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THE CHANGE:
ARJUN KAPOOR
13 VIVACITY

2K Pak violations kill 21 Indians MEA registers strong protest against unprovoked Pak action

MOHIT KANDHARI/PNS ■
JAMMU/NEW DELHI

With security forces going all out to target the Pakistan-backed terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir, Islamabad has resorted to uninterrupted ceasefire violations through the years to keep the Kashmir pot boiling. The Pakistani Army has committed more than 2,050 unprovoked ceasefire violations this year in which 21 Indians have been killed, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Sunday.

"We have highlighted our concerns at unprovoked ceasefire violations by Pakistan forces, including in support of cross-border terrorist infiltration, and targeting of Indian civilians and border posts by them," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

"This year they have resorted to more than 2,050 unprovoked ceasefire violations in which 21 Indians died," he said.

India has repeatedly called upon Pakistan to ask its forces



to adhere to 2003 ceasefire understanding and maintain peace and tranquillity along the Line of Control and International Border, Kumar said.

Indian forces exercise maximum restraint and respond to unprovoked violations and attempts at cross-border terrorist infiltration, he said.

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On Saturday, Pakistani troops engaged in heavy firing and mortar shelling on forward posts and villages along the LoC in Poonch district of Jammu & Kashmir.

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troops engaged in heavy firing and mortar shelling on forward posts and villages along the LoC in Poonch district of Jammu & Kashmir.

On September 1, an Army personnel was killed when Pakistani army targeted forward posts and villages in Shahpur-Kerni sector, raising the death toll in ceasefire violations by Pakistan in the twin

districts of Poonch and Rajouri since July to eight — six soldiers and two civilians.

Meanwhile, with tensions rising along the LoC amid repeated ceasefire violations, the Indian Army has launched a fresh drive to reactivate Village Defence Committees (VDCs) in the forward areas of frontier Rajouri and Poonch districts.

The objective is to improve human intelligence and revive most of the defunct committees to effectively deal with the fresh threat emanating from across the LoC.

"Village Defence Committee training organised at Naoshera to refresh their weapon training and intelligence gathering skills. Session included firing practice & medical examination of the members," tweeted official Twitter handle of Nagrota based White Knight Corps on Sunday.

Similar drills are expected to be organised in several other forward areas of Poonch and Rajouri districts in the coming days.

Will implement NRC in State: Haryana CM

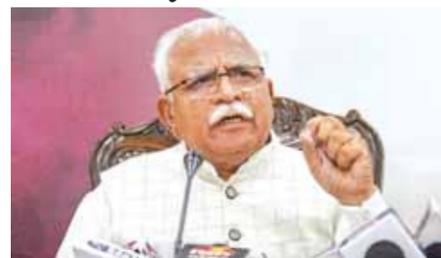
Says Govt working on family identity card & data would also be used

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Sunday said the National Register of Citizens (NRC) would be implemented in the State.

"In Haryana, we will implement NRC along the lines of Assam," the Chief Minister said while talking to the media-persons after meeting Justice (retd.) HS Bhalla, former chairman of Haryana Human Rights Commission in Panchkula near here.

Manohar Lal, who is seeking his second term as the Chief Minister with several imminent personalities including Justice (retd.) HS Bhalla, ex-Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba and Lt Gen (retired)



Baljit Singh Jaiswal on Sunday. He met them under his party's "Maha Sampark Abhiyan" ahead of the State Assembly polls in October.

The Chief Minister said, "Justice Bhalla has taken up many assignments after his retirement. He is also working on NRC and will visit Assam soon. We will implement NRC in Haryana and have sought Bhalla's support and suggestion."

The State Government is working on a fast pace on family identity card and its data

would also be used in the NRC, he added.

Manohar Lal had previously too supported NRC implementation across the country. Notably, the final NRC in Assam was released on August 31, leaving out 19 lakh people. Following this, several political parties had voiced their dissatisfaction with the final document.

Meanwhile, the Haryana Government will look into the feasibility of setting up a Law Commission.

Former inmate of Bihar shelter home raped by 4 men in moving car

PTI ■ BETTIAH (BIHAR)

A woman, who had been an inmate of the infamous Muzaffarpur shelter home, was allegedly raped by four men in a moving vehicle (car) in Bettiah town of West Champaran district, police said on Sunday.

The Muzaffarpur shelter home had hit the headlines in 2018 after a social audit report highlighted that over 30 girls were allegedly raped at the Government-aided shelter home, run by an NGO.

Bettiah town police station SHO Shashi Bhushan Thakur said the woman was admitted to a Government medical college on Saturday evening and a medical examination was conducted by a team of doctors on Sunday, he said.

It will be confirmed whether she was raped only after getting the medical examination report, he said.

The woman, in her police complaint lodged with the Bettiah town police station on



Saturday, alleged that four men forcibly took her inside their vehicle (car) while she was passing through the area where she lives on Friday evening, and raped her in a moving vehicle, police said.

The men then dumped the woman in her locality after raping her. All the four men had covered their faces with masks but she could remove the masks and identify them.

While all the four persons belonged to the same family, two of them were brothers, she said. Over 30 girls were allegedly raped at the shelter home run by Brajesh Thakur, the chief of a state-funded NGO.

82 ex-MPs may face action for not vacating Lutyens' bungalows

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 82 former MPs are yet to vacate their official bungalows in Lutyens' Delhi despite a stern warning by a Lok Sabha panel. The authorities are planning to take action against these ex-MPs under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act for speedy eviction.

According to officials of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, most of the ex-MPs have vacated their official bungalows. But, 82 former MPs are, however, yet to vacate their bungalows as per a recent list.

Sources in the Lok Sabha Housing Committee said this is not acceptable and that strict action will be taken against such former MPs.

"It was the panel's decision to ask ex-MPs to vacate their official residences. Now, if some of them have not done so, it is not acceptable. Strict action



will be taken against them," the sources in the committee said.

Notices are being sent to these former Members of Parliament, asking them to vacate their bungalows which had been allotted to them in 2014, another source said.

"If they (ex-MPs) do not give up official bungalows, action may be taken against them under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act.

"Once the eviction order is passed, power, water and cooking gas connections will be snapped," the source added.

Cong aims for strong poll pact in Haryana, J'khand

Party all set to target BJP Govts on 'excesses' in MVA rollout

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After resolving the seat-sharing arrangements with Sharad Pawar-led NCP in Maharashtra, the Congress is now making efforts to stitch a strong alliance in the poll-bound States of Haryana and Jharkhand.

At the backdrop of prevailing economic slowdown, unemployment and job losses, the Sonia Gandhi-led Congress is planning to announce similar sops which helped them to bounce back in State Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh last December when Rahul Gandhi was head of the party.

AICC sources said the party will also target the BJP Government both at Centre



and States over excesses committed in the implementation of the amended in the amended Motor Vehicles Act.

Sonia has formed a six-member screening committee for Haryana Assembly elections nominating senior party leader Madhusudan Mishra as its chairman. The party has begun talks for a grand Opposition alliance with JMM, RJD, JVM and Left parties in Jharkhand.

Other members of the panel appointed by Sonia Gandhi for Haryana include Haryana Congress chief Kumari Selja, Congress legislative party leader and former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and AICC general secretary State in-charge Ghulam Nabi Azad. Congress leaders Deepa Dasmuni and

Devender Yadav have also been made members of the panel. Hooda is also the chairperson of election management committee.

Launching the elections campaign on Sunday Hooda said the days of the "anti-people" BJP Government in Haryana are numbered and people have made up their mind to throw them out of power in the upcoming Assembly polls. He said the "false promises" made by the BJP have been exposed before the people.

Giving an example where a hefty challan was imposed on a motorcyclist in Gurgaon for violations, Hooda said under the amended act hefty challans were being issued, which were burdening the common people. "A bike is worth ₹15,000, but a challan is issued for ₹15,000," he said.

In the 2014 Assembly polls, the BJP won 47 seats and went on to form its Government. The Congress could only win 15 seats in the 90-member Assembly.

12 drown as tourist boat capsizes in Andhra



NDRF and navy personnel carry out a rescue operation after a tourist boat capsized in the swollen Godavari river in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday

PTI ■ AMARAVATI (AP)

At least 12 people drowned and 17 others were rescued after a boat carrying them to a tourist spot capsized in the swollen River Godavari in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday, police said.

The boat was carrying around 60 people, including nine-member crew, and a search was on for others.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the incident. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed shock over the grave tragedy and announced an ex-gratia relief of ₹10 lakh each to the kin of the deceased.

The boat, belonging to a private operator, was on its way to the picturesque Papikondalu tourist spot in the middle of the river when it met with the accident, apparently on colliding with a large rock formation, at Kachchururu in East Godavari District, about 200 km from here, they said.

Twelve bodies have been retrieved so far while 17 people were rescued by the locals, police said adding two teams of National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force, with a total of 140 personnel, have been sent to the accident spot for rescue operations.

A special helicopter has been pressed into service from Rajamahendravaram for the rescue operation.

Jaga to undergo skull transplant surgery

Kalia's condition still not normal



PNS ■ CUTTACK

One of the separated conjoined twins, Jaga would undergo a skull transplant surgery during the present course of his treatment, informed Law Minister Pratap Jena here on Sunday.

A skull would be brought from a bone bank to conduct the transplant on Jaga, he said after meeting both Jaga and Kalia at the SCB Medical College Hospital.

The Government would provide all assistance for the skull transplant surgery, he said.

While Jaga is doing well, his sibling Kalia's health condition is yet to be normal. However, efforts are on to give them the best treatment for improving their conditions,

Jena told reporters.

When asked about a proposal on enrolling Jaga at a school for studies, he said, "Jaga does not have a proper skull on his head. He is wearing a helmet for protection. After successfully undergoing a skull transplant surgery, he can go to school."

"However, we will make arrangement for his education at the hospital till the next surgery," he added.

Notably, Jaga and Kalia are now undergoing treatment at the SCB Hospital since September 7 after they came from New Delhi. Two years ago, the two had left the State as conjoined twins and are back as separate children after undergoing a series of complicated surgeries at the AIIMS, New Delhi.

Mangu Mutt razing halted as Punjab CM tweets to Naveen

Only mutt's ugly commercial structures to be removed: Pinaki

PNS ■ PURI

Demolition of the 16th-century Mangu Mutt of Sikhs situated close to the Jagannath Temple here has been put on hold after a tweet from Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh to his Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik.

After demolitions of three major monasteries near the temple, the administration's next target was the Mangu Mutt as it is located in the 75-meter of the temple's boundary.

Ferro Scrap engineer thrashed to death

Accused contractual worker held by police

PNS ■ ROURKELA

A contract labour of the Ferro Scrap Nigam Ltd (FSNL), Rourkela allegedly killed an assistant engineer of the company, which operates on the premises of Rourkela Steel Plant.

The deceased G Ganesh Kumar was working as an executive at the Ferro Scrap Nigam Limited.

In a reply to the Punjab CM's tweet, Puri MP Pinaki Misra has assured safety of the mutt and its adjoining rooms. Misra in a tweet said he wants to assure Capt Singh that the sacred mutt will not be touched.

Only the ugly commercial structures (as seen in media photo) are to be removed, tweeted Misra.

Meanwhile on Sunday, most of the shops and other business establishments running in the Mangu Mutt vacated after a notice from the administration. A wide space near the Jagannath Temple's Lions Gate would be available if these commercial structures are cleared from the area.

Reports said Kumar had asked the contractual worker Anil Loahara (30) of Kansara village in Sundargarh district to report for work in the forenoon. Though Anil came to work, he was upset with Kumar for asking him to report on a holiday.

While the work was going on at the plant, Anil suddenly hit Kumar with an iron rod on his head, which critically injured the latter, who was rushed to the Ispat General Hospital, but doctors declared him dead.

Getting information, the Tangarapali police reached the spot and arrested the accused.

IN BALANGIR Biker fined ₹22,500 for traffic violation

PNS ■ BALANGIR

A few days after the State Government announced a relaxation in the implementation of the amended Motor Vehicles Act for three months, a motorcyclist was fined a hefty ₹22,500 for traffic rule violation in Balangir district on Sunday.

Sushant Kumar Meher, who was riding the bike, was intercepted at Kuruli Chhak on the outskirts of Kantabanji town by a joint team of Regional Transport Office (RTO) and police personnel.

Meher allegedly argued with the officials over the traffic checking. Later, he was handed a challan for ₹22,500 over multiple traffic rule violations.

The RTO issued him challans of ₹500 for general offence, ₹2,000 for disobeying orders of the enforcement agency, ₹5,000 for failing to produce a valid driving licence, ₹5,000 for rash driving and ₹10,000 for drunk driving.

Later, the Kantabanji police detained Meher and seized his bike as he refused to pay the



Later, the Kantabanji police detained Meher and seized his bike as he refused to pay the fine.

Notably, on September 9, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had announced a relaxation on traffic enforcement for a period of three months following public outrage over heavy fine under the newly amended Motor Vehicles Act.

ECOREA HOLDS ENGINEERS' DAY

Railway engineers kingpin of system: GM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The East Coast Railway Engineers Association (ECOREA) celebrated the Engineers' Day at Rail Vihar here on Sunday.

A symposium on "Relevance of targets for Railway Engineers" was organised after tributes were given to Sir M Visvesvaraya.

ECOREA general secretary Bishnu Prasad Dash brought to the notice of guest about various problems being faced by railway engineers to achieve targets. He said filling of vacant posts and supply of sufficient materials are a basic need for

starting the targeted work. ECoREA president Dr Robin Mohanty said three 'Ms' of manpower, material and motivation are required for achieving target.

Principal Chief Engineer NS Vikey advised them not to do any compromise with safety when achieving the target. There should be 100 per cent compliance in respect of target of quality, he said.

Chief Administrative Officer BK Gupta advised to emulate great qualities of Visvesvaraya.

Principa Chief Signal and Telecom Engineer S Manga V said all engineers should have



disciplines in three aspects, action, wisdom and spirituality, to achieve target.

ECOR General Manager Vidya Bhushan said railway engineers are the kingpin of the

system. Making a comparison with Defence personnel, he said railway engineers put all efforts for safe movement of passengers.

Agreeing to the engineers' demand for Group-B status, he said a decision in that regard can be taken by the Union Cabinet only.

In the second session, the 11th annual general meeting of the ECoREA was held. While Mohanty and Dash were elected as president and general secretary, respectively, Sudhanshu Bhushan Satpathy and Dr IA Khan were elected as finance secretary and additional general secretary in that order.

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A meeting of the Mahabodhi Society of India national-level executive was held in Kolkata recently. In the meeting, the society's elections were held for next three years.

The society's Odisha State senior member Aryakumar Jnanendra was elected as vice-president. Jnanendra has been dedicatedly working for the Odisha chapter of the society for over last four decades.

He is also involved in



Jnanendra has been dedicatedly working for the Odisha chapter of the society for over last four decades

the religious and cultural activities of organisations like Arya Samaj, Ditya Jiban Singha, Puri Sri Gobardhan Pitha, Sishu Ananta Ashram of Baba Balia and Satya Seva Ashram of Baba Baikunthath.

Coalmine shutdowns incur huge losses

State, Centre, MCL revenue hit

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Repeated unrest and stoppage of coal production is likely to cost State and Central exchequers by ₹2,000 crore per annum.

Due to several shutdowns and repeated obstacles created in progress in the coalfields of the Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), loss to the Government exchequer is rising every year in a whopping manner, which has caused serious concern for the both State and Union Governments.

Every year the Government exchequer was losing more than ₹1,000 crore and it is on a whopping rise, officials say.

While in 2017-18 loss to the Government exchequer was ₹1,102 crore, it went up to ₹1,495 crore in 2018-19.

And in 2019-20 up to August 31, loss is pegged at ₹804 crore in just five months and this will go up to more than ₹2,000 crore, officials

apprehend. The situation is worsening in the coalfields area and conflict resolution is just not taking place for which the MCL is suffering huge losses along with the State and Union Governments, sources said.

While target is set to produce 160 Million Tons of coal in 2019-20, the MCL is not able to achieve the target which is a loss of revenue to the State and the Centre.

Union Secretary Coal Sumant Chaudhuri and Coal India Chairman AK Jha, who visited the State, brought the issue before the State Government in this regard.

Sorting out the pending issues in a time bound manner is required and unless a proactive approach is taken by the State administration, the situation is likely to worsen in coming days, apprehend MCL officials.

Stoppage of work is faced in Talcher and IB Valley Coalfields and the problem is more acute in Talcher Coalfields Areas, admit senior officials.

With less production of

coal, power generation is hampered as thermal power stations are not getting coal as per their requirement.

Sources said due to less production of coal in 2018-19 there was loss of over 36,000 million units of power and it continues in 2019-20 and by August 31, more than 19,000 million units of power generation has been lost.

Shutdowns and stoppage of work are being done due to protest of villagers in the coal block areas. The loss comes in the shape of coal royalty, State Goods and Service Tax (GST) and less flow of District Mineral Funds.

Similarly, the Central exchequer is losing due to loss of Central GST, Integrated GST and cess on coal.

Apart from that power generation loss is also harming the industries and situation is serious, feel officials.

In this backdrop, conflict resolution in a time bound manner is the only solution and that has to be taken up by the highest authority in the State, feel officials working in coalfields areas.

20 yrs on, woman fights for justice against father's killers

Now on dharna in Delhi, appeals for PM's intervention

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Seeking justice, a woman of Odisha has been struggling for 20 years to see that her father's killers are duly punished.

Being disappointed by the existing system of law and 'lengthy' administrative procedures, Rukhsana Bano of minority community of Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district is on a dharna in Delhi demanding punishment for her father Abdul Habib's assassins.

During the last eight months, Rukhsana along with her mother has been staging dharnas at various places in the national capital and appealing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking action against accused persons involved in her father's murder.

Rukhsana, who has used Facebook and YouTube massively to make public her



"As we did not get justice in Odisha, we have come to Delhi. After sitting on dharna for 62 days, a CBI probe was ordered into the case. But Bhawanipatna SP closed the case and forwarded the copy to the CBI. With no option left, we have come here to seek justice," said Rukhsana

protests, was found roaming recently in Noida area with a poster written in Hindi reading '20 saal se laga rahe hain nyay ki guhar! kab milega mere papa ke hatyare ko saja?'

According to reports, Rukhsana's parents had a love marriage. However, her father died in 1999 while she and her two other siblings were under three years' of age.

Rukhsana alleged that her father was poisoned to death by his siblings over property dispute. When her mother protested seeking justice, she received murder threat from

the accused persons. "Though we have been leading a very miserable life, we have insisted for justice for the last 20 years," said Rukhsana.

She said though she approached the district Collector, SP, DSP and IIC many times, her demand has still remained unmet. On directive by the Collector, the SP reopened the case and booked the accused persons under sections 302, 506 and 34 of IPC, but nobody was called for interrogation in the case.

"As we did not get justice in Odisha, we have come to Delhi. After sitting on dharna for 62 days, a CBI probe was ordered into the case. But Bhawanipatna SP closed the case and forwarded the copy to the CBI. With no option left, we have come here to seek justice," said Rukhsana

Meanwhile, various voluntary organisations have extended helping hands to provide them food and other facilities during their stay in Delhi. Rukhsana and her mother still hope that they would get justice one day.

CAG report: Depts asked to comply by Sept 30

House panel concerned over lapses

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the State Legislative Assembly has expressed displeasure over lapse on the part of the officials to submit compliance on the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in a time bound manner.

The PAC Chairman has expressed his displeasure and directed the Department of Finance to ensure submission of compliance on the pending paras and Action Taken Notes (ATNs) by September 30, failing which the Secretary of the department shall have to personally appear before the PAC to explain the matter, informed Finance Secretary Ashok Kumar Meena.

Meena, while pointing out about the disapproval of PAC over inaction, said that despite issue of definite guidelines and detailed instructions to all the departments and

repeated discussions with Secretaries and Financial Advisors of the departments for observing timely submission of compliance on the report of the CAG of India and Action-Taken Notes (ATN) on the recommendations of the PAC, improvement is not happening.

Officials say that as per the recommendations of the High Power Committee constituted by the CAG, the ATN to the Audit Reports are required to be submitted to the PAC within a period of three months from the date of presentation of the CAG Report in the State Assembly.

Similarly, as per the Rules of State Assembly, the departments are to provide four months to the Assembly and ATNs on the recommendations of the PAC are to be presented in time.

Delay in submission of compliance and ATN on the recommendation of the PAC defeats the very

purpose of taking remedial measures by the departments.

The Chairman of PAC during recently held meeting of PAC has adversely commented upon the delay in submission of compliance to the CAG Audit Reports laid during 2018-19.

He also expressed his displeasure over delay in presentation of ATNs on recommendations of PAC on 16th Report of 25th Report of the 15th Assembly period beyond the stipulated time.

Even some of the departments have not furnished compliance till date. So, senior officials of all the departments have been urged to submit compliance on the Reports of the CAG of India as well ATNs on PAC recommendations within the stipulated time.

Sources said the defaulting departments have been urged to present the Report of Compliance to the PAC by September 30 without fail.

XIMB meet on 'innovating business' ends

Key persons of various companies attend

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar's (XIMB) three-day Business Excellence Summit on the 'Innovating Business' concluded on Sunday with a discussion "Is Disruptive Innovation the only way to create value?"

UBER Manual Fraud Investigations Community Operations Manager and Head Stalin Mohapatra, Reliance Retail Executive Vice President and COO Kamadeba Mohanty and OYO Rooms VP Harshit Vyas served as panelists for the session.

Mohapatra, the first speaker, discussed the various types of innovation and focused on how revolutionary innovation transitions into disruptive innovation and how it accentuates the "High-5" policy responsible for Disruptive Innovation.



Reliance Retail's Mohanty spoke about the significance of creating businesses and retail stores that are closer to the hearts of customers. He gave us insights on how process innovation has brought about a change in the retail industry.

The final speaker, Vyas, enunciated the challenges faced during scaling up a business and mentioned how a fast-moving scaling-up process poses hurdles in maintaining sustainability and delivery

of good quality services. He concluded by saying, "To disrupt, you need to have an open culture as well as the will to perform in a highly growth-driven organization".

In a leadership talk, Thicksake factory co-founder Yeshwanth Nag narrated an engrossing tale of his journey from an employee to an entrepreneur and emphasised the importance of having an entrepreneurial mindset irrespective of one's profession. The next theme

was "How to tame Automation Sprawl?" in which DXC Technologies Workplace and Mobility Product Engineering and Digital Transformation Centers Director Sabyasachi Das mentioned "No tool is perfect. No tool will ever be. But it is this gap that leads to automation sprawl." The summit concluded with a closing address by XIMB Deputy Registrar V Arockia Das and a vote of thanks by General Secretary Anjan Mohanty.

Jumbo 'Chandan' dies at Nandankanan



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Male elephant 'Chandan', aged about 10 years, died at the Nandankanan Zoological Park here in the wee hours of Sunday.

The elephant had suddenly become ill on Friday with reduced appetite, nasal dis-

charge and swollen glands on both sides of his face. Its treatment was undertaken by the zoo's veterinarians as per the advice of the Centre for Wildlife Health, OUAT, zoo sources said.

However, the pachyderm died at 3.40 am on Sunday reportedly due to a herpes

virus infection. The exact cause of the death would be ascertained after postmortem, the sources said.

The zoo authorities are taking steps to prevent spreading of the virus and provide advance preventive treatment to remaining elephants the sources added.

Odisha Tourism Conclave to be held on Sept 18

New suggestions to be made to Govt, says HRAO

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Odisha (HRAO) will organise its fourth Odisha Tourism Conclave here on September 18 with theme "Tourism to be the driving force of State economy". Like earlier years, the HRAO will suggest various promotional initiatives and action plans to the State Government for development of the tourism sector.

Experts from the field of travel trade, media, performing arts, bloggers, content writers, adventure sports, airlines, digital marketing and branding, food connoisseur, film makers, eco-tourism lovers, academicians, bureaucrats, MPs, Central and State Ministers will participate.



Union Minister of Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel, Union Minister Petroleum and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan and State Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi have been

invited to the event. While Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal would inaugurate the conclave, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will grace the valedictory ceremony.

Presentations on potentials of the Odisha Tourism would be made by Tourism Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev, F and E Secretary Dr Mona Sharma and Handlooms,

Textiles and Handicraft Secretary Shubha Sarma.

Rajya Sabha member Dr Sasmit Patra will chair a panel discussion on "Branding Odisha" (Unique Selling Propositions (USP) & Unique Value Proposition (UVP)). The other panel discussions would be on "Globalising Odisha's Unique Heritage, Culture and Cuisine", "Connecting Odisha Globally", "Enhancing the role of Digital Media in Tourism Promotion" and "Augmenting Odisha's Hospitality and Tourism sector".

The conclave would be an immense congregation to give a 360 degree boost to the growth of tourism sector in the State, attract investments to the sector, rediscover the potential issues relating to tourism and hospitality sector and prepare a roadmap with specific recommendations from the stakeholders, informed HRAO and IATO Easter Region chairman JK Mohanty.

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Hundreds of deer held captive in Aarti Steel campus

- Many perished failing to cope with hazardous environment
- Also many killed for company officials' feast
- Forest Dept nonchalant in setting antelopes free

DINESH DAS ■ ATHAGARH

Hundreds of deer spend hard times in the campus of Aarti Steel and Power at Ghanatikhal here for over a decade without any care by the local forest officials.

When the company erected its boundaries to develop the

production units, allegedly it encroached multiple acres of forest lands adjacent to its purchased land and leased land, where hundreds of deer used to live.

Even though in the year 2003, the then DFO of Athagarh tried to vacate the animals from the campus of

Aarti Steels, he failed to make it fully. Later, whoever DFO was posted here couldn't be successful in evacuating the deer who were forced to remain silent on the matter on direction of the political and bureaucratic powers. At present, the forest officers engaged here don't heed to any plea to free these wild animals from the company campus.

Asked, a high profile forest officer here who has very good rapport with top influential bureaucrats and media persons in Bhubaneswar, said that the deer are safe inside the campus of Aarti Steels who are

free from stray dogs' attack and road accidents. That's why the department is reluctant to free the deer.

Some locals alleged that several deer are being killed in regular intervals and flesh cooked in the feasts arranged by top class company employees here.

Environmentalist Manoranjan Mohapatra of Athagarh, expressing concern over the matter, said the lives of these animals are at stake.

They are confined to limited boundaries and don't get adequate food stuff and drinking water facilities. This apart,

as the company uses high level blast furnace emanating high temperature and sound around its area, these innocent bonded animals are severely victimised.

Former Athagarh Bar Association president Jagadanand Tripathi said it is cruelty to animals to curb their movement.

Asked, Arati Steels PRO Sarat Nishank said the company authorities have already informed forest officials regarding the presence of a huge number of deer in the plant campus and urged them several times to evacuate them but in

vain.

Since the company is situated in about eight hundred acres of land adjacent to the Subashi Reserve Forest, it has erected high boundary walls where hundreds of wild animals including the elephant population have lost their regular passage for which most of the time, the elephants stray into human habitation and farmlands leading to man-elephant conflict.

Animal lovers have demanded immediate release of the deer from the boundary walls of the Aarti Steels by the Government.

Another Ganjam criminal nabbed after encounter

2 cops hurt; mouser, cartridges, bike seized

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

Another hardcore criminal, Pramod Barik (29), was injured in a gunfight with police near Palur in Ganjam district in the wee hours of Sunday.

Acting on a tipoff, a police team tried to intercept Pramod on the Krishana Prasad road in Palur. But spotting the cops, he opened fire at them to



escape.

In an exchange of fire that followed, Pramod sustained bullet injuries in his right leg and fell down. Subsequently, he was nabbed. Two police Constables also received minor injuries in the cross-firing.

Pramod was initially admitted to a hospital in Chhatrapur and later shifted to the MKCG Medical College Hospital here.

Police seized a motorcycle, a mouser and two live cartridges from his possession. He

is allegedly involved in multiple offences, including the murder of one Sudhir Padhi in the district.

This was the second encounter in the district within a span of 24 hours. Earlier in the wee hours of Saturday, antisocial Sugasanta Behera had also been nabbed in an encounter with police.

Notably, the Brahmapur and Ganjam police have followed a bullet-for-bullet policy and carried out more than 71 encounters in the last three years to tame the gangsters, who have spread a reign of terror with the barrel of the gun.

₹60L embezzled from Angul DM's account

PNS ■ ANGUL

A former HDFC Bank branch manager was arrested on Saturday on the charges of fraudulently withdrawing ₹60 lakh from the account of the Angul district Collector.

While the arrestee Shakti Bedanta Das was the Angul HDFC Bank manager, he fraudulently withdrew the money by forging the signatures of the Collector in 2017-18.

The account was opened in the name of the Collector and the amount (CSR fund) was deposited in 2015 for various developmental projects of

HDFC Bank ex-manager held

National Highway and State Highways.

It is alleged that Das withdrew the money through eight cheques on different occasions.

The fraud came to light after the Angul Assistant Collector lodged a formal police complaint in connection with the incident on September 11, 2019.

No cheque book was issued and the money was fraudulently withdrawn in cash through forged signatures of the former Collector and cheques.

After a complaint was lodged, the bank refunded the entire money on Saturday, said a senior Government official.

Man dead at M'giri Anganwadi Centre

BSF jawans took him with them, allege kin

PNS ■ MALKANGIRI

A person's body with injury marks was found in a kitchen of an Anganwadi Centre at Jantabai village in the Chittrakonda area of Malkangiri district on Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Raju Hantal of Ranganiguda village under Dhuliput panchayat of the district.

On Sunday, locals spotted the body in the kitchen of the Anganwadi Centre and informed Raju's family members about it.

The Papermetla police recovered the body and started an investigation into the incident.

As per the family members of Hantal, he had on September 13 gone to a weekly market at Jantabai with his two daughters.

Some BSF personnel met him at the market and took him along with them, following which he didn't return home, Raju's kin alleged.

Job aspirants duped of ₹40L in Keonjhar

Police complaint filed

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

Over a hundred job aspirants, including women, have been cheated of more than ₹40 lakh by an institute in Keonjhar district, according to a complaint filed at the Keonjhar Town police station on Sunday.

As per the complaint, the institute, namely OEAT, initially trained the job aspirants without any charges. Later, it took ₹40,000 each from them with a promise to provide them computer trainer jobs at different schools. Though more than a year has passed, they are yet to be employed anywhere.

Frustrated over the delay in



getting jobs, the aspirants asked the institute's MD Amulya Mohanty to return their money, but he declined the request. Following this, the job aspirants lodged the complaint against the MD, the institute's director Malay Patra and accountant Jagadananda Patra. They also

caught hold of two staffs of the institute and handed over them to police.

"The institute authorities had assured us to return the money in case no job was provided. But when we asked for the money, the authorities refused to return the amount," said one of the complainants.

"We had gathered ₹40,000 after many difficulties. Now, we want the money back as the institute has not provided jobs to us," said another complainant. Police said an investigation would be initiated into the matter.

Boy electrocuted by electric trap laid by poachers in Ganjam

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

A 17-year-old boy was killed when he came in contact with an electric trap, which was laid by poachers for hunting boars at Chunapali village under Bhanjanagar block in Ganjam district on Sunday.

As Shakti Prasad sustained critical injuries after coming in contact with the charged trap in a forest near the village, he was rescued by his family members and rushed to the Bhanjanagar Sub-Divisional Hospital, but doctor declared him brought dead.

Police sent the body for postmortem and started an investigation into the incident to ascertain who had installed the trap. A pall of gloom descended on the village following the death of the boy.

J'suguda bank heist: Accused nabbed from Bihar

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

The Belpahar police achieved a breakthrough in the September 4 Axis Bank robbery case, in which Rs 11 lakhs was looted, by arresting an accused, Niraj Thakur (38), from Repura village in Muzaffarpur district in Bihar.

Six robbers had entered the Belpahar branch of Axis Bank of Belpahar branch and looted the money at gunpoint.

Before fleeing from the spot, they had locked all the customers inside the bank. Following which the Belpahar police had launched a probe based on the CCTV footage.

Jharsuguda Superintendent of Police Aswini Kumar Mohanty said, "We had minutely observed the CCTV footage and found that one of the accused had used the ATM before committing the crime, by which we were able to gather information of the accused and able to track them to Muzaffarpur district of Bihar."

"Our team with the assistance of the Muzaffarpur counterparts was able to nab one of the accused. But no cash has been recovered from him but we have identified the whole gang and are quite hopeful that all the six accused involved in this case would be nabbed very soon," he said.

RoB at PPL gate at Paradip demanded

Locals write to PM, Railway Min

PNS ■ PARADIP

Public representatives of six Paradip area have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Piyush Goyal demanding construction of a railway over-bridge (RoB) at the Paradip Phosphates Limited (PPL) plant gate here.

In the letter, the represen-

tatives pointed out that the PPL was established in 1986; and there is a school, a post office, a bank, a hospital, a temple, a market complex and a housing colony in the PPL campus.

But the railway line going towards the PPL plant from the main entrance gate becomes obstacle for people and students everyday as they have to wait for hours as the train takes a long time to go to the plant site, the letter stated.

It also stated that students fail to go school and senior citizens, pregnant women and patients suffer while going to the PPL hospital.

'Migrant kids are most invisible & exploited'

Meet held in Balangir

SUDHIR MISHRA ■ BALANGIR

A regional-level consultation on protection of rights of migrant children was held here on Friday by the Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights and Aide et Action, Bhubaneswar.

It was attended by officials of various departments like Labour, Child Development and Education, CDPOs, members of Child Welfare Committee ChildLine, NGOs and civil society organisations from Balangir, Nuapada, Kalhandi and Bargarh districts were present.

According to the Census 2011 reports, there are 453.6 millions migrants in India out of which 46.3 millions are migrating for work and employment. Similarly, 14.6

million people of Odisha are migrants.

As per the UNESCO, children constitute 15 per cent of the total migrants in India. Child migration, or children in migration is the movement of children within or outside of the State boundaries, with or without parents or legal guardians.

The children, who largely migrate seasonally with their parents to the inter-State and intra-State destination, are deprived of basic education, child care, immunisation, health nutrition and protection from abuse and child labour. Brick kilns are one such informal sector where infant to adolescent live for 7-8 months as invisible entity and subjected to exclusion, exploitation and abuse.

A study conducted by the International Labour Organisation and Aide et Action in 100 villages of Kalahandi, Balangir and



Nuapada districts during 2011-12 revealed that among the brick kiln migrant workers families, children constitute 35 per cent (children below 6 years 13 per cent and 6-14 age group 22 per cent) of the total migrant population.

The migration data from the Labour Department suggest that close to 1,40,000 people are registered under the ISMWA and majority of the workers are from western Odisha. The labour registration data at the districts doesn't provide

any gender and age specific information about the migrants. Therefore, children always remain invisible and unreachable. Among others, Chairperson, State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) Sandhyabati Pradhan, district Collector, Balangir, Arindam Dakua, Director-Migration and Education, Aide et Action, South Asia, Ummi Daniel and Member, SCPCR Harihar Naik deliberated on the issue.

INBRIEF

MCL EMPLOYEE KILLED IN ROAD MISHAP AT HIRAKUD

Sambalpur: A person was killed on the spot when a car collided with his scooter near the Hirakud railway station on Sunday. The deceased was identified as Rajendra Mishra, an employee of the Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) at Hirakud. Mishra was on his way to office when the tragedy took place. The car driver fled from the spot. Police recovered the body and started a manhunt to nab the driver.

BOAT CAPSIZES IN MALKANGIRI; 1 DEAD, 3 MISSING

Malkangiri: A boat capsized in the Balimela reservoir near Ambulibedha under Chittrakonda panchayat of Malkangiri district leading to death of a woman while three other persons went missing on Saturday afternoon. The four members of a family, including a woman and an eight-month-old girl, were returning home by the boat, which overturned due to high tides. While the woman's body was recovered by locals on Sunday, the three other persons were yet to be traced. Till last reports came in, district officials were yet to reach the spot.

WOMAN DIES OF SNAKEBITE IN BHADRAK

Bhadrak: A 50-year-old woman died after being bitten by a snake at Korkara village under the Bhadrak Rural police limits on Sunday morning. Sukanti Pethala was bit by the serpent when she had gone to the backyard of her house.

LOK ADALAT IN GANJAM SETTLES 15 CASES

Brahmapur: A Rastriya Lok Adalat was held at the Chhatrapur court under the aegis of the State Legal Service Authority in the district on Saturday with 15 different cases being settled and Rs 14, 43, 500 being awarded. Among this, two motor vehicle accident cases were solved and Rs 8, 75,000 was awarded to the victims. Besides, two bank cases were settled with Rs 5, 25,500 being disbursed. Additional District Judge Sikharani Rath, Sub-Judge Swayamprabha Acharya, SDJM Santosh Kumar Panigrahi, Daminath Sahu, K Sivaram Reddy, Braja Mohan Acharya, P Dhama Reddy, Suresh Senapati and Ram Krushna Dash were present.

PADMINI MISHRA'S 'MAUNAMATI' RELEASED IN B'PUR



Brahmapur: The Kalinga Sahitya Samaj celebrated its 49th annual day here on Sunday under the chairmanship of its president Amiyabala Patnaik. Khallikote Autonomous College Principal Prof Uttama Jena attended it as chief guest. On the occasion, a poetry book 'Maunamati' written by poetess Padmini Mishra was unveiled and eminent poets and writers were felicitated by Prof Jena. Among others, Samaj secretary Sidhartha Sankar Padhi and Dr Sarat Kumar Jena were present.

CPWD OFFICERS' WIVES' ASSN GIVES RELIEF MATERIALS

Bhubaneswar: A relief distribution camp was organised by the CPWD Officers' Wives' Association recently at Nilakantheswara village in Gop block in Puri district which was badly affected by the Cyclone Fani. The ladies team distributed chuda, chatua, biscuits, sugar, amul and dal, dry food items to the affected villagers. Among others, association members Pinki Mishra, Jyotimayee Pradhan, Susmita Mishra, Manisha Kumar and Mukta Sahoo were present. The association organises social welfare camps like health check up camps and study materials, clothes distribution camps among the children and labourers who work at CPWD's various project sites at regular interval.

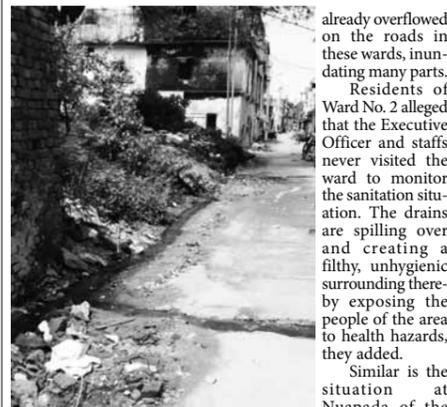
ONAM CELEBRATED AT DHAMRA PORT



Dhamra: Onam, the annual harvest festival of Malayalis, was celebrated at the Adani Dhamra Port Community hall with pomp and show on Sunday. Joining the celebration, Chief Executive Officer Subrat Tripathy spoke about the spirit of unity and oneness symbolised by Onam and referred to the country-wide celebrations of harvest festivals in India. On the occasion, people decorated their houses with pookalams and flowers, wore new clothes, organised cultural programmes and enjoy the special feast Onam Sandhya.

Choked drains lead to waterlogging in Tarbha

Residents in miserable condition



PNS ■ SONEPUR:

Absence of proper drainage system in several wards of the Tarbha NAC in Subarnapur district has made life miserable for the residents.

The rainyseason has posed a challenge for the residents of Ward No. 2, Meherpada and Nuapada in Tarbha town. With incessant rainfall in the last three days, drain water has

already overflowed on the roads in these wards, inundating many parts.

Residents of Ward No. 2 alleged that the Executive Officer and staffs never visited the ward to monitor the sanitation situation. The drains are spilling over and creating a filthy, unhygienic surrounding thereby exposing the people of the area to health hazards, they added.

Similar is the situation at Nuapada of the

NAC where the roads are filled with drain water. Locals said they have been demanding a proper drain in their locality but the authorities have been unresponsive. The road connecting to Meherpada to Nuapada is waterlogged owing to absence of a proper drainage system.

Locals demanded that the administration take immediate steps to resolve the problem.

Youth empowerment fest in B'pur today

Engineering youths from across country to participate

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

An event named "Youth Empowerment Festival" will be organised at the National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST) at Pallur Hills in Berhampur on Monday.

The festival to be organised by the Indian Innovation Entrepreneurship Community (IIEC) will witness participation of Engineering youth from Odisha, Delhi and Jaipur. About 400 youths from Odisha will join.

It will pave way for social empowerment with digital technology. The event is free of cost for all.

India is going to be home to the largest youth population



by 2020 and for a youth-driven country, the empowerment of population is of primary importance.

To empower youth with digital education and make them self-reliant, noted technology mentor and philanthropist Vimal Daaga will make motivational speech.

The festival will also launch

"Jazbaa" which will lead towards resolving social issues with technology and aim to train, guide and motivate

youth, especially students who are below the average and response of society remains of disapproval towards them.

BJD membership drive held at Papadahandi

PNS ■ NABARANGPUR

Nearly 1,500 new party members were felicitated on the occasion

A block-level Nuankhai Bhetghat and a Biju Janata Dal membership drive meeting were held at Papadahandi in Na barangpur district on Thursday. Dabugam MLA Monohar Randhari joined as chief guest.

Randhari gave a call to strengthen the party's organizational network in the tribals-dominated district. He urged the party members to collect four members from each ward.

He further said, "Our party president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has announced a membership drive and to collect primary members for our party. The membership drive

was launched on September 2 and will continue till October-end."

Nearly 1,500 new party members were felicitated on the occasion.

Among others, Chairperson of Tribal Development Council, Motiram Nayak, ZP President Bhagabati Bhadra, district youth BJD president Siva Bissoyi, vice-chairman of Papadahandi block Trinath Pradhan, Swadhin Patnaik and Sonamath Bissoyi attended the programmes.

Highway dacoit gang busted; 5 held

Cash, mobile seized

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

Police on Sunday busted an inter-district highway dacoit gang with arrest of five persons in connection with several loot cases in western Odisha districts.

The arrestees were identified as Suresh Dehury (32), Ramakanta Badi (27), Rasananda Kumbhar (30), Bablu Behera (40) and Sailendra Kumar Behera (42).

The accused were arrested on the basis of the complaint lodged by one Kartika Sikha, a field officer in a non-banking financial company (NBFC) Bharat Financial Inclusion.

Notably, on September 11, Kartika along with his other staffs were returning home after collecting money from

Badhol and Bharatpur villages when some bike-borne miscreants intercepted them and decamped with Rs 24,517 in cash, a tablet, and a mobile phone at gunpoint.

Later, Kartika had lodged an FIR in this regard. Based on the complaint, a joint team of special squad and Charnal police was formed and a probe was initiated. During the investigation, police apprehended five persons.

The cops also seized Rs 11,000 in cash, a tablet, a mobile phone and a motorcycle from them.

During interrogation, the accused confessed to their involvement in the loot case and in a number of similar cases in Subarnapur, Balangir and other districts.

A case has been registered against the accused persons under Sections 457 and 380 of IPC, police said.

Kalinganagar Rotary Club installation day held

PNS ■ JAJPUR ROAD

The Kalinganagar Rotary Club's 6th installation day was held here recently. Rotary past district governor Sibabrata Dash inaugurated the programme in the presence of IPDG Bhawani Prasad Choudhuri and Akshaya Kumar Pati.

Loknath Rout and Sibananda Nayak were elected as president and secretary, respectively, for 2019-20. Seven new members, Amarnath Dhar, Nihar Ranjan Nanda, Sudhir Kumar Sahoo, Pravudutta Mohanty, Debakalyan Das, Pradyumna Kumar Mishra and Manoj Kumar Barik, were inducted into the club.

Dash advised the new members to work dedicatedly to help people under the Rotary banner. Secretary Nayak read out the action plan report and informed about the construction of a Rotary Bhawan at Jajpur Road.



Executive secretary Sudeep Kumar Mishra was felicitated for his outstanding services and receipt of Platinum Medal at Bhubaneswar recently.

POOR STATE OF HEALTHCARE IN KEONJHAR

Patient administered IV fluid near drug shop

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

In another such instance of callous healthcare services, a patient was reportedly administered intravenous (IV) fluid at the verandah of a shop at Telkoi Bazaar in Keonjhar district, according to information received late.

Reports said family members of one Naba Munda of Kamalanga village had brought him to the Government hospital at Telkoi on September 12 after he complained of illness. However, his treatment at the hospital was not possible as doctors were allegedly absent. Soon later, owner of a medicine store at Telkoi administered him IV fluid and made him lie on a bench in front of the shop. The treatment, without consultation with any doctor, continued for hours.

On being questioned by journalists regarding such a practice, the shopkeeper held out threat to them. Locals alleged that many patients of



the area are undergoing similar plight due to lack of proper health services. However, Chief District

Medical Officer Gour Prasad Mishra said the patient had not gone to the hospital. "A preliminary probe has revealed

that the person hadn't gone to the hospital that day as his name was not mentioned in the register.

However, we are making continuing the investigation and necessary action will be taken, if required," he added.

Atal Centres to be set up in backward districts

To support innovations in various fields

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government would set up Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) in backward areas of the State to support innovations in various fields, for which the NITI Aayog would extend support.

With a large number of corporate majors operating in Odisha, there is a huge scope for setting up the centres in the State. The ACICs would be set up in public-private partnership (PPP) mode and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds can be routed for the initiative.

CSR funds of private and public sector undertakings would be utilised for the purpose, officials say.

In order to tap the opportunities, the NITI Aayog has

urged the State Government to pursue such innovations, which would spur the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The centres are launched through the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and this is a NITI Aayog flagship programme, which is promoting innovation in a big way.

NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant has brought to the notice of the State Government the large scope of setting up of ACICs in the districts. With 10 Aspirational Districts in the State, there is enough scope for setting up of ACICs in these districts, said sources.

While universities would be able to set up ACICs, non-Government organisations (NGOs) are also eligible to set up the centres, said sources.

The Atal Innovation Mission would give support up

to Rs 2.5 crore over five years and an equal amount is needed to be invested by the organisation, which needs to set up an ACIC, officials say.

The ACICs would be set up to promote a design thinking process to spur community focused innovation and to create local, national and global synergy with all stakeholders in the ecosystem. The CSR funds available with private and public sector would ensure financial stability of these centres. Innovation through the local clusters would be promoted and it will help the entrepreneurs. The AIM would leverage mentoring network with 10,000 mentors under the mission. The ACICs would create a positive atmosphere, where different communities would learn from each other about unique innovations.

Make road to transport coal in Belpahar, MCL told

Brajrajnagar MLA holds review meet

RAJ KUMAR SHARMA ■ JHARSUGUDA

Brajrajnagar MLA Kishore Kumar Mohanty held a review meeting for various welfare projects in the constituency and directed the officials to solve the various problems that arise out in implementation of the projects.

It was decided to complete the various projects of the State Government in the Belpahar Municipality in a planned manner.

Meanwhile, pipe-laying work is going on for a Belpahar drinking water project by digging holes in many roads. This has made the roads vulnerable to accidents. The MLA directed the officials to make these roads fit for public use before the ensuing Durga Puja.

It was pointed out that coal transportation from the

Lakhanpur mines is done these days to various industries engaging thousands of trucks and other heavy vehicles causing loss of life and property of the public in several accidents. Besides, water, air, food products, houses and agriculture land of the area are polluted by the excess flow of coal dust. Loss of lives is also reported in the locality due to intake of polluted water and food products. For this, the inhabitants are demanding since long that MCL management make a separate bypass road or coal corridor.

MLA Mohanty called upon MCL Lakhanpur Area GM Anil Singh and departmental officers to take necessary steps in this regard on a priority basis.

The Lakhanpur Area GM was also told to take action for installation of required number of CCTV cameras in Belpahar Municipality area as requested by the municipality. Initially, repair of Garakhai Check Dam at Belpahar was done in 2014

at a cost of Rs 1 lakh from MCL Cempa fund. Thereafter, renovation of the dam was done by a private contractor firm on June 1, 2016 at a cost of Rs 40 lakh.

However, due to low quality work and continuous rain, the dam has been dismantled and not repaired till date. The agriculture work has miserably suffered due to the position of the dam.

The GM was told by the MLA to construct a special road for the place alongwith renovation of the damaged dam. Besides, the concerned agency was requested to solve the technical issues in lighting arrangements of the city.

That apart, it was also discussed to make necessary lighting arrangement in the remote areas of the city soon alongwith construction of a new martyr ghat after identification of the land.

Bus stand issues and electricity problems in different places also figured for discussion.

Youth's body found on Astarang beach

The identity of the youth, aged about 25 years, was yet to be ascertained

PNS ■ PURI

A body of a youth was found on the sea beach at Dalukhai village under the Astarang police limits in Puri district on Sunday.

The identity of the youth, aged about 25 years, was yet to be ascertained.

On being informed by locals, the Astarang police went to the spot and recovered the body. Later, the body was sent to the Community Health Centre (CHC), Charichhak for post-mortem.

Gir pride saved from 100-foot deep plunge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Open wells in Gujarat's Gir forest continue to pose threat to the Asiatic lions with four of them, including a lioness, falling in one of them on Sunday. Fortunately, rescue arrived in time for them. They are recuperating from the injuries.

The unused well was about 100-feet deep and was situated on a farm in Manavav, and the four big cats, in the 2-3 year age group, fell into it on Saturday evening, Sarasiya Range Forest Officer MR Odedra said.

"The farm owner alerted us. A forest department team managed to rescue the lions and lioness after working through the night. The well was dry and the four had to be dragged out with the help of residents and equipment we had carried for the purpose," the forest officer said.

Last month, a lion had died after falling into a well at Kantala village in Tulsishyam



Khambha range of the Gir East wildlife division in Gujarat's Junagadh district.

The incident comes within a month after the State Government had informed the State High Court that it has taken care of the open well problem by providing financial subsidy up to ₹16,000 for construction of parapet wall around the wells and so far 37,201 open wells have been

covered. According to officials, there are over 50,000 such wells that pose danger to wild animals.

As many as 222 lions died, most of them due to natural causes, in the Gir forest region in Gujarat in the last two years, the Gujarat Government had told the legislative Assembly recently.

Among them, only 23 lions died because of "unnatural

causes such as getting hit by trains or falling into wells between June 2017 and May 2019.

In a written reply a query by Congress MLA Shailesh Parmar, Forest Minister Ganpat Vasava had stated that 82 lions, including 30 cubs, have died between June 2017 and May 2018 while the number of deaths stood at 140, including 60 cubs, for the June 2018 — May 2019 period.

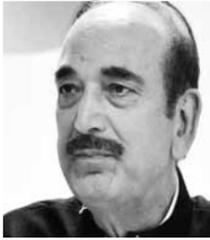
Wildlife activists feel that open wells are like death traps and such incidents (falling of lions in wells) reflect the fact that overcrowding in and around Gir was harming Asiatic lions in more ways than one and that something had to be done to resolve this.

Gir forest is the only abode of Asiatic lions. As per the last census of 2015, it is home to 523 lions. However, the State Government had recently said that the number of lions has gone up to 600.

Azad moves SC to visit J&K, family members

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader and former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has moved the Supreme Court seeking permission to visit his home State to enquire about the well being of his family members. His plea is scheduled to be taken up by a bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices SA Bobde and S Abdul Nazeer on Monday.



Azad has sought a nod from the top court to visit his family members and relatives. He had tried to visit the State after the abrogation of Jammu & Kashmir's special status but was sent back from the airport by authorities.

In his petition before the top court, he has also sought permission to check on social conditions in the state after the clampdown imposed by the authorities in the aftermath of revocation of provisions of Article 370.

Several opposition leaders, including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, had sought to visit Jammu and Kashmir, but were not allowed to do so and were sent back from the airport itself. CPI(M) leader Sitaram

Yechury had moved the apex court to see his ailing party colleague Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami, which allowed him to pay a visit but with certain conditions.

The Supreme court had on September 5, allowed former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti's daughter Iltija to meet her in Kashmir, where she is under detention following the revocation of the state's special status. The top court had allowed Iltija to meet her mother in private but said that as far as moving around in other parts of Srinagar goes, she can do so subject to the permission from district authorities.

The National Panthers

Party (NPP) too on Sunday accused the Centre of ignoring the "genuine concerns and apprehensions" of the people of Jammu and Kashmir following the scrapping of Article 370 last month. NPP chairman and former minister Harsh Dev Singh said it has already highlighted the concerns of the people for protection of their lands and jobs through a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and would continue to agitate till the issue is addressed.

Meanwhile normal life remained affected in Kashmir Valley for the 42nd consecutive day on Sunday as most of shops remained shut and public transport was off the roads, even as the weekly flea market opened here, officials said. The weekly flea market opened here on Sunday as several vendors put up their stalls on the TRC Chowk-Polo View axis.

Most of the shops and other business establishments remained closed, while public transport was off the roads across the valley, they added. Internet services remained suspended across all platforms.

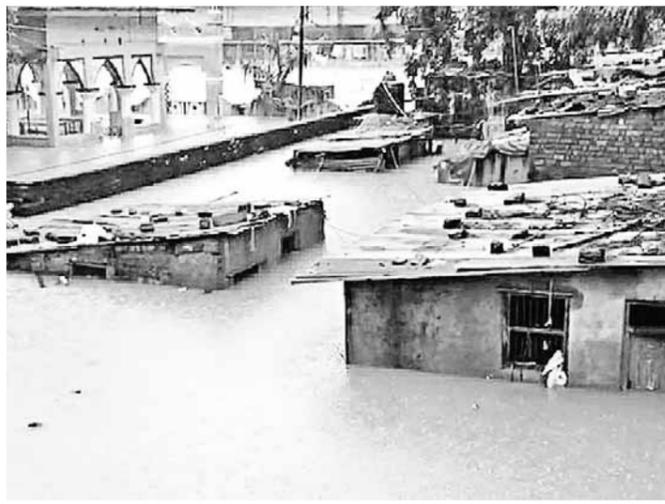
1400 killed, 1 cr affected in floods: MHA

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As many as one crore people are affected and 1400 people have died in rain-related tragedies across the country and damages to property runs into thousands of crores in 14 States. Taking note of grim situation in the recent floods in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC), headed by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba, on Sunday reviewed the prevailing flood situation and directed that immediate assistance be provided to meet the crisis. According to the Home Ministry data, as many as one crore people are affected in floods.

As per the situation report pertaining to floods in India, prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs, as many as 136 people died and 170 villages are affected in Gujarat while 150 died, 6000 houses damaged and 640 villages are affected in Madhya Pradesh. East Rajasthan recorded 49 percent above rainfall this season while west Rajasthan recorded 16 percent more rainfall till date. MP recorded 54 percent more rainfall this year.

According to flood situation report, this year, floods have wreaked havoc in Assam, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu,



Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha and among others states. The data shows over one crore people affected in 18000 villages in flood affected states. As far as five lakh hectare crops have been affected in floods. Several states including Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have not submitted crops damage data to the home ministry.

According to the Home Ministry, the Cabinet Secretary took stock of the situation, preparedness, rescue and relief operations and directed that immediate assistance, as sought by the states, be provided to meet the crisis. The NCMC has been informed that action to evacuate and rescue people and livestock has been taken by the states and no loss of life has been reported. Adequate teams of the National Disaster

Response Force and the Army have also been deployed in rescue work.

It was informed by both the states that due to extremely heavy rainfall and the consequent discharge of water from the Gandhi Sagar Dam in Madhya Pradesh and other reservoirs in the two states, there has been flooding in the downstream as well as upstream areas.

The India Meteorological

Department (IMD) conveyed that while there has been very heavy rainfall in the two states over the past few days, the intensity is likely to decline from Monday.

Senior officials of the Ministries of Home and the Defence, as well as those from the IMD, NDRF and Central Water Commission attended the meeting.

The Chief Secretaries and other senior officers from the state governments participated in the meeting through video conference.

According to the agriculture ministry, it is estimated that 40 million hectares of land (roughly 12 per cent of India's geographical area) is prone to floods. While floods occur in India every year, data for the last 65 years show that the scale of their impact, in terms of area affected and damage caused, has been erratic. Between 1953 and 2017, for farmers, the overall damage to crops was Rs 1,11,225.62 crore (nearly 30 per cent of the total damages) and 60,49,349 cattle dead.

India suffered damages worth Rs 37,82,47,04,70,000 (Rs 3,78,247.047 crore) due to floods and heavy rains. Besides this, 1,07,535 people were killed, a total of 8,07,17,993 houses destroyed and an area of 466.335 million hectare affected.

SC to hear pleas against abrogation of Article 370, restrictions in J&K

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday pleas challenging abrogation of provisions of Article 370 — which gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir, validity of imposition of President's rule and the related restrictions imposed in the State.

A bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices SA Bobde and S Abdul Nazeer will be also hearing a bunch fresh petitions, including the one filed by former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad seeking permission to visit his family members and relatives. Azad, who had tried to visit the state twice after the abrogation of Article 370 provisions in Jammu & Kashmir but was sent back from the airport by the authorities, has sought a nod from the top court to visit his family members.

Jammu & Kashmir People's Conference party led by Sajjad Lone has also challenged the abrogation of provisions of Article 370 and the validity of the state Re-organization Bill. Child right

activists Enakshi Ganguly and Professor Shanta Sinha have also filed a plea against the alleged illegal detention of children in Jammu & Kashmir since the revocation of special status.

A plea of Rajya Sabha MP and MDMK founder Vaiko is also listed for hearing, in which he has sought a direction to the Centre and Jammu & Kashmir to produce former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, allegedly under detention following abrogation of Article 370, before the court.

In his plea, Vaiko has said that authorities should allow Abdullah to attend a "peaceful and democratic" annual conference, being organised in Chennai on September 15, on the occasion of birthday of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C N Annadurai.

The plea of CPI(M) Sitaram Yechury who had moved the apex court seeking to see his ailing party colleague Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami is also among the batch of petitions listed for hearing.

PTI

NCRPB to form committee for sustainable development study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) is expected to set up a committee of town planners and other experts to carry out a study for sustainable development of "far-reaching" areas of national Capital region. The committee is also likely to study the reasons behind variation in population density of the various regions of Delhi and NCR.

NCRPB officials said a recent board meeting of NCRPB reviewed the issue of constituting the expert committee.

Asked who will head the panel, the official said the decision has not been taken yet, adding that terms of refer-

ences of the panel will soon be fixed.

In the recent past, h Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, and Hapur districts of Uttar Pradesh and Faridabad, Jind and Karnal districts of Hararyana have been included in the NCR.

"In surrounding areas of Delhi like Noida, Gurugram, Ghaziabad, there has been rapid development. The committee will look into aspects of sustainable development in far-reaching areas of NCR and optimization of resources," official also said.

The plan is to ensure equal development in all areas which are part of the National Capital Region so that people don't need to move to surrounding areas of Delhi, official said.

In 2015, the NCRPB had decided to include Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, and Jind and Karnal districts of Haryana.

According to NCRPB's website, National Capital Region (NCR) is a unique example of inter-state regional planning and development, covering the entire National Capital Territory of Delhi, thirteen districts of State of Haryana, seven districts of State of Uttar Pradesh and two districts of State of Rajasthan, with the Nation Capital as its core.

The NCR in India was constituted under the NCRPB Act, 1985 with the key rationale to promote balanced and harmonized development of the region, and to avoid any haphazard development.

DST to launch 5 technology missions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To ensure that the country is ready to meet scientific and technological challenges of the future, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) will soon launch five technology missions - Mission on electric mobility, Mission methanol, Mission on promoting research and development in quantum technology, cyber physical systems Mission and last but not the least the Mission on digital mapping.

DST Secretary Ashutosh Sharma told the reporters here recently that the government was working continuously to shape a seamless science, technology and innovation sys-



tem, which was cutting edge, collaborative, inclusive, relevant and aligned to national priorities.

In this regard, the new missions would cover aspects ranging from electric mobility to quantum science and technology.

The aim is to give a fillip to the manufacturing sector through development of new products and services, creation of skilled human resources at different levels, from technician to researchers and entrepreneurs

The electric mobility Mission seeks to promote long-term research and development in all aspects of technologies in the wake of climate change concerns while Mission methanol envisages establishment of centres of excellence for production and utilisation of methanol and dimethyl ether using various solid fuels and natural gas and develop knowl-

edge base and trained manpower in the area.

The third mission seeks to promote developments in the area of cyber physical systems, which includes artificial intelligence, robotics, sensors, big data analytics, geographical information systems and advanced materials.

The aim is to give a fillip to the manufacturing sector through development of new products and services, creation of skilled human resources at different levels, from technician to researchers and entrepreneurs.

A mission on promoting research and development in quantum technology and related areas of quantum comput-

ing, quantum cryptography, quantum communication, quantum metrology and sensing, and quantum enhanced imaging will be based on the properties of quantum mechanics.

The fifth mission aims to produce digital maps across the country to a scale of 1:500 with the help of satellites and drones. The entire country would be mapped within the next two years.

Meanwhile, the DST under the Union Science and Technology is also preparing a draft geospatial data policy which puts down in writing who can own geospatial data, how they can use it, and how it can be shared.

Over 138m harmed every yr by doctors' errors: WHO

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Just when concerns are being raised about increasing incidents of violence against doctors, sometimes leading to grievous hurt or murder by the patients and their relatives, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has brought to the fore other side of the picture by stating that more than 138 million patients are harmed every year by doctors' errors.

On Tuesday, the WHO will celebrate the first World Patient Safety Day, with which it seeks to raise awareness of this ongoing tragedy. It said that globally, at least 5 patients die every minute because of unsafe care such as error in diagnosis, errors in medicine prescriptions and treatments, and the inappropriate use of drugs.

Errors in diagnosis, errors in medicine prescriptions and treatments, and the inappropriate use of drugs are the three main reasons why so many patients are harmed, WHO patient-safety coordinator Dr. Neelam Dhingra-Kumar said. Four out of every ten



patients are harmed during primary and ambulatory health care. The most detrimental errors are related to diagnosis, prescription and the use of medicines. Medication errors alone cost an estimated US\$ 42 billion annually. Unsafe surgical care procedures cause complications in up to 25% of patients resulting in 1 million deaths during or immediately after surgery annually.

In India, according to a study published in BMJ journal in 2018, safety of patients in tertiary care hospitals was found to be a big problem. "At least 62.9 per cent of unsafe injections are administered every year in India. Estimated risk of Hospital Care Associated Infections (HCAI) is up to 20 times higher than

industrialised countries and is approx 10 per cent and 15-30 per cent in acute care. 77 per cent of all reported cases of counterfeit and substandard drugs are from developing countries," said the study.

In fact, according to the WHO, only errors related to erroneous medicine prescriptions cost healthcare systems around the world some \$42 billion (37 billion euros).

"These mistakes occur because healthcare systems are not suitably designed to deal with these errors and learn from them," Dr Kumar said, while admitting that many medical facilities hide what they did wrong, which often keeps them from taking steps to make sure these mistakes are

not repeated in the future.

Figures provided by the WHO refer only to countries with medium and low economic status (where 80 per cent of the global population live), so that the real number could be even greater, considering that even in developed countries, one out of every 10 patients is the victim of medical mistakes.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General said that "we need a patient safety culture that promotes partnership with patients, encourages reporting and learning from errors, and creates a blame-free environment where health workers are empowered and trained to reduce errors."

Following demand from the medical fraternity, Union Health Ministry has proposed Healthcare Service Personnel and Clinical Establishments (Prohibition of Violence and Damage to Property) Bill 2019 that makes assault of medical professionals a criminal offence with imprisonment up to 10 years and fine extending up to ₹5 lakh.

High humidity in north plains to prevail: IMD

Monsoon shows no signs of withdrawal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the monsoon showing no signs of withdrawal, north Indian plains are unlikely to get any respite from high levels of humidity this week. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the humidity is expected to be high in the next 15 days as due to high amount of moisture due to the low pressure area, coupled with temperatures, leads to rise in the humidity.

K Sathi Devi, Head of the National Weather Forecasting Centre said that currently, there is a low pressure area of north-west Madhya Pradesh which is causing good rainfall. This also attracts moisture from the easterlies. Several parts of the north Indian plains have been recording high levels of humidity, which is not a usual phenomenon in September. In humid conditions where sur-

rounding air cannot hold further water vapour, sweat evaporates slowly, if at all. As a result the body heats up, it is difficult for the sweat to evaporate and in high humidity conditions we tend to sweat more.

The amount of water vapour present in a column of air determines the Absolute Humidity of air but this principle is not usually preferred by meteorologists. "The concept of Relative Humidity is used whereby the amount of water vapour present in air is calculated with respect to the amount of water vapour the air can hold. During rainy season or conditions of high humidity, the relative humidity is on the higher side which means air cannot hold moisture further," the IMD said.

So far, the country has received four per cent more rainfall than normal. The south peninsula has received 10 per cent more precipitation, while the central India division has recorded 23 per cent more rainfall. Mritunjay Mohapatra, Director General of the India Meteorological Department, said the intensity of the low



pressure will be ebbing from Monday but the effect in likely to remain for the next five days. "Thereafter, we can expect the withdrawal process of the monsoon to commence," Mohapatra said.

The east and north India divisions and the northwest India division have recorded deficient rainfall at minus 18 and minus 8 per cent respectively. Of the 36 meteorological sub-divisions of the IMD, more than three-fourths have received normal or excess rainfall. Sixteen sub-divisions have received normal rainfall, while 11 have recorded excess precipitation. Nine have received deficient rainfall.

'Terrorists present in Srinagar, threatening shopkeepers'

Srinagar: Nearly two dozen terrorists are present in the city and its periphery and even openly threatening shopkeepers in some areas, raising serious concern in the security establishment, according to officials. However, security forces are taking all precautions to ensure that the terrorists do not use the situation to cause any flare-up as in the past incidents of stone pelting by youths have occurred during anti-militancy operations, they said.



There have been only stray protests since the government imposed severe restrictions on communication channels and movement of people after it announced its decisions to abrogate the special status accorded to Jammu & Kashmir and split the state into two Union territories on August 5.

Restrictions have subsequently been eased, but the situation in Kashmir Valley seems "far from normal", particularly with a high presence of terrorists, they said.

At many places in Downtown Srinagar, the terrorists have been seen roaming freely and even warning shopkeepers to keep their shops shut and adhere to their diktats, the officials said.

Jammu & Kashmir Police chief Dilbag Singh did not rule out the possibility of presence of terrorists but said to claim that they are roaming freely "is an exaggeration".

From interactions with several officials of the state as well

as the Centre, it is estimated that around two dozen terrorists are well-entrenched within the city limits, while their movement and visibility in rural areas have become a routine.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said counter-militancy operations have taken a severe hit ever since August 5 when the Government announced its decisions on Jammu & Kashmir.

Only two operations have taken place since August 5 — one in Baramulla on August 20 and another chance encounter in Sopore on September 9.

The terrorists have erected blockades in certain parts of the city, including in areas adjoining Anchar Lake and Soura.

The officials said that the administration has ensured that there is no civilian death till now and apprehends that any strong action may provide

a trigger for violent protests. Search-and-cordon operations and imposition of night restrictions in the city area had ended in early 2000s and it had been declared as militancy free in 2012, they said.

The officials believe the terrorists have "a deeper game plan" as the violence level has come down despite their "heavy presence". At many places in the city, including the highly secured Civil Lines areas of Raj Bagh, Jawhar Nagar and Lal Chowk, shopkeepers were threatened at gunpoint to keep their shops shut and ensure a complete hartal.

The shopkeepers and some media outlets have also been asked to keep their peripheral CCTV cameras off, the officials said. In the militancy-hit areas of Shopian, terrorists burnt down an automobile workshop as it was repairing vehicles on Saturday, they said. **PTI**

Journalists in J&K hard-pressed due to restrictions

Srinagar: With no internet and mobile services in Kashmir for over 40 days now, journalists in the Valley have been hard-pressed as a make-shift media centre set up here by the Government continues to be the only connection for many with the rest of the world.

The restrictions were imposed across Kashmir on the evening of August 4 — a day before the Centre announced the abrogation of Article 370 provisions and bifurcation of Jammu & Kashmir into two Union territories.

Even though landline phones have been restored early this month, mobile services and internet — on any platform — remain snapped. Harried journalists are now demanding that the Government should at least restore broadband connections of media houses.

"We have minimal contact with our head office. We are often outside our offices here for assignments or something else and it is difficult for the head office or even our family to reach us in the absence of mobile phone services," Irfan Ahmad, a senior photojournalist, said.

Another local journalist, Mudasir, who works for a daily newspaper, said information gathering has suffered due to the communication restrictions.



"We often do not know what is happening in the city and information from other districts is hard to come by. We have to rely on official versions of the events or incidents. Reaching officials or sources especially in the other districts is very difficult," he said.

During the first few days after the restrictions were imposed, the journalists could not file any stories except for the TV reports using the channels' outdoor broadcast vans here.

In the absence of any medium to send the news-reports across the country or outside, some journalists would send their reports on pen drives

through flyers at the airport. The flyers would then contact the offices of the media houses which would collect the drives from him.

Most media organisations, especially TV channels, sent journalists from Delhi to the Valley as their reporters were incommunicado.

Around a week later, the state government's Department of Information and Public Relations set up a 'Media Facilitation Centre' at a conference hall of a local hotel here.

Four computers and a lone cell phone were available to cater to hundreds of journalists — both local as well as from out-

side the State. "One often had to wait for more than half-an-hour to get a (computer) system. Then the speed was so irritating that the email would take ages to open," Firdous Ahmad, a local journalist, told PTI.

Journalists have to register themselves before making a call from the cell phone and more often than not, the waiting period would stretch for hours because of the rush.

"We have to write down our names on a register before making a call and then wait for our turn," Ahmad said.

However, after frequent complaints by journalists, few

more computers were added to the centre and the network speed was also upgraded, bringing some relief.

Irfan Ahmad said while the addition of more computers and speed upgrade was a welcome step, media persons are still grappling with a number of problems. "After completing our assignments and capturing pictures, we have to first go to our respective offices to select and re-size the pictures. Then copy them in a flash drive and head to the media centre to send them. This is so hectic," he said.

Mudasir said it has been the "longest-ever blockade" of services faced by journalists in the Valley and the Government should at least restore broadband or leased-line internet connections of media houses.

"We have seen mobile and internet suspensions, but never before has it been this long for journalists. It has been over 40 days now that we have been deprived of the facilities. In an era when government agencies can monitor anything, why is it so difficult to restore internet lines of media houses?" the journalist said.

While the television channels have outdoor broadcast vans for their reportage, the work of their stringers from other districts across the Valley has been hit. **PTI**

LORD NATARAJA TEMPLE

Cuddalore: Priest sacked for allowing marriage ceremony

Cuddalore (TN): A priest of the famous Lord Nataraja temple at Chidambaram in this district has been suspended for arranging the recent marriage of a Sivakasi-based businessman at the shrine's 1,000-pillar hall in violation of "Agama sastras".

Trustees of the temple, including Ayyappan Deekshathar, told reporters that the priest had violated the "Agama sastras" (rules Governing the poojas and other temple rituals) and the industrialist family had converted the entire hall into a luxurious wedding hall with flower decorations, festoons

and illuminations. The grand decorations had converted the holy atmosphere of the temple into a private wedding hall and this had hurt the sentiments of devotees, they said.

Though weddings were performed in the Pandiyanayakar Sannathi in the temple, the 1000-pillar hall was used only for the special festival occasions such as celestial marriage of the deities and "Arudhra darshan".

As per Agama rules, the place where celestial wedding is held should not be used for the marriage of humans, a priest of the temple said. **PTI**



Members from Gujjar tribe lead a herd of horses along the Jammu-Srinagar highway at Ramban 150km from Jammu on Sunday **PTI**

BJP leader demands fresh socio-economic survey in Kashmir

Jammu: There should be a fresh socio-economic survey in Jammu & Kashmir for the welfare of members of schedule caste communities, a senior BJP leader said on Sunday, claiming that they were living in "sub standard conditions".

BJP state SC morcha president Jagdish Bhagat also claimed that the existing socioeconomic survey, which was conducted in 2011, was inexact.

"The fresh socioeconomic survey should be conducted as it is a must for improving the living conditions of members of the SC community who are living in sub-standard condi-

tions," he said at a meeting at the BJP headquarters here.

Bhagat also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for early implementation of laws favouring schedule caste (SC) communities in Union territories of Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh, which will come into being on October 31.

Hailing the Centre for scrapping the special status to Jammu & Kashmir and its bifurcation into the two Union territories, he said people belonging to the SC community are victims of Article 370 that proved a major hurdle in their overall development. **PTI**

Army destroys live mortar shell along LoC in J&K's Poonch

Jammu: A 120-mm mortar shell, fired by Pakistani forces, was destroyed by the Indian Army in a forward village near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu & Kashmir on Sunday, officials said. The shell had landed near a house in the Balakot area of Mendhar sector during cross-border shelling on Saturday and was noticed by some villagers, who informed the Army, the officials said.

They said Army experts immediately rushed to the spot and destroyed the unexploded shell safely.

Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire by targeting forward posts and villages at several places, including Balakot, on Saturday, prompting strong and effective retaliation from the Indian Army. **PTI**

Dearth of quality people in north India: Labour Minister on unemployment

Santosh Gangwar's comment draws scathing attack from Opposition

Lucknow: Union Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar has said there was no dearth of employment opportunities in the country, but recruiters visiting north India complain of lack of "quality people" to fill vacancies, drawing flak from Opposition leaders who accused him of insulting people of the region.

The comments came amid criticism of the Government over India's unemployment rate rising to a 45-year high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18, data of which was released in May.

"The issue of employment keep figuring in newspapers these days. I am handling the same Ministry for labour and



creation. Whatever jobs were there, they have been snatched due to the economic slowdown brought by the Government. You want to escape by insulting North Indians," she said.

"Youths are looking towards the government hoping that it will do something good for them," the Congress general secretary said.

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said such comments are laughable. "After the different laughable statements by different Union ministers on the serious issue of economic slowdown, instead of removing unemployment in the country now it is being said that there is no shortage of jobs, but of competence, especially amongst north Indians.

"This is extremely shameful and an apology should be tendered to the nation," she tweeted. **PTI**

MAMATA ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

'Protect rights in Super emergency era'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Attacking the BJP for imposing a super emergency-like situation in the country, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday called upon the people of India to unite and fight against the saffron outfit so that their rights and freedom guaranteed by the Constitution can be preserved and protected.

Tweeting on the occasion of International Day of Democracy, Banerjee said "on International Day of Democracy today, let us once again pledge to safeguard the constitutional values our country was founded on."

Lashing out at the Centre for imposing a super-emergency-like situation she said "in this era of 'Super Emergency', we must do all it takes to protect the rights and freedoms that our



Constitution guarantees." Banerjee's Sunday's tweet wishing the people good came a couple of days after she warned the Centre against bringing Bengal within the ambit of National Register for Citizens.

In an earlier meeting on Thursday, she lambasted the Centre for subjecting the people of Assam to untold misery

through NRC. "Their (BJP) version of NRC is nothing but a political vendetta on those who oppose their politics," she said adding "in the guise of NRC the Government has struck out the names of more than 11 lakh Bengali Hindus, four lakh Muslims, one lakh Gorkhas and Bihari and UP wallahs." This was all a part of BJP's

They are not only mixing religion but also linguistic divide in the name of NRC which is dangerous for the future of the country

—Mamata Banerjee

electoral politics in Assam, she said. "They are not only mixing religion but also linguistic divide in the name of NRC which is dangerous for the future of the country," she said it was "for the sake of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others that I have rejected NRC."

On the BJP's proposal of involving NRC in Bengal she

said "let them touch Bengal and then see what happens."

While the Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh said that his party was determined to invoke NRC in the State after the ouster of the State Government, BJP legislator from Ballia in Uttar Pradesh Surendra Singh said lashed out at Banerjee for criticising NRC saying she was more interested in preserving her vote bank than preserving the interests of her motherland. He asked her to shift to Bangladesh and become that country's Prime Minister.

He said "Mamata Banerjee's bad days are about to come and she should change her language. If she wants to do politics with the support of Bangladeshi people, she should go to Bangladesh. It will be good if she becomes Prime Minister of Bangladesh if she has courage for it."

Education worst hit during 42 days of clampdown in Valley

Srinagar: While schools, colleges and universities are functioning normally in the Jammu and Ladakh divisions of the two Union Territories, the same cannot be said for the Kashmir Valley where education has taken the worst beating because of the clampdown.

Authorities have opened schools up to the 10th standard in the Valley, but the attendance of children in these educational institutions has been disappointing so far.

"All the teaching staff have been attending their duty regularly in the Valley's government-run schools, though the attendance of children has not improved," said an official of the School Education Department.



Parents have been reluctant to send children to school as they are unable to track of them because of the suspension

of mobile phone services.

"During normal days we would keep a track of our children through mobile phones by

calling the school authorities, or the bus drivers in case of private schools.

"In the present uncertain situation, no one wants to take a chance with the child's safety especially when mobile phones are not working," said Javid Shah father of two school-going children in Srinagar old city.

Submission of examination forms for the 10th class has already started in the Valley even though the students said they had not covered all the topics of their academic syllabus.

"We have not yet been taught many topics in Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Social Sciences. How can we answer all the questions unless they ignore the untaught topics?" said a class

10th student. The general demand of the class 10th student for curtailment of the syllabus has not yet been accepted by the authorities.

Farooq Ahmad Khan, the advisor on education to the Governor, has said all school exams will be held in the Valley even if their conduct is delayed by some days.

Khan also dispelled rumours of any mass promotion of students to higher classes on account of the prevailing uncertainty in the Valley. Colleges and universities, however, continue to remain shut for the last 42 days.

"All colleges and universities will start functioning soon in the Valley as the situation is fast

returning to normal," said an official of the Higher Education Department.

The opening of colleges and universities is likely to have a cushioning effect on the attendance of students in schools.

It is, however, believed that the authorities do not want any student unrest to add to their law and order problems.

"We do not want anti-social elements to play with the future of our students by stoking passions through unfounded rumours. Institutions of higher learning in the Valley will start functioning after the situation improves further in the coming days," said another Government official. **IANS**

Building of Ayodhya Temple to start after Nov: Swamy

Ayodhya: Senior BJP leader Subramaniam Swamy has claimed that the construction of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya will commence by November.

He also stated that the decision of the Supreme Court, which is hearing the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit, will be in favour of the Ram temple.

Swamy, who was in Ayodhya on a two-day visit, further said that the right to worship is a fundamental right and cannot be taken away by anyone.

"The temple which is at the spot of Lord Ram's birth cannot be removed," he said. **IANS**

The remark by the BJP leader comes just days after NDA constituent Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray called for action by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led central government to enable speedy construction of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The Shiv Sena chief had said that with abrogation of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, the Modi government had shown that it was decisive in nature.

He added that after the Article 370 move, it was now time for construction of Ram Mandir and introduction of uniform civil code. **IANS**

Maha CM hints revision of MV Act; pulls up Sena Min

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday expressed displeasure over Shiv Sena leader and State Transport Minister Diwakar Raote's "unilateral" announcement to keep on hold the implementation of the Centre's amended Motor Vehicles (MV) Act which stipulates steep fines for violation of traffic rules.



Speaking to PTI, he also indicated revision in the amount of fines to make it less harsh on the common man, without compromising on the "deterrent value" of the Act.

Days after Raote requested the Centre to reconsider the hefty fines under the amended provisions and announced holding their enforcement, Fadnavis said sometimes he had to "cover" his colleagues from allied parties for certain decisions.

"At times, some of my Cabinet colleagues, from allied parties, take decisions which I have had to cover. Raote's decision was about a policy. Hence,

it should have been discussed with me and the entire Cabinet," the Chief Minister told PTI.

The amended Motor Vehicle Act was passed by Parliament in July-August this year, but its steep fines have been at the Centre of a debate, leading to some states deciding to give breathing time to the public before enforcing it.

While Gujarat and Uttarakhhand have announced a cut in penalties for traffic violations under the Act, few states have adopted it in its entirety while several others have put it on hold.

Fadnavis went on to say that he was "whole-heartedly"

supporting the amended provisions.

"Earlier provisions in the Motor Vehicles Act were not stringent enough. There were instances where people threw the fine amount at officials because it was so low. There have been major accidents and complaints of traffic violations. Such a strong deterrent is needed," he said.

The CM said the Act would be implemented notwithstanding differences over the quantum of fines.

"Maharashtra is going to accept and implement the Act. There may be a difference of opinion about the fine amounts. Whether to reduce the fine amount, so that it is not a burden of the common man, can be considered. It can be worked out and fine amount can be revised to make it less harsh," Fadnavis said.

He, however, added that such reduction in the fine amounts must not "compromise on its deterrent value." **PTI**

SWAMI CHINMAYANAND CASE

SIT examines rape victim's male friends, college staff

Leakage of video a conspiracy, says father of rape victim

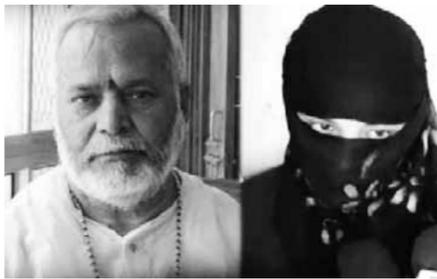
Shahjahanpur (UP): The SIT probing the alleged rape of a law student by BJP leader Swami Chinmayanand on Sunday examined three male friends of the victim, besides some employees of her college.

The victim's friends who were examined included the one who was with her when she was located in Rajasthan after having gone missing from here late last month.

He and the two others were also present inside the car in which the girl had made her video recording, narrating about her ordeal.

The apex court-appointed Special Investigation Team called them to the Police Lines here and recorded their statements, official sources said.

The SIT also examined the principals of girl's alma mater — a law college and a post-graduate college — both located on the campus of Mumukshu Ashram of former



Union Minister Chinmayanand.

The SIT also examined two other college employees, who had been summoned on Saturday but had failed to turn up for recording of their statements.

The girl's father, meanwhile, termed the leakage of the video footage given to the SIT by his daughter as a "conspiracy" and said he would request

the Supreme Court to order a probe into it.

"From where have the screenshots and videos come to the social media? The screenshots have been posted even on various social media platforms. These were given to the SIT by my daughter. This is a conspiracy," he said.

He said he would inform the Supreme Court about it and seek a probe in the entire matter.

From where have the screenshots and videos come to the social media? The screenshots have been posted even on various social media platforms. These were given to the SIT by my daughter. This is a conspiracy — Girl's father

"The UP Government must not register any case of rape against Chinmayanand and if it has been lodged, it must be withdrawn," he said.

Omji claimed the girl student had met Congress president Sonia Gandhi and party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in Delhi and it was at their behest that a zero FIR was lodged against Chinmayanand.

The law student had on Saturday given a pen drive containing 43 videos to the SIT to support her allegations after the sleuths asked her to submit whatever evidence she had against the former Union minister. The SIT, set up on Supreme Court orders, had taken the woman to Chinmayanand's bedroom on Friday morning and had collected various pieces of evidence. The special investigation team had quizzed the student's mother on Saturday, they said. **PTI**

CBI seeks info on missing Kolkata ex-CP Rajiv Kumar

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Sunday sent letters to Bengal Chief Secretary, Home Secretary and Director General of Police seeking the whereabouts of senior IPS officer Rajiv Kumar even as the former Kolkata Commissioner of Police continued to remain "untraceable and uncontrollable" even two days after the Calcutta High Court lifted the shield against arrest of him.

Informed sources in the Bengal Police said Kumar, presently the Additional Director General of CID who failed to present himself before the CBI officials for the second day on Sunday after losing the protective cover against arrest on Friday, was planning to file a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court.

After summons were sent

to him on Friday, the former top cop had reportedly written to the CBI seeking a month's time as he was on leave tending to his ailing wife a senior IRS official herself.

About the contents of the letters sent to the senior State Government officials, sources in the Agency said the CBI wanted to know through the letters that whether Kumar was genuinely on leave, if so when he applied for the leave, what was the reason for the leave taken and when was he supposed to join back.

Information was also sought about the reason of leave taken and the address he was to be found during the leave period.

Meanwhile, senior CBI counsel RJ Dastoor on Sunday rushed to Delhi to meet the top officials. "He has been asked to visit Delhi where legal consultations will take place for further steps tomorrow," sources said.



A view of a damaged building in Bowbazar area, where several houses have been damaged owing to tunnel boring for East-West metro corridor in Kolkata on Sunday **PTI**

DK Shivakumar appeals to supporters not to visit Delhi

Bengaluru: Arrested Congress leader DK Shivakumar has appealed to his supporters not to come to New Delhi to express solidarity with him, in the backdrop of a large number of them barging into a court there on Friday, when he was produced in connection with a money laundering case.

Conveying this in a press release, his brother DK Suresh said Shivakumar has asked his supporters not to come to Delhi on Tuesday when he is likely to be produced in the Special Court dealing with cases relating to ED.

A Delhi court on Friday had extended the custodial interrogation of Shivakumar by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) by four days till September 17 in the case.

"I request all party workers, supporters and well wishers of Shri D K Shivakumar to not to come to New Delhi on Tuesday (17.09.2019). This request is on behalf of

my brother DK Shivakumar too," Suresh said in a press release.

He said, "We request everyone to be in their respective places in the state and arrival of more people in Delhi will cause inconvenience to the administration and judiciary."

"As law abiding citizen, it's our responsibility to maintain smooth functioning of administrative and judicial systems.

Therefore we request and expect everyone's cooperation and support in this regard," he added.

Shivakumar, 57, sitting Congress MLA from Kanakapura assembly segment, is in the ED custody since his arrest on September 3.

On Friday, when Shivakumar was produced before the court on the expiry of his 9-day custodial interrogation by the agency, additional forces from Delhi police and CRPF were deployed inside

and outside the courtroom to control the large number of supporters who had gathered.

But even the heavy deployment of security personnel could not stop the supporters from barging inside the courtroom.

Before being escorted out of the court on Friday, Shivakumar had reportedly asked his supporters present at the premises, to go back home.

The ED had in September last year registered the money laundering case against Shivakumar, Haumantahaiah, an employee at the Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi, and others.

The ED had filed the PMLA case against him and others based on a charge sheet (prosecution complaint) filed by the Income Tax Department against them last year before a special court in Bengaluru on charges of alleged tax evasion and hawala transactions worth crores. **PTI**

Patriotic Muslims will vote for BJP: Karnataka Minister

Bengaluru: Karnataka Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj KS Eshwarappa, who ahead of the LS polls made a controversial comment that Muslims won't be given tickets by BJP, on Sunday said patriotic Muslims will vote for the safiron party while those who are pro-Pakistan will hesitate.

The senior BJP leader also announced that the party-led government will ban slaughter of cows in the state.

"Every one has a wish for Akhanda Bharat, why it is not happening is because of fear that they (section of politicians) may not get Muslim votes," Eshwarappa said.

Speaking at an event here, he said, "Before BJP government came to power I happened to meet couple of Congress MLAs who expressed desire to come to BJP, but claimed that they have over 50,000 Muslim votes in their

constituencies and may face defeat if they lose that, which is kind of a 'Hijada' (eunuch) behavior."

Eshwarappa also claimed that in his constituency in Shivamogga, there were over 50,000 Muslim voters and he has never gone to them seeking votes.

"I told them (Congress MLAs) that in my constituency, my community - Kuruba vote is about 8,000-10,000 and there is more than 50,000 Muslim votes. I have till today not gone to a single Muslim saluting him for vote. I have won by a lead of over 47,000 votes," he said. "Why I'm saying this - Journalists write down this."

A rashtira bhakta (patriot) Muslim will vote for BJP, and those who are pro Pakistan and rashtira drohis (traitors) will hesitate to vote for BJP," the Minister added. Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls in April,

Eshwarappa had said the BJP would not give tickets to Muslims to contest the elections as they do not believe in the party.

On banning cow slaughter in the state, he said, "Cow slaughter is banned in a way, but it has to be done completely. When there was BJP government in the past we had done it, but Congress government came to power and removed it. I'm saying this in this meeting, in front of holy seers that this government will ban cow slaughter, let there be no doubt."

Despite resistance from opposition, the then BJP Government led by BS Yediyurappa in 2010 had got the controversial Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill passed that proposed to replace the Karnataka Prevention of Cow Slaughter and Cattle Preservation Act, 1964. **PTI**

Kota flooded after release of dam water, thousands evacuated

Kota (Raj): Over 5,000 people were evacuated while many others remained stranded on rooftops on Sunday as large areas were flooded in the city due to discharge of 6.93 lakh cusecs of water from Kota barrage, officials said.

Schools have been closed and Army, NDRF, SDRF and teams from Kota municipal corporation engaged in rescue operations in areas along the river Chambal.

"Over 5,000 people have so far been shifted to shelter homes and safe places. However, people are still trapped in many areas and efforts are being made to evacuate them with the help of Army and rescue personnel," Kota district collector Muktanand Agrawal told reporters on Sunday evening.

No causality has been reported so far, he said. The official said Kota was facing an unprecedented situation as it is the first time since the construction of Gandhi



Army personnel carry out rescue operation in a flood affected area in Kota, Rajasthan on Sunday **PTI**

Sagar dam that a record 6.93 lakh cusecs of water was discharged from 19 gates of Kota Barrage in a day.

He said more water is likely to be discharged from Gandhi Sagar dam which is currently overflowing at 1,314 ft and needs to be brought down to 1,308 ft.

and 200 NDRF, SDRF and civil defense personnel have been deployed.

Meanwhile, additional chief secretary and Kota district in charge secretary P K Goyal, along with divisional commissioner LN Soni and Kora range IG Vipin Panday, visited the flood affected areas.

Collector Agrawal too reviewed the flood situation with officials.

The down stream localities in the city were the worst affected by the deluge, as water reached even the second floor of houses and people were taking shelter on the third floor of buildings to save themselves, officials said.

"The situation following release of 7.50 lac cusec water from Kota barrage is very serious and grave," said assistant fire officer, KMC, Devendra Gautam, who is engaged in the rescue operation.

People are being asked to evacuate, but most of them are not ready to leave their

houses and have climbed on rooftops to save themselves, he added.

Meanwhile, the situation improved in downstream areas of Jhalawar district which were flooded due to discharge of about 5 lakh cusecs of water from Kalisindh dam in the district.

As the discharge was brought down to 2 lakh cusecs, flood waters receded. "The flood situation is under control. No one in the district is reported trapped," Jhalawar district collector Siddharth Sihag said.

In Baran, district collector Indra Singh Rao has declared a holiday in schools on Monday.

Bundi district collector Rukmani Riyad Sihag also appealed the people to move away from areas near Chambal.

Meanwhile, Lok Sabha Speaker and Kota-Bundi MP Om Birla remained in touch with senior state officials on the flood relief operations. **PTI**

Two Naxals killed in Gadchiroli encounter

Nagpur: Two Naxals, each carrying a reward of ₹4 lakh, were killed and at least five others injured in an encounter with police on Sunday in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district, an official said.

The gun-battle took place in Narkasa forest area, located around 170 km from here in east Maharashtra, when C-60 commandos, a specialised anti-Naxal unit of State police, were combing the area, he said.

On a specific information received by district SP Shailesh Balkawade about a naxal build-up in Gyarapatti area in Dhanora taluka the security personnel rushed to the spot when they came under heavy fire from a group of 20-25 ultras around 7:30 am,

Gadchiroli Police said in a release.

"The firing continued for about half an hour. We later found bodies of two Naxals, including a woman. We also found a carbine, a one-bore rifle, several rounds of ammunition, binoculars, walkie-talkie set, a transistor, and items of daily use," the official said.

He said that around four to five Naxals were apparently injured in the skirmish.

The slain ultras are identified as Lalsu alias Shantaram Devrao Gawde, a resident of Dhanora and platoon party committee member of company no 4, and the woman cadre as Samila from Bastar in Chhattisgarh. **PTI**

Siddaramaiah slams Centre, K'taka Govt over flood relief

Bengaluru: Hitting out at the BJP Government in the State and at the Centre over the delay in announcing flood relief for Karnataka, senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Sunday termed BS Yediyurappa as the most weakest Chief Minister.

The Centre had not given even a single rupee since the floods caused havoc last month despite a Central team visiting the affected places and the state government submitting a memorandum putting the loss at ₹38,000 crore, he told reporters here.

Stating that the central Government had sent back the states memorandum, seeking some clarifications, he asked what was the difficulty in announcing interim relief and

pointed to the largescale destruction caused by the floods that hit several districts, especially in the northern parts of the state.

"I have been in politics for 40 years, I had never seen such large scale floods, coupled with drought in some districts, he said. As many as 103 taluks of 22 districts were affected by recent floods for which the State Government has sought a relief of ₹38,000 crore from the Centre. Around seven districts were reeling under drought.

Questioning as to why the Prime Minister has not visited the affected areas, he asked, doesn't Narendra Modi have any responsibility? He would have come if he had cared for farmers and poor." **PTI**

Attacking the BJP leaders from Karnataka as coward for not demanding central relief, he said: "According to me none of them has the courage. Our Chief Minister Yediyurappa is the most weakest Chief Minister"

The Congress leader also alleged that BJP was trying for another round of operation lotus (poaching of opposition MLAs), but expressed confidence that none from Congress will leave the party.

Absence and resignation of 17 rebel Congress-JD(S) MLAs during the trust vote had led to the collapse of the HD Kumaraswamy headed coalition Government in July, paving the way for the BJP to come to power. **PTI**

Mend your ways or meet same fate as Chidambaram: BJP MLA warns Didi

PTI ■ BALLIA

An Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA has warned West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to mend her ways or get ready to meet the same fate as former Finance Minister P Chidambaram who is currently lodged in jail.

The MLA from Baira Assembly constituency Surendra Singh said the Trinamool Congress supreme should "become the Prime Minister of Bangladesh" as she was opposed to the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

"The statements made by Mamata Banerjee against the NRC show that she is backed by foreign forces," Singh told reporters here on Saturday on



the sidelines of a 'krishi mela'.

"It seems that Mamata is forgetting that bad days are approaching her. She should change her language and behaviour otherwise she will meet the same fate as Congress leader P Chidambaram," he said. On September 13, Mamata

Banerjee took out a rally in Kolkata against the NRC in Assam after the final list was released on August 31 which left out 19 lakh people.

After the rally, the TMC chief had said that she would never allow the Centre to conduct a similar exercise in West Bengal.

Singh, however, said: "If Mamata wants to do politics by protecting the infiltrators from Bangladesh then she should become the Prime Minister of Bangladesh."

"In Bengal, lord Ram and lord Hanuman respectively in form of Amit Shah and Yogi Adityanath have appeared, and in the next Assembly elections, there will be a change of power in the state," he added.

PAPER WITH PASSION

Odd-even blues

As Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal proposes the controversial vehicular restriction, we must question its feasibility



Before we start a debate on vehicular curbs in the city, we need to recognise a few things. First, vehicular congestion is a problem and is impacting economic prospects with millions of man-hours lost in fruitless traffic jams in the city. The second is that while vehicular pollution is not the worst sort of pollution, it does create a whole host of noxious gases, particularly nitrous oxides, which are unique to the burning of petroleum products.

In that light is the proposal by the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to reintroduce the "odd-even" vehicle rationing scheme after the Diwali festivities to control the November smog practical or not? There is after all, little evidence to show that previous "odd-even" schemes have worked significantly and one must remember that the last time it was planned, the scheme was shot down by the courts. Besides, pollutants have been going down this year. But Kejriwal has cited an issue that he has no control over, namely stubble burning in neighbouring States.

While a vehicular restriction scheme is not a bad idea per se, something like "odd-even", which is heavy-handed, needs to be fine-tuned. In this context, Delhi-NCT should take inspiration from other cities where such practices are followed, notably London and Beijing. In Beijing for example, on weekdays numberplate based restrictions affect just 20 per cent of vehicles. In London, a heavy congestion charge on bringing vehicles into the city has resulted in a dramatic decline in inner-city pollution. However, in both cities, both local and regional public transport services, are far superior to that in the Delhi-NCT. The capital of India still suffers from a dramatic shortage of buses for example, something that has not been solved. And while the city has one of the most extensive mass-transit systems in the world today in the form of the Delhi Metro, it barely scratches the surface and one wonders where Delhi would have been minus it. Possibly once the Regional Railway Transit System (RRTS), that will connect Delhi to nearby cities alongside Phase-IV of the Delhi Metro, takes off, there could be potentially a more planned offloading of vehicles from the city's roads. One other problem with "odd-even" plan before was the huge number of exemptions, particularly for two-wheelers and for women. If a scheme is to be successful, not only should all private vehicles be covered, no exemptions must be made. But Delhi-NCT should look at long-term and permanent solutions to vehicular congestion and pollution. A congestion charge in Central Delhi, alongside a steep increase in parking charges for example, could be considered. This could be followed up with building parking towers outside and not just rely on inefficient surface parking. Also the government can look at a "pollution charge." New BS6 capable vehicles, particularly BS6 diesels, are cleaner than their BS3 and BS4 brethren, and since registration data includes such details, these vehicles should be charged extra to enter the congestion zone or at parking bays. Most importantly, just like the Delhi Traffic Police has installed hundreds of cameras across the city to monitor traffic, the State transport department should use the funds raised from the new fines under the Motor Vehicles Act to install more cameras and automated systems for traffic management. As for Diwali, it would be better to crack down on firecrackers as well as increasing awareness drives for the public about the dangers of the toxic gases that these produce.

Myth versus reality

ASCI ticks off misleading ads featuring celebrities as claims are grossly exaggerated



Ad guru Leo Burnett once said how advertising does not just circulate information, it penetrates the public mind with desires and belief. And at a time when lifestyle choices are aplenty and we seek to govern our lives with the right one, advertisements, especially those helmed by celebrities and their

gone-in-60-seconds wisdom, have a profound impact. Artful lying it is, but when it is outright falsehood, there's a problem. That's why the Advertising Standard Council of India (ASCI) has decided to verify tall claims made by companies in mass media campaigns and banned 106 of 334 ads for violating consumer rights and interests. Most of these campaigns were by topline brands and found to be selling mistruths concerning crucial sectors like healthcare, home appliances, personal care, housing, food and beverages and education, in short our everyday life and well-being. The ASCI said the commonest reason for pulling out ads was their unsubstantiated and exaggerated claims that exploited the consumers' lack of knowledge. Besides, some of the products made unverifiable leadership claims, improper use of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) logo in contravention of the FSSAI advisory and labelled products organic without fact-checks. One ad claimed an endorsement by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) which had supported the technology but never the product. It also came down heavily on celebrity campaigns, considering their mass popularity and impact, suggesting that each brand ambassador should, while endorsing products, at least ensure that all description, claims and comparisons made in the advertisement are genuine. The misleading advertisements include those of Asian Paints, featuring actors Ranbir Kapoor and Deepika Padukone; Fena Superwash Powder peddled by Preity Zinta, cricketers KL Rahul and Ravichandran Ashwin; Eureka Forbes RO hawked by Madhuri Dixit; CricPlay online game by cricketer-turned politician Gautam Gambhir and housing firms ads by actress Vidya Balan.

Earlier, too, products that falsely claim doctoral research or clinically proven results had been pulled out, be it enriching clay shampoos, chemical-free hair colours or pure *atta* noodles, all of which have a certain ratio of concentrates and ingredients that they claim to have done away with. For example, *atta* noodles have *maida* or refined flour, too, and 100 per cent dandruff-free shampoo is never a possibility. Consumer awareness and rights are anyway not scaled up in this country and without questioning, such products are not only misleading and overrated but cheating the consumer of his expectation and right to a good and healthy life. Going by the list, most of the products prey on the consumers' health insecurities instead of addressing them through scientific corroboration. Of course, there are consumer laws and various codes about advertisement in general to curb malpractices. And though food safety norms have made labelling with details mandatory, the same does not extend to other product categories with equal seriousness. However, the absence of a single statutory, regulatory body further aggravates the problem. But hopefully this will be taken care of by the Consumer Protection Bill 2019, which seeks to penalise deceptive advertisements. Disclaimers should run as tickers on both audio, print and video campaigns. Of course, the core of the advertising industry is based on tempting the consumer, capturing their mindscape and then driving up sales. True, it is hard to expect the creators to be "conscience-oriented," but given the social cascade of information flow, they have to be self-regulatory, considering they rule cultural sensibilities.

Betraying the Uighurs

The deafening silence of nations towards the oppressed Muslims in China exposes a potent combination of greed, fear and insincerity that has been guiding them



BHOPINDER SINGH

There is a deafening silence that surrounds the ongoing fate of the beleaguered Uighurs, incarcerated in Chinese detention centres. This indifference is especially ironical from the affluent Gulf sheikhdoms, who themselves cry hoarse on issues like Palestine, Rohingya, Bosnia or even Kashmir, albeit, unsuccessfully. Countries like Saudi Arabia, who have used religion to legitimise their own regime, political standing and global efforts pertaining to the matters of Ummah, are conspicuous by their feeble and pusillanimous stand against the Chinese for their treatment of the Uighur Muslims. Even the theoretically-powerful multilateral forum (world's second-largest organisation with 57 member countries representing 1.8 billion people) like the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which positions itself as "the collective voice of the Muslim world", has been equally fearful of slamming Beijing.

On the contrary, the OIC had incredulously passed a resolution at the Abu Dhabi declaration to "commend the efforts of the People's Republic of China in providing care to its Muslim citizens." Whereas voluble and belligerent nations like Pakistan, who are virtually surviving (economically and diplomatically) on the Chinese doles and bail-out packages, are expectedly mum on the Uighur affairs and are only selectively pitching Kashmir. Matters like the fate of the besieged and oppressed co-religionists like the Uighurs are not allowed to vitiate the "all-weather friendship" with China. On the contrary, it was left to the 22-odd countries, including Australia, Canada, Japan, the UK, France, Germany and the US among others, to jointly write to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) stating: "We also call on China to refrain from the arbitrary detention and restrictions on freedom of movement of Uighurs, and other Muslim and minority communities in Xinjiang."

The undeniable reality is that a lot of public posturing, cause-espousal and haranguing that is routinely done by Islamic countries is only on account of convenience, selfish considerations and not on account of morality or conscience. As Pakistan wraps itself up as the self-appointed custodian of the Kashmiris, its embarrassing silence on the Uighurs and the state-sponsored complicity against its own Baluch populace or other minority denominations like Hindus, Christians and even the sectarian "others", like the Shias and the Ahmediyas among others, makes a mockery of its self-righteousness. Pakistan's patent two-facedness has earned it the ire of its own Islamic neighbours like Iran and Afghanistan. Even though Pakistanis play up the rote "brother-Islamic-nation" card with both Iran and Afghanistan, the former fumes at the sectarian intolerance that is "allowed" within Pakistan, whereas the Afghans bristle at the active support that Islamabad bestows on Afghan-facing terror organisations. Whereas "Kashmir" unites the polity of Pakistan like



nothing else can, it is the singular societal unifier that legitimises the unwarrantedly generous budgets of the Pakistani military. The poison of the Pakistani clergy emerges as the pivotal rallying cry for Pakistani civil politicians. "Kashmir" is the ultimate weapon of distraction that can sway mood, deflect attention and cobble together the semblance of a unified nation. No such tears are even pretended on the hapless Uighurs even though the situation, treatment and Constitutional status of the Kashmiris and Uighurs cannot even be compared. Kashmiris are entitled to all Constitutional rights, guarantees and opportunities as is applicable to others. Clearly, realpolitik and commerce overrides all other considerations in the Middle East. China is the high-temple of transactional relationships and is flexing its "scale" muscle to extract its own pound of flesh. Beyond beholden or vassal nations like Pakistan (owing to the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor investment) or pathologically anti-US countries like Iran for whom China has a natural traction, others like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar are engaged in very high-stakes trade and commerce with Beijing. That is perennially at the risk of earning China's ire, should these countries speak out against the Uighurs. Reciprocally, China never

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AS PAKISTAN WRAPS ITSELF UP AS THE SELF-APPOINTED CUSTODIAN OF THE KASHMIRIS, ITS EMBARRASSING SILENCE ON THE UIGHURS AND THE STATE-SPONSORED COMPLICITY AGAINST ITS OWN BALUCH POPULACE OR OTHER MINORITY DENOMINATIONS MAKES A MOCKERY OF ITS SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS
 ”

expresses any concern with state actions like the Jamal Khashoggi episode, Baluch insurgency or other human right issues in the region. It is a mutually-beneficial silence maintained by both China and these nations that selectively bury some issues like the blatant Uighur exploitation, while allowing for some others. Even when the United Nation forums were taking up the Uighur issue against China (often by Western powers on account of their own realpolitik considerations against China), the visiting Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman endorsed the Chinese "counter-terrorism" strategy against the Uighurs in Xinjiang by stating, "We respect and support China's rights to take counter-terrorism and de-extremism measures to safeguard national security. We stand ready to strengthen cooperation with China." He added for good measure that the Saudis oppose "interference by external forces in China's internal affairs." Shortly thereafter, a multi-billion Saudi-Chinese oil deal and agreement to partake in the gargantuan "One Belt, One Road" initiative was promptly confirmed. Independent bodies have consistently called the bluff on Chinese camps that forcibly host up to one million Uighurs in what the Chinese regime calls "boarding schools", "vocational centres" and even "re-education centres". Independent researchers

have described the same as "wartime concentration camps" that are part of a "systematic campaign of social re-engineering and cultural genocide." Reports of torture, forced sterilisation and political re-education are commonplace, yet there is not a twitch of condemnation from major Islamic nations. Already, the Chinese have brazenly forbidden people from practising Islam in certain areas and banned elements of religiosity like keeping fasts, wearing hijab, growing a beard or even retaining "Muslim" sounding names. The Chinese Government has openly announced its five-year to "Sinicize" Islam via a virtual denouncement of religion. The ingenious attempt to "guide Islam to be compatible with socialism and implement measures to Sinicize the religion" is a barely concealed socio-cultural genocide that has escaped any tangible condemnation from Islamic nations. The sheer hypocrisy of silence surrounding Uighur suppression exposes a potent combination of greed, fear and insincerity that guides some of these nations, who often shroud themselves with fake emotions about issues that do not earn them either petrodollars or the wrath of countries like China. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry)

SOUNDBITE

We reiterate our commitment to the welfare of (Singur) farmers, alongside promoting industry. My humble pronam to *Maa, Mati, Manush*.



West Bengal CM —Mamata Banerjee

FM's measures will help make exports competitive & especially benefit MSME exporters with a new scheme for reimbursing taxes & ease of doing business.



Commerce Minister —Piyush Goyal

I want to appeal to people to promote their native languages but also use Hindi to make the dream of Bapu and Sardar Patel of one language come true.



Home Minister —Amit Shah

As an actress, I am okay with constructive criticism from film critics because it is a part of my job to take it all in my stride.



Actor —Kangana Ranaut

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fix driving culture

Sir — Looks like Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari will not relent easily. Undaunted by opposition from BJP-ruled States to the hefty road penalties, he has boldly asserted that he is not afraid of street protests, explaining, "My responsibility is to save the lives of 1.20 lakh people who die on road in accidents." He further reasoned that it is everyone's responsibility to save people's lives besides underscoring "the duty of the State as well." We can blame successive Governments for failing to stem the rot at the "rogue" transport office but what about the way we have chosen to drive? Frankly, in India, one can procure a vehicle, learn to drive and get licence from a tout. It could be a truck, a light commercial vehicle or a motorbike. Which means that just about anyone can start driving on the road in real traffic. The dangers are immense, for what one is driving has the ability to kill. The working presumption is not a scientific one: That everyone's life is dear to

The need for an anti-lynching law

Attempts being made to help those who committed the murder of Tabrez Ansari in cold blood amount to subversion of justice. Ansari was attacked by a mob on June 17 after he was accused of being a thief. Like the Pehlu Khan case, the Ansari case now does no credit to India's criminal justice system. Something must be terribly wrong if even open-and-shut cases go the way they do without a glimmer of hope for justice to the victims of hate crime. By dropping the murder charges and choosing to slap culpable homicide not amounting to murder, the Jharkhand police has shown utter lack of professionalism and naked partisanship. The footage of the mob lynching a person clearly establishes the identity of the killers; yet the ruling dispensation has been far too lenient with them. In both the cases of lynching, heart attack was cited as the cause of death. The logic is that the lynching (captured on camera) does not matter because the alleged victims would have been dead anyway due to cardiac arrest. The attribution of heart attacks to stress, drug and injuries is a vain attempt at impartiality. Obfuscation, by mixing up head injuries with heart attack and vice versa,



convinces nobody. The adjectives "light" and "minimal" introduced by the police to describe the brain haemorrhage sustained by Ansari in the mob attack says it all. By the prosecution's logic, death must occur on the spot for a crime to be treated as murder. The way the lynching cases are going, there's a dire need to formulate a special anti-lynching law.

G David Milton Maruthancode

them so they will by default drive carefully, learn to swim quickly than sink. Along with fear, Indians need to learn how to make the process of driving a pleasurable one. **KS Jayatheertha** Bengaluru

Solution for Kashmir

Sir — Irrespective of its merits and demerits, a step at unraveling the Gordian knot in Kashmir has been taken. A pause should certainly be in order but it can-

not prolong beyond a point. Restoring normalcy, even in calibrated stages, must be visibly seen to be prompt and earnest. We cannot increasingly be circumspect as the structure and strategy are in place, built all these years as we countered militancy

and unrest in the Valley. International opinion has always been counted in our diplomatic stances and initiatives and it tends to be in our favour. But there always exists the probability of a tilt towards an abrupt change. Besides, we must also factor in the reality that ensuing socio-economic imbalances post the abrogation of Article 370 would be onerous to tackle. The sooner we move on to the next phase, the quicker we can put the Kashmir episode behind us. **R Narayanan** Navi Mumbai

Suppressing voices

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Grudge wars in Andhra" (September 14). The house arrest of N Chandrababu Naidu and his son was unwarranted. Leaders have the right to take out rallies to express their dissatisfaction with the Government. Resorting to such tactics amounts to curtailment of Constitutional rights. **Shambhavi** Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

The gains of sustainability

It's time to prepare for the future before the nature of raw materials and inputs changes so drastically that a new civilisational order is required



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

There comes a time in management of knowledge when phrases become clichés and are repeated ad nauseam, without many pausing to think about their meaning or significance. One such phrase is "The world is changing."

What is often not clear is what is changing, by how much and in which direction? Unfortunately though, this does not even bother people sufficiently for them to pause. This is also true about the watershed times that we live in. Fossil fuel is now nearly passé. Hydrocarbon-based energy, to move vehicles and generate heat, is given a lease by the most optimistic of forecasters of not more than 30 to 40 years. The rest of the debate is known too well to bear recount.

Yet, there are obvious aspects which never figure in the debate. The overall consumption would indeed go down if the population was to remain a constant. The reduction in the quantum of the demand of the existing population is more than made up by the rise in demand from the population which is subsequently added. To bridge the gap between past consumption of the horizon year and current year of reckoning, therefore, becomes a methodological requirement. New consumers keep the level of consumption constant.

Similarly, developments of one sector are very often serenaded without factoring a composite picture. Consider the way a particular Minister has been propagating electrical vehicles. These, in their present state of research and development (R&D), are at best a showpiece purchase by those who can afford a third or fourth car. The battery of an electrical vehicle is not only exorbitant and with a short life but cumbersome to maintain and tricky to deal with. Yet, coming as it does from the exalted office of the Minister-concerned, it has had a dampening influence on the enthusiasm for petrol or diesel vehicles. Inter se parity rarely passes the mind of those whose careers depend on attention-grabbing statements or positioning themselves as 'innovative'!

No less dramatic is the threatening effect of climate change: the melting glaciers, sometimes the change in nature of the rivers. Not unknown is the level of the sea water rising in certain parts of the world, at certain times.

Not only is there a fight for the forest cover but there are lifestyle issues related to forest produce. Typical of the products would be Gum Karaya. This product is used in food industries as a thickener and emulsifier of food. It can be used in concentration as stabiliser for aerated dairy products and frozen dessert. It can also be used for controlling the formation of ice crystals. Clearly it is an input to lifestyle issues of many urbanised folks. The examples can be multiplied.

The snag is people are not talking of this enough and not enough R&D is going into it. These are big issues. Perhaps so big, that they get trivialised. Whereas all the structures are there to pay attention to these concerns, the outcomes are difficult to locate or for that matter even draw significant attention. The non-descript of the urban elite is likely to yawn over all this, shrug his shoulder and say "well... these are complicated issues." In one breath the line of thought has been both mystified and de-constructed and the bandwagon rolls on.

For the sake of argument one can be tolerant about this attitude and one can talk of lesser rarified things like forest cover. There are silent workers, say in Manipur, who are working to not only save the forest cover but to extend them. One such person is Moirangthem Loiyao. He works silently to clear the roots of the trees and plant fresh saplings to keep the acreage of the forest cover growing. He has not been recognised by any award. Apparently he does not even care. Even comparatively more experienced people in forestry have testified to his having saved flora and fauna by replanting 300 acres of forests. Indeed, he quit his job to plant different types of plants in Punshilok forest in Langol hill range of Manipur. It took him nearly two decades and, of course, Punshilok has become a plastic-free zone. He claims that he does not want to buy land and own it. The Chief Conservator of Forests, Manipur, Kerelhouvi Angami claims that anyone else is equally welcome to replicate Loiyao's feat. There are reserved forests, there are protected forests and there is a whole typology of forests entirely lost to the learning of avant garde curriculum of so-branded elite schools. The proposition is simple: What is the kind of generation we are preparing for the future? In the meanwhile, the water table keeps receding and water conservation is more talked of than acted upon. It's time to think of the future and prepare for it before the nature of the raw materials and the inputs changes so drastically that a new civilisational order is required.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

INFLATION HAS BEEN KEPT VERY MUCH BELOW THE FOUR PER CENT MARK AND THERE ARE CLEAR SIGNS OF REVIVAL IN THE ECONOMY.

—FINANCE MINISTER
 NIRMALA SITHARAMAN



THE STEPS ANNOUNCED TODAY WILL NOT REVIVE THE INDIAN ECONOMY, THEY ARE PURELY COSMETIC AND PIECEMEAL.

— CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON
 ANAND SHARMA

Powerless, cosmetic moves

Given the extant tariff policy and Power Purchase Agreements, the Centre's plans to reform PPAs to provide power at competitive prices and make discoms viable fall far short



UTTAM GUPTA

The Union Government has set up a committee to reform Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) to ensure power availability at competitive prices and make distribution companies (discoms) viable. A PPA is a contract between a generation company (genco) and discom which lays down the terms of electricity purchase by the latter from the former, including the tariff, which is subject to approval by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC).

The Cabinet is also considering a new tariff policy which will inter alia require discoms to pay a surcharge to the genco for delayed payment, which would be equal to the commercial rate of interest. The Government has already made it mandatory for discoms to open Letters of Credit (LoC) for getting supply from gencos from August 1, 2019. However, State-owned gencos are not covered by this dispensation.

The discoms would be allowed to recover only up to 15 per cent of under-recovered power supply cost from other consumers implying they need to absorb the remaining 85 per cent. Also, they won't get any grant or loan if they don't reduce losses.

When seen in juxtaposition with the extant tariff policy environment as also the architecture of PPAs, the intended reforms and proposed measures are laughable.

On tariff policy, under directions from the State governments, discoms sell electricity to poor households and farmers at heavily subsidised rates, even free in some States. To make up for the under-recovery, they charge exorbitant rates from industries and businesses; yet they continue to incur losses forcing the Centre to come out with packages to bail them out. Three packages have already been given since 2000, with the latest being Ujjwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) launched in 2015 and the fourth is in the offing as alluded to by Power Minister RK Singh.

In this backdrop, if discoms' recovery of under-recovered power supply cost from others (industries) is restricted only to 15 per cent, their losses will multiply.

Instead of allowing proper pricing of supplies to households and farmers and curb theft (the only logical way to cut under-recovery), the Government wants discoms to absorb losses. Do they have Alladin's lamp? Penalising them by charging commercial rates of interest, insisting on LoC or denying them loans, for not reducing losses, amount to adding insult to injury.

Yet another factor adding to the woes of discoms is the unusually high price they are forced to pay to gencos under long-term PPAs which account for nearly 86 per cent of the power sold (of the balance, ten per cent is covered under short-term agreements and four per cent sold on trading platform). Herein, two extreme scenarios are discussed to show how discoms and eventually the consumer and the taxpayers are taken for a ride.

First, in consonance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan of giving a big push to renewable energy, in Andhra Pradesh, promoters of 139 power plants based on solar and wind energy had signed agreements with the discoms during the last five years under the erstwhile dispensation led by N Chandrababu Naidu. Under

PPAs SHOULD HAVE A CLAUSE TO PROVIDE FOR CANCELLATION OF THE CONTRACT IF ANY IRREGULARITY INVOLVING CORRUPTION IS NOTICED. ON THE CONSUMPTION SIDE, THEY SHOULD DO AWAY WITH SUBSIDISED OR FREE SUPPLY AND BRING DOWN POWER THEFT TO ZERO. SANS THESE REFORMS, THERE IS NO WAY OF SALVAGING DISCOMS AND PROTECTING INDUSTRIES AND BUSINESSES FROM HIGH TARIFF



the PPAs, the discoms had agreed to pay to the gencos ₹4 to 6 per unit which is almost double the cost of supply, about ₹2.4 per unit. At such high tariff, discoms are incurring huge losses. Of the total loss of close to ₹7,000 crore in the last five years, an overwhelming ₹5,500 crore was on account of excess payments to the generators of renewable energy.

This prompted the new Government led by YS Jaganmohan Reddy to set up a high-level committee in July, to review those agreements with a view to bring down the tariff. But the decision has been stayed by the Andhra Pradesh High Court (APHC). The issue is heading for a protracted legal battle and it will be some time before the proceedings get concluded and final pronouncement from the Supreme Court comes.

Meanwhile, investors in these projects (mostly foreign investors) have raised the pitch, arguing that any review will dent the sanctity of contracts, thereby eroding their confidence in India as an attractive investment destination. The countries from where these companies come have taken up the matter with the Centre, which in turn, has asked the AP Government to honour the PPAs. The way events are unfolding, it is unlikely that the issue will get settled in favor of discoms.

At another extreme, gencos had agreed to charge from discoms low tariff — using the Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) method. Under the long-term PPAs signed by

Tata Power Ltd (TPL) and Adani Power Ltd (APL) with regard to their Ultra Mega Power Projects (UMPP) in Gujarat, these companies had committed to sell at ₹2.26 per unit and ₹2.35 per unit respectively for supplies to discoms in the State. Both projects are based on coal; TPL is entirely on imported coal, APL uses 70 per cent domestic and 30 per cent imported coal. Unlike all other PPAs wherein increase in the cost of fuel is pass-through, for supplies from these UMPPs, the consumers were fully shielded. In fact, TPL/APL had arrangements in place to ensure that they got coal supplies at a fixed price all through the project life.

These included TPL acquiring 25-30 per cent equity in three Indonesian mines. Likewise, Adani acquired a coal mine in Queensland, Australia in 2010. But, this turned out to be an illusion.

In 2012, TPL/APL petitioned the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) seeking 'compensatory tariff' — a sophisticated nomenclature for hike in tariff. They argued that following an order of the Indonesian Government in September 2011, fixing a Minimum Export Price (MEP) of coal, they were forced to pay more which should be compensated. This was instantly allowed by the CERC and confirmed by the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL) in December 2016.

The Supreme Court (SC) after initially rejecting the claim (order of

April 2017), finally directed CERC "to amend the PPAs to enable pass-through of fuel price escalation subject to a cap" (order dated October 29, 2018).

We see a typical syndrome of "head I win and tail you lose." While, on one hand, there are PPAs which allow gencos to charge more from day one, even where the agreements were crafted to charge low tariff, those were subsequently altered to provide for escalation (TPL and APL).

For the discoms being squeezed at both the ends by having to pay more to gencos and compelled to charge less from preferred users (farmers and poor households), any talk of making them financially viable or reduce tariff burden on industries — as contemplated in the new tariff policy — is meaningless.

The Government should look at as to why cost of supplying power is high; especially aspects such as 'gold plating' (a euphemism for claiming higher investment than actual), over-invoicing of fuel bills need to be seriously examined and remedial steps taken. For instance, PPAs should have a clause to provide for cancellation of the contract if any irregularity involving corruption is noticed. On the consumption side, they should do away with subsidised or free supply and bring down power theft to zero. Sans these reforms, there is no way of salvaging discoms and protecting industries and businesses from high tariff.

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

Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah

With the Saudi monarchy and Gulf Arabs making unprecedented and self-interested political moves, Islamabad should also refigure its nationhood in the context of its South Asian heritage



NADEEM PARACHA

On August 31 this year, former chairman of the Senate and long-time member of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Raza Rabbani was quoted in the media as saying it is high time for Pakistan to pull out of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He then added that the "bubble of an Islamic ummah" (global Muslim community) had burst.

Rabbani was echoing the thoughts aired by many Pakistanis — especially on social media sites — who are incensed by the manner in which Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) reacted to India's move to controversial-

ly remove Article 370 from India's Constitution and thus nullify the 'special status' that the article provided to India-Occupied Kashmir.

The Saudi monarchy went ahead with a \$15 billion investment deal with an Indian business giant, whereas the UAE Government bestowed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the UAE's highest civilian award.

The English weekly *The Friday Times* had reported on August 9 that Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan was not happy with Saudi Arabia and the UAE's passive stance on Kashmir. But when, in mid-August, news of Saudi investment in India became common knowledge, and later, when Modi was bestowed with an award by the UAE, Imran Khan didn't say much. In fact, his Foreign Minister went to the extent of suggesting that "international relations are above religious sentiment."

Of course, Pakistan was never given this privilege by the same Arab monarchies. In the 1970s when Saudi/UAE jobs, money and

oil began to arrive in Pakistan it was with the condition to gradually roll back the manner in which the state and governments of Pakistan had advocated Islam — sometimes by merging it with Islamic modernism and sometimes fusing it with socialism.

After the Shia clerics came to power in Iran in 1979, Pakistan could still not claim that foreign relations are above religious sentiment as the state of Pakistan gladly embraced militant Saudi proxies in Pakistan against the country's Shia minority, segments of which eventually became Iranian proxies.

Nevertheless, there is nothing incorrect about what the Foreign Minister says. Indeed, foreign relations are almost entirely based on geopolitical and economic interests of states. Yet, for over 40 years or so, the Pakistani state and governments have been passionately lecturing their citizens about the notion of a "Muslim ummah" and that Pakistan was at the core of it.

The more immediate roots of this claim can be found in the mid-

1970s when oil-rich Arab countries began enjoying windfall profits due to an unprecedented rise in oil prices, and when Saudi Arabia successfully replaced Egypt as the most influential Muslim country.

The Pakistani state's thinking also began to transform after the country lost its eastern wing in 1971. Pan-Islamist ideas and the word "ummah" became a lot more common in the post-1971 state narrative, mainly to offset the creeping paranoia that Islam alone could not keep an ethnically diverse Pakistan together.

The perception that there was an ummah and Pakistan was an important part of it was bolstered when Pakistan was made the launching pad for an armed jihad against the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul.

Saudi Arabia (along with the US) became the largest donor of financial and military aid to Pakistan during this period. Their reasons were geopolitical in nature but, of course, Saudi Arabia and Pakistani dictator General Zia

explained the endeavour as a jihad by the ummah against the godless Soviet Union. What's more, it also gave Zia the excuse to start defining himself as 'Mard-i-Momin'.

Former senator Rabbani is right in saying that this bubble has burst — especially when the Saudi monarchy is making some unprecedented political and social moves to change the geopolitical and ideological complexion of the Kingdom.

Pakistan, on the other hand, is left lamenting that it was made a proxy of the Arabs when they needed to enhance their political clout in the Muslim world through the ummah narrative.

Fact is, the roots of the idea of an ummah run even deeper than when the populist ZA Bhutto regime first floated the idea in 1974 to get close to oil-rich Arab monarchies. According to historian Mubarak Ali and celebrated sociologist Hamza Alvi, in the 19th Century, when the already depleted Muslim rule in India completely collapsed, many Muslims became

aware of their minority status vis a vis the Hindus.

In his 2011 book *Pakistan In Search of Identity*, Ali writes that this is when some members of the fading Muslim elite began to claim that the Muslims of India were a part of the larger Muslim universe, the ummah. In a 1997 essay "Ironies of History", Alvi explains that the idea of the ummah was proliferated among India's Muslims by 19th Century pan-Islamists, many of whom had the backing of the last remaining caliphs of the Ottoman Empire.

Interestingly, according to Christopher Jaffrelot's *The Pakistan Paradox*, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, actually discouraged the whole idea of the ummah because he believed it diluted his idea of forming a concrete Indian Muslim identity.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, too, aired similar concerns when he refused to join the Khilafat Movement (1919-24) led by pan-Islamists and the ulema. Yet, some 25 years after

Pakistan's birth, the state reinstated the idea of the ummah. Just as this idea had emerged in the 19th Century to appease Indian Muslims who had suddenly become conscious of their minority status, in the 1970s, the shock of losing East Pakistan because of ethnic divisions, reinvigorated the same idea to (albeit artificially) lift Pakistan from its South Asian roots and place it at the core of the larger Muslim world.

This diluted Pakistan's identity and the manner in which it described itself as a Muslim majority state. It began looking for validation from Arab monarchs to the extent of sometimes changing the way its South Asian Muslim ancestors had practised their faith for centuries, and adopting the behaviours of rich Arabs.

It is time to refigure Pakistani nationhood in the context of its rich South Asian heritage, especially now that India is digging exactly the kind of hole that we once dug and then fell into. (Courtesy: *The Dawn*)

SBI to move RBI to offer fixed-floating rate home-loans

PTI ■ LEH

The largest lender State Bank of India will be seeking clarifications from the Reserve Bank whether it can offer long-term home loans with fixed rates in the beginning and convert the same into floating rates later, chairman Rajnish Kumar has said.

The move comes after the Reserve Bank has mandated banks to shift all retail lending to floating rates that will be determined by external benchmarks like the repo rate. Kumar said there is a lack of clarity on how it can go ahead with the fixed rate products, after the RBI's new regulations on floating rates.

Hinting at the volatility in the repo rate, he said some home buyers may want their loan rates to be fixed. For such buyers, it can offer a 'fixed-floating' product, wherein the rates are locked in for an initial period of say five to ten years, and then turn floating.

The need for making the product floating in the latter part arises out of the bank's inability to project the liability movements in the future, he said, adding typically, home loans are for about 30 years.

It can be noted that the repo rate at which the central bank lends to the system is at a nine-year low of 5.40 per cent.

Speaking to reporters here over the weekend, Kumar said the central bank's recent guidelines on floating rate products



for the retail segment has necessitated the need for the clarity.

Kumar has clarified that from an asset liability management perspective, it is difficult to have a fixed rate product for a long term like 30 years, the maximum tenor of a home loan now from the bank now. Some private sector peers offer up to 35 years of home loans depending on in the age of the borrower, though.

At present, SBI has a floating rate home loan product linked to its marginal cost of funds-based lending rate and it recently withdrew one linked to the repo rate. It does not have a fixed rate home loan product at present.

As of now, under the marginal cost of funds based lending, floating rate loans are reset as when the interest rates fall or rise, but fixed rate loans are reset in 9-12 months. But when the loans are linked to the repo rate, the rates can change sharply, depending on how RBI acts on the rate front.

Many mortgage borrowers normally choose fixed rates, as that helps them better manage their finances because of the certainty about the EMI outgoes.

Kumar said the bank does not have adequate liabilities linked to the floating rate product which makes such a floating product difficult.

Speaking on the RBI-mandated systemic shift to external benchmarked lending rates, he said SBI will have minimal issues with the same.

He said the industry leader was the first to move on to the repo-linked loans and deposits since May, and has many of its products aligned to the external benchmarks now.

However, he said such shifts make asset liability management 'challenging' as there lack of floating rate liabilities now.

About the impact of the mega bank mergers on SBI, he said it will not impact the nation's largest bank as SBI has specified business model and target segments, and will continue with the same.

MoS Meghwal for voluntary action to avoid single use plastic

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Sunday said people on their own should avoid single use plastic to help protect environment.

Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) has called for ban on single use plastic. Can we discontinue single use plastic? We have to take oath that I will not use single use plastic one day in a week," the Minister of state for heavy industries and public enterprises said here.

Addressing "Vision New India 2022-Development Through Technology for All" conclave jointly organised by his Ministry and the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, he said an alternative should be invented to replace single use plastic.

"India is one of the signatories of the Paris Agreement. We have to protect the environment and take suo motu action to reduce carbon emission," he said.

Members of the United Nations negotiated and adopted the Paris Agreement in which India has made four commitments, including reducing greenhouse gas emission intensity of its GDP by 33-35 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.



Referring to the last public speech by former president A P J Abdul Kalam at IIM Shillong in 2015, Meghwal said the late leader had spoken about the need to save the Earth.

"It is the duty of the present generation to follow his words to save the earth. We follow the ideas of APJ Abdul Kalam. But we do not follow his words. We have to follow," the minister said.

Meghwal also mooted the idea of collaboration between corporates and academia on tapping renewable energy at Chennai Airport and referred to the example of the airport in Kochi, which uses solar power.

"Why cannot we introduce this (concept) in Chennai, Kolkata (airports) or in any other parts of the country? We have to take some suo motu action and it can be done under CSR activity," he said.

He said companies can form a consortium to take up the initiative and can collaborate with institutions like IIT Madras.

Markets to eye global factors, macro data; stimulus measures may lift sentiment: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Equity markets will take cues from global developments and wholesale inflation data this week, while the third tranche of stimulus measures announced by the government may bolster sentiment, analysts said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday unveiled over Rs 70,000 crore of measures for exporters and the real estate sector, including about Rs 30,000 crore new spending in plans such as setting up of a stressed asset fund, as part of efforts to boost economic growth from a six-year low.

"The new measures announced by the FM send the clear message that the government is giving top priority to reviving growth in the economy. The measures relating to housing and export promotion like textiles will provide a big boost to employment too since these are labour intensive industries."

"The Rs 10,000 crore fund for providing last mile funding for stalled non-NPA, non-NCLT (housing) projects needs to be specially appreciated," said V K Vijayakumar Chief



Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

On the global front, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East ratcheted up after Yemen's Houthis rebels carried out drone attacks on two major oil plants in Saudi Arabia, affecting more than half of the Kingdom's output and putting upward pressure on global oil prices.

Any spike in crude oil rates will affect the fiscal position of net energy importers like India. Brent crude has been trading at USD 60 per barrel levels.

Participants will also track WPI inflation data scheduled to be announced on Monday.

"Going ahead, we have important numbers such as WPI inflation, food and fuel, but we see trade war, global markets taking the spotlight. The market is poised to follow the path of how global markets respond and move," Mustafa

Nadeem, CEO, Epic Research said. Factors such as movement of rupee against the US dollar and foreign capital flows will also influence trading sentiment in the market.

Meanwhile, global markets will also focus on the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision and Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) economic projections.

Signs of easing US-China trade tensions boosted the domestic equities last week. During the last week, the Sensex advanced 403.22 points or 1.09 per cent. On Friday, it closed at 37,384.99, up 280.71 points.

Jimet Modi, Founder and CEO, SAMCO Securities and StockNote, said markets are waiting for the festive season to gauge how consumer spending pans out and whether there is a change in sentiments at the bottom of the pyramid.

FPIs turn net buyers, infuse ₹1,841 cr in first half of Sept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors turned net buyers in the first half of September, pumping in ₹1,841 crore into the capital markets, after remaining sellers for the previous two months.

The latest inflows have been triggered by improving investor sentiment on the back of easing US-China trade war and supporting macroeconomic data, experts said.

According to the latest depositories data, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) withdrew a net amount of ₹2,031.02 crore from equities but put in ₹3,872.19 crore in the debt segment during September 3-13, translating into a total net inflow of ₹1,841.17 crore into the capital markets.

Prior to this, FPIs pulled out a net ₹5,920.02 crore in August and ₹2,985.88 crore in July from the domestic capital markets (both equity and debt).

"The markets have been largely positive on back of cooling US-China trade war. Besides, the July IIP came out at 4.3 per cent which could have helped with the investor's sentiments," said Harsh Jain, COO at Groww.

Sebi mulls new whistle blower mechanism for auditors, other 'gate-keepers'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to unearth financial irregularities and other fraudulent transactions at listed companies, capital market regulator Sebi is planning to set up a new whistle-blower mechanism for auditors and other 'gate-keepers' to report such cases.

The proposed move assumes significance in the wake of several auditors in the recent past decided to exit from their audit mandate after certain listed companies failed to take remedial actions despite financial wrongdoings having been flagged in their auditors' observations.

Officials said most of these auditor exits have taken place at a much later stage, but a 'confidentiality mechanism' can help in cases of financial frauds being reported at an early stage by auditors, independent directors and others considered to be 'gate-keepers' or 'conscience keepers'.

Regulators and enforcement agencies have often stressed that auditors, independent directors, investment bankers, valuers and other such entities have a greater responsibility to ensure compliance to regulations and

safeguard the interest by minority shareholders.

While Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has announced a new mechanism to reward informants with up to Rs 1 crore cash for any credible inside information for providing information on insider trading at listed companies, this is not applicable to corporate entities and professionals such as auditors and lawyers.

While there were suggestions from some quarters that auditors, lawyers and consultants on behalf of their firms should also be allowed to avail the 'informant mechanism', Sebi was of the view that corporate entities were as such under a duty to report.

Besides, lawyers are bound of confidentiality and it would be considered unethical for them to complain against their clients.

"However, as far as gate-keepers such as auditors are considered, a separate confidentiality mechanism is being proposed," a top official said.

The proposal is in early stages as of now and a final decision would be taken only after a detailed consultation process with all the concerned stakeholders, the official added.

Facebook global exec moots 'prospective' solution on WhatsApp issue

GOVT STANDS FIRM ON TRACEABILITY

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Facebook global executive Nick Clegg has proposed a 'prospective' mechanism for WhatsApp to act on cases flagged by law enforcement agencies, but the government has refused to budge on its demand for traceability of messages.

The issue of traceability has been a flashpoint between the government and WhatsApp, and the Facebook-owned messaging platform has so far resisted India's demand for identification of message originators, arguing that doing so would undermine its policy on privacy and end-to-end encryption.

A senior government official told PTI that Facebook Vice-President, Global Affairs and Communications, Nick Clegg, during his meeting with IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad last week mooted alternatives to absolute traceability of messages, including use of 'meta data' and machine intelligence for dealing with the issue, even offering to harness

WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook linkages to provide assistance to law enforcement agencies.

When contacted, a Facebook spokesman said: "Facebook cares deeply about the safety of people in India and Nick's meetings this week provided opportunities to discuss our commitment to supporting privacy and security in every app we provide and how we can continue to work productively with the Government of India towards these shared goals."

A person aware of WhatsApp's position on the matter emphasised that the platform cannot read messages exchanged as they are encrypted. It is learnt that Clegg in meetings with top authorities, including Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval as well as IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on September 12, reiterated the US tech giant's stance that it will abide by a lawful request for information by the Indian government, but it cannot read messages exchanged on its platforms.

Clegg told the officials that the company can provide 'signals' and meta data such as who calls were made to and duration, among others, of lawfully identified users, a source said.



The US social media giant has agreed to provide India with 'meta data' of any user of its platforms, including WhatsApp, that the government lawfully identifies but has insisted it cannot look into messages exchanged as they are encrypted.

India is home to 400 million WhatsApp users and more than 328 million Facebook users. Social media companies in India have drawn flak from the government in recent past over instances of circulation of fake news, breach of user confidentiality, unauthorised data sharing by the apps and concerns over privacy and data security.

WhatsApp in particular has been under fire over users misusing the platform for circulation of fake news that have incited mob fury. The Indian government has made it clear that it intends to strengthen the legal framework and make social media platforms more accountable under law.

Maruti Suzuki's PV mkt share shrinks in April-Aug; Hyundai, Mahindra gain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Auto-makers Maruti Suzuki India and Tata Motors' domestic passenger vehicle market share declined in April-August this year, while Hyundai and M&M witnessed gain in the same period, as per data compiled by industry body SIAM.

The country's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) saw its market share dip by over 2 percentage points during the period under review and slip below 50 per cent in the domestic passenger vehicle segment in April-August.

The company sold 5,55,064 units this fiscal as compared with 7,57,289 units during April-August previous year. Its market share has come down from 52.16 per cent last year to 49.83 per cent in the April-August this fiscal.

Overall PV sales during the April-August of the current fiscal stands at 11,09,930 units as compared to 14,51,647 units.

When contacted MSI executive director (marketing and sales) Shashank Srivastava told PTI that while cars and vans (A and C segment) have performed well, there has been a drop in sales of utility vehicles (B segment).

"This is because of constraint in supply of Ertiga having a large waiting period," he added.

Besides, there is a shift in consumer preference in SUV segment towards petrol where currently the company does not have a variant, Srivastava said adding that MSI plans to introduce petrol variants of Vitara Brezza and S-Cross BS-VI later this fiscal.

Similarly, Tata Motors has reported sales of 60,093 units this fiscal so far as against 98,702 units last year. Its market share has fallen by 1.39 percentage points to 5.41 per cent

in the current fiscal as against 6.79 per cent last year.

On the other hand, Hyundai Motor India saw its market share go up by 2.77 percentage points in the April-August this year. The company sold a total of 2,03,729 units this fiscal as compared to 2,26,396 units.

Despite selling less this fiscal, the company's market share has risen from 15.59 per cent last fiscal to 18.36 per cent.

"2019 is a milestone year for Hyundai Motor India as we launched three products in three different segments...The new launches have led to increase in customer traction, footfalls in showrooms and market share," Hyundai Motor India Ltd National Sales Head Vikas Jain said.

Similarly, Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) sold 89,733 units this fiscal so far as compared with 1,00,015 units in April-August last financial year, still its market share has risen by 1.19 percentage points this fiscal to 8.08 per cent from 6.89 per cent.

Likewise, Toyota Kirloskar Motor sold 53,977 units this fiscal so far as against 67,051 units in the same period previous year. Its market share rose to 4.86 per cent from 4.62 per cent earlier.

Other players like Renault India, Skoda Auto, Volkswagen India saw their market shares increase marginally during April-August this year.

Honda Cars sold 51,569 units as compared to 79,599 units last year, shrinking its market share marginally to 4.64 per cent this fiscal as against 5.48 per cent in the same period last fiscal.

Similarly, Ford India saw its market share go down marginally to 2.7 per cent from 2.81 per cent in April-August last year. It sold 30,010 units this year as against 40,799 units.

Disappointed with Govt's measures to boost real estate: CREDAI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's apex realtors group said it is disappointed with the government's measures to support the sector, as it did not address the key demands such as tax rebate and lower interest rate for home buyers and developers.

CREDAI's National Chairman Jaxay Shah said the fund created for completing the stalled real estate projects will have limited impact as it excludes those projects which are either facing insolvency proceedings or become non-performing assets (NPAs).

"Last month, we had met the finance minister and made several demands to improve liquidity and boost demand in the real estate sector. But, unfortunately our demands have not been met," Shah told PTI on Sunday.

Reiterating the demand of the association that has about 12,000 members, Shah said the Government should withdraw its decision to ban subvention scheme as it was for the benefit of home buyers and helped generate demand.

Poor decisions taken by AI may affect its stake sale targets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi-led Government's plan to sell debt-laden airline Air India is well on track but the sale may not mop up the targeted yield owing to its value erosion over last several months since it decided to stop selling tickets on the platform of global ticketing distribution company Amadeus.

In October last year, Travelport had announced that it had "won competitive tender process undertaken by Air India for the sole provision of distribution of its domestic flight content in the airline's home market".

The national carrier had decided to shift to Travelport despite several senior officials raising objections against the move. Joining hands with Travelport meant giving access to details of AI's flyers to Interglobe Technologies Quotient, a strategic business unit of InterGlobe Enterprises which is the parent company of IndiGo, India's largest airline by market share and Air India's biggest competitor.

It is understood Amadeus managed about 50 per cent of Air India's ticket sales through



its GDS network.

GDS is a globally connected computerised reservation network offering a one-point access to airline bookings, hotel reservations as well associated travel-related areas including car rentals.

Dr Sanat Kaul, Chairman International Foundation for Aviation Aerospace and Drones said "Air India has been on the proverbial ventilator for long time. Divesting its saleable assets and properties is not the answer to this mess. Reducing its vast GDS distribution network to one vendor is shrinking its catchment area of passengers. The government policy of appointing one CMD shortly take a final call on the timing, price and amount of shares of Air India to be sold.

lines business shows its lack of seriousness. Taxpayers are the victims of this policy unlike other airlines which go in for liquidation."

The committee of secretaries (CoS) headed by Cabinet Secretary PK Sinha has given the green signal to offload 95 per cent stake in the national carrier. Last year, the Centre had invited bids to sell a 76 per cent stake in the ailing airline, along with the transfer of management control.

The divestment proposal is presently with group of ministers (GoM), headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. It is understood the GoM will shortly take a final call on the timing, price and amount of shares of Air India to be sold.

The government took multiple measures to make Air India competitive by way of bringing down debt and raising resources by selling land assets and other subsidiaries. However, Air India's net debt peaked to ₹58,351.93 crore in FY19 from about ₹55,000 crore in FY18. The national carrier received an equity infusion of ₹30,520.21 crore from the government till date as a part of its 2012 Turn Around Plan.

Last month, in a major admission to state-run Air India, Delhi High Court has directed national carrier to present its reasons behind its decision to shift domestic ticket-booking business "exclusively" on Travelport, and abruptly discontinuing using the services of global ticket distribution firm Amadeus.

In its order dated July 25 the High Court ruled, "time is sought to file counter affidavit. Let the counter affidavit be filed within four weeks. Rejoinder, if any be filed within four weeks thereafter". The HC is slated to hear the case on September 26.

The court has given Air India four weeks' time to respond to the judgement with relevant documents.

Bajaj Finserv comes up with Wallet Care to combat fraudulent

PNS ■ PUNE

Bajaj Finserv offers Wallet Care, which will help customers block their credit cards and debit cards with a single phone call without any hassles. The card protection plan gives coverage upto ₹2 lakh at just ₹599. Emergency travel and hotel assistance and as well as get free replacement of important identity proofs like your PAN card are also possible through it.

Wallet Care offers instant card blocking facilities. People can report a loss 24x7 from anywhere in the world by dialling the helpline number. Once a call is made to report damage, fraud, or loss, all your cards will be blocked at once. Along with carrying out your credit and ATM card block, you can ask for replacement of your lost PAN card too.

Pocket Insurance ensures that small losses in life do not keep adding up to make a big dent in wallet.



TC Limited enabled installation of 'Community Wet Composting Unit' was inaugurated by Meerakshi Lekhi, member of Parliament in the presence of Rashmi Singh, Secretary New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), residents of the society and RWAs of other municipal corporation members on Sunday. ITC's WoW Initiative is aligned with the Government of India's Swachh Bharat mission where the objective is to create end-to-end sustainable and scalable solutions for municipal waste. The initiative also includes public education and awareness for improving hygiene, creating a cleaner and better environment so that there is reduction in landfills.

Scheme	NAV	1Yr%	SBI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	14.68	-0.79	Kotak Infra & Eco Reform Fund(G)	19.00	-3.87	Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	13.84	-6.89	UTI MNC Fund-Reg(G)	183.81	-10.40
DSP World Gold Fund-Reg(G)	13.95	46.62	DSP India T.I.G.E.R Fund-Reg(G)	86.87	-0.81	Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity Fund(G)	214.98	-4.01	ICICI Pru Multicap Fund(G)	279.04	-6.96	Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	377.38	-10.40
Kotak World Gold Fund(G)	9.82	31.35	Sundaram Select Focus(G)	175.93	-0.87	Edelweiss Large Cap Fund(G)	34.57	-4.08	Reliance Quant Fund(G)	24.32	-7.00	L&T Large and Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	44.15	-10.54
BNP Paribas India Consumption Fund-Reg(G)	11.39	13.84	Sundaram Multi Cap Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	9.79	-0.94	UTI Focussed Equity Fund-IV(G)	9.28	-4.10	Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-B(G)	17.73	-7.01	ICICI Pru R.I.G.H.T Fund(G)	39.31	-10.56
Reliance US Equity Opp Fund(G)	16.17	7.37	Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)	115.18	-0.94	ICICI Pru Smallcap Fund(G)	24.03	-4.15	UTI Focussed Equity Fund-V(G)	9.01	-7.11	Kotak India Growth Fund-Sr 5(G)	9.08	-10.61
DSP World Mining Fund-Reg(G)	8.45	7.22	JM Large Cap Fund(G)	65.49	-0.98	L&T Business Cycle Fund-Reg(G)	14.46	-4.15	Sundaram Value Fund-III-Reg(G)	15.69	-7.12	UTI LT Adv Fund-III(G)	12.39	-10.70
Sundaram Fin Serv Opp Fund(G)	41.57	6.73	HDFC Top 100 Fund(G)	471.70	-0.99	Edelweiss Multi-Cap Fund-Reg(G)	13.87	-4.25	UTI Focussed Equity Fund-VI(G)	9.42	-7.13	L&T Emerging Opp Fund-I-Reg(D)	8.96	-10.73
ICICI Pru US Bluechip Equity Fund(G)	29.24	6.72	IDBI Long Term Value Fund-Reg(G)	9.93	-1.00	SBI Equity Opp Fund-Sr IV-Reg(G)	14.90	-4.25	Tata India Pharma & Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	8.96	-7.14	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-3-Reg(G)	10.76	-10.93
Tata Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	18.67	6.67	Axis Capital Builder Fund-1-Reg(G)	10.02	-1.09	ICICI Pru FMCG Fund(G)	233.69	-4.32	Invesco India Midcap Fund(G)	45.70	-7.23	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-IV-Reg(G)	8.73	-11.00
Edelweiss Emerging Markets Opp Eq. Offshore Fund-Reg(G)	12.80	6.56	ICICI Pru Value Fund-11(G)	11.82	-1.09	DSP Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	51.98	-4.35	HDFC TaxSaver(G)	487.20	-7.31	ICICI Pru Dividend Yield Equity Fund(G)	15.57	-11.03
Baroda Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	22.68	5.98	Aditya Birla SL Digital India Fund(G)	54.61	-1.14	DSP World Agriculture Fund-Reg(G)	16.74	-4.43	Sundaram Value Fund-II-Reg(G)	15.08	-7.35	Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	75.47	-7.37
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	16.07	5.96	Kotak US Equity Fund(G)	17.21	-1.15	Motilal Oswal Multicap 35 Fund-Reg(G)	25.20	-4.49	Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	75.47	-7.37	Sundaram Rural and Consumption Fund(G)	39.13	-7.46
Aditya Birla SL Global Real Estate Fund(G)	20.35	5.94	ICICI Pru Value Fund-13(D)	10.24	-1.16	UTI Focussed Equity Fund-I(G)	12.88	-4.52	Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-III-Reg(G)	13.53	-4.52	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-5-Reg(G)	8.95	-7.54
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	16.26	5.91	Kotak Global Emerging Mkt Fund(G)	1139.89	-1.20	Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-IV-Reg(G)	9.42	-4.56	ICICI Pru Midcap Fund(G)	89.17	-7.55	Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	12.77	-7.63
Franklin Asian Equity Fund(G)	22.45	5.57	Axis Nifty ETF	114.49	-1.31	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-4-(G)	32.93	-4.59	Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	58.70	-7.78	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	29.99	-7.79
ICICI Pru Value Fund-18(G)	11.29	5.42	BNP Paribas Multi Cap Fund(G)	45.50	-1.23	Tata Large Cap Fund(G)	212.60	-1.32	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-4-(G)	9.42	-4.56	BNP Paribas Mid Cap Fund(G)	29.99	-7.79
Axis Bluechip Fund(G)	29.14	5.24	IDFC Nifty ETF	114.49	-1.31	HDFC Nifty 50 ETF	1160.62	-1.34	Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	58.70	-7.78	Reliance Capital Builder Fund-IV-A(G)	9.31	-7.86
Edelweiss ETF - Nifty Bank PGIM India Global Equity Opp Fund(G)	2862.63	5.21	HDFC Equity Fund(G)	636.90	-1.42	IDBI India Top 100 Equity Fund(G)	23.42	-1.51	Kotak Emerging Equity Scheme(G)	107.46	-4.62	Motilal Oswal Midcap 30 Fund-Reg(G)	24.18	-7.93
SBI Tax Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	24.61	4.99	UTI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	72.61	-1.52	Canara Rob Equity Diver Fund-Reg(G)	128.00	-1.52	HDFC Growth Opp Fund-Reg(G)	310.08	-4.69	Canara Rob Emerg Equities Fund-Reg(G)	87.47	-8.03
ICICI Pru Growth Fund-1(DP)	10.90	4.71	Canara Rob Equity Diver Fund-Reg(G)	128.00	-1.52	IDFC Nifty Fund-Reg(G)	22.98	-1.55	ICICI Pru Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	63.23	-4.80	Tata Equity P/E Fund(G)	128.01	-8.10
Axis Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	11.61	4.59	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-1(DP)	10.90	4.71	PGIM India Large Cap Fund(G)	163.30	-1.61	UTI Dividend Yield Fund-Reg(G)	12.65	-4.82	Reliance Focused Equity Fund(G)	43.08	-8.12
SBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	17.45	4.55	Axis Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	11.61	4.59	HDFC Index Fund-NIFTY 50 Plan(G)	101.14	-1.69	PGIM India Diversified Equity Fund-Reg(G)	12.65	-4.82	IDFC Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	42.18	-8.12
Tata Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	201.93	4.37	JM Core 11 Fund(G)	8.65	-1.72	JM Core 11 Fund(G)	8.65	-1.72	UTI LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)-Reg(G)	82.90	-4.83	IDBI Equity Advantage Fund-Reg(G)	25.31	-8.16
Aditya Birla SL Global Emerging Opp Fund(G)	13.06	4.33	Tata Index Fund-Nifty Plan(G)	67.16	-1.74	DSP Equity Opportunities Fund-Reg(G)	213.60	-1.76	Aditya Birla SL Equity Fund(G)	693.17	-4.88	Franklin India Taxshield(G)	541.46	-4.91
BNP Paribas Large Cap Fund(G)	88.91	4.33	DSP Equity Opportunities Fund-Reg(G)	213.60	-1.76	Aditya Birla SL CEF-Global Agri-Reg(G)	24.16	-2.03	Tata Ethical Fund-Reg(G)	151.43	-4.92	Reliance Value Fund(G)	69.69	-4.93
Invesco India Financial Services Fund(G)	55.13	4.20	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-3(DP)	9.89	-1.98	ICICI Pru Nifty Index Fund(G)	107.30	-2.05	Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-V-Reg(G)	9.43	-4.97	Sundaram Diversified Equity(G)	94.54	-8.28
ICICI Pru Value Fund-15(G)	10.47	3.25	Aditya Birla SL Focused Equity Fund(G)	57.46	-1.99	ICICI Pru Value Fund-15(G)	10.47	3.25	HDFC Equity Opp Fund-Sr 2-1126D-May 2017(1)-Reg(G)	9.91	-5.07	ICICI Pru Exports & Services Fund(G)	54.81	-8.34
ICICI Pru Value Fund-17(G)	10.40	3.07	Aditya Birla SL CEF-Global Agri-Reg(G)	24.16	-2.03	ICICI Pru Value Fund-17(G)	10.40	3.07	Tata Value Fund-Sr-2-Reg(G)	9.19	-5.16	Reliance Vision Fund(G)	493.38	-8.35
ICICI Pru Value Fund-16(G)	10.81	3.05	ICICI Pru Nifty Index Fund(G)	107.30	-2.05	ICICI Pru Value Fund-16(G)	10.81	3.05	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-2-(G)	9.54	-5.17	Franklin India Bluechip Fund(G)	434.19	-8.42
BNP Paribas Long Term Equity Fund(G)	37.54	2.75	Sundaram Multi Cap Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	9.80	-2.07	Sundaram Multi Cap Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	9.80	-2.07	SBI Magnum Global Fund-Reg(G)	163.22	-5.17	Edelweiss Eur Dynamic Equity Off-shr Fund-Reg(G)	11.00	-8.55
ICICI Pru Growth Fund-2(DP)	11.82	2.69	Kotak Bluechip Fund(G)	227.12	-2.08	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-2(DP)	11.82	2.69	ICICI Pru S&P BSE 500 ETF Fund-Reg(G)	146.21	-5.19	L&T India Value Fund-Reg(G)	33.63	-8.59
Mirae Asset Emerging Bluechip-Reg(G)	52.11	2.45	SBI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	95.36	-2.09	Mirae Asset Emerging Bluechip-Reg(G)	52.11	2.45	Reliance Growth Fund(G)	1049.52	-5.35	Principal Dividend Yield Fund(G)	50.06	-8.72
Reliance Japan Equity Fund(G)	13.34	2.44	IDFC Equity	9.79	-2.10	IDFC Equity	9.79	-2.10	HDFC Focused 30 Fund(G)	73.22	-5.37	SBI Small Cap Fund-Reg(G)	49.77	-8.99
Franklin India Feeder - Franklin U.S. Opportunities Fund(G)	32.45	2.34	Opportunity-6-Reg(G)	131.26	-2.18	Opportunity-6-Reg(G)	131.26	-2.18	UTI Banking and Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	92.18	-5.39	ICICI Pru Value Fund-8(D)	9.92	-9.07
Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-A(G)	22.26	2.12	Tata Mid Cap Growth Fund(G)	21.39	-2.18	Tata Mid Cap Growth Fund(G)	21.39	-2.18	Sundaram Select Small Cap Series-VI-Reg(G)	9.23	-5.39	Franklin India Equity Fund(G)	550.86	-9.08
SBI Technology Opp Fund-Reg(G)	67.31	2.10	Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)	39.35	-2.22	Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)	39.35	-2.22	UTI Value Opp Fund-Reg(G)	58.67	-5.43	Kotak Small Cap Fund(G)	67.13	-9.15
ICICI Pru Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	61.79	2.05	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	39.35	-2.22	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	39.35	-2.22	UTI MEPUS	103.31	-5.48	Principal Tax Savings Fund Fund(G)	131.74	-9.31
SBI Tax advantage Fund-II(G)	36.21	1.87	IDBI Nifty Index Fund(G)	20.47	-2.28	IDBI Nifty Index Fund(G)	20.47	-2.28	Tata Value Fund-Sr-1-Reg(G)	9.46	-5.49	Aditya Birla SL Resurgent India Fund-4-Reg(G)	9.11	-9.35
DSP Equity Fund-Reg(G)	38.69	1.77	Aditya Birla SL Index Fund-Reg(G)	108.91	-2.29	Aditya Birla SL Index Fund-Reg(G)	108.91	-2.29	Baroda Multi Cap Fund(G)	93.52	-5.52	Sundaram Multi Cap Fund(G)	67.94	-9.36
DSP Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	47.28	1.76	Reliance Index Fund - Nifty Plan(G)	18.56	-2.37	Reliance Index Fund - Nifty Plan(G)	18.56	-2.37	Kotak India Growth Fund-Sr 4(G)	8.97	-5.53	SBI Magnum Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	24.89	-9.41
SBI Magnum Equity ESG Fund-Reg(G)	102.94	1.72	ICICI Pru Infrastructure Fund(G)	48.52	-2.39	ICICI Pru Infrastructure Fund(G)	48.52	-2.39	Axis Emerging Opp Fund-1-Reg(G)	11.69	-5.57	UTI LT Adv Fund-IV(G)	9.56	-9.46
ICICI Pru Global Stable Equity Fund(G)	16.08	1.58	Franklin India Index Fund-NSE Nifty(G)	87.87	-2.44	Franklin India Index Fund-NSE Nifty(G)	87.87	-2.44	ICICI Pru Value Fund-10(G)	10.98	-5.59	ICICI Pru Nifty Next 50 ETF	26.70	-9.53
Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	13.93	-2.52	ICICI Pru LT Wealth Enhancement Fund(G)	10.22	-2.48	ICICI Pru LT Wealth Enhancement Fund(G)	10.22	-2.48	Reliance Multi Cap Fund(G)	89.68	-5.65	ICICI Pru Value Discovery Fund(G)	138.35	-9.56
Invesco India PSU Equity Fund(G)	17.20	1.42	Enhancement Fund(G)	10.22	-2.48	Enhancement Fund(G)	10.22	-2.48	Tata Resources & Energy Fund-Reg(G)	13.68	-5.69	DSP Equal Nifty 50 Fund-Reg(G)	9.26	-9.60
Sundaram Global Advt(G)	16.99	1.17	Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	13.93	-2.52	Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	13.93	-2.52	ICICI Pru LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)(G)	358.74	-5.71	L&T Tax Advt Fund-Reg(G)	50.69	-9.62
Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)	81.77	1.14	Mirae Asset Great Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	33.34	-2.55	Mirae Asset Great Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	33.34	-2.55	Reliance Large Cap Fund(G)	32.42	-5.73	UTI India Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	24.38	-9.64
Kotak India Growth Fund-Sr 7(G)	10.10	1.07	Principal Focused Multicap Fund(G)	61.60	-2.59	Principal Focused Multicap Fund(G)	61.60	-2.59	Mirae Asset Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	10.36	-5.80	IDFC Tax Advt(ELSS) Fund-Reg(G)	52.03	-9.67
Mirae Asset Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	17.26	1.04	Axis Midcap Fund(G)	35.58	-2.68	Axis Midcap Fund(G)	35.58	-2.68	IDFC Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	9.69	-5.83	Invesco India Multicap Fund(G)	44.76	-9.76
DSP Global Allocation Fund-Reg(G)	12.76	1.00	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-1-(G)	9.88	-2.76	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-1-(G)	9.88	-2.76	Franklin India Prima Fund(G)	901.57	-5.89	Principal Personal Tax saver Fund	181.27	-9.82
JM Tax Gain Fund(G)	16.75	0.87	Tata Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	52.48	-2.81	Tata Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	52.48	-2.81	Motilal Oswal Long Term Equity Fund-Reg(G)	16.66	-5.92	Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(G)	29.55	-9.83
Tata India Tax Savings Fund-Reg(G)	17.59	0.83	DSP US Flexible Equity Fund-Reg(G)	25.96	-2.83	DSP US Flexible Equity Fund-Reg(G)	25.96	-2.83	Edelweiss Tax Advantage Fund-Reg(G)	38.19	-5.96	Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(ELSS U/S 80C of IT ACT)(G)	29.55	-9.83
DSP A.C.E. Fund-Sr 2-Reg(G)	9.72	0.74	ICICI Pru Nifty Low Vol 30 ETF	87.65	-2.85	ICICI Pru Nifty Low Vol 30 ETF	87.65	-2.85	Reliance Power & Infra Fund(G)	92.48	-5.98	Baroda ELSS 96(G)	41.66	-9.83
IDBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	10.00	0.70	DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)	22.42	-2.88	DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)	22.42	-2.88	IDBI Diversified Equity Fund(G)	20.13	-6.02	ICICI Pru Focused Equity Fund(G)	28.56	-9.88
SBI Magnum Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	48.00	0.64	Invesco India Infrastructure Fund(G)	16.18	-2.88	Invesco India Infrastructure Fund(G)	16.18	-2.88	SBI LT Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	15.46	-3.44	SBI Consumption Opp Fund-Reg(G)	107.76	-9.92
JM Multicap Fund(G)	31.51	0.49	Kotak India EQ Contra Fund(G)	50.63	-2.99	Kotak India EQ Contra Fund(G)	50.63	-2.99	Mirae Asset Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	49.56	0.07	IDBI Nifty Junior Index Fund(G)	19.99	-9.94
Canara Rob Consumer Trends Fund-Reg(G)	37.78	0.48	UTI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	49.79	-3.00	UTI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	49.79	-3.00	HDFC Index Fund-Sensex(G)	332.60	-0.10	Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	10.45	-9.99
SBI LT Advantage Fund-V-Reg(G)	9.83	0.47	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-3-(G)	9.94	-3.02	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-3-(G)	9.94	-3.02	Franklin India Focused Equity Fund(G)	39.05	-0.14	Pan European Equity Fund-Reg(G)	8.92	-10.02
SBI LT Advantage Fund-VI-Reg(G)	10.17	0.44	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-3-(G)	9.94	-3.02	ICICI Pru Bharat Consumption Fund-3-(G)	9.94	-3.02	Kotak Standard Multicap Fund(G)	34.30	-0.33	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-V-Reg(G)	9.95	-0.62
Parag Parikh Long Term Equity Fund-Reg(G)	25.25	0.40	Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	12.94	-3.06	Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	12.94	-3.06	L&T India Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	26.47	-0.35	ICICI Pru Sensex Index Fund(G)	11.64	-0.35
HDFC Sensex ETF	3931.50	0.38	Global Equity Income Fund(G)	160.11	-3.08	Global Equity Income Fund(G)	160.11	-3.08	ICICI Pru Sensex Index Fund(G)	11.64	-0.35	SBI BlueChip Fund-Reg(G)	38.38	-0.52
IDFC Sensex ETF	385.90	0.36	Franklin India Technology Fund(G)	160.11	-3.08	Franklin India Technology Fund(G)	160.11	-3.08	Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)	44.29	-0.58	Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)	44.29	-0.58
DSP 3Y Close Ended Equity Fund-Reg(G)	14.65	0.29	Edelweiss ETF - Nifty 100 Quality 30	272.26	-3.13	Edelweiss ETF - Nifty 100 Quality 30	272.26	-3.13	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-VI-Reg(G)	9.95	-0.62	Sundaram Emerging Small Cap-Sr-VI-Reg(G)	9.95	-0.62
DSP A.C.E. Fund-Sr 1-Reg(G)	9.75	0.26	Canara Rob Equity Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	61.87	-3.16	Canara Rob Equity Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	61.87	-3.16	ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	11.87	-0.67	ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	11.87	-0.67
Tata Index Fund-Sensex Plan(G)	92.41	0.14	Aditya Birla SL Sensex ETF	349.46	-3.17	Aditya Birla SL Sensex ETF	349.46	-3.17	Kotak Tax Saver Scheme(G)	42.34	-0.73	Kotak Tax Saver Scheme(G)	42.34	-0.73
Canara Rob Bluechip Equity Fund-Reg(G)	24.27	0.12	Tata Digital India Fund-Reg(G)	15.24	-3.19	Tata Digital India Fund-Reg(G)	15.24	-3.19	Reliance Index Fund - Sensex Plan(G)	18.43	-0.76	Reliance Index Fund - Sensex Plan(G)	18.43	-0.76
SBI Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)	137.34	0.07	Invesco India Growth Opp Fund(G)	33.13	-3.21	Invesco India Growth Opp Fund(G)	33.13	-3						

Iran refutes US claim it's behind Saudi oil attacks

AFP ■ TEHRAN

Iran on Sunday dismissed US accusations it was behind drone attacks on Saudi oil installations, suggesting the United States was seeking a pretext to retaliate against the Islamic republic.

"Such fruitless and blind accusations and remarks are incomprehensible and meaningless," foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi was quoted as saying in a statement.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo condemned Iran after Saturday's attacks, which knocked out half of Saudi Arabia's oil production.

Yemen's Iran-aligned Shiite Huthi rebels claimed responsibility for the drone strikes, but Pompeo said "there is no evidence the attacks came from Yemen".

"The United States will

work with our partners and allies to ensure that energy markets remain well supplied and Iran is held accountable for its aggression," the top US diplomat tweeted.

Mousavi said the US allegations over the pre-dawn strikes on Abqaiq and Khurais in Eastern Province were meant to justify actions against Iran.

"Such remarks... Are more like plotting by intelligence and secret organisations to damage the reputation of a country and create a framework for future actions," he said.

Tehran and Washington have been at loggerheads since May last year when President Donald Trump pulled out of a 2015 deal that promised Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

Since the withdrawal, the

United States has slapped crippling sanctions on Iran as part of a campaign of "maximum pressure" and the Islamic republic has responded by reducing its commitments to the nuclear accord.

"The Americans have taken the policy of 'maximum pressure' which has apparently turned into 'maximum lying' due to their failures," said Mousavi.

The arch-foes were on the cusp of confrontation in June when Iran downed a US drone and Trump ordered retaliatory strikes before cancelling them at the last minute.

In remarks published Sunday, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' aerospace arm said Iran's missiles could hit US bases and ships within a range of 2,000 kilometres (about 1,240 miles).

Saudi halts production at attacked oil plants: Minister

AFP ■ RIYADH

Saudi Arabia has temporarily halted production at two Aramco oil facilities that were attacked by Yemeni rebels, interrupting about half of the company's total output, the energy minister said Saturday.

The attacks "resulted in a temporary suspension of production at Abqaiq and Khurais plants," Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, the energy minister said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency.

It led to the interruption of about 50 per cent of total production, he added.

"These attacks resulted in production suspension of 5.7 million barrels of crude oil per day," the state-owned Aramco said in a separate statement.

Underfire PM calls up Hulk, claims 'huge' Brexit progress

AFP ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Boris Johnson insisted Sunday that "huge" progress was being made in Brexit talks and declared Britain would break out of the European Union just like the comicbook hero Hulk.

The Conservative leader made the comments ahead of meetings with European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker and EU negotiator Michel Barnier in Luxembourg on Monday.

In an interview with the Mail on Sunday newspaper, Johnson said he was "very confident" of getting a divorce deal at an EU summit on October 17, in time for Brexit on October 31.

In an odd analogy, he compared Britain to the comic book character Hulk. "The madder Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets and he always escaped, no matter how tightly bound in he seemed to be -- and that is the case for this country," he said.

But Johnson is facing opposition in parliament to his threat to leave the EU without a deal next month if his negotiations fail.

On Saturday night, one of his Conservative MPs defected to the pro-European Liberal Democrats.

Former universities minister Sam Gyimah, who has called for a re-run of the 2016 Brexit referendum, condemned Johnson for "veering towards populism".

Meanwhile former prime minister David Cameron, who led the failed campaign to stay in the EU in 2016, accused Johnson in his memoirs of only pursuing Brexit out of political ambition.

The turmoil comes ahead of another crucial week, as the Supreme Court considers the legality of Johnson's decision to suspend parliament earlier this month until October 14.

Johnson was a leading "Leave" campaigner in the referendum, and took office in July promising to deliver Brexit no matter what.

He wants to renegotiate the terms struck by his predecessor Theresa May, which MPs have rejected, but EU leaders have so far refused.

He told the Mail there was a "very good conversation" going on about the key sticking point, the issue of the Irish border.

"A huge amount of progress is being made," he said.

Much of the opposition in London to the current Brexit deal is focused on the so-called backstop plan to keep open the Irish border.

It could keep Britain indefinitely tied to EU trade rules to avoid frontier checks between British Northern and EU member Ireland.

Brexit minister Steve Barclay insisted "the backstop needs to go", but fuelled speculation that an alternative might be taking shape.

"We can see a landing zone in terms of a future deal but there is significant work still to do," he told Sky News television on Sunday.

"The talks tomorrow will be an important step forward as part of that and they build on significant discussions that have been happening at a technical level."

Johnson repeated that "under no circumstances" would he delay Brexit. However, he may have no choice after MPs last week passed a law to postpone until January if he does not get a divorce deal by the EU summit.

Twenty-one Conservatives rebelled to back the law and were expelled from the party, leaving Johnson without a majority in the House of Commons. One of the rebels was Gyimah, who becomes the Lib Dems' 18th MP in the 650-seat chamber.

The 43-year-old was once viewed as a rising star in the Conservatives and briefly ran against Johnson for the party leadership. But he said Johnson had left moderates like him with a "stark choice... To accept a no deal Brexit or walk away from public life".

HK returns to violence with tear gas, Molotovs

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong riot police fired tear gas and water cannons at hardcore pro-democracy protesters hurling rocks and petrol bombs on Sunday, tipping the violence-plagued city back into chaos after a brief lull in clashes.

Tens of thousands of people defied authorities to march through the streets of the city in an unsanctioned rally on Sunday, the latest expression of a popular revolt that has raged for the last 99 days.

But the rally descended into violence when small groups of hardcore activists -- known within the movement as "braves" -- tried to attack the city's main government complex.

Police fired repeated volleys of tear gas and deployed water cannon trucks after Molotov cocktails and rocks were thrown over security barriers surrounding the complex, which has become a frequent flashpoint in the ongoing protests.

Local television networks



An anti-government protester throws a Molotov cocktail during a demonstration near Central Government Complex in Hong Kong on Sunday

broadcast footage of protesters tearing down and burning a banner celebrating the upcoming 70th anniversary of the founding of communist China -- as well as burning a Chinese flag. As evening set in, protesters retreated, chased by riot officers and water cannon firing blue-dyed water.

Some demonstrators built barricades, set fires and vandalised subway stations but the crowds avoided further

direct clashes and largely ran away when ranks of police officers got close.

The clashes ended a relative lull in recent days in the intensity of skirmishes between police and protesters.

The once-stable international hub has been convulsed by weeks of rage, sometimes violent rallies calling for greater democratic freedoms and police accountability.

Hard Brexit threat looms over French fishing fleet

AFP ■ GRANVILLE (FRANCE)

The waters for French fishermen are being stirred up by uncertainty of what will happen if Britain leaves the EU without a deal on October 31 and their boats barred from British waters.

A no-deal Brexit would likely end access for French boats to British waters and, in France, fishing industry players fear this will not just increase tensions with rivals across the Channel but between themselves.

Sophie Leroy, whose Armement Cherbourgeois company operates three fishing vessels off the northwest coast of France, says there have been almost daily checks of their boats by the British authorities.

Earlier this month, her boats were stopped for what she described as an interminable set of checks 21 miles off the English coast.

Her boats were also surrounded by 15 British fishing vessels, she said. "And they were saying, 'We are going to do

the same as what the French did to us last year."

The "Scallop Wars" in 2018, when French and British fishing vessels clashed over access to scallops off France's Normandy coastline, was finally settled by the two sides in a deal last September.

While a Brexit deal would help put a framework in place, Britain anticipates the possibility of more clashes between rival fishing vessels if the country pulls out of the EU with no agreement in place. The government last week released a study of that scenario, code-named "Operation Yellow Hammer", after a copy of the document was leaked to the press.

One issue it addressed was the possibility that EU vessels could illegally enter British waters, leading to "clashes between vessels", "violent disputes" or even the "blockading of ports". So far this time around the two sides have not actually come to blows. But Leroy referred to what she called a "war of nerves" online.

Jeddah-bound PIA flight makes emergency landing

PTI ■ LAHORE

A major tragedy was averted on Sunday when an agile pilot successfully landed a Pakistan International Airlines flight carrying about 200 passengers onboard after one of its engines caught fire minutes after take off.

The Jeddah-bound flight PK-759 was forced to make an emergency landing back to Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore after one of its engines caught fire during take off. "One of the engines of the aircraft caught fire during the take off Sunday morning and the pilot alerted the control room about it and sought for emergency landing," an official of the airlines told PTI.

He said the pilot successfully landed the plane and no passenger was injured.

The passengers were sent to Jeddah on another aircraft in the afternoon while the plane has been grounded for repair work.

PIA spokesperson Mashhood Tajwar, however, claimed that the plane had not caught fire.

Decks collapse during firefighter event; 22 injured

AP ■ WILDWOOD, (NEW JERSEY, US)

A home's multilevel deck collapsed Saturday evening at the Jersey Shore during an event weekend, trapping people and injuring at least 22, including some children, officials said.

No deaths were reported. The collapse happened around 6 p.m. Saturday in Wildwood during the annual New Jersey Firemen's Convention.

It was unclear how many people were on or under the decks at the time, or how many were firefighters, but authorities said those who were trapped were quickly removed.

The annual convention attracts thousands of current and former firefighters to the resort town. Firefighters were likely among those hurt or trapped.

Cape May Regional Health System said 21 people were taken there, at least three of them children. Eleven patients had been released by 10 p.m., including all the children who

were admitted, hospital spokeswoman Susan Staeger said.

AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center in Atlantic City said at least one additional person was taken there.

The conditions of the remaining hospitalized people wasn't known.

Photos and video on social media showed firefighters trying to lift a piece of decking. Images showed multiple levels of decking ripped away from the building and reduced to beams and splintered wood.

The decks appeared to have been attached to a three-story building and topped by a fourth-floor overhang.

The second and third levels appeared to have pancaked onto a first-floor deck. The overhang looked intact.

Nearby resident Joann Devito saw the collapse from a deck across the street.

"I was sitting on the deck up there, and I heard this noise, so I turned and looked and saw the whole thing caving in," she said.

"I saw two women running and screaming. It was horrible."

Over 2,000 fetal remains found at ex-abortion doctor's home

AP ■ JOLIET (ILLINOIS, US)

More than 2,000 medically preserved fetal remains have been found at the Illinois home of a former Indiana abortion clinic doctor who died last week, authorities said.

The Will County Sheriff's Office said in a news release late Friday that an attorney for Dr Ulrich Klopfer's family contacted the coroner's office Thursday about possible fetal remains being found at the home in an unincorporated part of Will County in north-eastern Illinois.

The sheriff's office said authorities found 2,246 preserved fetal remains but there's no evidence medical procedures were performed at

the home. The coroner's office took possession of the remains. An investigation is underway.

A message left Saturday seeking additional comment on the discovery was not returned by the Will County Sheriff's Office investigations department.

Klopfer, who died September 3, was a longtime doctor at an abortion clinic in South Bend, Indiana. It closed after the state revoked the clinic's license in 2015.

The Indiana State Department of Health had previously issued complaints against the clinic, accusing it of lacking a registry of patients, policies regarding medical abortion, and a governing body to determine policies.



Israeli soldiers chat as they stand guard for a weekly cabinet meeting, in the Jordan Valley, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Sunday

Cleanup resumes in Bahamas as Humberto swirls away

AP ■ MCLEAN'S TOWN (BAHAMAS)

Jeffrey Roberts lifted a mustard-yellow curtain from the ground as he looked for passports and other documents at the site where his family's home once stood in Grand Bahama.

He then moved the cloth aside, picked up a pair of old, rusty pliers, and continued his search.

"We got to take what God gives us," Roberts said in reference to Tropical Storm Humberto, which narrowly missed the island over the weekend as it continued on its northward trajectory well offshore of Florida's east coast.

By early Sunday morning, the US National Hurricane Center said the storm was located about 137 miles (220 kilometers) north of Great Abaco Island and was moving at 7 mph

(11 kph) north-northwest with maximum sustained winds of 60 mph (97 kph).

Weather forecasters said it would likely become a hurricane by The storm briefly shuttered a couple of small airports, sent people in damaged homes to seek shelter and threatened to interrupt the distribution of sorely needed supplies including food and water.

As the storm barely passed the northern Bahamas, however, Roberts and others were already returning to the task at hand: resuming their cleanup and recovery efforts in communities devastated by Hurricane Dorian two weeks ago.

On Saturday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited the island of Great Abaco to support humanitarian efforts in the wake of the storm, which left thousands in need of food,

water and shelter. "Hurricane Dorian has been classified as Category 5. I think it's Category Hell," said the secretary-general, adding he was horrified by the "level of systematic devastation."

The death toll from the hurricane stands at 50 and the number of missing at an alarming 1,300 people, although officials caution the list is preliminary and many people could just be unable to connect with loved ones. Meanwhile, detritus was piled high as Bahamians attempted to continue salvaging what was left behind.

On Saturday, Patrice Higgs stood barefoot in her backyard with grey mud caked on her feet. She stared listlessly at the horizon as she occasionally pointed at some of her belongings that remained tangled in the debris and out of reach, including a cream-colored loveseat.?

Italy: Rescue boat with 82 migrants can sail to Italian isle

AP ■ ABOARD THE OCEAN VIKING (ITALY)

Italy allowed a charity rescue ship to sail Saturday to a tiny southern island so that 82 migrants aboard could be transferred to shore, but the country's foreign minister cautioned against interpreting the move as a sign the new government is easing a crackdown on humanitarian vessels.

Shortly before midnight, all the migrants had been transferred off the Ocean Viking after several days stranded at sea prior to being given permission to sail to Lampedusa island.

Women, children and unaccompanied minors were put on an Italian coast guard vessel, while men were taken aboard a customs police boat, so all could be brought to Lampedusa's dock.

The Norwegian-flagged ship, which had appealed for days for a port of safety, is operated by two humanitarian groups, Doctors Without Borders and SOS Mediterranee.

Ocean Viking carried out its first rescue, of 50 migrants who were struggling in an unseaworthy rubber dinghy launched by Libyan-based migrant smugglers, on September 8.

The others were rescued the next day. Among the migrants is a 1-year-old boy from Somalia.

"We just heard that we have been assigned a place of safety, we are now on our way" to Lampedusa, Erkinalp Kesikli of Doctors Without Borders said earlier in the day after the ship received a call from Italian authorities about the permission.

Migrants clapped with joy

and excitement. "We are very happy about the news this morning. It amazes us. This news amazes us," said Myriam Annie Malang, one of the migrants. "We are arriving at a place where people understand and listen to us. We are very happy to learn that we are disembarking in Lampedusa."

Malang said she had been beaten while detained in Libya, a common account of suffering among migrants waiting to depart the northern African country on smugglers' boats.

She said she had fled conflict between English- and French-speaking communities in Cameroon.

The previous government, under a rigid anti-migrant policy led by right-wing leader Matteo Salvini, banned charity rescue boats from entering Italy's waters and disembarking

migrants on Italy's shores.

Premier Giuseppe Conte's week-old coalition now contains the center-left Democrats, whose leaders have called for a more humane policy on the rescue boats. Italy's current and previous governments have insisted on more solidarity from fellow European Union nations, saying the migrants set out on their journeys seeking asylum or better economic conditions in Europe as a whole, not necessarily in Italy.

Italy's new foreign minister, Luigi Di Maio, leader of the coalition's senior partner, the populist 5-Star Movement, cautioned against concluding his government was softening its stance on private rescue boats.

"I believe there's a big misunderstanding about a safe port given to Ocean Viking," Di Maio told reporters.

"It was assigned a port because the EU adhered to our request to take the great share of the migrants."

Germany's interior minister said in a report published on Saturday his country is prepared to take in a quarter of migrants rescued off the Italian coast as the European Union tries to find a solution to repeated standoffs involving humanitarian groups' ships.

The Italian news agency ANSA said Germany, France, and Italy were expected to take about 24 migrants each, while the other 10 would go to Portugal or Luxembourg.

While Di Maio insisted that Italy wasn't lifting the ban, championed by former Interior Minister Salvini, on docking by charity rescue boats, lawmakers from the left praised the resolution of Ocean Viking's situation as a break with the previous government's hard line.

Afghan Taliban rescind ban on Red Cross

AFP ■ KABUL

The Afghan Taliban rescinded a months-long ban on the International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC) working in areas under their control Sunday and restored security guarantees for those working for the organisation.

The militants and the ICRC "consented to following the old agreement on top of new promises in humanitarian aid leading to the Islamic Emirate granting ICRC permission of resuming their activities," said Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid in a statement.

S Africa dispatches emissaries to calm xenophobia fears

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has sent high-ranking emissaries on a mission to reassure African countries after a wave of xenophobic attacks, the presidency said on Sunday.

At least 12 people have been killed in the surge of mob violence targeting foreign-owned businesses and homes, mainly in and around Johannesburg since the start of the month.

Hundreds of economic migrants from neighbouring Zimbabwe and Mozambique

have fled to shelters and Nigeria has flown 600 of its citizens back home after they were targeted in the violence.

The mission, led by former minister Jeff Radebe, left South Africa on Saturday and will visit Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, DR Congo and Zambia, the presidency said.

Ramaphosa was jeered at on Saturday during his speech at Zimbabwe ex-leader Robert Mugabe's funeral in Harare before he apologised for the attacks, which have been prompted by unemployment and poverty.

Trend Slazer

No room for bad content: Arjun

Actor **ARJUN KAPOOR**, who has come out with a digital property called 'Arjun Recommends', said there is no room for bad content and for mediocrity as people are exposed to the best of cinema and also documentaries on OTT platforms.

"I'm extremely excited to be an actor living and working in today's time. We are in the middle of a drastic change for the better and we should celebrate that. There is no room for bad content and definitely no room for mediocrity as people are exposed to the best of cinema, best of documentaries on the OTT," Arjun said.

The *India's Most Wanted* star said that the ride of OTT platforms has changed the game.



'I am happy that I have been through different phases of life. From the extremely ambitious one, where films meant the world to me to the laid back time once I got married and had kids to now when I am back at work again. It has been nice to go back to work and discover something new about yourself. Age is just a number for me. Ageing is also a privilege.'

—**Genelia Deshmukh**

Actor **SUMEET VYAS** started his performing career with theatre and has since been alternating between theatre, cinema and the web.



"The lines have started blurring, especially between TV and the online medium, even though their content and its duration, in the way people consume it, is slightly different. You watch a web series and you watch a film, you won't feel this is cheaper and that is expensive — because the same technicians are working on both," says the actor.

He however, adds that online it's indeed easier to experiment with content.

Sam wants to be addressed as they

Singer **SAM SMITH**, who came out as non-binary earlier this year, wants fans to refer to him as 'they' and 'them' instead of 'he' and 'him'.

"I've decided I am changing my pronouns to 'they/them' after a lifetime of being at war with my gender. I've decided to embrace myself for who I am, inside and out. I'm so excited and privileged to be surrounded by people that support me in this decision," wrote the 27-year-old singer on social media.

"I understand there will be many mistakes and mis-gendering but all I ask is you please try. I hope you can see me like I see myself now. Thank you," added Smith.



Air pollution is the cause for prematurely killing seven million people across the globe every year. It is strongly linked to strokes, heart attacks, many kinds of cancer, premature birth and dementia, among other ailments. Looking at these deadly consequences of air pollution, environment journalist and writer Beth Gardiner took a world tour to trace the level of pollution in the air.

Her world tour started with the diesel smell in her adopted hometown of London. From New Delhi, Beijing and Krakow, in Poland, as well as Berlin to Los Angeles and California's San Joaquin Valley, Gardiner travelled the world to tell the story of this modern-day plague. From the halls of power in Washington and the diesel-fogged London streets, she took walks with her daughter to Poland's coal heartland and India's gasping capital.

"You could see the pollution shimmering off the headlights,"

No place perfect to breathe

Writer **BETH GARDINER** takes a world tour in search for clean air and tracks the growing deadly air pollution across the globe



said Gardiner, calling south Asia "the global ground zero for air pollution." India has 10 of the world's 15 most polluted cities, according to the World Health Organisation.

Gardiner penned the recently released *Choked: Life and Breath in the Age of Air Pollution*, which is based on her experiences around the globe. The tour gave her a firsthand look at the struggles of developing countries desperate to raise living standards without burning everything in sight, from fossil fuels to crop residues. She also covers success stories. The 49-year old Clean Air Act has markedly improved air quality in many American cities,

largely through strenuous enforcement that European countries with similar standards often lack.

So where would she travel for purer air? "Northern Canada," she answered and "some remote parts of Scandinavia," though she is quick to add that the reliance of rural areas on wood burning means they are not always the ideal choices. "There's no place that's perfect," she sighs. Her latest travel podcast, *Get Outta Here* gives more details about her trip and how she calls clean air "a birthright." She says it can disappear in a puff of smoke if the rules that protect it are unravelled. At home and around the world, it's never been more important to understand how progress happened and what dangers might still be in store. Her research shows us that we hold the power to build a cleaner, healthier future — in which breathing, life's most basic function, no longer carries a danger.

—AP

Reel is real

Actor **NEIL BHOOPALAM** says it's unfair to define somebody's coolness quotient on the basis of languages. And this is what his latest *Kiska Hoga Thinkistaan 2* aims to highlight.

By **CHAHAK MITTAL**



he says that even it might not look like that, but they did some research work. He says, "However, our preparation was collective. We all sat together and worked on how you pitch the idea to the clients, how you make presentations. We studied why certain advertisements worked out and why others did not. I studied this, in a way, revamped a lot of things too. And because of that, it gave me an opportunity to perform in a way, in which I haven't performed before."

The series shows how the two protagonists gain success and popularity on the basis of their languages — Hindi and English. While the content in English gets high scores and is considered to be 'classy', the one in Hindi is seen as incompetent and old-fashioned. However, Neil doesn't quite get this conflict between the two and how people are

William is not the villain like everyone is perceiving him to be after watching the trailer of MX Player's *Kiska Hoga Thinkistaan 2*. Actor Neil Bhoopalam says that his character is just a strict new head of the company who wants the work to be refined and perfect.

"That's all. Though that's how it was actually pitched initially — negative. But they told me that he is just a person who is doing his job. There might be a few points where the audience might get a 'baddy' kind of vibe from me. My job was to try and make that as natural as possible. I was told that during a meeting, like a strict boss, I cannot sugar-coat my words to not hurt your feelings. At the same time, I would not even go out of the way to make you feel bad. I just simply tell you that your ideas are not up to the mark. And now, it's up to you to feel bad," he says and laughs that while he was shooting this, it was quite relatable. "We have all experienced this in our work lives and especially in the first five to six years of our jobs. It does hurt. But later, you realise that it wasn't deliberately meant. They just knew it wasn't meant to work out," says he.

The series spins narrative around two contrasting copy writers and content creators, who work at MTMC, a huge advertising agency, and traces their journeys and a tiff between English and Hindi content.

After a whole day of seemingly-endless interviews, an early morning and a coffee-only meal had

I REALLY ENJOYED READING THE SCRIPT. IT'S VERY BELIEVABLE. I HAVE STUDIED ADVERTISING IN COLLEGE. IT WAS SOMETHING I KNEW. AND THIS WAS THE CLOSEST I COULD HAVE GOT TO THE WORLD OF ADVERTISING, WHICH I HAD SOMEDAY THOUGHT THAT I WOULD BE A PART OF

exhausted him but the *Shaitan* actor was fresh and quick to answer why he chose the script. "I really enjoyed reading it. I have studied advertising in college. It was something I knew. And this was the closest I could have got to the world of advertising, which I had someday thought that I would be a part of. Even the directors and producers of the show have come from an advertising background and have made the script so believable. There's no fuff. It's all true," he says.

Of course, he has come a long way from college to today. What you study in college does remain with you but is eventually a history. So what was Neil's research work or better, some digging into the history? As he thanks me for asking this question,



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

WEBBED



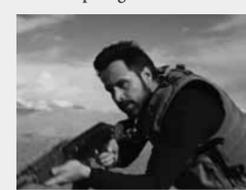
THE FAMILY MAN

The series revolves around Srikant Tiwari, a middle-class man who also serves as a world-class spy. He tries to balance his familial responsibilities with those at the highly secretive special cell of the National Intelligence Agency.

Starring Manoj Bajpayee, Priyamani, Sharb Hashmi, the thriller releases on September 20 on Amazon Prime Video.

BARD OF BLOOD: SEASON 1

Ex-communicated RAW agent Kabir Anand (played by Emraan Hashmi), a courageous analyst and a sleeper agent take on a covert but disastrous



mission in Balochistan when four Indian spies are captured. The mission soon turns south and Kabir must face his demons from the past.

Directed by Ribhu Dasgupta and based on the eponymous book by Bilal Siddique, the series is set to release on September 27 on Netflix.

THE POLITICIAN

Payton Hobart, a wealthy student from Santa Barbara, has known since he was seven that he's going to be the president of the United States, but first he has to navigate the most treacherous political landscape of all, Saint Sebastian High School.

The comedy, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Ben Platt, will release on September 27 on Netflix.



An inclusive tomorrow

A conversation with sex workers gives us a deeper insight into their challenges and how important it is to dignify their profession like any other. By **SAKSHI SHARMA**



to access social welfare and human rights due to stigmatisation. A sex worker Kusum, who was forced to enter the profession due to her financial instability, said, "People used to call me by derogatory words. They looked at my profession as a crime. Fact is

why can't we looked at as professionals like them?" Like second-class citizens, she was not even issued the ration card given her declared identity.

Nepal-based Ayeesha, a member of National Network of Sex Workers, said that she was harassed by local goons in Kolkata when she went there to become an escort. She shifted to South India but stayed committed to the profession. "Why does this profession bother people so much?" she raised her voice as she questioned the audience.

However, her voice broke as she got emotional. After a pause, she recollected her strength and added, "They don't ask other professionals, lawyers or doctors to change their job and seek for something else. So why us? It's a means of living for us as well."

The two didn't aim to glorify the idea of this job but it was quite evident on Kusum and Ayeesha's part that they want people to change their mindsets and respect their work as it includes services in return of money like it happens in other professions.

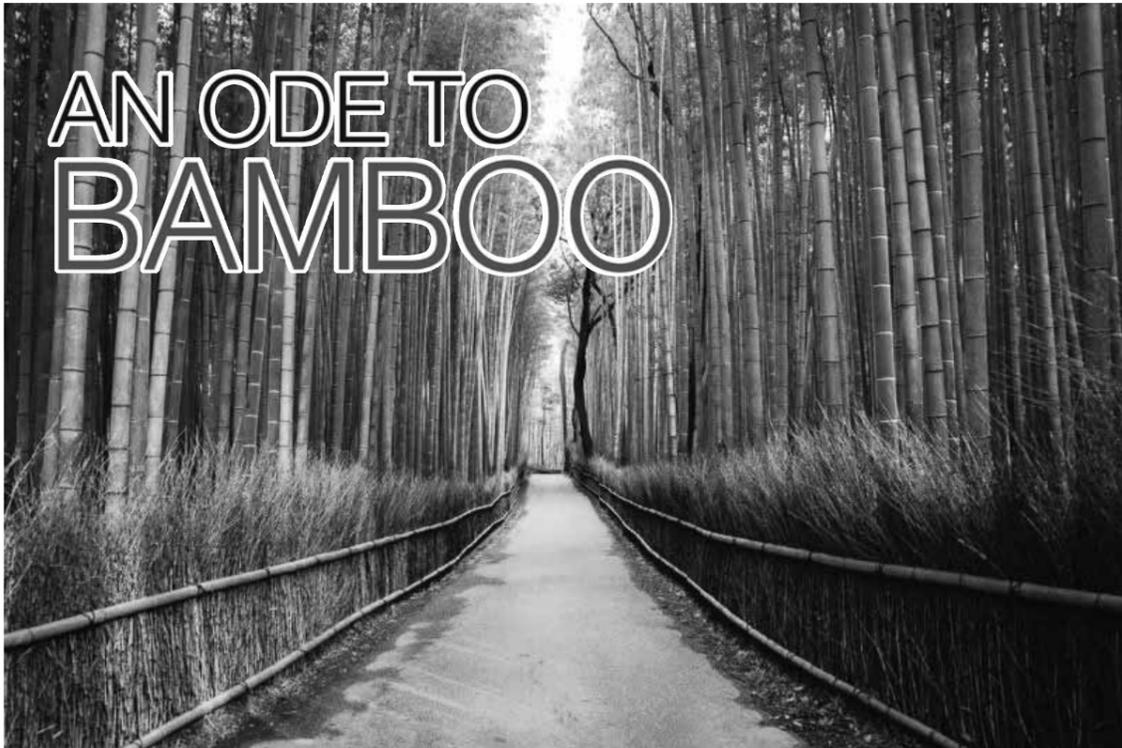
A transgender sex worker from Telangana, Rachana, agreed with them. "It surprises me how sex work bothers people when we are using our body as an investment," said she.

Sultana Begum, sex worker from Alwar, shared about her early life. Her watery eyes spoke volumes of how her struggles and tragedies had landed her where she was. She said, "The economic gains I have received from this work has certainly empowered me. Working as a maid paid me ₹500 per month and here, I earned double the amount in 30 minutes. Returning home the first time with cakes and pastries in my hand made my children happy. However, the way this society treats my children is what I don't agree with. They taunt me by saying that I would forcibly push even my daughter into it. It is really disheartening."

The profession has often been seen in a derogatory light due to society's stringent patriarchal framework too. 'Men rule' is

a mindset that has been deeply rooted, Rachana pointed out. She shared that as a transgender, her challenges have been greater. She does not have other means of income and the society already looks at her with disgrace. She recalls one of the incidents where a group of policemen had forced some transgender women to strip and beaten them to death on the road. She said, "The government is expected to take care of us and ensure that we lead peaceful lives but it is them who are the reason for this stigma around our gender and profession. Is this the democracy that we chose to live in? How ironical this is!"

In films or even in real life, we have usually seen the escorts in a depressed state because none of them enter this profession by choice. But fact is many choose to stay in it with dignity. As another sex worker Sunita said, "My body, my business." The firmness with which she delivered those four words made it quite evident that she has chosen to continue her line of work even though she was thrown into it due to her life situations. She shared candidly that she is now privileged enough to choose her own clients. "If I like him in the photograph, only then I go." All of this hints towards a changing scenario where sex work should be socially-acceptable like other professions. And when sex workers demand respect and recognition for their profession, it is upon us to lead that. The way we (the society) lead it will govern the change.



AN ODE TO BAMBOO

SHAIENDRA SINHA reports how the perennial plant is creating huge employment opportunities for tribals of Jharkhand and helping them change their lives

Can you name a plant that rejuvenates barren land and which is considered to be the most durable material on earth? An only plant that grows rapidly in any kind of environment? It's bamboo. Owing to its durability and ability to grow in any environment, the plant is believed to be a symbol of progress and prosperity. Bamboo farming, which is also known as green gold, has always proved to be profitable every time. World Bamboo Day was declared by the Thai Royal Forest Department in 2009 at the 8th World Bamboo Congress with an aim to create and increase awareness of bamboo globally. It is now celebrated every year on September 18. Scientists believe that the plant, compared to other vegetation, has 35 per cent more oxygen. The concept of sustainable development and the

vision of 'Green India' is also being realised through bamboos. In Feng Shui, the plant is called the 'divine plant'. Jharkhand, a tribal dominated state, is also one of the prominent states where bamboo is produced on a large scale. According to India State Forest report, the Jharkhand's forest belt covers an area of almost 23,478 sq km and approximately 2,520 million tonnes are produced. With the production of bamboo, the Jharkhand government plans to bring about positive changes in the livelihood of the tribals through various schemes. On one hand, the emphasis is on increasing its production, on the other hand, skill training is being imparted to the artisans. They are also being motivated for self-employment. Today, the demand for Jharkhand's bamboo has



increased all over the world. In view of the increasing demand, Chief Minister Raghubar Das's government will be organising a two-day Bamboo Artisan Mela on World Bamboo Day in Dumka. Half of India's bamboo is found there. The bamboo found in the state — *Bambusa tulda*, *Bambusa nutans* and *Bambusa balcooa* — are also high in demand worldwide. The crafts have become the main industry of Jharkhand, and about 500 types of products are made from it, which are then transported to other states. Bamboo production generates an income of ₹50

lakh every year for the government. K Ravi Kumar, Secretary, Department of Industries, Jharkhand, says that the government will ensure that the income of people living in rural areas gets doubled to lift them out of poverty by the year 2022. Kumar also informs that efforts are being made to provide employment to people through forest based products. National Bamboo Mission and Jharkhand State Bamboo Mission are working together to promote the production of bamboo. Through the concept of 'Green India' for farmers and sustainable development, the government is working towards achieving more employment in the bamboo-based industry. Among the Mahli tribe of Jharkhand, there are hundreds and thousands of families who have been traditionally making

bamboo baskets for their livelihood since many years. In the Bamboo Artisan Mela, 10,000 artisans will gather from all over the country. They will be receiving training on sustainable development. Investors from all across the country will be informed about the bamboo-based industry. Bamboo is abundant in each district of Jharkhand. Its abundance promises great potential for the people of the state in terms of employment. Also, it can be utilised in various ways ranging from agriculture to alternative sources of energy. Demand for bamboo products such as sofa sets, tables, bags and artistic materials for daily use has increased in recent times due to which its trade has also increased in the world. Ajit Sen, who runs an NGO, ESAF, says, "Bamboo is being produced in all the districts of the state, with maximum production in Santhal Parganas. Apart from this, it is available in abundance in Godda, Sahibganj, Pakud, Dumka, Jamtara, Jamshepur, Hazaribagh, Khuti, Gumla, Ranchi Ramgarh district. The artisans are being encouraged by Mukhyamantri Laghu Evam Kutir Udyog Vikas Board to become cultivators of the plant. There are about two hundred artisans in a cluster. There are around a 1,000 clusters at present in the state. A producer group has been created for the artisans. They are also given training to ensure efficiency. What is special about the bamboo products made in Jharkhand is that there is demand for them in Europe and in the Middle East. Since the demand for bamboo products is rising, the artisans are being trained on modern methods of production to ensure maximum employment. Bamboo artisans Santosh Mahli, Kashinath Mahli, Joseph Mahli, Babita Kumari, Marshila Hembram earn approximately ₹10,000 per month. The government is also working towards increasing the income of the poor. Moreover, several new types of products have been added to the existing ones through various trainings. The tribals of Jharkhand will no longer have to migrate to West Bengal for employment. Bamboo will provide them employment at their own residential places. —Charkha Features



Reframe and reform

The present world economic system is only pushing mankind to poverty. So it's time to restructure the international monetary system with global cooperation and give human relationships and peace a chance, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It is now universally recognised that the world economic situation, today, is very critical. The crisis is the result of a divorce between present-day economic systems and ethics. It's a fact that nobody would deny. Economic systems today not only avoid taking into consideration the ethics but also generate unethical trends. The current world fiscal scene is evidence of how our economic thinking and our models of planning and development have lost touch with reality. For example, the recent reversion of the fall in exchange rate of currencies of some developed countries. A little thinking about the factors that led to these two events concludes that it was because the developed nations have been spending way beyond their means.

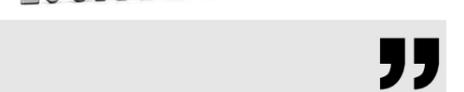


international monetary system. Further, we all know that there are presently two major economic systems at work — capitalist and communist. The former is based on competition, a drive for profits and the law of value of the goods. Social good, love and respect for humanity and the less fortunate brethren have little or no place in this system. Moreover, the system has only been exhausting natural resources and threatening the ecological balance.

As per the International Monetary System, constituted at Bretton Woods, the parity of national currencies of the member countries is determined as per the value of the US Dollar. Their parities depend on the stability in its value. But ever since the US Dollar began vacillating, the system of parities has been upset. Now, in the system, as it stands, the domestic policies of major industrial countries, especially the USA, highly influence the policies of developing nations. The levers of power now stand firm in the hands of a few developed countries and are often used to the detriment of developing countries. Thus, creating crises due to huge losses in foreign exchange suffered by developing nations due to change in the US Dollar rates. The variation in exchange rates, high interest rates charged by private international banks, an unequal distribution of monetary reserves, etc., are some other phenomena that point to the inadequacies and discrepancies of the present

Thus, it is bound to reinforce an conflict between individuals and countries. It has divided the world in two power blocs, tying up much of the funds to armament, thus impeding developmental work. And as the communist form of economy is concerned, it is often alleged that it is intensely repressive and indeed soul-less. Its discipline is ruthless and it constitutes totalitarianism. Precisely, the result of the present economic world order is that about three-fourth of mankind lives in poverty. The remedy thus lies in basing the world economic system on love, humanity and social consideration. For this, there is a need for all countries to commit to peaceful progress not only in their own lands but also worldwide. Global co-operation to restructure the international monetary system, basing it on human relationship is thus the need of the hour.

(The author is the managing director of Cambridge Montessori Pre-school.)



With the easy availability of the Internet, the world has become a global village and everything is available at a single click. While the brighter side of this technological boon has made life easier, on a darker note, it has intruded in our personal space resulting in cybercrimes. If reports are to be believed, in 2018 Bangalore registered the most number of cybercrime cases. A recent survey reveals that the statistics are grim. Almost 76 per cent of Indians have been victims of some form of cybercrime and 60 per cent have been victimised because of computer viruses and malware. A tiny minority, only 8 per cent do not believe they will fall victim to cybercrime. Clearly, the overwhelming majority of Indians considers cybercrime a significant threat. In India, only 10 per cent of people feel safe online. Not only do many Indians believe they will fall prey to cybercriminals, the majority, approximately 57 per cent, believe cybercriminals will never be brought to justice. Internet, if used as a boon, it is the biggest tool for information, learning and connection. And when used as a bane, can result in massive destruction resulting in loss of respect and even lives. children are the most affected ones as today they are able to access more information than any generation before.

YOUNGSTERS AND INTERNET
Mostly used by youngsters and teenagers, use of this technological bliss calls for strict cyber security to keep the privacy intact. It has been

Think and click

While researchers feel that a lot more has to be done to make the internet a safer media, PANKAJ SINGH shares some basic security parameters to protect kids



found that from school to college, the dependency on the internet has not only exposed youngsters to quality content but has also raised a threat to their innocence with explicit content that is available at a single click. While scrutinising it every moment is not an easy job for parents, the need for cyber security has become inevitable.

ROLE OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Parents and teachers play a key role which involves the right guidance and discipline. It is important for them to guide them in terms of do's and don'ts of internet usage and developing a healthy disciplined environment so that kids don't fall prey to bad thoughts and habits.

Open discussion about bad habits can help them understand the need of the hour. Also, the guidance about ways to deal with cybercrime can be helpful to handle any fraud. Many a times children expose themselves to identity theft by disclosing personal information online. Scammers can trick kids into disclosing their social security number and other details to commit identity theft. Remind children not to reveal too much information about themselves, especially online. Make sure your children know about the online privacy. Many apps have privacy policies which disclose that the apps collect and share their users' information. Kids often accept these without even going through the terms and conditions. Even if your settings are set to private, remember nothing is private. Even the so-called private browser is not private. Let the children know that hackers could have access to your so-called private information. Unused accounts can be a rich source of personal information for cybercriminals. Sometimes kids create an account with their first and last name or their birthday in the user name. Cybercriminals can patch these data points together and steal information from other sites that the individual uses. If you think you

won't be revisiting the site, it's best to close the account.

GUIDANCE GOAL

The subject of cyber security covers everything that can cause a threat to humans and data. The major areas covered here are — application, information, disaster and network. All these aspects have certain techniques that are used for the application of these security systems, which are apt for home, offices and schools. The application security also involves certain techniques for scanning and processing information that includes input parameter validation, user/role authentication and authorisation, session management and auditing and logging. At disaster security level, risk assessment, establishing priorities, developing recovery strategies are a few parameters that play a key role. And at the network security level, components like anti-virus and anti-spyware, firewall, intrusion prevention systems (IPS) and virtual private networks (VPNs), play a crucial role to secure remote access.

While the researchers feel that a lot more has to be done to make the internet a safer media but these basic security parameters are enough for school children and youngsters to have a secured exposure.



(The author is the managing director of Cambridge Montessori Pre-school.)

Lead from the back and let others believe they are in front. —Nelson Mandela

BUBBLES IN BODY TO FIGHT CANCER BETTER

Researchers have found that tiny bubbles in our body might potentially be used to treat cancer and could fight the disease better than chemotherapy. Healthy cells in our body release nano-sized bubbles that transfer genetic material such as DNA and RNA to other cells. It's your DNA that stores the important information necessary for RNA to produce proteins and make sure they act accordingly. According to the researchers, these bubbly extracellular vesicles (EV) could become mini treatment transporters, carrying a combination of therapeutic drugs and genes that target cancer cells and kill them. "What we've done is improve a therapeutic approach to delivering enzyme-producing genes that can convert certain drugs into toxic agents and target tumours," said the study's lead author Masamitsu Kanada, Assistant Professor at the Michigan State University. These drugs or prodrugs start out as inactive compounds. But once they metabolize in the body, they are immediately activated and can get to work on fighting everything from cancer to headaches.



MISTAKES CAUSE 2.6 MN DEATHS YEARLY: WHO

More than 138 million patients are harmed every year by doctors' errors, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned, just a few days before celebrating the first World Patient Safety Day, with which it seeks to raise awareness of this ongoing tragedy. Errors in diagnosis, errors in medicine prescriptions and treatments, and the inappropriate use of drugs are the three main reasons why so many patients harmed, WHO patient-safety coordinator Dr Neelam Dhingra-Kumar said. "These mistakes occur because healthcare systems are not suitably designed to deal with these errors and learn from them," the expert said, while admitting that many medical facilities hide what they did wrong, which often keeps them from taking steps to make sure these mistakes are not repeated in the future. Figures refer only to countries with medium and low economic status so that the real number could be even greater, considering that even in developed countries, one out of every 10 patients is the victim of medical mistakes.



POVERTY ACCELERATES AGEING PROCESS

Genetics, lifestyle and environment are all factors that somehow influence when and how we all age. Now, researchers have revealed that four or more years with an income below the relative poverty threshold during adult life may accelerate the ageing process. For the study published in the journal European Journal of Ageing, the researchers have tested 5,500 middle-aged persons, using various ageing markers: physical capability, cognitive function and inflammatory level. The results were then compared with the participants' income throughout the 22 years leading up to the test. An annual income of 60 per cent below the median income is considered relative poverty. "We have found that there is a significant correlation between financial challenges and early ageing. And this is important in order to be able to instigate preventative measures," said study co-author Rikke Lund, Professor at the University of Copenhagen. "With our results, we show that poor finances are a strong indicator of early ageing — this knowledge can be used to prevent the problems," she added.



NEW TREATMENT FOR KIDNEY AILMENT

Researchers have found a potential treatment for polycystic kidney disease, a genetic disorder that causes the kidneys to swell with multiple cysts and can eventually lead to organ failure. The drug is now in early clinical trials on human subjects, the researchers said. Autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD) affects about 12 million people worldwide, with half developing end-stage kidney disease by the age of 60, according to the study. "Once the kidneys have failed, the only options for survival are dialysis or a kidney transplant, a large percentage of ADPKD patients on dialysis die each year while waiting for a donated kidney," said Indian origin researcher and study senior author Vishal Patel, Associate Professor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre. According to the study, the new treatment showed no evidence of toxicity in animals or human cell tests. It is preferentially delivered to kidneys rather than the liver after being administered.



DRINK TEA TO BOOST YOUR BRAIN FUNCTION

Researchers have found that regular tea drinkers have better organised brain regions and this is associated with healthy cognitive function as compared to non-tea drinkers. "Our results offer the first evidence of positive contribution of tea drinking to brain structure and suggest that drinking tea regularly has a protective effect against age-related decline in brain organisation," according to a study authored by Feng Lei, Assistant Professor from the National University of Singapore. Previous researchers have demonstrated that tea intake is beneficial to human health and the positive effects include mood improvement and cardiovascular disease prevention. Upon analysing the participants' cognitive performance and imaging results, the research team found that individuals who consumed either green tea, oolong tea, or black tea at least four times a week for about 25 years had brain regions that were interconnected in a more efficient way.



SOURABH WINS VIETNAM OPEN

PTI ■ HO CHI MINH CITY

India's Sourabh Verma registered a thrilling three-game win over China's Sun Fei Xiang to claim the men's singles title at the USD 75,000 Vietnam Open BWF Tour Super 100 badminton tournament here on Sunday.

Second seed Sourabh, who has won the Hyderabad Open and Slovenian International earlier this year, recovered from a mid-game slump to beat Sun 21-12 17-21 21-14 in the summit clash which lasted an hour and 12 minutes.

"I am very happy with the way, I played this week. I played three Japanese and these players have similar kind of style. Most like to attack and the little differences in their style is something you have to figure out on the court. So it was nice to beat them," Sourabh told PTI.

He beat three Japanese shuttlers -- Kodai Naraoka, Yu Igarashi and Minoru Koga -- on way to his title win.

"The final was a tough match but I am happy I could play my game and come out victorious. This title will give a boost to my confidence," the Indian said.

It was a third career meeting between Sourabh and Sun. The duo has faced off twice this year at Canada and Hyderabad with the Indian coming up trumps on both the occasions.

Talking about the final



match, the world no 38 Indian said: "In the first game, I waited for his weak returns. I realised his defence was a little weak, so I looked to exploit that. He committed too many unforced errors and it helped me."

"In the second game, I was troubled by the drift from one side and he jumped into a huge lead. But after the change of side in the decider, I went back to the strategy that worked for me and I am happy I could win," added the National champion. Asked if he will play the

The final was a tough match but I am happy I could play my game and come out victorious. This title will give a boost to my confidence

USD 400,000 Korea Open World Tour Super 500 event to be held from September 24 to 29, Sourabh said: "I will head back home now and depending on the condition of my body and the time required to recover, I will take a call if I want to go to Korea or not."

In the finals, Sourabh dominated the proceedings in the opening game as he jumped to a 4-0 lead early on and kept moving ahead. He enjoyed a 11-4 cushion at the break and surged to a 15-4 advantage after the breather.

Sun tried to recover but the gap was too wide to be bridged as Sourabh pocketed the first game comfortably.

The Chinese came out all guns blazing in the second game, zooming to a 8-0 lead. He led 11-5 at the interval and even though the Indian tried to make a comeback, it proved an uphill task as Sun roared back into the contest.

In the decider, Sun had a slender 4-2 lead initially but Sourabh ensured he enjoyed 11-7 advantage at the breather. The Indian then maintained his lead, despite the Chinese snapping at his heels.

Leading 17-14, Sourabh blasted off the next four points to shut the door on his opponent and win his third title of the year.

The 26-year-old from Madhya Pradesh had won the Dutch Open and Korea Open last year



Fati lights up Barca

AFP ■ MADRID

Ansu Fati, the 16-year-old starlet from Guinea Bissau, scored his second goal of the season as Barcelona breezed to a 5-2 win against Valencia on Saturday.

Karim Benzema netted twice for Real Madrid as they fought off a late comeback to beat Levante 3-2 as Eden Hazard made his La Liga debut.

Atletico Madrid retained their place at the top of the table, but only by one point from Real Madrid after their first defeat of the season when they lost 2-0 at Real Sociedad at the Basque club's newly refurbished stadium.

With Lionel Messi still out and watching from the stands at the Camp Nou it was left to Fati take the plaudits.

Fati, who became the third youngest scorer in La Liga history when he came off the bench to net in a 2-2 draw at Osasuna this month, scored in the second minute, before providing the assist for Frenkie de Jong's seventh minute goal.

Barca coach Ernesto Valverde marvelled at Fati's

composure. "It's not usual that on his first touch he scores, and on his second he sets up a goal," he said.

The defeat left Valencia with just four points from four matches, leaving new coach Albert Celades -- a former Real Madrid assistant coach -- with a huge amount of work to do before the club play their first Champions League group game against Chelsea on Tuesday.

Real show frailties - At a rain-drenched Santiago Bernabeu, Benzema's goals came just six minutes apart in the first half before Casemiro put Real 3-0 up.

However Levante, who had won their previous two outings, made a fight of it in the second half as they pulled goals back through Borja Mayoral and Gonzalo Melero.

Hazard also came off the bench for the final half-hour to make his first La Liga appearance after a thigh injury had interrupted the start of his Real career following his 100 million-euro (\$110 million) move from Chelsea.

SINGLES

KAUSHAL WINS MYANMAR INT'L SERIES



YANGON: Indian shuttler Kaushal Dharmar clinched the Myanmar International Series with a come-from-behind win over Indonesia's Karono Karono in a thrilling men's singles final here on Sunday. The 23-year-old from Mumbai, who had won the Hatzor International in October last year, recovered after dropping the opening game to outwit Karono 18-21 21-14 21-11 in a match that lasted an hour here. A trainee of Uday Pawar Badminton Academy, Kaushal, who has been troubled by injuries for almost two years, is currently ranked 187th.

KAVINDER BISHT MOVES AHEAD

EKATERINBURG (RUSSIA): Asian silver-medallist Kavinder Singh Bisht (57kg) advanced to the pre-quarterfinals with a hard-fought win over China's Chena Zhihao in the World Men's Boxing Championships here on Sunday. The fifth seeded Indian left his rival with a bloodied face before the judges ruled 3-2 in his favour after an exhausting bout during which both the boxers managed to connect very few impactful punches. The 26-year-old Indian Air Force man, who was a quarterfinalist in the 2017 Hamburg edition and is among the strongest contenders for a medal this time around, stood out for his pace and endurance during Sunday's bout.

GR WRESTLERS CONTINUE STRUGGLE

NUR-SULTAN (KAZAKHSTAN): Ravi won India's first bout at the World Championships before suffering a defeat by fall as the country's Greco-Roman wrestlers continued their disappointing show on Sunday here. The Olympic qualification was at stake in three categories but all three Indians cut a sorry figure as Manish (67kg), Sunil Kumar (87kg) and Ravi (97kg) exited without a fight. The four wrestlers in action on the opening day had not won a single bout and three of them did not even score a point but Ravi managed to win a bout against Chinese Taipei's Cheng Hao Chen.

ANJUM 3RD IN NATIONAL TRIALS

NEW DELHI: World championship Silver medalist Anjum Moudgil swept the women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions (3P) national trials, winning the T7 trial at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range here on Sunday. Anjum, thus, added to the T6 title she won in the same event on Saturday. With this, the Punjab girl has won four trials in all in this outing, claiming both the T6 and T7 Rifle Prone events before landing both the women's 3P titles. Anjum shot 460.2 in the T7 final to improve upon her 456, which she shot to win the T6 on Saturday.

GILL MAKES MARK IN TURKEY

NEW DELHI: India's top rally driver Gaurav Gill won praise of his co-competitors by overcoming mechanical failures and a series of punctures before it ended in a heartbreak for him in the gruelling Rally of Turkey, the first event of the FIA World Rally Championship 2 on Sunday. Going into the final day with a top-five finish firmly in sight, the UK Racing ace underlined his mettle by finishing second in the first stage of the day. He continued in the same vein, taking the third place in the next stage too, demonstrating phenomenal speed and control to post spectacular timings to inch up the leader-board.

AGENCIES

Inter Milan top Serie A as Juventus held in Fiorentina

AFP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan reclaimed top spot in Serie A after a 1-0 win over 10-man Udinese on Saturday as Juventus lost three players to injury in a painful goalless draw at Fiorentina to complicate preparations for next week's Champions League opener.

Stefano Sensi's diving header was enough to seal a maximum nine points for Antonio Conte's Inter ahead of their European opener against Slavia Prague in the San Siro next Tuesday.

But as Maurizio Sarri made his debut on the Juventus bench after recovering from pneumonia, the Italian champions showed signs of weakness four days before their trip to Atletico Madrid.

Juventus are trailing two points behind Inter Milan after three games and could be overtaken by city rivals Torino who host promoted Lecce on Monday.

Napoli meanwhile warmed up for European holders Liverpool on Tuesday with a Dries Mertens double sealing a 2-0 win over crisis club Sampdoria, to move up to fourth in the table.

The reigning eight-time Serie A champions are already missing injured captain Giorgio Chiellini, Mattia De Sciglio and Marko Pjaca.

And Brazilian Douglas Costa pulled up with a hamstring problem minutes into



the game in Florence, followed by Miralem Pjanic with a muscular issue with Danilo later suffering cramps in the heat.

'Better than Ronaldo' - Ribery, 36, went off to a standing ovation from the crowd at the Artemio Franchi Stadium after an hour as his team earned their first point this season.

Ribery "played better than Ronaldo," insisted Fiorentina's new owner Rocco Commisso, as the former Bayern Munich midfielder did well to neutralise Ronaldo, who had scored four goals for Portugal in European qualifiers this week.

Ronaldo failed to add to his tally with an acrobatic bicycle kick in the 85th minute flying over the bar.

TIME TO TURN THE PAGE: NEYMAR

AFP ■ PARIS

Neymar shrugged off a hostile reception as he marked his return to action for Paris Saint-Germain with a stunning injury-time winner, and then insisted it was time to move on from the saga of his aborted return to Barcelona.

The world's most expensive player was booed and insulted by sections of the PSG support in the Ligue 1 match against Strasbourg at the Parc des Princes.

That seemed set to be the only story of the afternoon until the second minute of added time when, with the game still goalless, the Brazilian met Abdou Diallo's cross with an acrobatic effort that sent the ball arcing back over his own head and in off the post, sealing a 1-0 win.

It was a remarkable goal and a reminder of why PSG paid a world record 222 million euros (\$264 million at the time) to sign Neymar in 2017. It also leaves them two points clear of Rennes at the



top of Ligue 1.

"I made it clear that I have nothing against the fans, nothing against Paris Saint-Germain as a club. Everyone knows I wanted to leave. I am not going to get into the details of what happened," he said after the game.

"It is time to turn the page. Today I am a Paris Saint-Germain player and I am going to give everything on the field."

He had not played for his club since May and had been left on the sidelines in their first four league games of the campaign because of the uncertainty surrounding his future.

However, having been resigned to a third season in France, he was handed a start by coach Thomas Tuchel here, and loud jeers greeted his name as the teams were read out. He was also regularly whistled by

fans when he touched the ball.

"It is not the first time I have been booed by everyone," Neymar admitted.

"I played in Brazil away from home, I was widely booed. I have played in finals and been booed. I have played here in France, away from home, and also been booed."

"It is sad but I know that, from now on, every game I play will be an away game." One banner unfurled in Portuguese, aimed at Neymar's father who is also his agent, read: "Neymar Senior, sell your son in the Vila Mimosa".

Vila Mimosa is a district of Rio de Janeiro notorious for prostitution. Another banner mockingly called Neymar "Calimero", a reference to the always unlucky Italian cartoon character.

Certainly not much was going right on the field for the 27-year-old or for his team, who had been held by Strasbourg twice in the league last season.

Barua's sensational charges divide Indian chess

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

Indian chess bosses have swung into action to contain the damaging fallout of the sensational corruption charges leveled by Grandmaster Dibyendu Barua, a chess legend in his own right, against the Bengal Chess Association (BCA) secretary, Atanau Lahiri.

The latest reaction of the All India Chess Federation (AICF) in dealing with Lahiri, who has been caught with his hands literally in the till, shows the Federation has done a rethink on tacking an alleged offender, who is also one of their own officials. Lahiri is a member of the AICF trainer's committee and perceived to be close to the Federation bosses.

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 comp[nay]-Global Chess- in around 53 weeks.

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 Halder from playing in a tournament on disciplinary grounds. Barua has reportedly also

met with State Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and brought to her notice serious financial irregularities in conduct of state chess association.

Barua's charges of corruption are in sync with an allegation leveled by an office bearer of the BCA that signature of a chartered account was forged to manipulate the accounts.

There are also serious allegation that Lahiri conducts all profitable tournaments under Global Chess and all non-profitable ones under BCA. Lahiri is a partner and main signatory in Global Chess.

In its first reaction AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan on August 30 issued a statement taking cognizance of Barua's complaint and promised to set up a three-member committee to probe the charges.

"The AICF will initiate a thorough enquiry into the affairs of Bengal Chess Association and its secretary Atanau Lahiri on the charges leveled by Dibyendu Barua. We will set up a committee soon to look into the matter."

Stopping chess activity is perceived as a serious offence by us in AICF," the statement added. Chauhan's letter also slammed BCA's decision to stop nine-year-old Sneha Halder - the state and national U-9 champion - from taking part in state-level tournaments.

The tone of Chauhan's statement was highly critical of Lahiri's conduct and gave the impression that the AICF was determined to do justice in this



case.

Chauhan statement created a flutter in the chess circle, because Lahiri is seen as a blue-eyed boy of the AICF bosses, who allowed him to control the destiny of Bengal chess despite presiding over an association which didn't even have a fulltime president in the last three years.

It didn't take long before differences cropped up in the AICF over this issue. On September 6, AICF president P.R. Venkatarama Raja issued a state-

ment in which he virtually criticized Bharat Singh Chauhan accusing him for taking side in the matter and arguing for impartial probe.

Rebuffing Chauhan for backing a serious issue tossed by India's foremost chess player, the AICF president Venkatarama Raja said, the Federation should act impartially in this matter and Chauhan "went beyond the brief" while issuing the press statement regarding the allegations leveled by Barua.

Dream didn't come true for Aussies

England close in on Ashes-levelling win after Broad double on day four



AFP ■ LONDON

England closed in on a series-levelling victory in the fifth Test at the Oval on Sunday as Australia slipped to 68-3 at lunch on the fourth day. Joe Root's side set the tourists an unlikely 399 to win in London after adding just 16 runs to their overnight total. Paceman Broad pounded in, roared on by a packed crowd, who raised the roof when he demolished Marcus Harris's off-stump in the fifth over, removing the batsman for nine. In his following over, Broad ended David Warner's miserable

series, with the opener edging him to Rory Burns in the slips and departing for 11. Warner, who returned to international cricket in June after a 12-month ban for ball-tampering, had a good World Cup but has endured a torrid time in the Ashes. The attacking batsman has scored just 95 runs in 10 innings and has been dismissed by Broad seven times. Warner's dismissal brought Steve Smith to the wicket and he opened his



account with a sweet drive through the covers for four off Jofra Archer. Smith and Marcus Labuschagne (14) took the score to 56 before off-spinner Jack Leach beat the outside edge of Labuschagne's bat and Johnny Bairstow whipped off the balls to complete a sharp stumping. Seamer Sam Curran and Leach continued to apply pressure

on Smith and new man Matthew Wade but Australia reached the lunch break without losing a further wicket. Smith was unbeaten on 18, with Wade 10 not out. England, who became world champions in the one-day game for the first time in July, are desperate to end a long summer by levelling the five-match series at 2-2. If they manage to win, it would be the first drawn Ashes series since 1972. The tourists' hopes rest almost entirely on the shoulders of Smith, who has dominated the series with his bat despite miss-

ing one-and-a-half Tests after being hit by an Archer bouncer. His 769 runs so far put him fifth on the list of highest tallies in an Ashes series behind Don Bradman's two entries, England's Wally Hammond and former Australia skipper Mark Taylor. Australia are seeking their first Test series win in England since 2001 but only once before have they scored 399-plus runs in the fourth innings to win a Test match, against England at Headingley in 1948. Earlier, England took their second-innings total to 329, with Archer and Leach the last men out.

Australia having a 'mare' with Ashes DRS calls

AFP ■ LONDON

Australia captain Tim Paine admitted he was having "a mare" after twice failing to review umpiring decisions in the fifth Ashes Test even though the challenges would have brought wickets.

England, seeking to level the series at 2-2, are firmly in control of the final Test with two days to go, 382 runs ahead with two second-innings wickets left.

Australia toiled in the field at the Oval on the third day of the match on Saturday and were not helped by Paine's misjudgements.

Joe Denly, who went on to score 94, should have been out lbw to Mitchell Marsh when he was on 54 but Australia opted not to review the not-out decision.

Later on the skipper, who is the team's wicketkeeper, failed to review a not-out decision against Jos Buttler after an appeal for lbw, with replays showing Nathan Lyon's delivery would have hit the stumps.

Buttler, then on 19, went on to score 47.

"I'm getting it wrong," said a tetchy Paine.

"I don't know what else to say. We're having a mare (nightmare). We've got it wrong."

"It's fast," he added. "It's a tough job as I've said throughout the whole Test series. I've got a new respect for umpiring, particularly in Test cricket because it's a hard job."

When asked what he could do about it, he said sarcastically that he would enrol in "umpiring school" when he returned home to Australia.

Paine said after his side's defeat in the third Test at Headingley that he would be putting someone else in charge of the team's reviews.

During the closing stages of that match, Lyon had a huge appeal for lbw against Ben Stokes but the England vice-captain was given not out and Australia could not challenge that verdict as they had used up all their reviews.

Their misery was compounded when replays revealed that Stokes would have been given out.

Paine said it was sometimes difficult to judge from behind the stumps,



saying he was not sure where the ball hit Denly, for example.

The skipper said his team, guaranteed to retain the Ashes urn, still had a chance to win the series outright.

"The only thing that's been a bit upsetting this Test match is our catching and our referrals but that's not anything new," he added.

He described his top-scorer Steve Smith as a "freak" after he took a stunning diving slip catch late on to see the back of Chris Woakes.

"Cricketers like him, I think Stokes is the same, they're just in the contest and in the game all the time," he said.

"That's what makes great cricketers great because they're always in the contest, they're always aware of what's happening. It was a pretty special catch."

'Youngsters need to prove themselves'

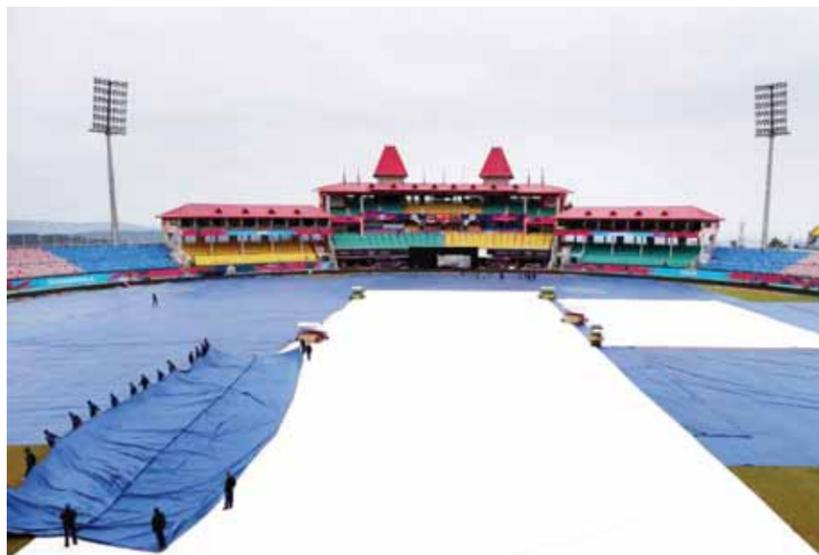
PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

India captain Virat Kohli has made it amply clear that the youngsters drafted into the squad ahead of the T20 World Cup next year will have to prove themselves in the "four or five" opportunities they get.

Giving his own example, Kohli, who made his India debut in 2008, said he never expected to get a bagful of opportunities in his early days as an international cricketer.

"We have 30 odd games (before T20 World Cup). From team's point of view, it is very clear. Even when I got into the team it is not like I was expecting 15 opportunities. You get four to five opportunities and you have to make the most of it. That is the level we are playing at," Kohli told Star Sports.

"I think individuals coming in need to have the mindset (of limited opportunities) because team definitely has that mindset.



The first T20 International match between India and South Africa at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) stadium on Sunday was called off without a ball bowled due to rain. The consistent showers throughout the day didn't even allow the toss to take place and both the team had to walk away without any action on the field. Source: Twitter

Pant has unquestionable talent: Shastri

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

India head coach Ravi Shastri has made it clear that Rishabh Pant will be "rapped on the knuckles" if he keeps on playing rash shots like the one he did against the West Indies recently.

Shastri did not mince words as he pointed out that the young wicketkeeper-batsman has let the team down during India's recent tour of the West Indies where he was dismissed first ball in an ODI game.

"We'll let him be but at times when you see a shot, like the first ball dismissal in Trinidad, if he repeats that, then he will be told.

There will be a rap on the knuckles, talent or no talent," the head coach said.

"As simple as that. Because you are letting the team down, forget letting yourselves down. In a situation where you have the captain at the other end, a target to chase, the need of the hour is sensible cricket," Shastri was quoted as saying in an interview with Star Sports.

Shastri said Pant has unquestionable talent but if he



can sort out his shot-selection and decision-making, he will be unstoppable.

"No one will even think of changing his style. Like Virat said, reading the situation, match-awareness and shot-selection becomes crucial. If he can fathom that, he could be unstoppable.

"It could take one game, it could take four games. He has played so much IPL cricket, he will learn. It's time now for him

to step up and show how devastating he can be," Shastri said with captain Virat Kohli by his side. Kohli, on his part, said he wants Pant to play according to situations.

"The only expectation from Rishabh is that he read situations well," Kohli said.

"We don't expect him to play the way you might be thinking. It is about analysing a situation and dealing with it in your own way."

PKL: Dabang Delhi beat Gujarat Fortunegiants

PTI ■ PUNE

Naveen Kumar was once again the hero for Dabang Delhi KC as they beat Gujarat Fortunegiants 34-30 in a Pro Kabaddi League match here on Sunday.

Naveen Kumar picked up another Super 10 (13th consecutive) as Delhi produced a composed performance, despite being closely challenged in the second half by Fortunegiants, to pick up five points and consolidate their stay at the top of the points table.

The initial minutes of the match suggested it would be a closely-fought encounter with both defences looking sharp.

Ravinder Pahal pulled off two successful tackles for the Delhi side while, at the other end, Rituraj Koravi was looking in form.

But Naveen had other plans, as

The initial minutes of the match suggested it would be a closely-fought encounter with both defences looking sharp

he unlocked the Gujarat defence with a five-point raid in the ninth minute to clinch an All-Out for Delhi.

The restart didn't bring good fortunes for Fortunegiants, with their raiders looking rather one-dimensional against a Delhi defence that was slowly growing in stature.

The first half ended with Naveen claiming another two-point raid that reduced Gujarat to



a single player and gave Delhi an 11-point lead (20-9).

Sadly for Delhi, both Meraj Sheykh and Anil Kumar had to be substituted due to injuries.

Delhi secured their second All-Out in the first move of the second half but the restart marked the revival for last season's runners-up Fortunegiants.

Pankaj, playing in the left corner for Gujarat, ensured Naveen Kumar had no influence in the game, while Rohit Gulia produced a quick-fire Super 10 to inflict an All-Out on Delhi (sixth minute of the second half) and reduced the margin.

Sachin also got into the act for Gujarat as the team kept pace with the Delhi side.

But Naveen's clinical Super 10 and a dash by Vishal Mane on Gujarat's Sachin was enough for Delhi to pick up a victory

Guys who grab the opportunity quickly, they grab the opportunity. It is a delicate balance to strike but it is important because you only have 30 games (to figure it out). Besides the T20 World Cup in Australia next year, the team is also focussing on the World Test Championship. For the last two T20 International series, including against the West Indies and the ongoing one against South Africa, India have left out spinners Kuldeep Chahal and Yuzvendra Chahal who have made way for Rahul Chahar and Washington Sundar. The selectors have also brought in batsmen Shreyas Iyer and Manish Pandey. "Before we reach the World Cup, focus is on T20s and Tests. Youngsters are being pushed in from time to time. It is very important to settle the team combination and you will have to figure out the players who will take the team forward," added Kohli.