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Howdy, Modi echoes in Houston

Trump heaps praise on India, says under PM Modi world witnessing a strong country

PTI ■ HOUSTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was accorded a rousing welcome on Sunday when he arrived at the crowded NRG stadium on Sunday to address the Indian-American community with people chanting "Howdy, Modi."

Trump, who joined Modi as a "special gesture" by the US President to underscore the special bond between the two countries, said, "Modi is doing extraordinary job for India and under him the world is witnessing a strong India."

While addressing the Indian diaspora, Trump said, "I am happy to be here at the Houston event. We are celebrating everything that unites India and the US. The relationship between India and the US is stronger than ever before... We are strengthened by our love of liberty. The constitutions of both the countries begin with three beautiful words — We, the people."

It is for the first time that Trump and Modi shared a stage together and address a record crowd of 50,000 Indian-Americans.

Modi introduced Trump to Indian-American community; describes him as a "special person". Modi entered on the stage with folded hands. He



President Donald Trump stands on stage with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at NRG Stadium on Sunday

bowed before the audience, thanking them for such an amazing welcome.

Welcoming Modi, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner highlighted the significance of the

event and said that Indians have been a key figure in the development of his city.

Turner told the crowd that Houston is the most diverse city in the county. "In Houston,

we say howdy in more than 140 languages," Turner said, "and this morning we are saying howdy to Modi!"

After welcoming Modi at the event, Turner presented

him the keys to the Houston City, which has one of the largest concentration of the Indian-American community in the US. About two dozen governors and members of the

US Congress are also attending the event.

Democrat Steny Hoyer welcomed Modi and invoked Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his speech. He said both Indians and Americans have the same purpose, growing the partnership between the two countries.

Earlier, Trump said he and his "friend" Modi will have a "good time" at the mega event. "Look forward to being with our great India loving community!" he tweeted.

Responding to Trump's tweet, Modi said he was looking forward to meet the US leader in Houston. "It surely will be a great day! Looking forward to meeting you very soon @realDonaldTrump," Modi tweeted.

Organised by the non-profit Texas India Forum, the event, with the tagline 'Shared Dreams, Bright Futures', will shine light on the tremendous contribution of Indo-Americans in United States and the strong and lasting partnership between the US and India. Ahead of Modi's address, Indian-American artists from Texas and elsewhere performed cultural programmes. Modi welcomed Trump and the two leaders embraced each other and walked together towards the stage.

Dallas-based Ashok Mago said 'Howdy, Modi' is an opportunity for the two leaders to showcase to the world the shared values and principles of the two largest democratic countries of the world.

"This meeting has great significance," Mago said. "It (Howdy Modi) shows that President Trump wants the US-India relationship strong and is committed to this. I do not think that Trump has shared a dais with a visiting foreign leader like this," Dallas-based Mago told PTI.

An eminent Indian American, who has played a key role in strengthening India US relationship, Mago was one of four Indian-Americans who were invited by the White House to meet the president on his arrival at the Joint Reserve Base.

Accompanying Mago to the air force base, Piyush Patel said that this was a dream come true. "For me this mega event will take India-US relationship goes to a whole new level," he said. India, he asserted, should be treated as a most favoured nation as is the case with major European countries. Defence, technology and energy are some of the key sectors he identified as major areas of co-operation that would take the relationship to a new level.

"Today, there are no other leaders like Trump and Modi. For both of them the country comes first. Both of them are working for the people of the country," he said.

Earlier in the day, Modi had a "special interaction" with a 17-member delegation of Kashmiri Pandits here and assured them of "building a new Kashmir" which would be for everyone.

The delegation, which included Kashmiri Pandits from across the US, met Modi on his arrival in Houston as part of his week-long visit to the US.

"Kashmir mein naee hava bah rahee hai (New winds are blowing in Kashmir) and we will all build a new Kashmir together that will be for everyone," he told the delegation.

The Indian Government on August 5 revoked the special status given to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated it into two union territories. Modi also thanked the community for their patience for over 30 years. "I had a special interaction with Kashmiri Pandits in Houston," Modi later tweeted.

Earlier, MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted that the Kashmiri Pandits expressed support for the steps taken by the Indian Government for the progress of India.

DMK affidavit to EC puts CPM, CPI in tight spot

CPM affidavit doesn't mention DMK donation

J GOPIKRISHNAN ■ NEW DELHI

The DMK's Lok Sabha election expenditure affidavit submitted to the Election Commission has put its alliance partners CPI(M) and CPI in a tight spot.

As per the affidavit submitted on September 20, the DMK has given ₹10 crore to CPI(M) and ₹15 crore to CPI which were allotted two seats each in Tamil Nadu by the major alliance partner DMK. Interestingly, this ₹10 crore donation from the DMK is not reflected in the CPI(M)'s affidavit to the Election Commission.

The CPI(M) had submitted the first expenditure affidavit on July 10 and on September 13 the party claimed that its total election expenditure across India is around ₹7.2 crore in

their last affidavit. The CPI has not yet submitted their affidavit to the Election Commission.

According to the DMK's affidavit, it had given ₹10 crore to the CPI(M) through bank transfer in three installments on April 5, 8 and 9. The DMK transferred ₹15 crore to the CPI through bank in two installments on April 5 and 16. The DMK also gave ₹15 crore to one of their regional alliance partners Kongu Nadu Democratic Party, which was allotted one seat in Lok Sabha elections from the DMK-led alliance.

It is interesting to note that the DMK's self-declared total expenditure is ₹79.26 crore including the above mentioned total ₹40 crore donations to its alliance partners. The DMK won 22 seats in Tamil Nadu. The CPI(M) in its expenditure affidavit showed around ₹82 lakh as receipts from Coimbatore and Madurai constituencies, while the DMK's affidavit claims they have given ₹10 crore.

Dantewada goes to polls today amid security fear

STAFF REPORTER ■ DANTEWADA

Voting for the by-election in the Naxal-affected Dantewada Assembly constituency of Chhattisgarh will be held on Monday amid heightened security.

Total nine candidates are in fray for the by-poll necessitated following the death of sitting BJP legislator Bhima Mandavi in a Naxal attack in April this year.

The main Opposition BJP in the State is fighting to retain the seat, reserved for Scheduled Tribe candidates. "All preparations have been done for conducting a free and fair by-election in Dantewada," State's Chief Electoral Officer Subrat Sahoo told reporters here on Sunday.

There are total 1,88,263 voters, including 89,747 men and 98,876 women, in the constituency where 273 polling stations have been established.

"Voting will be held from 7 am till 3 pm. Elaborate security arrangements have been

Total nine candidates are in fray for the by-poll necessitated following the death of sitting BJP legislator Bhima Mandavi in a Naxal attack in April this year. All preparations have been done for conducting a free and fair by-election in Dantewada

made for conducting the by-poll," he said.

Nearly 18,000 security personnel, including paramilitary forces, have been deployed in the Naxal-infested Assembly segment, which is part of the Bastar region, a senior police official here said.

Besides, drones will also keep a hawk eye to track the movement of Naxals, especially in areas close to the polling booths and camps of security forces, he said.

As many as 1,302 polling personnel have already left for their respective booths, he said.

Both the leading parties have fielded candidates who have been victims of Naxal

violence. The Congress has nominated Devi Karma, wife of senior Congress leader Mahendra Karma who was killed in the Jhiram Valley attack by Naxals in 2013, against BJP's Ojaswi Mandavi, wife of slain MLA Bhima Mandavi.

In the 2018 Assembly elections, Devi Karma lost to Bhima Mandavi by a margin of 2,172 votes. In the State polls held last year for the 90-member Assembly, the Congress won 68 seats and the BJP bagged 15.

The Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) bagged five and two seats respectively.

Centre to release buffer stock to arrest onion price increase

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prices of onion have once again gone up by around 50 per cent from ₹30-40 per kg to ₹50-80 per kg due to uneven distribution and supply in the wholesale markets across the country and floods in major supplying States such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

Taking note of increasing onion prices, the NDA Government is mulling imposing stock limits on onion traders.

Onion prices are on the rise despite several measures taken by the Ministry of Food and Consumers Affairs to boost supply. The onion supply is expected to improve in November when the new crop will come in the market. The Centre has a buffer stock of 56,000 tonnes of onion, of which 16,000 tonnes have been offloaded so far. In Delhi, 200 tonnes a day is being offloaded.



The trade data showed retail onion prices skyrocketing to ₹70-80 per kg towards the end of the last week from ₹50-60 per kg in the previous week. At wholesale market of Lasalgaon, onion prices rose to ₹45 per kg last week, when compared with less than ₹10/kg during the same period last year.

The retail onion prices in Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) areas are Rs 50-80 per kg depending on the localities and quality. "Onion prices have almost doubled in the last 7 to 10 days.

CAPSULE

TWO NEWBORN GIRLS DROWNED BY PARENTS

Muzaffarnagar: Two newborn girls were drowned in a pond by their parents in an Uttar Pradesh village, with the father claiming that they killed the 20-day-old twins as they could not bear their expenses.

DON'T REPEAT MISTAKES, RAJNATH WARNS PAK

Patna: Warning Pakistan to not repeat the "mistakes of 1965 and 1971", Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said the neighbouring country can get dismantled into various parts on account of flagrant human rights violations against Balochs and Pashtuns on its soil.

GREYHOUNDS OF AP POLICE KILL 3 MAOISTS

Amaravati: Elite Greyhounds of Andhra Pradesh Police on Sunday killed three members of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) in an encounter in Visakhapatnam district on the AP-Odisha border, police said.

70 IAS OFFICERS TRANSFERRED IN RAJ

Jaipur: The Rajasthan Government has transferred 70 IAS officers, including 10 district collectors, according to an official order.

Shah blames former PM Nehru for POK

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Blaming late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for the creation of Pak-Occupied Kashmir (POK), Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday exhorted voters of Maharashtra to "show the place" they deserved to political parties opposing the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, in the State Assembly polls.

Launching the BJP's campaign for the Maharashtra Assembly polls at a party workers' rally held at NESCO ground at Goregaon in north Mumbai, Shah laid the blame for the creation of the POK at the door of the then Prime Minister Nehru. "Maharaj Hari Singh ceded Kashmir to India on October 26, 1947. On the following, Indian forces began to capture areas under Kashmir. One fine day, Nehru declared ceasefire with Pakistan-supported forces. POK would not have come into existence had Nehru not

declared ceasefire at that time. It's because of Nehru's blunder, we have POK now," the BJP president said.

"Later on January 1, 1948 India approached the UN. Had India invoked charter 51 instead of charter 35, POK would have been part of India. But India invoked charter 35 which is meant for disputes. And the POK came to be declared as disputed territory," Shah said.

Charging that the Congress and its ally NCP were "shamelessly" opposing the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, Shah said: "I have come here to appeal to see for yourself who is in favour of the annulment of Article 370 and who is against it. There are two major political formations

One political formation owes its allegiance to Bharat Mata i.e., BJP and its allies, while the other formation -- Congress and NCP -- believes



Home Minister Amit Shah speaks during a rally on the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir and to campaign for next month's Maharashtra Assembly polls, in Mumbai on Sunday

dynastic politics. The voters have to choose between these two political formations."

Making the abrogation of Article 370 main plank in the elections, Shah said: "As a leader and president of BJP, I have come to you with an appeal. Maharashtra is a land of Chhatrapati Shivaji. It was on

this land that freedom struggle began. The fight against Moghuls started here. At the time when the elections are happening, the people of Maharashtra should decide and show the people they deserve to the political parties opposing the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution"

Aromatic plants perk up Leh-Ladakh farmers

MoU signed for cultivation of high-value aromatic crops like rose, marigold & mint

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The fragrance of the high revenue-earning aromatic plants seems to have caught the fancy of the small farmers residing in the high-altitude cold arid zones of Leh-Ladakh.

Tapping in on this growing interest among farmers, Ladakh Farmers and Producers Cooperative Limited (LFPC), Leh and Ladakh recently inked a pact with Council for Scientific and Industrial Research's (CSIR) Palampur-based lab, Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) for cultivation of the high-value aromatic crops like rose, marigold and mint.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a processing unit to churn out essential oils from these crops at village Ranbirpura, Thiksay



and Leh is being set up. Dr Sanjay Kumar, Director, CSIR-IHBT, Palampur said processing unit is indispensable for value addition of aromatic plants and establishment of this facility in Leh will benefit the local farmers of Leh district.

"As the region is deprived of natural irrigation facilities and is suitable for the cultivation of high value aromatic

crops such as damask rose, chamomile, wild marigold, dracocephalum, lavender and saffron, so CSIR-IHBT recognised this area for the cultivation of these crops," he explained.

Dr Kumar said seeds of wild marigold, chamomile and saffron have also been provided to the farmers along with the complete information package of agro technologies which

will help them in proper cultivation of these crops.

The project is being undertaken under the CSIR's Aroma Mission programme started two years ago with an aim to promote the aromatic crops and to bring additional area of 5,500 ha under these crops for socio-economic upliftment and environment generation for farming community and rural masses.

Azad visits Anantnag colony, meets people

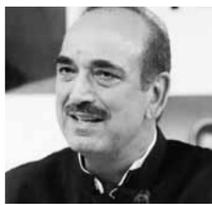
PNS ■ NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR

Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who is on a three-day visit to Kashmir following Supreme Court orders, on Sunday visited Anantnag district in south Kashmir where he met people in a Government housing colony.

Azad, who was scheduled to meet people at Dak Bungalow which has been declared a jail, had to change the venue after authorities refused him permission. Party sources said that Azad was at the housing colony from 11 am to 3 pm and several people visited the former Chief Minister of the State.

This is Azad's first visit to the State after being denied permission to deboard the plane when he was part of an all-party delegation led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi last month. He was accompanied by nine senior political leaders from different parties including Left, Trinamool, DMK, RJD.

Rahul and other were barred from leaving the airport on August 24 where local authorities had warned that their visit could stoke heightened tension in the region. When their plane arrived in Srinagar, the politicians were not allowed to leave the airport and were sent back within a few hours.



A senior Congress leader alleged while the leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha was strictly following the Supreme Court order with respect to his visit to the valley, authorities were creating hurdles. He mentioned that during Azad's stay in Srinagar on Friday, the security personnel did not allow people to meet him.

Azad reached at Srinagar on Friday on his maiden visit following the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and after three failed attempts in which he was turned back from the airport.

On Saturday, Azad visited Lalla Ded maternity hospital and inquired about the welfare of patients. He also visited the Tourist Reception Centre here and interacted with the members of Kashmir Houseboat Owners Association. He is scheduled to visit Baramulla in north Kashmir on Monday.

Azad's visit became possible after a nod from the Supreme Court, which allowed

the Congress general secretary to visit the state. A bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, had on Monday allowed the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister to visit four districts — Srinagar, Jammu, Baramulla, Anantnag — to meet people.

The bench was told by senior advocate A M Singhvi, who was appearing for Azad, that the Congress leader wants to meet the people and inquire about their welfare. In his petition filed in "personal capacity", Azad had told the Supreme Court that he had tried to visit the state thrice, but was turned back from the airport.

Upon the insistence of the political leaders to visit the valley post abrogation of Article 370, Jammu & Kashmir government, currently headed by Governor Sat Pal Malik, has remarked that political leaders had been asked not to visit Srinagar as the administration works to restore order.

A row emerged when Malik offered to arrange an aircraft for Rahul Gandhi to visit the Valley to which the former Congress chief said he will take up his invitation but requested the "freedom to travel and meet the people, mainstream leaders and our soldiers stationed there." Sooner the Governor accused Rahul of politicizing the invitation by putting conditions for visit.

CPWD requests MHA not to examine its projects estimates as it delays works

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPWD, a prime construction agency of the Central Government, has requested the Ministry of Home Affairs not to examine its project estimates as it causes delay in taking up the construction works.

In a letter to Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, CPWD Director General Prabhakar Singh said that it has been observed that proposals or estimates submitted by the Central Public Works Department are examined at various levels in the MHA or Central Para Military Forces.

Singh said that estimates are made with "sound engineering practices" by competent technical professionals and should not require further scrutiny. The CPWD is also the principal construction agency of MHA for creation of all types of built assets of Central Para Military Forces and for border infrastructure, he said.

"Often curtailments in estimates are done which cause misperception in the mind of field units as they are unable to understand the nature, quantum and reason of curtailments," the CPWD DG said in his two-page letter.

He said such curtailments are also a major reason for delay in the execution and completion of the project. The CPWD also examines the estimates prepared by other depart-



ments and organisations, he said.

"Therefore in the interest of the work, there is no need for checking of CPWD estimates as it entails duplication," Singh said.

He said some of the CAPMFs are also insisting on detailed estimates instead of preliminary estimates.

"Detailed estimates require detailed planning such as soil testing, detailed survey, structural design, architectural detailing etc, which is a time intensive exercise and causes substantial delay," Singh also said.

"I, therefore, request your good self to kindly look into the above issues and advise the concern organisations under your administrative control for appropriate needful," the director general said in the letter.

The CPWD is the central government's largest construction agency and it carries out several development and border projects.

The agency also carries out projects in foreign countries which have friendship programmes with India.

EC announces bypolls to 2 more seats in Gujarat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid criticism by the Opposition Congress for not conducting polls for all the vacant seats, the Election Commission (EC) on Sunday announced two more Assembly bypolls — Radhanpur and Bayad seats in Gujarat taking the total number of seats going for by-election across India to 66. The bypolls to Radhanpur and Bayad Assembly seats, announced on Sunday, were necessitated after sitting MLAs Alpesh Thakor and Dhavalsinh Zala of Congress resigned and joined the ruling BJP.

According to the EC, bypolls to Radhanpur and Bayad assembly seats in Gujarat and the Samastipur Lok Sabha seat in Bihar will be held on October 21. Bypolls to four assembly seats — Amraiwadi, Tharad, Lunawada, and Kheralu seats, which fell vacant after sitting MLAs successfully contested Lok Sabha polls in April-May this year, were announced on Saturday.

Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Haryana will also be held on the same day. The counting will be held on October 24. The EC is yet to announce schedule for Morva Hadaf Assembly constituency, reserved for the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category in Gujarat. Morva Hadaf seat fell vacant after Independent MLA Bhupendrasinh Khant was dis-



qualified following invalidation of his caste certificate.

The main opposition Congress on Saturday criticised the EC for announcing by-elections to only four Assembly seats in Gujarat and leaving out three other vacant seats. "The commission was acting under the BJP's pressure," it alleged.

Meanwhile, Thakor and Zala have staked claims for their respective constituencies, Radhanpur and Bayad. Both the leaders belonged to the Thakor community.

"My decision to join the BJP was for the sake of the Thakor community and farmers of Bayad constituency. A former MLA has also demanded ticket from the seat. But people know me. I have helped resolve even small, personal problems of people in my area. If given ticket, I will help the

party win," said Zala.

Thakor said (abrogation of provisions of) Article 370 will remain the main issue in polls. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided a capable leadership to the country. The way the Congress campaigned against Article 370 has disillusioned people," he said. Thakor added that people are also appreciating the work of the state government.

"The decision on likely candidate from Radhanpur will be decided by the parliamentary board of the BJP. However, senior BJP leaders have indicated that I will contest. I am very much interested..." he added. The EC has announced on Saturday that bypolls to 64 assembly seats and one Lok Sabha constituency, spread across 18 states, will be held on October 21, and the counting of votes will be on October 24.

BSY seeks ₹2K-cr flood relief from Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Election Commission (EC) announced bypolls in the seats represented by the rebel lawmakers who were disqualified by speaker KR Ramesh Kumar under the tenth schedule, Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa rushed to Delhi on Sunday and met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and sought ₹2,000 crore as urgent relief for the flood-affected State.

Speaking to reporters, he said the Centre has assured that a decision on providing assistance from the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF) will be taken after a central team, which is assessing the extent of damage in the state, submits its report in the next two-three days.



"We have demanded ₹2,000 crore central assistance for flood relief. We have resource constraint. Despite all, the state government has released about ₹1,000 crore so far. Release of central funds will ease the burden on us," Yediyurappa told reporters.

Most likely a decision on this matter will be taken after the prime minister returns to India, he added. Shah has assured that flood relief and other emergency works will not be affected in the state as they have been exempted from the purview of the poll code,

according to Yediyurappa. Bypolls in the state will be held on October 21.

Karnataka deputy chief ministers Ashwath Narayan and Laxman Savadi and home minister Basavaraj Bommai were also present in the meeting.

The 2019 floods in Karnataka are touted to have caused losses to the tune of ₹38451 crore and around 103 taluks in 22 districts have been badly hit with over 6.9 lakh hectares of crop loss. Around 75,317 houses have been damaged due to the rains. Last month, Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with Yediyurappa had undertaken an aerial survey of flood-affected areas. The Chief Minister had briefed Shah about the rescue and relief operations that were underway in the state.



Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu lights a lamp to inaugurate a free medical camp organised by KIMS Hospitals and Swarna Bharat Trust, in Hyderabad on Sunday. Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan and other dignitaries are also seen.

Only 2.5% colleges run PhD programmes, finds HRD survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even as the Centre has been advocating and granting more funds through various schemes towards strengthening and encouraging of research programmes in academics, the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) conducted by HRD Ministry has reflected that only 2.5 per cent colleges in the country run PhD programmes and maximum students opt for PhD in science stream. A total of 1,69,170 students are enrolled in PhD programmes that is less than 0.5 per cent of the total student enrolment.

For the annual survey, the higher education institutions are categorized in three broad categories—university, college and stand-alone institutions. A total of 962 universities; 38,179 colleges and 9190 stand alone institutions participated in the survey for the year 2018-19.

Only 2.5 per cent colleges run PhD programme and 34.9 per cent colleges run post graduate level programmes. At PhD level, maximum numbers of students out-turn is in science stream followed by engineering and technology. On the other hand at PG level maximum students out-turn is observed in social science and management stream comes at number two," according to the survey report.

The share of PhD student is highest in State Public University (34.3 pc) followed by Institute of National Importance (21.6 pc), Deemed University-Private (21.6 pc) and State Private University (13.4 pc).

The ASHE report pointed out that about 79.8 pc of students are enrolled in under

The share of PhD student is highest in State Public University (34.3 pc) followed by Institute of National Importance (21.6 pc), Deemed University-Private (21.6 pc) and State Private University (13.4 pc)

graduate level programme. "Maximum numbers of students are enrolled in B.A. Programme followed by B.Sc. and B.Com. Programmes. At Undergraduate level the highest number (35.9 pc) of students are enrolled in arts, humanities or social sciences courses followed by science (16.5pc), engineering and technology (13.5 pc) and commerce (14.1 pc)," the report said.

There are 34.8 per cent colleges, which run only single programme, out of which 83.1 per cent are privately managed. "Among these privately managed colleges, 38.1 per cent colleges run B.Ed courses only, 77.8 per cent colleges are privately managed, 64.3 pc private-unaided and 13.5 pc private-aided. Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have about 88 per cent private-unaided colleges and Tamil Nadu has 87 per cent private-unaided colleges, whereas, Assam has 16 per cent."

"Around 16.3 per cent of colleges are having enrolment less than 100 and only 4 per cent colleges have enrolment more than 3,000," the report said.

IAF felicitates trust funded by MIAF Arjan Singh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a gesture to honour the late Marshal of the Indian Air Force Arjan Singh, the force on Sunday felicitated a trust founded by him and his wife, with Air Chief Marshal B S Dhanoa applauding the noble work done by it towards welfare of serving and retired air warriors. The felicitation ceremony was held at Akash Air Force officers' mess here on the establishment day of the trust.

In his speech, Dhanoa expressed his gratitude to the founders of the trust and "applauded the noble work done by the trust towards welfare of the serving and retired air warriors including their widows and dependents."

The Marshal and his wife Teji Singh had contributed their personal funds of Rs 2.25 cr to establish this trust on September 22 in 2004, IAF officials said.

Marshal Arjan Singh, a Padma Vibhushan awardee, had played a crucial role in



1965 by stopping Pakistani armour offensive code named 'Operation Grand Slam'. He was also appointed as the Lt Governor of Delhi in 1989, according to a statement issued by the IAF.

Arvind Singh, son of the Marshal and a life trustee of the organisation, delivered an emotional speech.

To mark the felicitation ceremony, a leaflet on the trust and a poetry book "Abhi Kaam Baaki Hai" on the Marshal were launched jointly by the IAF chief and Air Chief Marshal (retired) Arup Raha, the IAF statement said. A memento was also presented to the trust.

Broad gauge Metro time saving option, says Nitin Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has advocated the deployment of broad gauge Metro as an affordable, efficient and time-saving option for inter-city travel which will reduce stress on large cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore.

Speaking at the curtain raiser event of the India Manufacturing Show (IMS) 2020 in the national Capital last week, Gadkari said: "We are deploying broad gauge metro in my constituency Nagpur. It will connect Nagpur with Wardha, Bhandara Road, Ramtek and Narkhed. Running metro on the broad gauge should be considered as it makes travel between cities and its satellite towns affordable. For instance, people can stay in Meerut or Panipat and easily travel to Delhi for work every day. So, it's a win-win for the city as well as the commuter."

Cabinet Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Coal & Mines Prahlad Joshi and Union Minister of State for Railways



Suresh Angadi were also present on the occasion. Gadkari said current metro rail construction costs around ₹320 crore per km, while the broad gauge metro costs around Rs three crore. Stressing on the need to develop indigenous technologies focused on urban infrastructure, Gadkari said it will help generate jobs besides ensuring better organizational efficiencies.

Gadkari also said he has cleared for the consideration of the Union Cabinet the policy for the scrapping of old cars, buses, and two-wheelers. Finance Ministry has already cleared the proposal and the Government will very soon clear it. Scrapping policy for old vehicles will help reduce vehicular congestion in cities like Delhi and Mumbai, which have a large number of vehicles that are older than 10-15 years.

SC: Judges should possess sterling quality of integrity

New Delhi: The judiciary is an institution founded on honesty and integrity, the Supreme Court has said, reasserting that it is necessary judicial officers possess the "sterling quality of integrity" to be able to serve the public.

It made the observation while refusing to show any leniency to a Maharashtra-based judicial magistrate, who had challenged his 2004 dismissal from service following allegation he passed orders in favour of the clients of a woman lawyer he had a "proximate relationship".

Impeccable integrity should be reflected both in the public and personal life of a judge, the top court said, and added judicial officers must always remember they hold high office and serve the public.

A bench of justices Deepak Gupta and Aniruddha Bose said the petitioner did not live up to the "expectations of integrity, behaviour and probity" and no leniency can be shown to him. "Hence, we find no merit in the appeal, which is accordingly dismissed," it said.

The petitioner was appointed as a judicial magis-

trate in March 1985. In February 2001, he was put under suspension and dismissed in January 2004.

He challenged his dismissal in the Bombay High Court but his plea was rejected. He then moved the apex court, which issued a notice on his plea limited to the question of the quantum of punishment.

"In this case, the officer decided the cases because of his proximate relationship with a lady lawyer and not because the law required him to do so. This is also gratification - of a different kind," the bench said, explaining that gratification can be of various types. "It can be gratification of money, gratification of power, gratification of lust etc," it said.

The bench said the first and foremost quality required in a judge is integrity. Being a public servant, judicial officers should always remember they are there to serve the public. "The need for integrity in the judiciary is much higher than in other institutions. It is, therefore, necessary that judicial officers should possess the sterling quality of integrity," it said. **PTI**

Pak fake social media handles using KBC to trap people: Def Ministry

New Delhi: Security agencies have discovered that Pakistan-based operatives are attempting to use the popularity of the Amitabh Bachchan-anchored show Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) to trap individuals and propagate misinformation through fake social media handles.

"It has been reported by cyber cell, Ministry of Defence that adversaries are taking

advantage of the popularity of TV show "Kaun Banega Crorepati" by making individuals join WhatsApp groups and sending fake KBC messages to trap individuals," a security advisory issued by the Defence Ministry said.

The advisory listed two Pakistan-based numbers found to be the administrators of WhatsApp groups, which were



trying to trap individuals. The Defence Ministry's cyber cell advised people who are part of these groups to "immediately exit such groups if one has already been added.

"The cyber cell also advised people to configure their WhatsApp settings in a manner that only a person whose contacts details are saved in your phone can add you without an invitation. After the abrogation of article 370, Pakistani spy agencies have become very aggressive in spreading misinformation about India and have been targeting the defence forces in a big way in the virtual world. The

security agencies had detected that over 200 fake handles of military officers including both serving and retired officers had come up on social media who were tweeting and spreading messages as per the Pakistani narrative on the Kashmir issue.

After the agencies concerned approached Twitter, a large number of such handles were suspended for being fake. The Indian Army has now

again asked its personnel to avoid putting up their service or posting details on social media as it can be used by the adversaries to spread misinformation.

Also, there have been cases of virtual honey traps where serving officers and jawans have been trapped and forced to leak military classified information to enemy operatives who generally pose as girls on social media. **Agencies**

Naxal top brass belong to neighbouring states, says CM

'Naxal menace could be curbed with elimination of its top leaders'

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said on Sunday that there are only misguided lower rung Naxals which belong to Chhattisgarh while almost all the commanders and top brass are from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha state.

"If Union Home Minister is willing to curb the Naxal menace then the top militants had to be either eliminated or be forced to surrender," he added. Baghel made the announcement while



responding to a query of media persons at Meet the Press programme held at Raipur Press Club.

He further reiterated that for finding out an amicable solution after understanding the root causes he will continue to hold talks with the affected parties which include the innocent tribal victims, citizens, local journalists as well as the police and security personnel deployed in the conflict zone.

Regarding newly introduced Motor Vehicle Act, Baghel said it was a 'Tuglaqi' order which had created panic among vehicle owners and commuters.

"Roads come under state government and hence fines are to be levied by state police but the courts follow the acts

of Centre. We have a federal system in our country and we could not go against the constitutional provision but we are looking for the best alternative that citizens of the state are prevented from being victimised" he remarked.

Commenting about slashing down of corporate tax by union government recently, Baghel said as per his information it would benefit only big corporate houses and small and medium scale industries would be largely left out from the benefits.

Reacting to allegations levelled by former chief minister Raman Singh and other BJP cadres that he is

indulged in politics of vendetta, the CM challenged to cite a single case of it. "Neither any fresh FIR has been lodged nor any new probe has been initiated," he claimed.

Earlier citing achievements of his 10 months old government, Baghel claimed that he had prevented the state from nationwide economic slowdown by boosting the rural economy.

The farm loan waiver and providing of ₹2500 Minimum Support Price for paddy had strengthened the rural economy and flow of money had also benefited the business community, he remarked.

Notification for Chitrakot seat by-poll today

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chief Electoral Officer (Chhattisgarh) Subrat Sahoo said on Sunday that the notification for Scheduled Tribe reserved seat of Chitrakot will be issued on September 23.

The seat fell vacant after resignation of sitting Congress MLA Deepak Baj after being elected to Lok Sabha from Bastar seat.

Sahoo said with notification on Monday, the filing of nomination papers will also begin. The last date of filing nomination is September 30. The names can be withdrawn on October 3 while the polling date is October 21 and counting will be held on October 24.

The assembly constituency has 229 polling centres, where

213 are in Bastar and 16 polling centres are in Sukma. There is 5 Sanghari polling centres (all women), 8 model centres and one centre of PwDs (physical disabilities). A total of 38 service voters have been registered. The Chitrakot has total 1,67,722 electors having 79,218 men and 88,503 women.

Sahoo further informed in Assembly poll 2013 the polling percent was 78.90% while in 2018 it was 80.32% while for Lok Sabha poll 2019 the polling percent was 77.21%.

The election model code has been enforced in Bastar and Sukma districts.

The C-VIGIL has also been activated in the assembly constituency area, where electors can register any poll related violation.

Manturam filed wrong affidavit to fight assembly poll-1990: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ KANKER

Prime accused of Antagarh Tapes case whose startling disclosures in the infamous case brought him to lime light is now gripped under a fresh controversy.

BJP cadre of Kanker district had lodged a complaint before Pakhanjur police station that Manturam had filed affidavit during 1990 assembly elections in state lying about his date of birth.

District BJP leaders

Accepting that a complaint letter had been handed over to him by BJP leaders, the SHO Sharad Dubey informed media persons that he is investigating the matter and a further action would be taken followed by it

charged that Manturam had then not attained the desired 25 years of age for fighting the elections as a CPI (M) candidate. "Manturam falsely claimed that he had attained the required age and presented fake documents," they

charged in the complaint letter. This act of him comes under forgery and is a punishable offence and hence a case must be registered against him, they had pleaded before the SHO, Pakhanjur. Meanwhile, accepting

that a complaint letter had been handed over to him by BJP leaders, the SHO Sharad Dubey informed media persons that he is investigating the matter and a further action would be taken followed by it.

However, on the other hand Manturam refuting the charges of BJP leaders had warned of filing defamation suit against them. "It was fault of election commission and not mine and thus the accusers should apologize otherwise I will file defamation suit against them," he said.

C'garh showcases agro products at Int'l fest

Three day long Buyers-Sellers Meet concludes

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

A three-day Buyers-Sellers Meet showcasing agriculture products and artefacts of the state concluded here on Sunday on a high note.

The programme was organised at a private hotel of state capital and on the concluding day Food and Civil Supplies minister of the state Amarjeet Bhagat was especially present on this occasion.

Bhagat discussed in details with the farmers and collected information about their products. He also



inspected various stalls.

Official sources claimed that the event got an overwhelming response and a sale of ₹10 lakh was recorded at the sale-cum-exhibition on the concluding day. Food products, herbal medicines and handloom products were highly appreciated by the visitors.

Food Minister during his inspection also took information from the farmers about the market of their products. Notably, a total of 33 MoUs were signed between business establishments, buyers and sellers in the three day event.

BJP to undertake foot march from Oct 2

To mark 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh BJP will take out 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Padyatra' (foot march) from October 2, to mark 'Gandhi Jayanti'. The decision to this effect was taken on Sunday at a meeting held here at party office Ekam Parisar.

The country will celebrate 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2.

Member of Parliament Sunil Soni will lead the programme, starting from Brahmanpara where Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi had addressed people during his visit to Raipur.

Security heightened in Bastar ahead of Dantewada polling

STAFF REPORTER ■ DANTEWADA

The restive Bastar region which is made up of seven sprawling districts, is back in the news with the reported convergence of a large number of armed Naxalites in recent days ahead of September 23 polling for Dantewada assembly seat.

Latest intelligence reports with the state police suggest Maoist cadres in large numbers have been arriving in the region from neighbouring states.

Police suspect that they are planning a major action before the Dantewada assembly seat by-election which is scheduled on Monday. Vigil has been increased and security forces have been alerted in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Telangana.

Significantly, both the Congress and BJP have fielded as candidates widows of party



leaders killed by Maoists militants. The Congress has fielded Devati Karma, whose husband and former minister in state government Mahendra Karma was killed by the Naxalites in the Jhiram mas-

sacre in May 2013. Many top Congress leaders in Chhattisgarh were killed in a Maoist landmine blast in Jhiram valley.

The BJP has nominated Ojasvi Mandavi, the widow of

Bhima Mandavi whose death in a Maoist attack on April 9 this year has caused the Dantewada by-election.

Maoists had attacked the convoy of the BJP leader by triggering an improvised

explosive device (IED) during the Lok Sabha elections. Besides Mandavi, five security personnel were also killed in the attack. The BJP legislator's vehicle was last in the convoy.

The BJP and Congress are locked in a direct contest in Dantewada and their campaign revolves around Maoism and the attempts of the two mainstream parties to garner sympathy votes.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has often complained that the Centre is impeding the inquiry into the death of Mandavi.

Maoists have eliminated many leaders in this area. Before the 2018 assembly elections, the Maoists had also killed a Doordarshan cameraman in Nilavaya village. They had also killed two BJP leaders of Nakulnar in the 2008 assembly elections.

During the last assembly elections, the Congress had

promised to solve the Maoist problem through dialogue. However, the state government is facing a piquant situation with the Centre taking a different stance now.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) in the state has been nudging the Congress government about the release of innocent tribal people who get targeted by both the Maoists as well as the security agencies.

After the Central action on Sections 370 and 35A in Kashmir, BJP is eager to appear more aggressive on terrorism and Maoists.

Earlier this week the Chhattisgarh Governor Anasuya Uike called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi who is said to have assured her that a detailed action plan against Maoists is being formulated and will be sent to the state government soon.

Man-elephant conflict cases rising in C'garh

STAFF REPORTER ■ JASHPUR

The death toll due to human-elephant conflict is increasing every year in Chhattisgarh mainly its vast forested northern region which is made up of Surguja, Jashpur, Koriya, Raigarh, Korba and Ramanujganj-Balrampur districts. As least 65 people and 14 elephants get killed in the state every year, a latest report of the state government said.

As per the government records, 325 people and 70 elephants lost their lives in the last five years with an average of 65 humans and 14 elephants per annum. The loss of lives, property



and crops led to an extra burden of ₹75 crore on the government exchequer. According to reports, elephants from other states started migrating to Chhattisgarh in 1988, grad-

ually increasing in numbers. The conflicts are taking place largely due to the degrading habitats of the pachyderms, the report added.

As of now, there are

more than 254 elephants in the state which move around in 19 herds. Of these, 121 elephants are in Bilaspur forest circle, 110 elephants in Surguja and 23 elephants in Raipur circle.

According to government sources, efforts to control elephants in the state started in 2005. For this, a resolution was passed in the State Legislative Assembly to start 'Project Elephant' and sent to the Central Government, requesting for financial support to build huge protected areas for the conservation of wild elephants where the elephants will get an abundant amount of water, food and other facilities in Raigarh, Jashpur and Korba.

In October 2007, the Union Government had given its consent to form two elephant reserves out of which one elephant reserve included areas of Bandalkhol and Tamor Pingla forests and the second one was to be the Lemru elephant reserve. However, only one reserve has been created so far.

In 2010, the central government declared the elephant an animal of national heritage to scale up measures for its protection.

Wildlife experts believe that protecting large tracts of forest will help conserve the jumbos and bring down incidents of human-pachyderm conflict.

MoU to procure cashew nut, flax seeds for Japan

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

With higher demand for organic products worldwide, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed during the 3-day International Buyer-Seller Meet for agricultural products in Chhattisgarh where cashew nut, Flax seeds (Alsi), Lentil (masoor), and coriander will be exported to Japan.

The exhibition was opened for public on Sunday, the concluding day. The meet has been organized at Hotel Sayaji, capital city, Raipur.

Yogesh and Shyam Singh dealing with agro-products in Japan, had signed a MoU for procurement of 18 MT of cashew nut, 10 MT of coriander, flax seed and 40 MT of lentil seeds. The MoU will directly benefit the farmers of Jashpur,



Bastar, Raigarh and Khairagarh. Shyam Singh said through Sartaj Co Dot Limited, he procures food materials through online. Japanese also likes Indian cuisines.

There is higher demand of organic cashew nut and the exhibited products here are of

good quality. As the production of cashew nut in Japan is less, the chances of imports from India are very high. Indians residing in Japan also prefer to use Indian foodgrains, including fruits and vegetables. The Indian restaurants also use Indian fruits and vegetables.

Will reserve 75% jobs for Haryana youth: Dushyant Chautala

MANOJ KUMAR ■ ROHTAK

Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) senior leader and former Haryana MP Dushyant Chautala on Sunday promised 75 per cent of jobs for youth of the state in private and government sector.

Dushyant, while addressing a "Jan Samman Divas" rally to mark the birth anniversary of former Deputy Prime Minister Chaudhary Devi Lal here said that if comes to power, his party would reserve 75 per cent of jobs for youth only and also, assured his party's support to employees of the state.

"The JJP is the only viable alternative. Your vote will decide the future of Haryana," he said, while making an appeal to the people to support the party in the elections.

The elections to 90 assembly seats in the state will be held on October 21 and the results will be declared on October 24.

Hitting out at ruling Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) Government, he said that the BJP has befooled the common people of Haryana for last five years and now, each section of society wants to get rid of BJP. Slamming the Haryana Government for the poor law and order situation, he said that Haryana was burnt thrice in the past five years under their rule.

"80 people died during these incidents," he said, in an apparent reference to the violence suffered by the state during the episodes linked with self-styled godman Rampal, Jat agitation and the conviction of Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh.



He also cornered the BJP led government at Centre and state over economic slowdown, unemployment and farmers' woes.

"Farmers and small businessmen are in crisis. Farmers are not getting remunerative prices for their produce. The rate of unemployment has increased in the last five years," he said.

Unemployment, farmers' woes and law and order are the key poll issues, Dushyant added. He said that two weeks ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also addressed a rally at this same place and half of the pandal was empty which

shows people are fed up with the false promises of BJP leaders. Targeting the Congress, Dushyant said that their party leaders are already indulged in infighting and it is a divided house.

"When tickets are announced, these Congress people will once again fight amongst themselves," he said.

The JJP leader also attacked the Indian National Lok Dal saying that he and his brother

were expelled from the party. We made a separate party with the support of leaders and workers and became people's first choice, he said.

Notably, the JJP was formed nearly a year ago after a split in the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) following a feud in the Chautala family.

On the amended Motor Vehicle Act, Dushyant said that if their party comes to

power, they would not implement it.

He accused the BJP of burning a hole in pockets of common people by bringing strict punishments under new traffic rules.

The JJP leader, however, backed the scrapping of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir but said the time had come to reclaim Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.

Dushyant also made a slew of promises if his party was voted to power. He promised to increase the old-age pension to Rs 5,100, free treatment to the poor in government hospitals for life-threatening diseases, shifting of liquor vends outside village limits and a wage hike for government employees and panchayat members.

"People want change... We are working hard to oust the BJP from the power. 29 days have left ahead of polls," he added while making an appeal to the party workers to reach out to people through door to door campaign and seek vote for the future of Haryana.

New votes to be made for coming VS elections: Hry CEO

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana joint chief electoral officer Inder Jeet on Sunday said that new votes would be made till September 24, for the upcoming Vidhan Sabha Elections to be held on October 21.

He said that one can apply online on the website www.nsvp.in for new votes, and toll free number-1950 of Election Commission can be contacted for more details. All the issues relating to the pending applications would be resolved by focusing on Form 6, he said.

Inder Jeet said that the process of making votes is a continuous process and the revised electoral list published on August 27 would be used in Vidhan Sabha elections.

About 1.83 crore voters would be able to exercise

their franchise.

He said that during the model code of conduct, no Minister would be able to use a government vehicle for election work. Only from his residence, he would be allowed to do the necessary government work. Government vehicles would not be used to do government as well as political work, he added.

He further said that the cVIGIL app of the Commission is functional. Any person could send the information related to violation of model code of conduct, to the Commission and action would be taken by the concerned Deputy Commissioner-cum-District Election Officer within 100 minutes.

The toll-free number 1950 of the Commission can also be contacted, he added.

AAP releases list of 22 candidates for Assembly elections in Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday released a list of 22 candidates for the next month's assembly elections in Haryana.

Three women candidates have figured in the list released by AAP's Haryana unit president Naveen Jaithind.

In the Lok Sabha elections, AAP had an alliance with the Jannayak Janata Party, a split-away faction of the Indian National Lok Dal. After the Lok Sabha debacle,

in which the alliance failed to win even a single seat, both had parties parted ways.

AAP had not contested the assembly polls in 2014, in which the BJP came to power for the first time in Haryana.

The candidates fielded by AAP are Yogeshwar Sharma (Panchkula), Anshul Kumar Agarwal (Ambala City), Gurdev Singh Sur (Ladwa), Anoop Sandhu (Asandh), Rajkumar Pehal (Julana), Lakshya Garg (Fatehabad), Manjeet Ranga (Uklana), Sandeep Lohra (Narnaund), Manoj Rathi

(Hansi), Anoop Singh (Barwala) and Pawan Hindustani (Tosham).

The other candidates are Municipal Atri (Garhi Sampla Kilo), Anita Chhikara (Bahadurgarh), Ashwani Dulhera (Bahadurgarh), Ajay Sharma (Mahendargarh), Ranbir Singh Rathi (Gurugram), Karan Singh Dagar (Hodal), Kuldeep Kaushik (Palwal), Santosh Yadav (Faridabad NIT), Dharamvir Bhadana (Badrkhal), Harinder Bhati (Ballabgarh) and Kumari Sumanlata Vashisth (Faridabad).

65,146 posters removed from Govt property to prevent defacement

Chandigarh: Haryana chief electoral officer Anurag Aggarwal said that in compliance to the instructions of Election Commission of India, 65,146 wall writings, posters, papers cutouts or hoardings, banners, flags and other types have been removed from gov-

ernment property to prevent its defacement.

Giving further details, Aggarwal said that 4,964 wall writings, 17,553 posters, 7,543 papers of defacement in any form, 1,833 cut-outs, 12,061 hoardings, 11,837 banners, 3,296 flags and 6,059 other

forms of defacement, have been removed within 24 hours from the announcement of elections.

He said that all unauthorized political advertisement, in the form of wall writings, posters, papers of defacement in any other form, cutouts or

hoardings, banners and flags at public property and in public space like railway station, bus stands, airports, railway bridges, roadways, government buses, electric or telephone poles, municipal or local bodies' building would be removed within 48 hours

by the Commission. All unauthorized political advertisement displayed at private property and subject to local Law and courts' directions, if any, would be removed within 72 hours from the announcement of elections, he added. PNS

Terror module backed by Pak, Germany-based group busted

Punjab Police arrests four with AK-47s, other arms

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In another major terror crackdown, the Punjab Police has busted a terrorist module of the revived Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZLF), backed by a Pakistan and Germany based terror group that was conspiring to unleash a series of terrorist strikes in Punjab or adjoining states.

The police have also seized a huge cache of arms including five AK-47 rifles, pistols, satellite phones and hand grenades.

Given the international links and the ramifications of the conspiracy, Punjab Chief

Minister Capt Amarinder Singh has decided to hand over further investigations in the case to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to ensure that the entire conspiracy is fully and expeditiously unravelled.

With initial investigations revealing the use of drones to deliver terrorists weapons and communication hardware across the border, the Chief Minister has also urged the Central Government to direct the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Border Security Force (BSF) to launch necessary counter-measures to check any further threat from drones to the border state of Punjab.

The state Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta said that the weapons were suspected to have been delivered recently across the Indo-Pak border from Pakistan over drones launched by the Pak establishment, the Pak ISI, and the State-sponsored Jihadi and

CM decides to hand over case to NIA in view of international links, seeks Centre's directions to IAF, BSF to counter cross-border drone use

pro-Khalistani terrorist outfits working under its command.

Gupta said that the large-scale infiltration appeared to have been aimed at scaling terrorism and militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and the Indian hinterland, in the wake of the recent developments in the Valley.

The operation was based on different inputs gathered from sources that activists of the banned KZF planned to carry out multiple terrorist strikes in J&K, Punjab and other States, he said.

In an operation carried out by Amritsar AIG (Counter Intelligence) Ketan Baliram

Patil, along with various Punjab Police teams based in Chandigarh, four module members have been arrested and a large quantity of arms, ammunition, explosives and communication devices, has been seized by the Counter Intelligence Wing of Punjab Police.

Gupta said that the module was backed by Pakistan-based chief of KZF, Ranjeet Singh alias Neeta, and his Germany-based associate Gurmeet Singh alias Bagga alias Doctor, who had re-organized their terrorist group to revive terrorism in Punjab.

With the help of local sleeper cells, they had spotted,

radicalized and recruited local members, besides arranging funds and sophisticated weapons from across the border for operationalizing the local module members.

Those arrested have been identified as Balwant Singh alias Baba alias Nihang, Akashdeep Singh alias Akash Randhawa, Harbhajan Singh and Balbir Singh. Both Akashdeep and Baba Balwant Singh have a criminal past with multiple criminal cases against them.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that Maan Singh, currently lodged in Amritsar Jail in an Arms Act and UAPA case, at the behest of his handler Gurmeet Singh alias Bagga, had recruited Akashdeep Singh, when they were lodged together in Amritsar jail.

Recipient of the consignment, Baba Balwant Singh is a member of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terrorist organization, and was earlier

arrested in a UAPA and Arms Act case in Mukandpur police station (SBS Nagar), and is presently on bail and facing trial in that case.

A FIR, dated September 22, 2019, has been registered at Police Station State Special Operation Cell (SSOC), Amritsar, under UAPA, Arms Act, Explosive Substances Act,

Prisons Act, and various relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

RECOVERY

Altogether five AK-47 rifles (along with 16 magazines and 472 rounds of ammunition), four Chinese made .30 bore Pistols (along with eight magazines and 72 rounds of

ammunition), nine hand grenades, five Thuraya satellite phones along with their ancillary equipment, two mobile phones, two wireless sets and Rs 10 lakh Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) have been recovered from them. Further investigations are on to unravel the entire terrorist module.

RAINING ARMS — terror groups using drones

Going a step ahead, keeping pace with the technology, the terror groups are using drones to deliver terrorists weapons and communication hardware across the border



Alarmed, Punjab police chief Dinkar Gupta said that the weapons were suspected to have been delivered recently across the Indo-Pak border from Pakistan over drones launched by the Pak establishment, the Pak ISI, and the State-sponsored Jihadi and pro-Khalistani terrorist outfits working under its command

Alarmed, the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh has urged the Central Government to direct the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Border Security Force (BSF) to launch necessary counter-measures to check any further threat from drones to the border state of Punjab.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग, बिलासपुर मंडल, बिलासपुर

ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना

Portal : <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

छत्तीसगढ़ शासन, लोक निर्माण विभाग, बिलासपुर मण्डल, बिलासपुर में निम्नलिखित कार्य नवीन ई-पंजीकृत टेकदार सरल क्र. 01 हेतु दिनांक 30.09.2019 सरल क्र. 02 हेतु 03.10.2019 हेतु एवं सरल क्र. 03 से 05 दिनांक 09.10.2019 तक निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

क्र. दिनांक	नि.आ.सू. क्र.	कार्य का नाम	लागत (लाख में)
1.	157	जिला एवं सत्र न्यायालय कोरबा में ए.डी.आर. भवन कोरबा के लिए फर्निचर सप्लाई। कोरबा संभाग कोरबा। द्वितीय आमंत्रण।	51.32
2.	158	लो.नि.वि. उपसंभाग क्र. 01 बिलासपुर के अंतर्गत आवासीय एवं गैर आवासीय भवनों, (जिला हास्पिटल, पुलिस लाईन थाना एवं पी.जी.बी.टी. महाविद्यालय) में ए.आर., एस.आर. एवं एम.ओ.डब्ल्यू कार्य। संभाग क्र. 01 बिलासपुर। द्वितीय आमंत्रण।	35.00
3.	159	जिला मंगेरी विकासखण्ड लोरमी के ग्राम पटारीकांप में शासकीय हाईस्कूल भवन निर्माण कार्य। मुंगेरी संभाग मुंगेरी। प्रथम आमंत्रण।	69.01
4.	160	जिला मंगेरी विकासखण्ड लोरमी के ग्राम बोडरकला में शासकीय हाईस्कूल भवन निर्माण कार्य। मुंगेरी संभाग मुंगेरी। प्रथम आमंत्रण।	69.01
5.	161	लो.नि.वि. उपसंभाग कोटा के अंतर्गत मार्गो डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पंच रिपेयर का कार्य। पेण्डुरोड संभाग पेण्डुर। प्रथम आमंत्रण।	60.00

निविदा में भाग लेने की प्रक्रिया एवं निविदा के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी विभाग के उपरोक्त वेबसाइट में देखें जा सकते हैं।

अधीक्षण अभियंता
लो.नि.वि., बिलासपुर मण्डल, बिलासपुर

G- 73455/4 Ryp/Dtd 22.9.19

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E-mail: br.7854@syndicatebank.co.in

Sale of Machinery/Vehicle by Public Auction

Sealed tenders are invited for sale of following machineries on "as is where is, what is there is" and without any recourse basis"

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower and Account No.	Date, Time and Place of Auction Sale	Description of Machinery-Quantity	Regd. No. and Date	Reserve Price	EMD
1.	Mr. BALDEV BAGHEL A/C No- 78547910000231	03/10/2019 Time 11:00 Syndicate Bank New Raipur	BAJAJ RE COMPACT passenger	CG04-HZ 4502, 10/2015	₹ 42,000/-	₹ 4,200/-
2.	Mr. DIPAK BANJARE A/C No- 78547910000473	03/10/2019 Time 11:00 Syndicate Bank New Raipur	APE PIAGGIO VEHICLE LOADING VEHICLE	CG04-LE 7133, 12/2015	₹ 48,000/-	₹ 4,800/-
3.	Mr. AJAY KATHLE A/C No- 78549910000399	03/10/2019 Time 11:00 Syndicate Bank New Raipur	APE PIAGGIO VEHICLE LOADING VEHICLE	CG04-LU-9063 30/11/2016	₹ 48,000/-	₹ 4,800/-
4.	Mr. SANTOSH TAMRAKAR A/C No- 78549910000154	03/10/2019 Time 11:00 Syndicate Bank New Raipur	BAJAJ RE COMPACT PASSANGER	CG04-LJ-7208 06/2016	₹ 42,000/-	₹ 4,200/-
5.	Mr. HEMANT KUMAR SAHU A/C No- 78549910000057	03/10/2019 Time 11:00 Syndicate Bank New Raipur	APE PORTER LOADING VEHICLE	CG04-LJ 3499	₹ 53,000/-	₹ 5,300/-
6.	Mr. Ashwini Kumar Yadav A/C No- 78549910000351	03/10/2019 Time 11:00 Syndicate Bank New Raipur	BAJAJ RE COMPACT PASSANGER	CG04 LP 5031	₹ 42,000/-	₹ 4,200/-
7.	Mr. SHAHID KHAN A/C No- 78547910000435	03/10/2019 Time 11:00 Syndicate Bank New Raipur	APE PIAGGIO PASSANGER 2016	CG04 LE 9120	₹ 79,000/-	₹ 7,900/-

Terms and Conditions: (1) The intending bidders should send their bids in closed/sealed cover along with an EMD which is 10% of the Reserve price mentioned above/refundable without any interest to unsuccessful bidders by way of DD drawn in favour of Syndicate Bank New Raipur. The EMD shall be liable for forfeiture without any prior notice if successful bidder fails to adhere to terms of sale, time and commit any default in any manner. Such bid shall be submitted/sent so as to reach the undersigned on or before 02/10/2019 at 5:00 pm. (2) The tenders will be opened at 11:00 am on 03/10/2019 in the Syndicate Bank New Raipur premises, in presence of attending public. After opening the tenders, the intending bidders may be given an opportunity, at the discretion of Branch Manager, to have inter-se-bidding among them to enhance the offer price. (3) The purchaser of machineries has to bear the cost/charges relating to transfer of machineries in his/her name, insurance and other charges. (4) The purchaser of movables has to bear the cost/charge relating to shifting of movables from place of storage. (5) The Branch Manager may cancel/postpone the sale and/or add/delete/change any of the terms at any time, without any further notice to the owner, bidder, public etc. (6) For auction the bidders are required to go through the website www.syndicatebank.in and also the website <https://syndicatebank.auctiontiger.net> for detailed terms and conditions of auction sale before submitting their bids and taking part in the auction and general auction sale proceedings. (7) For more details Branch Manager, Syndicate Bank, New Raipur Branch may be contacted (Mobile No 9424204031) during office hours on or before 02/10/2019. The machineries/Vehicle are available for inspection at following address: Machinery- M/s Ambe Associates, in front of India Gandhi agricultural college, Raipur. (8) The successful bidder should deposit the balance 90% of the bid amount (exclusive of EMD) within 07 days from date of confirmation of sale. In case of default, the entire deposited till then shall be forfeited.

Date: 23/09/2019 Place: New Raipur Branch Manager, Syndicate Bank

Little Baby trailer launched in Dehradun

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The trailer of the Hindi movie 'Little Baby' shot entirely in Dehradun was launched here in the presence of State minister Dhan Singh Rawat, Dehradun mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' along

with the director and producer of the movie among others on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion Rawat said that a new film policy, subsidy for film makers and single window system introduced by the state government will further boost film shooting

in Uttarakhand. There are hundreds of sites in the state which are more beautiful than even foreign locations, he added, while appreciating the movie makers.

Mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' appreciated the movie makers for giving space for local actors. He added that the local artistes should also be given prominent roles and not only those of extras. Pauri MLA Mukesh Koli, Lansdowne MLA Dilip Singh Rawat and State minorities commission chairman Dr RK Jain among others also expressed their views on the occasion.

Earlier, the movie director Rinku Singh Jha said that Uttarakhand is one of the most beautiful Indian states. Stating that it took 20 days to complete the film shooting in Dehradun, he thanked the state government, local residents and local actors for their contribution. Appreciating the state government's policy, he said that they had secured the necessary permission for shooting the film in one day. The movie producer Rinku Singh recalled that though Dehradun was the first choice of the director, she was initially apprehensive. However, shooting the movie here was a good decision since all equipment, locations and about 90 per cent of the actors in the movie were found in Dehradun, he said.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग, रायपुर मण्डल क्रमांक 2 (छत्तीसगढ़)

ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना

"प्रथम आमंत्रण"

दिनांक 19.09.2019

निम्नांकित कार्य हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदा "डी" श्रेणी एवं अधिक श्रेणी के टेकदारों हेतु आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि 09.10.2019 है।

एन.आई.टी. क्र./ निविदा क्र.	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत (लाख में)
1	2	3
NIT NO. 180 Tender No. 56431	जिला एवं सत्र न्यायालय भवन धमतारी में वार्षिक संधारण एवं रंगाई पुताई का कार्य।	₹.19.95 लाख

उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य को निविदा को सामान्य शर्त, धरोहर रशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापि, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> अथवा विभागीय वेबसाइट <https://eproc.rgstate.gov.in> से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।

G- 73477/3 Ryp/Dtd 22.9.19

अधीक्षण अभियंता,
लो.नि.वि. रायपुर मण्डल क्र. 2 (छ.ग.)
आपकी धी चाह, हमने बनाई राह

Credible Chhattisgarh विश्वस्तनी छत्तीसगढ़

Iran warns foreign forces of meddling

AFP ■ TEHRAN

President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday denounced the presence of foreign forces in the Gulf and said Iran will offer a peace plan, after arch-foe the United States ordered reinforcements to the tinderbox region.

"Foreign forces can cause problems and insecurity for our people and for our region," Rouhani said in a televised speech at an annual military parade.

Rouhani also said Iran would present a peace plan to the United Nations in the coming days.

"In this sensitive and important historical moment, we announce to our neighbours that we extend the hand of friendship and brotherhood to them," he said.

Tensions between Iran and the US and its allies have threatened to boil over since May last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from a 2015 nuclear deal and later began reimposing sanctions in a campaign of "maximum pressure".

The tensions escalated in the wake of devastating September 14 attacks on Saudi oil installations that Washington and Riyadh have, to varying degrees, blamed on Tehran. Following the attacks, which caused global oil prices to spike, Trump initially raised

MILITARY PARADE ON IRAN-IRAQ WAR ANNIVERSARY



In this photo released by the official website of the office of the Iranian Presidency, President Hassan Rouhani speaks at a military parade marking 39th anniversary of outset of Iran-Iraq war, in front of the shrine of the late revolutionary founder Ayatollah Khomeini at Tehran, Iran on Sunday

the possibility of military retaliation, tweeting that the United States was "locked and loaded".

The United States later expanded its long list of sanctions against Iran by further targeting its central bank, as Trump indicated he did not plan a military response.

US Defence Secretary Mark Esper announced on Friday that the US was sending reinforcements to Saudi Arabia at "the kingdom's request", while noting the

forces would be "defensive in nature" and focused on air and missile defence.

In his speech delivered before a massive military parade on Sunday, Rouhani called on the foreign powers in the Gulf region to "stay away".

"If they're sincere, then they should not make our region the site of an arms race," he said.

"Your presence has always brought pain and misery for

the region. The farther you keep yourselves from our region and our nations, the more security there will be for our region."

"We are even ready to ignore their past mistakes... Since today the situation is such that the enemies of Islam and the region, meaning America and Zionism, want to abuse the rift between us.

"Our logic is the logic of a Persian Gulf whose security

comes from within," said the Iranian president.

Following his speech, the Iranian armed forces paraded their latest equipment, including tanks, missiles and armoured vehicles as Rouhani and top military commanders saluted them.

Rouhani is expected to travel to New York on Monday, a day before general debate kicks off at the United Nations General Assembly.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who is subject to US sanctions, has already arrived in New York ahead of the annual gathering.

Tensions have flared in the Gulf since May, when Iran began reducing its commitments to the nuclear deal and the US said it was sending forces to waters near the Islamic republic in response to "indications of a credible threat" from its forces.

The US deployed an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the sensitive waterways, before sending B-52 bombers, an amphibious assault ship and Patriot missile battery.

Following the deployments, commercial ships were mysteriously attacked, drones downed and oil tankers seized in Gulf waters. Trump in June authorised a military strike after Iran shot down a US drone, only to call off the retaliation at the last moment.

US likely to escalate trade war with China if no deal is agreed soon: Trump's advisor

PTI ■ BEIJING

The US is likely to ramp up pressure on China by raising existing tariffs if a trade deal is not reached soon between the two countries, a key White House adviser has said.

The world's two largest economies have been locked in a bruising trade war since Trump in March last year imposed tariff hikes of up to 25 per cent on USD 250 billion of Chinese goods.

In response, China, the world's second largest economy after the US, imposed tit-for-tat tariffs on USD 110 billion of American goods.

Michael Pillsbury, adviser to the White House on China policy, said that Trump would likely escalate the trade war by raising existing tariffs, if no deal is reached.

In an interview in Hong Kong on Thursday, Pillsbury said that Trump had been "remarkably restrained in the pressure he has brought to bear on China in the trade field".

Both sides so far have held 12 rounds of talks but failed to work out a deal as China continued to resist Trump's demand for intrusive verification mechanism to supervise Beijing's promise to protect

intellectual property rights (IPR) technology transfer and more access to American goods to Chinese markets.

Trump delayed a planned tariff hike on USD 250 billion of Chinese goods as a "gesture of good will" ahead of China's 70th year of National Day celebrations on October 1.

The two countries are preparing for the next round of trade talks in Washington in October.

"Does the president have options to escalate the trade war? Yes, the tariffs can be raised higher. These are low level tariffs that could go to 50 per cent or 100 per cent," Pillsbury was quoted as saying by the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post on Sunday.

Trump's critics were wrong to assume the President was "just bluffing" when he threatened an all-out trade war, he said.

"There are other options involving the financial markets, Wall Street, you know, the president has a whole range of options," he said. Pillsbury said Trump was not seeking to cripple US-China trade, instead positing that he wanted to "increase the level of trade to rectify the deficit".

GLOBE TROTTER

NOT TOO LATE FOR BREXIT DEAL: JUNCKER

Madrid: There is still time for London and Brussels to make a Brexit deal, outgoing European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker said in remarks published Sunday, as the clock runs down to a October 31 deadline. Juncker also told the Spanish daily El Pais that he wished the Commission had played a more active role in the 2016 British referendum to counteract "lies and fake news".

WORLD FEELS HEAT OF CLIMATE SUMMIT

United Nations: Saying humanity is waging war with the planet, the head of the United Nations isn't planning to let just any world leader speak about climate change at Monday's special "action summit." Only those with new, specific and bold plans can command the podium and the ever-warming world's attention, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

TANZANIA NOT SHARING EBOLA INFO: WHO

Nairobi: The World Health Organization has accused Tanzania of failing to provide information on suspected cases of Ebola in the country, potentially hindering efforts to curb the spread of the deadly virus.

Israeli Prez says 'stable' Govt should include Likud, Blue and White

Jerusalem: Israeli President Reuven Rivlin said Sunday the country's next Government should include both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party and Benny Gantz's Blue and White alliance to form a "stable" coalition.

Rivlin made the comments during meetings with representatives from political parties to hear their recommendations on who should be prime minister following last week's deadlocked elections. Blue and White won the most seats in Tuesday's poll, with 33 out of parliament's 120, while Likud finished second with 31.

Neither has an obvious path to a majority coalition, raising the possibility of a third election in a year's time after April polls also ended inconclusively. Rivlin had so far met representatives from Blue and White and Likud as part of his consultations.

ISRAELI ARAB PARTIES BACK GANTZ FOR PM IN BREAK WITH PRECEDENT

Jerusalem: Israeli Arab political parties are backing ex-military chief Benny Gantz as the country's next prime minister in a break with precedent, they announced Sunday. The mainly Arab Joint List alliance made the announcement at roughly the same time as its leader, Ayman Odeh, published an opinion piece on the New York Times website speaking of the move.

Trump, Biden spar over Ukraine after whistleblower complaint

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

Joe Biden accused Donald Trump Saturday of "an overwhelming abuse of power" and called for an investigation into accusations the US leader pressured his Ukrainian counterpart to investigate the presidential candidate's son.

Biden's allegations prompted a swift rebuke from Trump, who himself accuses the Democratic frontrunner of wrongdoing in Ukraine during his time as vice president under former president Barack Obama.

The back-and-forth recriminations stem from a Washington Post report stating a whistleblower complaint had been filed over Trump's communications with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, and a "promise" allegedly made by the US leader.

Trump allegedly pressured Zelensky to investigate possible corruption involving Biden and his son Hunter, who had worked with a Ukrainian natural gas company while his father was vice president.

Trump has urged media to "look into" Biden's comments in early 2016 when the then US president said the Obama administration would freeze \$1 billion in US loan guarantees unless Kiev fire its top prosecutor, who was looking into the gas company.

"This appears to be an overwhelming abuse of power, to get on the phone with a for-



eign leader who is looking for help from the United States and ask about me," Biden told reporters on the campaign trail in the state of Iowa.

"I know what I'm up against, a serial abuser. That's what this guy is," Biden continued. "If he sees any threat to his staying in power, he'll do whatever he has to do. But this crosses the line."

Biden had on Friday demanded Trump immediately release the transcript of a July 25 call with Zelensky while saying reports that the president sought to coerce his Ukrainian counterpart, if true, amounted to "clear-cut corruption".

Trump slammed the allegations as "ridiculous," and on Saturday accused Biden on Twitter of having demanded, during his time as vice president, "that the Ukrainian Government fire a prosecutor who was investigating his son."

He also accused news outlets of fabricating "a story about me and a perfectly fine and routine conversation I had with the new President of the Ukraine. Nothing was said that was in any way wrong, but Biden's demand, on the other hand, was a complete and total disaster."

Trump to boast to UN about US success, but troubles mounting

AFP ■ UNITED NATIONS

US President Donald Trump will stand before the United Nations on Tuesday to declare his country top of the world. But with diplomatic troubles building, his annual boast may ring hollow.

Trump's political brand is as well known inside the United Nations as his businessman version is to the rest of New York: brash, unabashedly self-promoting, and all about claiming the win.

At this year's UN General Assembly, the former real estate tycoon won't disappoint. "We'll say the United States is the greatest country in the world. It's never been stronger and it's never been better," he said in a mini-review of his speech.

Oh -- and that Americans "certainly have one of the great presidents in our history."

Trump's declaration last year that he had "accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country" triggered laughter in the cavernous UN hall.

Headlines like "The Whole World Laughed at Trump" followed, to which Trump insisted that diplomats were chuckling with, not at him.

A year later, with Trump beset by setbacks from North Korea to Iran and Venezuela to China, will his Big Apple bragadocio get a better reception?

UN welcomes Houthi offer to halt attacks on Saudi Arabia

AFP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations envoy for Yemen welcomed Saturday an offer from the country's Houthi rebels to halt all attacks on Saudi Arabia, saying it could bring an end to years of bloody conflict.

Implementation of the initiative by the Huthis "in good faith could send a powerful message of the will to end the war", Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths said.

The Iran-backed Huthis, which control the capital Sanaa and other parts of Yemen, have been fighting against a Saudi-led coalition which supports the country's internationally recognised government in a devastating five-year war.

Griffiths hailed "the desire for a political solution to end the conflict" in a statement issued from the UN headquarters in New York. On Friday, the Huthis proposed halting attacks on Saudi Arabia as part of a peace initiative. Saudi Arabia gave a cautious response, with minister of state for foreign affairs Adel al-Jubeiri saying on Saturday, "We judge other parties by their deeds, actions and not by their words, so we will see (whether) they actually do this or not."

Griffiths stressed "the importance of taking advantage of this opportunity and moving forward with all necessary steps to reduce violence, military escalation and unhelpful rhetoric".

Demonstrators clash with Egyptian security forces in rare anti-Sisi protests

AFP ■ CAIRO

Egyptian security forces clashed with hundreds of anti-government protesters in the port city of Suez on Saturday, firing tear gas and live rounds, said several residents who participated in the demonstrations.

A heavy security presence was also maintained in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the epicentre of Egypt's 2011 revolution, after protests in several cities called for the removal of general-turned-president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

Such demonstrations are rare after Egypt effectively banned protests under a law passed following the 2013 military ouster of Islamist ex-president Mohamed Morsi.

But discontent over rising prices has been swelling in Egypt, where Sisi's government has imposed strict austerity measures since 2016 as part of a \$12-billion loan package from the International Monetary Fund. Nearly one in three Egyptians lives below the poverty line on less than \$1.40 a day, according to official figures released in July.

On Saturday, protesters headed to downtown Suez for the second night in a row, where they were met by security forces barricading the streets and armoured vehicles.

"There were about 200 or so people. They (security

forces) fired tear gas, rubber and live bullets and there were injuries", a man who took part in the demonstration but declined to be named told AFP.

Another resident, who also preferred to remain anonymous, said the tear gas was so thick it had reached her apartment block a few kilometres away from the turbulent downtown area.

"My nose started burning up. The smell was seeping through the balcony. I also saw some youth run and hide in our street", the woman said.

On late Friday, hundreds of Egyptians poured through the streets of Cairo, chanting slogans including "Leave, Sisi!" and demanding the "fall of the regime".

At least 74 people were arrested after clashes between the crowds and police in the capital, a security source told AFP. The protests came after Mohamed Aly, an exiled businessman and opponent of Sisi posted calls online for demonstrations against Sisi.

He upped the pressure on Saturday in an explosive-filled video, imploring Egyptians to join a "million-man march" next Friday and to fill all "major squares" of the country.

"This is a people's revolution... We have to link up together as one... And organise going down to the major squares," he said in a Facebook appeal to his followers.

Study: Melting Antarctic glaciers to slip faster towards ocean

PTI ■ LONDON

The water from melting Antarctic glaciers, flowing through the ice and beneath them, is rapidly accelerating further thawing of the continent's ice sheets towards the sea, according to a study.

The study, published in the journal Nature Communications, is the first time researchers have found that melting on the surface impacts the flow of glaciers in Antarctica.

Researchers, including those from the University of Sheffield in the UK, used imagery and data from satellites along with regional climate modelling and found that meltwater is causing some glaciers to move 100 per cent faster than average — by up to 400 metres per year.

According to the researchers, gravity causes glaciers to move downhill with the internal deformation of ice, and by sliding over the ground beneath them — a process lubricated by liquid water called basal sliding.

The study shows that the movement of glaciers in the

Antarctic peninsula coincides with spikes in snowmelt.

The researchers add that this is due to the surface meltwater penetrating into the ice bed, and lubricating the sliding of glaciers.

As temperatures continue to rise in the Antarctic, surface melting could occur more frequently, and across a wider area, the researchers said.

According to the study, the Antarctic temperature is an important factor in determining the speed at which glaciers move towards the sea.

Ultimately, the researchers said that glaciers on the Antarctic Peninsula would behave like those in present-day Greenland and Alaska, where meltwater controls the size and timing of variations in glacier flow across seasons and years.

"Our research shows for the first time that surface meltwater is getting beneath glaciers in the Antarctic Peninsula — causing short bursts of sliding towards the sea 100 per cent faster than normal," said co-author Jeremy Ely of the University of Sheffield.

Gandhi's 150th birthday to be celebrated in Netherlands

PTI ■ THE HAGUE

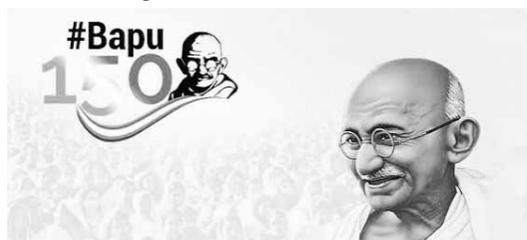
A number of public awareness events, including a Gandhi March for non-violence, will be held next week in the Netherlands to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The events — which also includes a cycling rally, an exhibition on the life of Mahatma Gandhi, a commemoration meeting, events surrounding the four Gandhi statues in the country and a school outreach programme — are being organised by the Indian Embassy here in cooperation with the Gandhi Non-Violence Foundation and other groups.

The celebrations will commence with the cycling rally on September 29 to spread awareness about the Gandhian philosophy of simplicity and sustainability, India's Embassy here said in a statement.

The rally in the city of The Hague will begin at the Embassy of India and pass through the iconic Peace Palace, the Parliament (Binnenhof), and the most popular seaside resort Scheveningen and return to the Embassy of India.

From October 1 to October 4, an exhibition on the "Life



and Message of Gandhi" will be displayed in the Atrium of the City Hall of The Hague.

The exhibition in Dutch will show the viewers the important phases of Mahatma Gandhi's life.

From September 24 to October 3, volunteers will fan out to schools and universities of the Netherlands in a "Follow the Mahatma" campaign and talk about Gandhi's message of non-violence and its relevance in today's world.

This school project aspires to reach over 25 schools and over 1,600 children.

The aim of the programme is to bring together volunteers who in turn can reach out to several thousand students aimed at disseminating the message of non-violence.

The International Day of

H a g u e , Amsterdam, Utrecht and Zoetermeer, with the public paying tributes by placing flowers at the feet of the statues as a mark of respect amidst speeches, singing of favourite songs of Gandhi, cultural programmes and a memorial meeting by Stichting Standbeeld Mahatma Gandhi in the Peace Palace.

A social media campaign will also be conducted inviting people to post messages reiterating their commitment to the principle of non-violence.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. He led India to independence from the British rule through peaceful and non-violent resistance. In 2007, the United Nations declared his birthday October 2 as the International Day of Non-Violence and called upon countries and people across the world to celebrate and observe this day by disseminating the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness.

26 people killed as bus rams into mountain in Pak

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

A bus rammed into a mountain on Sunday after the driver lost control while taking a turn on a hilly road in Pakistan's northwest, killing at least 26 people, including children, and injuring 13 others, police said.

The accident happened in the Babuser Top area, bordering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).

The bus was going towards Rawalpindi from Skardu city and there were 40 passengers, including 16 Pakistan Army personnel, the Express Tribune reported.

Rasheed Arshad, a spokesman for the Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister, confirmed that 26 bodies, among them women and children, have been retrieved from the wreckage.

He said 13 passengers were admitted to the district headquarters hospital in

Chilas and some of them were in critical condition.

The passenger bus, belonging to a private company, departed from Skardu on Saturday for Rawalpindi. On Sunday morning, the driver lost control of the bus while taking a turn and it collided against a mountain. It is not clear yet how the driver lost control of the vehicle, according to Diamer police spokesperson Mohammad Wakeel.

Police said that rescue and police teams had been dispatched to the site of the accident. Additionally, a helicopter has been requested from the GB government so as to transport the bodies to Skardu following identification, Dawn News reported.

The Babuser Pass road, frequently used by tourists, remains open from the end of June to October every year. It is then closed following heavy snowfall at Babuser Top.

PAPER WITH PASSION

A dose of adrenaline

The Indian economy needed a booster shot. Was Nirmala Sitharaman's corporate tax cut the way to do it?



On the face of it, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement to cut the corporate tax rates in India from 30 to 25 per cent, making for an effective slab of 25.17 per cent for all companies in India that do not use incentives, is a smart move, both for the corporate sector and the optics of politics. This avoids any potential conflict with sector-specific reductions in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates, which would have led to a showdown in the GST Council. By cutting a Central tax, a decision solely of the Central Government, days of headache have been avoided. Of course, Opposition politicians will make a fuss about these rates but the smarter among them will understand that not only did something need to be done but that the private sector was essential for creating employment and the challenges thereof might potentially be reduced. Now, how the tax cuts will be utilised could determine how they benefit the economy. Companies could use the extra cash to fund expansion, pare debt or even not reduce their workforces in what has been a difficult year. That said, the reduction in corporate tax rates would also be extremely beneficial for potential foreign investors who might have shied away from India due to higher rates and could, therefore, give a boost to the 'Make in India' initiative. This shows that the Government is not just taking half-hearted selective measures to revive the economy but is actually taking matters seriously.

The prime disappointment though has been felt by middle-class income tax payers, who were also hoping for some adjustments in personal income tax rates that remain relatively high. While the after-effect of demonetisation and the GST rollout, both of which brought in a lot of the informal economy into the formal scheme, was an increase in the overall tax base, there have been no commensurate rate reductions. The investing classes are still peeved about long-term capital gains tax on money market investments and any reduction in these will excite the markets once again. The problem is that while this might have given the bourses a booster shot, it could take several quarters for the effects to really start taking hold of the economy. In the short-term, consumer sentiment might take a while to recover. And that is worrisome. With companies already stressed, some feel that the rate cut will be absorbed in the near-term by firms balancing their books. While there could be some concerns and some cribs, there should be no doubt that the measures taken by the Government are on the whole an extremely positive given the overall state of the economy, and could even improve collections in the long-run once investments increase. If companies pare their debts, it could encourage the banks to start lending more. Increased investments could spur job creation as well. Yes, the Government has huge social responsibilities but the best way to help people is to create jobs and India's challenge on that front is unparalleled. This will help. However, this looks more like a distress management module rather than embodying a vision of either long-term goals, structural or big bang reforms that will take us to the next level irrespective of market trends and crisis. If only, this gives credence to the idea that no Government really changes the status quo unless it is forced to by the scale of an economic crisis. This is a repeat of the scenario in 1991 when the then Finance Minister Manmohan Singh liberalised the economy in the face of an unprecedented crisis. India's economy cannot afford to be reactive anymore, it has to be proactive.

Role model

Greta Thunberg's call is reverberating in India where school kids in metros are missing classes for a climate strike



Youth leadership is certainly changing the world. And the greatest impact among activist leaders has been achieved by 16-year-old Greta Thunberg from Sweden, who has taken upon herself the task of awakening the consciousness of the world community to the only issue that will matter to us — climate change. From launching a protest outside her country's Parliament on August 2018, till a little more than a year now, the teenager has indeed caught the attention of not just the intended audience, the lawmakers across the world, but gathered traction among the youth. Her message has been plain and simple: Stop talking, start acting. And she is leading by example, taking the road and sailing the waters in solar-powered rides while strictly not flying. Now her call for "climate strikes" till the end of the month has ensured the largest student demonstration on planet earth till now. Millions of youth, predominantly school-going, are giving their classrooms a miss to take part in peaceful street protests demanding world leaders to take concrete actions and avert environmental catastrophes. Her echoes have been heard here, too, as millennials in Delhi launched a march from the city centre that snaked past Lodhi Garden and ended at the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. The students even submitted a memorandum to the powers that be. In the spirit of the freedom movement and a display of our vibrant culture, brightly dressed students held up placards that read, "The show must go on" and "if the weather can change, so can you." Young people in other metro cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai and Kolkata followed suit, setting aside their weekday pursuits.

Ahead of the 2019 Climate Action Summit, while speaking to the members of Congress in the House Ways and Means Committee last week, Greta said, "This is the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced, you cannot solve a crisis without treating it as one. Stop telling people that everything will be fine. As it looks now, everything won't be fine." Bluntly, she told the US lawmakers, "Listen to the scientists, unite behind the science, then take real action." Echoing her words, even the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres could not afford to remain a mute spectator and asked member nations to bring a plan and not plain speeches to slash greenhouse gas emissions. Greta's success and freshness have been that as a disruptor, she is being heard more and as a representative of a generation we will be bequeathing the earth to, is stirring up enough guilt within us. Besides, her passionate campaigns and demonstrable actions of how to re-orient modern living in a sustainable manner have given everybody an individual goal that is easier to meet than effecting a policy change. Climate scientists had for long warned that the world is running out of time to avert the worst effects of global heating. They had alerted about the consequences — food scarcity, water stress, deaths due to high temperatures, forest fires, and mass displacements — all of which have become a reality. Youth leaders are more aware in a knowledge society, more user-oriented and practical. It's time we go by their blueprint. For a child is indeed the father of man.

What's a degree worth?

As graduates and class VIII dropouts are forced into the same career stream, India's joblessness is leading to desperate choices



RINKU GHOSH

They say the story of India is found in its people, its complexity unravelling in everyday life. And so it is that I chanced upon Ankit, who is an owner-driver of a Hyundai Xcent with taxi aggregator Uber and makes anything about ₹40,000-50,000 a month. That's not new or surprising. But Ankit was a verification officer at Barclays bank, who found himself jobless at a time when he was expecting his first child and his family deep in a financial trough for other reasons. Maternity meant his wife, too, was hived off from her firm that justified job cuts in the name of smart-sizing. Another job with his qualifications was difficult to come by and the offers that came guaranteed him nothing more than ₹35,000 a month. With mounting debts, he invested his severance package in a car and drove around the city, 17 hours on normal days, 22 hours over the weekend, so that he could earn the high points and incentives that Uber guarantees. Despite the inhumanity of sleep deprivation that such trips entail, Ankit's biodata on the company's app flashes the only thing that has become his calling card; that he is healthy and ever-ready to run. Now a father of a one-and-a-half month daughter, a fan of Adele whose songs motivate him on each ride, he has invested in a second car which he uses for inter-city tours. Some day, he hopes to grow his tourist car business, may be even set up his own agency. But a job he is not going back to, even if it means devaluing his education or explaining to neighbours in the Ghaziabad condominium he lives in why he scours the city at night. "Whatever gives me money, there is no shame. My education isn't working anymore."

Many like Ankit, young graduates and with middling incomes that are on freeze in a sputtering economy, are signing up with taxi aggregators to make ends meet across the country. A very infrequent user, over the last couple of months I have chanced upon at least six graduates who believe in dignity of labour provided it ensures the right price. There was Sandeep, who was a junior sales executive at a company and a people's person but once retrenched, chose the graveyard shift to rush people to their destinations. There was Vikas, who junked a job of ₹25,000 simply because it involved grudgingly long hours and he realised he could make more money in the same time period. "Now I can pace out my work on my own terms, be my boss and take home everything," he had told me. "What social embarrassment, I am my own company and I can vary my workflow depending on my needs. Which job will give me this flexibility? This is my choice." There was a young woman too, Suman, who is funding her vocational course by driving around women professionals in a WagonR owned by the family. "I drive select hours, am on GPS, so safety isn't an issue. This is good supplementary income for me."

The fact that I found all these drivers in



Noida's one-time booming SEZ area also presents a sordid tale of a slowdown and shutdown that's forcing our young people to find their own means of survival. With taxi aggregators like Uber and Ola finding the third largest ride-sharing market in India after the US and China, a driving partnership has now become a viable self-entrepreneurial option. Yet others are signing up with food and other service aggregators. Some are even relooking at their passions and acquired skills as there is a shop for every kind of service, utilitarian and entertainment, online.

If a report released by the Azim Premji University's Centre for Sustainable Employment is to be believed, then people with a graduate degree are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than the national average. The same study also found that women are more likely to fall by the wayside. Not only that. Even if graduates decide to take up low-skill work, they have to face intense competition from those who apply to such categories normally. This trend was echoed by a Kotak Institutional Equities report too, which cited data from the Government's periodic labour force survey (PLFS). The unemployment rate among male job seekers with secondary-

level education far exceeds joblessness among illiterates in both rural and urban areas: "The unemployment rate is highest among youth with education until diploma (37 per cent), graduate (36 per cent) and post-graduate and above (36 per cent), suggesting the lack of opportunities for a higher skilled workforce." The crisis was found to be more acute in urban areas (7.8 per cent) than in rural (5.3 per cent). A report by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) had also found that qualified youth — those with bachelor's degrees and above — faced the highest unemployment.

There have been alarming news reports about how graduates and post-graduates are applying for Class IV services in Maharashtra and how nearly a third of the 93,000 applicants for 62 police courier jobs in Uttar Pradesh had doctorates. With more people moving away from agriculture sector jobs to services, the pool of applicants is now an ocean of missed opportunities. There's a big rush for any kind of Government jobs as they provide what has become elusive today — job security, salaries that are routinely revised and a relatively good beginners package. The minimum Government salary is now ₹18,000 per month, higher than what 70 per cent employed people make in this country in desolate times. No data encapsulates this better than the Hindi film *Dream Girl*, where Ayushmann Khurrana plays an educated young man from Mathura, who has pursued the conventional path of BA, MA and MPhil but finds himself without a job. Out of sheer desperation, he signs up for a phone-sex call centre simply because it promises an income that his degrees cannot give him.

Undoubtedly, this trend is setting off a socio-economic transformation. At one level, it is offering recourse to students who are not academically brilliant and won't make the cut in higher institutions, just plain regulars who, however, make up the bulk of our educated workforce. At another level, it also means we are diluting their core competence, productivity and belief that education and knowledge are tools for an elevated life. We are teaching them the art of compromise, building values numerically than holistically. In fact, if basic skills like driving and cooking can earn people the moolah, then our young may just give up the idea of "becoming a graduate," still an aspiration that

parents sacrifice their earnings for across the vast hinterland of India. If that benchmark is seen as a redundancy, then it is another challenge in a country where literacy is often mistaken to be good enough as an education, compromising the overarching process of evolution of the mind. Let's not forget the last Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) which found that one out of every four Class VII students in rural India is unable to read even a Class II text and over one in two Class VIII students cannot solve a problem that involves basic division.

In the end, there is the socio-psychological impact of levelling out to a bare median, of a graduate and a class VIII dropout being forced into the same bloodstream. Is a compromise ever happy when you are told that excellence should be your only pursuit? Besides crushed expectations can have ramifications in the form of increased manifestation of disturbing and deviant behaviour among the youth.

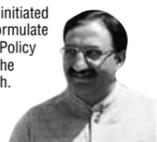
How then can we customise higher education for a segmented job market rather than dumping a one-size-fits-all formula on sectors that can hire but need specific domain knowledge? How can we make our graduates job-ready? As a recent skill research has shown, employers found 80 per cent of Indian engineering graduates failing to meet minimum requirements for a hire. Many such firms say prospective candidates lack sufficient industry experience because our courses are too theoretical and not application-oriented. There must be an industry-aided skill requirement map so that the problem of over-qualification, as evidenced by the latest job rush queues in Maharashtra, does not dash hopes. Besides, there must be a provision for career-long skill upgradation given that the economic paradigm can change due to technological breakthroughs and fluidity of the economy. There should be enough start-up incentives for engineers to set up small units that are viable. Yes, use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) may kill some traditional jobs but as seen with the IT revolution, they also encourage an allied layer of human services and talent. That spinoff is often overlooked in umbrella decisions. The jobs crisis is severely threatening our demographic dividend, given that half our population is below the age of 25. But a potential asset could become our biggest liability if we don't look at the bigger picture now.

(The writer is Associate Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

The Government has initiated a major exercise to formulate a National Education Policy that will aim to fulfil the aspiration of the youth.

HRD Minister
—Ramesh Pokhriyal



I cried the day Article 377 was abolished in India. The next step is gay marriages are allowed in our country. I hope that happens very soon.

Filmmaker
—Karan Johar



India is an important actor in climate action. Obviously, part of the dialogue was also related to our own efforts and the need to green the UN.

UN chief
—Antonio Guterres



The people of the country have been divided into black and white and there is no shade in between which is called tolerance.

Congress leader
—Shashi Tharoor



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A wake-up call

Sir — The world's largest oil facilities in Saudi Arabia have faced massive damages in the recent drone attacks. Various conspiracy theories have been doing the rounds regarding the culprits and the US President, Donald Trump, has as usual pointed a finger at Iran. But it must be remembered that Saudi Arabia has for long been threatened by internal conflicts by fringe elements and other radical groups. Further, the dependence of the world on Saudi Arabia for fuel makes it crucial for any strife there to be solved at once. This incident goes on to show how such attacks can impact world economics and politics.

P Senthil
Via email

Boosting the economy

Sir — This refers to the report, "Corporate tax slashed to 25% to rev up economy" (September 21). In a bold move to revive the economy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an eight percentage points cut in

the corporate tax rate. This means that the effective tax rate for firms who do not avail exemptions will fall from 34.94 per cent presently to 25.17 per cent. However, for new domestic manufacturing companies, incorporated after October 1, the tax rate

will be as low as 15 per cent. Due to high corporate tax rates, investments had remained at the lowest ebb. The present move will encourage private investment. It may also give a boost to foreign investments given that global value chains

Apathy towards a football player

Stories about celebrities falling on bad times are not rare. Managing whatever fortune they amassed during their heydays, many are known to have had pitiable existence thereafter, passing the rest of their lives in near anonymity. But some sagas are known to have their own share of shocks and surprises. The story of ace footballer Uday Konar from Mumbai is a case in point. Harassed by local goons, backed by influential people who are on the lookout to evict him from his hawking space at the Colaba Causeway, Konar is at the risk of losing his only means of livelihood. Apart from the space from where his father used to run a newspaper stall since the 1960s, the land mafia is intent on grabbing control of all spots allotted to his family in the close vicinity. One can very well understand his desperation.

The very fact that Konar has not been able to elicit any response from Government officials speaks volumes about a powerful nexus with powerful lobbies. His situation is that of a typical ordeal of a street vendor who gets targeted by powerful lobbies who use force and bullying tactics to evict them. But how can the administration be silent to the plight of the star player who has brought many laurels to the State?



Besides playing for Mumbai's top outfits, Konar was also part of the Maharashtra squad that won the gold medal in football at the 1999 National Games as well as the 2000 Santosh Trophy. Such indifference towards one of India's sporting heroes does not behave well. When it comes to matters of livelihood, it is essential that the administration takes a stringent view of the matter and ensures that the Konar family is allowed to operate from its ancestral hawking spots.

Pachu Menon
Margao

Timely action

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Missing woods for trees" (September 20). With more than 100 million adult smokers, India has a huge market for both electronic and conventional cigarettes. Although few Indians vape at present, the Indian ban cuts off a vast potential market of 1.3 billion consumers for makers of e-cigarettes. In particular, the e-cigarette market is acquiring 'epidemic' proportions among the youth and children. Given their attractive appearances and the availability in a number of flavours, teenagers are likely to be more prone to such devices.

In this backdrop, the Government's comprehensive ban on these battery-operated devices is welcome. The perception that e-cigarettes are a less-harmful alternative to cigarettes is entirely wrong. In fact, youngsters who use ENDS are more likely to start smoking conventional cigarettes.

Bal Govind
Noida

Srishti Mathur
Ujjain

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Unsung hero of the downtrodden

Though Bhola Paswan Shastri worked tirelessly for the benefit of the underprivileged, he was never credited for his socio-political work



RAJ PARASHAR

The name, Bhola Paswan Shastri, might have a different meaning for different sections of society, but his contributions and accomplishments in the social and political arena speak for themselves. It is unfortunate that Shastri's endeavours have not been accommodated in the political history of India. Though he worked tirelessly for the benefit of the underprivileged and the oppressed, and for the freedom of the country from colonial rule, Shastri has never been duly credited for his socio-political work.

Simple living and high thinking was a way of life for the three-time Chief Minister of Bihar, who not just dedicated his whole life for the uplift of the marginalised sections of society but also followed a righteous path in the murky world of politics.

Not one to believe in politics of opportunism, nepotism, favouritism, glorification and cashing in on his following by bargaining for political posts, Shastri charted his own course in life and was always guided by political ethics and constitutional morality.

Born in 1914 in Baigachhi, Purnea district, Bihar, in a family that belonged to the Pasi community (considered untouchables) Bhola Paswan, as he was known at that time, faced intense discrimination and atrocities. However, rising above that, he charted his way forward and was a brilliant student. He gained a respectable position in society by studying from the renowned Kashi University and the title of Shastri was conferred on him due to his keen intellect. Using his education as a means to fight for the emancipation of his people, Shastri began raising his voice against the caste system and the atrocities inflicted on members of the Dalit community. He participated in many of the struggles launched for the betterment of Dalits and later on joined active politics to make their voice heard as their representative.

Being a follower of Gandhi, he strongly advocated the Mahatma's ideas during the days of freedom struggle and reiterated that political independence could not be achieved unless one was socially equal and liberated. Realising the important role education had played in his life, Shastri always stressed on the need for learning and urged Dalits to pursue higher education for an overall and holistic development. His keen understanding of socio-political dynamics allowed Shastri to ignite the minds of the oppressed and encourage them to break the shackles of poverty and social stigma attached to the caste-system.

Later Shastri, who also had a nationalistic bent of mind, was to jump into the struggle for India's independence as a revolutionary and play a significant role in it. Shastri's dynamic personality and love for the country, politics and social issues resulted in him becoming the first Dalit Chief Minister of Bihar in 1968. He was to occupy that post twice more. Shastri was also a member of the Rajya Sabha and a vocal advocate for his community and the progressive plans he had for them.

Shastri's unmatched wit and intellect came through in an interview he gave in 1978 in his capacity as the Chairman of the then newly-founded Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission. When asked about caste-based discrimination in the country, he said, "With more people from different communities becoming educated, the discrimination against Harijans is slowly becoming less. But then, you also have rigid Hindus, like the ones who washed with Ganga water a statue that Jagjivan Ram had unveiled at Varanasi, in order to 'purify' it."

He mobilised the Harijan community to enter the national mainstream and join hands with other landless peasants to change their lives for the better. Shastri supported affirmative action and termed it as a way to rectify the history of injustice dating back thousands of years. A proponent of the reservation policy, Shastri often pointed out that Harijans have a double impediment, poverty and social discrimination, to overcome and quota would help them beat this.

Shastri was one of the unsung leaders and visionaries of yesteryears who contributed a lot to the nation but never took advantage of their capacity and position. He always gave priority to society over his family and was against amalgamation of wealth, which is why Shastri was left with just a few clothes, a pair of shoes and a meagre bank account at the time of his death. Socialism and egalitarianism were the inalienable attributes of Shastri's personality which is evident from the journey of his life.

It will be an injustice to let his name be erased from the annals of history, especially whenever we remember frontline social reformers and Dalit ideologues. In an era where politics of vendetta and nepotism is being used as a means to further personal agendas or decimate rivals, his simple lifestyle and brand of selfless politics can prove to be the guiding light for modern-day politicians and inspire many budding leaders.

(The writer is a Research Scholar at Patna University.)

BJP SHOULD STAGE A SIT-IN AT DELHI FOR RELEASE OF FLOOD RELIEF FUNDS INSTEAD OF INDULGING IN TONGUE WAGGING AGAINST MY GOVERNMENT.

—MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

KAMAL NATH

POINT COUNTERPOINT



KAMAL NATH SHOULD GO TO DELHI HIMSELF AND ASK FOR HELP. HAVE I EVER TOLD THE OPPOSITION TO GET HELP FROM DELHI WHEN I WAS CM?

—FORMER MP CHIEF MINISTER AND BJP LEADER

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

Beating desertification

At the COP14 held in India, 196 countries and the EU adopted voluntary land degradation neutrality targets that include their restoration by 2030



VK BAHUGUNA

At the just-concluded Conference of Parties (COP) 14 hosted by India under the aegis of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), 196 participating countries and the European Union adopted the 'New Delhi Declaration' wherein they agreed that land degradation is a major economic, social and environmental problem, and welcomed strengthening of the adoption of voluntary "land degradation neutrality" targets that include restoration of degraded land by 2030.

The UNCCD, one of the three environmental conventions running after the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992, (the other two being The United Framework Convention Climate Change and Convention on Biological Diversity) was established in 1994 as a legally-binding international agreement within the parameters of the UN and connects the environment and development with sustainable land management. The conventions deal with most vulnerable ecosystems in arid, semi-arid and dry lands areas. The basic aim of the convention is to work for improving the livelihoods of the people in these ecosystems through restoration of soil and land and combat draught conditions.

Under the UNCCD, the developed countries are supposed to transfer technologies to the developing countries for sustainable land development. The UNCCD had adopted a strategic framework for the period 2018-2030, which among other things, primarily focusses on improving the condition of affected ecosystems, combat desertification, land degradation, promote sustainable land management and contribute to land degradation neutrality. It also aims to mitigate, adapt to and manage the effects of drought in order to enhance resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems; mobilise resources for implementation of the convention and improve the living conditions of the people residing in dry land ecosystems. By far this is the most important convention and the success of two other conventions' objectives depends upon the success of the UNCCD. The secretariat of the convention had taken lot of programmes to achieve its mandate and some excellent work has already been achieved by India though almost one-third of country's landmass remains degraded and prone to desertification.

China, which became the president of the convention in 2017, passed on the baton to India at the programme held in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar, now has the mammoth task of steering the mandate of the convention for the next two years. The four issues discussed during COP14 were land and draught; land and human security; land and climate change and land and sustainable development goals.

Signatories to the New Delhi Declaration endorsed 35 decisions, including commitments to combat land degradation, desertification and drought. In the resolutions, the conference agreed to make the Sustainable Development Goal target of achieving "land degradation neutrality" (LDN), a national target for action. Besides the LDN agreement, whereby countries have pledged to halt the degradation of land to the point where ecosystems and land use can no longer be supported, there was a landmark decision to boost



global efforts to mitigate and manage the risks of crippling drought.

Countries will now be expected to address insecurity of land tenure, including gender inequality; promote land restoration to reduce carbon emissions and mobilise innovative sources of finance from public and private sources to support the implementation of these decisions at a national level.

All countries recognised that desertification undermines health, development and prosperity in all regions and were deeply concerned that the impacts would be felt most keenly by vulnerable people. They were also convinced that participation from civil society organisations, local governments and the private sector would be crucial to achieving the objectives of UNCCD.

The document laid special emphasis on community-driven transformative projects that are gender-sensitive at local, national and regional levels to drive implementation.

While the declaration is a statement of consensus, the 35 decisions are legally binding on each of the 197 signatories. Activities carried out over the next two years would be monitored by India. The resolutions adopted in the New Delhi Declaration are vital for India and the world, which is grappling with the ever-increasing effects of climate change and faces a major desertification threat.

Around 30 per cent of the world's populations live in dry areas, which cover more than 40 per cent of Earth's land surface. Countries like Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan, China and Pakistan are prone to repeated draught and in fact, 40 per cent of the world is now facing draught-like conditions due to climatic vagaries.

In India, around 20 per cent (63.8 million hectares) of the land is categorised as waste lands and most of this is in dry areas. Latest statistics shows that 42 per cent of the Indian land mass faces draughts where more than 600 million people live.

In the light of these findings, the COP14 is vital for the entire world and its recommendations need to be implemented in all seriousness. The people and the institutions of governance must focus on physical structure of land and quality of soil; improve the availability of water; control landslides, floods and movement of soil and conserve

COUNTRIES WILL NOW BE EXPECTED TO ADDRESS INSECURITY OF LAND TENURE, INCLUDING GENDER INEQUALITY; PROMOTE LAND RESTORATION TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS AND MOBILISE INNOVATIVE SOURCES OF FINANCE FROM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE DECISIONS AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

the bio-diversity and use of land for sustainable development of the people living in these areas.

India must gear up its diplomatic channels to ensure creation of fund and technology for tackling the threat by all countries. As for India, an action plan must be prepared to deal with deforestation, water conservation and land degradation for forest and non-forest lands. The degraded forests below 40 per cent crown density have increased from 24 million hectares in 1985 to 30 million hectares in 2017 and regeneration of natural forests needs to be backed up.

The recent proposal of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to bring private investments in forest areas of less than 10 per cent crown density should be started on pilot basis after taking the local people into confidence. If it succeeds, it will give a big fillip to forest conservation and enhancement of land productivity. The land vested with tribals under Forest Right Act should also be taken up for investment for productive use and livelihoods.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who addressed the ministerial segment of the convention, outlined the success achieved by India in implementation of the objectives of the convention in checking desertification and land degradation as well as help in saving the livelihoods of the people residing in dry areas. Modi asserted that India was looking forward to making an effective contribution at the global level as it took over the chairmanship for the next two years.

He called for concerted attempts as two-third of the countries are affected by desertification and are in the grip of severe water crisis. He exhorted the delegates to create a Global Water Action Agenda and offered Indian expertise to other countries in land degradation and raised the target of its land restoration from 21 million hectares to 26 million hectares by 2030.

Pointing out that India was on course to achieve its Paris climate change targets, Modi announced setting up of a Centre of Excellence at the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education to facilitate scientific and technological collaboration between South-South Cooperation and with those who wish to access knowledge and training of manpower so that land degradation is addressed effectively.

(The writer is a retired civil servant)

The rise of conspiracy theories and fantasies

Complex political, economic, demographic shifts and the mushrooming of social media sites have all contributed in making fantastical explanations, that were once relegated to the lunatic fringe, migrate to the mainstream



NADEEM PARACHA

In 2005, an independent filmmaker, Dylan Avery, made a documentary called *Loose Change*. The film explores the many conspiracy theories which began to emerge after the 9/11 attacks in New York.

The documentary does not discuss the theories as much as it actually promulgates them in a rather dramatic manner. The film claims that it has enough evidence to prove the conspiratorial notion that the 9/11 attacks were an "inside job," meaning they were organised by the US Government.

In 2006, Avery and the film's producers released a second edition of the film, claiming that this one included some new evidence. But,

actually, this one left out certain claims made in the first edition of the film after they were debunked.

A year later in 2007, a third version of the documentary emerged called *Loose Change: Final Cut*. This edition almost entirely edited out the many speculative claims of the previous editions. This left the film looking more like a compilation of reports on the attacks because, by then, *Loose Change* had been systematically debunked through a series of articles in various newspapers in the US and the UK.

Ironically, the American business tycoon, Mark Cuban, who had bought the rights to distribute the last edition of the film — which, unlike the first two editions, was not released online for free — was quoted as saying that he entirely disagreed with the contents of the film. One of the film's producers, Mathew Brown, echoed the sentiment but added that he had financed the film because he believed in freedom of speech.

The first edition was a sloppy and amateur attempt to cynically draw traction from online fans of conspir-

acy theories. However, it became a huge online hit, encouraging the makers of the film to turn it into a lucrative franchise of sorts.

The first edition cost just \$2,000, the second \$6,000 and the third \$200,000, after the rights of the film were sold to a major DVD distribution company. Translated versions of the film were also screened on TV channels in various countries, including Pakistan.

Geo TV ran it with an Urdu commentary, even though, by then, the film had been significantly discredited. Influenced by the successful manner in which it had managed to draw a large audience, another local TV channel, *Indus TV*, began to run a series of translated documentaries funded by the wealthy Turkish 'Islamic creationist' and cult figure Harun Yahya. These films explained Darwinism, secularism, democracy, 'Western modernity', and so on, as the core reasons behind the misery in the Muslim world and on Earth in general.

In 2009, *ARY News* jumped on the bandwagon by adapting another

Yahya-funded documentary *End of Time*. Commentary in the Urdu version was provided by a talk-show host, who faithfully replicated the film's sombre tone, pointing out the 'signs' foretold by the holy scriptures of the coming apocalypse.

As I mentioned in a previous column two in-depth studies, conducted in 2018 and published in the *Journal of Individual Differences*, identified 'schizotypy' as a prominent reason behind the growth in the acceptance of fantastical claims and conspiracy theories in recent years. People with schizotypy have an elevated need to feel unique, but at the same time take refuge in a community of like-minded individuals. Such an individual or community are more likely to judge nonsensical statements as profound.

They often believe in things for which there is no empirical evidence. The higher this schizotypy is in a person, the more likely he or she is to believe in conspiracy theories.

There is also the fact that the complex political, economic, climatic and demographic shifts and

changes occurring in the post-9/11 world and the mushrooming of social media sites, have all contributed in making fantastical explanations — that were once relegated to the lunatic fringe — migrate to the mainstream.

Confusion and polarisation in this context allows people to latch on to theoretical concoctions connecting disparate dots to complete an (often diabolic) explanatory whole. Nothing new about this, as such. In 1902 a tome appeared in Russia titled *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The book reports how a group of powerful Jews got together to plan a sinister takeover of the world's economic, political and media institutions. The book is also a hotchpotch of segments plagiarised from certain 19th-century anti-Semitic literature.

Russian scholar and professor Cesare G. De Michelis writes in his book *The Non-Existent Manuscript* that *The Protocols* was an anti-Semitic satire on a seminar organised by Russian Zionists. Anti-Semitism was peaking in Russia at the time, and this is why this satire was then published more

widely, but this time as fact, according to Michelis.

After doing the rounds in Russia, *The Protocols* reached the US in 1917. In 1921, US car manufacturer Henry Ford financed the publishing of 50,000 copies of the tome. He also published a series of articles inspired by the book in a newspaper that he owned. The articles all appeared under the title *The International Jew*.

Everything from the communist revolution in Russia to the creation of trade unions and inter-racial marriages in the West was blamed on the Jews. In 1922, the book and the articles were translated into German and became popular in Germany. It would go on to influence the ideology of Nazism in that country. It didn't matter that the British daily *The Times* had already thoroughly exposed the book as a hoax and a forgery. At the end of World War II, when facts about the Holocaust began to emerge, the book lost mainstream traction and readership in Europe and the US, and was relegated to the Right-wing fringe.

But it rebounded by finding a

brand new audience in the Arab world after the creation of Israel in 1948. Its first Arabic translation appeared in 1951 in Egypt. It soon made its way into the non-Arab Muslim world as well.

I am not sure when it appeared in Pakistan as an Urdu translation, but I once found a 1968 Urdu edition of it in a second-hand book store in Islamabad in 2005. In 1987, when the Palestinian Islamist outfit Hamas was formed, its first charter (published in 1988) heavily referenced *The Protocols*. But by then the book had already begun to lose purchase in the Muslim world as well, until it returned with a bang a decade or so later due to the internet explosion.

Uploaded by Neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups and by various Islamist outfits, *The Protocols* once again managed to migrate from the fringes to the mainstream.

Its readers again outnumber those who are more interested in reading the many exposés that completely debunked the book as a vicious fraud.

(Courtesy, *The Dawn*)

UNABLE TO BEAR EXPENSES

Parents drown 20-day-old twin daughters



Muzaffarnagar: Two newborn girls were drowned in a pond by their parents in an Uttar Pradesh village, with the father claiming that they killed the 20-day-old twins as they could not bear their expenses.

Waseem, a daily wage, and his wife Nazma were arrested on Sunday for killing Afrin and Afiya at Bhikki village here, Station House Officer (SHO) Ajay Kumar said.

"Our financial condition is very weak. We could not have borne the expenses for our two daughters," Waseem, who has a seven-year-old son, told police.

The couple had an argument on Saturday night following which the newborns were thrown by them in the pond near their house, the SHO said, adding that the twins drowned.

The father lodged a mis-

ing complaint on Sunday morning, but during investigation it was found that the twins had been killed, Kumar said.

Waseem, in the complaint, said when he woke up this morning, he found his daughters missing, the officer said.

The parents have been booked under Indian Penal Code sections 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence, or giving false information to screen offender), Kumar said.

"The bodies were recovered and sent for postmortem, he said.

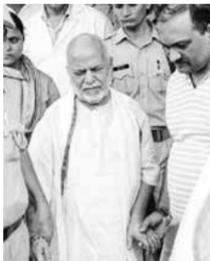
"The parents have confessed to killing their daughters," Kumar said.

Residents of the village said Waseem was angry over the birth of two girls and frequently fought with his wife over it. **PTI**

CHINMAYANAND CASE

Woman, SIT leave for Allahabad High Court for Monday hearing

Shahjahanpur: The student who levelled rape charges against BJP leader Swami Chinmayanand has left for Allahabad, where she will be appearing before the High Court on Monday, sources said.



The special investigation team (SIT), which will submit a status report in the court, too has left for Allahabad, they said.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, former MLC and BJP leader Jayesh Prasad met Chinmayanand in the jail and expressed concern over the health of the 72-year-old former Union Minister.

"The health of Chinmayanand is continuously deteriorating. He should be shifted to the KGMU in Lucknow or any other prominent hospital for treatment," he said, adding that though he respected the legal process, the woman was "yet to be arrested" in the cases registered by the leader against her and other accused.

The student and her three friends were booked for extortion by the SIT.

Sources said the SIT also booked the woman on charges of causing disappearance of evidence.

Jail Superintendent Rakesh Kumar told PTI on Sunday that on September 20, the advocate of Swami Chinmayanand, Om Singh, had submitted an application

to the CJM court, urging it to allow the "shifting of the leader to the KGMU, Lucknow, for treatment".

Kumar said they had received directions from the court and the jail doctor was looking after the leader.

"A team of doctors from the Shahjahanpur Medical College came yesterday to see him and he is being given the medicines from time to time as prescribed by the doctors," he said.

The former Union Minister was arrested by the SIT on Friday and sent to 14 days' judicial custody.

According to Om Singh, the counsel for Chinmayanand, they could not approach the court for bail on Saturday as local advocates were on strike demanding that Shahjahanpur be attached with the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court.

The sources said that the SIT had on Friday registered a

case against the woman's three friends -- Sanjay Singh, Sachin Sengar and Vikram -- and an unnamed person (Ms A).

They said the unnamed person was also a student but they did not disclose her identity in view of the Supreme Court guidelines.

SIT chief Naveen Arora had on Friday said the three friends, when questioned in view of a video clip in which they were purportedly discussing extortion, had accepted their involvement in the case.

They have been booked under Indian Penal Code Sections 35 (criminal act done with a criminal knowledge or intention), 385 (extortion), 506 (criminal intimidation), 201 (disappearance of evidences) and Section 67 of the Information Technology Act.

The three men were arrested by the SIT.

On her name being included in the extortion case, the woman had said, "I do not know if the people who helped me escape from Chinmayanand were using me. I have nothing to do with the extortion case. I think all this drama is being done to dilute my charges of rape."

The girl said, "The Supreme Court has taken cognisance of the entire matter and I am confident that I will get justice on September 23, which is the date of hearing in Allahabad High Court." **PTI**

JU row: Students union files complaint against Supriyo

Kolkata: The Arts Faculty Students Union (AFSU) of Jadavpur University has filed a police complaint against Union Minister Babul Supriyo, accusing him of misconduct during the ruckus at the varsity on Thursday.

The Left-leaning AFSU also lodged a complaint against five members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) for assaulting students, including women, and vandalising university property.

"Various incidents had taken place after the Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (Babul Supriyo) came to the JU campus in an event organised by ABVP, prompted by ABVP members," the AFSU said in its complaint on Saturday.

The complaint named Supriyo as the 'prime accused' and also identified five other ABVP members.

An officer of Jadavpur Police station confirmed the receipt of the complaint.

Alleging that the minister and his bodyguards had misbehaved with students on Thursday, it read, "A file of loaded magazine was found on the site of the event, which created unnecessary panic among the students, disrupting the campus life."

Supriyo could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

The AFSU complaint also said that ABVP members "created a ruckus, burnt and

destroyed campus property, threw acid bulbs, burnt tyres and pelted stones at the students and beat them up with sticks".

The student union was referring to the incident when agitated ABVP supporters assembled outside one of the main gates of the varsity on Thursday evening, after Supriyo was confined in the campus for over five hours.

The ABVP members then barged into the campus and allegedly went on a rampage in the union room and arts building. "Babul Supriyo being the prime accused, some other ABVP members recognised by us until now are..." the complaint said.

Asked to comment on the

action of AFSU, BJP leader Mukul Roy told PTI, "This is the present scenario in West Bengal, where a union minister, who has been assaulted by students of a university for attending a function at the institute, is named in a police complaint by those who had attacked him without any provocation."

He alleged that the police was not taking any action against those involved in the "attack on Supriyo," and instead accepting their complaint.

"We will take appropriate legal action," Roy said.

BJP leader Agnimitra Paul on Friday had filed a complaint at Jadavpur police station against some students, but did not name anyone. **PTI**

Was left with no other option but to visit JU: Bengal Gov

Kolkata: West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said he was left with no other option but to rush to Jadavpur University for rescuing Union Minister Babul Supriyo, who was heckled and held up by a section of students at the varsity.

After being held up at the university campus by protesters from leftist students unions for nearly five hours, Supriyo was taken out by the Governor late on Thursday evening.

Dhankhar, who is also the

chancellor of the university, said there was nothing wrong in his decision to visit its campus to understand the prevailing situation at that time. "I am happy that after I went there, I got the cooperation and support of students and professors," he said.

"If I don't connect with the agitating students and understand their situation, who will connect with them? I have to connect, have a dialogue with them... Only then, we can go ahead," the Governor said at an event here. **PTI**

PM deserves respect when he represents India abroad: Tharoor

Pune: Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, who is a strong critic of the Modi-led government, on Sunday said the prime minister deserves respect when he visits foreign countries as India's representative, but when he is in the country, people have the right to question him.

On the row over a common language for India, the Lok Sabha MP from Kerala said he was in favour of a three-language formula (promoting multilingual communicative abilities).

He was speaking at a session organised by the All India Professional Congress in Pune district of Maharashtra.

"The prime minister deserves respect in foreign countries as (there) he is a representative of our nation. But when he is in India, we have the right to ask him questions," Tharoor said.

On the issue of one common language in the country, he said the BJP's ideology of promoting Hindi, Hinduism and Hindustan is "dangerous" for our country.

"We need to carry on the three-language formula," he said.

Amid a heated debate over his remark that Hindi should be a common language, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on

Wednesday said he has never asked for imposition of Hindi over native languages in the country but advocated its use as the second language.

He criticised the ruling BJP over incidents of mob lynching, saying they are an "insult to Hinduism and Lord Ram".

"There is no difference among people (of different communities) living in Kerala. Then why it is happening in Maharashtra," he said.

Even Maratha warrior king Shivaji Maharaj had people from different communities under his rule. But he instructed everyone to respect each other, he said. **PTI**

Police attach properties of absconding RJD MLA Arun Yadav

Ara: Police in Bihar's Bhojpur district on Sunday attached the properties of RJD MLA Arun Yadav, who is absconding in connection with a case of sexual abuse of a minor girl, a senior police officer said.

The process of attaching the Sandes RJD MLA's property at his native village Lasarhi began this morning amid tight security, the officer said.

"The properties belonged to MLA Arun Yadav located at his native village Lasarhi were attached today," Additional Superintendent of Police (Operations) Nitin Kumar said.

The move comes days after District and Sessions Judge R K Singh, who holds the charge of special POCSCO court, issued the NBW against Yadav following an application filed by the district police.

The POCSCO court had on September 13 issued a non-bailable warrant against the sitting RJD MLA in the sexual abuse case. The ASP said that the MLA has been absconding ever since an NBW was issued against him in the case besides a notice for attachment of properties was pasted on his house on the court's directive. **PTI**



A view of illuminated Mysore Palace in Mysore on Sunday

PTI

MAHARAJA HARI SINGH BIRTHDAY EVE

BJP's Jammu rally gets lackluster response

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Multiple rows of empty chairs on Sunday greeted top BJP leaders including national vice-president Shyam Jaiu, Union Minister of State PMO Dr Jitendra Singh and Union Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur as they arrived here to pay tributes and address public rally on the eve of 125th birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh.

Thin attendance inside the pandal, raised outside Maharaja Hari Singh Park, also forced the organisers to delay the programme.

Interestingly, central BJP leaders waited for the green signal from the organisers to reach the venue as empty chairs inside the pandal, decked up



with king size images of Maharaja Hari Singh, kept staring at the organisers till the program culminated.

The public rally was organised by the Jan-Jagran Abhiyaan committee of BJP along with Jammu Bar Association and Civil Societies, Jammu.

Majority of people, who attended the rally, were ferried from peripheral areas of rural Jammu to fill the seats. To discourage use of plastic, during such public events, the organisers served packaged juice in paper cups instead of PET water bottles.

On their arrival, the central BJP leaders offered floral tributes to the statue of Maharaja Hari Singh and later addressed a public rally.

Addressing the public rally, Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur said the Government is committed to the development of Jammu & Kashmir.

He said the Government had taken a "historic" decision to abrogate Article 370, which he claims will result in massive development in the entire region.

"Our Government has taken a historic decision to abrogate Article 370. Now, J&K will witness massive development," Thakur also slammed Pakistan for spreading "fake propaganda" and went on to say that PoK is a part of India.

Reaching out to the business community of Jammu, the MoS Finance said several measures have been implemented for the revival of the economy, citing recent cuts in corporate tax and GST for certain categories.

Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Thakur said the entire world is standing with India today due to the efforts of Prime Minister.

Shyam Jaiu, in his address, said the whole Nation is thankful to Maharaja Hari Singh for his contributions to the society and for acceding to the Union of India.

Dr Jitendra Singh, in his address, said the decision to abrogate Articles 370 & 35(a) has nothing to do with Hindu-Muslim but it is for betterment

of common masses. He said that Home Minister Amit Shah is very liberal towards house arrested leaders in J&K providing them Hollywood movies, gym facilities & brown breads to eat, as we remember also the times when our leaders were thrown way to far off places & abused and added that these are the "House Guests & not House Arrests". He said that these valley politicians have exploited public machinery after getting only 10% votes. He aired his voice for the commitment to make status of PoJK in the state as it was when the Maharaja handed it over to the Union of India.

MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, Th. Narayan Singh and Adv. Abhinav Sharma also addressed the rally.

Serial killer 'cyanide' Mohan convicted in 16th murder case

Mangaluru: "Cyanide" Mohan, a serial killer who has murdered several women using the deadly chemical after befriending and raping them, has been convicted of killing another woman — a music teacher — in Karnataka, taking the total number of his convictions to 16.

Mohan, who has previously been convicted of killing women in public toilets by giving them cyanide capsules, murdered the 33-year-old woman after raping her at a lodge in Bengaluru in May 2007, the prosecution told the Mangaluru district and sessions court.

The woman hailed from Uppala in Kasaragod district of Kerala.

The serial killer had introduced himself to her as Sudhakar Acharya, an employee of the forest department. He

gave her a poisonous capsule, telling her it was a contraceptive.

He has used the same modus operandi in all the 20 cases against him, the prosecution submitted to the court.

Judge Sayeedunnisa pronounced Mohan guilty on Friday under various sections of the Indian Penal Code relating to murder, robbery and punishment for cheating and others, after examining 38 witnesses and 49 exhibits.

The quantum of punishment would be pronounced on September 25.

This was the 16th case in which Mohan has been convicted. He had been accused of killing a number of women between 2003 and 2009 and had been sentenced to death in three cases and to life imprisonment in others. **PTI**

Depression off Guj coast likely to turn into cyclonic storm: IMD

Ahmedabad: A depression formed over east-central and north-east Arabian Sea was now around 170 kilometres west-southwest off Veraval in Gujarat, the India Meteorological Department said on Sunday.

It is likely to intensify into a deep depression and subsequently convert into a cyclonic storm in 24 hours and move west-northwest towards Oman coast over the next 72 hours, the IMD added.

The cyclonic storm will cause light to moderate rains in several places in the Saurashtra-Kutch region of Gujarat, and heavy rainfall in isolated places in the coastal districts during



the next 24 hours, the IMD informed.

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the east-central and adjoining north-east Arabian Sea along and off Gujarat coast during next 48 hours as the condition of the sea would be very rough with winds with speeds of 45-55 kmph to 65 kmph, the IMD informed. **PTI**

The depression over east-central and adjoining north-east Arabian sea off Gujarat coast moved west-northwest with a speed of 15 kilometres per hour and lay centred, at 11:30 am on Sunday, around 170 km west-southwest of Veraval in Gujarat, 570 km south-southeast of Karachi in Pakistan, and 1170 km east-southeast of Muscat in Oman, the IMD said.

"It is very likely to intensify further into a deep depression during next 12 hours and into a cyclonic storm during subsequent 24 hours. It is very likely to move west-northwestwards towards Oman coast during next 72 hours," it said. **PTI**

INTER-STATE WATER ISSUES

Kerala, TN CMs to hold talks on Sept 24

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will meet his Tamil Nadu counterpart K Palaniswami here on September 25 to discuss various inter-State water issues, including the Parambikulam-Aliyar Project (PAP).

Palaniswami will lead a delegation on a day's visit to Kerala and during it both the states would discuss various current and proposed river water sharing agreements between the two neighbouring states, Water Resources Minister K Krishnankutty told PTI here on Sunday.

"The discussion will include Parambikulam project, Anamalai, Pandiyar-Punnapuzha, Pamba Achankovil diversion and many



more. We will discuss the water-sharing agreements between the states," Krishnankutty said.

This would be first meeting between the chief ministers of the two states in 15 years, he said.

In 2004, the then Chief Ministers Jayalalithaa and Oommen Chandy had met in Chennai.

assembly Deputy Speaker V Jayaraman, Chief Secretary K Shanmugam, secretaries and chief engineers.

Kerala has been expressing concern over Tamil Nadu's approach to the river-water sharing agreement, signed by the two states in 1970, with retrospective effect from 1958.

The state has also been demanding Tamil Nadu to honour the provisions of the PAP, and its rightful share of water.

Tamil Nadu might take up its demand for the diversion of Anamalaiyar river water, which is linked to the Idamalayar project.

Krishnankutty has recently held discussions with senior officers of his department here as part of the preparations.

Police seize 450 cartons of liquor in Bihar

Ara: Police on Sunday seized 450 cartons of India Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) worth in Bihar's Bhojpur district, a senior police officer said. Acting on a tip-off, police stopped a truck near Ramdihra pul in Barja village under Bihyan police station and recovered 450 cartons of liquor during the search of the truck. Additional Superintendent of Police (Operations) Nitin Kumar said adding that smugglers fled from the spot. The liquor consignment was brought to Bihyan from Arunachal Pradesh, the ASP said. Sale, consumption, manufacturing, transportation, storage of liquor had been completely banned in Bihar by the Nitish Kumar Government in April 2016. **PTI**

BABRI MASJID DEMOLITION CASE

Special CBI court issues summons to Kalyan Singh

Lucknow: A special CBI court here has issued summons to former Uttar Pradesh chief minister and BJP leader Kalyan Singh, directing him to appear before it on September 27 in connection with the Babri Masjid demolition case.

The court is conducting the trial of accused persons, including BJP leaders L K Advani, M M Joshi, Uma Bharti and others for allegedly conspiring to demolish the mosque at the disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid site in Ayodhya.

Taking note of the information given by the members of the Bar association that Singh's term as Rajasthan governor expired in the first week of this month, special judge S K Yadav on Saturday passed the order on a pending application that the CBI had moved on September 9.

After serving a full five-year term as governor, the 87-year-old leader, who was the Uttar Pradesh chief minister when the Babri Masjid was demolished in 1992, rejoined the BJP on September 9.

The court had taken up the application and asked the CBI to produce papers that the



term of Singh as the governor has expired. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had then sought time to produce the papers, saying it did not receive any documents from its headquarters.

On the information given by the members of bar association, the court issued the summons to Singh for appearing before it on Friday.

Moving the application, the CBI pleaded that Singh was chargesheeted in 1993. It further pleaded that the Supreme

Court had in April 2017 said Singh could not be brought in as an accused to face trial due to the constitutional immunity granted to governors under Article 361 of the Constitution.

The top court had, however, allowed the CBI to move for summoning of Singh as an accused as soon as he ceased to be the governor.

All the accused are on bail in the case, the trial of which is being conducted on a day-to-day basis, on the directions of the apex court. **PTI**

Four held in Kerala for honey trapping NRI bizman

Kochi: Four people including a woman were arrested for allegedly honey trapping a Gulf-based NRI businessman to extort money from him, police said on Sunday.

While three of the accused hail from Kannur district, the woman belongs to Kochi.

An investigation was launched based on a complaint that the Qatar-based businessman was lured into the trap allegedly by the woman, who was in that country, by establishing friendship through Facebook, they said.

The businessman was invited to her room in Qatar by the woman. One of the accused, in connivance with the woman, had allegedly set up a secret camera inside the room and took their naked photos. **PTI**

Dalit man beaten to death for 'stealing water pump' in Rajasthan's Jhalawar

Kota (Raj): A 40-year-old Dalit man was beaten to death for allegedly stealing a water pump in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place in Ghatoli area on Saturday morning, when a 60-year-old man, his two sons, and some other unidentified people thrashed Dhulichand Meena of Mewakhedha village, alleging that he stole a water pump from their fields, Station House Officer (SHO) Nainuram Meena said. When Dhulichand was on his way to a nearby village, Purilal Tanwar, his sons, Devi Singh (23) and Mohan (20) and the other men confronted him, the SHO said.

He said a heated exchange between Dhulichand and the group of men over the stolen

hand pump soon turned violent and he was beaten up badly.

Dhulichand's father reached the spot and took his injured son home. Later, Dhulichand's condition deteriorated and he was rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead, the SHO said.

He said preliminary investigation revealed that Tanwar and his sons had on Friday complained about the theft to Dhulichand's father, who reprimanded his son and asked Tanwar to lodge a police complaint against him.

A case under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act has been registered against Tanwar, his sons and seven unidentified men, the SHO said. **PTI**

Gorkhas not to visit Foreigner's Tribunal: Body

Guwahati: The Gorkhas, whose names have been excluded from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, will not visit Foreigners' Tribunals to prove their Indian citizenship, a community body said on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference here, Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangha (BGP) national president Sukhman Moktan said that Gorkhas being tried in the Foreigners' Tribunals (FT) will be an "insult to us for being Indians," he said.

"We can file defamation suit against the system for challenging the citizenship of Gorkhas and Nepali speaking population being taken to FT", Moktan, who heads the only registered national organisation, representing 10.5 million Indian Gorkhas in 22 state units and five zones, said.

The BGP had organised a week-long tour across Assam to meet the victims of the Gorkha community who were not included in the NRC and directed to appeal against it at Foreigners' Tribunals.

During the visit to 18 districts that ended on Sunday, Moktan said they found that names of many Gorkhas had been left out from the final NRC list.

"We met NRC victims and arbitrarily marked D Voters and their descendants whose citizenship is challenged and are being directed to go to FT as per NRC guidelines while a recent Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notification exempts the Gorkhas.

"This is an attempt of a few vested interests within the system to disrespect Indian

Gorkhas who are actually original inhabitants as is proved by our historically and mythologically recorded presence since centuries," Moktan said.

Nirmal Kumar Pun, BGP secretary general said, "No Indian Gorkhas should be left out of the NRC. As a vigilant civil society organisation, the BGP will play a vital role as it is a judiciary monitored process".

On being asked whether the BGP is planning to take the state government to High Court for the delay in filing fresh writ petition to uphold the MHA notification, Nityananda Upadhyay, president, Assam State Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangha (BGP) said, "BGP is a party to the NRC case in the Supreme Court of India.

"If the Government of Assam does not do its duty as directed by the Union of India, the BGP will take a policy decision to take the matter to the Supreme Court and make the State Government party to it and contest the case to ensure that Gorkhas are not taken to Foreigners' Tribunals."

On Saturday a BGP delegation had urged Chief Secretary Alok Kumar to implement the MHA notification.

The chief secretary was urged to form an Empowered Committee to address the woes of the Gorkha community regarding exclusion of many of their names from the NRC, BGP national secretary Nanda Kirati Dewan had said. More than 19 lakh of the 3.29 crore applicants have been excluded from the final NRC, released in Assam last month. **PTI**



Exclusion of Hindu Bengalis from Assam NRC changing political narrative in Bengal

Kolkata: The spectre of NRC implementation is fast turning Bengal into a political battleground, with the TMC appearing to have an advantage over the BJP after the omission of a large number of Hindu Bengalis from the register in saffron party-ruled Assam.

The demand for the NRC exercise to weed out infiltrators has been gaining momentum since last year in the state, which shares over 2000-km-long border with Bangladesh.

However, the publication of the final NRC list in Assam, which left out over 19.6 lakh people - of which around 12 lakh are Hindus and Bengali Hindus - has changed the political narrative in the state to a great extent.

The ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) has been on the offensive by milking the issue of updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) as an "anti-Bengali" move on the part of the saffron party.

"What does the omission of 12 lakh Bengalis and Hindus from Assam NRC show? It shows that it is a tool to target Bengalis. The BJP which claims to be the champion of Hindus and its rights should first answer how come Hindus and Bengalis were omitted from the list.

"The figures prove that their main target was Bengalis," TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee said. **BJP national president**

Amit Shah, who had repeatedly said that the exercise would be conducted across India, is expected to address a seminar on the issue here on October 1.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who met the Union home minister in Delhi over the matter early this week, has been building strong public opinion against the exercise. The TMC supremo had led a rally against NRC on September 12 here.

Last month, the West Bengal Assembly had passed a resolution against NRC, with Banerjee vowing not to allow its implementation in Bengal.

TMC MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay said the register has not just divided the masses, but also made people refugees in their own country.

"The BJP has said if it comes to power, it will implement NRC in Bengal. So the people of Bengal are conscious enough to decide what is good and bad for them. The party should first explain why Bengalis and Hindus have been excluded from the list," Bandyopadhyay said.

The ripple effect of NRC in Assam has already been felt in Bengal, especially in districts bordering the neighbouring state, with panicked people lining up at government offices to get documents in place.

Two recent deaths in the state have been attributed to the panic swirling around the citizenship register. **The TMC leadership has**

blamed the BJP for creating anxiety over NRC in Bengal.

Banerjee, however, iterated that the exercise will not be allowed in the state and the BJP would have to get past her if they tried to touch anyone.

The promise of NRC implementation, which has been a major plank of the BJP in the last Lok Sabha polls, is considered by its leaders as a plausible factor that led to the rise of the party in Bengal, having bagged 18 parliamentary seats earlier this year.

Nevertheless, the exclusion of around 12 lakh Hindus from the final NRC list in Assam has put the saffron party in a precarious situation.

The party has now said that the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill would be implemented first, which would provide Hindu refugees Indian nationality, and then the process to oust "Muslim infiltrators" would be carried out.

"The illegal Bangladeshi Muslims pose security threat to the inhabitants of the state and the country," state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh told PTI.

During the 1971 Liberation War in Bangladesh, millions of people had fled the country and moved to India, particularly in Bengal and the north-east region.

"In Bengal, we would first implement citizenship bill and then the NRC. The TMC is just trying to create a panic to reap political dividends," Ghosh added. **PTI**

Meghalaya may add more teeth to MRSS Act to check illegal immigration: Dy CM

Shillong: Following the publication of NRC in Assam, Meghalaya government is contemplating to add more teeth to a law, enacted in 2016, to check illegal immigration into the state. Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong said on Sunday.

The state government will soon hold a consultative meeting with all political parties in the state to discuss on the proposed amendment of the Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security (MRSS) Act 2016 and once agreed, the same may

be passed in the form of an ordinance, he said.

"We will soon hold consultations with all political parties as well as legislators for their views and suggestions in this regard," the deputy chief minister told PTI.

Once the consultation process is completed, Prestone said the Government would place the proposed amendments before the state cabinet for its approval. He also informed that the proposed amendment may be passed in the form of an ordinance. **PTI**



A view of houses partially submerged under flood waters of River Ganga at Chhota Boghara area in Prayagraj on Sunday

Three-fourths of J&K supported Art 370 abrogation: Rajnath

Patna: Article 370 was like a "cancer" that bled Jammu and Kashmir, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday, asserting that more than three-fourths population of the erstwhile state supported its abrogation.

Addressing a "Jan Jagran Sabha" (public awareness meet) organized by the BJP here, where leaders spoke on the Narendra Modi government's move to strip J&K of the special status, Singh said the party has lived up to its promises.

"As a nationalist party, the BJP never softened its stand on the issue. Article 370 was like a canker (nasoor) which left J&K bleeding. We have now demonstrated that we are an honest and credible party which fulfills its promises," Singh said evoking applause from the crowd.

He blamed Article 370, and Article 35A which arose out of it, for the state being in the throes of terrorism.



"J&K will now be transformed within five years. In fact, more than three-fourths of its population wanted this provision to go. Our intentions were good and it is no surprise that our move was supported wholeheartedly by our alliance partners," Singh said.

Cautioning the neighbouring country against promoting cross-border terrorism, in the wake of the recent developments in Kashmir, he said, "Talks with Pakistan will henceforth resume only after it stops promoting terrorism. And it must also keep in mind

that J&K is an integral part of India. All discussions will only take place about Pak-occupied Kashmir."

Notably, the abolition of Article 370 has been one of the key promises made by the BJP in its election manifestos. It was accomplished earlier this year by a presidential order and the ruling party at the Centre managed to secure a parliamentary nod for bifurcation of the state into Union territories with the help of its coalition partners.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), however, emerged as the lone dissenting voice from within the alliance as it staged a walkout in both the Houses of the Parliament after expressing his disapproval over the Narendra Modi government's move.

The defence minister also warned Pakistan against "repeating mistakes of 1965 and 1971", referring to the two wars fought and won against the neighbouring country, and

claimed that it ran the risk of getting "dismantled" on account of flagrant violation of human rights.

"We do not need to do anything against Pakistan. It will get dismantled because of the very path it has chosen. The country will be devoured by flagrant violation of human rights and flourishing terrorism on its soil," Singh remarked grimly, without elaborating further.

He rubbished the "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" theory often used by the neighbouring country to justify militancy in the northern state.

"Let us see how many terrorists they can send (to India). None of them will go back," he added. Among others who addressed the gathering here were Union Ministers Ravi Shankar Prasad and Nityanand Rai and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi. **PTI**

After losing 6 legislators to Congress, BSP may lose more to BJP

Lucknow: After losing six legislators to the Congress in Rajasthan, the Bahujan Samaj Party is now likely to lose three members of the UP Legislative Council to the BJP in Uttar Pradesh.

According to sources, three BSP MLAs have held meetings with state BJP leaders and are waiting for a meeting with the party high command before they resign from the BSP.

One Rajya Sabha MP from the BSP is also said to be knocking at the BJP's doors.

The BSP, at present, has four members in the Rajya Sabha and eight members in the Vidhan Parishad.

The BJP, on the other hand, lacks a majority in the 100-member UP Legislative

Council where the BJP has only 21 members while the Samajwadi Party has 55 members and BSP 8 members.

A senior BJP leader, while speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "The BSP has always been prone to splits. History proves this and we are not forcing anyone to quit the party."

"If the leaders are unhappy with the leadership, it is the leadership that is to be blamed. If anyone comes to us with a clean slate, we will welcome them with open arms."

The leader, however, refused to disclose when exactly the BSP MLAs would quit to join the BJP.

However, he said, "In the case of SP MPs and MLAs we have kept our word and re-

nominated them to their respective houses. The BSP leaders should know this."

The Bahujan Samaj Party, incidentally, has been prone to splits ever since Mayawati took over the reins of the party.

The first split that the BSP suffered was in 1995 when the infamous state guest house incident took place in Lucknow and the then state BSP president Raj Bahadur crossed over to the Samajwadi Party along with some other legislators. The BSP had won 67 seats in the 1993 elections and some legislators were upset at the hard bargain that Mayawati was then trying to drive with the then Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Kanshi Ram, who was in



hospital at the time of the incident, could not intervene and Mayawati's leadership, apparently, was not acceptable to a section of the BSP MLAs.

The BSP (which again won 67 seats) suffered its biggest split in 1997 when Mayawati pulled out of the coalition with BJP. About 20 BSP MLAs

broke away to form the Jantantrik Bahujan Samaj Party and extended support to the then Kalyan Singh government. All of them were made

ministers.

Again in 2003, when Mayawati severed her alliance with the BJP and recommended dissolution of the state assembly, about 18 BSP MLAs crossed over to the Samajwadi Party and Mulayam Singh formed the government.

According to a former BSP leader who is now in BJP, it is Mayawati's style of functioning that has made the party susceptible to recurrent splits.

"Kanshi Ram reached out to party cadres at the lowest level and established an emotional connect with them. Mayawati never meets her MLAs and MPs on a one-to-one basis. Moreover, ever since she has started charging money for tickets, the dedi-

cated party workers are left out and those with monetary interests end up getting tickets. Such persons have no loyalty to ideology and can leave the party for further gains," he said.

Political analyst Pradeep Kapoor, meanwhile, said that the BSP was becoming prone to splits because of the fickle nature of its leadership.

"Making and breaking alliances without a valid reason has become a habit with Mayawati. She has forged and then broken alliances with SP, Congress and BJP on several occasions. This naturally disturbs leaders who contest elections in her party. Moreover, she never takes her people into confidence before announcing decisions," he said. **IANIS**

No plans to revise fiscal deficit target: Nirmala

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said there are no plans to revise the fiscal deficit target for the current fiscal at the moment and a decision in this regard will be taken before the annual Budget.

Experts are of the view that India's fiscal deficit will widen as a result of the corporate tax reduction by the government.

When asked if the government will consider revising the fiscal deficit target, Sitharaman said these are "decisions taken near the Budget".

In the biggest reduction in 28 years, the Government on Friday slashed corporate tax by almost 10 percentage points as it looked to pull the economy out of a six-year low growth and a 45-year high unemployment rate by reviving private investments with a ₹1.45-lakh crore tax break.

Base corporate tax for existing companies was reduced to 22 per cent from the current 30 per cent; and for new manufacturing firms, incorporated after October 1,



2019 and starting operations before March 31, 2023, to 15 per cent from the current 25 per cent.

On raising the borrowing target for the second half of the current fiscal, the Finance Minister said, it will be decided in the next few days.

"Not touching any of the given targets now. When the meeting for revised estimates takes place, we will look at it," Sitharaman said.

According to global rating

On raising the borrowing target for the second half of the current fiscal, the Finance Minister said, it will be decided in the next few days

agency Moody's, the reduction in corporate income tax revenue — even when balanced against the windfall from the recent transfer of central bank surplus reserves, equivalent to around 0.3 per cent of GDP in the current fiscal year — further narrows fiscal room for manoeuvre.

However, it described the rate reduction as credit positive for companies because it will enable them to generate higher post-tax incomes.

Corp tax cut makes India an investment destination, says FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has become a highly competitive investment destination post corporate tax reduction as the rates are now lower than that in China and most Southeast Asian countries, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday.

India was earlier at disadvantage because of a couple of factors and on top of it was the high corporate tax rate, she said, adding that the reduction has made it attractive for foreign investors, including iPhone maker Apple, to set up units in the country.

"The top consideration on which India was rejected as investment destination is now better than everybody else... For some one who is coming up with new investment, no country is offering 15 per cent (tax rate). We are giving 15 per cent with no MAT (minimum alternate tax) and simpler taxation structure," she said.

Quoting experts, she said

India is now much better than China in terms of rate, transparency, and tax administration so companies can now look at India for setting up new units.

"Apple and its entire ecosystem's moving will have a greater impact. Everyone who comes now will straightaway get 15 per cent tax benefit. Component manufacturers of Apple in China will find India more attractive to have units at 15 per cent in India than 25 per cent there," she said.

Apple or any foreign company can come and set up business and enjoy the competitive rate of 15 per cent, she said, adding that the stipulated timeline for the product roll-out from the new unit is on or before March 31, 2023.

In the biggest reduction in 28 years, the government on Friday slashed corporate tax by almost 10 percentage points as it looked to pull the economy out of a six-year low growth and a 45-year high unemployment rate by reviving private investments with a Rs 1.45-lakh crore tax break.

Top 1K listed firms may see savings of ₹37K cr post corp tax cut: CRISIL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

CRISIL Research on Sunday said top 1,000 listed companies could see tax savings of ₹37,000 crore on account of the corporate tax cut.

"Over the past few days, a slew of measures have been introduced to address the slowdown in the Indian economy. Friday's announcement, however, is the most material... Our analysis indicates these 1,000 companies could see tax savings of ₹37,000 crore, or nearly a fourth of the total savings anticipated by the government," it said in a statement.

The drop in tax rate would now bring India at par with most Asian economies, it added.

"CRISIL Research's analysis of nearly 1,000 companies — spread across 80+ sectors such that they cover more than 70 per cent of NSE's market capitalisation — indicates that effective tax rates had risen over the past 5 years," it said.

These companies, including oil & gas and financial services, account for nearly a third of the tax paid by India Inc.

BUSINESS CORNER

PRADHAN REVIEWS PERFORMANCE OF NMDC

New Delhi: Dharmendra Pradhan Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Minister of Steel, Govt. of India visited the Head Office of NMDC Limited at Hyderabad on 21.09.2019. The Minister met CMD, Directors and employees of the company and reviewed NMDC's performance in presence of G Kishan Reddy Minister of State for Home Affairs, Govt. of India. Pradhan said, NMDC being one of the largest mining companies in India should focus on increasing iron ore production. This will have the benefit of keeping prices in check and ensuring equitable supply of raw material to all steel producers. He further asked NMDC to carry-out sustainable and responsible mining using digital means. The Minister directed that the execution and commissioning of the ongoing projects especially NMDC Iron and Steel Plant (NISP) should be monitored regularly so that it can be completed on priority. Pradhan also reviewed the Slurry Pipeline Project of NMDC.



AAI PARTICIPATES IN WORLD ROUTES 2019

New Delhi: Airports Authority of India, the sole provider of air navigation services and responsible for management of airports across the country is participating in the 25th World Route Development Forum - World Routes 2019 at Adelaide in Australia. The India Pavilion jointly representing Airports Authority of India and Mumbai International Airport at this global event was formally inaugurated today by Usha Padhee, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India in presence of IN Murthy, Member (Operations), AAI; Kaushik Bhattacharjee, Airport Director, NSCB Airport, Kolkata; Ajay Kumar Bhardwaj, Airport Director, Pune; JB Singh, GM (CC), AAI and Ajay Kumar Verma, DGM (Operations), AAI.



GRSE CONDUCTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

New Delhi: The 103rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) was held on Friday 20 Sep 19 at 1030 Hrs. at Bhasha Bhawan of National Library, Kolkata. Commenting on the outcome of the Annual General Meeting, Rear Admiral V K Saxena, IN(Retd.), Chairman and Managing Director, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd., stated that this AGM had a very special significance as it was GRSE's first AGM after the successful IPO of the Company, wherein the Government of India disinvested 25.50 per cent of its shareholding in the Company. The Public Issue was well received and the shares of the Company are now listed at NSE and BSE. The CMD took the opportunity to extend his gratitude to all the investors for the confidence they reposed in the Company, which was further reflected by the increased market capitalisation post listing of its shares.



MNRE AWARDS GRANTS TO FOUR PROJECTS

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) awarded Grants to the awardees of the second round of PACEsetter fund programme in a ceremony organised by the Ministry yesterday. Anand Kumar, Secretary, MNRE and Kenneth Ian Juster, the US Ambassador to India co-chaired the felicitation ceremony. In the second round of awards, a total of 168 Expressions of Interest were received. Out of these, four projects were selected for award of grants. The awardees include Society for Economic and Social Studies, New Delhi, Customized Energy Solutions India Pvt. Ltd., Pune, The Energy & Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi and RaghavendraSuntech Systems Pvt Ltd (RSSPL), Bengaluru. Stressing on the importance of access to energy for all, the U.S. Ambassador said that innovation in off-grid and clean energy will improve energy access. Secretary, MNRE appreciated the impact that the awarded projects would have on the common man. He also suggested that innovation realized through such projects could be replicated in other developing countries.



We are committed to meet India's energy security needs: Saudi envoy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In the midst of disruption in global oil supply following the biggest-ever attacks on its oil installations, Saudi Arabia has said it is committed to meet India's energy security needs and will work constructively with other oil producers to maintain market stability.

Saudi Ambassador Dr. Saud bin Mohammed Al Sati, in an exclusive interview to PTI, also said his country will invite the United Nations and international experts to view the situation on the ground and to participate in the investigation into the attacks.

He said Saudi Arabia has the capability and resolve to defend itself and to forcefully respond to "these aggressions", and appreciated India's support and solidarity to Riyadh following the strikes which, he asserted, were "against the international community as a whole".

A series of drone and missile attacks on oil facilities of Saudi Aramco, the country's national petroleum company, in Abqaiq and Khurais on September 14 knocked out half of its daily oil production, severely impacting the global oil market and triggering fresh tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Saudi Arabia is a key pillar of India's energy security, being a source of 17 per cent or more of crude oil and 32 per cent of LPG requirements of India. The attacks on Aramco's Abqaiq and Khurais facilities resulted in up to 15 per cent increase in global oil prices last week due to disruption in supply by the top oil exporter.

Al Sati said the "unprecedented act of aggression and sabotage" on Saudi petroleum facilities, which were vital for



global energy supplies, resulted in the suspension of approximately 50 per cent of Saudi Aramco's production.

"As the investigations are ongoing, the Kingdom will

invite UN and international experts to view the situation on ground and to participate in the investigations," the ambassador said.

"The Kingdom will take appropriate measures to ensure its security and stability. The Kingdom affirms that it has the capability and resolve to defend its land and people, and to forcefully respond to these aggressions," he said.

Yemen's Houthis terror group has taken responsibility for the biggest-ever attacks on

The envoy said Saudi Arabia will continue working with its partners and allies in stabilising the security of the region

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Saudi oil facilities which severely impacted global oil supply. Saudi Arabia and its ally, the US, have blamed Iran for the attacks but Tehran has strongly denied the allegations.

"The recent attack against Saudi Aramco was not only against the Kingdom, but against the international community as a whole, and was a deliberate attempt to disrupt the global economy. Therefore, the perpetrators should be held accountable," the envoy said.

Tax cuts to boost industry; now need to focus on spurring demand: India Inc

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Industry leaders from diverse sectors such as manufacturing and services expect the reduction in corporate tax rates to create a positive impact on the economy, leading to a speedier turnaround.

Last Friday, the government announced a massive 10-12 percentage points reduction in taxes for corporates, bringing down the effective corporate tax to 25.17 per cent inclusive of all cess and surcharges for domestic companies. The new tax rate will be applicable from April 1, involving a revenue loss of Rs 1.45 lakh crore this fiscal.

Welcoming the step, Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej said, "This great announcement will totally change the economic progress. I would say the only other announcement which is of greater importance was in July 1991. This tax cuts will have tremendous positive effect. We will soon see a turnaround."

Addressing the India Today Conclave here over the weekend, he said there is now a need to focus on improving demand.

RC Bhargava, chairman of Maruti Suzuki, said manufacturing's growth rate or share in GDP is nowhere near the required level. Manufacturing

is barely limping at around 5 per cent and we need to lift it to 15 per cent, he said, adding that the tax cuts will be a big step in that direction.

The need is now to address the demand side issues, Bhargava also opined.

Niranjan Hiranandani of realty major Hiranandani Group said the tax cuts address only the supply-side economics but we also need "to address the demand side."

Piramal Group's Ajay Piramal said the tax cut sends out a clear message that the government is listening to the issues. It is a brave step but more needs to be done to spur demand, he added.

Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said the government has brought corporate tax on par with the East Asian neighbours and on par with the best tax regimes across the world. "The government has put liquidity into the bottom line of the companies. Roughly, close to Rs 75,000 to Rs 80,000 crore will be flowing because of the tax cuts into the bottom line of companies," he said.

The onus is on these companies now as the government has done its bit, Kant said, adding that it is time for all the Marutis, Mahindras and Godrejs to act by cutting their prices and offering more sops to consumers.

HDFC Bank to hold 1,000 grameen loan melas over next 6 months

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank on Sunday said it plans to organise 1,000 grameen loan melas over the next six months in a bid to expand its retail portfolio.

These grameen loan melas (or village loan fairs) will be held across more than 300 districts and cover around 6,000 villages across India, HDFC Bank said in a statement.

Just like a traditional village fair, the grameen loan mela will be a one-stop shop for people from the surrounding five or six villages to access the entire range of the bank's products, it said. Customers can avail of tractor, auto, two-wheeler and agri loans or open current or savings accounts, it said.

Besides, self help groups (SHGs) can avail of finance through the bank's Sustainable Livelihood Initiative. The loan melas will also serve as a platform to educate the local populace about banking services.

WTO dispute over India's tariffs on ICT goods: US seeks setting by up of dispute panel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The US has sought establishment of a dispute panel by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in a case against India's import duties on certain ICT products, including mobile phones.

The US sought consultations in July under the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism over imposition of import duties by India on certain information and communication (ICT) products, alleging breach of global trade norms.

As both the countries failed to resolve the dispute through the consultation process, the US has sought setting up of the dispute panel.

Bilateral consultation is the first step towards resolution of a trade dispute under the WTO norms.

"The US held consultations with India on August 1, 2019. Unfortunately, these con-

sultations did not resolve the dispute," according to a communication of the US to the WTO.

Several countries including the European Union, Singapore, Canada, China, Taiwan and Thailand have sought to join in the dispute as they have claimed significant trade interest in the ICT products over which India has imposed import duties.

The EU has challenged introduction of import duties on a wide range of ICT products, for instance, mobile phones and components, base stations, integrated circuits and optical instruments.

Seeking consultation is the first step of dispute settlement process as per the WTO rules. If the consultations requested with the complainant do not result in a satisfactory solution, they can request that the WTO sets up a panel in the case to give ruling on the issue raised.

Govt working on measures to make steel sector 'globally competitive'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Sunday said it is working on various fronts to make the Indian steel sector vibrant, efficient, investor-friendly and globally competitive.

In this regard, the steel ministry is organising Chintan Shivir, in the presence of Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday, with the theme to "make the sector vibrant, efficient and globally competitive", the steel ministry said in a statement. Despite short-term challenges and the current slowdown, it is believed that India's long-term growth story remains intact, the ministry added.

This growth must be backed by the steel sector by making the industry principally and fundamentally stronger, it further said. Steel is the basic input material for a host of development activities. From a small capacity of 22 million tonnes (MT) in the financial year 1991-92.

Petronet to invest \$2.5 bn in Tellurian Inc for 5 m tons of US LNG

PTI ■ HOUSTON

India's largest LNG importer Petronet will invest \$2.5 billion for nearly 20 per cent equity stake in US energy major Tellurian Inc's Driftwood project to negotiate the purchase of 5 million tons of gas per annum. The Houston-based Tellurian and Petronet LNG Ltd (PLL) signed an MOU on Saturday under which the Indian company and its affiliates will import 5 million tons of LNG from America over a 40-year period.

The agreement also includes PLL making investment in the equity of \$28 billion Driftwood project in Louisiana to secure the LNG.

"On the sidelines, an MoU was signed between Tellurian, a Houston based energy major and Petronet LNG. Petronet will invest \$2.5 billion in Tellurian's proposed Driftwood LNG export terminal, in exchange for the rights to 5 million metric tons of LNG per year over 40 years," Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

The Petronet deal, the largest by an Indian company in US LNG, came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a meeting with the CEOs of top US-based oil companies.

Experience more relevant than what you learnt 35-40 years ago, says Das

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Shaktikanta Das has played down many jokes and spoofs about his history background soon after his surprise appointment as the 25th governor of the Reserve Bank of India last December after the 'protest' resignation of Urjit Patel.

Academic qualification of the head of the central bank is not relevant, but what matters is his/her grip on the economy, general awareness about the issues facing the economy and professional experience, is how Das has deflected the question from an audience who sought to know whether his non-economic academic background has weighed him down as the governor.

Das pulled out from retirement and dashed to the Mint Road within two days of Patel's calling it quits on December 10, 2018, after many a run-in with the government.

Both Patel and his predecessor Raghuram Rajan have illustrious academic records. While Rajan is an internationally acclaimed economist, writer and sociopolitical thinker, Patel is known for his papers on monetary economics from among the world's universities.

Rajan is also known for exactly predicting the 2008 global financial meltdown more than a year before it really engulfed the world at the

annual Jackson Hole retreat of the US Federal Reserve with economists.

As against this, Das has done history from St Stephen's, New Delhi, who, after this, joined the civil service and retired in May 2017 as the economic affairs secretary. At the time of joining the RBI, he was a member of the 15th Finance Commission.

Das' role in the note ban and how he managed the changing narratives of the government in its aftermath has got him the moniker of a being an insider who will toe the government line as the past two governors hardly were on the same page with New Delhi on most matters.

"The chief of US Fed (Jerome Powell) has a political science background, the incoming chief of the European Central Bank and former IMF president Christine Lagarde has a legal background and the chief of the Bank of Japan (Haruhiko Kuroda) has a civil service background," Das has said at the India Today Conclave over the weekend here. Das was responding to a question from the audience whether his academic qualification has weighed him down as the governor.

Stating that policymaking involves a lot of complex realities, which is less academics and more of experience, Das argued, "when it comes to policymaking, whether you did a

particular course 35 or 40 years ago, I think it is not relevant as it would appear.

"I think what matters more is your awareness, your grip on what is happening in the real economy, the kind of experience you have had in your entire professional life," Das smiles.

The governor then goes on to pointing out that the RBI has an "excellent research team" and there is "no dearth of technical inputs from them" and it is not necessary for the governor to go into each equation and take a policy decision.

"It is necessary for the RBI governor to understand what is the role of monetary policy, and the importance of financial stability, it also important for the governor to understand the nuances of the real economy and have the ability to take into account all the incoming data and take the appropriate decision," he explained offering a peek into how he conducts his affairs from the 19th floor corner office.

However, the 62-year-old Das who hails from Bhubaneswar, is in all praise of his predecessors Patel and Rajan.

"Both of my immediate predecessor and the one before that have made their contributions to the RBI. The RBI and the nation are fortunate to have had a number of outstanding governors over the years," he smiled.

Rahul clinches bronze

PTI ■ NUR-SULTAN (KAZAKHSTAN)

Rahul Aware won the biggest medal of his career by bagging a Bronze while an injured Deepak Punia settled for a Silver after pulling out of the final as India celebrated its best-ever performance at the World Wrestling Championship here on Sunday.

Aware outclassed Tyler Lee Graff, the 2017 Pan- America champion, 11-4 in the 61kg bronze play-off to take India's tally to five medals.

Deepak, the reigning junior world champion did not take part against Iranian great Hasan Yazdani due to an ankle injury, sustained during the semi-final.

The other medal winners in this edition are Bajrang Punia, Ravi Dahiya and Vinesh Phogat.

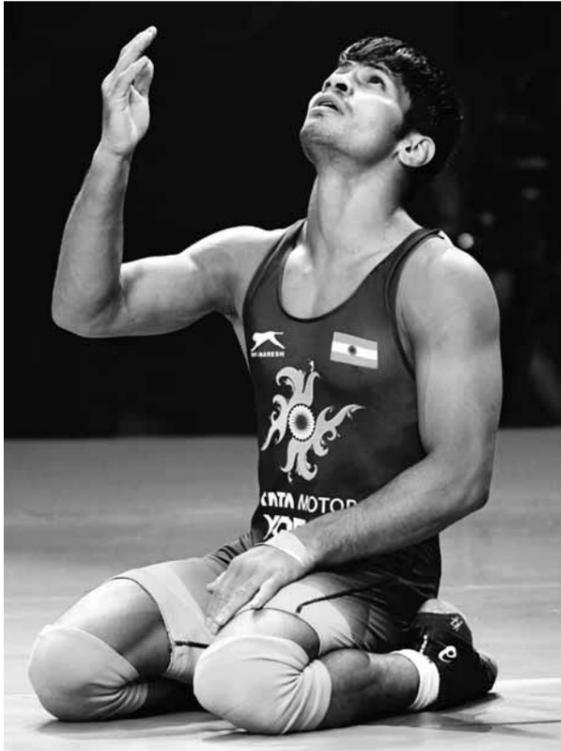
India's previous best show was at the 2013 edition, when the country had won three medals through Amit Dahiya (Silver), Bajrang Punia (Bronze) and Sandeep Tulsı Yadav (Bronze in Greco-Roman).

Winning Gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games was 27-year-old Aware's best performance before.

"I could have won a Gold. It was within my reach. I could have won that semi-final (against Beka Lomtadze). I botched it up in the first period," Aware told PTI.

Aware had shown early promise when he won Bronze medals at the Asian Championships in 2009 and 2011 but suddenly vanished from the scene after that.

"The injuries pegged me back. I was ready in 2014 but then there were no trials for the CWG or the Asian Games. So



I could have won a Gold. It was within my reach. I could have won that semi-final (against Beka Lomtadze). I botched it up in the first period

I did not get a chance to prove my worth," he argued.

"I feared for losing this chance. After a long time, something good was waiting for me and I was really scared to lose it. I am glad I pulled it off," Aware heaved a sigh of relief.

Wrestling of late has been a sport dominated by grapplers from Haryana and Aware is first from Maharashtra to win a senior World medal.

"But Maratha sports history will remember me for winning this medal. I am first from that region to do this," he said adding that he would dedicate his medal to his first coach, late Harichander Brajdar.

For the record, the greatest ever Maharashtrian wrestler undoubtedly is late KD Jadhav, who won independent India's first individual medal, a bronze in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics.

Aware, who now trains under Kaka Pawar in Pune, said he was under a lot of self-imposed pressure going into the bout. The American surprised Aware with a double leg attack, the moment the bout started and earned two points with a takedown.

However, he became alert and twice

wriggled out of Graff's right leg attacks. He also scored consecutive takedown points to lead 4-2 at the break.

In the second period too, Graff got hold of Aware's right leg but the Indian got himself out of trouble in an impressive manner.

He then pulled the bout away from the American with a flurry of moves - the takedowns and expose - taking a commanding 10-2 lead. It consolidated further when the American lost a challenge. Eventually he won 11-4.

The morning of the final day of the championships brought with it the news that Deepak will not be able to compete in Sunday's final.

"The left foot is not taking the load. It's difficult to fight in this condition and could have aggravated the injury. I know it was a big chance to fight against Yazdani but I can't help it," Deepak told PTI.

Deepak had come out of the mat limping and a swollen right eye after his semifinal against Switzerland's Stefan Reichmuth.

It was a good draw for Deepak and he exploited it to get the biggest medal of his career.

In a dream run, Deepak reached the final with wins over Reichmuth, Colombia's Carlos Arturo Mendez and Kazakhstan's Adilet Davlumbayev. He became only the fifth Indian ever to reach the World Championship final after Bishamber Singh (1967) Sushil Kumar (2010), Amit Dahiya (2013) and Bajrang Punia (2018). Only last year he had won the junior world championship.

Sushil Kumar remains India's only World Champion. He had won a Gold in 2010 in Moscow



Lure of job brought Deepak to wrestling

PTI ■ NUR-SULTAN (KAZAKHSTAN)

Wrestling was just a route which Deepak Punia hoped would find him a good job to help sustain his family.

He wanted a job and was even offered the post of a sepoy in the Indian Army back in 2016.

But he was told to dream big and not settle for little things in life by none other than Sushil Kumar.

"Keep wrestling as your priority, jobs will chase you later," Sushil, India's most successful wrestler with two Olympic medals and a world title, had told him, besides arranging for a sponsorship.

He became a World Cadet champion in 2016 and only last month won the junior World title, only the fourth Indian ever to do so and first in 18 years.

Within one month of that feat in Estonia, he found himself face-to-face with his idol and Iranian great Hasan Yazdani for a clash, the winner of which would be crowned the senior world champion.

It is a pity that the bout did not happen because of the ankle injury he sustained during the semifinal against Switzerland's Stefan Reichmuth and he settled for a silver.

He missed out on a great opportunity to wrestle with one of the best of the sport has seen in its history.

But the last three years in Deepak Punia's life still sounds like a dream.

So, what is it that makes Deepak India's best in heavyweight category in recent times. The results have come thick and fast.

"It's a combination of a lot of things. Everything has to come together," said India's former foreign coach Vladimir Mestvirishvili, who has played a key role in Deepak's progress as a world-class grappler.

"You need four things — brain, power, luck and flexibility on the mat. Deepak has all. He is a disciplined wrestler and that he gets from his father.

"Boys usually get bored with the repetition process when they are told to learn a new technique but Deepak would do it for two, three, four days unless he gets it. It comes from family."

It's true. His father Subash has been coming to his training centre every morning to deliver milk and fruits to him since 2015 despite the fact their Chhara village in Jhajar district in Haryana is at a distance of 60km.

That Deepak has immense appetite for milk was known from his childhood when he was a four-year-old kid and even has a role in him getting the moniker 'Ketli pehalwan'.

The Sarpanch of his village once offered him milk which was kept in a 'ketli' (kettle). He drank that in one gulp. He was offered a second, a third and a fourth and he finished all.

From then onwards, people started calling him 'ketli pehalwan'. Deepak said staying disciplined has been a big reason for his success.

"I like hanging out with friends, going to malls and doing some shopping. But we are not allowed to go out of the training centre. I like buying shoes, shirts and jeans, though I don't get to wear them because I am always in a tracksuit," he said.

"Whenever I get a chance, like after the tournaments, I go out and eat even junk food. But once the break is over, I don't think about anything else. Wrestling and training is life then."

The sponsorship he got from OGG took away a bit of worry and he began to concentrate on honing his skills.

From bad to worse (Barcelona suffer shocking defeat against Granada)

AFP ■ MADRID

Barcelona threw on their stars of the present and the future but neither Lionel Messi nor Ansu Fati could save them from a dismal 2-0 defeat away at Granada.

Messi was still not deemed fit enough to start at Los Carmenes while Fati, the 16-year-old who has lit up La Liga in recent weeks, also began the game on the bench on Saturday.

But while both came on at half-time with Barca trailing to Ramon Azeez's opener, it was Granada that scored again, Alvaro Vadillo converting a penalty after Arturo Vidal was found guilty of a handball.

Barcelona have now won only two of their opening five league games and none away from Camp Nou, this their second loss already, just one fewer than the three they suffered during the entirety of last season.

With seven points on the board, this is their worst start to a season since 1994.

"Obviously I am worried," said coach Ernesto Valverde.

"Because we are not getting good results and when that happens in two or three games, it means we are not playing well."



Instead, Granada go top of the table after capitalising on Atletico Madrid's goalless draw at home to Celta Vigo a few hours before.

They will stay there until Sunday, when Sevilla, Real Madrid or Athletic Bilbao could overtake them.

Barcelona are sixth, grasping onto the consolation of Messi's second substitute appearance in five days that now sug-

gests he has finally recovered from the niggling calf injury sustained at the start of August.

Their problems though are unlikely to be solved simply by their captain's return. Junior Firpo's error two minutes into his first start for the club gifted Granada their opening goal and set the tone for a chaotic night in defence.

And up front, Antoine Griezmann was quiet again,

with little in any of the combinations to suggest Ernesto Valverde has yet worked out who will form his best attacking trio and in what positions.

"In the end, the coach is responsible and I feel responsible," Valverde said.

"I always think you can win or lose but at least you have to deserve to win when you lose, and today it hasn't been like that.

MESSI IMPACT LIMITED

With Firpo on the floor, Gerard Pique scrambled across but Puertas' shot only looped up off the defender to the back post where Azeez headed in.

Granada seemed hungrier than Barca and their dominance persuaded Valverde to make two changes at half-time, Messi and Fati replacing Carles Perez and Firpo.

Messi won a free-kick 30 yards out but hit it straight at the wall while Marc-Andre ter Stegen fumbled a cross and had to react quickly to claw it back off his own line.

Any hopes of a Barca comeback were dashed in the 66th minute as Vidal handballed at the end of a scramble in the box and Vadillo made no mistake with the spot-kick.

Milan belongs to Inter

AFP ■ MILAN

Romelu Lukaku fired Inter Milan back top of Serie A with the second goal of a 2-0 derby win that extended their perfect start to the season at the expense of city rivals AC Milan.

Belgium striker Lukaku and Marcelo Brozovic's second half strikes gave Inter their fourth win in as many games, putting them two points ahead of Juventus after the champions' came back from a goal down beat Verona 2-1 thanks to Aaron Ramsey's first Serie A goal and a Cristiano Ronaldo penalty.

Antonio Conte's Inter were looking for a boost after their dismal 1-1 draw in their Champions League draw against Czech outsiders Slavia Prague.

And they hit back in a fiery Milan derby with Belgian striker Lukaku heading in his third goal in four games with 12 minutes remaining after Brozovic's 49th-minute opener.

"At 26 years old, I needed and wanted a coach like this, one who motivates me every day," said Lukaku of Conte.

"My relationship with Conte is very strong, he's a really good coach because he's someone who helps players to develop a lot.

"I'm really happy to be here and to be wearing this shirt."

Milan could thank Gianluigi Donnarumma for keeping the match goalless in the first half after



he denied Lautaro Martinez, Lukaku and Danilo D'Ambrosio. Lautaro had a goal ruled out after 35 minutes for being marginally offside.

But the breakthrough came four minutes after the break when Stefano Sensi set up Brozovic, whose deflected shot beat Donnarumma and was confirmed after consultation with VAR.

Lukaku sealed the win and a perfect 12 points from four games when he guided Nicolò Barella's cross home with a glancing header, as AC Milan slip to ninth place with six points.

"We came from a performance in the Champions League that left us with a bitter taste, but gave us more impetus to face the derby in the best way," said Conte.

"It is a deserved victory, I am happy for our fans, because the derby is always the derby."

Ole's veering off road

AFP ■ LONDON

West Ham inflicted more away-day pain on a poor Manchester United side on Sunday, lifting themselves to fourth in the Premier League with a comfortable 2-0 win at the London Stadium.

Andriy Yarmolenko's goal shortly before half-time and a wonderful late Aaron Cresswell free-kick extended United's barren run on the road.

United, who started the season by thumping Chelsea 4-0, have lost twice already in their opening six league games and lie seventh, without an away win in any competition since March.

Injury-hit United were without midfielder Paul Pogba and forward Anthony Martial and huffed and puffed but failed to break down their dogged opponents.

West Ham are riding high under Manuel Pellegrini, unbeaten since a 5-0 drubbing in the first match of the season and this victory followed a home win last season against United at the London Stadium.

But it was a chastening day for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men, just a day after champions Manchester City came close to matching United's Premier League record for margin of victory -- 9-0 against Ipswich in 1995.

Solskjaer played the same side that triumphed against Leicester last week while Pablo Fornals came in for the injured Manuel Lanzini for the home side. Both sides were cagey at the start of the match, with neither side able to create clear-cut chances.

West Ham looked the more inventive team when they broke forward



while United looked ponderous in attack and lacking in ideas, with Marcus Rashford isolated up front.

The match was drifting towards the interval before Felipe Anderson and Yarmolenko combined to sap United's confidence with a goal in the 44th minute.

United went close to an equaliser early in the second half as the rain came down in London, with Juan Mata missing from close range after an Andreas Pereira cross.

Already short of options up front and missing creators in midfield, they lost Rashford just before the hour mark, replaced by the out-of-form Jesse Lingard. West Ham went close to doubling their lead shortly afterwards but David de Gea got down low to keep out an Anderson shot from a tight angle.

United upped the pressure and West Ham had goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski to thank for keeping out a Harry Maguire strike from close range.

But West Ham continued to look more dangerous on the break and made United pay when Ashley Young brought down Mark Noble on the edge of the penalty area.

Sock, Kyrgios keep World in touch

AFP ■ GENEVA

Jack Sock and Nick Kyrgios paired up to defeat Rafael Nadal and Stefanos Tsitsipas as Team World cut Europe's lead to 7-5 heading into the final day of the Laver Cup in Geneva.

Sock and Kyrgios won Saturday's doubles 6-4, 3-6, 10-6 after Nadal defeated Milos Raonic in his first match since his US Open triumph in the singles.

"There was a lot on the line there," said Sock. "We obviously wanted to keep the overall weekend close. Being down 9-3 is different than 7-5."



Roger Federer, who won his

"We've had so many chances this weekend, it's been crazy, so I think the score could be the other way round."

"I thought it was a high quality match and we're definitely happy to get the win."

Nadal, who won his 19th Grand Slam title in New York, had earlier overcome Canada's Raonic 6-3, 7-6 (7/1) after defending eight break points in the first set.

"I feel very lucky," said Nadal. "I think he deserved that first set for sure. Later in the match I think I started to play a little bit better."

Roger Federer, who won his

first match alongside Alexander Zverev in Friday's doubles tie, beat Australian Kyrgios 6-7 (5/7), 7-5, 10-7 to the delight of his 17,000-strong home crowd.

"The crowd could feel it, I could feel it. I needed to get some energy going but you can't do that if you don't play any good shots and Nick was playing very well," said Federer, the 20-time Grand Slam champion.

"I was just trying to stay focused. If you can turn the momentum, the crowd gets back into it and I need some earplugs next time, it was just phenomenal."

Bjorn Borg's holders had seen

Team World draw level with John Isner's victory over Zverev.

Isner fought back from a set down to beat Zverev 6-7 (2/7), 6-4, 10-1 and haul Team World level at 3-3 after Europe led by two points after the opening day.

The scoring system sees one point awarded for each win on the first day, two points given for each victory on the second day, and three points on offer in each match on Sunday's final day.

This year is the first time the tournament has been played since being added to the ATP Tour. Europe won the 2018 edition 13-8 in Chicago.

VENUS OUT OF WUHAN OPEN

AFP ■ WUHAN

Venus Williams' first visit to Asia since 2017 was cut short as she crashed out of the Wuhan Open first round on Sunday 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) to fellow American Danielle Collins.

The 39-year-old Williams, a 2015 Wuhan champion now 59th in the world rankings, squandered a lead in the first set before eventually losing to Collins, who recorded just the second match win of her career on Chinese soil.

The 35th-ranked Collins rallied back from 3-5 down in the opening set, winning a whopping nine games in a row to go up 7-5, 5-0.

Williams, a wildcard at Wuhan this year, finally stopped the bleeding, holding the serve to interrupt her opponent's momentum. It was the start of a surprising five-game

run from Williams, who saved two match points along the way as she drew level at 5-5. In the decider, Williams got the first mini-break but it was Collins who eventually created a 6-4 gap, converting with an ace on her fourth match point to move into the second round.

It was Collins' second triumph over Williams, who had also stumbled against the 25-year-old during the Miami Open last year.

"This is my first tournament here in Asia. I was just happy to come out with a win, said Collins, who next takes on defending champion and ninth seed Aryna Sabalenka, a 6-1, 6-2 winner over Aliaksandra Sasnovich.

Former US Open champion Sloane Stephens battled past home favourite Zhang Shuai 7-5, 6-4 to take just her second win at Wuhan from four starts.

Stephens had lost her last two matches against Zhang, and was relieved to get through unscathed.

The American had won just one of her last seven matches on tour but said she wasn't concerned about her performance this year.

"I don't really dwell on things, just move on," the 14th-ranked Stephens said.

"The season is not fully behind me, I'm still playing, but when I'm done, it'll definitely be behind me. I'm just going to get in the best shape I can, have a great off-season, and get ready for next year."

TOP RANK RACE

Meanwhile, 2017 Wuhan runner-up Ashleigh Barty is making sure she has enough left in the tank for a busy closing stretch of the season, including her singles

debut at the WTA Finals in Shenzhen and a highly-anticipated Fed Cup final between Australia and France in Perth.

Barty is top seed at Wuhan and faces a stiff challenge in the fight for the year-end number one ranking from the likes of Karolina Pliskova, Simona Halep, Bianca Andreescu and Naomi Osaka. The 23-year-old Australian is first-ranked this week and would like to finish the year on top, but admitted that she has other priorities.

"I think it's a target without being a target," Barty told reporters.

"We've put ourselves in a position where it's a possibility. I plan my schedule, the last six months of this year, well in advance. I think I'm not going to change it to try and chase it," she added.

INDIA MISS, PROTEAS HIT

de Kock leads the chase as South Africa beat India by 9 wickets to level series 1-1

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India captain Virat Kohli's bold move to bat first boomeranged on his team as Quinton de Kock (79) spearheaded South Africa's chase for a series-levelling nine-wicket win in the third T20 International here on Sunday.

To everyone's surprise, Kohli opted to bat after the coin landed in his favour on one of the smallest grounds, always known to favour teams chasing in the shortest format.

Initially though, the decision seemed to have worked as India raced to 54 for one in six overs at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

The departure of Shikhar Dhawan gave the South Africans an opening, and they grabbed it with both hands, snuffing out eight Indian wickets for 71 runs.

In their chase, South African captain de Kock looked in complete control and struck six fours and five sixes in his unbeaten 52-ball unbeaten 79.

He added 76 runs for the first wicket with Reeza Hendricks in 10 overs and then put on another 64 with Temba Bavuma. After moving to 19 in four overs, De Kock cut loose by hitting Navdeep Saini for two sixes, and there was no look-



ing back.

Earlier, India were stopped at 134 for nine by a disciplined South African attack.

Top-scorer Dhawan blazed

away to a 25-ball 36 and got India off to a brisk start that yielded them 54 runs in the first six overs.

Kagiso Rabada was expensive but picked up three wickets, while

there were two apiece for Bjorn Fortuin (2/19 in 3 overs) and Beuran Hendricks (2/14).

Playing in his first game of the series, Beuran Hendricks was the

team's best bowler without a doubt as he choked run-flow in the middle overs along with left-arm spinner Fortuin.

Rohit Sharma got out early but

he did put pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada under pressure straightaway, striking him for two boundaries in his first over - one over cover and the other through extra

cover.

That brought crowd favourite Kohli in the middle but Dhawan, who began the innings with a boundary, was in charge and welcomed leg-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi with back-to-back sixes.

The first six was smashed over long-on and the for the second maximum, Dhawan sashayed down the ground, played against the turn, before striking the ball towards long-off.

Going for one too many, Dhawan mistimed Shamsi, who had his revenge after Temba Bavuma completed a neat catch. Kohli, too, followed suit as Andile Phehlukwayo pulled off a fine running catch in the deep, much to Rabada, the bowler on the occasion, and his team's relief.

Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant, who improvised to scoop Dwaine Pretorius over the fine leg boundary, threw away their wickets within two balls, leaving India in trouble at 92 for five in the 13th over.

After Pant fell prey to Fortuin's smart piece of bowling, Iyer stepped out only to be stumped off a wide ball.

It was yet another failure for Pant and once again to a left-arm spinner. After Santner accounted him in the World Cup, Fortuin has now got him twice in two games.

At the toss, Kohli's contention was that he doesn't want the team to slip into a comfort zone. Batting first or second, he wants his team to be a master of all situations with little more than a year left for the T20 World Cup.

However, it did not prove to be a successful move as South Africa staged a strong comeback to level the three-match series 1-1 after the first game was washed out.



MARIN RETURNS WITH CHINA TITLE

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

Triple world champion Carolina Marin retained her China Open title on Sunday, eight months after suffering a career-threatening injury.

The Spaniard recovered from a game down to defeat Taiwan's second-seeded Tai Tzu-ying 14-21, 21-17, 21-18 in Changzhou.

A tearful Marin collapsed to the court floor and buried her head in her hands after powering to victory in 65 minutes.

"It's unbelievable," said the 26-year-old, who injured her anterior cruciate ligament in her right knee in January.

"I couldn't imagine during my rehabilitation that I could win in my second tournament back.

"But I did and I feel so happy with myself," added the reigning Olympic champion.

Japan's world champion Kento Momota cemented his place as the top men's player with a 19-21, 21-17, 21-19 win over Indonesia's seventh seed Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in their final.



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AFP ■ SINGAPORE

Vettel's wait come to end

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel ended his year-long drought without a win at the Singapore Grand Prix on Sunday, mastering a hazy circuit to claim a record fifth triumph in the city-state.

The German was chased home by teammate Charles Leclerc, who started on pole but lost the lead to the four-time world champion after making his pit stop, and Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who finished third.

"It was a very late call on the pit stop and I just gave it everything on the out lap. I was surprised to come out ahead and it was difficult to manage the tyres but we controlled it to the end," Vettel told reporters.

Championship leader Lewis Hamilton finished fourth but extended his advantage over fellow Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas to 65 points, with six races remaining, after the Finn finished in fifth.

The race got off to a clean start with the top six retaining



their grid positions despite Vettel putting immense pressure on second-placed Hamilton in the opening lap.

While a few drivers were shifting position further down the field, the frontrunners were maintaining a one-second gap between each other as Leclerc set a slow pace to make his soft tyres last as long as possible.

Ferrari and Red Bull were

the first of the big teams to bring their cars in for pit stops as Vettel and Verstappen were fitted with the more durable hard tyres on lap 20, with Leclerc following suit on the next lap.

Leclerc, however, was dismayed to leave the pits behind Vettel. Hamilton stayed out on track in the lead to set about forging a big enough gap to retain the lead when it was his

turn to come in.

But Vettel, Leclerc and Verstappen were lapping much quicker than Hamilton and when the Briton finally stopped seven laps after his rivals, he emerged in a distant fourth place.

Hamilton's only hope of victory was to capitalise on his rivals' degraded tyres late in the race.

But three safety car periods — when both George Russell and Sergio Perez stopped on the track, and when Daniil Kvyat collided with Kimi Raikkonen — allowed the front three plenty of time to cool their rubber.

Ferrari will be delighted to have recorded a one-two finish at a circuit they were not expected to muster a podium finish.

But Leclerc was unhappy with the pit strategy that dashed his hopes of a hat-trick after wins in Belgium and Italy.

No MS till Nov

ANS ■ NEW DELHI

Mahendra Singh Dhoni will not be available for selection until November this year, according to the Mumbai Mirror.

The former India captain had previously missed the West Indies tour after taking a break of two months which also meant that he missed the ongoing home series against South Africa. The extension of the break means that he will miss out on the Vijay Hazare Trophy and the home T20I series against Bangladesh as well.

This means that Dhoni will be available to play for India only in December when the West Indies tour the country for three T20Is and as many ODIs. The series is scheduled to start on December 6.

Dhoni had last played for India on July 10 when the Men in Blue lost to New Zealand in the semifinal of the ODI World Cup in England. His break would effectively be nearly six months long.

This comes at a time when there has been speculation over the 37-year-old's future in the team, especially with the team management grooming 21-year-old Rishabh Pant as his replacement behind the stumps ahead of next year's World T20.

Recently, rumours about Dhoni announcing his retirement were doing the rounds after captain Virat Kohli tweeted a pic of him and Dhoni during a match with the caption: "A game I can never forget. Special night. This man, made me run like in a fitness test."

When Kohli was asked about it in a press conference ahead of India's first T20I against South Africa in Dharamsala, the skipper said that he had nothing on his mind when he posted the tweet.

"I was sitting at home and I normally put out a photograph and it became a news item. I think it was a lesson for me, that the way I think, the whole world does not think that way. There was nothing in the farthest stretch of my imagination (that it could be taken as retirement tribute) while putting that picture out on social media," he said.

Mumba win against Gujarat

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Mumbai produced an all-round show to beat Gujarat Fortunegiants 31-25 in a VIVO Pro Kabaddi League match at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium here on Sunday.

Abhishek Singh secured a Super 10 (11 raid points) for U Mumbai, who were also miserly in their defence, with Surinder Singh and Harendra Kumar picking up vital points.

The victory meant the Mumbai side jumped to the fourth place in the points table to consolidate their chances of making to the play-off stages.

The match was a closely-fought affair with two of the best defences in the league going head to head.

But Abhishek's raiding backed up by some incredible defence by Sandeep Narwal and Surinder Singh opened up



a lead for U Mumbai as they inflicted an all-out on Gujarat to move to a five points lead with eight minutes still left for half time.

Rohit Gulia found chinks in the U Mumbai armour after the all-out and his eight-point half helped the Gujarat team claw their way back with an all-out with under two minutes to play. The first half ended with both the sides locked at 16-16.

The second half continued

to be the same with both defences trading blows.

Unfortunately for Gujarat, Sunil Kumar picked up an injury which disrupted the team's structure.

With Arjun Deshwal out for U Mumbai with an injury, the raiding responsibilities for the Mumbai side were solely on the shoulders of Abhishek.

The raider produced a two-point raid in the 13th minute after which the Mumbai defence successfully tackled Gujarat's Sachin to give U Mumbai a three-point lead after a long time.

The raider picked his game up and helped U Mumbai secure an all-out with less than three minutes left in the match to move to a six-point lead.

The defence held firm in the final minutes to clinch an important victory for the Mumbai side

SA women beat BPXI

PTI ■ SURAT

South Africa women started their India tour on a positive note as they defeated Board President's XI (BPXI) by 83 runs in the second T20 warm-up match here on Sunday.

The first warm-up game was abandoned due to inclement weather.

South Africa women first posted a descent 174 for 5 after opting to bat and later bundled out the hosts for paltry 91 to kick off their campaign on a high.

Luus, a leg-break bowler, returned with best figures of 3-17 for South Africa women as she ran through the BPXI's middle-order.

Wicket-keeper Lizelle Lee stoked her way to 65 off just 48 balls for South Africa women, Tazmin Brits made 20 off 19 as they duo shared 61 runs for the opening stand to lay the founda-

tion for the score.

Lee was in her elements as he took on the opposition bowlers, hammering 10 fours and a six.

BPXI bowlers then removed Brits and one-down Laura Wolvaardt (7) in quick succession, but that did not deter Lee from playing her natural game.

For the visitors, a late onslaught by Mignon du Preez (40 off 18 balls) coupled with Nandine de Klerk's 29 helped them go past the 170-run mark. Preez struck six boundaries and cleared the fence once during her entertaining knock.

For the hosts, off-break bowler Tarannum Pathan grabbed two wickets conceding 23 runs, while pacers Pooja Vastarakar, part of the main squad, had forgettable figures of 1 for 32.

Chasing the target, BPXI were tottering at 4 for 6 after their first four batters walked back to the pavilion in no time.

Dutee hope to run personal best at worlds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's fastest woman Dutee Chand has set herself a target of reaching the finals of the women's 100m dash in the World Championships starting in Doha on September 27 with a personal best timing.

Dutee, who these days has been training at night similar to her competition schedule in Doha, said she is determined to make amends of her disappointing performance in the last edition of the event in 2017 London.

"I hope to run my best in Doha, that is my target. I could not reach the semifinals last time but I am hoping to reach the finals this time. It will not be easy but I will be really happy if I do that," Dutee told PTI.

In the 2017 London World Championships, Dutee ran a disappointing 12.07 second in the heats and failed to reach the semifinals.

Dutee could not touch the Doha World Championships qualification mark of 11.24 seconds but her personal best effort of 11.26 seconds, which is also the national record, during the Asian Championships in Doha in April, ensured that she was among the maximum target number of competitors for the event.

"I am training at night these days around 7pm to 8pm to adjust to my race timings in Doha and my preparations are going well. Let us see what happens in Doha," said the 23-year-old Odisha athlete, who became the first top Indian athlete to have confessed to same sex relationship.

Dutee, who became the first Indian to win a 100m gold in a global event during the World



University Games in July, has been training with her coach N Ramesh at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

In Doha, she will run in the women's 100m heats on September 28 at 4:30pm local time and 7pm Indian time.

She, however, is not hoping to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics from the World Championships - for which the qualification standard is a tough 11.15 seconds.

"It is the end of the season and I have run a lot of races this year. So, I have to see how far I can push my body to run faster. It will be difficult to run that mark (11.15). It

is not only for me but for other athletes also," Dutee said.

"I am not running any more competitive race and I have to try next year for Olympics qualification," said Dutee, who has run 15 competitive races this season (3 Indian Prix, 3 in Fed Cup, 3 in National Inter-State, 3 in World Universiade and 3 in Asian Championships).

The biennial World Championships are normally held not later than August but in view of the heat in Doha, the showpiece event is being pushed to September end to early October. The late season fixture and the heat, which will be still high, may impact the timings of the athletes.

Under normal circumstances, athletics season ends in September and top athletes all over the world have tweaked their training and competition schedule to able to peak during the World Championships in Doha.

Dutee, who is leaving for Doha on September 25, said her coach N Ramesh will accompany her and she will bear all his expenses as he is not a member of the official Indian contingent.

"All the expenses for accommodation and flight will be borne by me. I have requested the AFI to arrange for a pass for him to be able to be at the stadium when I run my race. The AFI has said yes," she said.

She also rued that she could not travel to Europe to run a couple of races in the first half of last month due to visa issues and later because of some technical problems.