrust their lives and property to agents and human traffickers for the proverbial El Dorado, where they would rather do menial services on the recommendation of an acquaintance than earn a work permit legally. Hopefully, for the thousands of villagers in Punjab and Haryana, the overseas dream will not be their only aimless ambition. Each of the returnees reportedly bought illegal passage for ₹15 to ₹18 lakh, a sum that would have ensured them a decent livelihood in India itself had they invested it wisely. Now they are staring at a bleak future on home ground, too. The deportation of Indians from Mexico is a first. As per the National Migration Institute of Mexico, trans-Atlantic air transport to ferry deportees is unprecedented and is expected to continue. The move is not surprising considering that Mexico has been sending back migrants, especially Central Americans, in droves in line with its agreement with the US. It has vowed to significantly curb America-bound migration in exchange for averting US tariffs on Mexican exports. Reports suggest that the backlog of migrants in southern Mexico has grown as officials have stopped issuing permits for them to cross the country. They deported 25,069 Central Americans in January and February, almost double the number in the same period last year. Of these deportees, 3,289 were minors. Contrary to Asians, a majority of Central American migrants flee murderous gangs while others run from poverty or look to reunite with their parents working in the US. The dreams of Indians may have been shattered but they are fortunate to have survived the ordeal and escaped the horrendous detention centres.

An ideal US immigrant would evoke images of a young educated person, either wanting to go there for higher education or already a software professional, adding to the US talent pool, and by extension to the US economy and human resource. However, illegal immigrants are the polar opposite. All those sent back are between 18 and 27 years, hold a graduate degree and wanted to earn a livelihood as a taxi driver in the US. It is, therefore, not difficult to comprehend why despite knowing all the perils involved, they embarked on a risky journey. Obviously their gamble is rooted in the problem of shrinking job space and the comparatively low wages offered by both private and public companies in the country. For those unemployed, the lure of healthy earnings and the prospect of sending a large paycheck back home are enough to embark on a life-threatening journey overseas. It is this desire that scamsters encash. The fake job racket is now a booming industry in the country. And a very organised one at that. Operators engage some very creative minds and legal expertise to identify loopholes in existing rules. The higher the risk, the greater the fee. Then there are others who operate in legally grey areas by training immigrants in the art of bending the rules. Every Government will have to tackle the problem of illegal immigration. But the present incident must impress upon our Government the need to crack down on rogue agents who promise lucrative jobs. This seems to be a difficult flushout challenge in Punjab and Haryana where illegal trafficking networks are a sub-set of a larger matrix of gunrunners, drug smugglers and ganglord couriers. Simultaneously, a campaign must be launched to make the people aware of the dangers of falling prey to corrosive agents and the benefits of going through job services linked to embassies and high commissions.

Gravity of bias

Two women astronauts of NASA completed the first all-woman spacewalk, literally claiming the gender space



In a small step for two women but a giant leap for womankind, two female astronauts from the US space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) completed the first all-woman spacewalk on Friday. It was a moment frozen in the history of women empowerment as the two US astronauts, Christina Koch and Jessica Meir, floated out, feet-first, of the International Space Station’s (ISS) Quest airlock, tasked with replacing a failed power control unit. During the spacewalk, the coordinator on the ground was also a woman, astronaut Stephanie Wilson. In a test of endurance and grit of the two women, the spacewalk went on for six hours and 45 minutes, something which has so far been considered a male privilege and equal to his stamina. The figures say it all. Till now, only 14 women have done spacewalks compared to 213 men. The first woman to break the glass ceiling was Russian cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya, who went outside the USSR’s Salyut 7 in 1984. Meir became the 15th woman overall and 14th US woman to spacewalk.

How male-oriented NASA and other space programmes of the world are can be gauged by the fact that this spacewalk was to take place in March but had to be postponed as there was only one medium-sized spacesuit available at the ISS. As Christina Koch so aptly put it in an interview, “In the past women haven’t always been at the table.” This sentiment finds resonance with millions of women on Earth, who struggle to make their voices heard in male-dominated spheres and face discrimination and derision on a daily basis. The 40-year-old Koch is also setting another milestone as she will remain on the ISS until February, bringing her total time in space to 328 days, the longest single spaceflight by a woman and just short of astronaut Scott Kelly’s 340-day record. Till now, most of the bio-medical data on the impact of spaceflights is derived from male astronauts. Researchers are collecting extensive data about the impact on Koch’s body for the first time. The first all-woman spacewalk is also evidence of NASA’s own journey of empowerment. According to the space agency, this was something it had not planned but happened because there has been a marked increase in the number and aspiration of women astronauts. This is the same agency which did not admit women into the astronaut programme until 1978. Sally Ride went to space in 1983 but she was beaten to it by two Soviet women. Similarly, it was only in October 1984 that Kathryn Sullivan became the first American woman to finish a spacewalk. Now, the agency is planning to put the first woman on the Moon by 2024 with its Artemis lunar exploration programme and recently unveiled the prototype for a new spacesuit. That is a big step towards gender equality everywhere though it has taken a long time coming.

The new Indian identity

India’s new fashion mantra is not about ethnocentrism or muscularity. But yes, it is robust, meaningful and confident



RINKU GHOSH

A few days ago, a mass men’s label launched the Nehru jacket as an assembly line product, as regular as corporate wear, and not an ethnic fancy meant for festive or ceremonial rituals. This signals a shift from the formal code of the Western suit as the only boardroom qualifier and legitimises the ethnic identity as an equally driven negotiator. Latest brand campaigns of other labels show the young flaunting ethnic wear unabashedly and one significant advertisement has designer Manish Malhotra, the man who set the grammar of popular fashion through the porous matrix of Hindi films, advising a young woman on how to wash the *zari* in the traditional silks and saris that she has proudly stacked up in her wardrobe. The assumption is clearly of these not being just occasion wear or a one-time statement but meant to be worn regularly and, therefore, frequently washed at home. This attribute of everydayness is freeing up Indian fashion from the dictates that we have so long assumed as a given.

For long, fashion has been the most visible barometer of anthropological studies. And by that measure, India’s millennial story is to be found in what we wear, rather how we live our mindset. One that has come full circle after liberalisation and opened us to the world. Post-WTO, there was a rush to co-opt a Western standard of brand consciousness and grammar. And no matter what the unease or inhibition, there was a willingness to engage with the currency of globalisation, even open acceptance of it. There was a McDonaldisation process as well that brought us out of our stiffness and made casual Friday dressing a linking code of behaviour, both in formal and informal spaces. The open democracy and gender neutrality of the casual wear market had a lasting social consequence, that of looking good everyday and being comfortable in a crowd. The exposure to refined silhouettes and minimalism of boutique fashion houses meant that we could structure our appearances better. It further meant that we could define the global Indian by what s/he wore and the accessories s/he carried; the tags could be identified anywhere. It was also the time when our designers sought international collaborations, using the luxurious heritage of our craftsmanship, to lend some accents to the ramps in New York, Milan and London.

Post-1990s, we were taking strides to be at one with the world. Almost three decades on, we are a significant player, our new-found politico-economical heft giving us the confidence to own our cultural identity. That’s why Banaras is not just about saris but has emerged as a concept and motif of one of our many identity markers. We have co-opted Western structures and silhouettes to the extent of blending them with our sensibility and becoming the Indian-global rather than the global Indian. Fashion today also has finally broken through the Western



concept of seasonality of spring-summer and fall-winter and decided its own timeline. Free-flowing drapes are in, khadi is in the middle of an evolutionary explosion and the *kurta-churidaar*-wasitcoat ensemble has become the most androgynous and modernist statement there is. Our designers, too, now see a potential in the domestic market and instead of international collaborations, are taking their craftsmanship to high streets in fashion capitals of the world, choosing to be an ethnic Indian label that is not just about identity but about philosophy, of handmade skills and originality, sustainability, vibrancy, colour and people. In the neo-Indian assertion of why the world ought to be at our feet, we are literally wearing it on our sleeves. And doing so with a refined sense of style that has finally taught us how fusion ought to be, a cultural memory blended with functional grammar, the deep-rooted knowledge of both now defining our body consciousness.

According to a survey by Technopak, India’s ethnic wear industry is expected to grow to ₹ 1,26,210 crore at the end of this fiscal, 83 per cent of it in women’s wear. A survey by clothing brand Biba showed that ethnic wear is a preferred

outfit for women aged between 16 to 50 years, particularly in Tier II and Tier III cities.

This is significant since it reflects the empowerment of women in the social, economic and political space and their emergence as a sizeable chunk of the market. It also points to their greater buying capacity by virtue of their increased participation in the workforce. Particularly in the boardroom, where the woman had to be seen mannish in every aspect, be it in approach or power dressing to break the glass ceiling, the rules of appearance have changed completely. Women are keeping to their traditional preferences and body types with different cuts and drapes. The *salwars* have transformed to palazzos and long-flowing skirts, the embellishment streaks through short *kurtis*, the *anarkali* is becoming an asymmetrical cape, the *kurtas* are now long floor-length dresses while saris are being structured as cocktail gowns. Fusion wear, in fact, is now about day, casual and even evening wear. The Indo-Western genre has emerged as a good option for the youth who may still want the cool quotient of the university jeans and T-shirt routine and want to look ethnic at the same time.

A new consciousness about where we come from has meant a renewed interest in the sari, fabrics and our metals. Online sari-wearing challenges have translated into a revivalist search of the diversity of fabric and design and a rediscovery of cotton. This has helped designers and cooperatives rescue weaving clusters and organise the local market. India’s metal and mineral wealth has also fuelled a demand for tribal jewellery as standout avant-garde statements. The comfort with drapes and flowing lines has been directly proportional to a greater embrace of “otherness”, be it of the LGBTQ community or even men themselves, who have been strait jacketed so far by colonialism but are now at home with civilisational logic in sartorial choices, that we need to use organic and breathable fabrics and feel light and easy in a tropical land. Fluidity is in.

Fashion then has become the most accurate reflection of the empowerment of the mind beyond causes or politics. In fact, it has become a tapestry of our neo-consciousness. One that is proud of expressing personal experiences and narratives, localised contexts, embroidery and fabrics (like Bhagalpur silk and Assam *muga*) and even architectural motifs from our

heritage sites and structures.

Of course, in climate challenged times, matching India’s initiatives in environment politics, Indian fashion has emerged as one of the most sustainable choices there is as creators reuse, re-engineer and recycle heirlooms. Be it zero-waste production processes, locally-sourced and woven linen or use of natural dyes, sustainability is gradually becoming the wardrobe mainstay. Particularly, fair-trade practices and the direct sourcing from and benefits to weavers’ and craft clusters have meant that social responsibility is dominating popular choice. Designers are now working independently with craft clusters, often picking out the under-utilised ones, value-adding to their dead stock and joining hands with other societies/groups that are known for mastering a particular craft. This Gandhian essence of the grassroots, that mirrors the primacy of rural India in the political space, has made our fashion industry truly inclusive in its sense of purpose.

In fact, India’s new fashion mantra is not about ethnocentrism or muscularity. But yes, it is robust, meaningful and confident.

(The writer is Associate Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

Modiji only remembers (Article) 370. He does not know when Pakistan split and who did it. It was we (Congress) who split Pakistan’s integral part from it...

Congress leader
—Kapil Sibal

To me, fitness is about complete well-being, psychological, emotional and physical. I eat well but mindfully and work out consistently.

Actor
—Shriya Pilgaonkar



We believe that India and China should correctly view their differences and never let differences negatively affect the overall effort of bilateral cooperation.

Chinese Ambassador
—Sun Weidong



In spite of the Congress being in power for so many years, why aren’t the people siding with its ideology? Because national interest is foremost for the people.

BJP leader
—Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rally controversy

Sir — This refers to the report, “Sonia gives Haryana rally a miss...fill void” (October 19). Congress president Sonia Gandhi’s son Rahul cited his mother’s viral fever to be the reason behind her inability to turn up at an election rally in Haryana. However, Sonia has not been attending any public functions of late, apparently on the advice of her doctors.

Officially, the rally in Mahendragarh was the only one which she was to address. There could be two reasons for scheduling the rally for Sonia by the Congress’ campaign managers despite knowing about her poor health. First, they might have hoped she would be up and about in time to address the rally. Second, since Sonia remains the tallest leader in the Congress with a crowd-pulling potential, party bosses continued bandying her name about till the last minute to gain maximum traction and build up expectations. Of course, it fuelled speculation about the old vs new war.

Navin Chawla
Chandigarh

Safeguard bank depositors

This refers to the editorial, “Lessons from PMC” (October 17). The collapse of the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank has put the focus back on the need for effective regulation modules. It is the responsibility of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to regulate lesser banks. It cannot escape questions each time an institution regulated by it fails for public money is involved. With banking scams becoming the new normal now, it is increasingly becoming clear that the RBI must own up to its failure as a monitor. The PMC scandal should be a wake-up call for developing an early warning system.

As has been seen, it is because of the rich scammers, who loot the banks, that the middle classes, who toil day and night to save money for future needs, are left in the lurch. The bigger question is how to compensate the hapless victims of bank frauds. The Government as also the RBI must collaborate and find a solution. On its part, the Central bank must do all it can to sense early



warnings signals of a fraud and carry out pre-emptive strikes. Proper response triggers are the only way to save the common man from predators.

Pragya Jain
Via email

Learn from Bangladesh

Sir — This refers to the editorial, “Still too hungry” (October 18). The UNICEF’s State of World’s Children and the Global Hunger Index report for Indian children are not too surprising. It only states the truth that India has not made much headway in reducing malnutrition and is

wasting food. Yes, natural calamities do play havoc and compound this situation. But when we can strive for 100 per cent electrification and complete polio eradication, why not target this menace, too, with the same zeal? If Bangladesh can do it, why can’t we? India needs to learn. What it needs is great political will.

Bal Govind
Noida

Save the banks

Sir — This refers to the editorial, “Lessons from PMC” (October 17). Increasing instances of bank scams in India mean that fraudsters are looting the public money with impunity. These scams are the brightest examples of how the poor account holders are being cheated out of their hard-earned

money deposited in safe custody of banks. No doubt, higher officials have mastered the art of fudging books to play around with the poor depositors’ money. Both the Union and State Governments must take credible, pragmatic and effective steps for expeditious solution of the crisis-ridden PMC.

Nimai Charan Swain
Bhubaneswar

Unsafe Capital

Sir — This refers to the report, “Snatchers have free run! Secy to Delhi Speaker latest victim” (October 19). Instances of chain, purse and mobile snatching are on an alarming rise in the national Capital. So much so that one has stopped wearing chains, necklaces and carrying mobiles in hand when out on the street. And girls are concentrating more on clutching their purses while travelling. It’s high time the authorities resort to technology and camera devices to track gangs.

Shruti
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

‘ACT-EAST POLICIES MUST BE PRACTICAL AND SUSTAINABLE’

He is one of the youngest Chief Ministers in the country. But then the way **CONRAD KONGKAL SANGMA** has turned Meghalaya around means that it has been easier for him to break out of the past and chart out an original course, free of expectation. It is not just his youth but also the legacy of his father, PA Sangma, that he is reverential about and wears almost like a talisman. During the course of the interview with **SAIMI SATTAR**, the Meghalaya CM does not mince words, articulates his ideas clearly and is focussed on efficiently bringing about a change in his State — things that could make one think that he was the CEO rather than a politician. He touches upon issues that matter and how with minimal investments he is trying to make the maximum impact

Has the attitude of the Centre changed towards North-Eastern states. Can you elaborate on the difference that you have witnessed as Chief Minister?

I just wait for the right moment and then say what I have to as the situation presents itself. But overall, this is something that I have seen happening during the last one-and-a-half years after taking over as Chief Minister. There are many senior people in my team and they tell me that there was a time when they went to Delhi but couldn't meet the officials, the minister concerned or the Prime Minister. But now we do not face any difficulty and there is accessibility in terms of human connectivity. There is a different sense of importance given to the North-East. The Prime Minister himself is very concerned. The last time I went and met a Minister to invite him to Shillong, his response was that, "Even if you don't call, I will have to go, or else PM *nahin chodenge hamein* (the PM would be displeased with us)." That is the kind of response that we get now, which indicates the pressure on every Ministry when it comes to any issue related to the region.

I am of the firm belief that you cannot get work done in Shillong while sitting in Delhi. You have to see what is happening at the grassroot level with your own eyes to understand what is needed. So when Ministers come here, they understand the requirements. That is what I meant when I said that there is a change. I am sure that more will happen in the coming years due to the approach of the Government.

■ The Government has formulated the Look East policy. Is there anything in particular that Meghalaya would like to focus on as part of this initiative?

It has moved ahead and has now been renamed as Act East. For Meghalaya, I have been very clear even before I became the Chief Minister that we need to "Look South" and "Act South" which means Bangladesh. I have been a strong advocate of this. Kolkata, the nearest Indian port to export our products, is 1,200 km away. Before Independence, it was Chittagong in Bangladesh which is half that distance at 650 km. If this was to open up, the exports from the North-East would go up tremendously. At the moment, the region comprises only one per cent of the total exports from the country.

I have proposed an eight-lane highway connecting Guwahati, Shillong, Dauki in India and Chittagong in Bangladesh. If needed, the Government should invest and fund this project so that the North-East gets accessibility. One very important and good thing that has happened recently is that Bangladesh has agreed to allow access of goods from the North-Eastern States to Chittagong port which wasn't there earlier. This is a big diplomatic achievement for the Indian Government.

In order to ensure that exports increase, many policy decisions need to be cleared. For instance, there is a rubber plant in Bangladesh, which is running at 50 per cent deficiency and sourcing raw material from Malaysia even though Tripura and Meghalaya, which grow rubber, are very close. The current policy means that if I have to export rubber to Bangladesh, I have to go through Kolkata, even though the factory in Bangladesh is 40 km away. A policy decision is needed to get over such hurdles.

Then there is connectivity in terms of telephony. If Airtel or Jio go 5 km into Bangladesh, and there is a complaint against them, they have to pay a fine of ₹5 lakh every time. So these service providers do not put up a tower near the Bangladesh border. As a result everyone, including the BSF personnel, uses the Bangladesh network. It is a massive security lapse. Of course there are a lot of challenges, including illegal infiltration, but we have to tackle those while looking at the positive side also.

I will be visiting Bangladesh along with a big delegation. I have suggested that all the Chief Ministers of the North-East can go together in a bus. We should drive rather than take a flight to focus on connected corridors of mutual benefit. Tura, my home town and constituency, is a four-hour drive from Dhaka. To put it in perspective, it takes equal time to reach Guwahati by road. So for me, the entire "Look and Act East" policy should be focussed on Bangladesh.

■ One of the important changes that you



have initiated is the Public Redressal Mechanism. How does it operate and reach out to people?

There are multiple layers. We realise that connecting with people is one part and can be done easily through a WhatsApp Complaint System but the more important challenge is how to address the problems and connecting them to the department concerned. We created a system where a code is generated for every problem and then a message goes to officials concerned, both at the ground level and the senior ones. If there is no reply, then reminders are given. It is not a very complex system where a lot of money is needed. However, we are trying to understand how to make the system more efficient, accountable and deliverable.

Since we started this, approximately 500-600 complaints have come to us. There were personal problems as well as complaints like a transformer had broken down and hadn't been repaired for months. We are trying to segregate the problem into delivery mechanism problems and those which are more personal in nature and dealing with them accordingly.

I am not satisfied because the system has never been response-oriented. Earlier, there was no concept of addressing complaints within a certain time period. I am hoping this will improve from the 50 per cent redressal rate that we have managed to achieve till date.

More importantly, I try to make it a point to connect with my officers all the time through two programmes. There is a departmental review that is done at my level through video-conferencing or physically when I am present. Another important programme is a block visit. In two

IN HEALTH, OUR FOCUS WAS ON MOTHERS GETTING ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL DELIVERY. INITIALLY, WE WERE OF THE OPINION THAT THEY WERE NOT OPEN TO THE IDEA BUT WE WERE WRONG. WE STARTED WITH ONE DISTRICT AND USED TECHNOLOGY TO MAP EVERY WOULD-BE MOTHER. SUCH BASIC TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS WITHOUT HUGE FINANCIAL INPUTS HAVE IMPROVED HEALTH FACILITIES

years, I want to target all 46 blocks. I started this one month ago and have covered three blocks. So every month I hope to meet a similar target. Every time I have a meeting with my deputy commissioners (DCs), I keep telling them that I am not here to "catch you or find faults with your working, rather I want to find faults in the system and we will find a solution together. Let's work as a team." People-first is the crux of my approach.

■ You have signed MoUs to create smart villages. How do you intend to undertake the exercise considering rural people will always aspire to move to urban centres?

There are multiple objectives of making smart villages, including the one to stem migration to towns. People migrate in search of better facilities for health, education and employment opportunities. We can actually resolve these problems through technological interventions.

In health, for instance, our focus was on expectant mothers getting access to

institutional delivery. Initially, we were of the opinion that they were not open to the idea but we were wrong. We started with one district and used technology to map every would-be mother. There were 3,000 of them and after the exercise, we knew exactly which village they were from, which week the delivery would take place, the names of Asha volunteers taking care of them, the medical officer involved, the contacts of husbands and mothers-in-law and a shortlist of high-risk mothers due to blood pressure problems or diabetes. In each area, there is an ambulance driver covering a certain radius, who is connected with the expectant mothers and we give their phone numbers to him and his number to the next of kin. Additionally, we have connected auto-rickshaw drivers to the expectant mothers as a back-up ambulance and promised to give them ₹300 if they ferry mothers to hospitals. This has improved the overall institutional delivery in that district from a mere 40 per cent to 90 per cent in six months. That is how I

envision smart villages rather than with huge towers and buildings. Such basic technological interventions without huge financial inputs have improved health facilities.

Similarly, in education there are no fancy smart classes or thousands of crores of investments. We identified the bottom 20 per cent of the schools where the results were below a certain benchmark and launched a pilot project in one district where students from those schools, who were doing badly, were brought together in clusters. Incentives were given to teachers to bring in students and they were provided with additional tuitions on Saturdays.

It is not so difficult to improve the numbers from 20 to 60 per cent because if you are getting a 20 per cent pass percentage in any school, that means the modules there are simply not working. So just by making simple tweaks, you improve it to 60 per cent. The toughest is reaching the level of 80 to 100 per cent. But as of now, we are focussed on reaching 60 per cent and then we will think about moving ahead.

A third initiative is setting up a Self-Help Group (SHG) network of about three to four lakh women. My target is to have one woman in each household in an SHG. We use the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) funding patterns. Some money is collected and these SHGs will act as micro financing banks and give loans without paperwork. We are not just doing that but we are motivating women and giving them ideas about the industries that they can develop.

We will connect SHGs with people from Berkeley University to whom we have given seven challenges, including food processing as a part of the MoU. I have asked them to study every district of Meghalaya and zero down on certain products from the area and figure out which technological intervention at an affordable cost can be implemented to improve the livelihood of people and, also, where the products can be sold. A study of bamboo was undertaken by Berkeley and it highlighted that it was not the ply or the brush that would give margins. The highest profits, of about 25 per cent, would come from bamboo charcoal. The institution connected us to Chinese companies which make the machines to create bamboo charcoal and they gave us the cost and how much time it would take for the process. Berkeley developed an entire business plan and also, an end to end solution.

Besides food, researchers will study micro-financing, tourism, food processing, turmeric and more. We have to focus on our strengths and see what the requirements are outside and within the country. We need close to 2 lakh MT of milk whereas we produce 50,000 MT. We launched a milk mission at a cost of ₹250 crore. Then there is a huge requirement for pork not just locally, but also outside. In India, good quality pork is not available and we have to rely on imports. So we are seeing these gaps in local consumption and exports and plugging those. These are low-hanging fruits as there is an existing demand. We are doing the market research to figure out the requirements, giving money to the SHGs and training them but we let them do it on their own.

The key aspect of the SHG movement, which is so important to understand, is creating an institutional network. For instance, at three, the fertility rate is the highest in the country where some families have as many as seven or eight children. If we want to address the issue of fertility, we will have to talk about contraceptives. A lot of rural mothers have no say in when they wish to get pregnant, which is sad. Once these SHGs have a woman in every house, I can get a contraceptive network going with their help. The same applies to a nutrition programme. If we want to provide every child with one glass of milk, it is not just a doctor or a health specialist which can do this. The women in this institution can be roped in. If you pour anything on top of this network, it will trickle down. Health, social welfare, education — it will ensure all the benefits reach everywhere.

■ The first road with plastic waste was built in Meghalaya. You are also providing plastic to a cement factory. What are the other ways that you plan to incorporate sustainability in the Government's functioning?

There are more initiatives. Of course, plastic is an issue and we ensured that the CM

office and the Secretariat were plastic-free. However, it is essential to give people alternatives, otherwise they will go back to their old ways. We roped in cement companies which are providing people with bottles in place of plastic ones. While we do not have to spend money, these companies can advertise and put their logo on the bottle.

For all these initiatives, we are roping in NGOs and media houses as well and at the same time, trying to make it a fun activity. So when people see the Governor cleaning an area or the Chief Minister doing so, they are connected with the idea. It is a very powerful way to motivate people.

Our target is to make all Government offices fully sustainable in water and electricity. My first target is my own office and we will start it in the Secretariat in November. We are creating a rainwater harvesting system so that when the next rains come in, the Secretariat doesn't have to draw water from the Public Health Engineering Department (PHE).

In the energy segment, we have switched over to LED lights which reduced the cost by 50 per cent. So some part of the installation cost is getting covered by these savings.

In the meantime we have also talked to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the Centre and they have sanctioned some funds for rooftop solar panels. The good thing about our offices is that they do not need a lot of light during their diurnal operations. We called in some experts who told us the number of panels and batteries to be set up after a survey of the roof. Even if we meet 50 per cent of our demand, it will be good. The programme will be gradually extended to the Secretariat and Additional Secretariat by the next financial year as well as the DC offices gradually.

■ Meghalaya has a lot of potential in tourism. There is history, since it was inhabited in the Neolithic age, wildlife and natural beauty. How do you plan to focus on tourism and at the same time make it sustainable?

We are looking at developing it in a sustainable manner and focussing on the strengths that we have. We would prefer to have a lesser number of tourists, who are looking at a niche experience. Something like the Bhutan model. It might not be as strict but our product line will move in that direction.

We are selecting areas that everybody connects to like Cherrapunji and have identified eight tourist spots. We want to pull the tourists there while developing them in an eco-friendly manner. We have built log houses, which give a local and natural feel in place of the cement and brick ones. Then there are events like the cherry blossom festival which is specific to the region and has become big over the years. People in the State are also fond of music, so we are building activities around such passions too.

Plans are already afoot for a hot air balloon experience so that you can see Cherrapunji and even Bangladesh from the sky. We are planning to develop chopper tourism, which will be a premium service. Tourists can see the double-decker root bridge more frequently as the chopper can land right next to it. This will naturally cater to a high-end market.

Then there is history. Geologists found a stalagmite in the Mawmluh Cave which was classified to be 4,200 years old and dated to what is called as the Meghalayan Age. Mawmluh is a 28 km long sandstone cave which is the longest in the world. There are other caves of varying lengths. We are developing a system where people can actually enter these. Some of the caves are massive and could hold an amphitheatre inside. You enter one and find yourself in a huge hall where the ceiling is 30-40 feet high. There are caves with rivers flowing inside them, almost like a swimming pool, and one where the entrance is hidden behind a waterfall and will remind people who love comics of Phantom's cave. To experience something like this, you can travel to Meghalaya or spend a lot of money to go to distant lands.

■ You love music and also perform...

All people in the North-East do. I used to be in a band in school. I played guitar, my brother was a singer. Earlier we played the music. Now, as Chief Minister, I face it (guffaws).

(Photo: Md. Meharban)

MONEY STUCK FOR NEARLY A MONTH

PMC Bank depositors stare at uncertain future

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI

Nearly a month after the RBI clamped down on the operations of scam-hit PMC Bank, the depositors say their woes have only worsened, with some unable to pay school fees of their wards, while others finding it difficult to meet medical expenses.

Many fear that they might lose their lifetime earnings deposited in savings accounts, or in the form of fixed deposits. Businessmen like MA Chaudhary complained that they were unable to either pay salaries to their workers, nor pay taxes or even the electricity bills after the cheques issued by the PMC Bank bounced.

So far, three depositors have lost their lives, apparently due to the crisis.

Established in 1984 in Sion in central Mumbai, the bank now has branches in six States but most of them are concentrated in the metropolises of Mumbai and Delhi.

On September 24, the bank's Managing Director Joy Thomas sent an SMS to its

depositors about the Reserve Bank of India imposing regulatory restrictions, capping the withdrawals up to ₹1,000 for six months.

Since then, he has been arrested, along with the promoters of Housing Development Infrastructure Limited (HDIL) Rakesh and Sarang Wadhawan, in an alleged fraud case.

After protests from account holders, the RBI raised the amount to ₹10,000 and then to ₹40,000 earlier this month.

However, the depositors, who have deposited lakhs and in some cases even crores in the bank, said the amount is too less even to meet the monthly expenses, .

Tek Chand (71), a retired Government servant and a resident of Janakpuri in west Delhi, said his family has over ₹18 lakh deposited in the Tilak Nagar branch of the bank.

His wife has to undergo dialysis which costs him ₹10,000 per month and half his monthly pension goes into it.

There are many like Chand whose source of sustenance is



Senior citizen Harish Malkani (69) with his wife Rani Malkani (L) at their home in Mumbai. Both husband and wife are retired civil servants and have deposited all their savings in PMC Bank. They depend on the interest received from the bank for their day to day expenses

the interest they get from their fixed deposits.

Anuradha Sen (61), a resident of Malviya Nagar in south Delhi, said she deposited ₹15 lakh in the bank.

“My livelihood is dependent on the interest from it,” she said.

Sen said she was also upset with the government for not doing enough to help the account holders get back their hard earned money.

“I am annoyed. We gave them a thumping majority not to put us in this crisis. If this continues, I am surely not

going to vote in their favour next election,” she said.

Malviya Nagar resident Ravindra Kumar Jha (40), an interior designer by profession, said he was struggling to pay the school fees of his two children and manage the household expenses.

He said he has ₹32 lakh deposits in his PMC Bank account but cannot access them.

Jha also complained of blood pressure after the irregularities in the bank surfaced.

“I have two school going kids. I need to manage their fees and household expenses. Recently, I met with an accident and I have not recovered yet. I never had a blood pressure problem, and now with each passing day, it is becoming difficult to survive in Delhi. Sometimes I feel like committing suicide.

“I had planned to start a new business this Navratri. Unfortunately, I deposited the surplus cash of ₹4 lakh that I had kept for emergency. Now I feel so helpless. It is my hard-earned money,” he said.



MA Chaudhary, another businessman, said he has deposits of ₹35 lakh in savings account and ₹16 lakh in his current account but he is not able to access his money.

“A PMC Bank cheque issued to pay electricity bills bounced because no one would process it. I do not have money even to pay my quarterly GST,” Chaudhary said.

For several depositors, the PMC Bank scam has shattered their trust in the banking system. Gurijyot Singh Keer (25) was eight when he first opened

an account in the bank's Mulund west branch in north-west Mumbai under the 'Baal Bachat Yojana'.

The lender has been central to the Keers, residents of Mulund west, and the family members have a deposit of over ₹3 crore.

“I was in awe of the bank since my childhood. Our family always believed in cash and I fought with them saying depositing money in banks is good. Today, I am fighting for the same money stuck in the bank,” 25-year-old Keer, who

runs a coaching institute, said.

There has been a domino effect of the crisis, where the whole “circle of money” has stopped, he said.

Students hailing from the Mulund area, a lot of whose families have accounts in the bank, are unable to pay their fees, Keer said, adding he is also not able to pay his teachers who are paid on a weekly basis as the money is stuck.

Twenty-four year-old Manali Narkar, a resident of Kanjurmarg in northwest Mumbai, said her family has been banking with the PMC since last 27 years.

The biology teacher and her family have over ₹28 lakh in accounts with the bank. It was the good service that made Narkar and her family continue with the bank, she said.

“I am losing my patience and money with every passing day. I have put all my hard earned money in the bank and this is what I get in the end. What wrong did I do that I am being made to beg for my own money?” 71-year-old Chand asked.

Top leaders from India, US to discuss trade, geopolitics

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Top leaders and corporate executives from India and the US will gather in New Delhi on October 21 for a day-long brain storming session on trade and geopolitics.

To be hosted by US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) with the theme “Partners of Growth”, the second annual India Leadership Summit would also be attended by former US Secretary of State and statesman Henry Kissinger, Condoleezza Rice, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar among others.

“The relationship between India and the US is not just about trade. It's not just about geopolitical. Now it has gone beyond that. It is about learning how you build research-led universities, learning on managing waste, learning on quality of air exchange of scientists,” USISPF president Mukesh Agni told PTI in an interview.

“What I'm saying is that there has to be a platform which encourages, supports and propagates these discussions,” Agni added.

Over 300 influential and powerful people from India and the US are joining the summit which aims to focus on the immense potential that the US-India relationship has in



areas beyond trade including sustainability, security, energy access and innovation.

“The whole objective is to keep the momentum going in this relationship and come up with some plus factors, some action items so we can move forward next 12 months this relationship,” Agni said.

“Because we don't have the bureaucratic limitation, we are nimble, run and build businesses, we can react, move things much faster,” he added. Agni said the objective is basically to enhance the relationship between the two nations.

“We have no political agenda. Our objective is to enhance this relationship,” he said.

He said that for the top American CEOs to fly only for

this conference and spend a few days in India is a reflection of their commitment to India.

“If you would want to call it India's Davos, start of that. That's what I see it,” he said.

“Our theme is partners in progress, what is a win win for both countries. That's what we're going to focus on. For example, India is energy deficit and US is energy surplus. How do you basically collaborate not just purely from procuring oil and LNG, but more research in this area?” he said.

“Does India need to follow the same economic growth model what the western development took place. Is it possible to explore our different to growth agenda for India?” he asked, referring to some of the thought provoking issues for the brain storing sessions.

India-US trade negotiations going in full speed: Sitharaman

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the negotiations between India and the US on a trade deal are going in “full speed” and expressed hope that an agreement will be structured soon.

The ongoing trade deal negotiations briefly came up for discussion during a pull aside between Sitharaman and US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin at the IMF headquarters. Mnuchin is scheduled to visit India early next month.

“In fact, I broadly mentioned it to Secretary Mnuchin, but that is something on which the Commerce minister and Mr (Robert) Lighthizer (US Trade Representatives) are working. My inputs are that the negotiations are going in full speed and there's a great intensity with which both sides are engaging and hopefully the deal will be structured soon,” Sitharaman said on Saturday.

India is demanding exemption from high duties imposed by the US on certain steel and aluminium products, resumption of export benefits to certain domestic products under their Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), greater market access for its products from sectors, including agriculture,

automobile, auto components and engineering.

On the other hand, the US wants greater market access for its farm and manufacturing products, dairy items and medical devices, and cut on import duties on some ICT products. The US has also raised concerns over high trade deficit with India. In 2018-19, India's exports to the US stood at \$52.4 billion, while imports were \$35.5 billion. Trade deficit dipped from \$21.3 billion in 2017-18 to \$16.9 billion in 2018-19.

Responding to a question, Sitharaman said a totalisation agreement with the US has always been on the cards.

Totalisation agreement seeks to eliminate dual taxation with regards to social security and medicare taxes in the United States.

“One of the reasons why that was never responded to was that India did not have a social welfare net or social insurance cover for Indians in India. And therefore, if they had to give it, they wouldn't be given in the sense where would it be used?” she said.

“Today, I think most private insurances or for many of the families which are below the certain level of income, Ayushman Bharat is a fantastic big coverage.

Will design blueprint for firms leaving China: FM

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said she will prepare a blueprint for international companies that are looking beyond China to make India as their preferred investment destination.

She said industry leaders who are contemplating getting their businesses out of China are “definitely considering India as the pitch”.

Therefore, she said, it might be important for the government to now see and meet up with a lot of industry leaders and invite them to India.

“I'd certainly be doing that...I go back and design in some way whereby I will identify those multinational corporations, all American businesses or any other country European or a British origin who are moving out of China or who probably are even contemplating,” she said.

“I will make a blueprint with which I will approach them and put forward to them as to why India is a far more preferable destination,” Sitharaman told a group of Indian reporters on Saturday at the conclusion of her interactions at the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank here.

That could also be in spe-



cific areas in which India has common capacity ecosystem building, whether it's electronics, lithium ion battery or any other semiconductors, she added.

However, Sitharaman said the government's decision is not just going to be purely on the basis of what is happening presently between the United States and China.

“That could either aggravate the situation or probably just influence at some level. But the fact remains that there are companies which are looking at relocating for various other reasons also,” she said.

“That is why I gave that little fine line that I'm drawing about companies which would want to locate elsewhere outside of China. Even as I said that, I said that not every company wants to lock, stock and barrel get out of China, there are companies which will remain there to service the Chinese market.

“After all little China as a very big domestic market and the their purchasing power, consumption style may be very different from what it is in India, but I'm making that margin already that companies will probably be there to service the Chinese market tension or not tension,” the Union minister said.

She said India wants to create an ecosystem to invite the companies to tap the country's market.

“I'm allowing that margin already. Over in about that for those companies, even if they continue to be in China but still would want to produce from elsewhere either to export or to capture a new hub, domestic market like India,” Sitharaman said.

“There was one thing very clear that India is still for them (companies), one of the biggest options to consider,” she added.

The minister said it is perceived that the opportunities in Vietnam are not that much attractive.

“In fact, today, one of the conversations that I was having with some of the bank and the government representatives was that even Vietnam now probably is getting saturated. They don't have enough manpower to address expansionary programmes of investment,” she said.

DPIIT sends queries to Amazon, Flipkart on FDI norms adherence

New Delhi: After repeated complaints by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) over alleged violation of FDI norms by e-commerce majors, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has sent a questionnaire to Amazon and Flipkart over their adherence to the norms for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

The questions are concerned with their fund flow, business model and inventory management, people in the know of things said, adding that it also asks the names of their respective top five sellers and price list of vendors on these platforms. Official sources said that the department would look into their replies and then decide whether more clarification is required or any action needs to be taken.

“It is basically related to the complaints of small retailers, and a series of questions have been sent to them which are relevant to understand the allegations which small retailers make about these online platforms which are under FDI,” a source told IANS.

Questions sent to Amazon and Flipkart by IANS, however, were not immediately replied. Traders' body CAIT

has time and again approached the government for its intervention regarding the “deep” discounts offered by these platforms during festival sales. CAIT recently sought an independent audit of the business models of both Amazon and Flipkart on the charges of predatory pricing and deep discounting, among others.

The move by DPIIT comes after Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal last week warned of strict action against e-commerce companies if they were found violating India's e-commerce policy.

In a related development, CAIT on Sunday alleged that not only the e-commerce companies, but even large number of brands in mobile, FMCG, electronics, electrical appliances, footwear, garments, gift articles, watches and other segments as well as several banks are also responsible for distortion of prices of different products on online portals.

“It is apparent that these brand-owning companies are also exploiting the offline market being hand in glove with e-commerce companies having separate price policy for both online and offline markets which is a clear violation of the Competition Act,” CAIT said in a statement. **IANS**

Paddy, basmati see increase in sown area over last year

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Paddy acreages in the current fiscal have grown by 6.5 per cent and basmati acreages have increased by a whopping 36 per cent in comparison to kharif 2018 but the increased cultivation may turn out to be a challenge due to growth concerns at the global level and within India.

National Collateral Management Services conducted a field-based crop survey for assessment of acreage, crop health and production of basmati rice during kharif 2019. The survey was com-



missioned by the Basmati Export Development Foundation, founded by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export

Development Authority.

As per the latest kharif sowing report released by the Agriculture Ministry on September 27, all India paddy acreages are reported at 382 lakh hectares which are 1 per cent lower than 2018 paddy acreages of 387 lakh hectares.

This survey is at variance with the government report and paddy cultivation is higher as per the NCML survey with total paddy acreages during kharif 2019 estimated at 6,204,000 hectares which are 6.5 per cent higher than last year's acreage of 5,825,000 hectares.

Two-wheeler exports rise 4% in April-Sep

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two-wheeler exports rose by over 4 per cent in the April-September period of the current fiscal, with Bajaj Auto leading the segment by shipping over 9 lakh units to various markets, including Africa and Latin America, as per latest data by industry body SIAM.

Two-wheeler dispatches, including motorcycles, scooters and mopeds, stood at 17,93,957 units in the first half of the current fiscal, as compared to 17,23,280 units in the same period of 2018-19. Scooter exports during the period under review stood at

2,01,277 units, down 10.87 per cent from 2,25,821 units in the April-September period of 2018-19.

Motorcycle shipments, however, rose by 6.81 per cent during the period at 15,85,338 units as against 14,84,252 units earlier. On the other hand, exports of mopeds were down by a massive 44.41 per cent at 7,342 units as compared to 13,207 units in April-September period last year.

Pune-based Bajaj Auto led the segment with shipments of 9,34,581 units, up 7.5 per cent from same period last fiscal, the data by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) showed. It was fol-

lowed by TVS Motor Company and Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) which exported 3,43,337 and 1,74,469 units, respectively, during the period under review.

Bajaj exports its bikes to over 70 countries and last year dispatched around 40 per cent of its total production to Africa, Latin America and Middle East markets. The company exported around 20 lakh units last fiscal.

Similarly, TVS Motor Company exported 3,43,337 units in the April-September period this fiscal, up 6.24 per cent from same period last fiscal. On the other hand, HMSI's overseas dispatches were 23.09

per cent lower than the April-September period of last financial year. India Yamaha Motor exported 1,56,058 units, up 21.38 per cent from last fiscal. It was followed by domestic market leader Hero MotoCorp at 92,823 units. The company's overseas shipments were 12 per cent down this fiscal as compared with the same period of 2018-19.

Suzuki Motorcycle India's foreign dispatches stood at 54,372 units, up 35.61 per cent.

Other notable exporting companies during the period included Royal Enfield (22,956 units), Piaggio Vehicles (14,050) and Mahindra Two Wheelers (297).

Jio slams Trai's IUC review as anti-poor

Move sabotages PM's Digital India vision: Jio

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio has alleged that review of call connect charges by Trai “sabotages” the Prime Minister's vision for Digital India, and will hit not only the regulator's credibility but also investor confidence as the move protects vested interests of some old operators.

Continuing its relentless attack on the regulator and old operators over the contentious IUC (interconnect usage charge) issue that has polarised the industry, Jio alleged that Trai's move is arbitrary, bad in law, unwarranted, and anti-poor. Any change in implementation of original timeline of January 1, 2020 will end the free voice regime and is likely to increase tariffs which is against consumer interest, Jio claimed.

Typically, a telecom operator pays for completing calls made by its subscribers to a rival network. This is done by paying the rival network an interconnect usage charge, which currently is 6 paise per minute.

Trai's move to reopen the deadline for ending charges for terminating calls on rival networks beyond January 2020 had forced Jio to levy a 6 paise per minute charge on its users recently, effectively ending its free call regime.



Submitting its official response to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on the IUC matter, Jio alleged that “certain incumbent telcos” want their large body of 2G customers to forever remain digitally disempowered and deprived of the fruits of the digital revolution. Trai's consultation paper “protects and perpetuates the vested interests” of such players, it added.

Jio accused certain old operators of exploiting their 2G customers by charging “extortionist rates” for voice calls, which are offered free to all Jio's 4G-only customers.

“The Consultation Paper...Undermines and sabotages Prime Minister's Digital India vision and mission,” Jio said in its comment to Trai's consultation paper.

It is unfortunate that instead of profiting the poor and marginalised sections of Indian society, the consultation paper has chosen to help profiteers in the telecom business, Jio alleged.

Scheme			NAV	1Yr%	HDFC Nifty 50 ETF	1223.07	13.07	UTI MEPUS	107.73	9.45	Baroda ELSS 96(G)	43.57	5.52	HDFC Capital Builder Value Fund(G)	277.37	0.43
Tata Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)			19.90	27.60	SBI LT Advantage Fund-II-Reg(G)	13.86	13.04	ICICI Pru S&P BSE 500 ETF	153.39	9.43	Invesco India Midcap Fund(G)	47.66	5.49	Aditya Birla SL Dividend Yield Fund(G)	154.83	0.31
Sundaram Fin Serv Opp Fund(G)			44.05	25.50	Axis Nifty ETF	1201.53	13.03	Canara Rob Emerg Equities Fund-Reg(G)	92.30	9.23	Sundaram Value Fund-II-Reg(G)	15.76	5.47	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-VII-Reg(G)	10.04	0.28
BNP Paribas India Consumption Fund-Reg(G)			12.41	25.39	Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	14.80	12.98	IDFC Equity Opportunity-6-Reg(G)	10.54	9.22	L&T Equity Fund-Reg(G)	80.89	5.45	HDFC Equity Opp Fund-Sr 2-1126D-May 2017(1)-Reg(G)	10.07	0.23
Axis Bluechip Fund(G)			31.41	24.49	Nippon India Index Fund - Sensex Plan(G)	19.34	12.98	IDFC Multi Cap Fund-Reg(G)	94.37	9.20	BNP Paribas Mid Cap Fund(G)	31.27	5.36	IDBI Midcap Fund(G)	10.23	0.10
SBI Tax Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)			26.88	23.99	UTI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	52.00	12.94	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-1(DP)	11.18	9.18	Sundaram Smart NIFTY 100	11.65	5.36	DSP US Flexible Equity Fund-Reg(G)	26.08	0.05
Axis Multicap Fund-Reg(G)			12.54	23.43	DSP 3Y Close Ended Equity Fund-Reg(G)	15.84	12.94	Kotak Emerging Equity Scheme(G)	38.05	9.10	Eq Weight Fund-Reg(G)	287.36	5.23	DSP Natural Res & New Energy Fund-Reg(G)	31.33	0.02
SBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)			18.38	23.03				Sundaram TOP 100-Sr VI-Reg(G)	12.57	8.99	Aditya Birla SL Digital India Fund(G)	54.45	5.32	Aditya Birla SL Infrastructure Fund(G)	29.21	-0.14
Canara Rob Consumer Trends Fund-Reg(G)			42.01	22.34				UTI Focussed Equity Fund-IV(G)	9.58	8.99	ICICI Pru Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	319.86	5.08	L&T Emerging Opp Fund-I-Reg(D)	9.17	-0.19
JM Tax Gain Fund(G)			18.15	21.92				Nippon India Large Cap Fund(G)	33.86	8.97	IDFC Equity Opportunity-5-Reg(G)	9.91	4.98	IDFC Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	14.07	-0.21
DSP Equity Fund-Reg(G)			41.74	21.91				L&T Business Cycle Fund-Reg(G)	15.13	8.95	Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	77.65	4.96	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-2(G)	9.64	-0.31
JM Multicap Fund(G)			34.22	21.79				Invesco India Largecap Fund(G)	28.66	8.93	JM Large Cap Fund(G)	67.07	4.69	IDBI Small Cap Fund(G)	8.99	-0.33
Baroda Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)			23.75	21.67				Kotak India Growth Fund-Sr 7(G)	10.45	8.93	Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(G)	30.80	4.66	Kotak US Equity Fund(G)	17.12	-0.42
DSP World Gold Fund-Reg(G)			13.54	21.28				Invesco India Tax Plan(G)	51.62	8.93	Relief '96(ELSS U/S 80C of IT ACT)(G)	30.80	4.66	ICICI Pru Value Fund-8(D)	10.19	-0.49
BNP Paribas Large Cap Fund(G)			95.62	20.98				Baroda Multi Cap Fund(G)	97.41	8.89	Franklin India Equity Fund(G)	573.73	4.60	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-IV-Reg(G)	8.96	-0.56
Invesco India Financial Services Fund(G)			58.50	20.62				ICICI Pru Growth Fund-2(DP)	12.18	8.85	Franklin India Bluechip Fund(G)	451.47	4.54	Invesco India Feeder -Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	13.14	-0.62
Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)			48.00	20.39				Tata Ethical Fund-Reg(G)	161.66	8.83	IDFC Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	43.95	4.49	Tata India Pharma & Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	8.88	-0.66
SBI Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)			147.69	19.49				HDFC Top 100 Fund(G)	482.04	8.74	Invesco India Multicap Fund(G)	46.85	4.46	ICICI Pru Exports & Services Fund(G)	55.55	-0.70
Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)			88.08	19.27				Edelweiss Tax Advantage Fund-Reg(G)	40.22	8.73	Kotak Small Cap Fund(G)	69.91	4.35	L&T Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	15.32	-0.84
JM Core 11 Fund(G)			9.39	19.24				Sundaram Diversified Equity(G)	100.21	8.71	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-3-Reg(G)	11.28	4.35	Sundaram Value Fund-VIII-Reg(G)	10.31	-0.93
SBI Tax advantage Fund-II(G)			38.69	19.17				VII-Reg(G)	12.34	8.66	L&T Large and Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	46.46	4.30	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-II-Reg(G)	7.99	-0.97
Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)			23.22	19.12				Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity Fund(G)	223.12	8.60	DSP Equal Nifty 50 Fund-Reg(G)	9.66	4.15	ICICI Pru Focused Equity Fund(G)	28.93	-1.06
Kotak World Gold Fund(G)			9.86	18.80				Tata Resources & Energy Fund-Reg(G)	14.51	8.56	Sundaram Global Advt(G)	17.20	3.95	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-III-Reg(G)	8.63	-1.14
DSP Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)			50.17	18.75				SBI Magnum Comma Fund-Reg(G)	37.09	8.54	UTI LT Adv Fund-III(G)	13.14	3.85	SBI Contra Fund-Reg(G)	100.29	-1.18
Invesco India PSU Equity Fund(G)			18.20	18.34				Nippon India Banking Fund(G)	261.79	8.53	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-5-Reg(G)	9.51	3.82	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-I-Reg(G)	7.77	-1.34
Axis Focused 25 Fund(G)			29.91	18.22				SBI Large & Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	218.93	8.50	Nippon India Power & Infra Fund(G)	94.20	3.81	ICICI Pru Technology Fund(G)	58.63	-1.59
Sundaram Services Fund-Reg(G)			11.86	18.14				UTI Banking and Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	93.20	8.49	ICICI Pru Value Fund-16(G)	11.01	3.67	Principal Global Opportunities Fund(G)	29.33	-1.68
BNP Paribas Long Term Equity Fund(G)			39.97	17.86				Aditya Birla SL Equity Fund(G)	719.50	8.42	L&T India Value Fund-Reg(G)	34.72	3.57	Mirae Asset Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	10.24	-1.87
SBI Magnum Equity ESG Fund-Reg(G)			109.70	17.70				Canara Rob Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	44.02	8.40	SBI-ETF Sensex Next 50	316.80	3.56	ICICI Pru Value Discovery Fund(G)	139.39	-2.02
DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)			24.25	17.42				HDFC Equity Fund(G)	644.74	8.39	IDFC Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)	36.35	3.41	Edelweiss Eur Dynamic Equity Off-shr Fund-Reg(G)	11.08	-2.07
Axis Midcap Fund(G)			38.64	17.27				Aditya Birla SL MNC Fund-Reg(G)	757.79	8.37	UTI LT Adv Fund-V(G)	9.20	3.29	UTI LT Adv Fund-VII(G)	8.18	-2.14
Aditya Birla SL Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)			28.82	16.77				UTI Focussed Equity Fund-I(G)	13.27	8.28	ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	11.11	3.25	Aditya Birla SL Midcap Fund(G)	264.97	-2.19
Canara Rob Bluechip Equity Fund-Reg(G)			26.06	16.70				PGIM India Large Cap Fund-2-Reg(G)	12.47	8.26	ICICI Pru Value Fund-14(G)	10.49	3.25	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series VIII-Reg(G)	12.34	-2.24
Sundaram Multi Cap Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)			10.64	16.70				UTI LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)-Reg(G)	86.51	8.17	IDFC Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)	36.35	3.41	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series IX-Reg(G)	12.27	-2.42
ICICI Pru Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)			63.17	16.66				Nippon India Vision Fund(G)	519.30	8.14	UTI LT Adv Fund-VI(G)	9.20	3.29	PGIM India Euro Equity Fund(G)	13.82	-2.81
DSP Top 100 Equity Fund-Reg(G)			215.51	16.65				Nippon India Multi Cap Fund(G)	93.31	8.10	ICICI Pru Value Fund-14(G)	10.49	3.25	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-V-Reg(G)	9.09	-2.96
IDBI India Top 100 Equity Fund(G)			25.04	16.57				ICICI Pru US Bluechip Equity Fund(G)	29.45	8.07	Principal Multi Cap Growth Fund(G)	137.56	3.22	DSP Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	50.61	-2.98
Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)			36.14	16.51				UTI-Nifty Next 50 ETF	287.41	7.96	SBI Magnum Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	68.31	3.19	IDFC Equity Opportunity-4-Reg(G)	15.68	-3.86
Sundaram Multi Cap Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)			10.66	16.43				UTI Focussed Equity Fund-V(G)	9.41	7.91	ICICI Pru Manufacture in India Fund(G)	10.37	3.18	Aditya Birla SL Global Emerging Opp Fund(G)	12.99	-3.91
Tata Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)			208.42	16.21				Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	403.43	7.88	Tata Digital India Fund-Reg(G)	15.03	3.18	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series X-Reg(G)	12.01	-3.98
Nippon India Consumption Fund(G)			68.43	16.20				UTI Value Opp Fund-Reg(G)	60.70	7.85	Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-A(G)	22.25	3.14	Nippon India Small Cap Fund(G)	37.37	-4.20
SBI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)			15.48	16.15				Nippon India India Opp Fund-Sr-A(G)	10.34	7.52	HDFC TaxSaver(G)	502.06	3.11	IDFC Sterling Value Fund-Reg(G)	45.98	-4.25
Edelweiss ETF - Nifty Bank			2967.80	16.12				Nippon India Quant Fund(G)	25.72	7.50	Baroda Mid-cap Fund(G)	8.68	3.09	UTI LT Adv Fund-VI(G)	7.85	-4.33
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-III-Reg(G)			14.66	15.86				Franklin India Taxshield(G)	562.30	7.45			Franklin India Smaller Cos Fund(G)	49.02	-4.37	
Tata India Tax Savings Fund-Reg(G)			18.39	15.82				Franklin India Prima Fund(G)	942.23	7.44			DSP World Agriculture Fund-Reg(G)	16.59	-4.91	
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-VI-Reg(G)			10.00	15.81				ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	12.15	7.43			Sundaram Value Fund-VII-Reg(G)	8.07	-5.27	
Mirae Asset Great Consumer Fund-Reg(G)			36.37	15.75				Franklin India Opportunities Fund(G)	72.40	7.26			DSP World Mining Fund-Reg(G)	8.10	-5.31	
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-IV-Reg(G)			14.68	15.53				Principal Emerging Bluechip Fund(G)	103.74	7.24			Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-7-Reg(G)	7.78	-5.81	
SBI LT Advantage Fund-V-Reg(G)			10.39	15.37				Tata Equity P/E Fund(G)	134.16	7.18			Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	7.63	-5.93	
SBI Magnum Multicap Fund-Reg(G)			50.24	15.36				ICICI Pru Nifty Next 50 ETF	28.23	7.18			Nippon India Capital Builder Fund-IV-B(G)	7.32	-6.00	
Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-V-Reg(G)			10.21	15.29				UTI Focussed Equity Fund-VI(G)	9.81	7.16			Sundaram Small Cap Fund(G)	72.81	-6.02	
JM Value Fund(G)			33.04	15.23				SBI Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	52.27	7.13			HDFC Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	38.71	-6.11	
SBI BlueChip Fund-Reg(G)			40.32	14.81				IDBI Focused 30 Equity Fund-Reg(G)	9.97	7.09			UTI Transportation & Logistics Fund-Reg(G)	91.65	-6.64	
Mirae Asset Emerging Bluechip-Reg(G)			54.03	14.64				Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	16.01	7.00			Sundaram Value Fund-IX-Reg(G)	8.56	-7.10	
Canara Rob Equity Diver Fund-Reg(G)			136.84	14.63				HDFC Growth Opp Fund-Reg(G)	111.02	6.99			Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr IV-Reg(G)	8.82	-7.20	
HDFC Sensex ETF			4132.56	14.39				Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	16.19	6.96			Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Pan European Equity Fund-Reg(G)	10.68	-7.23	
BNP Paribas Focused 25 Equity Fund-Reg(G)			9.89	14.32				Fund-Reg(G)	11.02	6.99			Sundaram Value Fund-X-Reg(G)	8.51	-7.26	
L&T India Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)			28.06	14.31				ICICI Pru Value Fund-18(G)	11.61	6.63			Aditya Birla SL CEF-Global Agri-Reg(G)	23.71	-7.41	
DSP Equity Opportunities Fund-Reg(G)			226.96	14.29				UTI India Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	26.90	6.58			Nippon India Pharma Fund(G)	142.54	-7.46	
SBI LT Advantage Fund-IV-Reg(G)			13.55	14.28				Franklin India Index Fund-NSE Nifty(G)	92.43	6.84			L&T Emerging Businesses Fund-Reg(G)	22.35	-7.99	
Sundaram Select Focus(G)			185.29	14.24				Motilal Oswal Midcap 30 Fund-Reg(G)	25.70	6.83			Aditya Birla SL Small Cap Fund(G)	30.17	-8.56	
IDFC Sensex ETF			405.47	14.23				DSP Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	54.72	6.73			UTI Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	78.83	-8.59	
Axis Capital Builder Fund-1-Reg(G)			10.61	14.21				SBI Equity Opp Fund-Sr IV-Reg(G)	15.62	6.61			Aditya Birla SL Pure Value Fund(G)	46.25	-8.66	
Motilal Oswal Multicap 35 Fund-Reg(G)			26.70	14.18				ICICI Pru Nifty Next 50 Index Fund(G)	24.97	6.69			Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series XII-Reg(G)	8.55	-9.21	
Motilal Oswal Long Term Equity Fund-Reg(G)			17.92	14.15				IDBI Nifty Junior Index Fund(G)	21.14	6.67			Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series XI-Reg(G)	8.88	-9.52	
Canara Rob Equity Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)			66.44	14.12				ICICI Pru Infrastructure Fund(G)	48.81	6.67			SBI Healthcare Opp Fund-Reg(G)	110.45	-9.68	
Kotak Standard Multicap Fund(G)			35.88	14.09				SBI Magnum TaxGain'93-Reg(G)	139.76	6.62			Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series XIV-Reg(G)	7.85	-9.85	
ICICI Pru LT Wealth Enhancement Fund(G)			11.03	14.06				ICICI Pru Nifty Next 50 Index Fund(G)	24.83	6.61			Sundaram LT Micro Cap Tax Adv Fund-Sr VI-Reg(G)	6.85	-12.56	
HDFC Index Fund-Sensex(G)			349.52	13.87				Sundaram Infra Advantage Fund(G)	30.90	6.59			Nippon India Capital Builder Fund-IV-C(G)	6.77	-12.94	
Tata Index Fund-Sensex Plan(G)			97.02	13.83				Nippon India Focused Equity Fund(G)	44.83	6.58						
Kotak Bluechip Fund(G)			239.62	13.72				Fund(G)								
DSP India T.I.G.E.R Fund-Reg(G)			91.25	13.64				Kotak India Growth Fund-Sr 5(G)	9.69	6.55						
DSP A.C.E. Fund-Sr 2-Reg(G)			10.55	13.59				ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-3(G)	10.54	6.36						
ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-4(G)			10.49	13.53				SBI Consumption Opp Fund-Reg(G)	116.48	6.35						
ICICI Pru Sensex Index Fund(G)			12.22	13.41				HDFC Focused 30 Fund(G)	76.09	6.34						
Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)			119.67	13.37				Tata India Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	17.57	6.08						
SBI LT Advantage Fund-VI-Reg(G)			10.63	13.37				Invesco India Contra Fund(G)	47.22	6.06						
Mirae Asset Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)			17.91	13.35				Sundaram Value Fund-III-Reg(G)	16.41	6.04						
Invesco India Growth Opp Fund(G)			35.29	13.33				ICICI Pru Value Fund-17(G)	10.54	6.04						
Axis Emerging Opp Fund-1-Reg(G)			12.57	13.24												

Boris sends unsigned extension letter to EU

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was on Sunday branded a “spoilt brat” by the Opposition after he sent an unsigned letter seeking a three-month extension to the October 31 deadline from the European Union (EU).

The UK PM was bound by law to issue a letter seeking a delay to Brexit after MPs voted in a historic Super Saturday Parliament session to delay voting on his motion on a new Brexit deal.

Johnson has previously said he would rather be “dead in a ditch” than miss the October 31 deadline and had triggered speculation soon after the House of Commons vote by declaring that he would not negotiate an extension.

However, given the Benn Act passed by MPs last month to avert a no-deal crash-out from the economic bloc meant that he was obliged to send an extension letter by the end of October 19

BREXIT

unless a new Brexit deal had been passed through by the Commons.

“The United Kingdom proposes that this (extension) period should end at 11.00pm GMT on 31 January 2020. If the parties are able to ratify before this date, the government proposes that the period should be ter-

Brexit deal shakes Northern Irish unionists

AFP ■ BELFAST

In the staunchly pro-British Shankill area of Belfast, Northern Irish unionists worry that the new Brexit deal threatens to loosen ties with mainland Britain that are the cornerstone of their identity.

In this stronghold of unionism, UK flags flutter over the streets and murals commemorate loyalist para-

minated early,” reads the unsigned letter sent to European Council President Donald Tusk on Saturday night.

While the Downing Street stance is that the UK PM has complied with the Benn Act by sending the Parliament’s letter, there is some speculation if it opens up the prospect of legal action by it being an unsigned request.

militaries who died for the cause.

The site of gun battles and bombings, the west Belfast neighbourhood has spilt blood to preserve its links with the mainland. Northern Ireland’s Democratic Unionist Party supports Brexit and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s Government — but bitterly opposes his EU divorce deal.

Trump slams Clinton for ‘Russian asset’ jab at Gabbard

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Hillary Clinton has gone crazy, US President Donald Trump has said as he slammed the former secretary of state for calling Democratic presidential aspirant Tulsi Gabbard and former Green Party candidate Jill Stein as Russian assets.

During a Thursday podcast interview, Clinton said Russia had groomed Stein to be a spoiler third-party candidate in 2016 and implied that the Kremlin is doing the same with Gabbard in order to take votes away from the 2020 Democratic ticket and secure Trump’s reelection.

“Hillary’s gone Crazy!” Trump said in a tweet on Saturday night.

“So now Crooked Hillary is at it again! She is calling Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard ‘a Russian favorite’, and Jill Stein ‘a Russian asset’. As you may have heard, I was called a big Russia lover also (actually, I do like Russian people. I like all people!),” Trump said.

Clashes amid efforts for Kurd pullout from Syria border town

AP ■ AKCAKALE (TURKEY)

Kurdish-led fighters and Turkish-backed forces clashed sporadically on Sunday in northeastern Syria amid efforts to work out a Kurdish evacuation from a besieged border town, the first pull-back under the terms of a US-brokered cease-fire.

Turkey said one of its soldiers was killed in the day’s violence.

The planned evacuation of Kurdish fighters and civilians from the town of Ras al-Ayn would open the way to a pull-out of the fighters from a broader swathe of territory along the border, a senior official in the Kurdish-led forces told the Associated Press. The official, Redur Khalil, said Saturday evening that the evacuation could take place Sunday if there were no new problems.

Both sides accuse each other of repeatedly violating the three-day old cease-fire.

Turkey’s Defense Ministry said the soldier was killed in a Kurdish attack with anti-tank weapons and small arms fire near the border town of Tal Abyad.

That brought the Turkish military’s death toll to seven



American military convoy stops near the town of Tel Tamr, north Syria on Sunday

AP

soldiers since it launched its offensive against Kurdish-led fighters in northeast Syria on October 9.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said Turkish troops and their allied Syrian fighters have continued their offensives the past 24 hours, forcing its fighters to retaliation.

It said 16 SDF fighters had been killed and three wounded in Turkish attacks around

the border town of Ras al-Ayn and nearby villages.

Ras al-Ayn, under siege by Turkish-backed fighters, has been the scene of continual fighting since the cease-fire came into place on Thursday night.

Khalil told the AP that the force had reached understandings with the Americans to evacuate its fighters from the town from the start of the cease-fire but the siege had

delayed the plans.

Turkish officials have denied they were preventing the withdrawal of any fighters.

On Saturday, medical convoys were able to enter for the first time into neighbourhoods still in the hands of the Kurdish fighters, delivering medical supplies and bringing out 30 wounded and four dead.

Khalil said the full evacuation could follow the next day unless there were new delays.

EU calls for Afghanistan ceasefire

AFP ■ KABUL

European Union officials called Sunday for a ceasefire in Afghanistan, saying the breakdown in talks between the US and the Taliban presented an opportunity to push anew for a truce.

US President Donald Trump last month declared talks with the insurgents “dead”, citing a Taliban attack that killed a US soldier.

Negotiations had been in the final stages for a deal that would have seen the US pull troops from Afghanistan after 18 years in return for various Taliban guarantees.

But to the dismay of many Afghans and international observers, the deal included no immediate, comprehensive ceasefire, rather it would supposedly have paved the way for a reduction in violence and later talks between the Taliban and the Afghan Government.

Protesters defy HK police after activists attacked

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Large crowds of Hong Kongers defied a police ban and held an illegal march on Sunday, their numbers swollen by anger over the recent stabbing and beating of two pro-democracy protesters.

Authorities had forbidden the march in Tsim Sha Tsui, a densely packed shopping district filled with luxury boutiques and hotels, citing public safety and previous violence from hardcore protesters.

But tens of thousands joined the unsanctioned rally regardless as the movement tries to keep up pressure on the city’s pro-Beijing leaders after nearly five months of protests and political unrest.

Tensions were running high after the leader of the group organising the weekend rally, Jimmy Sham, was hospitalised by men wielding hammers earlier in the week. Then on Saturday night a man handing out pro-democracy flyers was stabbed in the neck and stomach.

A sea of protesters shuffled



Protesters set fire to a Xiaomi shop at Nathan road in Hong Kong on Sunday

AP

through the streets under a canopy of umbrellas to protect from the bright sunshine on Sunday. Many said they wanted to show they were unbowed by the attacks and authorities increasingly banning marches.

“The more they suppress, the more we resist,” a 69-year-old protester, who gave her surname Yeung, told AFP. “Can police arrest us all, tens of thousands of people?” Philip Tsoi, a self-described frontline protest-

er, said they needed to keep getting numbers out even though many more hardcore activists like him had been “arrested or wounded” in recent weeks.

“What I want is a truly democratic government whose leader is elected by Hong Kong people instead of selected by a Communist regime,” he told AFP.

In a now familiar pattern, the large march remained peaceful, but small groups of black-

clad protesters vandalised some subway station entrances and mainland Chinese banks along the route.

Police fired tear gas volleys at crowds of hardcore activists outside Tsim Sha Tsui police station.

Vigilante violence has mounted on both sides of the ideological divide. In recent weeks pro-democracy supporters have badly beaten people who vocally disagree with them — although those fights tend to be spontaneous outbursts of mob anger during protests.

In contrast, pro-democracy figures have been attacked in a noticeably more targeted way, with at least eight prominent government critics, including politicians, beaten by unknown assailants since mid-August.

Protesters have labelled the attacks “white terror” and accused the city’s shadowy organised crime groups of forming an alliance with Beijing supporters. Beijing has denounced the protests as a foreign-backed plot and condemned attacks on those voicing support for China.

Trump drops plan to host G-7 at his Doral golf resort

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Responding to stinging criticism, President Donald Trump has abruptly reversed his plan to hold the next Group of Seven world leaders’ meeting at his Doral, Florida, golf resort next year. Trump announced a rare backtrack Saturday night after facing accusations that he was using the presidency to enrich himself by hosting the international summit at a private resort owned by his family.

“Based on both Media & Democrat Crazy and Irrational Hostility, we will no longer consider Trump National Doral, Miami, as the Host Site for the G-7 in 2020,” Trump tweeted. He said his administration “will begin the search for another site, including the possibility of Camp David, immediately.”

The striking reversal raises further doubts about the position of the president’s acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, who held a press conference Thursday announcing the choice of Doral for the summit.

Caught up in Trump impeachment, US diplomats fight back

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Three years of simmering frustration inside the State Department is boiling over on Capitol Hill as a parade of current and former diplomats testify to their concerns about the Trump administration’s unorthodox policy toward Ukraine.

Over White House objections, the diplomats are appearing before impeachment investigators looking into President Donald Trump’s dealings with Ukraine and they’re recounting stories of possible impropriety, misconduct and mistreatment by their superiors. To Trump and his allies, the diplomats are evidence of a “deep state” within the government that has been out to get him from the start.

But to the employees of a department demoralised by the administration’s repeated attempts to slash its budget and staff, cooperating with the

inquiry is seen as a moment of catharsis, an opportunity to reassert the foreign policy norms they believe Trump has blown past. “It’s taken a while to understand just how weird the policy process has become but it was inevitable,” said Ronald Neumann, president of the American Academy of Diplomacy.

The group wrote a letter last month calling for the administration to support career diplomats and protect them from politicisation. The State Department officials parading through Capitol Hill include high-ranking diplomats with decades of experience serving both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Among them: Kurt Volker, who resigned as the administration’s special envoy to Ukraine after being named in the whistleblower complaint that jumpstarted the impeachment inquiry.



US Defense Secretary Mark Esper walks Gen. Scott Miller chief of the US-led coalition in Afghanistan, at the US military headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan on Sunday

AP

Pak will achieve all FATF targets in time: Qureshi

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Government will achieve all targets set by the Financial Action Task Force in time to get the country out of the anti-money laundering watchdog’s grey list, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said as he accused India of trying to blacklist it.

Qureshi’s remarks came after the Paris-based FATF put Pakistan on notice on Friday, warning that it will be blacklisted if it does not control terror funding by February.

The FATF plenary noted that Pakistan addressed only five out of the 27 tasks given to it in controlling funding to terror groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Hizbul Mujahideen, responsible for a series of attacks in India.

“India has failed to get Pakistan included in the FATF blacklist. The country has been given various tasks until February 2020,” Qureshi said, adding the government would achieve all targets in time and bring the country out of the grey list.

He said the FATF has recognised the steps taken by the Government to control money laundering and terror financing.

The FATF is an inter-Governmental body established in 1989 to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

During the FATF meeting, several countries voiced concern on Pakistan’s failure to do enough to contain terror funding on its soil.

Nigeria rescues 147 from ‘torture house’: State Govt

AFP ■ KANO

Police in northern Nigeria have rescued 147 people from an Islamic boarding school where the students were being abused, the fourth such raid in a month, a local official told AFP.

Armed officers found the inmates when they raided a school in the Rigasa district of Kaduna, said Hafsat Baba, Kaduna state women affairs commissioner.

“All the inmates were found in chains and said they were beaten. There are 22 women among them and some of them complained of being sexually abused,” she added.

Two Cameroonians and two

people from Niger were among those rescued, she said. There were also four children at the school. The inmates had been taken there by family members for “petty theft, delinquency and drug addiction,” Baba added. “Some of them have psychological problems and are mentally unstable.”

Last month police rescued more than 300 male students from a similar boarding school in the same neighbourhood. They too said they had been tortured and sexually abused.

That led to police raids on two other boarding schools in nearby Katsina state this week, where officers said they rescued more than 400 male students.

Tens of thousands protest in Lebanon for third day

AFP ■ BEIRUT

Tens of thousands of Lebanese people took to the streets Saturday for a third day of protests against tax increases and alleged official corruption despite several arrests by security forces.

They streamed into the streets around the country’s parliament in Beirut, as well as elsewhere across the country, AFP journalists said, despite calls for calm from politicians and dozens of arrests on Friday. The number of protesters grew steadily throughout the day, with major demonstrations in second city Tripoli, in the north, and other locations.

Many waved billowing Lebanese flags and insisted the protests should remain peaceful and non-sectarian.

The demonstrators are demanding a sweeping overhaul of Lebanon’s political system, citing grievances ranging from austerity measures to poor infra-

structure.

They have crippled main roads and threatened to topple the country’s fragile coalition Government.

Most Lebanese politicians have uncharacteristically admitted the demonstrations are spontaneous, rather than blaming outside influence.

In Tripoli demonstrator Hoda Sayyur was unimpressed by the contrition some leaders displayed on television and echoed a widely-held hope that the entire political class be replaced.

“They took all our fundamental rights... We are dying at hospital gates,” the woman in her fifties said.

“I will stay in the street... Since I was born, we’ve been spectators to their quarrels and corruption,” she said.

The army on Saturday called on protesters to “express themselves peacefully without harming public and private property”.

Saturday evening thousands

were again packed into the Riyadh al-Solh Square in central Beirut, despite security forces using tear gas and water cannons to disperse similar crowds a day before.

The Internal Security Forces said 70 arrests were made Friday on accusations of theft and arson.

But all of those held at the main police barracks were released Saturday, the National News Agency (NNA) said.

It said that the father of one man detained tried to set himself on fire in front of a police station.

The demonstrations first erupted on Thursday, sparked by a proposed 20 cent tax on calls via messaging apps such as WhatsApp.

Such calls are the main method of communication for many Lebanese and, despite the Government’s swift abandonment of the tax, the demonstrations quickly swelled into the largest in years.

World’s oldest pearl found in Abu Dhabi

AFP ■ ABU DHABI

An 8,000-year-old pearl that Archaeologists say is the world’s oldest will be displayed in Abu Dhabi, according to authorities who said Sunday it is proof the objects have been traded since Neolithic times.

The natural pearl was found in the floor of a room discovered during excavations at Marawah Island, off the capital of the United Arab Emirates, which revealed the earliest architecture found in the country.

“The layers from which the pearl came have been carbon dated to 5800-5600 BC, during the Neolithic period,” Abu Dhabi’s Department of Culture and Tourism said.

“The discovery of the oldest pearl in the world in Abu Dhabi makes it clear that so much of our recent economic and cultural history has deep roots that stretch back to the

dawn of prehistory,” said its chairman Mohamed Al-Muabarak.

The excavation of the Marawah site, which is made up of numerous collapsed Neolithic stone structures, has also yielded ceramics, beads made from shell and stone, and flint arrowheads.

The “Abu Dhabi Pearl” will be shown for the first time in the exhibition “10,000 years of Luxury” which is opening on October 30 at the Louvre Abu Dhabi -- the outpost of the famous Paris museum.

Emirati experts believe that the pearls were traded with Mesopotamia -- ancient Iraq -- in exchange for ceramics and other goods. They were also likely worn as jewellery.

“The Venetian jewel merchant Gasparo Balbi, who travelled through the region, mentions the islands off the coast of Abu Dhabi as a source of pearls in the 16th century,” the culture department said.

Afghan vote results delayed: Official

AFP ■ KABUL

Preliminary results expected Saturday after last month’s presidential election in Afghanistan have been delayed, the election commission said.

Officials had previously indicated that results would likely be pushed back.

But in her announcement, Awa Alam Nuristani, who heads the Independent Election Commission (IEC), did not say how long the vote count will be delayed.

“Unfortunately, because of some technical issues and for transparency, we could not announce the results based on the election timetable,” she said, apologising at a press conference.

The IEC previously said that less than one-third, or about 2.7 million of Afghanistan’s 9.6 million registered voters, cast ballots in the September 28 first-round poll.

With fears of fraud and threats of deadly Taliban violence, it was a record low turnout.

The contest featured 18 candidates but President Ashraf Ghani, seeking a second five-year term, and Afghanistan’s Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, are the favourites.

Just two days after the election and before all votes had even arrived in Kabul for counting, Abdullah claimed victory in a move that international and local observers panned as premature.

On October 12, his running mate Asadullah Saadati complained of “systemic fraud” organised by “circles within the election commission and the palace”.

Voting this year was supposed to be more secure than ever, with each voter verified through biometric machines to ensure no one could cast multiple ballots.

Saadati claimed the IEC was counting “fraudulent” and non-biometric votes.

The IEC has repeatedly said it would not count votes unless they had been verified biometrically.

But use of biometric read-

ers to prevent repeat voting complicated the process, partly because communication breakdowns prevented data from numerous readers being transmitted to the IEC on voting day.

Instead, the machines had to be taken to the commission in Kabul to extract the data.

Highlighting the challenges it faces, the commission has said unidentified hackers unsuccessfully attempted to break into its computer servers.

After a recent visit to the IEC, Canada’s ambassador to Afghanistan Dave Metcalfe said he was “impressed” by the commission’s attempts to fight voter fraud. Election officials have called on candidates to show restraint and wait for the preliminary results in a bid to avoid a repeat of 2014.

That year’s election was marred by duelling claims of victory and fraud by Abdullah and Ghani. The IEC’s initial timetable called for final results on November 7, after which a second electoral round would be held within two weeks if necessary.

TrendSlazer

Varun: SOTY was life-changing

Actor VARUN DHAWAN celebrated seven years of his debut film *Student Of The Year (SOTY)* and shared a tweet. Calling it a “life-changing film,” the actor thanked director Karan Johar, co-stars Alia Bhatt and Sidharth Malhotra, and all his fans for showering the film with love.

The actor tweeted, “#7YearsOfSOTY a life-changing movie for me thank you to everyone who worked on this. And all the fans involved in loving this film so much.”

The film, which marked Varun Dhawan, Alia Bhatt and Sidharth Malhotra’s debut in Bollywood, released on October 19, 2012.





‘Firsts are always special but *Rehnaa Hai Tere Dill Mein* is a film that was ahead of its time

as it packaged romance in a beautiful story. Apart from being a memorable start to my acting career, it has given me lifelong relationships and friendships that I cherish every day. Even now, it is difficult to believe that it has been 18 years since we shot the film. Even today, people are humming Zara Zara fondly.’

—Dia Mirza



Every year, with Diwali round the corner, there is a place where all the *Dilliwallas* make a beeline to. Yes, you’ve guessed it at the first go, Blind School Diwali Mela it is. The fanciest of candles, the latest in-home accessories, traditional crafts, gift items, gardening material and the last word in ethnic fashion for which you do not have to necessarily break your bank is what you have on offer.

A walk around the *mela* puts you in the midst of a festive vibe that is evident all around. There is everything which can cater to every whim — from a fashionista who wants to be impeccably turned out during the festival to the homemaker looking to buy utensils for *Dhanteras*. There are traditional artefacts from different states exhibiting their history which made people from all walks of life delve into the arts and culture of the various states.

However, it is a stall selling Japanese flowers with huge multicolour petals that is in for a lot of attention. Made of silk and leather, the flowers have nylon netting stretched over them. The cherry blossom flowers especially are indeed a replica of natural ones. The leaves are dyed with organic colours and the petals are shaped into natural rounded forms with the help of goffering irons. Then there are camellias, bonsais, smaller flowers and more. And the colours — a burst of purple, pink, bright red, peach which can live up any room.

There are 270 stalls, each peddling wares with a personal, innovative touch. The ones drawing the crowds have handmade colourful candles, *diyas*, paper products including bags, envelopes, papier-mache plates, cups and cloth products made by visually-impaired trainees.

However, even here, innovation is the key to make the customers keep coming back year after year. Swapna Merlin, one of the members of the Blind Relief Association, which organises the mela says, “This year, we have added more variety in our existing products, in terms of the designs and colours as well. There are 75 varieties now. Knitted items, like sling bags, which were not there until last year are also on sale this time.”

There are a queue of stalls and an attractive kids carnival store which draws attention because of its bright dresses but it is the yellow ones that overpower all other colours. The owner Sonali Singh said, “Earlier we only had sweatshirts. But now we have printed



ADD A SPARKLE

From knitted bags and mufflers, Portuguese chandeliers in gold to fairylights, the Blind School Diwali Fair’s collection can accentuate the festive vibe, says SAKSHI SHARMA

theme-based clothes in organic fabric.” The clothes have figures of Lord Ganesha, Krishna, Hanuman, Goddess Laxmi, Durga and other deities. Sonali says that the idea is to initiate a conversation with the children about mythology and religion. “When they wear dresses with Goddess Laxmi or Lord Hanuman, it makes them curious. This will not only help them know about our rich cultural history but also strengthen their bond with parents or grandparents when they want to know more,” she added.

The fair also provides a platform to the NGOs to showcase the products made by differently-abled persons and get exposure to a world of opportunities. Aanchal, an NGO owner has on offer handmade bags made of recycled paper to carry gifts in. These are painted

with beautiful floral designs by the mentally-challenged kids of her NGO. She says, “I’ve come here for the first time here. Through this I am able to promote what my kids have made. When I tell my children about the scale of the market, it gives them a sense of empowerment.”

Adjacent to her stall is that of Goonj, a development organisation known for recycling products and bridging the gap between urban surplus and rural poverty. They have jute tote bags with cotton tapes and blue colour jute wallets which are perfectly stitched by rural women and ensure sustainability and durability.

Next in line is a stall decorated with a creative cluster of wine bottles and fairy lights with messages such as ‘create your own vibe’, ‘own it all’ and more.



Each bottle has a rope tied around its neck so that one can hang it anywhere. The stall also has Portuguese chandeliers in gold and a teepee (in the shape of a tent) light in black. Its vendor, Ruchi Malik says, “This is the time when everyone wants to revamp their homes economically. So, I have used wine bottles to create an aesthetic look. Instead of painting their homes people can use designer fairylights and bottles to accentuate the some corners.”

A collection of multicolour knitted bags and mufflers made of jute, cotton, paper and textile waste are kept below a banner which says ‘A story of hard work, passion and skill’ attracts people in droves. The stall has macrame bag of different sizes, cotton pouches, cross knit small bags, crochet bags, flower basket bags, mountain knit tote, moon-

doggie bags and others. A NIFT graduate, the owner Vrinda Khemka says that this initiative aims to improve the knitting and stitching skills of women of surrounding villages to make them financially independent through craft.

Additionally there are cotton and woolen quilts in pastel shades, Lucknawi *chikankari*, clay products, food stalls — more of what we have been seeing for years at the mela, though the charm never wears off.

The executive secretary of the association, Kailash Chandra Pandey says that this year they have started a campaign of no plastic. So, all the products are covered by white Braille sheets. “We also have storytelling sessions on *Raja Ke Sau Chere*, *Sheikh Chilli Ke Khayali Pulao* and many others,” he adds.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar

I had participated in an international forum in January 2015 when one of the speakers put up a presentation featuring all the countries that had significantly contributed to the world of design and luxury. As I went through the slides, I confronted a reality — despite an array of timeless arts and crafts, India had no mention in the global world of luxury and design.

“That can’t be true!” I thought to myself. India has had an age-old tradition of royalty and richness in precious jewels and luxury textiles. And the magnificence of its heritage sites is incomparable. I realised that an appropriate branding of India and its “luxury” was what was required. It was then that I decided to take it upon myself and launched The Luxury League (TLL) in October 2015.

However, little did I know the headwinds I would face. In a country with low GDP like India, where many people struggle for subsistence, the word luxury was synonymous with decadence and expensiveness. Everyone shied away from associating with TLL. Government officials, whose support was important for the success of this venture, refused to support TLL and its initiatives. I knew that I had to change perceptions and mindsets. I recognised very early that the reason Indian arts and craft haven’t found global recognition because of the way they were packaged, marketed and branded.

In a conversation with Patrick Thomas, CEO of world’s premier luxury brand Hermes, I realised that people considered the quality of Indian products shabby due to the packaging. Patrick told me about his fascination with the incense sticks sold by Indian vendors in Paris. However, it was shocking for him to see that such a luxurious product was sold for only ₹2. “If Hermes was selling it, we would package it as a luxury product and sell it for ₹100”, he said.

I instantly recognised the problem and the opportunity that it presented. I developed a forum where the top luxury brands of the world could interact with decision-makers, artisans, craftsmen, corporate global brands, consumers as well as the Indian government to reimagine the connotations of luxury in an Indian context. The TLL was formed as a not-for-profit foundation with the mission to create an envi-

A series of epiphanies

There is now a growing understanding about how the uniqueness of India’s arts and craft can be used to brand our products as luxury, says fashion designer RITU BERI



ronment of conducive and creative thinking through dialogue and exchange of ideas. I felt that the essence of Indian luxury lies in our heritage and there was no better way to appreciate our country than by celebrating its rich cultural legacy.

We, hence, aimed to enhance the luxury of Brand India globally through its arts and craft and by reflecting all that is distinctly Indian and authentically unique. The board of various decision-makers and luxury creators listed the objectives as as following:

- Promote collaborations between Indian and global art forms and create mutually beneficial opportunities and joint ventures.

- Foster, strengthen cultural relations through mutual understanding between India and Italy thus expanding India’s cultural space, globally.
- Recognise opportunities for emerging Indian talent by developing business opportunities and partnerships through networking and create investment interests in sustainable Indian products.
- Help evolve a greater sense of appreciation for Indian quality, skill and creativity among world players.
- Bring greater recognition to Indian handicrafts and cultural art forms and generate employment opportunities for the unorganised sector.
- Promote India as a preferred invest-

ment destination for textiles, jewellery and rich craftsmanship via partnering programmes and kick-start communications, traffic through global networking.

- Formulate ideas to utilise our resources in the best way possible and create opportunities for global startups.
- Create employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for the Indian talent through strategic positioning and digital marketing.
- Create forums to support government’s skill development initiatives for the unorganised sector and develop their skills as well as knowledge.

Today, it’s been four years since I launched the initiative. Ever since, it has grown manifold. It has made tremendous progress towards its objective of promoting the luxury of Brand India. Initially, there were huge debates on the concept of luxury and its applicability to India. The debate is now over. It is time for everyone to embrace its true vision. It has also made remarkable progress in providing a forum for Indian companies to interact with foreign brands. Within just four years, we have managed to bring over 60 Indian and international companies to exchange ideas on how India can be promoted as a global brand. There is now a growing understanding among people about how the uniqueness of India’s art can be used to brand Indian products.

Established with the purpose of promoting the the richness of our heritage, design, arts and crafts, we have been able to convince the global consumer. In the past editions, with country partners like France and Italy, a global forum has been created where ideas have evolved and developed to directly benefit artisans and craftsmen.

(TLL begins today. The author is a fashion designer, an advisor to Khadi & Village Industries Commission, Government of India and the Cultural & Tourism Ambassador of Uzbekistan in India by the Ministry of Tourism in Uzbekistan.)

A monochrome palette

In collaboration with Cover Story, KARL LAGERFELD’s collection in India presented a play of athleisure with casual-chic. It makes for elegant silhouettes that can be worn in the boardroom or even at brunches. MANJULA TIWARI, CEO of the Indian retail brand, talks to TEAM VIVA

If there was one thing that Karl Lagerfeld desired to have invented in fashion, it’s the white shirt. For him, it was the basis of everything. Rest comes after. Known worldwide for his aspirational, relevant and cutting-edge approach to style, he was a force of nature, coupled with an enigmatic persona and an original perspective on fashion and pop culture. And such a design philosophy has finally made its way to the Indian fashion scene. In collaboration with homegrown Indian fashion retail label, Cover Story, Maison Karl Lagerfeld has presented its timeless, signature styles across ready-to-wear and accessories for Fall-Winter 2019, created in London.

So is there an Indianness to the Lagerfeld design philosophy? Manjula Tiwari, CEO of Cover Story, describes that the designs have been created keeping in mind the Indian body-types, seasonal and cultural preferences. “The day-wear captures Lagerfeld’s crisp, minimalist aesthetic, fashioned in a monochrome palette. The play of athleisure with casual-chic makes for elegant silhouettes that can be worn to the board-room or even at brunch. Key looks are crafted in black-and-white with highlights of red. A snow-leopard mono-print and bold houndstooth design, along with boucle fabrics, brings texture and dimension to the range,” she says.

Must-haves for the day include — the iconic, fitted white blouse with a black-tie, oversized as well as peplumed white shirts, the poplin shirt-dress, elegantly cinched at the waist with a logo belt and a fit-and-flair dress in houndstooth.

“The evening wear celebrates the glamour of Paris at night. From sequins ad bodycon silhouettes to tux detailing, chains and studs, the range pays a fashionable tribute to rock-chic,” she adds.

Must-haves for festive evenings include — a black sequined wide-leg jumpsuit, an androgynous tuxedo suit, a tuxedo-dress juxtaposed with a georgette sleeve and a deep red halter-neck knitted dress worn with a studded leather jacket.

Manjula feels that during his lifetime, Lagerfeld has influenced multiple generations of women with his inimitable design philosophy. “A mix of Parisian chic with a touch of the avant-garde — this ethos is reflected in the collection and is deeply inspired by every-woman. We have always believed in the substance of style,” she says.



There have been numerous collaborations between Indian and international brands such as Coach, Burberry, H&M and Tiffany. Similarly, this will also certainly broaden the horizons of both the fashion houses, believes Manjula. “We aim to celebrate the individual spirit that shapes a woman’s sense of style. When it comes to fashion, the Indian woman and her sartorial preferences are truly unique,” she says.

However, the question that arises here is how did the collaboration happened? Manjula tells us that Lagerfeld approached her while she was in London. It has been in process from the last year. “We wanted to bring the best of international fashion to India but made exclusively as per the needs as well as requirements of the Indian consumers and what could be more grand than Karl Lagerfeld?” she adds.

The collection included a comfortable range of trench-coats, leather jackets and logo sweatshirts, which not only make for ideal travel companions but can also be used to layer day-looks this winter.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar

GREEN OUTSIDE, GREENER INSIDE

While Greta Thunberg is busy challenging the world leaders, a young social entrepreneur in India is trying to convince people to combat climate crisis by taking the responsibility at a very small level, albeit, for a larger good. By CHETNA VERMA

Until a year ago, no one had heard of Greta Thunberg. Today, the 16-year-old Swedish environmental activist has taken the world by storm. Speaking at world's biggest platforms on issues around climate change, she has inspired people across generations. Millions of people from across the globe have joined her protest against world leaders urging them to start working to end the climate crisis. While Greta is busy challenging the global leaders, a young social entrepreneur in India is trying to convince people to do their bit by taking the responsibility at a very small level, albeit, for a larger good. Twenty-four-year-old Harshit Baveja's idea is simple — gift a plant, gift a life.

In 2016, the state of pollution in Delhi-NCR had alarmed not only its residents but every concerned citizen of the country. It was reported that air pollution had reduced life expectancy of Delhiites by 10 years. With the intention of finding a cure to combat air pollution, Harshit, along with his friend, started looking for most effective, environment-friendly and sustainable options to address the same. They talked to experts, looked for solutions online and researched at various levels. And finally they came across the NASA Clean Air Study. It was a project led by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to research ways to clean the air in space stations. Its results suggested that in addition to absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen through photosynthesis, certain common indoor plants may also provide a natural way of removing toxic agents such as benzene, formaldehyde and trichloroeth-

ylene from the air.

Taking a cue from this report, Harshit decided to gift indoor plants to his family, friends and neighbours. "Besides helping them to stay healthy during those days when air pollution was really high, we wanted to understand the acceptability of the concept among common people. To our surprise, we received quite a positive response," says Harshit.

The acceptance of plants by people around him encouraged Harshit to explore this idea at a bigger platform. He registered a company, Gift a Life, with the intention of selling the air-cleaning indoor plants. However, it was not just the simple task of selling indoor plants, it involved a certain procedure for the installation. "We understand every space differs and has different needs. Taking this into consideration, we suggest plants which are suitable for the location. We invented the idea of 'Plant Doctors' who would visit the concerned spaces and determine crucial factors like area, number of people occupying the space and surroundings," says Harshit explaining the steps involved. Once the data is collected from the site, it is analysed and major sources of pollutions and the types of pollutants present in that particular space are determined. A final 'site report' is prepared along with a custom plan to tackle the problems. After this in-depth analysis, the air cleaning planters



are installed. The idea, however, did not take off as expected. The company did not receive any order for the first three months and the uncertainties had taken over the people involved. "We had become really frustrated. We did not

know what to do next to ensure that 'Gift a Life' creates a space of its own. We had started losing hope," says Harshit, who was still in college at that time.

One day when he entered his friend's hostel room, the latter said, "Look Baveja, I have put a plant in my room." In that moment, Harshit knew that his idea was here to stay. He says, "It was quite a small impact that our idea had on my friend who made the effort of installing and taking care of a plant. But for me, it was big enough to help me continue motivating people to do their bits."

The company started contacting various other organisations to pitch the idea of installing the air-purifying plants. Many rejected it straight away while some at least listened. Sharing one such incident, Harshit says, "I can recall approaching a client. They were loud and clear that they do not want indoor plants in their office. We shared the benefits and installed some at no cost just to give a demo. It was for them to see the difference a small change could bring into their office life."

After three months, Harshit met the client who was immensely happy with the changes. Positivity, productivity and attendance had improved in those three months. Today, the company is taking care of six branches of the office. In the last three years, they have installed these beneficial plants in over 50 companies in Delhi-NCR.

Not just in numbers but they have also evolved in terms of ideas and sustainability in these three years. On Diwali, they try and launch a new product. They have come up with the concept of 'Eco-Glass Planters'. Its made using easily recyclable products.

—Charkha Features



Ray of hope

It's sad how people only remember *Nagad Narayana* or the lord of money on Deepawali. One should rather focus on enlightening the soul by lighting lamps, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

Deepawali – the festival of lights is widely celebrated across the globe by Hindus to commemorate the triumph of good over evil, knowledge over ignorance and hope over despair.

The festival falls on a day before the new moon in the month of Ashwin as per Hindu calendar. There are a number of rituals associated with this festival. One should know the spiritual and philosophical aspect of them and why people celebrate this occasion with such great festivity.

During Diwali, people lit oil lamps and keep them at the entrance of their homes, along with colourful strings of electric lights. But what is the spiritual significance behind lighting the lamps? In Hindu culture, light is a powerful metaphor for knowledge and consciousness. Thus, it is a reminder of the importance of education and self-inquiry, which brings harmony to the individual, community and between communities. This promotes respect and acceptance of lamps.

Lighting lamps reminds us to walk on the right path, to dispel darkness from our hearts and minds, and to embrace knowledge and goodness.

During the festival, utmost importance is given to *Lakshmi Pujan*, which means worshipping goddess of wealth — Laxmi. The word Lakshmi is derived from *Lakshya* or *Lakshma*, which means, goal. So, by semantic implication, Goddess Lakshmi represents 'the final goal' of life. The symbols associated with her and the rituals followed on the day of Deepawali imply that she stands for the highest stage of perfection and development which a human soul can reach. Her hands signify *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Mukti*, which represents the stage of fruition or beatitude. Her *abhaya mudra* shows the pose of assurance and safety. The 100 petal lotus flower on which she sits is symbolic of purity and detachment. There are many other lotus flowers too, which float in the ocean of milk which are symbolic of purity, peace and prosperity. Gold coins continually coming from her left hand signify unending material prosperity. An interesting feature of her portraits is the four elephants which pour water on her. They are symbolic of the four directions — East, West, North and South. Moreover, elephant is an emblem of strength, wisdom and faithfulness to the master. It is a sign of grace, majesty and the faithfulness of all her subjects and constant affluence. It also shows that she had her sovereignty on the whole world.

Invoking the goddess on a dark night by lighting lamps and candles is thus symbolic of enlightenment of the souls to attain the stage of perfection. Cleaning of houses and offices in advance is indicative of the observance of complete purity. The use of four elephants is symbolic of victory over the self to attain world sovereignty or *chakravarti rajya* in the golden age.

The door (of knowledge) is kept open all night to achieve knowledge, virtue and fulfillment of goal. But its sad to note that people only remember *Nagad Narayana* which means cash, worship mammon and forget the Almighty or the goal of life. Hence, the need of hour is to keep the lamp of knowledge lighted within us. We must try to enlighten everyone around us so that each one of us become helping hands in the process of world transformation by the supreme. So let's celebrate this Diwali by focussing on our destiny and helping others too to make their life resolute.

As per the Oxford dictionary, adulting means the practice of behaving in a way a responsible adult does, especially the accomplishment of mundane but necessary tasks.

After gaining popularity among millennials, the term has been looked at as derisive in the media. And there is a reason for it as adulting indicates a feeling of accomplishment which young people often boast about after doing certain responsible tasks like paying bills, rent, taking care of their cars, which they are supposed to do as an adult anyway.

However, I disagree. There's more to its meaning. As a millennial, I argue that the term captures the essence of what a lot of young people feel while coming to grips with the world. Unless we're very lucky to have grown up in a bubble of tuition classes or headed to university for graduation and masters. The formative years, which our parents, the baby boomers or the gen X, have had in their growing up days is something we experience only when we enter our first jobs. For me, this is adulting.

Indeed, we get more exposure today and have many options to explore. We get a disposable income right from our school for canteen or through pocket money to college trips. But we think through Twitter, talk on Whatsapp, party on Instagram, look for jobs on LinkedIn and watch TV on Netflix. Every thing is created well and intuitively but the collateral damage is that we have no time to think amid all this. We don't really know who we are. In such a scenario, how will we have a deep conversation about our lives, goals and career with other people when we ourselves have no time to introspect? Our bodies are conditioned to computers, postures are hunched and thumbs unconsciously scrolling through Instagram feeds every few minutes. The list doesn't stop here. Soon you will lose the ability to sit through your favourite

The dark side

It is easy to get addicted to social media to the point of no-conversation or lack of attention to read a book. NEHARIKA GUPTA questions if social media is the new smoking trend

Marvel film. It is an art to sit still and you will have to work for it. This is adulting.

However, one can attribute all this to the ease that mobile phones provide. It has apps which could solve almost every problem, be it getting married, selling your furniture, buying groceries or starting a SIP. But is making decisions from a screen healthy?

If we spend time comparing which app will help us solve a problem or take time to evaluate all possible options, are we not losing all our time and possibilities? If we spend a day evaluating all the information that we have, indecision will hit us hard. Now wonder, is this adulting?

The older generations utilised India's economic policies that helped many businesses evolve. We, the gen Y, hold the



golden key to the kingdom of content. Let's not drown ourselves in an Tsunami of technology. We should use it well and divide our time efficiently. It is high time we pause and think about how social media is paving its way into our schedules and consuming most of our time.

There is a lot of creativity in terms of business, job options, recreational activities and travel experiences. The quality of life, adventure and interesting opportunities that we want to do are out there, we just need to recognise it. Creating valuable space in our lives for things that can make a difference should be the focus. It is important for us to excel in content-creation but we also need to engage physically with the world around us.

My book *Adulting* (published by Harper Collins India) has three smart albeit fictional individuals who have been used as case studies. The protagonist Aisha Oberoi played the social media game and rose to the top. She had the talent (and the looks) but does she have the strength to live a successful adult life? It's a whole new ball game and she does-

n't know the rules. Aisha does not get the psychology behind social media and how society's tacit acceptance of it doesn't change the fact that it can take over one's peace of mind and affect lifestyle. It is easy to get addicted to social media to the point of no-conversation or worse and lack of attention span. All of this signals towards the question, is social media the new smoking trend?

The other thing I'm advocating is depth. We all share posts on social media. But if someone leaves a lengthy comment, people ignore, they either scroll up or swipe left. We are so used to scrolling the feed, that we don't have time to pause and read. I recall having in-depth conversations years ago at the tag-end of parties when most people have gone home. But that is not the case now. I might look like a cynical millennial when I say this, but now meeting people is sometimes cursory and just a status update in real life with no depth.

Tejas Sahni, my second protagonist demonstrates this well. He is a writing rockstar, who gets it right the first time

with his first novel but cannot seem to make it work for the next. When he's a stay-at-home writer and can Netflix and chill all day, why will he spend time writing a book or reading one? One would say that he should pause and ask himself why he wants to write but between Tinder and whiskey, where's the time? He doesn't understand the importance of a deep exploration into what makes him go for a craft.

Ruhi Singh, the third protagonist is the managing editor of a publishing house. She is in a tumultuous relationship that is tough on her but she likes it because it fulfills her desires. If she would have time to converse with herself and ask about the kind of person she is with, she will save herself a lot of time and tears. But she can't because of her hustle mindset and work responsibilities. She is guilty of not being at a successful level in her life.

While my characters may seem kooky and lost (they are) they find their North star eventually. I firmly think, this coming back to the path is adulting.

Whether you are one or not, whether you like it or not, you are living in a millennial world where we have common problems. I want my readers to take a walk and think, how can we do more of what makes us happy? Can we be brave and ask ourselves what we really want right now? We should make a five or 10 year logical plan which will help us discover ourselves more.

Let's grab this raging fast and understand how we need to supplement our high-flying lifestyle with slow hours that would initiate deep thoughts. While you read all this, even now your mind and body longs for the next episode of *Family Man* (an online series). But stop and think once again, do you want to watch his family or invest time in yours.

(The writer is a writer, poet, yogi and martial arts practitioner.)

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Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless.

—Mother Teresa

”

LIMITING MEALTIMES FACILITATES EXERCISE

Limiting access to food might increase levels of hormone - ghrelin, which in turn might increase your motivation to exercise, said a new research.

The study, published in the Journal of Endocrinology suggested that a surge in levels of the appetite-promoting hormone — ghrelin, after a period of fasting prompted mice to initiate voluntary exercise.

These novel findings indicate that better diet control, for example limiting food intake to mealtimes or fasting intermittently, could help overweight people maintain a more effective exercise routine, lose weight and avoid debilitating complications such as diabetes and heart disease.

"Our findings suggest that hunger, which promotes ghrelin production, may also be involved in increasing motivation for voluntary exercise when feeding is limited. Therefore, maintaining a healthy eating routine could also encourage motivation for exercise in overweight people," said author Yuji Tajiri from the Kurume University in Japan.



POTATO AS EFFECTIVE AS CARBOHYDRATE GEL

Consuming potato puree during prolonged exercise works just as well as a commercial carbohydrate gel in sustaining blood glucose levels and boosting performance in trained athletes, a new study suggests.

The research has shown that ingesting concentrated carbohydrate gels during prolonged exercise promotes carbohydrate availability during exercise and improves exercise performance. Our study aims to expand and diversify race-fuelling options for athletes and offset flavour fatigue," said study's lead author Nicholas Burd, Professor at the University of Illinois in the US.

Potatoes are a promising alternative for athletes because they represent a cost-effective, nutrient-dense and whole-food source of carbohydrates, the researchers reported in the Journal of Applied Physiology. Furthermore, they serve as a savoury race fuel option when compared with the high sweetness of carbohydrate gels.

The researchers recruited 12 participants who were healthy and devoted to their sport, averaging 165 miles per week on their bicycles.



WORKOUT BEFORE BREAKFAST HAS BENEFITS

Fitness enthusiasts, take a note. Researchers have found that working out before breakfast could increase health benefits of exercise.

The study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, the Universities of Bath and Birmingham found that by changing the timing of eating and exercising, one can better control the blood sugar levels.

"We found that the men in the study who exercised before breakfast burned double the amount of fat than the group who exercised after. Our results suggest that changing the timing of when you eat in relation to when you exercise can bring about profound and positive changes to your overall health," said study author Javier Gonzalez from the University of Bath.

There was a six-week study, which involved 30 men classified as obese or overweight and compared results from two intervention groups.



FREQUENT DRINKING IS HARMFUL

Alcohol lovers, take a note. Drinking small amounts of alcohol frequently is linked with a higher likelihood of atrial fibrillation than binge drinking, says a new study.

Atrial fibrillation is the most common heart rhythm disorder and raises the risk of stroke by five-fold. Symptoms include palpitations, racing or irregular pulse, shortness of breath, tiredness, chest pain and dizziness.

"Our study suggests that drinking less often may also be important to protect against atrial fibrillation," said study author Jong-Il Choi, from Korea University College in South Korea.

For the study, published in the journal EP Europace, researchers examined the relative importance of frequent drinking versus binge drinking for new-onset atrial fibrillation.

The analysis included 9,776,956 individuals without atrial fibrillation who underwent a national health check-up in 2009 which included a questionnaire about alcohol consumption.



GAINING WEIGHT IN 20s LINKED TO EARLY DEATH

Gaining weight from your mid-20s into middle age is associated with an increased risk of premature death, warn researchers.

According to the study published in the BMJ journal, weight loss at older ages (from middle to late adulthood) was also linked to higher risk.

"The results highlight the importance of maintaining normal weight across adulthood, especially preventing weight gain in early adulthood, for preventing premature deaths in later life," said study researchers from China.

For the study, researchers based in China set out to investigate the association between weight changes across adulthood and mortality.

Their findings were based on data from the 1988-94 and 1999-2014 US National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), a nationally representative annual survey that includes interviews, physical examinations and blood samples, to gauge the health of the US citizens.



Lallana late show

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Liverpool failed to record a record-equalling 18th straight Premier League win, but Adam Lallana's late equaliser saved the European champions from a shock defeat at Manchester United in a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

Marcus Rashford's controversial goal handed Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's struggling Red Devils a 1-0 half-time lead, but they could not hold out for a much-needed victory as they left substitute Lallana unmarked at the back post to level with five minutes to play.

Liverpool move six points clear of Manchester City at the top of the table, but will still feel this was a missed opportunity to inflict more pain on a United side sitting 13th in the Premier League, just two points off the relegation zone.

The two most successful sides in English football could not have come into the game in more contrasting form.

However, United answered Solskjaer's calls to rise to the occasion. Liverpool were without Mohamed Salah through injury and the Egyptian's pace and trickery was badly missed.

The visitors were able to welcome back goalkeeper Alisson Becker for the first time in two months after a calf injury, but the Brazilian was rarely tested as United were happy to sit back and counter-attack.

Solskjaer changed his formation to a 3-5-2 in an attempt to limit Liverpool's flying full-backs Trent Alexander-Arnold and Andy Robertson and it was largely effective as the hosts restricted the league leaders to precious few chances.

Liverpool's best opening before the break came when Sadio Mane finally found some space to counter-attack, but from his cut-back Roberto Firmino fired too close to David de Gea. United had not scored in their two



previous matches prior to the international break, but finally produced a moment of quality going forward to take the lead, even if fortune was also on their side for the goal to stand.

Victor Lindelof looked to have upended Divock Origi on halfway, but no foul was given by Martin Atkinson and as United broke forward, Daniel James's cross perfectly picked out Rashford to prod past Alisson.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was furious on the touchline even before a VAR review failed to overturn the decision.

The visitors' frustration only grew moments later when Mane outmuscled

Lindelof to turn in what he thought was an equaliser, only for VAR to this time rule the goal out for a handball by the Senegalese.

Klopp sprinted down the touchline at the half-time whistle, but was unable to change the pattern of the game after the interval as Liverpool continued to dominate possession without creating many chances.

Indeed United could have doubled their advantage when Rashford and Fred fired shots just wide of Alisson's goal on the counter-attack.

Lallana had played just 10 minutes in the Premier League this season prior to coming off the bench 20 min-

utes from time.

But he was in the right place at the right time to make a telling contribution in the title race as he tapped home at the back post from Andy Robertson's cross.

United were then camped inside their own box for five minutes of stoppage time.

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain was inches away from a winner as his driven shot flew just wide and United had another VAR review go their way deep into added time when Fred was adjudged to have played the ball with his shoulder rather than an arm inside the area.

Marquez wins 10th title of 2019 MotoGP

PTI ■ MOTEGI (JAPAN)

World champion Marc Marquez of Repsol Honda Team rode a brilliant race to claim his 10th title of the season at the Motul Grand Prix of Japan at the Twin Ring Motegi circuit here on Sunday.

Starting from the pole position for the first time in MotoGP at the Motegi, the 26-year-old Honda rider clinched the title with a timing of 42:42.492 seconds.

Yamaha SRT's Fabio Quartararo, who started third from the grid, finished second, 0.870 seconds behind Marquez while Ducati's Andrea Dovizioso (42:48.817 seconds) climbed up four places to take the third spot in the 24-lap race.

Marquez's win also clinched the Constructor's title for Repsol Honda with three races still remaining in the season.

Sunday's win also gave Marquez his third Japan Moto GP title after having clinched the crown in 2016 and last year, while finishing second in 2013, 2014 and 2017.

Before coming here, Marquez had already secured his fourth consecutive world championship title at the last race in Thailand.

In total, the 26-year-old Spaniard has eight world championship titles, including six in the premier class MotoGP. Marquez's other crowns came in the 125cc World Championship in 2010 and Moto2 World Championship in 2012.

Already assured of the world championship title, Marquez meant business from the word go and held off an early challenge from 'Rookie of the Year' Quartararo.

It was immaculate riding from Marquez in dry conditions on a circuit, which has always been tricky for him.

Marquez took an early lead and maintained that till the end. His strategy was simple — take the lead and increase the gap — and he execut-



ed that with perfection.

Marquez was leading the pack with nearly a lead of 2.2 seconds early on, but Quartararo pushed hard and gave him a tough fight towards the end to close the gap by 0.870 seconds.

"I was pushing from the beginning because the strategy was clear. I tried to open a gap from the beginning but honestly speaking I started to play a lot with the switches (gears)," Marquez said after registering his fourth consecutive win of the season.

"It wasn't easy because you need to think about a lot of things while riding but I was able to manage in a good way to finish the race. Congratulations to the team. They did a very good job. They tried to find the best package for me," he added.

Second place holder Quartararo of France was made to sweat in the final stages by Dovizioso, who claimed his 100th Grand Prix podium.

But it turned out to be a pretty disappointing outing for another Yamaha SRT rider Franco Morbidelli as he finished fifth after starting second from the grid.

Maverick Vinales of Monster Energy Yamaha

Ethiopians take the top honours

Defending champions Gemechu and Belihu retain ADHM title with improved timings; Bugatha, Suriya emerge top Indians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ethiopia's defending champion Tsehay Gemechu retained her Airtel Delhi Half Marathon title on Sunday by smashing the course record she had set 12 months ago in the national capital when she ran 66:00.

21-years old, Gemechu took 50 seconds less than the time she ran in 2018 to win the \$27,000 first prize at the IAAF Gold Label road race and also pocketed a course record bonus of \$10,000.

The women's race came down to a thrilling head-to-head duel over the final five kilometres between the defending champion and her compatriot Yelamzerf Yehualaw and when it briefly looked like African Games half marathon champion Yehualaw is going to cause an upset with the finish line approaching, Gemechu dug deep and managed to claw her way past her rival to also notch up a personal best while becoming just the second woman to defend here.

"I was tired after Doha (where she finished fourth in the world championships 5000m two weeks ago) but I wanted to come here and fight for the course record. I knew I was mentally strong," reflected Gemechu.

Yehualaw, even younger than the winner having just turned 20 in August, took more than three minutes off her previous best for the distance when finishing just one second behind Gemechu in 66:01.

It was yet another double for Ethiopian racers as the men's winner Andamlak Belihu also retained his title.

Belihu finished just under seven minutes earlier after improving his personal best by eight seconds from his winning time of 12 months ago, stopping the clock on this occasion at 59:10.

However, in sharp contrast to Gemechu, he had the frustration of once again just missing out on beating the men's course record of 59:06, held since 2014 by yet another

Ethiopian Guye Adola.

"At about 18km I started to suffer some back pain, that possibly cost me the course record. I'm a bit disappointed that I missed out on the course record again but I got a personal best so I cannot complain too much," commented Belihu, who immediately declared his long-term intention to come back to Delhi in 2020 with the aim of attacking the course record again and trying to become the first man or woman to win a hat-trick of ADHM title.

"I have been mainly focusing on the track season in my training until recently but I always knew I was going to come here and so I had that in mind. I am always very pleased to come to Indian races and especially Delhi as it was here that I had my first successes, and this changed my life.

"This race has put the frustration of finishing fifth at the world championships (in the 10,000m in Doha two weeks ago) behind me," he added.

Meanwhile, 20-years old Berihu posted one of the fastest

half marathon debuts ever when he came home second in 59:17 while Kandie hung on for third in 59:33.

As for the domestic stalwarts, Srinu Bugatha continues added another laurel in his kitty as he backed up his Tata Mumbai half marathon win with a victory here with a timing of 1:04:33. Suresh Patel clinched Silver after finishing the race in 1:04:57 and half marathon debutant Harshad Mhatre (1:05:12) won the Bronze medal in the Indian elite men's category.

"I tried very hard to beat my best timing, but unfortunately I couldn't. Because I broke away from the rest of the runners and took a lead early on in the race, I couldn't record a better timing. I didn't have anyone who could pace me throughout the race," said Srinu Bugatha.

In the Indian elite women's category, Loganathan Suriya, the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon course record holder, emerged first (1:12:49), followed by Parul Chaudhary (1:13:55) and Chinta Yadav (1:15:28).

Martyrs of CRPF at Hot Spring Date of Martyrdom 21/10/1959



Police Commemoration day is observed on 21st October every year. This date is a significant landmark in the history of Indian Police. It was on this very day in 1959, when CRPF scripted a saga of valour and sacrifice in the snow-laden, inaccessible, inhospitable terrain of Hot Springs in Ladakh. A patrol party of twenty CRPF personnel had gone to search a missing reconnaissance party when it was ambushed by PLA (Chinese Army). In spite of the sudden attack and disadvantageous tactical position, they fought valiantly against the Chinese army personnel who were in large numbers and also heavily armed. In this battle these ten of CRPF men were martyred in defense of the motherland. Their gallant action in fighting against a well-equipped and heavily armed army at a height of sixteen thousand feet in sub-zero conditions is a rare narrative of raw courage and sheer commitment. The supreme sacrifice by CRPF personnel during an unmatched battle has made the Hot Springs a sacred place of pilgrimage for policemen from all over the country. 21st October was befittingly declared "Police Commemoration Day" to be observed by all police formations to commemorate loyalty and supreme sacrifice of police personnel for their motherland.

A life lived for the country is well lived and it cannot be better exemplified than by the gallant act of these men at Hot Springs. CRPF salutes all the gallant Police personnel who have sacrificed their life at the altar of duty for our nation. CRPF pays homage to these martyrs who shall be remembered in reverence and will be an everlasting source of inspiration for all of us.

Remembered by
All Officers & personnel of CRPF

davp/19111/11/0340/1920

WESTERN RAILWAY E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No.S/06/2019 Date 18/10/2019			
S.N.	Short Description of item	Quantity	T.O.D.
161	POLYSTER STAPLE PILLOW	3396 Nos.	30.10.2019
162	SHUNTING CONTACTOR (EP UNIT) COMPLETE	131 Nos.	07.11.2019
163	FLAP DOOR ARRANGEMENT FOR BOXNHL WAGON	87 Nos.	07.11.2019
164	LATERAL DAMPER 100KG	374 Nos.	11.11.2019
165	UIC VESTIBULE FOOTPLATE	2500 Sets	11.11.2019
166	ENTRANCE HAND RAIL	495 Nos.	11.11.2019
167	COMPLETE BRAKE GEAR ARRANGEMENT	10 Sets	11.11.2019
168	HEXAGON HEAD BOLT WITH THREAD M20	14190 Kgs.	12.11.2019
169	HAVER SACK	3646 Nos.	12.11.2019
170	KANATS	1 Set	12.11.2019
171	BOUNDED RUBBER SANDWICH	661 Nos.	12.11.2019
172	415 Volts, 50Hz, 3 POLE, 38 AMPS, AC 3	104 Nos.	13.11.2019
173	ANESTHESIA MACHINE	2 Nos.	13.11.2019
174	BATTERY OPERATED SAGITTAL SAW SYSTEM	2 Nos.	13.11.2019
175	VALVE SPINDLE NUT BOTTOM	70 Nos.	13.11.2019
176	TRACTION MOTOR SUSPENSION BEARING	60 Nos.	13.11.2019
177	CENTRIFUGAL BLOWER DOUBLE INLET COMPLETE	239 Nos.	15.11.2019
178	SUPPLY OF MAINTENANCE FREE STAINLESS STEEL SEAT TOP PROFILE	6880 Nos.	15.11.2019
179	PHOSFOR SENSOR IMAGE PLATE READER WITH DATA PROCESSING	2 Items	15.11.2019
180	SMALL UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE (UAV) DRONE	1 No.	16.11.2019
181	STAINLESS STEEL DOUBLE FERRULE	205 Nos.	18.11.2019
182	STAINLESS STEEL DOUBLE FERRULE	235 Nos.	18.11.2019
183	AO TRS MODULER DRIVE SYSTEM	2 Items	18.11.2019
184	DIGITAL VOICE RECORDER	16 Nos.	18.11.2019
185	ADJUSTER FOR BRAKE BLOCK	17898 Nos.	04.12.2019
186	FOOT STEP ARRANGEMENT COMPLETE	1850 Nos.	05.12.2019
Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.reps.gov.in and www.wrindianrailways.gov.in			
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DHFL DEWAN HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED		
National Office: HDIL House, 8th Floor, Anant Kankar Marg, Bandra East- 400 051 Branch Office : DHFL, Dreams Mall, First Floor, L.B.S.Marg, Bhandup (West), Mumbai - 400078		
DEMAND NOTICE		
Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL) under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s)to pay to DHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to DHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.		
Loan Agreement No./Name of the Borrower/Co Borrower/Guarantor	Demand Notice Date and Amount With NPA Date	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
(LC No. 00000789 of New Delhi-west Branch) Asian Bulls Construction And Developers Ltd (Borrower) K Ashang (Co Borrower 1) Keishing James (Co Borrower 2)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 23120644 /- (₹ Two Crore Thirty One lakh Twenty Thousand Six Hundred Forty Four) NPA (01-08-2019)	Unit No.2, 1st Floor, Wing B, Time Square, Opp. Mittal Indsl Estate, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai Mumbai Suburban Maharashtra 400093
(LC No. 00000645 of Gurgaon Branch) Annapura Agronics Machinery Pvt Ltd (Borrower) Jatin Anand (Co Borrower 1) Tisha Anand (Co Borrower 2)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 1602687 /- (₹ Sixteen lakh Two Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Seven) NPA (01-07-2019)	M. MACHINE. NAME:- AMC CNC Turret Punch Press, AP_MODEL_NO.- TAN258H
(LC No. 00002747 of Noida Branch) Seema Sharma (Borrower) Dinesh Kumar Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 8572044 /- (₹ Eighty Five lakh Seventy Thousand Two Hundred Forty Four) NPA (01-08-2019)	Property No. E-37 & E-38, Ground floor, first floor & fourth floor(With Roof Rights), Jhilmil Colony,Ilaqa Shadarda, Delhi New Delhi Delhi 110095
(LC No. 00004679 of New Delhi Branch) Navneet Gupta (Borrower) Bharti Gupta (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 15452756 /- (₹ Three Crore Fifty Four lakh Fifty Two Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Six) NPA (01-08-2019)	MCD No. 274- E, Plot No. 728 Khasra No. 1151/3, Ward No. 7 New Municipal, No. 919-G Mehrauli, Delhi New Delhi Delhi 110030
(LC No. 00000841 of Karkarduma Noida Branch) Nitin Nagpal (Borrower) Jagdish Kumar (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 2770268 /- (₹ Twenty Seven lakh Seventy Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Eight) NPA (01-08-2019)	House No-157 Gali No-10 Shiv Mandir Vasudev Nager Pratap Nager Delhi New Delhi Delhi 110018
(LC No. 00002845 of Noida Branch) Himanshu Kumar Verma (Borrower) Pooja Kumari (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 25041001 /- (₹ Two Crore Fifty lakh Forty One Thousand One) NPA (01-07-2019)	Plot No. 95, Avatar Enclave Paschim Vihar New Delhi New Delhi New Delhi Delhi 110063
(LC No. NOD38422 of Noida- sector 2 Branch) RAJU RAJU (Borrower)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 1275815 /- (₹ Twelve lakh Seventy Five Thousand Eight Hundred Fifteen) NPA (01-07-2019)	H/Flat No 2-G , Floor No. Kondli Gharoli , Plot No. Phase-III , Pocket-2 , Sector. Mayur Vihar-III, Village . New Delhi Delhi New Delhi Delhi 110096
(LC No. 00000743 of Noida Branch) Abhishek Gupta (Borrower) Kanika Gupta (Co Borrower 1) Jpaag And Associates (Co Borrower 2)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 7453421 /- (₹ Seventy Four lakh Fifty Three Thousand Four Hundred Twenty One) NPA (01-04-2018)	Unit No.615 C In Tower No.6 In Luxuriya Golf View Apartment. Sushant Golf City., Lucknow, Lucknow-226001
(LC No. 00000924 of Noida Branch) Aawesh Dahiya (Borrower) Daljeet Singh (Co Borrower 1) Spikitel Technologies Pvt Ltd (Co Borrower 2)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 30362983 /- (₹ Three Crore Thirty Four lakh Fifty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Three) NPA (01-06-2018)	Flat No.317/ A Seventeenth Floor, Block-A Tower No.2 Sector 1, Pocket D Sushant Golf City Lucknow U.p, Lucknow, Lucknow-226001
(LC No. 00000966 of Noida 1 Rajendra Place Branch) Nitin Gupta (Borrower) Bgs Fashions Pvt Ltd (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 7721923 /- (₹ Seventy Seven lakh Twenty One Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Three) NPA (01-11-2018)	Unit No. 2003 Floor 20th Tower O Amrapali Heartbeat City 2 Plot No. Gh-1/d Sector-107, Noida, Gautambudh Nagar-201301
(LC No. 00000463 of Gurgaon Branch) Anita Jaggi (Borrower) Jaggi Dharmesh (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 8233766 /- (₹ Eighty Two lakh Thirty Three Thousand Seven Hundred Sixty Six) NPA (01-11-2018)	Flat No 12A03 12A Floor (As Per Docs) 13th Floor Physically Tower No 5 Plot No Gh 02 Sector 119, The Aranya Heights Noida,Gautambudh Nagar-201301
(LC No. 00000120 of Delhi Janakpuri Branch) Nand Lal Yadav (Borrower) Manju Yadav (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 10828278 /- (₹ One Crore Eight lakh Twenty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Eight) NPA (01-01-2018)	Flat No. 131 13th Floor Tower B Lumbini Terrace Homes Sector 109, Gurgaon, Gurgaon-122001
(LC No. 00041633 of Delhi - Safdurdurg Branch) Nareesh Kumar Dagar (Borrower) Sunil Kumar (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 5801867 /- (₹ Fifty Eight lakh One Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Seven) NPA (01-07-2018)	Flat No. 903 9th Floor Tower B2 M3M Woodshire Sector 107, Gurgaon, Gurgaon-122001
(LC No. 00003864 of New Delhi Branch) Sanjeev Kumar (Borrower) Santosh Kumar (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 6552377 /- (₹ Sixty Five lakh Fifty Two Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Seven) NPA (01-07-2018)	Flat No. 1101 11th Floor Tower G Capital Gateway Sector 111, Gurgaon, Gurgaon-122001
(LC No. 00000157 of Karkarduma Noida Branch) Vidyanand Thakur (Borrower) Luxmi Narayan Thakur (Co Borrower 1)	26-09-2019 / ₹ 6801701 /- (₹ Sixty Eight lakh One Thousand Seven Hundred One) NPA (01-01-2017)	Flat No 1901, 19th Floor, Type-d, Tower-1 Shubhkarma City, Plot No Gh-02/ A Sec-01, Greater Noida West, G B Nagar, Gautambudh Nagar-201308
If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to DHFL as aforesaid, DHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of DHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.		
Place : Delhi Date : 21.10.2019		
Sd/- (Authorised Officer) Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited		

‘Hit Man’s’ Superhit Show

After India declare on 497/9, Shami and Umesh reduce South Africa to 9 for 2

PTI ■ RANCHI

Rohit Sharma once again provided unbridled joy with his maiden Test double hundred before India’s pacers dented an already scarred South Africa top-order to gain complete control in the third and final match here on Sunday.

Revelling in his new avatar, the stylish Mumbaikar smashed his way to 212 off 258 balls in the company of vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane (115), as India declared their first innings at 497 for nine.

Before bad light stopped play on the second day, South Africa were reduced to nine for two in five overs. Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav removed Dean Elgar (0) and Quinton de Kock (4) respectively in their single over bursts, creating all sorts of discomfort.

The second day again belonged to Rohit, who scored his first double century in the longest format, having scored 176 and 127 in his ‘debut’ as Test opener in Visakhapatnam.

His innings had 28 boundaries and six sixes but, more importantly, it was the languid grace that stood out. The extra second to play those square cuts and the pull shots were exactly what a sparse Sunday crowd needed to rejuvenate themselves.



Batting on 199, the effortlessness with which he dispatched an express delivery from Lungi Ngidi into the mid-wicket stands with a front-foot pull, was worth a million dollars. His double hundred completed, Rohit, as if to taunt the pacer, repeated the shot and the result was same.

Rahane, who has been back in form since the tour of the West Indies, also looked solid during his 11th Test hundred and the first in India in three years — the last coming against New Zealand (October, 2016) in Indore.

The duo added 267 runs for the fourth wicket to set a solid platform before Ravindra Jadeja (51 off 119 balls) and Umesh Yadav (31 off 10 balls with five sixes) provided the final impetus.

Rohit, who has already broken the world record for most number of sixes in a series, has so far amassed 529 runs to become only the fifth Indian opener to score 500-plus runs in a bilateral face-off. Gavaskar had achieved it five times in his Test career and Sehwag was the last Indian to achieve the feat, having scored 544 runs against Pakistan in a three-Test series at home in 2004-05.

Rohit also joined Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag and Chris Gayle to notch 200-plus scores in both ODI and Test formats.

The lack of penetration in the Proteas

attack, save Kagiso Rabada (3/85 in 23 overs), has been the real problem for the visitors.

In the three Tests so far, India have had three double centuries — Mayank Agarwal, skipper Virat Kohli and now Rohit — which tells the tale.

While debutant left-arm spinner George Linde (4/133 in 31 overs) was the most successful bowler, Yadav took him to the cleaners, scoring all his sixes off his bowling.

When South Africa batted under fading light, the Indian pacers were too hot to handle.

Shami looked ominous, extracting extra bounce as he struck off the second ball. Elgar tried to remove his bat but the ball kissed the gloves en route to Wriddhiman Saha’s waiting hands.

De Kock was done in by a brilliant bouncer, failing miserably in his attempt to evade as Saha timed his jump to perfection.

Faf du Plessis and Zubayr Hamza survived the remaining three overs as debutant Shahbaz Nadeem bowled two tidy maidens under floodlights.

With light deteriorating quickly in this part of the world, the Indian bowling attack would like to take advantage of the pitch on which cracks are beginning to open up, and the uneven bounce could only make life more difficult for the beleaguered South African batting line-up.

‘Lot could have happened if I hadn’t cashed in on opportunities’

PTI ■ RANCHI

Rohit Sharma always knew that he had to make best use of the opportunities in his new role as a Test opener or else “a lot could have happened” as far as his stint in the longest format is concerned.

“Kafi kuch hone wala tha naahin toh kaafi kuch aap likh dete mere barein mein (A lot could have happened had I not performed and you guys (media) would have written a lot about me),” a satisfied Sharma said at the day end press conference.

“So it was about making most of the opportunities I got. I knew I had to make full use of it, otherwise media would have written against me. Now I know everyone will write good things about me,” he added.



Rohit has amassed 529 runs from four innings thus becoming the only fifth Indian opener to score 500-plus runs in a Test series.

“It was a good opportunity for me to open the batting. As I said during the Vizag Test, the communication between me and my team management was happening for a long time about opening the batting. So mentally, I was ready for it. I knew it could come at anytime.”

His double century came after India were left reeling at 39/3 in the first morning as he along with Ajinkya Rahane (115) staged a remarkable turnaround with a mammoth 267-run fourth wicket partnership, the highest versus South Africa.

“Speaking of this particular knock, I would say it was most challenging. I have not played much. I played only 30

Tests. In terms of what was thrown at me, I would definitely say it was probably the most challenging one,” the talented Mumbaikar said.

While he has had a blockbuster start to his career as a Test opener, Rohit himself acknowledged that he has a long way to go.

“In Tests, it has its challenges. Having played only three Tests as an opener, I know I have long way to go. I am not reading too much into these three Tests. Of course, I will take a lot of positives but I am not reading too much into it.”

Talking about the challenge of opening the batting, he said, “Opening the batting is a different challenge to batting at Nos 6-7. It’s just about how you prepare yourself, what you talk to yourself in your mind about what do you want to go out

there and achieve.

“Playing the first ball of the match, compared to facing a delivery after 30-40 overs is a different ball game altogether. There’s nothing in particular that I’ve done in terms of technique.”

The 32-year-old is now eyeing to replicate the success overseas when the tour New Zealand next year.

“Wherever you play the new ball, you have to have some understanding of the basics of the game. Which ball you have to play and leave. In certain aspects of the game you have to be mindful of.”

“I was allowing myself to take time rather than going after the ball straightaway. It’s not a good idea with a new ball. You got to play with a little lower backlift. In overseas, of course, it’s a different ball game. That’s a challenge and I am awaiting.”



Former players slam PCB for sacking Sarfaraz as captain

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan’s former stalwarts on Sunday lashed out at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for acting in haste in removing Sarfaraz Ahmed as captain in all three formats of the game.

Most of the former captains and players termed the removal of Sarfaraz on Friday as unjust. Not surprisingly the head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq and bowling coach Waqar Younis were also targeted and blamed for engineering the ouster of Sarfaraz.

The wicketkeeper-batsman is also unlikely to be part of the touring Pakistan T20 or Test squad to Australia later this month.

Batting great Javed Miandad said since Sarfaraz had gained considerable experience as a captain in the last two years, he should have been given time to regain his form instead of just sacking him.

“Azhar’s appointment as Test captain is okay but if the Board wanted to appoint Babar as white-ball captain, they should have first groomed him as I fear the burden of T20 captaincy will affect his batting,” Miandad said.

Former Test batsman and ex-head coach and chief selector Mohsin Khan said, “He (Sarfaraz) took Pakistan to number one in T20 cricket and he is a fighter. This is a decision taken in haste and it could also affect the career of Babar.”

Former captain Rashid Latif minced no words in stating that the Board had erred by making Babar captain of the T20 side.

“He is a selfish player and we have seen this in international cricket and now in the national T20 championship. Sarfaraz is not a selfish captain and sacrificed his position many times for the team. He did not deserve this treatment,” he said.

Former skipper Moin Khan said he was shocked at the way the Board had treated Sarfaraz.

“He (Sarfaraz) has shown himself to be a fine captain and yes he was struggling a bit for form but when a senior player is under pressure you have to encourage and back him, not dump him like this,” Moin said.

He noted that Misbah and Waqar had never been fond of Sarfaraz and with them in charge, this sacking was expected.

Former Test pacer Aaqib Javed also criticised the Board for taking a strange decision.

“I don’t know from where these decisions are coming but they make no sense at all to me. Sarfaraz should have been relieved as Test captain but the Board should have given him some time as captain of white-ball cricket.”

Another former captain Ramiz Raja, however, felt that the Board had taken a brave decision to appoint Babar Azam as T20 captain and said people defending Sarfaraz should accept his poor form in recent months as skipper.

“We were struggling in Test cricket, we did not reach semifinals of the World Cup. We lost to a Sri Lankan ‘B’ team in T20 cricket and his own form is on a decline. I think the Board acted properly by investing in a young player in the white-ball formats. If Babar develops into a good leader he can also become Test captain,” he said.

Murray wins first ATP title since 2017

AFP ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

Andy Murray won his first ATP title since March 2017 on Sunday with a battling 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 victory over fellow three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka in the Antwerp final.

Former world number one Murray, rebuilding his game after career-saving hip surgery earlier this year, fought back from a set and 3-1 down against Wawrinka to claim his 46th career title.

“It means a lot. The last few years have been extremely difficult,” Murray, who broke down in tears at the end, told Amazon Prime.

“Both me and Stan



have had a lot of injury problems in the last couple of years. It’s amazing to be back, playing against him in the final like that. I think it was a great match.”

“I didn’t expect to be in this position at all. I’m

happy, very happy,” added Murray whose ranking has plummeted to 243 in the world.

Fourth seed Wawrinka, also hunting his first title in over two years, broke Murray in his

opening serve game — enough to secure the first set in this 20th meeting between the pair.

The Swiss again broke Murray early in the second but the Scot hit back to level for 3-3 and then forced a deciding set as Wawrinka lost his serve for the second time.

Wawrinka again gained the upper hand as he broke for 2-1 in the final set, but Murray responded as the players traded breaks in four consecutive games.

With Wawrinka serving to stay in the match, Murray brought up championship point after almost two and a half hours and wrapped up his first title since Dubai in 2017 when his opponent strayed wide.

Karnataka, Gujarat sails into semifinals

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Opener KL Rahul continued his good form as his stroke-filled 90 guided Karnataka to the semi-finals even as another out-of-favour opener Shikhar Dhawan’s failure proved costly with Delhi exiting from another quarter-finals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Sunday.

While Karnataka cruised to an eight-wicket victory over Puducherry in one of the quarter-finals, Delhi lost by six wickets to Gujarat via VJD Method in another last eight clash.

Put into bat, Puducherry crawled to 207 for 9 with Vikneshwaran MM Marimuthu top scoring with an unbeaten 58.

The Karnataka bowlers led by the vastly experienced Abhimanyu Mithun (2-35) ran through the Pondicherry top and middle order before Mariimuthu and Sagar Trivedi (54) tried to rally their innings.

Pondicherry were reeling at 41 for 6 at one stage before Mariimuthu and Trivedi pulled them out of trouble and gave the score some semblance of respectability.

Barua set to drag chess bosses to court

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

India’s second Grandmaster Land Arjuna awardee Dibyendu Barua plans to bring a contempt of court plea against All India Chess Federation after a three-members AICF committee gave clean chit to the Federation joint secretary and Bengal chess Association suspended secretary Atanu Lahiri on a plethora of charges when the matter was sub-judice.

“This is clear case of contempt of court. The court is seized with the matter and had rejected Lahiri prayer against his removal as BCA secretary by the working committee of the BCA,” Barua told *The Pioneer*.

On October 15, late at night the AICF issued a report in which the three-member committee had given clean a chit to Lahiri. Barua had accused Lahiri of routing huge amount of fund received from the state government to his own chess promotion company in a clear case of conflict of interest. Barua produced documents to show that Rs 23 lakh in cash was withdrawn from Lahiri’s

company--Global Chess- in around 53 weeks.

Interestingly, the committee has dismissed this charge saying the routing of fund to a personal company didn’t not amount to misappropriation of fund and refused to to treat it as a case of conflict of interest. “Since the fund does not relate to either the BCA or AICF, the question of any misappropriation of chess association fund does not arise,” it said in its report.

This is a clear case of trying to deflect attention from the crucial charge that Lahiri used his position as the BCA secretary to divert fund to his company Global Chess—a clear case of conflict of interest.

And that is how it should have been treated by the committee instead of making an attempt to obfuscate the issue by talking about “misappropriation of funds.”

Barua also accused Lahiri of not allowing him to hold a youth tournament and banning two of India top players, Grandmaster Surya Sekhar Ganguly and Deep Sen Gupta, from taking part in Bengal Chess events. Lahiri also



barred under-9 national girls’ champion Sneha Haldar from playing in a tournament on disciplinary grounds.

Obviously, the committee had no intention to reach to the bottom of truth. Its members just met in Chennai without caring to meet the minister or secretary of the trial development department of West Bengal. The ministry had taken cognizance of Barua’s complaint and terminated its agreement with Global Chess of Lahiri.

When a similar case of conflict of interest rocked the Indian cricket, there was so many hue and cries than an expert committee

consisting of people from outside the BCCI were roped into probe the matter. But in the case of AICF, the task was given to a chosen few who were colleague of Lahiri himself.

To begin with the composition of the committee itself looked suspect since the AICF secretary was kept out of it. As per AICF constitution any such committee must include the AICF secretary. This makes the committee itself illegal.

Secondly, Barua had also written to the AICF President PR Venketrama Raja expressing his reservation about the committee. The AICF President should have realized that Barua is not wood pusher but a chess player of repute who had brought much laurels to the country and played a stellar role in popularizing chess. If a player of his stature makes some plea, it must be taken seriously. Alas, Barua was treated with sheer contempt and nothing else. His letter to the AICF President had no impact and the committee remained unchanged.

The committee’s finding flies in the face of the Court’s proceed-

ings.

The Court’s order clearly states the presence of a “prima facie” case even as it directed the AICF not to issue any direction to the BCA to hold election or take any other decision regarding the dispute.

The most intriguing things about the AICF clean chit to Lahiri on October 15 is that it came on the day when AICF central council met to discuss among others, the West Bengal affairs. The issue was foremost on the agenda, but AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan announced that it would not be taken up because the matter was sub-judice. Only a few hours later, the AICF came out with the clean chit to Lahiri.

Why was not the report placed before the council? This is the question which has baffled the Barua camp.

“I never expected this committee o do any justice. I’ve never heard of such a farce. They confined themselves to Chennai and didn’t even summon me to depose before them. Why didn’t they summon Surya Sekhar Ganguly and other chess players, who were

banned by Lahiri? “

“I’m going to fight till the bitter end. We can’t allow a handful of self seeking officials to destroy the dignity of this game,” he said.

Of later, the India chess has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. Charges of high-handedness, illegal dismissal of state associations, threats and abuses by officials against players and juniors, and allegation of sleaze have destroyed the image of a game which was once linked with gentlemen.”

“The situation has become so grim that the day is not far when we will have some scandalous viedo involving some top officials out in open. That day we will have to hang our head in shame,” said a senior player.

“I don’t blame the AICF president. He is gentleman. Since he is a top businessman of the country, I don’t expect him to be involved in day to day affair of chess. Some people around him are taking advantage of the situation and trying to create a coterie. I hope the president will see through their design and do justice,”