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THE HINDU

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2019

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

DELHI
CITY EDITION
24 pages • ₹10.00

Rahul Gandhi raises problems of farmers with Kerala CM

Page 8

Assange undergoing 'psychological torture', says UN investigator

Page 14

Thomas, Russell and Gayle help West Indies crush Pakistan

Page 17

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NEARBY

Mercury rises to season high of 44.8°C in Capital

NEW DELHI

The Capital on Friday recorded a maximum temperature of 44.8 degrees Celsius, four degrees above normal for the season under the influence of a heatwave. The temperature is likely to touch 46-47°C in some parts over the next 48 hours, according to the Met office. Over the next five days, hot winds carrying dust are also likely to blow over the city.

CITY ▸ PAGE 2

Admiral Karambir Singh takes over as Navy chief

NEW DELHI

Admiral Karambir Singh on Friday assumed office as the 24th Chief of the Naval Staff . He took over from Admiral Sunil Lanba who stepped down upon retirement. Admiral Singh was the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command, headquartered in Visakhapatnam.

NATION ▸ PAGE 9

Amit Shah gets Home in new Cabinet

- Nirmala is new Finance Minister, Rajnath Singh moved to Defence
- Nitin Gadkari and Ravi Shankar Prasad retain their portfolios
- S. Jaishankar is MEA, joins Cabinet Committee on Security

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The contours of the new Modi government were clear after portfolios were announced for the Union Council of Ministers, with BJP national president Amit Shah being allotted the Home Ministry and former Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar being made the External Affairs Minister. Both new faces immediately also became members of the Cabinet Committee on Security, the most powerful Cabinet sub-committee.

Former Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will be the new Finance Minister and former Home Minister Rajnath Singh will take over as the Defence Minister.

Change at the top

Prime Minister Modi has made bold changes in the top four Ministries that form the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), with Mr. Jaishankar being the biggest gainer, having joined the government as a Cabinet Minister and inducted straight into the CCS. However, many other Ministers have retained their portfolios from the first Modi government, with some being given additional departments.

Senior Minister Nitin Gadkari continues as the Minister of Road Transport and Highways and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. Ravi Shankar Prasad stays on as the Law Minister, along with Information Technology and Telecommunications.

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal retains charge of the Ministry with the addition of Commerce, which was earlier held by Suresh Prabhu who has been dropped. Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan retains the crucial portfolio and has been given the additional responsibility of Steel.

Giant killer Smriti Irani, who defeated Congress president Rahul Gandhi in Amethi and was expected to be moved up in the hierarchy, continues with her old portfolio of Textiles, along with Women and Child Development, formerly held by Maneka Gandhi.

New Ministry

One of the major gainers among Cabinet Ministers was former Minister of State for Agriculture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who will head the newly created "Jal Shakti" Ministry. Mr. Modi had said at the BJP's manifesto launch in April that the Ministry would be a priority area for the new government. The Agriculture portfolio has been allotted to Narendra Singh Tomar, along with his old portfolios of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

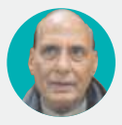
ALLIES RETAIN PORTFOLIOS IN NEW CABINET ▸ PAGE 13
SANITATION SIDELINED IN REJIG OF MINISTRIES ▸ PAGE 13

Big league 2.0

The portfolios of 24 Cabinet Ministers were announced through a communique issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Friday. A look at who got what:

NARENDRA MODI: Prime Minister; Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension; Department of Atomic Energy; Department of Space; & all other portfolios not allocated to any minister

AMIT SHAH
Home Affairs



RAJNATH SINGH
Defence

N. SITHARAMAN
Finance and Corporate Affairs

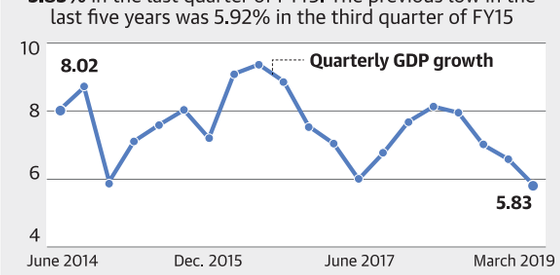
S. Jaishankar: External Affairs | **Nitin Gadkari:** Road Transport and Highways & Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises | **Ravi Shankar Prasad:** Law and Justice; Communications & Electronics and Information Technology | **Piyush Goyal**: Railways & Commerce and Industry | **Prakash Javadekar:** Environment, Forest and Climate Change & Information and Broadcasting | **Ramesh Pokhriyal:** Human Resource Development | **Smriti Irani:** Women and Child Development & Textiles | **Harsh Vardhan:** Health and Family Welfare; Science and Technology & Earth Sciences | **Ram Vilas Paswan:** Consumers Affiars, Food and Public Distribution | **D.V. Sadananda Gowda:** Chemicals and Fertilizers | **Narendra Singh Tomar:** Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; Rural Development & Panchayati Raj | **Harsimrat Kaur Badal:** Food Processing Industries | **Thaawar Chand Gehlot:** Social Justice and Empowerment | **Arjun Munda:** Tribal Affairs | **Dharmendra Pradhan:** Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel | **Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi:** Minority Affairs | **Pralhad Joshi:** Parliamentary Affairs, Coal & Mines | **Mahendra Nath Pandey:** Skill Development and Entrepreneurship | **Arvind Sawant:** Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise | **Giriraj Singh:** Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries | **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat:** Jal Shakti

GDP growth slumps to 5.8%

Unemployment rate at 45-year high

SLUMP CONTINUES

India's quarterly GDP growth slumped to a five-year low of **5.83%** in the last quarter of FY19. The previous low in the last five years was 5.92% in the third quarter of FY15



YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

India's GDP grew at 5.8% in the January-March 2019 quarter, dragging down the full year growth to a five-year low of 6.8%. The unemployment rate in the country rose to a 45-year high of 6.1% in 2017-18, as per official data released on the first day of the second term of the Modi government.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said the slowdown, caused by temporary factors such as liquidity crunch, is likely to continue in the April-June 2019 quarter, with the demand picking up from the second quarter onwards.

'Temporary factors'

"Slowdown in the fourth quarter GDP was due to temporary factors, like stress in the NBFC sector affecting consumption finance. The first quarter of the current fiscal will also see relatively slower growth. From the second quarter onwards, we expect the growth and consumption to pick up," Mr. Garg said.

Asked about India losing the fastest growing nation tag to China with a quarterly growth of 5.8%, Mr. Garg, who is also the Finance Secretary, said, "Quarterly numbers don't matter...it is basically annual growth... At 6.8% annual growth, India is still the fastest growing nation... China is still lower."

During the year, the slowdown in the economy was led by sluggish growth in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (2.9% growth), the mining sector (1.3% growth) and in manufacturing (6.9%).

The sectors which saw growth rate of over 7% were public administration, defence and other services, construction, financial, real estate and professional services, and electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services.

The unemployment data, which was released a day after Prime Narendra Modi took oath for the second term, confirms an earlier leaked version of this survey that claimed that joblessness was at a 45-year high.

"It is a new design and a new matrix. It would be unfair to compare it with the past. This 45-year high is your interpretation. I don't want to claim that it is 45-year low or high," Statistics Secretary Pravin Srivastava told the media.

FISCAL DEFICIT IS AT 3.39% OF THE GDP ▸ PAGE 15

Scholarship for wards of defence personnel hiked

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved changes to the Prime Minister's Scholarship Scheme for wards of deceased defence personnel under the National Defence Fund – his first decision on assuming office, a statement from the PMO said on Friday.

This was "in line with the Prime Minister's vision for India's safety, security and the well-being of those who protect the nation...," the PMO statement read.

Police too covered

Mr. Modi approved the increase from ₹2,000 to ₹2,500 a month for boys and from ₹2,250 to ₹3,000 a month for girls.

The ambit of the scheme was also widened to cover the wards of State police officials martyred in terror or Naxal attacks.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 12

India lifts curbs on airspace

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

There is relief likely for thousands of air travellers affected due to the closure of Pakistan airspace as India lifted curbs on use of its skies on Friday.

"The ball is now in Pakistan's court. Most likely they will also open up," a senior official said on the condition of anonymity.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 12

Sri Lanka eager to welcome PM Modi: President Sirisena

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the first major foreign dignitary to visit Sri Lanka following the Easter Sunday bombings, announced President Maithripala Sirisena here on Friday.

Addressing a press conference, the Sri Lankan leader sought a joint front to defeat terrorism and announced the date of the national election. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Sri Lanka on June 9. Sri Lanka has recovered from painful terror attacks. We have maintained peace and stability in the country in the aftermath of the Easter bombings," said President Sirisena, urging regional and global strategies to defeat terrorism.

Likely to visit Maldives

According to available information, Mr. Modi is expected to travel to Maldives in the first week of June and Mr. Sirisena confirmed that Sri Lanka will be the second foreign destination of the Indian leader.

"We are eagerly looking forward to welcoming Prime Minister Modi," he said. He thanked India for supporting Sri Lankan investigations into the Easter suicide attacks and urged for a global fight against terrorism.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 12

Spate of murders in U.P. after Lok Sabha poll results

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW/GHAZIABAD

A Samajwadi Party leader was shot dead in Jaunpur by bike-borne assailants in broad daylight on Friday while another was killed outside his house in the Dadri area of Gautam Buddh Nagar a few hours later, adding to the list of murders of people linked to political parties in Uttar Pradesh after the 2019 Lok Sabha election results.

Lalji Yadav, 45, was shot around 9.30 a.m. by masked men while his SUV was parked near the Sarai Khwaja police station on his way to Jaunpur city. He was declared dead at a local hospital.

On Friday afternoon Ramtek Kataria, president of the SP's Dadri unit, was shot dead outside his house. Vineet Jaiswal, SP (Rural) G.B. Nagar, said prima facie it appears to be a case of family rivalry.

Several other such incidents have been reported since May 23. On Tuesday, a BSP leader, Haji Ehsan, and his nephew were shot dead in Najibabad town of Bijnor district. Also, in a separate incident, former SP MP from Bulandshahr Kamlesh Valmiki was found dead at his residence in Khurja on Monday.

Below normal rainfall likely in northwest, northeast, says IMD

Normal monsoon expected over rest of India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A week before the onset of the southwest monsoon, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a "normal" rainy season, with the country as a whole set to receive 96% of the long period average (LPA) rainfall.

However, northwest India will get 94% of the average, while the northeast will only receive 91% of average rainfall, putting both these regions in the "below normal" category.

Issuing its second stage long range forecast on Friday, the IMD said the 2019 monsoon is likely to reach the Kerala coast by June 6.

The IMD seemed to allay fears of the El Nino phenomenon playing havoc with the summer's rainfall, although it noted that "the current weak El Nino conditions may continue during the monsoon season with reduced intensity".

During a "normal" monsoon, the country gets 96% to 104% of the LPA. The forecast probability of rainfall falling within this range was 41%, said the IMD statement.

If the total rainfall is between 90% and 96% of the LPA, it falls in the "below normal" category.

Regionwise, the season's rainfall is likely to be 94% of the LPA over northwest India, 100% over central India, 97% over south Peninsula, and 91% over northeast India, all with a model error of ± 8 %, it said.

Thick clouds hovering over Bengaluru.
▪ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

DELHI THE HINDU
SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2019

Capital records highest power consumption

NEW DELHI

With soaring temperatures, peak power demand crossed 6,400 MW on Friday, marking the highest consumption on a given day. This year, electricity discom BSES expects peak power to breach the 7,400 MW mark, which was recorded last year. Discoms have made elaborate preparations to tackle the increased demand.

Mercury likely to rise further: Met

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Capital on Friday recorded a maximum temperature of 44.8 degrees Celsius, four degrees above normal for the season under the influence of a heatwave.

The Met has forecast that temperatures are going to rise further leading to a severe heatwave. The temperature is likely to touch 46-47 °C in some parts over the next 48 hours.

Weather stations at Palam, Lodhi Road, Ayanagar, Ridge and Najafgarh recorded temperatures of 46.2. 44.5, 46,33.6 and 45.2 respectively. It was also a relatively dry day as humidity was between 20% and 59%.

In a bulletin, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast mainly clear sky with the possibility of development of severe heatwave conditions with maximum temperature touching 46-47°C at isolated pockets in Delhi/NCR.

Relief may come after June 2 as a western disturbance is likely to affect western Himalayan region, however, it is unlikely to cause significant thunderstorm activity over the plains, said an IMD official. He added that it was going to be a prolonged dry spell. Over the next five days, hot winds carrying dust are also likely to blow over the Capital.

"On June 3, gusty winds between 30-40 kmph are likely to bring dust storms, thunderstorms in the city accompanied by lightning but heatwave conditions are still likely to prevail," the IMD said. However, the relief is not likely to last long as heatwave conditions may extend again from June 5 again.

'Cancel summer camps'

The impact of the heatwave is being felt by all in the city with the Government School Teachers' Association writing to the government to cancel the ongoing summer camps.

The association said there have been several reports of students suffering from dehydration, nose bleeds and fainting in school due to the heat and requested the government to cancel the conduct of summer camps.

DELHI TODAY

Workshop: A lecture and demonstration on "Stop Motion Animation" , will be conducted by Tara Douglas and Pravesh Hingmang at Conference Room - II, India International Centre (IIC), 9:30 a.m.

Exhibition: Bahaar-e-dilli, a solo exhibition by Bahaar Jain and calligraphy in Urdu by Dr. Touseef Sheikh at Delhi 'o' Delhi Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Yugen", a solo art show by Ana Jain at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditordelhi@thehindu.co.in)

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	280	Gurugram	270
Ghaziabad	339	Faridabad	138
Noida	320	Greater Noida	272

Good 0-50 | Satisfactory 51-100 | Moderate 101-200
Poor 201-300 | Very poor 301-400 | Severe >401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

IN BRIEF

Accountant held for fleeing with ₹38 lakh

NEW DELHI

An accountant of a company was arrested for decamping with ₹38 lakh that he was supposed to deposit in the bank, the police said on Friday. The accused Chander Shekhar was arrested from near his house in Sahibabad and the amount was recovered, said the police.

Furnish report on steps to save water: NGT

NEW DELHI

Expressing concerns over the use of potable water in cricket fields, the NGT has directed a committee comprising representatives from the Union Environment Ministry, CPCB and others, to furnish a report on the steps to save water.

Fake notes with ₹39 lakh face value recovered this year: cops

Were mostly printed in Pakistan, supplied through India-Nepal border: Delhi Police

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have recovered fake Indian currency notes with a face value of ₹39,58,890 this year. These notes were mostly printed in Pakistan and supplied to the country through India-Nepal border, the police said on Friday.

"The smugglers are now targeting small towns to circulate the counterfeit currencies. These notes are almost a replica of the original ones and it is not easy for a common man to find out the difference. In Delhi, notes with higher denomination value often get detected, but in small towns where these notes are not in regular transaction, people are unable to check the security features and often get fooled," said a police officer.

Counterfeit flow

Year	Cases reported	Total amount recovered	₹2000 notes	₹200 notes
2017	65	**10,06,38,230**	3,124	0
2018	41	**3,63,36,720**	6,605	1,811
2019	10	**39, 58, 980**	1,573	923

Earlier, smugglers used to sneak in counterfeit currency to the country through the porous India-Bangladesh border. But due to alertness of security agencies on the border and frequent raids by the local police, they have destroyed the channel, said the officer.

Recovery of notes

In 2017, a total of 3,124 counterfeit notes of ₹2,000 denomination were recovered, in 2018 the figure went up to 6,605 and till May 15 this year, a total 1,573 such notes have been recovered, added the officer.

Further he said, the ISI in Pakistan is mostly into printing of counterfeit currencies as part of their anti-India activities. They have managed to match quality in terms of paper, ink and several safety features, including the security thread and security watermark that is unable for a normal person to detect, added the officer.

"They have managed to produce replicas of newly introduced currency notes in the denomination of ₹100, ₹200 and ₹50," said the officer.

Explaining the modus operandi, a police officer who was involved in seizure of fake Indian currencies on India's borders with Bangladesh and Nepal said, after getting the currency smuggled to India, it is handed over to crime syndicates operating in towns for distribution of notes. To circulate a fake note with a face value of ₹2,000, they get a commission of around ₹500.

On May 25, the Nepal police had arrested three Pakistan nationals in possession of fake Indian currency notes with a face value of ₹7,67,94,000. They had come to hand over the money to the people, who will smuggle it to India.

Delhi cops secure first conviction under MCOCA

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police secured its first ever conviction under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) since its invocation in the Capital.

The quantum of punishment was pronounced by Special Judge, MCOCA, Rakesh Syal. All six accused, identified as Vipin Sharma, Sachin Sharma, Honey Sharma, Harshad Alam, Aman Alam, and Bhupender Singh, were convicted under Section 3 of the Act for cheating innocent job seekers.

Vipin Sharma was the kingpin of the gang, which was involved in multiple cases of cheating, forgery, criminal breach of trust and attempt to culpable homicide, registered against them in Delhi, Haryana, and Punjab.

Associate prof. accused of sexual harassment surrenders in court

Remanded in three-day police custody

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
FARIDABAD

An associate professor of a women's government college here, accused of sexually harassing the women students along with two male staff members, has surrendered before a court.

Faridabad police spokesperson Sube Singh said the accused, C.S. Vashisth, surrendered before the court of Sakshi Saini over mounting pressure from the police who had been conducting raids at his possible hideouts for more than two weeks now. He has been remanded in police custody for three days.

His two accomplices -- junior laboratory attendant Jagdev and Class IV employee Vikram -- were arrested earlier.

An FIR was registered at Sector 16 police station in Faridabad on May 16 following reports in a section of media about a letter written by a woman student to the principal accusing the trio of sexually harassing her and other students on the promise of helping them during the exams. She had also submitted an audio recording in this connection as a proof, according to the newspaper reports.

The complainant had alleged that most of the girls in college knew about the matter but were scared of bringing it to the front. Her statement was registered with the police on May 17, in the presence of a Legal Advisor and the Women's Commission. The following day, she gave her statement before a Judge.

Trio suspended

Taking cognizance of the matter, the trio was suspended by the Directorate of Higher Education, Haryana on May 16. A report has also been sought from the State Sexual Harassment Committee within a week.

Gupta urges NHRC to take action against Delhi govt.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Terming it "criminal negligence", Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta, on Friday, urged the NHRC to take "strong action" against the Delhi government over delay in the implementation of laws aimed at preventing death of labourers while cleaning septic tanks.

Mr. Gupta argued that the "Delhi Water Board Septage Management Regulation, 2018" was notified on November 12 last year. "It is regrettable that after sleeping for nearly six months, the government has now issued a public notice inviting application for grant of license for collection of septic tank waste," he alleged.

Man held for posing as IG

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 53-year-old man was arrested for allegedly posing as an Inspector General of Police of TN cadre, the police said on Thursday.

The accused has been identified as Rajiv Gupta, a resident of Indirapuram. He was produced before the court and sent to police custody, they said.

Metro revises timings for exam

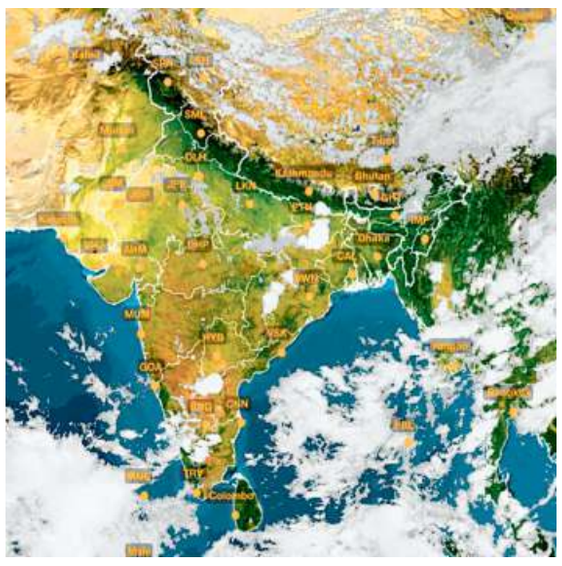
STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Services across the Delhi Metro Phase III network will start operations at 6 a.m. on Sunday instead of the usual timing (8 a.m.), to facilitate students appearing for the civil services examinations.

"The arrangement is being made to facilitate candidates appearing for UPSC exam," said a DMRC official.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.30 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Sikkim, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, south interior Karnataka and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Heat wave conditions likely at isolated pockets over Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Marathwada, Jharkhand and Telangana

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	2.9	35.8	25.4	Kozhikode	–	35.2	27.0
Ahmedabad	–	43.2	28.2	Kurnool	–	41.0	29.3
Aizawl	–	31.8	20.0	Lucknow	–	40.9	27.8
Allahabad	–	44.5	31.0	Madurai	2	40.4	27.2
Bengaluru	–	33.2	22.6	Mangaluru	–	35.2	27.4
Bhopal	–	44.4	31.4	Mumbai	–	34.5	26.6
Bhubaneswar	–	37.0	28.2	Mysuru	4.4	32.0	19.4
Chandigarh	–	44.2	26.1	New Delhi	–	44.8	28.4
Chennai	–	36.4	29.6	Patna	–	37.0	25.4
Coimbatore	–	35.5	23.7	Port Blair	11.4	29.6	24.2
Dehradun	–	40.4	22.0	Puducherry	–	36.6	28.0
Gangtok	2	21.0	14.6	Pune	–	40.0	23.5
Goa	–	34.0	27.0	Raipur	–	43.5	20.5
Guwahati	12.6	29.4	22.3	Ranchi	–	40.9	26.2
Hubballi	–	36.0	23.0	Shillong	0.8	23.8	14.8
Hyderabad	–	41.2	30.0	Shimla	–	30.2	20.7
Imphal	2.6	30.8	18.4	Srinagar	–	29.3	13.3
Jaipur	–	44.2	33.1	Trivandrum	4.2	33.0	24.9
Kochi	1.4	32.0	27.6	Tiruchi	8	38.9	25.4
Kohima	–	30.4	16.0	Vijayawada	–	40.0	28.2
Kolkata	1.5	34.9	27.5	Visakhapatnam	–	34.8	29.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.–	112	63	81	–	
Bengaluru	.4	.46	23	77	73	
Chennai	15	.19	44	.150	–	
Delhi	17	.48	23	.183	.415	
Hyderabad	.3	.44	17	95	.121	
Kolkata	.3	.17	.9	58	93	
Lucknow	.3	.11	32	.301	–	
Mumbai	16	.13	72	23	49	
Pune	45	.21	30	70	69	
Visakhapatnam	.6	.40	38	60	99	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Loni Dehat, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 354 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 43

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

DELHI Timings

SATURDAY, JUNE 01			
RISE	05:24	SET	19:14
RISE	03:58	SET	17:12
SUNDAY, JUNE 02			
RISE	05:24	SET	19:15
RISE	04:35	SET	18:11
MONDAY, JUNE 03			
RISE	05:24	SET	19:15
RISE	05:18	SET	19:13

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	45	28
Safdarjang	45	28
Palam	46	29

Delhi Palam Today
44°C Heat wave condition would continue. Warm winds are likely to increase uneasiness.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
45°C Heat wave condition may persist. Day temperature may rise. Sun stroke is likely.

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AAP claims plan to hold State poll in Oct.; EC denies

'Current govt. can do anything, with or without jurisdiction'

NIKHIL M BABU
DEVESH K PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Friday alleged that the Election Commission of India might hold Delhi Assembly elections in October, four months before the expiry of its government's tenure in February 2020. However, the claim was dismissed by the EC.

Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora told *The Hindu* the poll body had not even discussed the upcoming Assembly polls in Maharashtra and Haryana yet. AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said they would fight the election if that happens in October. When asked whether the EC can hold the election in Delhi in October 2019 as alleged by AAP, former Chief Election Commissioner N. Gopalaswami told *The Hindu*, "Under the law, the ECI is empowered to hold the election anytime within the period of six months before the expiry of the term of a legislative Assembly or Parliament."

Holding the election in October 2019 would fall in the six-month window.

When asked whether EC needs the Chief Minister's permission for it, he said, "EC needs no permission from any other authority as the matter is within its powers." Citing an example, Mr. Gopalaswami said though the Himachal Pradesh State election was held in November - December 2007, the Assembly's tenure was to expire only in March 2008.

"The current government can do anything with or without jurisdiction," Mr. Bharadwaj added.

Asthana case: four months to CBI to complete probe

FIR was filed on October 15 last year

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday granted the CBI, which is probing a bribery case involving the agency's then special director Rakesh Asthana and others, four months more to complete its investigation.

Rakesh Asthana

January order

In January, the court had directed the CBI to complete its investigation into the case within 10 weeks noting that the allegations of bribery against Mr. Asthana could only be known after a thorough inquiry.

Subsequently, the court has been extending the time required to complete the investigation on CBI's plea.

Earlier, the court had dismissed pleas of Mr. Asthana, Deputy Superintendent Devender Kumar and alleged middleman Manoj Kumar Prasad to quash the FIR registered against them for extortion and threatening businessman Satish Babu Sana.

The FIR was registered on October 15 last against Mr. Asthana, Mr. Kumar, Mr. Prasad and others on written complaint of Mr. Sana containing allegations of harassment and extortion in connection with investigation of a case related to meat exporter Moin Akhtar Qureshi.

Open Days begin at Delhi University North Campus

Many happy with session, some say it should deal with more specific questions

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

'Open Days' for admissions started in Delhi University on Friday. North Campus was filled with parents and students pouring in from different parts of the country.

Devati Mathur and her father, who hail from Bhagalpur in Bihar, have been in Delhi for close to a month now, waiting for the admissions to start.

While those in attendance were largely happy with the information session, some felt the session should have dealt with more specific questions.

Srinwantra, who is applying for mathematics courses, said: "It [the session] was informative, but they deflected a lot of questions by just telling us to read the bulletin, but that consists of 116 pages." The bulletin, available on the university's website, details all aspects of the admission procedure.

About 1,01, 811 applicants have registered in the first 24 hours after the admissions portal opened on Thursday.

Some applicants also faced various technical glitches during the registration process, such as discrepancy between the information entered by them and the ones on their forms. The officials, however, assured them that the information entered was duly recorded.

A litany of questions regarding different types of quotas for categories such as EWS, OBC certificates, sports quotas, extracurricular activities quota and PwD quotas dominated the session.

More such 'Open Days' are scheduled for the coming weeks.

Cut-off lists

Tentative dates for cut-off lists were also announced on Friday. The first list will be released on June 20, second on June 25, third list on June 29, fourth on July 4 and the fifth one on July 5.

Court frames charges against former Minister, BJP MLA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A court here on Friday framed charges against former Minister Kapil Mishra and BJP MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa in a criminal defamation case filed by Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain for allegedly levelling graft charges against him.

The court fixed July 3 and July 8 as the dates for recording of evidence of the Minister against both the accused respectively.

Mr. Jain had in 2017 filed two separate criminal defamation complaints against both leaders.

Stolen methanol used in killer Assam hooch

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Methanol stolen from a tanker went into the toxic country liquor that killed 168 people, mostly tea plantation workers, in eastern Assam's Golaghat and Jorhat districts in February.

This was stated in a chargesheet the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the State police filed against 41 people in connection with the hooch tragedy. The chargesheet was presented before the court of the chief judicial magistrate in Golaghat town on Thursday.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Partha Protim Saikia, who heads the SIT, said the statements of 65 witnesses were recorded to identify the culprits involved in the supply and distribution of the spurious liquor.

The 1,000-page chargesheet said the methanol used in the killer liquor was pilfered from a tanker carrying the chemical from a distillery at Khatkhati near the Nagaland border.

The SIT probe found that the victims suffered from optic nerve damage, blurring and loss of vision, excessive sweating, restlessness, abdominal pain, vomiting, severe headache and cardiorespiratory problems.

Mr Saikia said 15 people found responsible for the hooch tragedy have been charged under Sections 120B (punishment for criminal conspiracy), 328 (causing hurt by means of poison, etc) and 304 (punishment for culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of the Indian Penal Code read with Section 55 of the Assam Excise Act.

SIT chargesheet points finger at Sukhbir over police firing

It also charges him with arranging pardon for Dera chief in a blasphemy case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

The Special Investigation Team probing the desecration of scriptures in Punjab in 2015 has filed a chargesheet, claiming that the police firing on protesters was a pre-planned handiwork of the then Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal, the former police chief and the Dera Sacha Sauda head.

The chargesheet filed by the SIT of Punjab Police on May 28 has also accused six others, including a former Akali MLA, of firing on people protesting against cases of desecration at Kotkapura in Faridkot district.

In a similar case of firing at Behbal Kalan, two protesters were killed.

The SIT chargesheet also claimed that Sukhbir Badal arranged a pardon by the

Sukhbir Singh Badal. ▪

Akal Takht Jathedar to Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh Insan in a 2007 blasphemy case.

Mr. Badal and his father Parkash Singh Badal had earlier dismissed the SIT probe ordered by the Congress government led by Amarinder Singh.

Dismissing the former Deputy CM's claim that he was abroad when the police firing took place, the SIT stated that it was "nothing but an attempt to take a defence alibi."

"The investigations suggest that he was aware of each and every development which was taking place in Punjab. However, the office of the Chief Secretary has been requested to provide complete details," the chargesheet read.

'Unprovoked firing'

The chargesheet claimed that the police firing at Kotkapura was "totally unprovoked" and the action was the outcome of a "conspiracy" between high-profile politicians and senior police officers in connivance with the Dera chief and his followers.

The SIT said the role of the Badals, the then DGP Sumedh Singh Saini and Ferozepur range DIG Amar Singh Chahal was being investigated.

The chargesheet claimed that the blasphemy case registered against Ram Rahim was cancelled at the behest of Sukhbir Badal on January 25, 2012, five days before the Assembly polls, to get the votes of Dera supporters.

According to SIT, actor Akshay Kumar arranged a meeting between Sukhbir Badal and Ram Rahim to ensure a pardon for the Dera chief from the Akal Takht for allegedly posing as a Sikh guru.

"The investigation conducted by the SIT reveals that a meeting between Sukhbir Badal and dera chief Ram Rahim was arranged by film actor Akshay Kumar on November 21, 2018," the chargesheet said.

New MSME Minister is a Sangh Parivar old-timer

Sarangi was senior Bajrang Dal leader during Staines killing

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

On Thursday evening, the man who got the loudest cheers at the Cabinet swearing-in ceremony apart from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani was a 64-year-old bachelor. Pratap Sarangi, the first-time Member of Parliament from Odisha, however, betrayed no emotion at the adulation for him.

Named the new Union Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Mr. Sarangi was already a social media sensation ahead of the oath-taking ceremony because of photographs highlighting his spartan lifestyle – including of him standing in his modest

Pratap Chandra Sarangi. ▪

thatched house, riding a bicycle and bathing at the village tube well. There have even been comparisons with the Prime Minister, something Mr. Sarangi was quick to dismiss. "I am a common man while Modi is an unusual talent," he told PTI in an interview after being appointed Minister. He said the swearing-in ceremony was an "incredible experience" and that it is his duty to justify the trust Mr. Modi has reposed in him.

The Balasore MP is a Sangh Parivar old-timer who has long opposed proselytising work allegedly carried out by Christian missionaries in Odisha. He was the State coordinator of Odisha's Bajrang Dal unit when Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two minor children were charred to death in Mayurbhanj district in 1999. The Bajrang Dal was then accused of masterminding the killing of three.

Mr. Sarangi had deposed several times before a commission led by Justice D.P. Wadhwa that was constituted to investigate the murders. He claimed that his outfit was not involved in the incident and that Dara Singh, the prime accused in the murder, was not a member of the Bajrang Dal.

(With PTI inputs)

Car burnt, puppy killed outside Arunachal MP's house

Tapir Gao of the BJP won the Arunachal East LS seat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The police in Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar have launched a hunt for a man who burnt a car and clubbed a puppy to death outside the residence of newly-elected Bharatiya Janata Party MP Tapir Gao.

Police said closed-circuit television captured the man, identified as one Tongam Jomoh, driving a white hatchback up to the gate of MP Gao's residence in Itanagar and setting it on fire after killing a puppy that came in his way. The incident happened around 6 a.m. on Friday.

Mr Gao won the Arunachal East parliamentary seat, defeating his nearest Congress rival James Lowangcha Wanglat by 69,948 votes.

"Mr Gao's wife registered a complaint at the Itanagar police station. We identified the man from the CCTV footage. He is on the run," Complex Superintendent of Police Tumme Amo said.

The miscreant, claiming to be the president of All Arunachal Abo Tani Association, had ahead of the April 11 Assembly elections in the State warned Mr Gao of dire consequences for providing BJP ticket to "outsiders".

Mr Gao was the president of the BJP's State unit then.

The MP said he did not rule out the possibility of his "political rivals" sending an intimidatory message. "My party workers and I have filed many cases against those who have been attacking me on social media," he said in a message to the State's Chief Secretary.

Kailash Choudhary a surprise induction

New junior Agriculture Minister defeated Jaswant Singh's son in Barmer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The induction of first-time BJP MP from Barmer, Kailash Choudhary, into the Union Cabinet – though a surprise – is tacitly linked with his victory over former BJP veteran Jaswant Singh's son Manvendra Singh in the Lok Sabha election by a margin of 3.23 lakh votes in a challenging contest. Mr. Singh had crossed over to Congress before the 2018 Rajasthan Assembly election.

As the Jat face of the BJP, Mr. Choudhary, 45, has been an active Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh worker and was earlier elected an MLA from Barmer district's Baytu seat. He raised the issues of national security and defence preparedness in the election campaign in the border constituency. He was made the Minister of State for Agriculture on Friday.

Two more Ministers

In addition to Mr. Choudhary's entry, two Union Ministers of State from Rajasthan have been inducted into the Narendra Modi government in its second term, taking the number to three, which is less than five who occupied the Ministerial office during the first term. While Gajendra Singh Shekhawat's rank has been elevated to that of a Union Minister, Arjun Ram Meghwal continues to be the Minister of State.

Mr. Shekhawat, 51, defeated Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's son Vaibhav Gehlot in his home turf Jodhpur. He is known for his active use of social media and is the most followed Indian politician on Quora. He has been given the newly-introduced Jal Shakti portfolio.

Mr. Meghwal, 65, who defeated his cousin and Congress candidate Madan Gopal Meghwal in Bikaner Lok Sabha constituency, has been elected for the third consecutive term. He has been made the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs as well as Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises. He had taken voluntary retirement from Indian Administrative Service to join politics in 2009.

However, the exclusion of some veteran leaders, including Rashtriya Loktantrik Party chief Hanuman Beniwal who fought and won the Lok Sabha polls from Nagaur as an ally of BJP after joining NDA, was unexpected, according to the political observers.

Ministers of State Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and P.P. Chaudhary were dropped, despite winning with handsome margins from Jaipur Rural and Pali.

Prayers in paradise

Devotees offering prayers on the last Friday before Ramzan at the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar. ▪ NISSAR AHMAD

'More Ministers from Bengal'

State BJP Chief Dilip Ghosh assures newly-elected MPs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA

West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh on Friday assured MPs of the party elected from the State that not just two, more will be inducted as Union Ministers in the future.

"Two MPs have been inducted (in the list of Ministers) and many others would also be inducted in the future. It is a continuous process. Our responsibility was to send maximum number of MPs from Bengal and provide sufficient support so that Modiji becomes the PM," Mr. Ghosh said, while responding to a query whether the State was deprived as only two Ministers from Bengal featured in Modi 2.0 government.

There are two Ministers of State from West Bengal – Babul Supriyo, who has been assigned the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Debasree Chaudhuri, a first-time MP from Raiganj, who has been given the responsibility of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Both are Ministers of State.

West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh. ▪

Mr. Supriyo, who was re-elected from Asansol constituency, had served as MoS in the previous government as well.

Having worked in the party's youth and women's wings, Ms. Chaudhuri is now one of the general secretaries in the party's State unit.

Mr. Ghosh, a newly elected MP from Medinipur Lok Sabha constituency, also said, "I believe the State would be benefited in the future the way party's central leadership has kept its focus on our State."

The BJP scripted a spectacular victory in the State getting 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats, a huge leap from 2014 when the party had won only two seats.

Inadequate numbers?

Apart from Mr. Supriyo, the party's former Darjeeling MP S.S. Ahluwalia, who has been elected from Burdwan-Durgapur this time, had also served as Minister of State in the previous government. However, questions are being raised as the number of Ministers from the State in the newly formed Central government has not been increased even though the BJP won 18 seats.

BJP worker's murder: main accused held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AMETHI (U.P.)

The main accused in the killing of a close aide of Amethi MP Smriti Irani was arrested on Friday following an encounter with the police here, officials said.

Wasim was held in Shalhapur area under the Jamo police station area on Thursday night, Assistant Superintendent of Police Daya Ram said.

Wasim has suffered gunshot injuries, said the ASP.

He added that the Jamo police station in-charge also suffered minor injuries in the gunfight.

A case was registered against five people for killing Surendra Singh of Baraulia village on May 25. Ramchandra, Dharmanath, Naseem and Golu were arrested earlier.

'No significant reduction in infant deaths in Odisha hospitals'

Despite huge spending under govt. programmes: activist

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

Despite spending huge amounts of funds under different government programmes, the Naveen Patnaik government has not been able to bring down infant deaths in the tribal-dominated districts, alleged RTI activist Pradip Pradhan on Friday.

'5 CDMOs responded'

He said information was sought from Chief District Medical Officers of 10 tribal-dominated districts but only five CDMOs had provided information.

"We had sought information to know the situation on infant mortality in tribal districts. As per the information, no drastic reduction in infant mortality cases has been noticed whereas the government invested huge funds under various progrmmes," Mr. Pradhan said at a press conference here.

The tribal-dominated southern Odisha district of Koraput presented a grim scenario.

In 2014-15, the district had recorded 1,246 infant deaths, which came down to below 900 in two different years. However, in 2018-19, the number again rose to 1,067.

Over 1,000 infant deaths were reported from Mayurbhanj in 2018-19. In 2014-15, 453 deaths were recorded in the district.

Although Kalahandi witnessed steady decrease in infant deaths, the activist alleged that it was not significant. From 1,333 deaths in 2014-16, it came down to 898.

At the Rourkela Government Hospital, the annual infant deaths remained over 100 during the past five years whereas Sundargarh district hospital claimed to have reduced it from 759 in 2014-15 to 433.

Nuapara an exception

Nuapada is the only district where drop in infant mortality cases has been impressive. The 2018-19 statistics says 310 deaths were recorded in Nuapada whereas it was 720 in 2014-15.

Mamata asks TMC leaders to 'recapture' offices

Allegedly occupied by the BJP; sets stage for escalation of fight in the State

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

Setting the stage for escalation of the fight with the BJP, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday asked the party leaders to recapture TMC offices allegedly "occupied" by the BJP as early as possible.

The TMC chief, who held an extended core committee meeting of the party, appointed her brother Kartik Banerjee and State Minister Bratya Basu as the president and chairman respectively of the party's frontal 'Jai Hind Bahini'.

TMC MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar was appointed the chairman of 'Banga Janani Bahini', another frontal organisation.

The two organisations, which she had launched on Thursday, will "counter the

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee

growth" of the RSS in the State.

The TMC supremo also hit out at a section of the party leaders who had "surrendered" to the lure of money given by the BJP and termed them as "traitors".

"We have been told to recapture the party offices which had been occupied by the BJP workers after the Lok Sabha polls as early as possible," a senior party leader said after the closed door meeting.

"She (Banerjee) said the people of Bengal will never forgive traitors. They will get a befitting reply," the TMC leader quoted her as saying.

Ms. Banerjee cracked the whip against internal strife and revamped the party by clipping the wings of several leaders and giving new responsibilities to several old timers.

'Reach out to the masses'

She told party leaders to reach out to the masses and expressed confidence that the TMC will bounce back in the days to come.

"We have been asked to reach out to the masses and increase the connect with them. We have been told to bring back the old timers to the party fold," the leader said.

The Chief Minister also directed her partymen to organise small meetings and gatherings in areas where the party was defeated.

"We have been asked to prepare a complete report on grievances of the masses," the TMC leader said.

Senior party leader Suvendu Adhikari was given the responsibility of various districts.

The TMC chief had last week effected several changes in the party organisation in Jhargram, West Burdwan, Malda, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad Purulia, Bankura, West Midnapore and Nadia districts after the party's poll debacle.

U.P. teen set on fire, battling for life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MEERUT

A 14-year-old girl is battling for life after being allegedly set on fire in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district by a man who was upset over a past relationship between his sister and the victim's brother, the police said.

The attack created tension at a village in Daurala area as the victim and the accused belong to two different communities, the police said. The man poured a bottle of kerosene over the girl while she was sleeping on the rooftop of her house with her parents on Wednesday night. The girl suffered 80% burns and was first taken to a district hospital and then referred to a hospital in Delhi, an officer said.

SC asks Maharashtra to revise PG merit list sans EWS quota

Pulls up govt. for overreaching order against implementation of 10% reservation

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Maharashtra government to complete counselling process and come up with revised merit list for admission in post-graduate medical courses after removing seats allotted under 10% Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) quota to 25 students.

Raising their voice: PG medical students challenge the government's decision of increasing reservations. ▪FILE PHOTO

June 4 deadline

A Vacation Bench headed by Justice M.R. Shah asked the State to complete the counselling process by June 4. The court also pulled up the government for overreaching its order against implementation of 10% EWS quota in PG medical seats. The apex court had stayed the Maharashtra government's notifications issued in February and March implementing 10% EWS reservation for PG medical courses this academic year.

"When this court had specifically directed that the notifications dated 12.02.2019 and 07.03.2019 extending the benefit of reservation to the extent of 10% to economically weaker sections, inter alia, in post graduate medical courses shall not be applicable for admission for the academic year 2019-20 unless the Medical Council of India increases the number of seats (which has not taken place) and once the admission of all candidates allotted seats during the previous rounds under EWS category are cancelled and the category of all EWS candidates are converted into open category, necessary consequences of reshuffling must follow," the Bench observed in its order.

"The authorities are directed to complete the process of admission including reshuffling on 30.05.2019... In the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case, we extend the time to complete the counselling and to complete the admission process in post graduate medical and dental courses for the Academic Year 2019-20 as directed above up to June 4, 2019, failing which a very serious view shall be taken for not complying the interim order passed by this court in its true spirit," the court said. It directed the counsel for State to communicate its order to the competent authority on Friday itself.

Dr. Rajat Agrawal, the lead petitioner, said that the counselling round should have commenced afresh after Thursday's verdict and that the CET Cell's notice was an injustice to the open category aspirants.

(With inputs from Suyash Karangutkar)

Sena gets Heavy Industries ministry again

Party has been handed same portfolio since the first NDA government in 1996

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Though the Shiv Sena is the second largest constituent of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with 18 MPs in the Lok Sabha, it has been offered only one ministry in the Union Cabinet.

Sena's Arvind Sawant was among the seven ministers from Maharashtra who took the oath of office on Thursday. However, on Friday, he was given the Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise Ministry, which has been handed to the party since the first NDA government led by late Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1996. The late Balasaheb Vikhe-Patil, Manohar Joshi, Subodh Mohite, Suresh Prabhu, Anant Geete and Arvind Sawant have all handled this portfolio in successive NDA governments.

With the State Assembly polls just four months away and the BJP-Sena alliance expected to continue, the party was tipped to get more than one ministry. However, keeping with tradition, the Sena was offered the same lone portfolio.

New role: Arvind Sawant takes oath as a Cabinet Minister during the swearing-in ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan. ▪PTI

Cabinet Ministers from Maharashtra include Nagpur MP Nitin Gadkari, who continues as Minister for Road Transport and Highways and has also been given charge of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. Prakash Javadekar has been given the ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Environment, Forests and Climate Change. Piyush Goyal has been given the Commerce and Industry Ministry in addition to his old charge of Railways.

Among the Ministers of State from Maharashtra are State BJP chief Raosaheb Danve (Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution), Ramdas Athawale (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment), and Sanjay Dhotre (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Communications, and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology).

'Will ensure maximum benefit for Goa'

PRAKASH KAMAT
PANAJI

Shripad Naik on Friday said his second consecutive term as a Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH will take forward the projects of the ministry.

The North Goa MP thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for also appointing him as the Minister of State for Defence. "I will focus on completing ongoing projects faster, while also embarking on new plans for yoga and alternative medicine," Mr. Naik said in a message to the people of Goa soon after his portfolio was announced on Friday.

When asked if he would organise events like the Defence Expo in Goa once again, Mr. Naik said, "I will see to it that Goa gets as much benefit as possible from both ministries."

NCP may bank on new faces for State polls

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Amid talks of merger with Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party president Sharad Pawar will be holding a meeting with party leaders to discuss the Lok Sabha poll results, and finalise future strategy.

NCP's national spokesperson Nawab Malik on Friday denied talks of merger and said Mr. Pawar and Congress president Rahul Gandhi discussed Assembly polls in Maharashtra and the drought situation. Sources said the poll results has forced NCP to re-think its strategy. "The party will be investing more on young and fresh faces. There are likely to be organisational changes as well," said a leader on condition of anonymity.

Apart from a review, Mr. Pawar is likely to have discussions on giving more responsibility to new faces for the Assembly polls.

1,500 trawlers to drop anchor in Goa

The monsoon fishing ban, which comes into effect today, will go on for 61 days

PRAKASH KAMAT
PANAJI

The annual monsoon trawling ban in Goa will come into effect from June 1. The ban will go on for 61 days, ending on July 31. The seasonal fishing holiday is meant to facilitate breeding of fish during the season.

The State Fisheries Department has issued an order banning trawling through mechanised boats during the period. However, the registered motorised canoes using gill nets have been exempted. Nearly 1,500 trawlers in the coastal State would be anchored till July 31 as the annual trawling ban will be implemented along the western coast in Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Last catch: Fishermen drag a trawler out of the water in North Goa on Friday. ▪ATISH POMBURFEKAR

A notification from the State asserts that the government of Goa prohibits fishing by vessels fitted with mechanical means of propulsion and by means of trawl-net and purse-seine net. "Except fishing by the registered motorised canoes using only gill nets and fitted with outboard or inboard motors of up to 10HP capacity, as a means of propulsion, along the coastal area and the territorial waters, with effect from June 1 to July 31 (both days inclusive)," the order states.

The fishing ban in Goa has been enforced since 1981. During the ban period, the fish supply to the tourist State will drop. Considering the last year's controversy, during the ban, about formalin-laced fish imported from southern States, the Goa government will ensure import of fish after taking appropriate measures to ensure that licences of importers are strictly monitored, said a senior official of State Food and Drugs authority on Friday.

IN BRIEF

Krishna board plans steps for better monitoring

VIJAYAWADA

The Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) plans to take several steps for better monitoring of water being received and released by the irrigation projects that are common to both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.In addition to upgrading the telemeters with side-looking doppler sensors, which measure the water velocity, the board wants monthly reports from all the 18 telemeter centres.

Polling for 3 MLC seats peaceful in Telangana

HYDERABAD

Polling for the three vacancies in the Legislative Council under the local authorities constituencies —Nalgonda, Warangal and Rangareddy — caused by the resignation of sitting members ended peacefully on Friday barring minor incidents. Counting of votes would take place on June 3 and the entire election process is slated to be completed by June 7, according to the schedule notified by the Election Commission.

Kerala HC seeks Centre's response on ecotourism

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Friday asked the Central government to file an affidavit in response to a public interest writ petition seeking to restrain the State government from implementing tourism projects in reserve forests under the South Wayanad forest division. The petition was filed by the Wayanad Prakrithi Samrakshana Samiti. According to it, the projects were being implemented without prior approval from the Centre as mandated by the Forest Conservation Act.

Karnataka urban local body results bring cheer to Congress

Party wins 42% of 1,221 wards that went to polls across 56 urban local bodies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENAGLURU/HUBBALLI/ MANGALURU/ MYSURU/TUMAKURU

The Congress, which put up its worst ever show in the Lok Sabha election only last week, managed to perform well in the poll to the 57 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) held across Karnataka.

Contesting on its own despite being in power with its coalition partner Janata Dal (Secular), the party has won nearly 42%, or 509 seats, of the total 1,221 wards where polls were held on Wednesday. In all, it has won 19 ULBs and is likely to be in power in 13 more ULBs with the help of its coalition partner.

The BJP that performed exceedingly well in winning 25 seats out of 28 Lok Sabha seats in the recently held election, has won 30%, or 366, of the total seats.

Party workers in front of a counting centre at Arakalgud in Hassan district on Friday. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The JD(S) has won about 14.5%, or 174 seats, of the total 1,221 seats, the results of which were announced by the State Election Commission on Friday.

While Independents have won in 160 seats, Bahujan Samaj Party and the CPI(M) have won 3 and 2 seats, respectively, and other parties have recorded wins in 7 seats.

In all, polls were held for 19 town panchayats (TPs), 30 town municipal councils (TMCs) and 7 city municipal councils (CMCs).

How parties performed

The ULB polls show the voter preference changing for local elections in which the Congress has performed better than its rival BJP, and coalition partner JD(S). The Congress won 13 TMCs, 2 CMCs, and 4 CMCs.

While the Congress has performed well in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, the party lost some of the ULBs in the Bombay-Karnataka region. The party lost Aurad TP in Bidar, Kalagathagi TP in Dharwad to the BJP and has received a fractured mandate in Alnavar TP and Navalgund TMC, where the electorate have given a fractured verdict.

In the Cauvery basin, the Congress, which held power in K.R. Pete and Malavalli TMCs, is likely to share power with the JD(S).

It also lost Bannur TMC to the JD(S) while Kadur TMC and Hanur TP, held by the Congress, have received a fractured verdict.

In coastal Karnataka, it lost Moodabidri CMC to the BJP. It, however, has gained N.R. Pura TP.

Rahul logs in as Wayanad MP, takes up farmers' plight with CM

Seeks aid for family of farmer who committed suicide

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/ WAYANAD

Congress president Rahul Gandhi has begun his innings as Wayanad MP by highlighting the plight of farmers in the district, in particular, and the State, in general. In a letter on May 28, the Congress chief urged Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to provide assistance to the family of a farmer who committed suicide allegedly due to non-repayment of loans and conduct an inquiry into the matter.

V.D. Dinesh Kumar, 53, died after consuming some poisonous substance, the police said on May 25. His relatives said that financial burden had forced him to take the extreme step.

The letter is the first indication that the Congress president intends to take up issues affecting the constituency and the State.

Rahul Gandhi

"Shri Kumar's case isn't an isolated one. There have been a spate of farmer suicides in Wayanad due to an inability to repay loans. What is disturbing is that while the Government of Kerala has announced a moratorium on repayment of farm loans till December 31, 2019, farmers are still being pressured and hounded by loan collection agents," he said.

The police said that Kumar had taken loans of ₹20 lakh from three banks and was reportedly facing recovery proceedings.

The Congress chief said it was important to consider "long-term measures" to free farmers from the "vicious debt trap".

"I offer you my fullest support and cooperation in finding concrete long-term solutions to the critical issues Kerala's farmers are faced with and in ensuring every farmer in Kerala lives a life of dignity," Mr. Gandhi said.

Wayanad visit

Mr. Gandhi will visit the Wayanad constituency on June 7 and 8 to thank the electorate.

He will visit all the seven Assembly segments to express his gratitude to voters, Wayanad District Congress Committee president I.C. Balakrishnan, MLA, told *The Hindu*.

SIT makes new arrest in Kalburgi murder case

Accused drove shooter to and from victim's residence

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) made a new arrest in the M.M. Kalburgi murder case on Friday. The arrested person has been identified as Krishnamurthy from Hubballi. Sources in the SIT said Krishnamurthy is suspected to be the biker who drove the shooter to and from Kalburgi's residence on August 30, 2015.

His identification and arrest came days after the SIT secured the custody of Amol Kale, the kingpin who led the gang that killed rationalists and writers. He is accused No. 1 in the Gauri Lankesh murder case, which is also being investigated by the SIT. Sources said descriptions by eyewitnesses in the case also matched Krishnamurthy.

He is said to be part of the unnamed gang formed in 2011 to target "durjans" – people who they perceive to be anti-Hindu – from its inception. Information whether he was overtly associated with any other organisation is yet to be revealed.

Initially, Ganesh Myskin and Amit Baddi, both from Hubballi and allegedly part of the hit team that killed Gauri, were suspected to be the shooter and biker in the Kalburgi case. However, while eyewitness accounts matched the shooter with Myskin, accounts of the biker did not match Amit Baddi. Interrogation of Kale is said to have revealed vital clues leading to the arrest of Krishnamurthy.

₹21,370-cr. irrigation works may be cancelled in A.P.

Jagan govt. asks officials to prepare a list

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA

Nearly 25 irrigation projects that require ₹21,370 crore for completion are likely to be dropped by the Jagan Mohan Reddy government.

Irrigation works took a lead in the list of engineering works for which the erstwhile Chandrababu Naidu government gave administrative sanction, but for which it could not release even a single rupee during its tenure.

The new government has informally asked officials to prepare a list of all major engineering works so that it can take a fresh decision on them. The longest list of works came from the Department of Water Resources, which shows over 20 projects that need over ₹20,944.90 crore for completion.

20 projects are under the Department of Water Resources.

The Department also submitted a smaller list of seven major irrigation works that were less than 25% complete, but require ₹8,500 crore for completion.

Top on the list of works that have been started but need huge revenues for completion was the Galeru-Nagari Sujala Sravanti project, on which ₹254.17 crore had been spent, but a total of ₹3,626.82 crore was needed for completion.

In yet another such project, the erstwhile government spent ₹12.67 crore on the Uttara Andhra Sujala Sravathi scheme, which requires a total ₹2,022.20 crore for completion.

The other big projects that are on the list and the estimated cost for completion are Vamsadhara-Bahudha River linkage (₹6,326 crore), Gundrevula reservoir (₹2,890 crore), Vaikuntapuram Barrage (₹2,169 crore), Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme (₹1,985.42 crore), Vedavati Lift Irrigation scheme (₹1,942.8 crore) and a Lift scheme from Chitravathi Balancing Reservoir to Handri-Neeva (₹1,796.99 crore) and a host of other smaller schemes.

Telangana, Andhra archives bifurcated

Digitised copies will be shared

M. RAJEEV
HYDERABAD

Bifurcation of the archives wing of the erstwhile undivided State has been completed, except for digitisation of Government Orders issued from the time of the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956.

In the process, the Telangana State Archives and Research Institute has succeeded in retaining core documents, those spanning from the Bahmani period in early 1400 A.D., and Asaf Jahi period in the 1700s, till the merger of Hyderabad State into the Indian Union in 1948. The records, which were transferred to the State archives from Kurnool, the erstwhile capital of Andhra State, from 1953 to 1956, will be transferred to the successor State of Andhra Pradesh, while Telangana will retain all the other documents.

According to the memorandum of understanding signed between the two States, the Telangana archives would enable the neighbouring State to gain access to digitised copies of records while retaining the original documents in its possession. "We convinced the Andhra Pradesh government we will retain the pre-Independence records as they form the history of the erstwhile Hyderabad State," archives Director Zareena Parveen told *The Hindu*, thanking the A.P. government.

The archives has the precious collection of documents, including those from private collections.

Prayer for the holy night

The obligatory Esha prayer at the Madin grand mosque in Malappuram ahead of the night long prayers on Friday. Thousands attended the annual gathering to mark Lailathul Qadir, which, according to Islam, is the holiest night of the year. ▪SAKEER HUSSAIN

Sleuths find increase in gold smuggling

Flag threat to national security

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A worrying national security angle has emerged from the investigation of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) into the smuggling of "enormous quantities" of gold into the country through the international airport here, according to State and Central agencies.

In elaborate court filings last week, the DRI said that gold smuggling has reached "alarming proportions" in Kerala and it generates "huge amounts of black money". Much of it is ploughed back to Dubai through traditional hawala money transfer routes or smuggled out of the country as foreign currency.

Investigators say such underground money transfer channels that operate outside conventional banking routes provide the lifeblood for proscribed organisations and are a threat to national security. Hence, it is imperative to dismantle such criminal financial networks to obstruct anti-national activities.

The DRI has also found that the Dubai-based gold smuggling ring uses a "unique method" to illegally bring in gold into the country through the international airport in Thiruvananthapuram. The racketeers employ educated women feigning as genuine passengers to carry gold on their person. The carriers operate in pairs.

Domestic tourist arrivals up by 8.07% in Q1

But Kerala Tourism shows a 4.14% fall in foreign arrivals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Tourist arrivals have gone up by an impressive 6.82% in the first quarter of 2019 in the State, as compared to the figures of the corresponding period last year.

Arrivals, including domestic and foreign tourists, were 46,12,937 during January-March 2019, as against 43,18,406 in 2018. As many as 41,90,468 domestic tourists arrived in the first three months, as against 38,77,712 in 2018, registering an increase of 8.07%. Tourist statistics released by Kerala Tourism show a 4.14% fall in foreign tourists.

The increase in domestic tourist footfall, especially in Ernakulam, Alappuzha and Idukki districts, shows that the tourism sector has recovered after the floods in August last year. Ernakulam, with an increase of 1,08,169 domestic tourists, registered the highest growth among the districts. Domestic tourist arrival was pegged at 9,96,091 as against 8,87,922 in 2018.

A file photo of tourists pedalling through the market in the Mattancherry heritage zone in Kochi. ▪H. VIBHU

The number of domestic tourists was 3,43,938 (2,48,052 in 2018) in Idukki, 1,80,562 (1,32,442) in Alappuzha, 2,10,247 (1,84,389) in Kannur and 3,20,795 (2,76,188) in Kozhikode. Kollam, Kottayam, Malappuram, Wayanad and Palakkad also registered a growth in domestic tourist arrivals.

However, Thrissur and Thiruvananthapuram districts showed negative trends, possibly due to the downtrend in pilgrim tourists to the temples of Guruvayur and Sree Padmanabhaswamy.

Foreign tourists

In the case of foreign tourists, the number stood at 4,22,469 as against the 4,40,694 in the previous year. Thiruvananthapuram, including the beach destinations of Kovalam and Varkala, witnessed the highest fall, with a decrease of 27,760 tourists. The total footfall of foreign visitors in the capital district was 1,08,787 as against 1,36,547 in 2018.

Ernakulam registered a dip of 22,667 tourists, but the districts of Idukki, Alappuzha and Kottayam (Kumarakom) marked a robust growth with an increase of 8,976, 8,541, and 9,593 tourists over the same period of 2018. Foreign tourist arrivals also went up in Kannur, Kasaragod, Kollam, Kozhikode, Pathanamthitta and Thrissur districts.

"There was widespread apprehension that Kerala's tourism will take a long time to recover. But we were able to allay these apprehensions by swiftly putting in place an effective action plan to win back the confidence of tourists," Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran said.

Ongole mountaineer gearing up to conquer Mount Koscuiszko in August

Sk. Himmamsa is competing in the daunting Seven Summits challenge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
ONGOLE

Ace mountaineer Sk. Himmamsa is preparing to scale Mt. Kosciuszko in August as part of the Seven Summits challenge.

The Seven Summits challenge is a daunting mountaineering feat that involves scaling the highest mountains of each of the seven continents. Mt. Kosciuszko will be the fifth summit on Mr. Himmamsa's list, as he has already scaled Mt. Everest (Nepal), Mt. Elbrus (Russia/Georgia), Mt. Kilimanjaro (Tanzania, Africa) and Mt. Aconcagua (Argentina, South America).

After Mt. Koscuiszko, Mr. Himmamsa will have to scale Mr. Denali in North America and Vinson Massif in Antarctica to complete the challenge.

Mountaineer Sk. Himmamsa. ▪KOMMURI SRINIVAS

Besides having to deal with challenges like inhospitable terrain and harsh weather, Mr. Himmamsa says there are other daunting problems such as the prohibitively high costs involved in mountaineering expeditions. "A mountaineer has to shell out up to ₹50 lakh for each of the seven expeditions, an astronomical sum that only few can afford," said Mr. Himmamsa, who is hoping for a sponsor to come forward and help him in his expedition to Mt. Koscuiszko.

The son of a construction worker, Mr. Himmamsa underwent a training stint at the Bhuvanagiri Rock Climbing School in order to conquer the snowy peak of Mt. Koscuiszko.

The State government had sponsored his expedition to Mt. Everest in May last year. The next two expeditions were sponsored by Anand Granites Ltd. at Chimakurthy. His South American leg of the Seven Summits challenge was sponsored by Hyderabad-based Transcend Adventures Company.

Training regimen

Mr. Himmamsa has embarked on a rigorous training regimen to prepare for the climb. His daily workout on the outskirts of Ongole includes a 10-km run under the hot sun and a daily yoga session to increase lung capacity.

The temperature at the peak is sub-zero and requires a fortnight-long stay and climbing of smaller peaks before attempting to scale Mt. Koscuiszko, the highest Australian peak.

"I draw my inspiration from Malli Mastan Babu, the fastest Indian mountaineer to have scaled all the seven summits," Mr. Himmamsa told *The Hindu*.

IN BRIEF

PIL plea wants title of Salman film changed

NEW DELHI

A PIL plea has been filed in the Delhi High Court seeking change of the title of Salman Khan's upcoming movie *Bharat*. The plea was filed on Thursday by activist Vipin Tyagi who said that the word "Bharat" cannot be used for commercial purpose. IANS

Robert Vadra fails to appear before ED

NEW DELHI

Robert Vadra, husband of Congress leader Priyanka Vadra, did not appear before the Enforcement Directorate on Friday for questioning in connection with an alleged overseas assets case.
Mr. Vadra cited health reasons for not being able to join the probe, said an official.

Ready to investigate 'Bitcoin scam', says CBI

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Friday expressed its readiness in the Supreme Court to take over the probe into a multi-crore ponzi scheme involving virtual currency Bitcoin, which has snared investors. Appearing before a Vacation Bench, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the CBI and the ED, termed the scheme a "huge scam". The court listed the matter for July 5.

IMA panel to probe Dr. Tadvi's death in Maharashtra hospital

It will also suggest changes needed to make working conditions of doctors better

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

In the backdrop of the suicide by Dr. Payal Tadvi, the Indian Medical Association has formed a five-member fact-finding committee to look at the larger issues concerning resident doctors working in public hospitals in Maharashtra.

The committee will review the critical factors that led to her death and recommend how to avoid such incidents in future.

Tadvi, 26, a second-year resident doctor in the gynaecology department of Topiwala National Medical College attached to B.Y.L. Nair Hospital committed suicide on May 22.

Three senior resident doctors have been booked in the case after Tadvi's parents alleged harassment and caste slurs by them.

'Various aspects'

"The case has various aspects attached to it. Our fact-finding committee will piece together the facts and look at the larger issue that resulted in Tadvi's death," said Dr. Ravi Wankhedkar, a surgeon from Dhule and one of the five doctors on the committee.

Tough times: An accused in the Payal Tadvi case (face covered) being taken to the court in Mumbai on Friday. ▪PTI

The other members are Dr. Hozie Kapadia and Dr. Suhas Pingle, both physicians from Mumbai, Dr. Ashok Adhao, a surgeon from Nagpur, and Dr. Chandrakant Mhaske, a dermatologist and dean of Government Medical College in Nanded. While Dr. Kapadia is the current State president of IMA, Dr. Pingle is the State secretary.

"Our main focus would be to look at changes that need to be brought in place to offer a better work environment for the resident doctors," said Dr. Wankhedkar.

In a press statement, the IMA has stated that the poor working conditions of doctors, in particular, the residents in government hospitals, the abnormal load of work they are expected to carry as a matter of routine and the ever-present ridicule for deficiency of clinical skills cannot be pushed under the carpet.

"IMA's fact-finding team will study comprehensively the complex issue and is expected to submit its report to IMA national president in a week's time," it stated.

Referring to the allegations of casteism, the statement said that if true, it is a matter of serious concern which has to be addressed.

Three accused sent to judicial custody

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The city civil and sessions Court on Friday sent three senior doctors of B.Y.L. Nair Hospital, who were arrested in connection with the suicide of a 26-year-old second-year resident doctor Dr. Payal Tadvi, to judicial custody till June 10.

Hema Ahuja, Bhakti Mehare and Ankita Khandelwal, all third-year resident doctors, were booked on May 23 for abetting the suicide, a day after Tadvi killed herself in her hostel room. The trio were arrested later.

Special public prosecutor Raja Thakare argued that *prima facie* it is apparent that casteist remarks were made by the accused. "Tadvi had told her mother about harassment, and there is proof that she had made several complaints earlier too."

He, however, ruled out murder and said there was no evidence to prove it.

Admiral Karambir Singh takes over as Navy chief

'Will continue efforts to provide a strong, credible Navy'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Admiral Karambir Singh on Friday assumed office as the 24th Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS). He took over from Admiral Sunil Lanba who stepped down upon retirement.

"My predecessors made sure that the Navy has a solid foundation and has reached new heights. It'll be my endeavour to continue with their efforts and provide the nation with a Navy that's strong, credible and ready to meet security challenges in the maritime domain," Admiral Singh told the media after reviewing a guard of honour outside South Block.

Admiral Singh was the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) of the Eastern Naval Command, headquartered in Visakhapatnam.

"Admiral Singh is the most senior naval aviator. He is the first helicopter pilot of the Navy to become the CNS," a Navy officer said.

During his long and distinguished service spanning nearly 39 years, Admiral Singh served in a variety of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments, the Navy said.

Admiral Karambir Singh, right, shaking hands with outgoing Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba on Friday. ▪SANDEEP SAXENA

However, Admiral Singh's appointment was overshadowed by a petition filed by another senior officer challenging it.

AFT moved

Vice Admiral Bimal Verma, chief of the Andaman and Nicobar-based tri-Service Command, has approached the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT), questioning the appointment as he was the most senior naval officer after Admiral Lanba.

However, the Defence Ministry rejected his petition. Following this, the Tribunal asked the government to submit all files related to the selection process. Early this week, the AFT set July 17 as the next date of hearing as the government sought more time and allowed Admiral Singh to assume charge.

The Army and the Air Force too will see a change of guard at the helm later this year.

'Dutt's release a point to consider in Rajiv convicts' remission case'

Similar cases should be treated similarly: former CBI official

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

The demand for the release of the seven life convicts in former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination case took a new turn on Friday, with former CBI Director D.R. Kaarthikeyan saying there was a "point for consideration" in the wake of the remission of actor Sanjay Dutt's sentence.

He was replying to a question on a plea made by Perarivalan, one of the life convicts in the case, that the grounds and provisions of law invoked to grant premature release to Mr. Dutt should be extended to him as well.

"I don't know the full facts of the Sanjay Dutt case. However, in view of the reply given by jail authorities, there is a case for consideration in the interest of justice and fairness that similar cases should be treated similarly," Mr. Kaarthikeyan, who led the Special Investigation Team that probed the assassination of the former Prime Minister, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Kaarthikeyanhad earlier advocated the commutation of the death sentences awarded to the convicts and called for a special session of Parliament to debate and decide whether the country should abolish the death penalty.

Parrying questions on his view on the premature release of the seven convicts, he said he had done his duty as the SIT chief in investigating the assassination of the former PM. "Their premature release is a matter under the consideration of the Supreme Court and the Central and State governments...I have nothing to say on that," he added.

To a query raised by Perarivalan under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the Yerwada Central Prison authorities in Pune went on record, saying that the Central government was not consulted on granting remission of jail sentence to Mr. Dutt, convicted in the Mumbai serial blasts case. The actor was sentenced to five-year imprisonment under the Arms Act, a central legislation, and granted remission on the ground of "good conduct".

This revelation assumes significance in the backdrop of the ruling of a five-member Constitution Bench in *Sriharan alias Murugan & others vs the Union of India* that the Centre was the appropriate authority to reduce sentences in cases of offences under the Arms Act. Both Mr. Dutt and Perarivalan were convicted under Central acts.

Flight path

Line of sight: A replica of a Rafale jet on display on Friday outside the Air Force chief's residence, which is situated opposite the Congress party's headquarters, in New Delhi. ▪V.V. KRISHNAN

Frame Uniform Civil Code: petition

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday issued notice to the Centre on a petition seeking framing of a uniform civil code to promote "unity, fraternity and national integration."

A Bench of Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice Brijesh Sethi passed the order on the petition filed by Bharatiya Janata Party leader Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

Mr. Upadhyay has asked for direction to the Central government to constitute a Judicial Commission or a High Level Expert Committee to draft a Uniform Civil Code in the spirit of Article 44 of the Constitution within three months.

This, Mr. Upadhyay said, should be done "while considering the best practices of all religions and sects, Civil Laws of developed countries and international conventions."

'Can't interfere in retired JCO issue'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Army has said it has a "big heart" for Mohammed Sanaullah, a retired junior commissioned officer sent to a detention camp after being declared a foreigner, but can't do much to help him at this point of time.

Mr. Sanaullah, a Subedar who retired as an Honorary Captain in August 2017, was sent to a detention centre for foreigners in western Assam's Goalpara on May 28 by the Border Police, the very wing of the State police that had recruited the ex-serviceman as an assistant sub-inspector to detect non-citizens.

Mohammed Sanaullah

"We called his wife Samina Begum to our cantonment on Thursday to console her and assure her of our help whenever the need arises," an Army officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Our officers tried to share the grief of an Army veteran's wife," the officer added.

"[There] is very little the Army can do at this juncture" as Mr. Sanaullah's matter was now a legal case, the officer asserted. "We discussed his case with the Rajya Sainik Board too. They said he has to fight this out through lawyers. But we will definitely extend help during the course of the legal process, if needed," the officer added.

Assam's Directorate of Sainik Welfare (DSW) on Friday said it had "guided" the ex-serviceman to approach the Gauhati High Court given the confusion over Mr. Sanaullah's identity and the record held with the National Register of Citizens. "The undersigned immediately contacted two good advocates and their help/assistance is being taken," Brigadier (Retd.) Joshi Narain Dutt Ganesh Dutt, director, DSW, wrote in a letter.

Conjugal visits in jail: HC seeks Delhi govt. response

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday sought the response of the Delhi government and the Director General of Prisons on a petition seeking to hold conjugal visits in jail as a fundamental right of prisoners and their spouses.

A Bench of Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice Brijesh Sethi asked the authorities to submit their response on the plea filed by lawyer and social activist Amit Sahni in four weeks. The Bench posted the case for further hearing on August 2.

Mr. Sahni, in his petition, said conjugal visitation rights were not provided in prisons in the State though most of the prisoners fall under the sexually active age group.

"Despite courts taking a progressive approach and various countries allowing conjugal visit, considering it an important human right and also in the light of studies backing conjugal visit as a factor to cut down crimes in jail and reform inmates, the Delhi Prison Rules, 2018 are totally silent on the issue," the plea said.

NGT raps States for not curbing pollution in Ganga

Bihar, Bengal & Jharkhand fined ₹25 lakh each

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has imposed a penalty of ₹25 lakh each on the States of Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal for not taking adequate steps to curb pollution in the river Ganga.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel observed that while in Bihar there was no progress in terms of completion of sewage treatment infrastructure projects, in West Bengal only three out of the 22 projects had been completed. "The States of West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand are not represented in spite of orders of this Tribunal by which

A file photo of sewage water being released into the Ganga in Patna.

we recorded strong disapproval to such attitude of the said States. Such insensitivity in a serious matter is a matter of concern," the Bench observed.

"We direct the [three] States to deposit ₹25 lakh each by way of interim compensation for continued damage to Ganga and inaction of the said States even in responding to this Tribunal..."

The States were directed to deposit the penalty within a month with the Central Pollution Control Board, and the amount "may be spent on restoration of the environment."

Noting that the discharge of effluents is an offence, the green panel directed the Uttar Pradesh government to prohibit industrial activity that resulted in pollution. "The U.P. Chief Secretary may personally monitor and ensure zero tolerance approach to the pollution of the Ganga," the Bench said.

His new Council

There is a clear realignment of power in the second Modi government

His self-assurance boosted by a massive popular mandate, Prime Minister Narendra Modi constituted a 58-member Council of Ministers, with more than 20 fresh faces, on Thursday. In a group far outshone by its leader, analysing individual talent is not easy, and may be irrelevant too. Mr. Modi, characteristically, sees to it that his imprimatur on all executive decisions is unmistakable. Still, the composition of the council throws light on Mr. Modi's thinking. The induction of his long-time lieutenant and BJP president Amit Shah as Home Minister not only fortifies the Prime Minister's authority, it might be the precursor to further changes in the party organisation and the national security architecture. While Mr. Shah's entry into the Cabinet was expected, the surprise induction of former Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar as the External Affairs Minister is evidently meant to deal with the choppy international waters that rock India's sailing. Mr. Jaishankar has been a close confidant of Mr. Modi. He has his task cut out, as India faces challenges with its most important international partner, the U.S. The spillover effects impact the country's interests in multiple ways, including its objectives of economic and technological advancement. By placing the two confidants in critical Ministries, Mr. Modi appears to loosen the grip of his own office on the government; the effects will be felt by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval if he continues into a second term, as is widely expected. The triumvirate of Mr. Modi, Mr. Shah and Mr. Jaishankar will form the centre of power.

Rajnath Singh as Defence Minister and Nirmala Sitharaman as Finance Minister are next in the pecking order. While the top layer of the Council is infused with fresh talent and is expected to generate new momentum, its representative character is skewed. It has only six women, one less than the previous one; the majority community and the Hindi heartland States have disproportionate representation. While Mr. Modi rewarded the upper caste groups that supported him wholeheartedly, the OBCs and Dalits who shifted to his party significantly in 2019 have had to be content with lower representation, at least for now. There is an argument that it is healthy that Mr. Modi does not bargain with caste, linguistic and region-oriented interests groups. Apna Dal leader Anupriya Patel from Uttar Pradesh was dropped; the Janata Dal (United) from Bihar was offered only one berth, which it refused to accept; and the Shiv Sena wanted at least three but has had to be content with one. As equations change, Mr. Modi might have to rethink these positions and there is scope to expand. A Council more representative in nature, in terms of gender, social and linguistic backgrounds and religion, will better reflect the mosaic that is India.

A second election

Israel goes back to voters within six months in a changing political landscape

When the results of the April elections in Israel were announced, Benjamin Netanyahu, whose Likud party won 35 seats in the 120-member Parliament, was the winner. He was set to form a government with support from right-wing and religious parties to kick off a record term as Prime Minister. But his plans crumbled as the ultra-orthodox Jewish parties and right-wing nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu failed to come on board. When the deadline to form the government expired on May 29, Mr. Netanyahu had the support of 60 lawmakers, one short of majority. For the first time in Israel's history, a Prime Minister-designate failed to form a government, and the country will go to the polls again in September. The issue at stake is a military service bill. The ultra-orthodox Jews, the Haredim, are exempt from mandatory military service. Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman, a former Netanyahu aide, has submitted a bill to the Knesset that would enable the government to draft them. Mr. Lieberman, who has five lawmakers, made it a precondition for his support that the bill be passed. On the other side, the orthodox parties, which have 16 legislators, wanted the bill to be amended. Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing religious coalition collapsed before his eyes.

Mr. Netanyahu is a survivor. He will continue to lead the Likud in the September elections and appears better-placed than his rivals to form a coalition government. However, his challenges are rising. The new election will be held around two weeks before his pre-indictment hearing on corruption charges. The allegations have already dented Mr. Netanyahu's image. For decades, he had presented himself as a stronger, better alternative to Israel's old establishment elite. His war rhetoric, strongman policies and appeasement of orthodox Jews all burnished his appeal at a time when the Israeli electorate was steadily moving to the right. But the April election and the subsequent rift within Mr. Netanyahu's coalition suggest that the political landscape may be changing. The Israeli left is no longer Mr. Netanyahu's main political threat. The Labor party won only 4.43% votes and six seats in the April elections, while the Blue and White, a centrist coalition that is as hawkish on national security as the Likud, won 35 seats. The Blue and White didn't stand a chance to form the government this time because it lacked allies. By refusing to back Mr. Netanyahu over the conscription bill, Mr. Lieberman is further trying to weaken this left-right battle and bring into focus secular-versus-religious issues. Mr. Lieberman says he is fighting to prevent Israel becoming a religious state, and by saying so he is attacking Mr. Netanyahu's ties with religious parties. The challenge before Mr. Netanyahu is to fight growing political and legal odds in an election just months away.

The idea of Congress-free India

The party has been the biggest hurdle for those devoted to remaking India into a 'Hindu rashtra' or into a socialist utopia

VARGHESE K. GEORGE

A fashionable school of soundbite intellectualism seeks to reduce the outcome of the election to the 17th Lok Sabha into the success of one individual and the failure of another. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's oratory, marketing, cunning, etc. and the massive funds available to him were factors in his success while Congress president Rahul Gandhi's untrained oratory and ineffective command over the limited human and material resources under him were factors in his defeat. But the Modi-Gandhi binary is ahistorical, as 2019 has been in the making for a century – the advance of Hindutva through meticulous organisation building and ideological training, and a corresponding retreat of the Congress on both counts. The contest between the themes, Mr. Gandhi's 'love all' and Mr. Modi's 'I will hit you at home', could not have been timed worse for the former historically, though this slogan was never an irresistible one. That creed cost Mahatma Gandhi his life; 'death to Gandhi' was a slogan of many Hindu fundamentalists before his assassination in 1948, by one of them.

Not a new leitmotif

'Death to Congress' – or a Congress-free India – is not a new leitmotif in the country's politics, though the idea appears to have acquired a new urgency for some. This call for a Congress-free India comes from diametrically opposite perspectives. For instance, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president, and now Union Home Minister, Amit Shah's call for a Congress-free India is for the advancement of Hindutva, while Swaraj India president Yogendra Yadav wants the Congress dead for the exact opposite reason. Mr. Yadav believes the Congress is the only obstruction in the emergence of an alternative to the BJP, presumably his own party which is now TV studio-based.

This certainly sounds ironical, but is neither surprising nor unprecedented. Those who dreamed of reviving India to its pristine Hindu glory and those who vowed to build India into a utopia – of socialist, anarchist or market varieties – all thought the only force that obstructed them in their pursuit was the Congress. They disliked the Congress, variously, for not being Hindu enough, socialist enough or market-friendly enough. They joined hands in waves of anti-Congress mobilisations on different occasions for several decades. While constituents of anti-Congress coalitions had their legitimate grievances about the dominant party, a streak of self-righteous egotism of leaders also contributed to them. Successive waves of anti-Congress mobilisations progressively weakened the party, and opened political avenues for excluded social groups. But they also contributed to an erosion of public trust in parliamentary democracy, party politics, the rule of law and constitutionalism.

The Navnirman Movement in Gujarat in the early 1970s that attacked MLAs to force their resignations, and on its model the Bihar movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan to force legislators to resign, were attempts to overcome the Congress electoral majority in street fights. The latest among these – and India's first mob agitation raised through social media – was the Anna Hazare movement of

AP

2011 that sought sweeping anti-corruption measures and painted politics and politicians as universally corrupt. The widely held claim of populists all around the world today is that they speak for the authentic people without the institutional mediation of popular will in representative democracy has a history in India. We have rarely witnessed a bottom-up mobilisation against communal and caste violence, and this selective nature of 'people's mobilisation' is also revelatory. At each stage of anti-Congress mobilisation, and electoral alliances in 1967, 1977 and 1989, all individual constituents imagined they were using the others, but it was always the Hindutva groups that came on top. The Anna movement was the prefect precursor to the rise of Mr. Modi in 2014.

A post-2002 binary

So, while it is understandable why Mr. Shah wants a Congress-free India, it is difficult to comprehend why anyone anti-BJP would like the Congress to die. In fact, the 2002 Gujarat riots appeared to bury anti-Congressism among anti-BJP parties forever, as UPA-I took shape on the principle of a valid binary: that the fundamental fault-line of Indian politics is whether India shall remain an inclusive and non-sectarian country or become a Hindu rashtra.

While one call is for the death of the Congress party; another is for the end of its dynastic leadership, which sounds reasonable and even desirable. Here, the problem is only practical. Some thought JD (U) leader Nitish Kumar could be made Congress president. Apart from the fact that Mr. Kumar landed in the BJP camp soon after the suggestion was made, it is inconceivable that he could have any appeal in, say, Tamil Nadu, where Mr. Gandhi still has a certain influence. The Congress's emotional connect with the Indian public is through the curated memory of the freedom struggle, Nehru, Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, etc., while it also developed a network of material patronage. Over the years, the memory and the Nehru-Gandhi family became inseparable as most other icons were ejected from the Congress pantheon – P.V. Narasimha Rao is a relatively recent case in point. If memories are the lifeline of the Congress, the fact that they are all embodied in one family helped the Sangh Parivar politics of dismantling it. Sangh politics seeks to manage the collective memory to its advantage – by manipulation or, in some cases, complete erasure.

The other tool of Congress popularity, patronage, turned from patronage of social groups to patronage of individual vested interests first and crony capitalism post-liberalisation. This strengthened the hands of power brokers, who besieged the family and acted on their behalf with arrogance. They could even deliver electoral victories. Its ideological vacuum has been expanding in the meanwhile, and the Congress's adversarial figure of imperialism became a fading and irrelevant memory for each successive generation in the era of globalisation – while the Sangh Parivar's imagination of an internal adversary gained more traction with the spread of global Islamism. The Sangh Parivar patronage network also grew stronger. Though a dynast himself, and hence part of the problem, Mr. Gandhi has an awareness of the problem. The current crisis in the Congress is a stand-off between Mr. Gandhi and the party old guard. Mr. Gandhi believes that the old guard has failed his reformative agenda; the latter believes that Mr. Gandhi has disrupted the wheels of the party's election winning machine.

Mr. Gandhi has told members of the Congress Working Committee that he would step aside and work as a moral force in politics. He says he does not want to seek positions of power. His desire may be honourable and salutary. But in the current context, that may not be his destiny. Being a political ascetic these days needs film directors, multiple camera angles, attractive and colourful costumes, etc., which is not his forte. Being a dynast may be his biggest burden, but that is also his biggest advantage – the paradox is that only the dynast can rescue the Congress from this abyss, if at all. Nobody else in the party has the moral authority that the rest of the party will defer to.

An inescapable reality

Calling for a Congress without the dynasty is comparable to calling for a BJP disconnected from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a Republican Party minus the evangelicals, or a Labour party delinked from trade unions. There may be many things that you disapprove of in these arrangements, but that is an inescapable reality. Calling for a Congress today without a Nehru-Gandhi at its helm is tantamount to calling for a Congress-free India, at least for now.

varghese.g@thehindu.co.in

Outlining the first 100 days

There must be a revamp of how government services are delivered, and how India does business

SRIVATSA KRISHNA

A full majority government has been re-elected in India after many years. A young, aspirational India has identified itself with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his "idea of India". Here is a non-exhaustive agenda for Mr. Modi's first 100 days. India is on the cusp of overtaking the United States to becoming the world's second largest economy, with a consumer spending of $5.7 trillion, 77% of the population under 44 (80% among the middle class), and a billion Internet users, all by 2030, according to the World Economic Forum.

In mission mode, Mr. Modi needs to expand his "home delivery of services" model (cooking gas, health care, multiple citizens' services) to cover major government services. Separating the "point of decision" of a government service from "point of delivery" will be a necessary condition to get red tape out of the way. Technology as the lifeblood has to flow through every major government programme, especially in agriculture and health care, through the ambitious 'Digital India' programme, which cannot remain a stapled-together version of the schemes of previous years; it needs to become genuinely transformational. An 'AAA' Government or "Anytime-Anywhere-Anyhow" (or on any device or platform) delivery of services is still far away, which Mr. Modi needs to accelerate in deep collaboration with the private sector.

Loan waivers and input subsidies have not ameliorated rural distress, so the key policy shift is to move away from production to income. Having promised $85 per small farmer as a direct transfer, he needs to move from an inefficient, ossified cross-sector subsidy regime to an income-support model. This is possible by expanding this to cover all farmers in terms of both value and volume. This unconditional cash transfer should be an electronic transfer (banks, primary agricultural credit societies and post offices, with an area cap) keeping an eye on the fiscal deficit.

Harnessing data

India is emerging as a major 'data economy' with over 800 million mobile phone users, half of whom own a smartphone. India needs to leverage the enormous data it produces and deepen use of an 'India Stack' everywhere. However, India is way behind the U.S. and China in terms of artificial intelligence, data analytics and blockchain. It needs to pump in millions of dollars to make itself future ready, perhaps by first completing the fibre optic pipe that it begun to lay

R.V. MOORTHY

five years ago. It needs to make it extremely simple for startups to start and die (should they wish to). India received about $11 billion in venture capital through 748 deals in 2018 (of $29 billion private equity inflows) but there is much more capital waiting to come if its unicorns and 'soon'icorns (soon to be unicorns) benefit from an easier regulatory framework.

Mr. Modi needs to set up an "India First" Investment Agency directly in his office which should reach out to select 'Fortune 1000' companies to set up shop in India. For example, why shouldn't a Tesla set up its next gigafactory in India if it can be done at half the cost of doing it in Nevada? After a deep dive into their annual reports, he needs to send empowered envoys to attract them for marquee investments (in exchange for assured job creation). Credible incentives must include an exemption from India's notoriously opaque land laws and bureaucratic maze. This should not and must not be outsourced to any Ministry, for only the credibility of the highest office will make investors take such calls and commitments seriously.

There are 200-odd labour laws that mandate companies with 100 or more workers to get government permission to lay off or even change job descriptions (which never comes). Thus, India does not get the benefits of scale of huge factories with over 75% firms employing less than 50 workers, to escape such regressive laws. There is a golden opportunity to compete with and take business away from Bangladesh (garments), China (toys, electronics and manufacturing) as their wages rise. India can turn attractive by abolishing such restrictive labour laws, which will enhance employment by erasing a key factor that throttles India's global competitiveness.

There are an estimated three million vacancies in government jobs in India and these are often left unfilled to keep the fiscal deficit low. While many of these jobs are redundant for a "New India" in overstaffed sectors such as railways recruitment needs to start now through employment exchanges to buttress the dismal number of doctors, teachers, police officials to keep the ship moving.

Fast tracking privatisation

There must be a start to the privatisation of Air India and the other top 10 public sector entities without the restrictive covenants that discouraged bidders the last time. It should not be a tinkering on the margins with privatisation as has been the case so far. The bold reclassification of bad loans (of about $190 billion) to reveal their true picture needs to be followed by recapitalisation, a merging of banks, narrowing down priority-sector lending, and, finally, at least some privatisation. This will stop bleeding coffers and send out a strong signal to the world that the Modi government means business.

Last but not the least, the focus needs to be on execution and delivery. Mr. Modi should set up a delivery unit inside the Prime Minister's Office using modern technology tools (OmniFocus and Slack), for deep monitoring and follow-up, programme-wise and office-wise. The government's relentless focus should be on results and not only on process and effort. This can be the next avatar of the Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) system.

A surging 1.3 billion-strong "New India" identifies itself with Mr. Modi. Economic super performance should become a causal effect for election victories and the perpetual intellectual and execution gridlock needs to be broken. Mr. Modi has to deliver India victory in its war against poverty, the bureaucracy and every anti-prosperity force that holds it back. Make no mistake. This mandate is for transformational and not incremental change.

Srivatsa Krishna is an IAS officer. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Team Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's careful selection of Ministers for the various cabinet portfolios, especially important ones such as Home, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Finance, deserves appreciation. There is no question of favouring the so-called heavyweights in terms of seniority or regional considerations, which were the norms followed earlier. Merit seems to come come first in Mr. Modi's scheme of things. I hope that the new Ministers perform well. An interesting portfolio to watch would be Home Affairs and how it aids in federalism, under strain now.

V.S. GANESHAN,
Bengaluru

■ Modi 2.0 appears to be quite similar to Modi 1.0. Distilled to its core, the mandate of 2019 was about an element of faith – a faith in Mr. Modi and his ability to defend the interests of the Indian state and advance the goals of growth, development, national security and stability. Now that the new government has taken charge, he cannot keep harping on national security as there are a host of issues that require immediate attention. The expectations are even higher this time as the National Democratic Alliance has had a stable five-year run, unencumbered by the whims of self-seeking allies. A stable and strong government should be synonymous with peaceful co-existence, with absolutely no space for lynch mobs, self-styled vigilantes and hate-mongers. To deliver on the expectations of the electorate, Mr. Modi would do well to continue with the discipline he instituted in his last term, but make way for autonomy and transparency.

PADMINI RAGHAVENDRA,
Secunderabad

■ As the Home Minister, Amit Shah should 'do right by all manner of people' without being swayed by any extraneous consideration. He will be watched closely to see how he handles domestic affairs 'without fear or favour and without affection or ill-will'.
He must ensure that no one is persecuted in the name of 'internal security'. He has a constitutional and moral obligation to provide protection to India's religious minorities, which he must fulfil.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

■ With a strong leader, backed by an overwhelming majority, come decisive and bold decisions. This has been clear in the selection of cabinet picks. The selection of a trained foreign service diplomat, not a party man, shows that business will not be usual in New Delhi. The agenda since the first term of Mr. Modi, to raise the global profile of India as a serious player, will be well served with the selection of a former career officer. There is also a balancing act as far as rewarding supporters, as is evident by the picks from Odisha, Telangana and Rajasthan. Domestic, job-oriented growth that augments India's aspiration to be a global leader will be the task for the new government.

SESHADRI RAMKUMAR,
Lubbock, Texas, U.S.

Laying out priorities

The hard work and determined approach of Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy are what have fetched him rewards in terms of his resounding electoral win in the Andhra Pradesh Asembly polls. . Besides these it is also the mistakes and blunders of his predecessor that have made a sizeable contribution to the result. The perception is that Mr. Reddy will be more careful in ensuring a people-oriented regime in a State that has a number of social welfare issues (Page 1, "In his first order, Jagan hikes old age pension", May 31). Any trace of arrogance would make his triumph an ephemeral one.

A.G. RAJMOHAN,
Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the front-page story titled "T.N. fails to find a place in Ministry" (May 31, 2019), there was a reference to Atal Bihari Vajpayee becoming Prime Minister for the second time in March *1999*. It should have been March *1998*.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com

Raichur, a thirsty land between two rivers

Northern Karnataka is in the grip of a severe water shortage. As wells dry up, **Serish Nanisetti** reports on the struggle of the people in the region

Despite being located between two rivers, the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, Raichur is a dust bowl. (Above and below) Braving the heat, villagers go in search of water in Raichur, Karnataka. ▪ NAGARA GOPAL

Every morning, Simalamma, 35, and her eight-year-old son, Ganesh, trek half a kilometre from their home in Janakiramnagar Camp on the outskirts of Raichur in northern Karnataka in search of water. The land is cracked and the sun is harsh. Their destination is a pond owned by a wealthy farmer, Anil Gouda, who sometimes uses the water to irrigate his fields. Unlike borewell water, which is laced with arsenic, the water from Gouda's pond, though muddy, is free of arsenic.

Raichur is the land that the medieval Persian rulers of the region called Doab. Despite being located between two rivers, the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, it is a dust bowl in the first week of May.

In search of water

"I do this thrice a day," says Simalamma. Ganesh pushes a two-wheeled cart, which has space for six empty plastic pots, to the edge of the small fenced pond. His mother walks down to the edge of the pond and fills each pot with about 10 litres of water. Other women from the surrounding area do the same.

The people from the shanty town have to go further afield to get their drinking water when Gouda irrigates his lands. Janakiramnagar Camp has three water tanks, or ponds. Of these, the community of about 150 families that live in this area owns one. The muddy brown water is used for drinking. Sometimes cattle reach the edge of the pond to drink water, and the villagers shoo them away. "We have no choice. If we use the borewell water for cooking, the rice turns brownish yellow. It tastes different. If we have a bath, the water sticks to our hair. This water may look dirty but it is better than the borewell water," says A. Narsappa, a farm hand, while collecting water for domestic use. Multiple studies have found arsenic contamination of groundwater in the region. A study in the *Journal of Neurosciences in Rural Practice* in 2017 even linked the low intelligence quotient of children in the Hutti region of Raichur to groundwater contamination.

However, water was not an election issue during either the Karnataka Assembly election in 2018 or the Lok Sabha election this year. Voter turnout in Raichur was below 60%, perhaps an indication of the indifference of the voters. A week after polling for the general election, not a single poster can be spotted in the town. It appears as if the election fever bypassed the city and its surrounding areas.

"The MLA from Raichur, Shivaraj Patil [who was first with the JD(S) and then joined the BJP], got us the overhead water tank here. In his first term, a foundation stone was laid. In his second term, a tank has been built. Just before these elections, it was painted. By the next Assembly elections we hope the pipes will be connected and we will get water supply from this tank," says K. Srinivas, a farmer. "Nobody came here for campaigning. We have 750 votes in this area but the candidates didn't want to face us."

Failure of programme

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has tracked the systemic failure of supplying drinking water across the country in its performance audit. Karnataka lost the share of funds it received as part of the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) because of mismanagement and not spending the money allocated to it. The Central government stipulation is that States must maintain two accounts for managing fund disbursal for the various projects under the NRDWP. But between 2010 and 2017, Karnataka was found to be operating 108 accounts. Citing inflated bills and unauthorised parking of funds, the monies were sent back to the Central treasury.

The NRDWP guidelines were modified in 2013 to focus on piped water supply, increasing household tap connections and improving drinking water supply norms. The objective of the programme was to provide safe and adequate water for drinking, cooking and other domestic needs to every rural person on a sustainable basis.

But implementation of the NRDWP has been disastrous over the past five years. The programme used ₹81,168 crore in five years to improve rural water supply but, according to the CAG audit, only an additional 5.5% rural habitations have been impacted. At the end of five years, 82% of the rural population and 83% of rural households did not have access to the adequate water supply of 55 litres per capita per day as envisaged. At least 15% of rural schools did not have access to safe drinking water. The audit shows failure at every stage of the programme from planning, fund management, monitoring and grievance redress.

The failure of the NRDWP has also hit the Swacch Bharat Abhiyan. "Only 25% of people who have borewells use toilets at home. All the others go out in the open fields," says Narsappa. Between 1971 and 2017, Raichur had deficit rainfall. So struggle for water has become a part of the residents' daily life. In a good year, the area gets 450 mm rain with south-west monsoons. In 46 years, only 18 have been good years.

Wells without water

A hundred years ago, a suspected El Niño event led to one of the biggest famines in the region that killed thousands and displaced lakhs of people. The Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan, drafted a British mining engineer, Leonard Munn, to bring succour to the region. Munn was appointed Special Officer in charge of Well Sinking and Geological Survey Departments. Till his death in 1935, Munn and his staff dug 1,200 wells in Raichur. Munn thought that the hexagonal concrete wells were a cheaper solution than hand-pumps and borewells. Most of these wells, with their six fixed pulley systems, exist till today. "The water from these wells is sweet unlike borewell water. We can draw this water whenever we want. But this is the first time there is no water in the well," says Laxmamma, a villager from Wandali near the Hutti Gold Mines. In Chinchergi, a few kilometres away, another Munn well is still being used. There is water, but not enough to be drawn out. Two women sit near the well washing clothes with water drawn from a tap. The women guide us to another '*Munn sahib bawi*'. Only clumps of leaves and stones are at the bottom of the dry well.

In his lifetime Munn became known as '*Saavira Bhavigala Saradara*' (master of thousand wells) in the region. Munn's belief that community wells were better than hand-pumps has helped generations of water hunters. The logic is being followed now too. The Public Works Department in Atanur is building a drinking water tank that is 1,400 ft long and 700 ft wide. "We have dug up to 17 ft. We plan to dig up to 20 ft. This tank will get filled up when water from the Bangarappa reservoir is released through the canal," says Khaja Hussain, who is executing the work on the tank at Atanur on the Raichur-Bagalkot Road. At the centre of the tank is a pulley system which the villagers can use to draw water without contaminating the water body, just as they did with the wells dug by Munn. Villagers stop and watch the progress of the work and chat with the workers while they eat lunch.

Sitting near a shrub that gives no shade, three women, Sivamma, Malamma and Kupamma, open their food bags that contain three paper-thin *bajra* rotis each, a small bowl of boiled string beans and a slice of onion. The women pick stones from the area; they are preparing to grow millets there. They sell the stones and get ₹100 a day. "It's been five months since we have had any work. If a couple has grown-up children, they emigrate to big cities and send money to their families. Since we have small children we have to stay home and find work in the village," says Sivamma of Chinchergi. She says she struggles to get water home before rushing for work as a daily wage labourer every morning.

A few metres ahead, a tractor tills a rolling hillock covered with small stones. The soil is barely visible between the stones. "I am preparing the ground for the monsoon. I am planning to grow millets here. Last year there was no rain. But this year, I am expecting a better crop," says Erramma. Tilling a rocky terrain for a single crop of millets is possible for her as her son lives and works in Bengaluru and sends money home.

The man who built countless wells

Lingsugur is a small village between Raichur and Bagalkot. A plaque on a small building on the main road of the village reads, 'Captain Leonard Munn Memorial Hall'. Behind it is a British-era cemetery where Munn is buried under a flat pink granite with an inscription that reads: "April 1928 to October 1935, Director Geological Survey and Special Officer Well Sinking Department. He and his staff sank or remodelled more than 1,200 wells in the Famine Zone of this Raichur District where his name is a household word. Blessed is the man who passing through the valley of weeping make it a well". The inscription records that Munn passed away on October 21, 1935. The area known as the Christian cemetery is mostly unknown to outsiders. But the countless wells that dot the region keep alive the name of the man who was born in Madresfield, Worcestershire, in 1878 and came to finally rest on dry, dusty land.

It doesn't help that the quality of soil is rated poor in the district. "We issue a soil health survey card which shows what agricultural inputs are needed for a good crop. All the key minerals like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and iron are low in this region. A good crop can be harvested only if agricultural inputs like fertilizers are used on a big scale and the monsoon is normal," says Rahman, a scientist at the Soil Research Centre in Raichur. The borewell water is of limited use for agricultural purposes as the groundwater is 'moderately alkaline'. "This is a land of two rivers but there is no water. This has been the case from my childhood," says Laxmanna Gouda, a farmer and an agricultural activist from Raichur.

In 1993, the Karnataka government took up work on the Ganekal balancing reservoir (locals call it the Bangarappa tank) on the Tungabhadra left bank canal. The 0.75 TMC reservoir was a lifeline for the residents of Lingsugur and Raichur during drought years. Water from the reservoir is released every two days through canals to fill small water ponds used for drinking purposes.

Gouda pins hope on the proposed national river-linking project to help make a living out of his 13-acre land. "When all the rivers are linked there will be no water shortage in the country. Now a lot of water flows into the sea while farmers are left high and dry. We have become single crop farmers. My grandfather used to tell us how they used to grow two crops. But due to mismanagement of water, we have been reduced to this state," says Gouda. On a smaller scale, there is a project to link the Gugal barrage on the Krishna river with the Bangarappa tank on the Tungabhadra river. This will supply water to 120 villages. "Yes, there is a plan to link the two water bodies. We have done a preliminary survey but work is yet to begin as clearances have to be secured," says an executive engineer of Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam Limited, which manages the water resource.

"Raichur and other areas of Karnataka have many traditional systems of water harvesting and storage which replenish the water table. Big water projects are unsustainable. Before a river-linking project is planned, we need to think about the people and the potential of the rivers. Both the Krishna and the Tungabhadra are non-perennial rain-fed systems that emerge out of the Western Ghats. There is no way to assess the water supply or find out when there will be extra supply," says V.G. Govindankutty, a geographer who has studied water bodies and their use in the region. He says only community water management can help the villagers. Munn too favoured a community-based approach to solve the water crisis in Raichur. He calculated that one well is sufficient for 500 people and one pulley for 100 people. But his proposal has few takers in the age of big multi-crore projects.

A subject of conflict

Linking the water bodies is easier said than done as the Krishna river water has been a subject of conflict among the four States through which it passes. Starting as a small stream in the upper reaches of the Western Ghats in Mahabaleshwar, the river flows through Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and into the Bay of Bengal through Andhra Pradesh. It traverses a journey of about 1,400 km. In Karnataka, it flows for about 480 km before entering Telangana. Almatti is one of the biggest dams on the river with a gross storage capacity of 123.08 TMC. Only after water is released from this dam does it reach the Narayanpur project. A hundred kilometres downstream is the Gugal barrage in Raichur, and then it travels another 20 km to Girjapur, before reaching the Jurala project in Telangana. The parched land soaks up the water. And then there are a series of dams and reservoirs that hold the key to water security to the region. But they are also potential triggers for water wars as the lower riparian States get inadequate flows.

As its thirst remains unquenched, Raichur may well be the battleground for water wars in the region.

FROM PAGE ONE

India lifts restrictions on its airspace

"Temporary restrictions on all air routes in the Indian airspace imposed by the Indian Air Force on 27 February 2019 have been removed," the IAF posted on Twitter. The IAF communicated its decision in a letter to the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Pakistan shut its airspace for all flights on February 27 following the IAF airstrike at a Jaish-e-Mohammad camp in Balakot. According to Indian officials, 11 entry and exit points, which are located between Jammu and Kashmir and Gujarat, were also closed for flights to and from Pakistan as a reciprocal measure.

The government official also said that AAI has written to U.N.'s aviation watchdog, International Civil Aviation Organisation, as well as countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Oman and Iran informing them of the decision.

Since the imposition of its ban, Pakistan has gradually opened its airspace for most airlines, barring those that enter the country from its eastern border after traversing India.

On May 29, Pakistan extended its three-month long ban for flights from and through India until June 15.

As many as six international airlines have been forced to cancel a total of 33 weekly flights to Delhi due to the ban.

"For the first two weeks of June, 4258 passengers are affected. Majority of them are students from different parts of CIS studying in India and planning a trip home for their summer break," said Air Astana's Regional Manager for Gulf and Indian subcontinent Karlygash Omurbayeva.

'Sri Lanka eager to welcome PM Modi'

He also extended support to regional frameworks like Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation as effective mechanisms that can help the dialogue process at regional and bilateral levels on necessary issues.

Mr. Sirisena was one of the BIMSTEC leaders invited to participate in the swearing-in ceremony of Mr. Modi and his Council of Ministers.

The visiting leader announced that the political process of Sri Lanka will not be interrupted by the terror attacks and subsequent social tension.

"Elections in Sri Lanka will be held on December 9. None of the political parties, both the ruling and those in the Opposition, have decided upon the names of the candidates. Therefore I am not in a hurry either," said Mr. Sirisena assuring that his government will ensure stability in the poll-bound country and prevent any backlash against the Muslim community, which has faced violence in recent weeks after the Easter attacks.

The April 21 attacks that killed at least 253 and injured hundreds were among the worst that the country had witnessed in recent years after the end of the war against the Tamil Tigers in 2009. Indian security agencies had shared advance information about the attacks but Mr. Sirisena acknowledged officials in his country had failed to act on the input.

"I was in Singapore at the time of the attacks. A clear report was sent by Indian agencies on 4 April to Sri Lanka. I left on 16 April. However none of the defence chiefs informed me about the intelligence warnings from India," said the visiting President, promising necessary disciplinary action against those found negligent.

Investigation into the attacks showed that the suicide bombers and the support group came from wealthy sections of Sri Lankan society. Mr. Sirisena said the perpetrators did not visit India during plotting of the attacks. "The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attacks. But I have not received any report from my officials informing that the bombers had visited India."

Scholarship for wards of defence personnel hiked

The scheme is meant to encourage technical and post-graduate education for widows and wards of deceased personnel of the armed forces, the paramilitary forces and the Railway Protection Force, the PMO statement said. The National Defence Fund is administered by an executive committee that has the Prime Minister as the chairperson and the Defence, Finance and Home Ministers as members.

Under the scheme, new scholarships are given to 5,500 wards of armed forces personnel, 2,000 wards of paramilitary forces personnel and 150 wards of forces under the Railways Ministry every year.

Reply sought from Raja, Kanimozhi on CBI pleas

Agency wants early hearing in 2G case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday sought the response of former Telecom Minister A. Raja, DMK MP Kanimozhi and others on a plea by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) seeking an early hearing on the appeals challenging their acquittal in the 2G spectrum allocation case.

The High Court had previously posted the case for hearing on October 24, but the CBI wanted it to be advanced to an early date.

When the CBI's application came up for hearing, Justice A.K. Chawla asked, "What is the urgency now?" Central government standing counsel Ripu Daman Bhardwaj responded that the 2G case was of national importance, with international ramifications.

The High Court then issued notices to all the individuals and firms, acquitted in the case, and posted the CBI's application for hearing on July 30.

In December 2017, a Special CBI Court here had acquitted Mr. Raja, Ms. Kanimozhi and others in the CBI and Enforcement Directorate cases, noting that the prosecution had "miserably failed" to prove the charges.

It had also acquitted 17 others, including late DMK chief M. Karunanidhi's wife Dayalu Ammal. Vinod Goenka, Asif Balwa, film producer Karim Morani, P. Amirtham and Sharad Kumar, director of Kalaignar TV in the ED case, were also acquitted.

PM stresses close bilateral ties

Meets foreign leaders who attended the swearing-in ceremony

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held meetings with the visiting foreign leaders who attended the swearing-in ceremony on May 30. At the meetings, he urged for a closer multilateral and bilateral cooperation.

President of Kyrgyz Repubic, Sooranbay Jeenbekov, was the first to meet Mr. Modi, hours after the event at the Forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The visiting side reiterated the invite to him to visit capital Bishkek for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit meeting in June. Kyrgyz Republic is the current SCO chair.

Strong ties: Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering with Narendra Modi on Friday. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

May meet Pak. PM

The SCO summit is significant as it will provide an opportunity for a meeting between Mr. Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping. He is also expected to come across Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan during the ceremonies.

Mr. Modi met with the leaders of the BIMSTEC grouping on Friday. During his meeting with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, both the leaders noted the threat that terrorism poses to humanity. It was the first such high-level between the two sides after the April 21 Easter bombings in Sri Lanka. A press release from MEA said both sides would cooperate for the Indian Ocean and South Asian region.

Mr. Modi also met with the Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth. A press release from MEA noted that both leaders agreed to work together to achieve the shared vision of security and growth of the two countries and the Indian Ocean region.

Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli of Nepal, Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering and President of Bangladesh Mohammed Abdul Hamid also met Mr. Modi and discussed issues of bilateral interest.

We cherish press freedom: Javadekar

Begins second stint as I&B Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prakash Javadekar

Taking over as Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister, Prakash Javadekar on Friday said that "freedom of press is the essence of democracy" and was a value cherished by the Narendra Modi government.

This is the second time he will be handling the Ministry. He had held the position during the first six months of the Modi government's first tenure.

"Freedom of press is the essence of democracy. We not only recognise it but cherish it. The only instance of curtailment of freedom of press in post-Independent India was during the 1975 Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi," he said.

Mr. Javadekar said that he was part of the movement helmed by Jai Prakash Narayan to fight the Emergency. "I am very happy that press freedom was restored because of our struggle. I was jailed for 16 months during the movement," he said.

Mr. Javadekar handled many portfolios during the first tenure of Modi government. He also held the charge of Minister of State with Independent Charge in the Ministry of Environment and Forests for two years. In 2016, he was made the Human Resources Development Minister.

Most recently, he was the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in charge of Rajasthan where, just months after the Congress's victory in the Assembly polls, the BJP managed to sweep the Lok Sabha polls.

He has had a long association with the media, being one of the most visible spokespersons for the party.

Congress MPs-elect to meet today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) will have a meeting of its newly-elected Lok Sabha members on Saturday when the party could choose a new leader to head the Parliamentary group. Former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi currently heads the CPP but this could change if its president Rahul Gandhi insists on stepping down as party chief.

Party insiders said Mr. Gandhi could be asked to either head the CPP or lead the party in the Lok Sabha.

With 52 MPs in Lok Sabha, the Congress doesn't qualify to get the official Leader of the Opposition. But the party would need to choose a new leader in the Lok Sabha as its previous leader, Mallikarjun Kharge, lost the election in his constituency.

The *de facto* No. 2 in the Cabinet

As with his stint in Gujarat, Amit Shah will be second only to Modi in Delhi

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

After a landslide victory in the Assembly election in December 2002, which followed the communal riots earlier in the year, the then Chief Minister (and now Prime Minister Narendra Modi) dropped junior Home Minister Gordhan Zadaphia, a close aide of former CM Keshubhai Patel and staunch VHP loyalist.

He was replaced by Amit Shah, a legislator from Sarkhej, who made it to the Cabinet for the first time. Mr. Shah was made junior Minister of Home and several other departments.

Amit Shah

Power centre

Though a first-time Minister, Mr. Shah had already established himself as a powerful BJP leader in the State. He was chairman of the Gujarat State Financial Corporation (GSFC) and wrested control of the Ahmedabad District Cooperative Bank (ADC) from Congress leader Dasarath Patel in the late 1990s.

Despite his junior rank, he soon emerged as the main trouble shooter for the government, whose writ ran much beyond his own departments. He virtually became No. 2 in the Cabinet, whose opinion was important in all major decisions.

"In the government, No. 2 was Vajubhai Vala, then Finance Minister , but that was only theoretical. For all practical purposes, Amitbhai was the most important person after CM Modi," a retired bureaucrat, who served in several important positions, told *The Hindu*.

From January 2003, when he became a Minister, till July 2010 when he was implicated in the Sohrabuddin Sheikh fake encounter case and arrested by the CBI, Mr. Shah was involved in all major political, administrative and policy decisions of the Gujarat government.

After a brief period of three months in the Sabarmati jail, Mr. Shah was granted bail by the Gujarat High Court but was immediately forced out of the State by the Supreme Court. This forced exile afforded him a rare opportunity to be involved in the BJP's national organisation.

From his base in Delhi, he travelled extensively across the country, particularly Uttar Pradesh to revive the party's organisational base before the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

After the party's victory in 2014, Mr. Shah became party president replacing Rajnath Singh. In August 2017, he became a Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat.

In 2019, Mr. Shah replaced party patriarch L.K. Advani to contest from Gandhinagar. Mr. Advani, who held the seat for more than two decades, was Deputy PM and Home Minister till 2004 in the Vajpayee cabinet. Now, almost a decade and half later, the MP from Gandhinagar is again Union Home Minister.

And again, Mr. Shah may not be No. 2 in the Cabinet by seniority, but *de facto*, he will be the No. 2 in every respect in the Union government.

U.S. reiterates threat of sanctions over Triumf deal

'Acquisition of missile sends the wrong message to Russia'

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

India should not assume it will get a waiver from U.S. sanctions if it goes ahead with its purchase of the S-400 Triumf missile shield from Russia, Washington made it clear on Thursday. The purchase could also hamper the future of Indo-U.S. defence relationship, an official said.

"The [U.S.] President has been very clear that the acquisition of advanced Russian technology sends the wrong message to Russia at a time when it continues its aggressions in Ukraine, has interfered in our internal elections...And so those concerns...we hold high," a senior State Department official told a group of reporters on Thursday.

Caught in a crossfire: The S-400 surface-to-air missile system at a military base near Kaliningrad in Russia. ▪ REUTERS

$5 billion deal

India had committed last October to purchasing a Russian S-400 Triumf long-range missile defence shield for about $5 billion.

The deal has run the risk of attracting sanctions from the U.S. under a 2017 law – the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

While sanctions can kick in only when payments start being made for the S-400, the U.S. Congress's annual defence budget authorisation, the National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA) passed last year, allows the President to grant waivers from CAATSA sanctions under certain conditions.

The State Department official emphasised, however, that a CAATSA waiver was not automatic and it was for the President to grant waivers on a case-by-case basis.

This view that India should not bank on a waiver appears to be consistent across U.S. government departments.

Conditional waiver

"We have serious concerns about the S-400, and we would not encourage any country to rely on waiver status for the purchase of any prohibited Russian items, especially the S-400," a senior administration official had separately told *The Hindu* on May 24. "The irony of the U.S. pressing India on the S-400 is that several former U.S. defence officials have praised the military utility of Russian platforms like Brahmos cruise missiles and the S-400 system enabling India to face off against China. The U.S. can't offer comparable anti-access/area denial capabilities," said Sameer Lalwani, who heads the South Asia program at the Stimson Center, a non-partisan think-tank in Washington DC.

Purchasing the S-400 would preclude a deep and broad defence relationship with the U.S, the official said.

India is currently in discussions to buy various other U.S. defence equipment including combat aircraft and the Sea Guardian drones.

India to lose preferential trade terms with U.S.

Withdrawal of GSP benefits imminent

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

India will lose access to preferential trade terms with the U.S. under the latter's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme, a Senior State Department official told reporters in Washington DC on Thursday.

The official, who did not want to be named, said the restoration of benefits remained a possibility if underlying trade issues were resolved, but the withdrawal of India's GSP eligibility, was "a done deal".

"...The persistent market access issues, which we were engaged with ... our Indian counterparts over the last year [sic], led us to announce in March that we would be suspending or withdrawing India's benefits under the Generalised System Preferences programme...I think that suspension is a done deal."

Donald Trump

Access to markets

President Donald Trump had written to the U.S. Congress on March 4 stating his intention to withdraw GSP benefits for India, saying India had failed to assure Washington that it would provide "equitable and reasonable access to the markets of India".

Mr. Trump had issued a similar notification for Turkey as well, on the same day.

Now that the statutory 60-day notification period since Mr. Trump's notification is over, GSP can and is expected to be terminated via a Presidential proclamation. Mr. Trump terminated Turkey's GSP program effective May 17.

However, U.S. lawmakers had written to the administration, asking that a final decision be put on hold until the Indian elections concluded. Twenty-five lawmakers also wrote to the administration in May to request that GSP benefits not be cancelled as it would represent "a step back, not forward" and harm U.S. companies.

The lawmakers had urged further negotiations with India. Indian exports to the U.S. worth $5.6 billion are covered by GSP, although India gets only $190 million in tariff savings.

Nevertheless, the programme impacts crucial Indian sectors including textiles, leather, engineering goods, gems and jewellery.

IN BRIEF

Amit Shah, Rajnath yet to assume charge

NEW DELHI

Newly appointed Union Ministers of Home and Defence Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh did not take charge on Friday. The two Ministers, however, attended the Union Cabinet meeting headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was the first meeting after the BJP returned to power for a second time. The senior Ministers are expected to assume charge on Saturday. Home Ministry officials have prepared a presentation on key internal security issues for Mr. Shah.

Opposition cancels review meeting

NEW DELHI

The scheduled meeting of Opposition parties that was to be held on Friday has been cancelled due to unavailability of a majority of the leaders. The exercise was initiated by the Congress after reports from Bihar and many other States talked about discrepancy in the number of votes polled and the number of votes counted in the just-concluded Lok Sabha elections. The parties also wanted to discuss the floor strategy for the upcoming Parliament Session. The majority of the leaders are busy introspecting on the losses faced by their parties.

Mamata focusses on organisation

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday held a meeting of the Trinamool's core committee, and directed senior leaders to be present at party offices daily. Ms. Banerjee drew up a roster of leaders who would have to attend the party headquarters. She assigned responsibilities at the party's new socio-cultural unit to key leaders. While Ministers Bratya Basu and Indranil Sen would be in charge of the *Jai Hind Bahini*, Kakoli Ghosh Dasidar, MP, was tasked with oversight of the *Banga Janini Bahini* for women. Meanwhile, BJP State president Dilip Ghosh said two berths for West Bengal in the Union Ministry was less than what the State leadership had expected.

Defence Secretary gets three-month extension

NEW DELHI

Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra was on Friday given a three month extension in office by the government. He took over as Defence Secretary on May 24, 2017 and was set to retire on May 31. Mr. Mitra is a 1982 batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre.

Taking charge

The portfolios of 9 Ministers of State (Independent charge) and 24 Ministers of State were announced on Friday. The Culture and Tourism portfolio, which was bifurcated in the previous government, is now under the charge of one Minister: Prahlad Singh Patel. The Ministers include eight-term BJP MP from Uttar Pradesh, Santosh Kumar Gangwar, who is Minister of State with Independent charge for Labour and Employment

MINISTERS OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)

Santosh Kumar Gangwar — Labour and Employment
Rao Inderjit Singh — Statistics and Programme Implementation, Planning
Shripad Yesso Naik — AYUSH
Jitendra Singh — Development of NorthEast Region
Kiren Rijiju — Youth Affairs and Sports
Prahalad Singh Patel — Culture and Tourism
Raj Kumar Singh — Power & New and Renewable Energy
Hardeep Singh Puri — Housing and Urban Affairs & Civil Aviation
Mansukh L. Mandaviya — Shipping

MINISTERS OF STATE

Faggansingh Kulaste — Steel
Ashwini Kumar Choubey — Health and Family Welfare
Arjun Ram Meghwal — Parliamentary Affairs & Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
Gen. V.K. Singh — Road Transport and Highways
Krishan Pal — Social Justice and Empowerment
Danve Raosaheb Dadarao — Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
G. Kishan Reddy — Home Affairs
Parshottam Rupala — Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
Ramdas Athawale — Social Justice and Empowerment
Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti — Rural Development
Babul Supriyo — Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Sanjeev Kumar Balyan — Animal Husbandry, Dairy, Fisheries
Dhotre Sanjay Shamrao — HRD, Communications & Electronics and Information Technology
Anurag Singh Thakur — Finance & Corporate Affairs
Angadi Suresh Channabasappa — Railways
Nityanand Rai — Home Affairs
Rattan Lal Kataria — Jal Shakti & Social Justice and Empowerment
V. Muraleedharan — External Affairs & Parliamentary Affairs
Renuka Singh Saruta — Tribal Affairs
Som Parkash — Commerce and Industry
Rameswar Teli — Food Processing Industries
Pratap Chandra Sarangi — MSME & Animal Husbandy, Dairy, and Fisheries
Kailash Choudhary — Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
Debasree Chaudhuri — Women and Child Development

The list of MoS for other portfolios: Shripad Naik: Defence; Raj Kumar Singh: Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; Hardeep Singh Puri: Commerce and Industry; Mansukh Mandaviya: Chemicals and Fertilizers; Kiren Rijiju: Minority Affairs; Jitendra Singh: PMO, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space

IN BRIEF

Big-bang reforms soon: NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman

NEW DELHI

In the first 100 days of PM Narendra Modi's second term, 'big-bang' economic reforms, including changes in labour laws, privatisation moves, and creation of land banks are likely, said Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog. REUTERS

'51 Ministers crorepatis, 22 face criminal cases'

NEW DELHI

Of the 56 Ministers who took oath on Thursday and are part of either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, 51 are crorepatis and 22 have declared criminal cases against them, according to election watchdog Association for Democratic Reforms. PTI

Minister removed from Tripura Cabinet

AGARTALA

Tripura Health Minister Sudip Roy Barman has been removed from the BJP-led coalition government in the State. Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb, who was unhappy with him for his alleged anti-party activities, effected the change late on Friday night. PTI

Farm focus at first Cabinet meet

PM-KISAN scheme to cover all land-owning farm families, along with pension

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Farmers welfare was at the top of the agenda at the first meeting of the new Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, fulfilling major promises in the BJP's election manifesto.

The Cabinet cleared proposals to extend the ₹6,000 annual income support scheme to all land-owning farm families, create contributory pension schemes for small farmers and traders on the lines of the existing scheme for workers in the unorganised sector and control and ultimately eradicate foot-and-mouth disease among livestock.

First day: Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his office in New Delhi on Friday. ▪SANDEEP SAXENA

Game changer

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) was originally the big-ticket announcement of the last Budget before the election, acknowledging that farmers faced declining incomes, and was meant to cover 12 crore beneficiaries.

In its manifesto, the BJP had promised to extend the scheme to all eligible farm families, irrespective of the amount of land they owned.

"A number of States have not sent the information on their farmers, so they have not got the benefits. However, more than three crore farmers have already received benefits under the scheme," newly inducted Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar told presspersons after the Cabinet meeting.

The extension to a total of 14.5 crore farmers means that the scheme will now cost the exchequer ₹87,000 crore a year.

Small farmers and retail traders will now benefit from new contributory pension schemes, similar to the scheme for unorganised sector workers which was introduced in the last Budget.

For small farmers

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Pension Yojana aims to cover five crore small and marginal farmers, with the government expecting to spend ₹10,774.5 crore on the scheme over a three-year period. The traders' pension scheme will cover three crore shopkeepers, retail traders and self-employed persons with a Goods and Services Tax (GST) turnover below ₹1.5 crore.

Both schemes have an entry age of 18-40 years, and subscribers will contribute between ₹55 to ₹100, with the government matching the amount. Once they cross 60 years, they will receive a pension of ₹3,000 per month.

Nitish wanted 'proportional representation' in Ministry

Didn't want to settle for 'symbolic' presence with one berth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA

BJP president Amit Shah made repeated attempts to make Janata Dal(U) president Nitish Kumar accept his proposal to give one berth in the Modi Cabinet for the party. However, the Bihar Chief Minister spurned the offer, insisting on "proportional representation".

Mr. Kumar, who returned here on Friday from the national capital after attending the swearing-in of the Narendra Modi government, however, said there was no "unease" between the alliance partners and that the decision against joining the Ministry was taken as the JD(U)'s presence there would have been merely "symbolic".

No compromise: Despite Amit Shah's efforts, Nitish Kumar refused to accept one Cabinet berth for the JD(U). ▪FILE PHOTO

Offered a Cabinet berth

He said Mr. Shah had called him up on May 28, and said he wanted to meet him for discussions the next day.

He said the two met in New Delhi where the BJP chief told him that his party wanted to share power with all NDA constituents, and suggested that the JD(U) accept a Cabinet berth.

"I kept listening to him and the sense I had was that it was to be a symbolic presence for the JD(U) in the government. I didn't want that. Still, as he insisted, I told him I will consult my party and get back to him," Mr. Kumar told presspersons. He said he consulted the JD(U) office-bearers and MPs – 16 in the Lok Sabha and six in the Rajya Sabha – on the issue.

"The unanimous view was that we should stay out of the Ministry. Everybody felt there should be proportional representation in an alliance government," the Bihar Chief Minister said.

Asked how that proportional representation would have been determined, he said the number could be reached by taking into account the seats each party won countrywide or in Bihar.

Mr. Kumar said he did not convey to Mr. Shah the number of seats he wanted for his party in the Ministry.

Media reports say his talks with the BJP leadership collapsed as he insisted on a Cabinet berth and two Ministers of State, one of them with independent charge.

Double spend on education, says NEP draft

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Doubling the percentage of public expenditure on education, setting up an overarching National Education Commission as well as a National Research Foundation, encouraging primary school education in the mother tongue and incorporating traditional Indian knowledge systems into the curriculum are among the key recommendations of the draft National Education Policy released on Friday.

This is the first NEP in almost three decades; the last time such a policy was formulated was in 1986, with amendments made in 1992.

More consultations

"Further consultations are needed with States and other stakeholders," new Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank told presspersons after taking charge of the Ministry and accepting the draft policy, which has faced repeated delays over the past five years.

The policy is available online, and the HRD Ministry is soliciting public and expert feedback till June 30.

The draft policy recommends the creation of a National Education Commission (NEC) or Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA) as an apex body for Indian education, to be headed by the Prime Minister of India, with a mandate beyond the current HRD Ministry.

Warm welcome: MoS Anurag Singh Thakur greeting Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Friday. ▪PTI

First House session from June 17, Budget on July 5

Speaker to be elected on June 19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The first session of the 17th Lok Sabha will begin on June 17 and go on till July 26.

Nirmala Sitharaman, the country's first full-time woman Finance Minister, will present the Union Budget on July 5.

The decision was taken during the first Cabinet meeting of the newly elected government.

"This will be a fruitful session, and we hope that all parties will cooperate," Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said at a briefing, following the meeting.

The first two days of the session will be dedicated to oath-taking of the new members.

On July 19, the new Speaker will be elected. With 353 members, the NDA is in a comfortable majority giving it a wide leeway on picking anyone for the post.

The House will once again not have a Leader of Opposition, a Cabinet-rank position, since none of the Opposition parties meets the eligibility criterion.

Congress is three short

The leader of the largest Opposition party that has not less than one-tenth of the total strength of the House is appointed the Leader of the Opposition. The Lok Sabha has 545 members. So the required number is 55.

The Congress, which is the second largest party in the House after the BJP, has only 52 members, three short of the mark.

On June 20, the joint session of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha will be addressed by President Ramnath Kovind.

The President's address usually is a window to government policies and development plans ahead.

Following the norm, the economic survey will be tabled on July 4, a day ahead of the presentation of the Budget.

Sanitation sidelined in rejig of water-related Ministries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Drinking Water and Sanitation (DWS) Ministry seems to be an orphan for now, with confusion over which Minister is in charge of it under the new government.

The Ministry was not mentioned in the list of portfolios allocated on Friday. "The new Jal Shakti Ministry will merge several other Ministries, but the specifics are still not clear," a senior official told *The Hindu*. "Further clarity is required."

After taking charge at the office of the Ministry of Water Resources, new Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat told reporters, "All the water related works will be merged under one Ministry," reported news agency PTI.

However, at the Ministry of DWS, one official said the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), which is responsible for all unallotted Ministries, was in charge.

Another official, however, said the Ministry was "still awaiting the official change of Allocation of Business Rules to be issued by the Cabinet."

The official added, "Hopefully it'll come soon."

ELSEWHERE

Indian-origin official picked for UN Women

UNITED NATIONS

Indian-origin official Anita Bhatia, a veteran in strategic partnerships and resource mobilisation, has been appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as the Deputy Executive Director in UN Women, the agency focussed on women empowerment and gender equality. PTI

Iran's nuclear materials stock within limit: IAEA

TEHRAN

Iran's stocks of key nuclear materials have increased but are still within the limits set by a 2015 deal, the latest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report said on Friday. As of 20 May, Iran had 174.1 kg of enriched uranium, up from 163.8 kg in February but again well within the relevant limit of 300 kg. Further, the country's stock of heavy water, at 125.2 metric tonnes, was within the 130-tonne limit. AFP

1,300 civilians killed in anti-IS fight: coalition

BEIRUT

The U.S.-led coalition said Friday it had unintentionally killed more than 1,300 civilians in air strikes during its fight against the Islamic State (IS) group in Iraq and Syria since 2014. However, in a report released last month, Amnesty and air strike monitor Airwars found that air strikes killed 1,600 civilians just in the four-month blitz to oust IS from the Syrian city of Raqqa. AFP

Riyadh seeks firm action against Iran

Saudi King Salman tells Arab leaders that Tehran's actions pose a risk to regional and global security

REUTERS
MECCA

Saudi Arabia's King Salman told an emergency Arab summit on Friday that decisive action was needed to stop Iranian "escalations" following attacks on Gulf oil assets, as U.S. officials said a military deployment had deterred Tehran.

The right of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to defend their interests after the attacks on oil pumping stations in the kingdom and tankers off the UAE were supported in a Gulf Arab statement and a separate communiqué issued after the wider summit.

Tehran denies any involvement in the attacks. Iraq, which has good ties both with neighbouring Iran and the U.S., said it objected to the Arab communiqué, which stated that any cooperation with Tehran should be based on "non-interference in other countries".

"The absence of a firm deterrent stance against Iranian behaviour is what led to the escalation we see today," King Salman told the two consecutive meetings late on Thursday.

Oil price

The ruler of the world's top crude exporter said Shia Iran's development of nuclear and missile capabilities and its threats on world oil supplies posed a risk to regional and global security.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Thursday that attacks on four vessels near a major bunkering hub, just outside the Strait of Hormuz, were "efforts by Iranians to raise the price of crude oil around the world".

Riyadh accused Tehran of ordering the drone strikes. The attacks were claimed by the Iran-aligned Houthi group, which has been battling a Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen for four years. U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton said on Thursday that evidence of Iran being behind the tanker attacks would be presented to the UN Security Council as early as next week. "The Kingdom is keen to preserve the stability and security of the region, to spare it the scourge of war and to realise peace and stability," King Salman said.

Iraq's plea

Iraqi President Barham Salih, asking the gathering to support Iraq's stability, said that rising tensions with Iran could spark a war if not managed well and voiced hope that Iran's security would not be targeted.

Mr. Pompeo has warned Iraqi leaders that if they failed to keep in check Iran-backed militias, which now form part of Baghdad's security apparatus, the U.S. would respond with force.

Tensions have risen between the U.S. and Iran after President Donald Trump a year ago withdrew Washington from a 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran, re-imposed sanctions and boosted its military presence in the Gulf. Mr. Bolton has said Iranian mines were "almost certainly" used in the tanker attacks.

The final communiqué said regional stability required the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along 1967 borders to include Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

U.S. special envoy for Iran, Brian Hook, said on Thursday that a repositioning of U.S. military assets in the region had deterred Iran, but that the U.S. would respond with military force if its interests are targeted.

Emergency meet: From left, Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, Saudi Arabia's King Salman and Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi in Mecca on Thursday. ▪AP

'Saudi Arabia is sowing division'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

Tehran accused Riyadh Friday of "sowing division" in the region to Israel's advantage, after the Kingdom hosted summits of Gulf and Arab leaders to rally support against the Islamic republic.

Saudi Arabia has "continued to sow division between Islamic countries and in the region, which is the wish of the Zionist regime," Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi said. "We see the attempts by Saudi Arabia to rally neighbouring and Arab countries against Iran as the continuation of futile attempts by America and the Zionist regime," he added.

Mr. Mousavi expressed disappointment that Riyadh intended to level the same "baseless allegations" against Tehran at a summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Mecca early on Saturday, "exploiting" its role as host.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman on Friday ratcheted up the rhetoric against arch-rival Iran, calling on Arab states to confront its "criminal" actions after attacks on oil installations sparked fears of a regional conflagration.

Tehran dismissed the accusation as "laughable" and accused the U.S. of pursuing "evil desires for chaos in the region."

'Assange has suffered psychological torture'

UN official expresses serious concerns

REUTERS
GENEVA

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has suffered psychological torture from a defamation campaign and should not be extradited to the U.S. where he would face a "politicised show trial", a UN human rights investigator said on Friday.

Nils Melzer, the UN special rapporteur on torture who visited Mr. Assange in a high-security London prison on May 9 along with two medical experts, said that he found him agitated, under severe stress and unable to cope with his complex legal case.

"Our finding was that Mr. Assange shows all the symptoms of a person who has been exposed to psychological torture for a prolonged period of time. The psychiatrist who accompanied my mission said that his state of health was critical," Mr. Melzer told Reuters in an interview in Geneva.

Too ill to appear

Mr. Assange was too ill on Thursday to appear via video link from a British prison in a hearing on an extradition request from the U.S., his lawyer Gareth Peirce said. He is in a health ward.

"Mr. Assange has been deliberately exposed, for a period of several years, to progressively severe forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the cumulative effects of which can only be described as psychological torture," Mr. Melzer said in a statement. British Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt, in a tweet posted within minutes of Mr. Melzer's statement, said: "This is wrong. Assange chose to hide in the embassy and was always free to leave and face justice."

"I am seriously, gravely concerned that if this man were to be extradited to the United States, he would be exposed to a politicised show trial and grave violations of his human rights," Mr. Melzer said.

However, Mr. Melzer said he did not expect U.S. authorities to subject Mr. Assange to physical torture such as water-boarding. "I would much more expect him to be subjected to prolonged solitary confinement, to very harsh detention conditions and to a psychological environment which would break him eventually," said Mr. Melzer

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. ▪AFP

North Korea executed envoy after failed Hanoi summit: report

Kim's interpretor sent to prison camp, says S. Korean paper

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SEOUL

North Korea executed its special envoy to the United States following the collapse of the second summit between leader Kim Jong-un and President Donald Trump, a South Korean newspaper reported on Friday.

The *Chosun Ilbo* said Kim Hyok-chol, who laid the groundwork for the Hanoi meeting and accompanied Mr. Kim on his private train, was executed by firing squad for "betraying the supreme leader" after he was "won over to the U.S." during pre-summit negotiations. "Kim Hyok-chol was executed in March at Mirim Airport along with four senior Foreign Ministry officials following an investigation," the newspaper quoted an unidentified source as saying.

Asked about the account, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington was trying to verify it.

Kim Hyok-chol was the North's counterpart of U.S. special representative Stephen Biegun in the run-up to the Hanoi summit in February. Some previous South Korean reports of North Korean purges and executions have later proved inaccurate.

Kim Hyok-chol, who was North Korea's envoy for U.S. affairs. ▪REUTERS

Other officials punished

The paper also said Mr. Kim's interpreter Shin Hye-yong was sent to a prison camp for a mistake at the summit. She failed to translate Mr. Kim's new proposal when Mr. Trump declared "no deal" and walked away from the table, *Chosun* reported, citing another unnamed diplomatic source.

Senior party official Kim Yong-chol, the North's counterpart to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in nuclear talks, was also sent to a labour camp, the paper said.

In April, South Korea's parliamentary intelligence committee said Kim Yong-chol had been censured over his handling of the summit.

Earlier, the *Chosun Ilbo* had incorrectly reported in 2013 that Hyon Song-wol, head of the North's Samjiyon Orchestra, was executed by firing squad for distributing and watching pornographic material.

News of the reported purge came as North Korea's official *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper, mouthpiece of the ruling party, on Thursday warned that officials who committed anti-party or anti-revolutionary acts would face the "stern judgment of the revolution".

U.S. to hit Mexico with tariffs over migration

First set of fines to be imposed in June

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Washington will impose a 5% tariff on all goods from Mexico – increasing to as much as 25% – until "illegal migrants" stop coming through the country into the U.S., President Donald Trump said on Thursday.

"On June 10th, the United States will impose a 5% Tariff on all goods coming into our Country from Mexico, until such time as illegal migrants coming through Mexico, and into our Country, STOP," he tweeted. "The Tariff will gradually increase until the Illegal Immigration problem is remedied, at which time the Tariffs will be removed," he wrote.

According to a White House statement, the tariff will rise to 10% on July 1, then increase by 5% increments each month until topping out at 25% on October 1. "Tariffs will permanently remain at the 25% level unless and until Mexico substantially stops the illegal inflow of aliens coming through its territory," the statement said. The announcement came the same day that Mr. Trump kick-started the process of ratifying the new North American trade pact with Mexico and Canada – an agreement that now may be under threat.

The tariffs would have severe consequences on Mexico, which sends 80% of its exports to the U.S.

Mexico's response

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador struck a conciliatory tone in a letter to Mr. Trump following the tariff announcement. "I express to you that I don't want confrontation," he wrote. "I propose deepening our dialogue, to look for other alternatives to the migration problem."

The announcement came a day after border agents in El Paso, Texas detained the largest single group of migrants they had ever encountered – 1,036 people.

Use Huawei and lose access to our data, U.S. warns Germany

Pompeo threatens to cut intelligence sharing with Berlin

REUTERS
BERLIN

The U.S. raised the pressure on Western allies in a war of attrition over next-generation networks on Friday, saying countries that allow China's Huawei to build their telecoms infrastructure could be cut off from crucial intelligence data.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued the warning after meeting Foreign Minister Heiko Maas of Germany, which has so far stood with Britain and France in declining calls to ban the state-owned manufacturer.

European tour

Mr. Pompeo, on the first leg of a five-day European tour, said that while countries would take a "sovereign decision" on which equipment to use, that decision would have consequences.

"(There is) a risk we will have to change our behaviour in light of the fact that we can't permit data on private citizens or data on national security to go across networks that we don't have confidence (in)," he told a news conference.

Mike Pompeo with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on Friday. ▪AFP

Mr. Pompeo later met Chancellor Angela Merkel for brief talks before flying on to Switzerland, describing Germany as "a great, important partner and ally of the United States."

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, responding to similar comments on Huawei made by U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence on Thursday, said the U.S. had yet to prove that Huawei's products presented a security risk. "We hope that the United States can stop these mistaken actions which are not at all commensurate with their status and position as a big country," said spokesman Geng Shuang.

Mr. Pompeo also urged Germany to follow Britain in proscribing Lebanon's Hezbollah group.

Won't give up search for Budapest victims: Seoul

21 missing 2 days after boat accident

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BUDAPEST

South Korea vowed on Friday not to give up hope in the search for 21 people still missing two days after a sightseeing boat carrying mainly South Korean tourists sank on the Danube.

Rescuers are battling strong currents on the swollen river in their search for any more survivors of the *Mermaid* sightseeing boat, which overturned and was swallowed by the Danube just seconds after it collided with a much larger cruise ship in pouring rain late on Wednesday. Hungarian police have detained the captain of the river cruise ship involved in the crash.

Emergency task force

South Korea's Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha has arrived in Budapest with a emergency task force and visited the site of the crash on Friday along with her Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijjarto. "We have firmly decided that we won't give up our hopes about the possibility of finding survivors" until all the missing are located, she told a press conference.

But the prospects of finding any more survivors are seen as slim, as attempts by Hungarian police and army rescuers to find the victims and reach the submerged vessel are hampered by fast-flowing currents. Only seven people are known to have survived so far.

A woman paying tribute to the victims of the accident in Budapest, Hungary. ▪REUTERS

MARKET WATCH

	31-05-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	39,714	-0.30
US Dollar	69.70	0.24
Gold	33,170	0.91
Brent oil	64.79	-3.67

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	416.40	7.10
Asian Paints	1407.30	32.70
Axis Bank	808.30	0.75
Bajaj Auto	2925.90	-19.10
Bajaj Finserv	8187.95	-38.95
Bajaj Finance	3467.10	-14.55
Bharti Airtel	348.80	2.10
BPCL	409.35	1.70
Britannia Ind	2921.95	34.80
Cipla	558.85	-3.10
Coal India	253.50	0.55
Dr Reddys Lab	2678.35	25.95
Eicher Motors	19947.75	56.25
GAIL (India)	361.00	1.75
Grasim Ind	886.10	-25.35
HCL Tech	1092.55	14.35
HDFC	2182.65	-1.75
HDFC Bank	2425.35	-14.20
Hero MotoCorp	2680.25	-34.95
Hindalco	197.00	-1.55
Hind Unilever	1788.50	4.25
Indiabulls HFL	786.55	12.50
ICICI Bank	423.70	-2.50
IndusInd Bank	1605.35	18.45
Bharti Infratel	269.00	-2.90
Infosys	737.75	4.20
Indian OilCorp	165.55	3.60
ITC	278.55	-10.10
JSW Steel	271.70	-4.90
Kotak Bank	1522.15	-13.20
L&T	1557.55	-1.05
M&M	647.05	-14.65
Maruti Suzuki	6869.85	2.15
NTPC	133.25	-1.85
ONGC	171.95	2.50
PowerGrid Corp	189.30	-1.90
Reliance Ind	1330.15	0.40
State Bank	352.50	-1.05
Sun Pharma	409.85	-2.90
Tata Motors	172.60	-2.55
Tata Steel	488.30	0.35
TCS	2196.55	50.25
Tech Mahindra	760.35	25.35
Titan	1235.75	-4.85
UltraTech Cement	4760.10	1.20
UPL	998.95	-6.90
Vedanta	160.55	-3.45
Wipro	286.40	-1.60
YES Bank	147.80	-7.20
Zee Entertainment	357.45	-7.80

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 31

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	69.48	69.80
Euro	77.51	77.87
British Pound	87.42	87.83
Japanese Yen (100)	63.86	64.16
Chinese Yuan	10.05	10.10
Swiss Franc	69.11	69.43
Singapore Dollar	50.39	50.62
Canadian Dollar	51.30	51.54
Malaysian Ringitt	16.57	16.66

Source:Indian Bank

Tight-fisted Centre meets deficit target

Fiscal deficit came in at 3.39% as against the 3.4% projected in the revised estimates of the Budget

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Fiscal deficit for 2018-19 came in at 3.39% of the GDP (gross domestic product), marginally lower than the 3.4% projected in the revised estimates of the Budget, mainly on account of lower expenditure and increase in non-tax revenue.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit at the end of March 31, 2019, stood at ₹6.45 lakh crore as against ₹6.34 lakh crore in the revised estimates of the Budget.

The fiscal deficit for 2018-19 works out to 3.39% of the GDP, as per data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

Although in absolute terms the fiscal deficit has gone up, as a percentage of GDP, the deficit figure has come down marginally, mainly on account of gross domestic product expansion in 2018-19.

GDP at current market prices in 2018-19 is estimated at ₹190.10 lakh crore, a 11.2% growth over ₹170.95 lakh crore in 2017-18.

Non-tax revenues during the 2018-19 fiscal stood at ₹2.46 lakh crore, marginally higher than the ₹2.45 lakh crore in the revised estimates of Budget.

Under check: An increase in non-tax revenue also contributed to the lower fiscal deficit. ▪ GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

Tax revenue lagged at ₹13.16 lakh crore during the last fiscal

However, tax revenue lagged at ₹13.16 lakh crore during the last fiscal, as against ₹14.84 lakh crore in the revised estimates.

Total receipts stood at ₹16.66 lakh crore during the fiscal, compared to ₹18.22 lakh crore in the revised estimates.

Total expenditure at the end of 2018-19 fiscal was lower at ₹23.11 lakh crore as both capital and revenue expenditure were less than what was projected in the revised estimates. In the revised estimates, the government had projected the total expenditure at ₹24.57 lakh crore.

The CGA data also showed that fiscal deficit in April, the first month of 2019-20 fiscal, stood at 22.3% of the Budget estimates.

In absolute terms, the deficit stood at ₹1.57 lakh crore in April, while the full 2019-20 budget estimate is about ₹7.04 lakh crore.

Fiscal deficit, which is the difference between expenditure and revenue, was originally budgeted at 3.3% for 2018-19.

Upward revision

However, the government later revised upward the deficit to 3.4% in the revised estimates of 2018-19 Budget to accommodate extra spending on account of schemes for farmers.

For 2019-20, the fiscal deficit is budgeted at 3.4% of the gross domestic product.

Sensex pares losses after intraday drop of about 700 points

Financial sector stocks swing wildly

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Ahead of the announcement of portfolios of the Ministers sworn-in on Friday, the stock market witnessed a bout of extreme volatility with the benchmark Sensex shedding about 700 points – falling from 40,000 levels to the day's low of 39,374 – and quickly recouping a large part of the losses, as investors placed bets amid the uncertainty over portfolio distribution.

The 30-share Sensex, which touched a high of 40,122.34 in the morning session, finally settled the day at 39,714.20, a decline of 117.77 points or 0.3%. The broader Nifty fell 23.10 points to close at 11,922.80.

The Bank Nifty index also witnessed a sharp drop in the forenoon session but staged a recovery soon after.

Interestingly, market participants, while welcoming the appointment of Nirmala Sitharaman as the new Finance Minister, acknowledged the fact that the Rajya Sabha member's portfolio did take the market by surprise.

"The allocation came as a surprise, but I will say [Ms.] Nirmala [Sitharaman] has done a fairly good job as Defence Minister and proved her acumen. I think she fits the bill better than anyone else," said Garima Kapoor, economist, Elara Capital.

"After [Arun] Jaitley, she's the best bet that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi could have had as she has worked in the Finance Ministry as MoS (Minister of State), has domain knowledge as she is an economics post-graduate and also

worked in the sector, so all the main boxes are ticked. Simplification of GST, measures to revive consumption, recapitalisation of public sector banks and addressing the dislocation in financial sector, especially NBFCs, remain key tasks to address," she added.

In a similar context, Amar Ambani, president and research head, Yes Securities, said that Ms. Sitharaman had done justice to the portfolios she had managed so far, while presenting proper facts and figures.

Weak sentiment

The market sentiment remained weak on Friday with almost 1,600 stocks losing ground against less than 1,000 gainers.

While the broader market breadth was in line with the trend visible in the markets in most of the trading sessions when the benchmarks lost ground, the knee-jerk fall and the ensuing recovery were primarily due to intraday swings in financial sector stocks.

The Sensex pack saw as many as 19 declines with HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, M&M and Yes Bank contributing to the index's losses.

IL&FS probe: ED to quiz directors of 14 firms

The companies have a total exposure of ₹10,000 cr. towards the crisis-ridden firm

SHARAD VYAS
MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate has called in for questioning, directors of 14 companies as part of a money laundering probe into the affairs of crisis-ridden Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd. (IL&FS).

SFIO charge sheet

A day after the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) filed its first charge sheet on the irregularities at IL&FS and ILFS Financial Services Ltd. (IFIN), sources said a total of 48 companies with debt obligations and borrowing exposure towards IL&FS and IFIN were under the ED's scanner as well.

However, for now, the interrogation would include the first batch of executives specifically from the 14 firms which have total exposure to the tune of ₹10,000 crore towards IL&FS, sources in the ED said. The SFIO, in its charge sheet filed on May 30, named some of the companies that are part of the ED investigation, including Siva India Commercial Traders, ABG, A2Z and Parsvanath Group. However, officials said some of the other big infrastructure firms based out of Mumbai, Pune, New Delhi and Chennai too were under the scanner.

Noose tightens: A total of 48 companies with exposure towards IL&FS and IFIN are under the ED scanner. ▪ REUTERS

"We are looking at the firms carrying out major infrastructure works, but were given loans without sufficient collateral, and later failed to service the debts. As many as 14 of the 48 companies were severely stressed. Yet the loans were processed. Our focus is on these firms to see if any dirty money was channelled through them," a senior ED official said. The ED, had on May 21, carried out searches at the homes of directors Rajesh Kotian, Shehzaad Dalal, Manu Kochhar and Mukund Sapre. They had been on the boards of IL&FS Transportation Networks India Ltd. (ITNL), IFIN, IL&FS Investment Advisors LLC and IL&FS Investment Managers Ltd., officials said.

RCom lenders claim dues of ₹49,193 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Financial creditors of Reliance Communications (RCom) have submitted claims of more than ₹49,193 crore, that showed that China Development Bank, Life Insurance Corporation and State Bank of India have the highest exposure in the dues.

According to the list, Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) Pardeep Kumar Sethi had admitted claims of ₹47,038.79 crore and the remaining amount had been put for verification. The list showed that China Development Bank (CDB) claimed dues of ₹9,863.89 crore and the IRP had admitted the entire claim.

INTERVIEW | ARANCHA GONZALEZ

'Expensive access to credit a universal issue for SMEs'

'Making finance work for them is better than closing markets'

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA

Arancha Gonzalez *the Executive Director of International Trade Centre (ITC) since 2013, is also the co-chair of the World Economic Forum's Council on the Future of Trade and Investment. She served as the Chief of Staff to WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy between 2005 and 2013. A regular visitor to India, an issue close to her heart is the empowerment of women entrepreneurs in different countries and connecting them to international markets. Excerpts from an interview:*

What is the focus of ITC?

▪ It [ITC] is an agency that belongs to the World Trade Organisation and to the United Nations. Embedded in the organisation's DNA is how to use trade, investments, to get people out of poverty, to provide opportunities, foster development and generate jobs. Our focus today is not just trade per se, but supporting trade aligned with specific development objectives.

You spoke briefly at Mekelle about the need for trade cooperation in the current scenario. Can you elaborate?

▪ What we are witnessing is deterioration in the perception of trade in some parts of the world, but it is not universal. In some places, trade is seen as a lose-lose game and some argue that 'for me to win you have to lose', and 'if you win in trade, I must be losing'. There is also a perception that international cooperation and multilateralism is for the weak. Some argue that 'if you are strong, you should not engage in international cooperation' or that you should be either managing your relations in a unilateral manner or, at best, bilaterally; but not through an international cooperation framework. The inauguration of the KPR Garment factory in Mekelle, Ethiopia, is of course the opposite, and was the result of a triangular cooperation among the U.K., the ITC and India, which led to an Indian company to invest and create more than 1,000 jobs in Ethiopia.

You have to combine gradual opening up of the economy with mechanisms to support SMEs

How do you see ITC's role when there are such perceptions about international trade?

▪ At ITC, we see our role as defending the values of multilateralism, the values of openness, the values of predictability and transparency. And we demonstrate this work through concrete examples, which, in my view, is much more forceful than abstract speeches.

For example, Ethiopia has for many years been a rather closed economy. Lately, though, it has decided to open up, reform, become competitive, become more attractive for foreigners. It is important to stress that this is something Ethiopia has decided [by] itself, because it has realised that it will benefit the country and will generate jobs. However, it is also true that international trade does not automatically benefit everybody.

We see pressure on sectors such as SMEs in every country. How can there be a balance?

One universal problem facing SMEs is very expensive access to credit and capital. So, instead of closing markets to imports, you would gain more from providing better access to credit for SMEs.

You have to make the finance sector also work for SMEs. Rather than relying solely on keeping the market closed, you have to combine intelligently the gradual opening up [of the economy] with mechanisms to facilitate and support the SMEs.

(The correspondent was in Ethiopia at ITC's invitation.)

NITI for policy framework for infra projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A task force on project management, headed by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, has suggested the development of a National Project Management Policy Framework for the effective execution of public sector and public-private partnership infrastructure projects.

It has also recommended the setting up of a nodal body for the certification of chartered project management professionals to create world-class infrastructure. The report says, project management, with a view to deliver on time and within budget, is a learnable capability that can be institutionalised as demonstrated by the experiences of the U.S., the U.K., the UAE and China.

Jaypee Infra lenders' plea to vote against NBCC bid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Lenders of Jaypee Infratech have filed a petition before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) to allow them to vote against NBCC's bid in an ongoing insolvency process, sources said.

Voting on NBCC's bid started on Friday and will continue till June 10. On Thursday, a committee of creditors had decided to put on vote NBCC's bid to acquire the realty firm even as the bankers had reservations on the bidder not agreeing to dilute certain conditions in its offer, including relief from future tax liabilities. The tribunal had last month barred lenders from rejecting the offer of the public sector firm.

IN BRIEF

Ramco introduces crack-resistant cement

CHENNAI

The Ramco Cements Ltd. has launched crack-resistant, premium blended cement called Ramco Supercrete. It is priced at ₹450 a bag. Touted as an alternative to 53 grade cement, it would address the need for high strength concrete and durability. It is compatible with m-sand. The cement will be initially produced at Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu. Ramco plans to produce four million tonnes, or 30% of the total production, of the new variety during FY20.

M.K. Sharma appointed to Vedanta board

NEW DELHI

Vedanta Ltd. on Friday said it has appointed M.K. Sharma to the company's board as a non-executive independent director with effect from June 1, 2019. He previously held the position of vice-chairman at Hindustan Unilever. He was instrumental in leading many significant projects and the experience he brings would be very critical for the firm's growth, Vedanta chairman Navin Agarwal said. PTI

USFDA issues EIR to Dr. Reddy's unit

HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has said the US Food and Drug Administration has issued establishment inspection report (EIR) for its active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) manufacturing facility in Miryalaguda, Telangana. In a regulatory filing, Dr.Reddy's said the issue of the EIR indicated the closure of audit. The inspection classification of the facility is determined as voluntary action initiated.

Google to curb third-party access

To tighten norms for accessing user data for Chrome extensions, Google Drive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid growing global concerns over data privacy and security, Google has announced that it will be further tightening guidelines for third-party developers for accessing user data for Chrome extensions and Google Drive.

Expanding use: Google would also be extending the incognito mode to products like Search and Maps. ▪REUTERS

'Clear rules needed'

"Third-party apps and websites create services that millions of people use to get things done and customise their online experience. To make this ecosystem successful, people need to be confident their data is secure, and developers need clear rules of the road," Google's chief privacy officer Keith Enright said on Friday.

The Chrome Web Store offers about 1.8 lakh extensions and nearly half of all Chrome desktop users actively use these to customise their browser. Citing an example of the guideline, Mr. Enright said if there was more than one permission that could be used to implement a feature, extensions must use the permission with access to the least amount of data. "Google has doubled down on the commitment to provide best-in-class, privacy settings and controls across all of our products and services... We've made significant investments in getting this right... ensure that our products are continuing to innovate and reflect new and improved features to empower users to remain in control of their online experience," he said.

Incognito mode

He added that Google would also be extending the incognito mode, which prevents users' browsing history from being stored, to products like Search and Maps.

"We think that all of our users across all of our free and paid services around the world enjoy the same measure of privacy, best-in-class privacy that Google is committed to delivering consistently," he said.

Cox & Kings posts Q4 profit of ₹1,389 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Travel firm Cox & Kings has reported a consolidated net profit of ₹1,388.84 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2019.

It had posted a net loss after taxes and share of profit/loss of associates of ₹53.36 crore for the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, the firm said in a BSE filing.

Total income from operations stood at ₹1,262.89 crore (₹1,214.04 crore).

"Our focus on the right segment in each business has led to profitable growth in the quarter and we plan to sharpen our focus to improve future quality of earnings," Cox & Kings Group CEO Peter Kerkar said.

Reaching out: 3M India will leverage the strength of Castrol's pan-India network, Castrol India said. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Castrol, 3M to offer vehicle care products

Enter pact to tap $200 million market

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Castrol India Limited (Castrol), India's leading lubricants brand and 3M India Limited (3M) have entered into a strategic collaboration to bring in a range of vehicle care products.

The collaboration agreement was signed by Omer Dormen, MD, Castrol India Limited, and Debarati Sen, MD, 3M India Ltd., here on Friday.

Technological expertise

"Castrol is excited to combine our technological expertise, marketing and distribution strengths with 3M, a global leader in vehicle care innovation.

"Through this collaboration, we [are] entering the $200 million vehicle care market in India, a move which aligns with Castrol's approach to developing and embracing new business models in the ever-evolving automotive landscape," said Mr. Dormen.

A range of 3M-Castrol branded bike and car care products, including shampoo, glass cleaner, cream wax, dashboard and tyre dressers will be made available across India.

Ms. Sen said, "We are really pleased to see this collaboration coming to life between two globally-respected and trusted brands. Both Castrol and 3M have an established presence in India and share values of customer-centricity. This collaboration will help us leverage our common strengths to meet the changing needs of Indian consumers and bring unique value offerings through the 3M-Castrol range of vehicle care products."

Pan-India marketing

Castrol and 3M look to harness a new business model with this collaboration. Castrol offers 3M's market-leading vehicle care products range to its customers and consumers, and 3M India will leverage the strength of Castrol's pan-India marketing and distribution network of over 1 lakh independent workshops and retail outlets, Castrol India said in a statement.

Shyam Balasubramanian, Global Innovation Director, Castrol, said, "We are bringing together Castrol's extensive network with 3M's innovation capabilities to improve the driving experience of our consumers. We are confident of being able to scale up the model."

NCLT rejects proposal of former EPJL promoters

They had raised offer to ₹1,200 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has rejected the ₹1,200-crore offer by former promoters of Essar Power Jharkhand Ltd. (EPJL) for one-time settlement with the lenders and take the company out of insolvency proceedings.

After the committee of creditors (CoC) of EPJL, in which leading private sector lender ICICI Bank has over 90% voting rights, declined the ₹1,200-crore settlement proposal against a total debt of about ₹5,600 crore, the NCLT rejected the promoters' offer.

"A proposal made by the ex-promoter/director pursuant to the direction issued on March 11, 2019 and subsequently clarified by filing one affidavit dated May 16, 2019 does not find favour of the ICICI Bank – financial creditor who constitutes 99.34% voting share of the CoC," said the NCLT.

It further said: "There are plausible reasons given for not accepting the proposal. Accordingly, we are unable to accept any such proposal and the same is hereby rejected."

On March 11, NCLT had allowed Essar Power promoters to file a revised proposal to the resolution professional of EPJL, who was supposed to place it before a CoC meeting. Earlier, the promoters had offered ₹900 crore.

Tata Power to develop 100 MW solar project in Gujarat

Firm to supply power to GUVNL under a 25-year PPA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Power, has received a letter of award (LOA) from Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (GUVNL) to develop a 100 MW solar project in Raghanesda Solar Park of Gujarat.

The energy would be supplied to GUVNL under a power purchase agreement (PPA) valid for a period of 25 years from the scheduled commercial operation date.

The company had won this capacity in a bid announced by GUVNL in March 2019. The project has to be commissioned within 15 months from the date of execution of the PPA.

Praveer Sinha

Clean and green energy

Commenting on the LOA, Mr. Praveer Sinha, CEO and MD, Tata Power, said, "We are proud to announce that we have been awarded 100 MW solar project in Gujarat, and are thankful to the Government of Gujarat and the officials at GUVNL for this opportunity. We are delighted to contribute towards the realisation of our country's commitment towards clean and green energy through solar power generation."

With this win, TPREL's capacity under implementation would be 500 MW. This is in addition to the operating capacity of 2,268 MW.

"With this win, we continue to demonstrate our strong commitment towards renewable energy as well as project development, engineering and execution capabilities," said Ashish Khanna, president-renewables, Tata Power.

West Indies speedsters bounce out Pakistan in quick time

After Thomas & Co. skittle out the latter for an embarrassing 105, Chris Gayle delights with a blistering half-century

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP ENGLAND & WALES 2019

REUTERS
NOTTINGHAM

West Indies steamrollered Pakistan to seal a seven-wicket victory in its World Cup opener at Trent Bridge on Friday after an Oshane Thomas-led pace attack swept the latter away for a dismal 105.

Opener Chris Gayle, set to retire at the end of the tournament, led the Windies reply with a blistering 50 off 34 balls as the two-times champion chased down the total with ease, reaching 108 for three off just 13.4 overs.

Having elected to field, West Indies made full use of overcast conditions as Thomas took four wickets for 27 runs, while captain Jason Holder (three for 42) and Andre Russell (two for 4) completed the demolition job.

Merry men in maroon: The West Indians had a lot to celebrate on a day when everything went right for them. ▪ AFP

Gamble pays off

"It's good to have a young quick like Oshane, we know he can be expensive at times but he's a genuine wicket-taker," Holder said at the post-match presentation. "That's the gamble we need to take in one-dayers, with big scores going around."

Pakistan's batting unit has repeatedly struggled against short deliveries and West Indies' plan to pepper it with bouncers soon paid off.

Opener Imam-ul-Haq was cramped for room and caught behind down the leg side off fast bowler Sheldon Cottrel before Russell hit Fakhar Zaman on the helmet and the ball ricocheted onto the stumps.

Wicketkeeper Shai Hope grabbed two more catches when Russell and Holder removed Haris Sohail and captain Sarfaraz Ahmed to leave Pakistan on 75 for five.

Wahab Riaz struck 18 off 11 balls to help Pakistan breach the 100-run mark.

"I was confident of running in and doing my job," said man-of-the-match Thomas said. "Andre Russell started it for us, I just followed his footsteps today. Lot of guys tried to mix it up with short balls. We wanted to execute our plans well."

Injury concerns

The only concerns for the West Indies were Russell limping with a knee issue in the first innings, while Gayle appeared to have sustained a back injury.

After smashing two fours and a six in the 10th over, Gayle appeared to hold his back and limp to the other end for a single.

He looked increasingly edgy before holing out to point for Mohammad Amir's third wicket of the match.

Outstanding effort

"It was a good game. I think the bowlers were outstanding today," said Holder.

"We kept our foot on the accelerator. We've eased off in the past but it was good to see the killer instinct today.

"We wanted to be aggressive. It's the nature of our cricket with bat, ball and in the field. We've definitely come to win this World Cup but I just want us to enjoy our cricket, play fearless cricket and make the fans back home proud."

The hammering was Pakistan's 11th consecutive ODI defeat in matches where a result was achieved, following series losses to Australia and England. It was also its lowest at the World Cup after the 74 against England in 1992.

"If you lose the toss and lose so many wickets early on, it's tough to come back into the game," Sarfaraz said.

Tricky phase

"It was tricky for half an hour, but this is a good batting track, we didn't bat well.

"I think we have to play positive cricket, didn't do well today but hopefully we'll bounce back."

INNINGS SCAN

PAK		WI
1	Maidens	1
9	Fours	11
3	Sixes	5
22 (10th)	Best stand	36 (1st)
4.84	RR	7.90

PROGRESSION

PAK		WI
45/3	10 overs	71/2
86/9	20 overs	--
--	30 overs	--
--	40 overs	--
--	50 overs	--

TOP SHOWS

For	Batting	Bowling
Pakistan	Zaman 22 (16b, 2x4, 1x6) Azam 22 (33b, 2x4)	Amir 3/26 (6)
West Indies	Gayle 50 (34b, 6x4, 3x6)	Thomas 4/27 (5.4)

Gayle force to the fore

2 Pakistan's 105 was its second lowest total in the World Cup after the 74 against England (Adelaide, 1992)

2 The defeat, with 218 deliveries remaining, is Pakistan's second biggest in ODIs (balls to spare) after its loss with 225 balls left against West Indies (Cape Town, 1993)

2 The match, which lasted just 35.2 overs, is the second shortest between two Test-playing nations in the World Cup in which a result was achieved, after the Bangladesh-West Indies game at Dhaka in 2011 finished in 31.1 overs

6 Number of consecutive 50-plus scores by Gayle, pulling him level with Gordon Greenidge, Andrew Jones, Mohd. Yousuf, Mark Waugh, Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor. Miandad leads the chart with nine

11 Number of completed ODI games Pakistan has lost in succession -- its longest in the format

120 Number of catches by Gayle in ODIs, the joint-most for West Indies, with Hooper. The two are followed by Lara (117) and Richards (100)

40 Sixes hit by Gayle in the World Cup, the most by a batsman. He also became the third West Indian to reach 19,000 international runs after Lara and Chanderpaul. Gayle now has 317 sixes in ODIs, only Afridi (351) has hit more in ODI history

MOST SIXES IN WORLD CUP

- 40 Gayle
- 37 de Villiers
- 31 Ponting
- 29 McCullum
- 28 Gibbs
- 27 Jayasuriya & Tendulkar

Next assignment

PAKISTAN: June 3 vs **England**, *Trent Bridge, 3 p.m.*

WEST INDIES: June 6 vs **Australia**, *Trent Bridge, 3 p.m.*

SCOREBOARD PAKISTAN VS WEST INDIES

PAKISTAN

Imam-ul-Haq c Hope b Cottrell 2 *(11b)*, Fakhar Zaman b Russell 22 *(16b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Babar Azam c Hope b Thomas 22 *(33b, 2x4)*, Haris Sohail c Hope b Russell 8 *(11b, 1x4)*, Sarfaraz Ahmed c Hope b Holder 8 *(12b, 1x4)*, Mohd. Hafeez c Cottrell b Thomas 16 *(24b, 2x4)*, Imad Wasim c Gayle b Holder 1 *(3b)*, Shadab Khan lbw b Thomas 0 *(1b)*, Hasan Ali c Cottrell b Holder 1 *(4b)*, Wahab Riaz b Thomas 18 *(11b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Mohd. Amir (not out) 3 *(6b)*; Extras (nb-2, w-2): 4; Total (in 21.4 overs): 105.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-17 (Imam, 2.6 overs), 2-35 (Zaman, 5.5), 3-45 (Sohail, 9.4), 4-62 (Azam, 13.1), 5-75 (Sarfaraz, 16.1), 6-77 (Wasim, 16.6), 7-78 (Shadab, 17.3), 8-81 (Hasan, 18.3), 9-83 (Hafeez, 19.3).

WEST INDIES BOWLING

Cottrell 4-0-18-1, Holder 5-0-42-3, Russell 3-1-4-2, Brathwaite 4-0-14-0, Thomas 5.4-0-27-4.

WEST INDIES

Chris Gayle c Shadab b Amir 50 *(34b, 6x4, 3x6)*, Shai Hope c Hafeez b Amir 11 *(17b, 1x4)*, Darren Bravo c Azam b Amir 0 *(4b)*, Nicholas Pooran (not out) 34 *(19b, 4x4, 2x6)*, Shimron Hetmyer (not out) 7 *(8b)*; Extras (lb-3, w-3): 6; Total: (for three wkts. in 13.4 overs): 108.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-36 (Hope, 4.3 overs), 2-46 (Bravo, 6.2), 3-77 (Gayle, 10.5).

PAKISTAN BOWLING

Amir 6-0-26-3, Hasan 4-0-39-0, Riaz 3.4-1-40-0.

Toss: West Indies

Man-of-the-Match: Thomas.

West Indies won by seven wkts. and 218 balls to spare.

Kiwis comfortable as 'underdogs'

Sri Lankans have a nightmare to put behind them

Master craftsman: Veteran Ross Taylor's recent form has raised New Zealand's hopes of claiming the elusive trophy. ▪ AFP

PREVIEW

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

New Zealand is happy to go under the radar as it prepares to launch the campaign for World Cup glory against Sri Lanka in Cardiff on Saturday.

The Black Caps reached the final four years ago for the first time after six semifinal defeats, only to be soundly beaten by Australia in Melbourne.

Kane Williamson has replaced the swashbuckling Brendon McCullum as captain but the core of the team that came so close in 2015 remains.

Rise

Since the last World Cup, New Zealand has risen as high as second in the world, but has also been beaten at home by South Africa, England and India.

New Zealand beat India in its opening World Cup warm-up game before going down to the West Indies.

Taylor has been in breathtaking ODI form in recent years, averaging over 60 in 2017 and more than 90 last year.

Williamson, ranked 12th, and Martin Guptill, ranked 10th, are the other dangermen in the batting line-up.

Trent Boult leads an impressive bowling attack, with Colin de Grandhomme and Tim Southee for company. Spinners Ish Sodhi and Mitchell Santner offer useful variety.

The Kiwis start clear favourites in their opener against 1996 winner Sri Lanka, a side that has slumped to ninth in the rankings.

Tough job

Newly-appointed captain Dimuth Karunaratne, who has returned to the ODI fold after four years, has been handed the responsibility of lifting a team that has lost eight of past nine ODIs.

But Sri Lanka has an impressive World Cup record, with one title, two runner-up finishes and one semifinal appearance.

"Sri Lanka always find a way to do well in World Cups," said former captain Mahela Jayawardene.

"There have been some changes to the set-up. The captain himself hasn't played one-day cricket for a while, but he's a wonderful player."

The squads:

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (Capt.), Martin Guptill, Henry Nicholls, Ross Taylor, Tom Latham, Colin Munro, Tom Blundell, Jimmy Neesham, Colin de Grandhomme, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Matt Henry, Lockie Ferguson and Trent Boult.

Sri Lanka: Dimuth Karunaratne (Capt), Lasith Malinga, Angelo Mathews, Thisara Perera, Kusal Perera, Dhananjaya de Silva, Kusal Mendis, Isuru Udana, Milinda Siriwardana, Avishka Fernando, Jeevan Mendis, Lahiru Thirimanne, Jeffrey Vandersay, Nuwan Pradeep and Suranga Lakmal.

WILLIAMSON

THE FACE-OFF

NEW ZEALAND V SRI LANKA
CARDIFF

HEAD-TO-HEAD

KARUNARATNE

	Matches	NZ	SL	Tie	NR
Overall	98	48	41	1	8
World Cup	10	4	6	-	-

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 (SD & HD), 3 P.M.

Smith and Warner's IPL stint has helped, says Finch

The Aussie skipper feels that the high standards of the league has helped the duo adapt quickly

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Australia captain Aaron Finch said on Friday that Steve Smith and David Warner's stint in the IPL was important as it helped them adapt faster to international cricket.

On the eve of the team's opener against Afghanistan, Finch said, "I think when you are a world-class player, you adapt really quickly. Having them play in the IPL was really important. That's a higher standard of cricket and it just gets you back up to as close to international competition as you can."

The skipper said he also knew they would make a strong comeback.

"There was never any issue about how he (Smith) would bounce back, and the same with David. They are both so competitive, they have got great records. There was never any doubt how well they would come back."

Warner is fit to face Afghanistan after recovering from a sore muscle, he said.

"David is fine. He will play tomorrow [Saturday], no doubt about that. We are very close to a starting XI but we are not going to name it yet. Everyone is in contention."

"Afghanistan have turned into a really world-class side at times, they've got some of the best bowlers in the world and their batting is improving all the time."

Single-minded: Smith will be keen to shut out all distractions and focus on the task ahead. ▪ LUKE WALKER/GETTY IMAGES

Fairytale

Afghanistan's rise from associate-nation status to cricket's elite has been nothing short of a fairytale.

The team witnessed a captaincy change two months before the start of the World Cup, with little-known Gulbadin Naib named captain in place of Asghar Afghan, a move that did not go down well with some senior members of the team.

But the team has now settled to focus on its World Cup campaign. "

"The team has changed from four years ago, and the last couple of years we have improved very well in every department. We are just focusing on tomorrow. The World Cup is a big stage, and we are looking forward to doing our best," said Naib on Friday.

Star spinner Rashid Khan carries the team's hopes on his shoulders with his ability to run through opposition batting – he tops the world Twenty20 bowling rankings and lies third in ODIs.

The squads:

Australia: Aaron Finch (Capt.), Jason Behrendorff, Alex Carey, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Pat Cummins, Usman Khawaja, Nathan Lyon, Shaun Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Kane Richardson, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, David Warner, and Adam Zampa.

Afghanistan: Gulbadin Naib (Capt.), Mohammad Shahzad, Noor Ali Zadran, Hazratullah Zazai, Rahmat Shah, Asghar Afghan, Hashmatullah Shahidi, Najibullah Zadran, Samiullah Shinwari, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Dawlat Zadran, Aftab Alam, Hamid Hassan, and Mujeeb Ur Rahman.

NAIB

THE FACE-OFF

AFGHANISTAN V AUSTRALIA
BRISTOL

HEAD-TO-HEAD

FINCH

	Matches	Afg	Aus	Tie	NR
Overall	2	0	2	-	-
World Cup	1	0	1	-	-

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 3, 6 P.M.

Langer against booing Smith and Warner

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRISTOL

Australia head coach Justin Langer has called on fans to show Steve Smith and David Warner respect in the World Cup, and not jeer them.

"I think it's really important that people show respect as well," said Langer.

"They made a mistake and paid a big price for it. After the experience of Hampshire [the two were booed], we have a pretty good idea what to expect. We've talked about it a lot and we can put strategies in place.

"When it happens, it doesn't make it any easier. They are human beings, that's the truth – and that's what I find the hardest."

Work hard, Play hard

Downtime: Kohli and his men, at a bonding session, are ready for an ambush. ▪ COURTESY: VIRATKOHLI/TWITTER

We had a man to meet the challenge in every match: Mohinder

The remarkably courageous allrounder reminisces the wonderful English summer of 1983

MEMORY FILES

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

Love for the game was transmitted to Mohinder Amarnath by his legendary father, Lala Amarnath, who insisted cricket was a "tough" vocation and had to be played "hard."

Mohinder played it tough and hard but was remarkably calm and composed on the field. Not the one to allow emotions influence his approach, he often gave expression to his romance with cricket by performing consistently against strong opponents. It was his way of playing the game.

Like the occasion when the remarkably courageous cricketer crafted a Test century in Karachi to force a draw by vowing not to allow a ball to hit the pads. Or the comeback in a Test in West Indies when, hit on the mouth by Malcolm Marshall, he spent a night recuperating in the hospital, and hooked the first ball on return to the crease from the same bowler for a six. It was his way of batting.

Key component

Mohinder was a key component of the 1983 triumph in England. His batting and bowling gave him the status of an all-rounder and he did not fail the team by emerging the 'Man-of-the-Match' in the semifinal and the final. Typically, he has always played down his success.

"It was a team effort. Individuals did not matter. Remember, it was the team that won and not Mohinder Amarnath," he talks fondly of the phase that changed the course of international limited-over cricket.

West Indies, invincible until then, did not even enter the final at any of the subsequent editions of the World Cup.

Every four years, Mohinder is reminded of the eventful day at Lord's when he claimed the wickets of Jeff Dujon, Malcolm Marshall and Michael Holding. In the semifinal, he had snared David Gower and Mike Gatting with late seaming deliveries.

The left-handed Gower followed the ball into the 'keeper's gloves and Gatting was stunned by one that came in. "More than Gower's, I loved Gatting's dismissal. I set him up for that," recalled Mohinder.

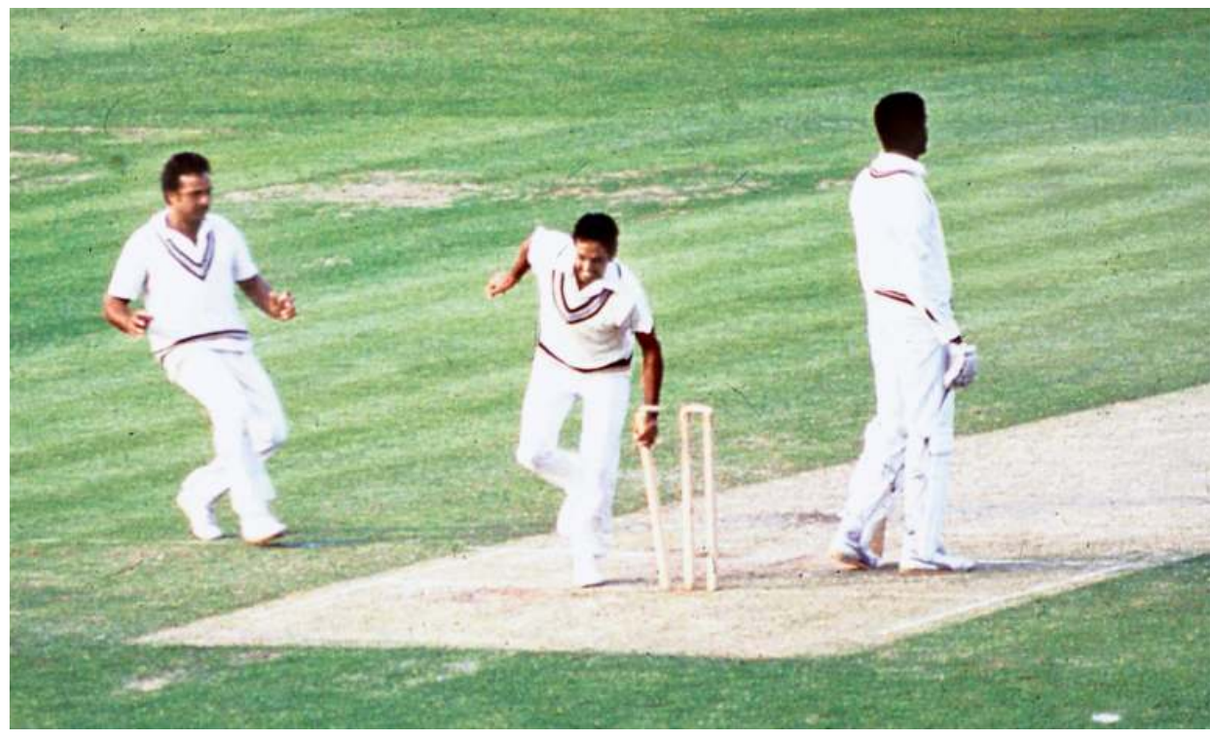
Team effort

Reiterating that India's 1983 campaign was based on team effort, Amarnath remarked, "If you look at that tournament, we had a man to meet the challenge in every match. It was not restricted to one individual. Each victory was built on the belief that we were a team to counter the best. We had individuals who transformed into a splendid team as the World Cup progressed."

He was among the privileged to witness the epic knock by Kapil Dev. "That was a one-in-a-lifetime knock. It is vivid. We still talk about it when we meet. A pity it can only be relived through our accounts since there is no recording of that match. But I don't get tired talking of that innings. Any batsman would want to play one such innings in his life."

Playing conditions were critical too. "There was something for the bowlers and I feel it would be same this time too. We have a compact side and there is bite in the attack. But it has to be a team effort."

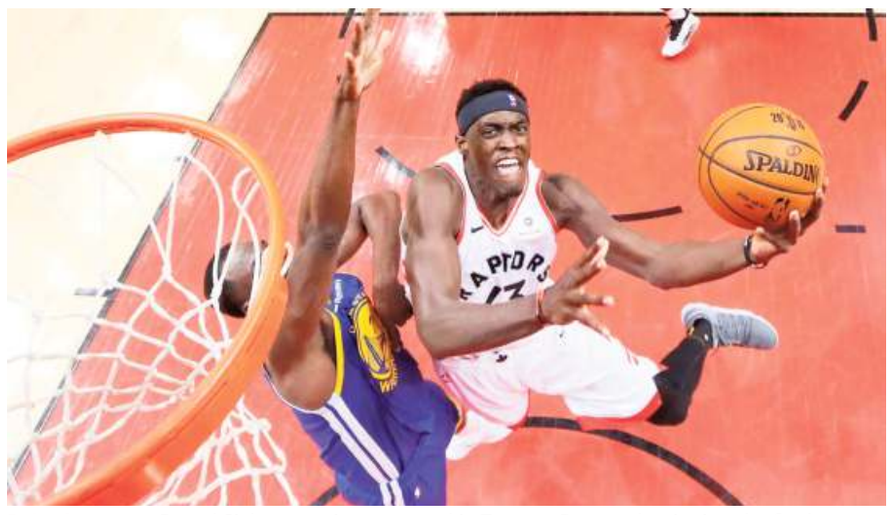
He will be in the stands to cheer Virat Kohli's team and also reminisce the wonderful summer of 1983.



Piece of history: In one of the greatest upsets ever, India humbled the mighty West Indies in the 1983 final to emerge the champion. Star performer Mohinder Amarnath tries to grab a stump as souvenir after nailing the last wicket. ▪ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Raptors draw first blood

Curry comes off second best to Siakam as Warriors lose



Poised to score: Pascal Siakam was instrumental in Toronto Raptors beginning the finals on a positive note. ▪ AFP

NBA FINALS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TORONTO

Toronto forward Pascal Siakam scored 32 points and upstart Raptors defeated defending champion Golden State Warriors 118-109 in Thursday's opening game of the NBA Finals.

The 25-year-old Cameroonian forward made 14-of-17 shots from the floor while Kawhi Leonard added 23 points and both players pulled down eight rebounds and passed out five assists.

Spanish centre Marc Gasol added 20 points and Kyle Lowry had nine assists for Raptors, who seized the lead in the best-of-seven championship series that resumes on Sunday in Toronto.

Stephen Curry scored a game-high 34 points for Golden State but the Warriors could not solve Toronto's swarming defensive work.

Danny Green's right corner 3-pointer lifted the Raptors to their largest first-half lead at 59-49 to end the second quarter.

Golden State trimmed Toronto's edge to four points on Kevon Looney's dunk late in the third quarter but Patrick McCaw's 3-pointer boosted Toronto's lead to 88-81 after three quarters.

In the fourth quarter, the Warriors closed within 90-87 on a DeMarcus Cousins free throw with 10:38 remaining but got no closer.

The result: Toronto Raptors 118 (Pascal Siakam 32, Kawhi Leonard 23, Marc Gasol 20) bt Golden State Warriors 109 (Stephen Curry 34, Klay Thompson 21, Draymond Green 10). *Raptors lead series 1-0.*

Another James-Wade combo in the making

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

Six years after their famous fathers conquered the NBA, the eldest sons of LeBron James and Dwyane Wade are set to form a high school superteam, it was reported on Thursday.

The *Los Angeles Daily News* said Bronny James, 14, is transferring to the prestigious Sierra Canyon private school in the Los Angeles suburb of Chatsworth. Wade's son Zaire meanwhile will also enrol at the school after moving from Florida following his father's retirement from the NBA this season.

LeBron and Dwyane formed the cornerstone of the successful Miami Heat team which won back-to-back NBA titles in 2012 and 2013, and remain close friends away from the sport.

Lacklustre Pliskova crashes out

Federer creates new records en route the fourth round

ROLAND GARROS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Roger Federer became the oldest man to reach the Roland Garros fourth round in 47 years on Friday by winning his record 400th Grand Slam match in straight sets against Norwegian Casper Ruud, while women's second seed Karolina Pliskova was dumped out.

The 37-year-old Federer saw off 63rd-ranked Ruud 6-3, 6-1, 7-6(8) on Court Suzanne Lenglen despite an action-packed fourth set.

It is the 14th time the 20-time Grand Slam champion has reached the second week in Paris.

"It was hard to find weaknesses in his game, so I'm relieved, I'm now going to have a good shower and it's going to be great," said the 2009 winner, who hit 52 winners and served 11 aces past Ruud, whose father Christian played the 1999 French Open when Federer made his debut. "It was a nice match to play in." Federer is the oldest man to book a last-16 place since Tunisian-born Italian Nicola Pietrangeli, a two-time champion, at the age of 38 in 1972.

Japanese seventh seed Kei Nishikori battled into the fourth round for the fifth successive year with a marathon 6-4, 6-7(6), 6-3, 4-6, 8-6 win over Serbia's Laslo Djere.

Rafael Nadal survived a blip to continue his bid for a record-extending 12th title with a 6-1, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win over David Goffin.

Blaze of errors

Pliskova exited in a blaze of unforced errors on Court Philippe Chatrier as she was comfortably dismissed 6-3, 6-3 by Croatia's Petra Martic.

The 31st-seeded Martic will face Estonia's Kaia Kanepi for a place in her first-ever Grand Slam quarterfinals.

Pliskova's defeat means Naomi Osaka will retain the World No. 1 spot after Roland Garros.

In the men's doubles, Rohan Bopanna and his Romanian partner Marius Copil advanced to the third round after notching up a 6-4, 6-4 win over Benjamin Bonzi and Antoine Hoang.

However, Divij Sharan and his Brazilian partner Marcelo Demoliner made an early exit, losing in straight sets to Henri Kontinen and John Peers.

Saturday's picks

MEN
1-Djokovic **vs** Caruso
4-Thiem **vs** Cuevas
5-Zverev **vs** Lajovic
8-del Potro **vs** Thompson
9-Fognini **vs** Bautista Agut

WOMEN
1-Osaka **vs** Siniakova
3-Halep **vs** Tsurenko
8-Barty **vs** Petkovic
10-Serena **vs** Kenin
14-Keys **vs** Blinkova

Comfortable: Petra Martic beat second seed Karolina Pliskova in straight sets and matched her best performance by reaching the last 16. ▪ AP

A throw-back moment

Generation bridge: Roger Federer and Casper Ruud shake hands at the end of their match. ▪ AFP

IANS
PARIS

Casper Ruud, Roger Federer's opponent at Roland Garros on Friday, is the son of one of his rivals from the 1999 French Open when he made his debut.

Casper's father Christian Ruud reached the third round when a 17-year-old Federer made his main draw debut.

Federer exited in the first round itself, losing to Pat Rafter.

Christian's last career tournament was the French Open in 2001 where he retired in the first round against Sargis Sargsian. Had Christian defeated Sargsian, he would have faced Federer in the second round.

"I probably know more about his dad than about him. Even though I never played his father," Federer was quoted as saying by the ATP Tour website.

THE RESULTS

Men: Third round: 2-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt 27-David Goffin (Bel) 6-1, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3; Leonardo Mayer (Arg) bt Nicolas Mahut (Fra) 3-6, 7-6(3), 6-4, 7-6(3); Juan Ignacio Londero (Arg) bt Corentin Moutet (Fra) 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4. 3-Roger Federer (Sui) bt Casper Ruud (Nor) 6-3, 6-1, 7-6(8); Benoit Paire (Fra) bt Pablo Carreno Busta (Esp) 6-2, 4-6, 7-6(1), 0-0 retd.; 7-Kei Nishikori (Jpn) bt 31-Laslo Djere (Srb) 6-4, 6-7 (6), 6-3, 4-6, 8-6.

Second round: Martin Klizan (Svk) bt 22-Lucas Pouille (Fra) 7-6(4), 2-6, 6-3, 3-6, 9-7.

Doubles: Second round: Rohan Bopanna & Marius Copil (Rou) bt Benjamin Bonzi (Fra) & Antoine Hoang (Fra) 6-4, 6-4; Henri Kontinen (Fin) & John Peers (Aus) bt Marcelo Demoliner (Bra) & Divij Sharan 6-3, 6-4. **First round:** Leander Paes & Benoit Paire (Fra) bt Dominic Inglot (GBr) & Martin Klizan (Svk) 6-4, 6-4.

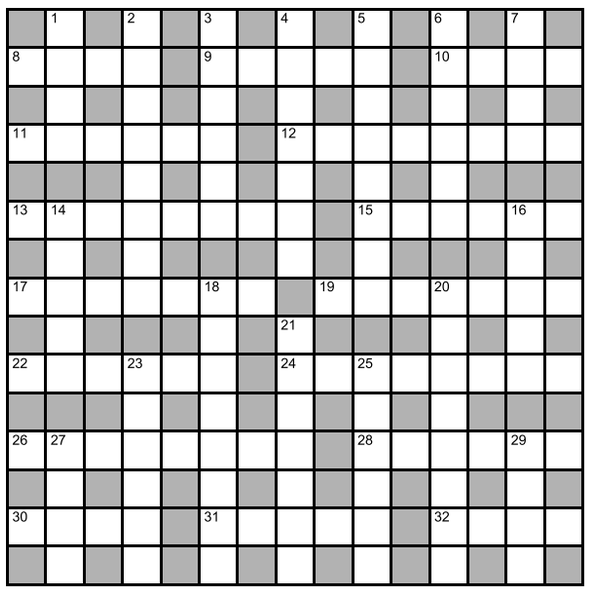
Women: Third round: 7-Sloane Stephens (USA) bt Polona Hercog (Slo) 6-3, 5-7, 6-4; 23-Donna Vekic (Cro) bt 15-Belinda Bencic (Sui) 6-4, 6-1. 31-Petra Martic (Cro) bt 2-Karolina Pliskova (Cze) 6-3, 6-3; 19-Garbine Muguruza (Esp) bt 9-Elina Svitolina (Ukr) 6-3, 6-3.

12-Anastasija Sevastova (Lat) bt 20-Elise Mertens (Bel) 6-7(3), 6-4, 11-9; Marketa Vondrousova (Cze) bt 28-Carla Suarez Navarro (Esp) 6-4, 6-4; Kaia Kanepi (Est) bt Veronika Kudermetova (Rus) 4-6, 6-3, 6-0.

Second round: 14-Madison Keys (USA) bt Priscilla Hon (Aus) 7-5, 5-7, 6-3.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12641

(set by Incognito)



ACROSS

8 Rats! Rejected hero (4)
9 Time-keeper's rouser consumes last meal (5)
10 Former President discharges queen's servant (4)
11 Bad actor's tool? (6)
12 Student and peer produce letter (8)
13 The Spanish redrafted notice for poll (8)
15 After morning's circular letter European graduate synthesises single celled creature (6)
17 Cons boss – that is, superior – in the beginning (7)
19 Once again film others wandering around commencement of opera (7)
22 Wildly pursues, without right, and consumes (4,2)
24 Revolutionary Maoism captivates girl and Yankee resulting in aversion to marriage (8)
26 Animal destroys the panel (8)
28 First PM's dance (3-3)
30 Company sailors' food (4)
31 Perfect scheme by student (5)
32 Relative taunts endlessly (4)

DOWN

1 It may erupt when stake is reversed (4)
2 Stern expert and daughter gave a scowl (8)
3 Puerto Rico, not Peru, revised tax (6)
4 Then oil spoilt emergency contact (7)
5 Purpose of cosmetics? Frighten relatives in residence (8)
6 God! A referendum before beginning of October? (6)
7 Perform. Else, this is the way to go (4)
14 Flower? Plenty with Uncle Sam (5)
16 Book space that is cleaner (5)
18 Stress English redcap has leaders of Islamic State (8)
20 Eat greedily many a preparation on December 31st (8)
21 Time Dot may be left out (7)
23 Drink in base, lying down (6)
25 Nickels may be recast, in absence of Nitrogen, to produce cutting tool (6)
27 Steal gents' model (4)
29 What you extend when you say "Have a nice day", for starters (4)

SUDOKU

	7	1		4	3			
	9		8					
6		5	1					
	5				8	6		3
	6	2	5		7	9	8	
4		9	2				7	
					4	2		9
					2		3	
			3	6		4	5	

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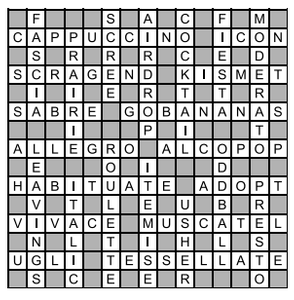
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12640



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	8	9	7	6	5	2	1	3
5	3	1	4	2	9	7	8	6
6	7	2	8	3	1	5	4	9
8	1	4	6	5	7	9	3	2
7	9	6	3	8	2	1	5	4
3	2	5	9	1	4	8	6	7
9	6	7	5	4	8	3	2	1
2	4	8	1	7	3	6	9	5
1	5	3	2	9	6	4	7	8

FAITH

Give and take spirit

In the chapter on karma yoga, Krishna draws attention to Srishti or creation that is wonderful in many ways and of man's role in this grand design. He states that Srishti is established in yagna and that man can gain whatever he needs from devas through performance of yagnas, pointed out Nannilam Sri V. Rajagopala Ganapadigal in a discourse. "In days of yore, the Lord of creatures created beings along with yagna and said that by this they would benefit and prosper. This yagna, like the Kamadenu or the divine cow would yield one's desires."

Yagnas have their source in the Vedas, which are believed to be the very breath of the Supreme Brahman. Mahavishnu is known as the Yagna Purusha who takes meticulous care of all the needs of all beings in creation and the yagnas protect all beings. For instance, it is shown that the gods depend on sacrificial offerings for their sustenance; and when they are thus propitiated through yagnas, they provide timely rains to ensure prosperity of human existence. The term 'parasparam bhavayantha' represents the 'give and take' spirit inbuilt in this cycle to guarantee reciprocal benefits. If the Lord's dictum is transgressed and the bounties in creation are taken for granted and one does not pay his gratitude to the celestial beings and the Almighty, he is none but a thief.

The Lord also helps us to understand how to get release from samsara through one's actions. Each one is involved in unlimited number of actions every day, known as Nithya and Naimittika karmas, and all actions lead to bondage. But if every act including yagna karma is done in a spirit of sacrifice, it can release one from samsara. This section of the Gita aims to cultivate a noble purpose to human life while creating awareness of the harmony and oneness in creation.

TV PICKS

Roland Garros: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 2.30 p.m.
ICC World Cup: New Zealand vs Sri Lanka, Star Sports 1, 2 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.; Afghanistan vs Australia, Star Sports 3, 6 p.m.
Champions League: (final): Sony Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Sunday).

IN BRIEF

Low hospitalised after training injury

BERLIN

Germany's football coach Joachim Low has been taken to hospital after suffering an injury while exercising, and will miss upcoming games against Belarus and Estonia, the German Football Association (DFB) said on Friday. In a statement, the association confirmed that Low was receiving treatment for a crushed artery and would not be in the dugout for the upcoming internationals. AFP

Sethu comes up with career-best

BURIRAM (THAILAND)

Arriving in Thailand on the back of a top-10 finish in the Asian Production 250cc category of the FIM Asian Road Racing Championship, Rajiv Sethu had a memorable end to Friday's practice by setting a personal best lap time of 1:55.146 at the Chang International Circuit. His previous best was 1:55.725, set in Round 2 last season. On aggregate, he finished in the 15th position after three practice sessions. Teammate Senthil Chandrasekaran, who is still getting used to his AP 250 bike, finished 20th. His personal best on the day was 1:57:766, set in Practice 2.

Anirban Lahiri in joint third spot

MIAMI

India's Anirabn Lahiri, shared third spot with 67 with Australia's Marc Leishman, Germanys Martin Kaymer and Americans Vaughn Taylor and Bud Cauley after the first round of the Memorial Tournament here on Thursday. Tiger Woods' two-under-par 70 left him five off the pace set by leader Ryan Moore at the Memorial Tournament. AFP

Sidharth Rawat in last four

NONTHABURI (THAILAND)

Third seed Sidharth Rawat beat compatriot Rishab Agarwal 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 to make the semifinals of the $25,000 ITF Futures tennis tournament on Friday.
In the $15,000 event in Singapore, Ryota Tanuma of Japan proved a thorn in the flesh for Manish Sureshkumar, defeating him in both sections.
The results: $25,000 ITF men, Nonthaburi, Thailand: Quarterfinals: Sidharth Rawat bt Rishab Agarwal 5-7, 6-2, 6-4.
$15,000 ITF men, Singapore: Quarterfinals: Ryota Tanuma (Jpn) bt Manish Sureshkumar 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.
Doubles (semifinals): Kazuma Kawachi & Ryota Tanuma (Jpn) bt Siddhant Banthia & Manish Sureshkumar 7-6(2), 6-3.

Antonio Conte appointed Inter Milan coach

MILAN

Inter Milan on Friday announced the appointment of former Italy manager Antonio Conte as coach.The 49-year-old has signed a three-year contract worth €9 million plus bonuses, according to reports. He won the first three of Juventus' eight straight Serie A titles and the Premier League and FA Cup as Chelsea boss. AFP

Diksha finishes 19th, Astha 36th

PUIDOUX (SWITZERLAND)

Indian golfers Diksha Dagar and Astha M finished tied-19 and tied T-36 in the Lavaux championship on the Ladies European Tour's Access Series, the second rung Tour. Spain's Maria Beautell won the title. PTI

A different challenge for Kiren Rijiju

New Sports Minister indicates Rathore's brainchild Khelo India will continue

TAKING CHARGE

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

His workout videos are now familiar with most, but new Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju has now a vastly different challenge with the Tokyo Olympics just over a year away.

Taking formal charge on Friday, Rijiju called the Olympics the pinnacle of world sports but also insisted that other competitions – Asian Games, Commonwealth and other major events including the National Games – were equally important while refraining from commenting on participation policies for some of the qualifying events India is likely to host.

Welcome: SAI DG Neelam Kapur and Youth Affairs secretary Upma Chawdhry greet Rijiju. ▪PTI

Continuity

"I cannot comment on the affairs of the ministry, I am yet to be briefed by my officers in terms of immediate requirement of jobs, policies vision etc. But there is something called continuity.

"Good things from the past should be carried on and new things to be added, if they are good. Being a minister doesn't mean everything, it is always a question of teamwork, which is the essence of any success," Rijiju said in his first interaction with the media.

Asserting the power of youth, he said the MYAS was an important part of the government. "I feel this is one of the most important ministries where we can galvanise the youth, who are the power of the country.

"In my earlier role (as MoS for Home) it was a different way of working, here it will be completely different. This is a soft ministry and is more about youth and a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the youth of the country," he said.

Rijiju also indicated that Khelo India – a brainchild of outgoing Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore – would continue and spread to more parts of the country after reviews.

"Once you start work, then the performance will be determined on the basis of how much you can give to the ministry and how much understanding you have.

"Both traditional sports in villages and modern Olympic sports need equal attention and support. Rathore is a good friend and I spoke to him just now. We are a team.

"After understanding the ministry, I will go ahead with the Khelo India or anything else in all parts of the country," he said.

REGIONAL ROUND-UP

A grand double for Sarabjot Singh

LUDHIANA: Sarabjot Singh won the under-18 boys' singles and doubles titles in the AITA Championship series junior tennis tournament organised by the Harvest Academy at its centre in Jassowal on Friday.
In the under-14 event, eighth seed Santhosh Yuvaraj beat the top seed Dhruv Agarwal 7-5, 6-4 for the title.
In the girls' section, G. Shivani was beaten in the under-18 final by Jaskirat Kaur but won the under-14 title, beating Aditi Pradhan.
The results (finals): Boys: Under-18: Sarabjot Singh bt Bharat Jaiswal 6-0, 6-2;
Doubles: Sarabjot Singh & Aarav Singh Gill bt Ankit Jaiswal & Kartik Parhar 6-3, 6-1.
Under-14: Santhosh Yuvaraj bt Dhruv Agarwal 7-5, 6-4.
Girls: Under-18: Jaskirat Kaur bt G. Shivani 6-2, 6-3.
Under-14: Shivani bt Aditi Pradhan 6-2, 6-2.

Proud moment: The winners and runners-up in various categories pose with their spoils. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Surendra Singh shooting championship

NEW DELHI: The 19th Kumar Surendra Singh shooting championship will be held concurrently with the fifth National selection trials in rifle and pistol, at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, from June 17 to July 1.
At the 10-metre range, it will be men's air rifle followed by the mixed air rifle. Thereafter, it will be women's air rifle. The women's air pistol will be followed by the mixed air pistol event, leading to men's air pistol.
In the 25-metre range, it will be standard pistol, centre fire pistol, women's sports pistol and men's rapid fire pistol, in that order.
In the 50-metre range, it will be women's rifle 3-position, followed by men's free pistol, men's rifle 3-position, ending with men's prone and women's prone events.
Each event in the Kumar Surendra Singh Championship will immediately be followed by the fifth selection trial.
The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has also announced a list of 66 men and 41 women for the national coaching camp to be staged at the Dr. Karni Singh Range from June 5 to 15.
The last World Cup in rifle and pistol will be held in Rio de Janeiro by the end of August.
The Asian Championship, offering the last set of Olympic quota places in shooting for the continent, will be held in Doha in November.

Collage Club enters Raghubir final

Shahbaz Khan (59) and Pragam Sharma (56) scored crucial half-centuries each as Collage Sports Club edged past Rann Star Club by one wicket to enter the final of the 44th Lala Raghubir Singh Hot Weather cricket tournament at Modern School grounds.
Put in to bat, Rann Star put up a competitive 280 for seven in its allotted 40 overs with Yash Sehrawat top-scoring with 86. In reply, Collage managed to overhaul the target with three balls to spare. Shahbaz was adjudged man of the match.
The scores: RSC 280 for seven in 40 overs (Yash Sehrawat 86, Pawan Nei 64,not out, Yogesh Nagar 40, Ravinder Singh three for 54) lost to CSC 281 for nine in 39.3 overs (Shahbaz Khan 59, Pragam Sharma 56, Kunal Chandela 40, Jayanshu Chaturvedi 38).

Saini and Shrey shine for Aarush Sports

Rushal Saini scored an unbeaten 72 and Shrey Walia picked up three wickets for just 17 runs as Aarush Sports beat NCR Sports by 10 wickets in the second SN Dubey memorial cricket tournament.
The scores: NCR 119 in 28.1 overs (Ujjawal Gulia 66, Shery Walia three for 17) lost to Aarush Sports 120 for no loss in 18.5 overs (Rushal Saini 72 not out, Ibrahim Khan 37 not out).

Half-centuries for Ankur, Rahul

Ankur Kaushik and Rahul Saini scored half-centuries each as RP Academy beat TN Memorial by one wicket in the Sports Sun cricket tournament.
The scores: TN Memorial 240 for four in 40 overs (Lakhan Singh 74, Aaradhya Yadav 64, Anshul Gupta 53) lost to RP Academy 241 for nine in 40 overs (Ankur Kaushik 56, Rahul Saini 50, Abhishek Singla 40, Anchit Yadav three for 30, Nalin Mishra three for 56).

It's Shesmyscript vs. Sakura in main event

BENGALURU: Shesmyscript and Sakura may fight out the finish of the Speaker's Trophy (1,400m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Saturday (June 1). False rails (width about 7.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1 MAMMA'S MINK PLATE (DIV. II), (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 4-y-o & over, 2-00 pm: 1. Tio Rico (4) Trevor 60, 2. Andra King (9) P. Surya 58, 3. Nawabzaadi (2) Vinod Shinde 57, 4. Santorini Secret (11) Rayan 56.5, 5. Ido What I Do (8) Dhebe 56, 6. She's Stylish (3) Mark 56, 7. Amalfi Coast (10) Rajesh K 55.5, 8. Sun Power (7) Yash 55.5, 9. Aqua Blessing (12) Chetan K 55, 10. Snow Queen (6) T.S. Jodha 55, 11. Look Out (1) Zervan 54.5 and 12. Mayurana (5) Irvan Singh 53.

1. TIO RICO, 2. ANDRA KING, 3. LOOK OUT

2 MAMMA'S MINK PLATE (DIV. I), (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 4-y-o & over, 2-35: 1. Sahara (4) R. Marshall 60, 2. Amber Crown (1) Darshan 59.5, 3. Varcasva (11) S. Shareef 59.5, 4. Princess Holly (6) Rajesh K 59, 5. Stanley (8) J. Chinoy 59, 6. Touch Your Destiny (7) R. Manish 59, 7. Aine (10) Vishal Bunde 58, 8. Star Man (5) Shobhan 57.5, 9. Fantastic App (2) Vaibhav 56, 10. Industrialist (3) T.S. Jodha 55.5 and 11. Reverberating (9) Chetan K 54.5.

1. SAHARA, 2. TOUCH YOUR DESTINY, 3. INDUSTRIALIST

3 BEAUTIFUL BABE PLATE (DIV. II), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 3-10: 1. Desert Mirage (5) Darshan 56, 2. Eco Friendly (11) Mark 56, 3. Glendale (7) C. Umesh 56, 4. Lightning Bolt (12) Akshay K 56, 5. Strategist (2) Yash 56, 6. Unstoppable (3) Kiran Naidu 56, 7. Chul Bul Rani (1) Ajay K 54.5, 8. Ice Floe (8) Neeraj 54.5, 9. Love Music (4) A. Merchant 54.5, 10. Queen Runner (9) Vikrant 54.5, 11. Sea Of Cortez (6) Trevor 54.5 and 12. Shiraz (10) Dhebe 54.5.

1. LIGHTNING BOLT, 2. SEA OF CORTEZ, 3. ICE FLOE

4 V.T. VELU MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,200m), rated 45 to 65, 3-45: 1. Side Winder (4) N.S. Parmar 60, 2. Super Success (5) Ajay K 59, 3. Teodoro (2) S. Shareef 57.5, 4. Areca Legend (8) Suraj 57, 5. Gusty Look (3) Abhay Singh 54, 6. Sitara (1) P.S. Chouhan 54, 7. Venus Bay (7) Akshay K 54 and 8. Angels Kiss (6) Rayan 52.

1. SITARA, 2. ARECA LEGEND, 3. VENUS BAY

5 SPEAKER'S TROPHY (1,400m), rated 60 & above, 4-20: 1. Automatic (3) A.S. Peter 63.5, 2. Buscadero (2) R. Pradeep 59, 3. Rum Runner (7) Antony 58.5, 4. Rafa (6) A. Imran 57.5, 5. Indian Pharaoh (8) Sandesh 55.5, 6. Dr Logan (4) Neeraj 53.5, 7. Shesmyscript (5) Trevor 51.5 and 8. Sakura (1) Akshay K 50.

1. SHESMYSCRIPT, 2. SAKURA, 3. AUTOMATIC

6 BEAUTIFUL BABE PLATE (DIV. I), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 4-55: 1. Buzz Light Year (12) Vikrant 56, 2. Country's Jewel (4) N. Rawal 56, 3. Eastern Crown (7) T.S. Jodha 56, 4. Manzoni (8) Sandesh 56, 5. Smile Around (3) M. Naveen 56, 6. Star Envoy (10) Kiran Naidu 56, 7. Storm Breaker (11) Yash 56, 8. Super Gladiator (9) Rayan 56, 9. Yours Forever (6) P.S. Chouhan 56, 10. Harbour Sunrise (2) Trevor 54.5, 11. Kionia (5) C. Umesh 54.5 and 12. Rorito (1) Neeraj 54.5.

1. HARBOUR SUNRISE, 2. YOURS FOREVER, 3. STORM BREAKER

Day's best: **SITARA**
Double: **TIO RICO – LIGHTNING BOLT**
Jkt: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Tr (i): 1, 2 and 3; (ii): 4, 5 and 6.

Asher-Smith trumps Thompson

Wilson takes advantage of Semenya's absence

DIAMOND LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STOCKHOLM

Dina Asher-Smith underlined her world title ambitions on Thursday by posting the year's fastest time as she cruised to victory in the 200m at the Stockholm Diamond League.

The British sprinter pulled away from 2016 double Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson to finish in 22.18s, with the Jamaican trailing in her wake with 22.66 and former world champion Dafne Schippers way back in third in 22.78.

Earlier, American Ajee Wilson took the 800m in the absence of Caster Semenya, who could not compete in the event due to new rules that would force her and other hyperandrogenic athletes to take medication to lower their testosterone levels.

Cruise mode: Dina Asher-Smith left Elaine Thomspon in her wake in winning the 200m. ▪REUTERS

A bronze medallist at the 2017 worlds, Wilson crossed the line in 2m 00.87s, beating Ethiopia's Habitam Alemu (2:01.26) and Kenya's Nelly Jepkosgei (2:01.98) in the first Diamond League 800m since the controversial rules came into effect.

US one-lap sensation Michael Norman won the 400m in 44.53s, a second slower than his fastest time in the world this year.

Kenya's Agnes Jebet Tirop also set a year's fastest time as she claimed victory in the women's 5,000m in 14:50.82, while Timothy Cheruiyot saw off Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen, double gold medallist at last year's European Championships, in the 1,500m with a time of 3:35.79.

Bharat gives substance to India-A total

SL-A IN INDIA

ASHWIN ACHAL
HUBBALLI

K.S. Bharat (117, 156b, 14x4, 1x6) held firm even as India-A was bowled out for 269 by Sri Lanka-A on the first day of the second 'Test', at the KSCA Stadium here on Friday.

Bharat was unafraid to play his strokes, and, in the company of Anmolpreet Singh (65, 116b, 6x4, 2x6) and Siddhesh Lad (32, 47b, 5x4), kept India-A afloat.

In reply, Sri Lanka-A finished the day on a precarious 87 for four.

Judging the length well

Bharat proved to be a fine judge of length, moving deep in his crease in a jiffy to pull the short balls.

The wicketkeeper-batsman peppered the mid-wicket fence, and later in his knock, even unleashed a fierce hooked six over fine-leg. Anmolpreet looked in good touch as well, impressing with his textbook cover drives.

However, an uncharacteristic heave off left-arm spinner Malinda Pushpakumara went straight to long-on.

Much like Anmolpreet, Lad looked in full flow, until he was adjudged caught behind. An upset Lad indicated to the umpire that he had not got an edge.

Pacer Lahiru Kumar (four for 53) and chinaman bowler Lakshan Sandakan (four for 64) did exceptionally well to keep India-A down to a manageable score.

Lahiru gave his team the ideal start, dismissing openers Priyank Panchal and Abhimanyu Easwaran for ducks. Sandakan then castled Shivam Dube and Jayant Yadav with well-disguised wrong-uns. Lahiru returned to remove Rahul Chahar (21, 24b, 3x4) and Bharat.

Fast bowlers Sandeep Warrier (two for 18) and Shivam Dube (two for 31) rattled the Sri Lanka-A top-order in the final session.

Niroshan Dickwella, who hit 103 in the previous match, was unbeaten on 27.

The scores: India-A 269 in 69.1 overs (K.S. Bharat 117, Anmolpreet Singh 65, Siddhesh Lad 32, Lahiru Kumar four for 53, Lakshan Sandakan four for 64) vs Sri Lanka-A 87 for four in 18 overs (Niroshan Dickwella 27 batting).

Seema and Manisha likely to make the cut

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

World Cup silver medallist Seema Tomar and Manisha Keer are likely to be selected in the women's trap team for the Shotgun World Championship to be staged in Lonato, Italy, by the end of June.

With Shagun Chowdhary holding on to her No. 1 spot, following good scores in the Acapulco and Al Ain World Cups, the second and third members of the National team – Rajeshwari Kumari and Varsha Varman – have not been able to retain their status on top of the merit list, as they struggled with the conditions in the World Cups.

In men's trap, there has not been much change at the top as Kynan Chenai and Prithviraj Tondaiman have been top class in the World Cups, and were overtaken by big scores in the race to the finals. It is learnt that former World champion Manavjit Singh Sandhu, who missed the last two World Cups, has still not recovered from ill-health, and will not be considered for the World Championship.

His berth had gone to Zoravar Singh Sandhu in the last two World Cups. Asian Games silver medallist Lakshay Sheoran had got the chance to at least shoot in the MQS section. It remains to be seen whether there is any change in the third member.

Juniors Vishwa Kundu and Vivaan Kapoor have been able to shoot above the averages of Zoravar and Lakshay. Since the World Championship will also feature junior events, the national federation may or may not push a junior into the men's team. However, if Vishwa gets in, it may open a chance for shooters of the calibre like Shardul Vihan and Manavaditya Singh Rathore to make the junior team.

Naruka on top

In men's skeet, Anantjeet Singh Naruka is on top of the table following impressive scores in the last two trials. He is marginally ahead of Olympian Maiiraj Ahmad Khan and the reigning Asian and National champion Angad Vir Singh Bajwa. Sheeraz Sheikh finds himself in the fourth spot. Angad had skipped the last World Cup owing to ill-health.

There could be a brand new team, as compared to the ones fielded in the recent World Cups, in women's skeet. Areeba Khan, Kartiki Singh Shaktawat and former National champion Saniya Sheikh figure in the top-three, ahead of Parinaaz Dhaliwal, Ganemat Sekhon and National champion Maheshwari Chauhan.

Former National champion Rashmmi Rathore has slipped to 10th.

It remains to be seen how the selectors make their choice, and announce the team on Saturday.

Suarez in Uruguay squad

ANI
MONTEVIDEO (URUGUAY)

Luis Suarez was named in Uruguay's final squad of 23 players for Copa America on Friday despite continuing to recover from a knee injury.

Paris Saint-Germain striker Edinson Cavani has also been named in the final squad.

Football's renaissance men seek glory on Europe's grandest stage

Klopp and Pochettino have overseen stunning revivals at Liverpool and Tottenham respectively, introducing a high-pressing style to the English game. On Saturday, their players battle for the Champions League crown

1
The sides' only previous meeting in a tournament final came in the 1982 League Cup at Wembley. Liverpool won it 3-1 after extra time

3
This is the third time Liverpool has reached successive European Cup finals. Only Juventus (1997, 1998) and Valencia (2000, 2001) have lost the fixture in consecutive years

6
There have been six previous Champions League finals between clubs from the same country, all since 2000. The only previous all-English final was in 2008, Manchester United beating Chelsea on penalties

8
Tottenham will become the eighth English club to appear in a European Cup final, more than any other country; Italy and Germany are next on the list with six each.

8
Sadio Mane could become the eighth player to score in more than one Champions League final. Gareth Bale, Samuel Eto'o, Lionel Messi, Sergio Ramos, Raul, Mario Mandzukic and Cristiano Ronaldo are the others

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA

Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur will not forget their journey to the final of the UEFA Champions League in a hurry. They have taken a road full of twists and turns, vanishing from sight at one bend, only to reappear in dramatic fashion at the next.

Neither side could be certain of a place in the knockouts even in the dying minutes of the final round of group matches. Tottenham survived Manchester City's onslaught in the quarterfinals by the tiniest of margins. In the semifinals, both teams were on the ropes, seemingly beaten until they surged back from the dead, producing two nights of epic drama.

"I don't know if it happened before; I don't know if it will happen again. I will remember this night forever," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said after that 4-0 second-leg win over Barcelona. Tottenham's players, seconds away from elimination, left their manager a sobbing wreck on the turf with their 96th-minute winner in Amsterdam. "Thank you football. Thank you my players, they are heroes," Mauricio Pochettino said afterwards, choking up. "Without football it is impossible to live."

Similar projects

And so on Saturday, only for the second time in the history of the competition, two English sides will contest the final of the Champions League. They are not, it would appear, equals. This Premier League season, Liverpool earned 26 points more than Tottenham, scored 22 goals more and conceded 17 fewer. Klopp's men lost only once all season, and finished the league campaign with nine straight wins, missing out on the title by a solitary point. In contrast, Tottenham limped over the line, winning only three of its last 12 league fixtures, scoring a mere 13 goals in that period. And four of those came in one game against an already-relegated Huddersfield.

There is no denying which the superior unit is, but it is impossible not to be struck by the similarities in the projects Pochettino and Klopp have embarked on at their respective clubs, the stunning revivals they have overseen. Also binding them is their style of football: an intense, high-pressing game. There may be differences in how each manager interprets that idea, but the underlying philosophy is the same.

In his first three full seasons in charge of Liverpool, Klopp has delivered a hattrick of top-four Premier League finishes: in the seven previous campaigns, the club had achieved that just once. This year he very nearly delivered that league title Anfield has so desperately sought, and has now taken Liverpool to successive Champions League finals. Klopp once pointed out that he was "not a messiah, only a coach"; the city of Liverpool (one half of it, at least) will argue otherwise.

All about pressing

In German football writer Raphael Honigstein's *Bring the Noise: The Jurgen Klopp Story*, a fascinating portrait of Klopp's 'Gegenpressing' system emerges. In theory it is a simple enough idea: press the opposition high up the pitch as a team, force the ball into areas that you overload, win possession back, attack, and prepare to go again.

The failure of even a single attacking player to press, though, could offer the rival side an easy outlet. It is why it is essential for an entire squad to buy into the concept.

"It's an agreement a team makes with itself," Liverpool's assistant manager Peter Krawietz tells the author. "A social contract: 'Yes, we want to do that together.' One guy doing it by himself is nothing."

It is more efficient for three or four players to press quick and hard than for eight to track back after losing the ball, he argues. "That's why it's not so much a question of your legs but of the mind. You have that moment where you have to overcome your inertia. Don't switch off."

Running their socks off

Sebastian Kehl, who captained Borussia Dortmund under Klopp, describes the system as "very, very wild running" towards the ball. Neven Subotic, his teammate at the time, admits that coping with it was not simple. "It's mentally and physically very demanding," he says in *Bring the Noise*. "You were used to running 105km per game as a team. Suddenly, you were up to 115km, and the target was to hit 120km or more. Klopp knew that couldn't happen overnight. He knew everybody had played 20 years of football and never been asked to work to such a plan before."

At Tottenham, Pochettino's rebuilding job has been nothing short of incredible. A club without the financial muscle of its rivals has managed three top-three finishes during the Argentine's first four years in charge. A club that had only ever featured in the Champions League once (in 2010) before Pochettino's arrival, has now qualified for the tournament four times in a row. A club simply not used to being in the Champions League is now, for the first time in its history, in the final of the competition.

Since Pochettino's appointment in 2014, Tottenham's net spend has been £29 million. Among Premier League sides, only Southampton has spent a smaller sum over the same period. Even Fulham, Brighton,

MATCH-DAY GUIDE

Everything you need to know about the final:

HEAD TO HEAD

Overall
Liverpool **79** | Spurs **48** | Draws **43**

Last five matches
Liverpool **3** | Spurs **1** | Draws **1**

Managers
Klopp **4** | Pochettino **1** | Draws **4**

• *Liverpool prevailed 2-1 in both this season's Premier League encounters, most recently at Anfield on March 31*

IN THIS SEASON'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Goals scored breakdown
Liverpool (22 goals): Open play **15** | Set-piece **3** | Counter attack **1** | Penalty **3**

Spurs (20 goals): Open play **17** | Set-piece **2** | Counter attack **1** | Penalty **0**

Goals conceded breakdown
Liverpool (12 goals): Open play **7** | Set-piece **3** | Counter attack **1** | Own goal **1**

Spurs (17 goals): Open play **12** | Set-piece **4** | Counter attack **1** | Own goal **0**

Most goals
Liverpool: Firmino **4** | Salah **4** | Mane **4**

Spurs: Kane **5** | Moura **5** | Son **4**

Most assists
Liverpool: Alexander-Arnold **3** | Milner **2** | Shaqiri **2**

Spurs: Eriksen **4** | Alli **3** | Lamela **2**

Most distance covered (km per game)
Liverpool: Milner **10.7** | Mane: **10.5** | Wijnaldum **10.1**

Spurs: Alli **11.9** | Eriksen **11.3** | Alderweireld **10.3**

Positional trends
• A majority of Liverpool's attacks come down the right (40%). The side attacks down the middle 26% and down the left 34%

• Spurs' attacks down the flanks are more evenly distributed: left 37%, right 36%. The side attacks down the middle 27%

THE STAGE
The Estadio Metropolitano — the home of Atletico Madrid — will host the game

Capacity: **67,829** | Field size: **105m x 68m** | Surface: **Grass**

WORD PLAY

Bank shot

● **What is it?** It's a shot in basketball which relies on the ball bouncing, or 'banking', off the backboard to enter the basket. The purpose of using the backboard is to slow the ball and create an angle for it to go into the hoop, thus improving the chances of success.

● **How does it work?** Players typically use 'bank shots' in the mid-to-short range, often when the angle for a direct shot is adverse. The small rectangle on the backboard, just above the rim, acts as a visual guide for players, to help them get a sense of what to aim at, to 'bank' it in.

● **Not to be confused with** 'Money in the bank', a sports metaphor to describe a sure thing — Rafael Nadal at Roland Garros, for instance, has been 'money in the bank'. While the 'bank shot' can be 'money in the bank' — if it's Tim Duncan shooting — this isn't always the case.

● **Who did it best?** It's hard to look beyond five-time NBA champion Duncan, an absolute master of "throwing it off the glass", as he described it. Other expert users of the shot include Sam Jones, George Gervin, Dwyane Wade, Scottie Pippen, and Dirk Nowitzki.

ON THE BOX

■ **Champions League final:** SUN: Tottenham v Liverpool, 12.30 A.M.; SONY TEN 2, 3 & HD.

■ **World Cup:** SAT: New Zealand v Sri Lanka, 3 P.M.; STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & HD. Afghanistan v Australia, 6 P.M., STAR SPORTS 3. SUN: South Africa v Bangladesh, 3 P.M.; STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & HD & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & HD.

■ **Roland Garros:** SAT: 2.15 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 1, 2 & HD. SUN: 2.15 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 2 & HD, STAR SPORTS 3.

STACKING UP

ICC Test Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	India	32	3,631	113
2	New Zealand	23	2,547	111
3	South Africa	27	2,917	108
4	England	35	3,663	105
5	Australia	27	2,640	98
6	Sri Lanka	37	3,462	94
7	Pakistan	27	2,263	84
8	West Indies	29	2,381	82
9	Bangladesh	22	1,438	65
10	Zimbabwe	9	140	16

ODI Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	England	43	5,372	125
2	India	47	5,669	121
3	South Africa	39	4,488	115
4	New Zealand	33	3,729	113
5	Australia	40	4,342	109
6	Pakistan	41	3,846	94
7	Bangladesh	35	3,155	90
8	West Indies	39	3,022	77
9	Sri Lanka	43	3,266	76
10	Afghanistan	30	1,864	62

T20I Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	Pakistan	26	7,365	283
2	England	16	4,253	266
3	South Africa	16	4,196	262
4	Australia	21	5,471	261
5	India	28	7,273	260
6	New Zealand	16	4,056	254
7	Afghanistan	16	3,849	241
8	Sri Lanka	18	4,093	227
9	West Indies	21	4,747	226
10	Bangladesh	16	3,525	220

Men's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Kento Momota	24	111,118	18
2	Shi Yuqi	23	90,661	17
3	Viktor Axelsen	25	79,438	15
4	Chou Tien Chen	29	79,118	19
5	Chen Long	30	75,840	17

Top Indians ▸

K. Srikanth
Rank 9

Sameer Verma
Rank 12

Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Tai Tzu Ying	24	96,225	15
2	Chen Yufei	21	90,365	16
3	Nozomi Okuhara	24	90,336	20
4	Akane Yamaguchi	21	86,730	21
5	P.V. Sindhu	23	78,784	18

India's next best ▸

Saina Nehwal
Rank 9

Mugdha Agrey
Rank 66

F1 Standings

#	DRIVER	TEAM	POINTS
1	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	137
2	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	120
3	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	82
4	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	78
5	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	57
6	Pierre Gasly	Red Bull	32
7	Carlos Sainz	McLaren	18
8	Kevin Magnussen	Haas	14
9	Sergio Perez	Racing Point	13
10	Kimi Raikkonen	Alfa Romeo	13
11	Lando Norris	McLaren	12
12	Daniil Kvyat	Toro Rosso	9
13	Daniel Ricciardo	Renault	8
14	Alexander Albon	Toro Rosso	7
15	Nico Hulkenberg	Renault	6
16	Lance Stroll	Racing Point	4
17	Romain Grosjean	Haas	1
18	Antonio Giovinazzi	Alfa Romeo	0
19	George Russell	Williams	0
20	Robert Kubica	Williams	0

Men's Top Five

#	PLAYER	EVENTS	POINTS	AVG. PTS.
1	Brooks Koepka	43	466.51	10.85
2	Dustin Johnson	46	495.67	10.78
3	Justin Rose	48	412.63	8.60
4	Rory McIlroy	47	376.80	8.02
5	Tiger Woods	40	292.86	7.32

Top Indians ▸

Gaganjeet Bhullar
Rank 164

Shubhankar Sharma
Rank 165

Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	EVENTS	POINTS	AVG. PTS.
1	Jin-Young Ko	53	399.65	7.54
2	Minjee Lee	56	378.55	6.76
3	Sung Hyun Park	49	314.64	6.42
4	Ariya Jutanugarn	55	322.09	5.86
5	Nasa Hataoka	53	304.97	5.75

Top Indians ▸

Aditi Ashok
Rank 133

Diksha Dagar
Rank 329

ATP Rankings

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Novak Djokovic	32	12,355	17
2	Rafael Nadal	32	7,945	16
3	Roger Federer	37	5,950	17
4	Dominic Thiem	25	4,685	23
5	Alexander Zverev	22	4,360	23
6	Stefanos Tsitsipas	20	4,080	28
7	Kei Nishikori	29	3,860	23
8	Kevin Anderson	33	3,745	16
9	Juan Martin del Potro	30	3,235	14
10	John Isner	34	2,895	19
11	Karen Khachanov	23	2,800	25
12	Fabio Fognini	32	2,785	24
13	Marin Cilic	30	2,710	19
14	Daniil Medvedev	23	2,625	27
15	Borna Coric	22	2,525	21
16	Nikoloz Basilashvili	27	1,970	28
17	Gael Monfils	32	1,965	20
18	Milos Raonic	28	1,960	20
19	Marco Cecchinato	26	1,840	27
20	Diego Schwartzman	26	1,755	26

WTA Rankings

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Naomi Osaka	21	6,486	19
2	Karolina Pliskova	27	5,685	22
3	Simona Halep	27	5,533	16
4	Kiki Bertens	27	5,405	25
5	Angelique Kerber	31	5,095	20
6	Petra Kvitova	29	5,055	21
7	Sloane Stephens	26	4,552	20
8	Ashleigh Barty	23	4,420	18
9	Elina Svitolina	24	3,967	18
10	Serena Williams	37	3,521	12
11	Aryna Sabalenka	21	3,505	26
12	Anastasija Sevastova	29	3,136	25
13	Caroline Wozniacki	28	3,063	18
14	Madison Keys	24	2,965	14
15	Belinda Bencic	22	2,893	27
16	Qiang Wang	27	2,812	22
17	Anett Kontaveit	23	2,565	23
18	Julia Goerges	30	2,520	25
19	Garbine Muguruza	25	2,465	21
20	Elise Mertens	23	2,305	26

Huddersfield, Burnley and Cardiff have made a greater outlay.

Last summer, Tottenham did not sign a single player. The lack of transfer activity is not, Pochettino insists, entirely a reflection on the club's finances. "The more defined your playing style is, the more difficult transfers become," he says in *Brave New World: Inside Pochettino's Spurs*, his account of the 2016-17 season (authored by Guillem Balague). "Because either a player gives you something specific that you're lacking, or you're better off not signing anyone."

Chaos theory

That playing style guides every decision Pochettino makes. Marcelo Bielsa, one of his first coaches at Newell's Old Boys, has clearly been an influence. "I want my teams to provoke a controlled disorder, to create so much movement that it distresses the opposition," Pochettino says in *Brave New World*.

He offers an example of his methods of drilling that frantic intensity into the Tottenham squad: "We'd play an hour-long 11-a-side game on Wednesdays, with no stoppages – there were no corners or goal-kicks. If the ball went out of play, the game would restart immediately with another ball. It was relentless. Those players have told me since that, even today, they still hear Jesus [Perez, assistant] yelling out 'press, press, press' in their dreams."

Whatever the outcome on Saturday, it should be possible to appreciate the tasks Klopp and Pochettino have accomplished, bringing a variety of football to the Premier League that has now seen two English sides reach the final.

Thrilling, brutal, manic

It is true though that Liverpool's rendition of that high-pressing style has been more thrilling, manic and brutal than anything Tottenham has produced. Liverpool has confidence, form and pedigree, its front three of Sadio Mane, Mohamed Salah, and Roberto Firmino arguably the best attacking assembly in the world.

But in Christian Eriksen, who according to Pochettino understands the requirements of his pressing game better than anyone else, Son Heung-min, Dele Alli, Lucas Moura and Harry Kane (fitness permitting), Tottenham possesses a remarkably diverse and intelligent combination of attacking players.

Besides, in a final, there is something to be said for composure and the ability to make sound decisions under pressure. As Manchester City and Ajax found out, even a moment's lapse in concentration can be fatal.

23
Spurs could become the 23rd side to win the European Cup and the first new name on the trophy since Chelsea in 2012

'India is the best team at the World Cup... the others can't handle as much pressure'

Sanjay Manjrekar says Virat Kohli's side has the strongest temperament of all the contenders. But the former India batsman thinks the middle order could be vulnerable

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Sanjay Manjrekar is one of the three Indian voices the ICC has hired for the World Cup (Sourav Ganguly and Harsha Bhogle are the others). Before his stint with the microphone, Manjrekar was admired in the late 1980s and early 90s for the technical virtuosity of his batting. He finished his Test career with 2,043 runs at 37.14, playing in an era of top-quality fast bowling. He spoke to The Hindu *in Jaipur recently on a range of subjects, including the World Cup, the future of Tests and commentary. Excerpts:*

How do you rate India's chances at the World Cup?

■ India is the best team at the World Cup. Whether they win is another matter. When you are playing bilateral one-day matches, there isn't as much pressure, but a World Cup semifinal or final is an entirely different matter. That is where India is strong. Temperamentally, it is the strongest side; the others cannot handle as much pressure.

You wanted Rishabh Pant in the side.

■ He should have been in the squad. The opposition is a little worried when Pant is around. He could have been played as a wild card. He certainly has the temperament. He has succeeded in Tests, so he is not somebody who will get overawed by the occasion.

Are you happy with the squad otherwise?

■ Yes. People are not excluded at the cost of someone very exciting. I have always maintained, even two months before the World Cup, whoever is picked at No. 4, India's little vulnerability will be in the middle – Nos. 4, 5 and 6. So that will continue to be India's little weakness in this World Cup. India's strength lies in its top three and the seamers.

India has come a long way in pace bowling since your playing days...

■ Certainly. I was particularly impressed by the pace Navdeep Saini clocked at this year's IPL and the attitude shown by Prasidh Krishna and Khaleel Ahmed. A lot of exciting talents are coming up; they look temperamentally good, especially compared to the uncapped Indian batsmen this IPL. What has stopped India from becoming the genuine No. 1 Test team in the world until now has been the lack of three top quality quicks. It is starting to change.

Do you think young batsmen today are trying to succeed in T20 at the expense of proper technique?

■ It is understandable. Why should you invest all your time and energy on a format that is increasingly going out of fashion? I can understand a lot of players wanting to become T20 stars, but there will be many who could be good at both. Test cricket is a format that has become extremely old-fashioned. It is very difficult for it to connect with today's fans.

So are you worried about the future of Test cricket?

■ Broadcasters are not making money from Tests. When Kusal Perera played that innings [which led Sri Lanka to a famous victory over South Africa at Durban in February], not many people were watching.

We all love Tests. Even if it is not completely a commercial enterprise, the people in power will ensure that Test matches always remain alive. T20 and other formats will fund it, because there is interest. And people remember Test performances. Cheteshwar Pujara's three hundreds [in Australia] were noticed by the whole world.

Why did you choose to become a commentator and not, say, a coach?

■ I haven't found anything else around cricket as appealing. I would not have been this long in the profession if I didn't find it exciting. As for coaching, I can do it. When I was the captain of Mumbai for the last two or three years, I was more of coach/player, doing more mentoring. But the problem with coaching is that you are at the mercy of the players. In spite of your best efforts, if you don't have a good team, you might lose your job. Commentary is more straightforward.

Who are the commentators you respect?

■ When I was a player, I didn't listen to the commentary, unlike Ravi Shastri, who would listen to the broadcast from Australia when he was playing in the West Indies. Rather than watching, I just loved playing.

Nasser Hussain, I feel, is one of the best ever. Ian Chappell is someone who never opens his mouth unless he has something worthwhile to say. I also enjoyed listening to Bill Lawry, who was infectious.

There are some really good commentators like Simon Doull and Ian Bishop, who are the pillars of the IPL coverage.

GAME THEORY

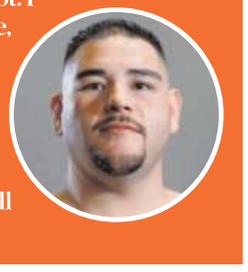
Saturday night at the Garden

Anthony Joshua will make his United States debut at Madison Square Garden, where he puts three world heavyweight boxing titles on the line. His opponent Andy Ruiz Jr. is a replacement for Jarrell Miller, who failed three drug tests and squandered his shot. Here's the tale of the tape:

Anthony Joshua		Andy Ruiz Jr.
AJ, The Surgeon	Nickname	The Destroyer
British	Nationality	American
Oct. 15, 1989	Born	Sept. 11, 1989
6'6"	Height	6'2"
82"	Reach	74"
Orthodox	Stance	Orthodox
22	Total fights	33
22	Wins	32
0	Losses	1
21	Wins by knockout	21
95%	Knockout %	64%
IBF, WBA (Super) and WBO	World titles held (current)	None
N/A	World titles held (past)	NABF
Win via technical knockout in the seventh round over Alexander Povetkin	Last fight	Win via retirement in the fifth round over Alexander Dimitrenko

"I think Ruiz punches with intent to hurt. And when you punch with intent to hurt, you punch to slow your opponent down, so they're easier to hit. I think Ruiz is looking for that one shot knockout

"I think being so tall he fights like a big robot. I think with my style, my speed, my movement, I don't think he's fought anybody like me. It's going to be a whole different ball game



PICTURE THIS

SCOTT BARBOUR/GETTY IMAGES

Flippin' insane

The distances people go to promote things these days! The AUS-X Open, the biggest supercross and freestyle motocross event outside of the USA, decided that it needed to generate some buzz. So it asked a daredevil rider to flip on a skyscraper.

Jack Field considered the proposal presented to him and took his bike to the top of Melbourne's Eureka Tower.

"I've done some pretty insane things in my life, but this certainly takes the cake in terms of nuts," the former World No. 1 freestyle trials champion said of his Eureka moment. Freestyle trials involves traversing terrain without placing a foot on the ground, but what about back-flips nearly 300m up, with no safety barriers installed on the sides of the skyscraper?

Field did it easy last week, registering the highest motorbike back-flip ever (297.3m), adding to his list of world records — he also holds the marks for the lowest motorcycle back-flip (34.925cm) and longest back-flip on a trials bike (24.99m).

What's more, he also brought the AUS-X Open the attention it wanted.

But a word of warning: leave such things to the professionals.

DELHI THE HINDU
SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2019

Sherbat on cue (Clockwise from right): Gur, Apple Roohafza, Watermelon ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

PARCHED?

Sip on one of these roadside sherbats in Old Delhi, to bring your body temp down

RAMIT MITRA

A few generations ago in Old Delhi, if you owned a haveli, you would gather, with family members in the cool tehkhaana (basement), sipping your 4 p.m. sherbet on an arid summer day. Today, this is rare, because the havelis themselves are unlivable. But the sherbat-makers still exist, though it's a trade dominated by older folk. Enjoy their treats before they are swallowed by urbanisation.

Aqueel Ahmad's Gur ka Sherbet

Ask for Sherbet Waali Galli as it is now called by people in the area. The stall is situated where Gali Pahari Imli and Bazar Matia Mahal Road meet

At this roadside stall, sits Aqueel Ahmad, squatting on his wooden stool with a big shallow round utensil in front of him, filled with a golden liquid, the colour of caramel. Intrigued by the colour I order a glass. I ask what it is, and with a twinkle of a challenge in his eye he says, "Sirf paanch pupaye ka hai, peekey bataiye. (It costs just ₹5; drink a glass, then tell me what it is.)"

Squeezing a generous amount of lemon juice in a glass tumbler, he pours in the golden liquid, which now resembles a glass of iced tea. After the first sip, I am still clueless about the ingredients. He chuckles.

"It is Gudh ka Sherbet (jaggery sherbet). I smash jaggery blocks, soak them in some water, leave them overnight and after sieving it a few times to remove impurities, I have a liquid concentrate," he says. At his stall, he adds ice-cold water to the concoction, ready to serve a glass of energy to the weary Rozadaars (those fasting during Ramzaan.) He says during Ramzaan, sales begin after Iftaar, at sunset and he finishes off his day's concentrate by 10 p.m.

Nawab Bhai's Sherbet Pyaar Mohabbat Mazaa

The stall just before Aslam chicken, opposite Gali Matia Mahal

Many years ago, I asked Nawab miyaan the name of the pink concoction of fresh milk, Roohafza, cubes of freshly-cut watermelon and water that he makes. He replied "Yeh hai Sherbet Pyaar Mohabbat Mazaa: Main Pyaar sey banata hoon, aap mohabbat sey peetey hain, aur sabko mazza aa jata hai. (I make this sherbet with love, you love the drink, and we all have loads of fun!)."

Quite a few stalls have now sprung up in competition, but I go back to Nawab for his ready smile which accompanies each glass of pure bliss (₹10 for small glass; ₹20 for a large).

Mohammad Jamal's Apple Sherbet

A cart goes up and down Bazar Matia Mahal Road until it reaches Chitli Qabar Chowk

I have never found Jamal's hand-cart at the same place ever during all my Ramzan food explorations to Old Delhi. At times he can be found near gate #1 of the Jama Masjid; another time I found him at the junction of Galli Churiwalan. He is the quintessential 'travelling salesman'.

His is a grated-apple-vanilla-ice-water concoction, with a pinch of kesar-coloured masala, which gives it a yellow tint. And you have another sherbet to rejuvenate you, at ₹10 and ₹20. Easily giving Nawab Bhai a big run for his money, sometimes Jamal stands with his cart right opposite Nawab's Watermelon-Roohafza stall.

Zulfikar ji's Roohafza Sherbet

On the lane leading upto Dargah-e-Nizamuddin Aulia from Mathura Road

Just below one of the prominent eateries of the area, N Iqbal & Sons, sits a man with a big steel water carrier, during the month of Ramzaan. But when you ask Zulfikar ji, an almost-60-year-old man with a flowing white beard, what it is, you are a tad disappointed to hear him say "Roohafza Sherbet." He senses that I am doubtful, so he pours out a glass, and that's when I notice it is loaded with Tukmaria or Sabja Beej. He says, "Making this is very easy, I soak the seeds in water for 2-3 hours in the afternoon, add Roohafza to it, mix chilled water and it is ready. The juice of some freshly-cut lemon is added to make it tastier and healthier for the Indian summer."

Handing me a spoon to scoop out the seeds, he says, "Tukmaria ko khaaiye janaab, Rozo mein pet thanda rakhega. (Eat the seeds; they'll keep your tummy cool during the Roza.)" He explains how they help reduce body heat and relieves the bloating after a whole day of fasting and also helps in reducing acidity due to the spicy food at Iftaar time after a whole 15-16 hours of Roza-fasting. The not-too-sweet-not-too-weak sherbet, at ₹20, went down with my Iftaar platter ever so smoothly.

Ramit Mitra is the founder of Delhi by Foot Adventures, which organises heritage walks and curates cultural events on food, music and poetry

Stories in minutiae

Mughal motifs and beads underline the newest collection from jewellery brand Zola

Women at work (Clockwise from left) Designer Gina Joseph with the craftswomen, products from the collection, an artisan at work

SURYA PRAPHULLA KUMAR

Chennai-based designer Gina Joseph has always been captivated by Gujarat, with its wealth of handloom and crafts – from the intricate Kutchi embroidery and unusual Rogan painting to the myriad colours of *bandhani* and *ajrakh*.

"So when I was invited by the NGO, Shroff Foundation Trust, to conduct a bead embroidery workshop at Chota Udaipur recently, I took it up. The colours and textures created by the different beads was fascinating, as were the possibilities for jewellery," says the 35-year-old behind Zola, a brand that works with rural artisans.

By the bead

Taking inspiration from architecture – "the Mughal influence seen at the palace in Shahibaug, the Azam Khan Sarai and Sujat Khan's mosque, and the Gujarati-style *jaali* work so beautifully depicted in the Sidi Sayyid Mosque" – and local flora and fauna, the motifs are painstakingly rendered on earrings, neck pieces, belts and more.

"Bead embroidery is an intricate and precise process, and very time consuming. We first sketch the design on paper, then make a digital copy in a cross stitch format so that the exact space for each bead is decided before starting the embroidery," she explains, sharing that the 15 women artisans who participated in the workshop were surprised that the craft they used on mobile pouches, bags and cushion covers, could transition into jewellery. Each piece takes three to five days to make.

Wisdom of experience

Bead embroidery has been around for at least 60 years. "Prior to that, the women used glass beads with pieces of silver to create necklaces. Later they began to combine beading and embroidery to make items like *indhoni* (beaded pot rests)," says Joseph.

The designer also visited the villages of Punyavat and Rangpur, where the artisans live, and spent a day creating new designs. "Some of the master craftswomen are over 70 years old, and now guide younger artisans," she concludes.

Jewellery from ₹990 to ₹2,100, on zolaindia.com

INSTAPICK

Stanley Kubrick

Keep your interest in cinema alive past Cannes, with this ongoing exhibit at The Design Museum in London. Relive iconic scenes from *The Shining*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *2001: A Space Odyssey* and more. There are also 700 rare objects, films, interviews, letters and photographs. Follow #discoverkubrick on Instagram. Till September 15.

UNPLUGGED

Leh-Ladakh Motor Bike Expedition 2019

Get your motor running and head out to a rough and exciting bike trail at this time of the year. You'll ride through tricky roads, drive across Baralacha Pass, Rohtang Pass and Tanglang La, visit monasteries and villages along the way, and spend a day at Pangong Lake. The 7D6N tour starts on June 9, 15 and 29, with additional dates in July, August and September. Starting at ₹25,000 + taxes per head. Details and registration on bookcruise.in. 9820048203

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE

AWARENESS

Cycle ride
To celebrate World Bicycle Day, marked on June 3, Delhi By Cycle, a cycle-tour company in the city, is hosting a cycle-ride tomorrow. Following this will be a talk and an exhibition. The event is organised to create an awareness on the problems faced by daily cyclists.
VENUE: DBC hall, Asaf Ali Road, near Delhi gate Station Gate 3
TIME: Ride at 6 a.m., talk at 9 a.m.

EXHIBIT

Paintings
The ongoing exhibition, *Elements That Define A Woman's Soul*, is a solo painting show by artist Sneha Agarwal. The 20 artworks on display in this showcase, explore different elements of nature such as, fire, water, earth and air, and narrate stories of how they embody a woman's spirit and soul.
VENUE: Convention Centre Foyer, IHC
TIME: 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

WORKSHOP

Mango recipes
Besides air-conditioning, one thing that makes the heat and dust of summer bearable is the king of fruits, mango. SodaBottleOpenerWala is organising a mango workshop at Gurugram today. Their chef Anahita N. Dhondy will explain and demonstrate the making of four mango recipes from the Keri Nu Kraze menu.
VENUE: SodaBottleOpenerWala, Cyber Hub
TIME: 11 a.m.

THEATRE

Hindi play
Kaalchakra, written by Jaywant Dalvi in Marathi, will be staged this Sunday evening. Directed by Prakash Bhatia, the play focusses on the mental anguish that senior couples undergo due to callousness on the part of their children, who feel that the responsibility of looking after parents is a burden.
VENUE: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Cerntre
TIME: 7:30 p.m.

FILM

Documentary
On the occasion of its 20th birthday, the Kriti Film Club is all set to screen the India première of a Hindi documentary, *Suryaganga*, this evening. This is a story of three curious citizens who attempt to unravel the connection between vanishing rivers, massive energy projects, and the quiet rise of renewable energy.
VENUE: Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre
TIME: 7 p.m.

FILM REVIEWS

Like a candle in the wind

Rocketman depicts Elton John's flamboyance as a flickering conduit of self-expression and discovery rather than simply rebellion

KENNITH ROSARIO

Rocketman The story of Elton John, told with the advantage of hindsight ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The advantage of making an authorised biography with the subject as one of the producers is that you understand the pulse of the person. There's ample access to study, investigate, explore and crosscheck. But there's also the threat of self-censorship, obscurantism and sanitisation. Dexter Fletcher's biopic on Elton John (Taron Egerton) toes the line carefully. While it takes away the British singer's responsibility for his messy years, it does so by investigating the lifelong impact of his childhood and his relationship with his parents. In an almost Freudian tone, the film contrasts his life with his early years periodically. The outcome appears natural, despite a tried-and-tested and terribly predictable narrative arc of a Hollywood biopic.

The key is in understanding John's flamboyance, which rests more in self-expression and discovery rather than rebellion. The biopic adopts the same tone, where the visuals are 'extra' and campy, yet somehow understated. The film opens with John barging into rehab, wearing an orange devil costume, with fiery wings and glittery horns. There's a halo of sparkle and rainbow around him momentarily. As the film keeps cutting back to the rehab, we see John sobering down in appearance, hinting at a transition, both external and internal. It's not as subtle as the makers think it is, yet the film's obviousness is actually effective in making a statement on self-acceptance.

It also comes as a mighty relief that a film on the vivacious singer's life embraces his queerness, and not merely to generate conflict. Despite sexuality being a critical reason for distress, *Rocketman* understands that the angst of belonging to a sexual minority manifests itself in other aspects of one's life. Even though his mother tells him he has "chosen a lonely life" and that "he won't find love", the grievances and anxieties of sexuality overlap with those of finding sudden and unprecedented fame, addiction and the inability to sieve out genuine relationships. The film creates Venn diagrams, not silos.

Ahead of the film's release, John announced that he didn't let Hollywood studios dilute the queer sex scenes in *Rocketman*, as is often the case with mainstream projects. Unlike last year's utterly problematic *Bohemian Rhapsody* (a Freddy Mercury biopic), *Rocketman* doesn't turn away the camera as two men get into bed, and queer sex is not the synonym for evil in this film. Although, the classic Hollywood problem of vilifying promiscuity and underground queer culture is seen in *Rocketman* as well. When it comes to sexual decadence among queer characters, the film displays its conservatism time and again, giving clear disapproval to John's 'wild side' and refuses to display it with as much openness. There's perhaps a longer discussion to be had on how the American queer movement has distanced itself from the impudence and irreverence of the '70s, to fit into the current system and appease "American family values".

Rocketman

DIRECTOR: Dexter Fletcher
CAST: Taron Egerton, Jamie Bell, Richard Madden, Bryce Dallas Howard
STORYLINE: A timid child grows up to become a renowned musician and grapples with addiction and loneliness

Although John's addictive music is undeniably at the centre of this film, it's commendable that it refrains from using his songs as plot points. The music develops in a parallel realm yet holds significance to what we see onscreen. But the dialogues by Lee Hall are not as subtle, especially when it comes to John's exchanges with his parents. Egerton's performance, on the other hand, is as effervescent and mellow as John's music. There's a noticeable shift in body language from a closeted to an openly gay man, without being caricaturish.

All said and done, *Rocketman* is a bit guarded. It's almost as if John, as a 72-year-old married and stable man with two children, is looking back at his tumultuous life through this film – at a distance. But we often forget that life lived in hindsight is vastly different from the one we live in real time.

An honest call for communal harmony

The low-budget *Nakkash* is high on both sense and sensibility, much needed in today's times

NAMRATA JOSHI

All heart *Nakkash* reflects the times, of little tolerance among many and high ideals of a few ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Poverty shines through in every frame of *Nakkash*, tattered as they appear for the lack of budget. This week's release might be a poor film in production values, but not in its aim or intent. *The* narrative may not soar high with imagination or ingenuity because of monetary constraints; its heart, however, is rich and speaks what we need to hear and introspect about, but are unlikely to.

Allah Rakha Siddiqui (Inaamulhaq) is a craftsperson working in a Hindu temple in Varanasi. His calling alienates him from his own community. Siddiqui is regarded as *kaafir* (infidel), his son denied admission to the madrasa and he has to live almost in hiding even in a Muslim ghetto. The head of the temple, Vedantiji (Kumud Mishra), who is seeped equally in the spirituality of Gayatri Mantra as he is in its Urdu *bhavanuvaad* (adaptation), believes in rising above the divides and supports him. But the newly emerging reactionary Hindus are not entirely convinced.

It's about the *kaam* versus *kaum* (livelihood as against community) split, the fear and loneliness that comes with treading a tangential path. Director, Zaigham Imam lays bare the lives of ordinary, 'lower-class' Muslims, their daily routines in Varanasi, Lucknow and Jaunpur. And it's one of them – Siddiqui – who talks more sense than the learned or the privileged on either side of the religious divide: he says the Quran doesn't prohibit you from working for another religion; it encourages it for fellowship and fraternity.

Nakkash

DIRECTOR: Zaigham Imam
CAST: Inaamulhaq, Sharib Hashmi, Kumud Mishra
RUN TIME: 125 minutes
STORYLINE: A Muslim artisan working in a Hindu temple faces the wrath of both the communities

"*Bhagwan kaun hai*? (Who is Bhagwan)?" asks Siddiqui's son. "*Allah miyaan ke bhai* (The brother of Allah)," he answers.

Imam doesn't show religion at fault, but the misinterpretation of it, whether by the Muslims or Hindus. Some simple lines are resonant with that sacred logic. "Allah *utni madad karega jitni zaroori hai* (God will help in only as much is required)" because, after all, "*Insaan jaisa chahega waisi banegi ye duniya* (The world is shaped by the way the humans want to mould it)". Or the fact that it's not God who discriminates among humans, it's human beings who do so.

Then there is the loud and clear message of keeping religion away from politics – the belief in *karm ki rajneeti*, not *dharm ki* (politics based on deeds rather than religion). *Nakkash* highlights the remnants of the Ganga-Jamuni *tehzeeb* (syncretic culture) that is on the verge of collapse. "*Mahaul theek nahin hai* (The atmosphere is not quite conducive)" is a phrase repeated constantly. "*Aapsi sadbhav samapt ho raha hai* (The harmony is disappearing)" is another.

However, the tone gets too sanctimonious and earnest, and often screechy, while the acting veers towards the melodramatic, but the film's plea to save *manushyata* (humaneness and humanity) is well-intentioned and hits the right spot. The timing of its release makes one wonder if it's an unintended metaphor of our times. Or if it's a film that is marooned and stranded because the cause it's propagating is itself a lost one. At least for now.

IN BRIEF

R. Kelly hit with 11 new sex crime charges

CHICAGO

Prosecutors on Thursday filed 11 felony sex crime charges against musician R. Kelly, in what his lawyer said was a refiling of counts from an existing case. The 52-year-old already had been facing 10 charges, filed in February, for the alleged abuse of four women. He has denied the charges and claimed his accusers are lying. AFP

Russia cuts gay scenes from Elton John biopic

MOSCOW

Gay sex scenes have been cut from the Russian version of Elton John biopic *Rocketman*, critics who saw a preview said on Friday, as the local distributor said it had made edits for legal reasons. Russia has a dire record on LGBT rights. AFP

AI beats humans in multiplayer shooter

LONDON

A team of programmers at a British company, DeepMind, has designed automated "agents" that taught themselves how to play a first-person multiplayer video game shooter, and became so good they consistently beat human beings. AFP

Vietnam culls 2 million pigs to fight swine fever

HANOI

Vietnam said on Friday it has culled 2 million pigs in a bid to curb an outbreak of deadly African swine fever and called on the entire nation to join the fight against the rapidly spreading disease. REUTERS

Spelling Bee ends in historic tie

Seven Indian-origin students are among eight to jointly claim the 2019 prize

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
OXON HILL

Reaffirming the dominance of Indian-Americans, a record seven Indian-origin students were among eight who jointly won the prestigious 2019 Scripps National Spelling Bee, taking home more than $50,000 in cash and prizes in an "unprecedented" competition.

It is the first time in the 94-year history of the contest that more than two co-champions have been named. It was also the first time since 2007 when an American student, Erin Howard, was among the winners.

Rishik Gandhasri, 13, of California; Saketh Sundar, 13, of Maryland; Shruthika Padhy, 13, of New Jersey; Sohum Sukhatankar, 13, of Texas; Abhijay Kodali, 12, of Texas; Rohan Raja, 13, of Texas; Christopher Serrao, 13, of New Jersey and Howard, 14, of Alabama were named as co-champions.

For Rishik Gandhasri, the winning word was "auslaut." Erin Howard spelled "erysipelas" correctly. Saketh Sundar won on "bougainvillea." And Shruthika Padhy won with "aiguillette." Sohum Sukhatankar spelled "pendeloque" correctly. Abhijay Kodali spelled "palama" right. Christopher Serrao won with "cernuous." Rohan's winning word was "odylic."

"I was last," Rohan said after it was all over. "I had to watch everybody get applause," he said.

Word whizz: Shruthika Padhy, Erin Howard, Rishik Gandhasri, Christopher Serrao, Saketh Sundar, Sohum Sukhatankar, Rohan Raja and Abhijay Kodali in Oxon Hill. ▪ REUTERS

Uncharted territory

Each of the eight students will receive the full winner's prize of $50,000 in cash. In all, 50 of the 562 spellers reached the finals, 34 of them eliminated during the afternoon rounds.

The six boys and two girls combined to spell the final 47 words correctly over five consecutive perfect rounds in the most extraordinary ending of the competition.

"In an unprecedented display of academic achievement, eight spellers have become co-champions of the 2019 Scripps National Spelling Bee, making history as the first group to share the coveted title in the 92 years of the storied event," the organisers tweeted.

Thursday night's finals went on more than an hour and half past the scheduled time with words like "omphalopsychite", "Geeldikop" and "auftaktigkeit".

The competition, broadcast nationally, kicked off on Tuesday with its biggest field ever. The 565 contestants ranged in age from 7 to 14 and came from across the U.S. and several other countries, including Canada, Ghana and Jamaica.

"Champion spellers, we are in uncharted territory," official pronouncer Jacques Bailly said.

"We do have plenty of words remaining on our list, but we'll soon run out of words that can possibly challenge you, the most phenomenal assemblage of super spellers in the history of this competition," Mr. Bailly said.

The majority of spellers had personal coaches, and 13 of the 16 used word lists and study materials compiled by ex-spellers Shobha Dasari and her younger brother, Shourav.

Last year, 14-year-old Indian-American Karthik Nemmani won the Spelling Bee, taking home $42,000. He correctly spelt "koinonia" to become the 14th Indian-American champion in 11 consecutive years.

Philippines returns trash to Canada

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANILA

Tonnes of garbage sent to the Philippines years ago was shipped back to Canada on Friday after a festering diplomatic row, as Asian nations increasingly reject serving as dumping grounds for international trash.

The 69 shipping containers of garbage were loaded onto a cargo vessel at Subic Bay to begin the lengthy trip to Canada.

E-cigarettes pose public health risk, says ICMR

Dismisses claims that devices can help cut tobacco use

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has warned of a potential public health disaster if action was not taken to completely prohibit and dissuade the use of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) or e-cigarettes given that the nicotine delivered by these devices adversely affect almost all systems in a human body.

E-cigarette use adversely affects the cardiovascular system, impairs respiratory immune cell function and airways in a way similar to cigarette smoking and is responsible for severe respiratory disease. It also poses risk to foetus, infant, and child brain development, the council noted in a white paper released on Friday.

Harmful effects

"Use of e-cigarettes has documented adverse effects on humans which include DNA damage; carcinogenesis; cellular, molecular and immunological toxicity; respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological disorders and adverse impact on foetal development and pregnancy,'' said Prof. Balram Bhargava, director general ICMR.

Given the harmful health effects e-cigarettes pose to users, as well as passive exposure, failure to make appropriate interventions at the right time – by bringing together all stakeholders under one umbrella to prevent this impending epidemic of e-cigarettes use – could lead to a public health disaster in India, Dr. Bhargava asserted.

E-cigarettes adversely affect cardiovascular system. ▪ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Urges complete ban

There are more than 460 different e-cigarette brands with varying configurations of nicotine delivery available in the market, according to the ICMR.

Now, based on the currently available scientific data from multiple streams of research, the ICMR has recommended complete prohibition on ENDS or e-cigarettes in India in the greater interest of protecting public health.

Observing that tobacco consumption, especially cigarette smoking, had shown a decline in India in recent years, Prof. K. Srinath Reddy, president, Public Health Foundation of India and cardiologist and public health expert who had chaired the ICMR expert group for this white paper, said that this had been achieved through several tobacco control measures that had already been initiated. "Thus, at this juncture, marketing of a product like e-cigarettes, with unproven benefit and high potential harm from addiction and health risks, is unwarranted as a tobacco control measure," said Dr. Reddy. "The risk of youth addiction is high,'' he warned.

With any benefit that e-cigarettes may offer as a tobacco cessation aid yet to be established and evidence suggesting that there were risks of both dual use and the initiation to tobacco addiction among non-smokers, these products, on balance, had a net negative impact on public health, the ICMR noted.

In its response, Association of Vapers India (AVI) in a statement said that the white paper does not present the true picture.

"The findings of the ICMR paper run counter to empirical data from countries where e-cigarettes are regulated and research conducted by some of the most credible organisations in the world. This could be because they have cherry-picked studies to make a targeted case against e-cigarettes," said Samrat Chowdhery, director of AVI.

'Time to start studying females too'

In experiments, the 'default' practice was to examine males as they were less 'complex'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. neurobiologist Rebecca Shansky recalled her first experiences studying mice in the lab two decades ago: the "default" was to study males.

"The primary excuses for not including females in your research was first that hormones just made everything so complicated that you were... going to have a difficult time if you tried to study the brain in female animals," said Ms. Shansky, explaining the conventional wisdom at the time.

Ms. Shansky's article published in the journal *Science* on Thursday denounces that practice as based on outdated gender stereotypes from the 19th century that are continuing to influence scientific research today.

In science, women were traditionally considered more complicated versions of men.

Scientists focus their studies nearly exclusively on male mice. ▪ GETTY IMAGES

Researchers believed menstrual cycles and the biological changes that went along with them made women "hormonal, emotional and unstable" study subjects, Ms. Shansky, who is now at the neuroanatomy and behaviour laboratory at Northeastern University, said. For half a century, the proliferation of this myth caused scientists to focus their studies nearly exclusively on male mice, rats and primates, so that a male brain became considered the baseline for a human brain.

But male mice can have their own hormonal changes too, with one to five times the level of testosterone depending on whether or not they are dominant – though scientists considered such changes a "non-issue" in males, Ms. Shansky wrote in her paper.

Side effects

That means that for decades, pharmaceutical labs developed drugs that were later found to be a poor fit for many women's bodies or brains, especially when it comes to mental illnesses such as depression or anxiety, which affect more women than men.

The sleep aid Ambien is a famous example: it caused more side effects in women than in men.

"It turns out that women should actually be taking half the dose that men do because they metabolize the drug really differently," Ms. Shansky said.

Dosage recommendations were changed in 2013.

Things are slowly changing. A new field of research is emerging that focusses on the differences between the sexes when it comes to anticancer treatments.

And since 2016, publicly funded research from the National Institutes of Health requires studies to consider sex as a biological variable.

"Money is a good motivator for people, and so I think that will help," Ms. Shansky said.

Japan unveils policy to curb plastic waste

It plans to press for a deal at G20 summit to reduce plastic dumping into the ocean

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Japan on Friday announced a policy to reduce marine plastic waste, part of efforts to raise the issue at the G20 summit it will host next month.

Japan is hoping to cast itself as a leader on the issue, and will reportedly press for an international agreement to reduce the amount of plastic going into the ocean during the Osaka summit from June 28 to 30.

"Ocean plastic waste is one of the issues topping the G20 summit agenda, and as the chair of the meeting, we will exercise leadership to solve the matter," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a ministerial meeting that adopted the policy package.

But so far the policies are largely theoretical, with no timeline specified for legislation needed to implement some of the programme.

Clean ocean: Globally, an estimated eight million tonnes of plastic waste ends up in the sea each year. ▪ AP

Japan is the second largest per capita producer of plastic waste in the world after the U.S., and while it has a comparatively high recycling rate, it lags behind on efforts to reduce single-use plastic.

Included in the policy is a plan to require retailers to charge customers for plastic bags, though it remains unclear when that will come into effect and whether all retailers will be affected.

Plastic bag charges are already common in many parts of the world, and the European Union in March passed legislation banning other single-use plastic including straws and cutlery from 2021.

Japan's policy aims to recycle 100% of newly produced plastics by 2035 and promotes the use of biodegradable alternatives to oil-based plastic.

The package also includes a plan to support Southeast Asian countries with recycling technologies and other infrastructure, the government said in a statement.

Globally, some eight million tonnes of plastic waste is estimated end up in the sea each year. From Japan, some 20,000 to 60,000 tonnes of plastic wastes are estimated to flow into oceans annually, the government said.

A dance at last

School days: Graduate cadets dance with young women during a ceremony on the last day at the military lyceum in Kiev, Ukraine, on Friday. Ukrainians today celebrate 'Last Ring,' a celebration of their last day of school. ▪ AP

From illiterate to author: ageing South Koreans embrace the written word

67.7% of people aged 80 or above cannot read or write, a 2017 study said

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SUNCHEON

Hyper-wired South Korea is the world's 11th-largest economy, one of its most technologically advanced countries, and the first to launch a nationwide 5G network.

But that is a relatively recent transformation and at the other end of the spectrum, many of its elderly are illiterate.

Now some are finally learning to read and write, decades after their contemporaries – and even becoming published authors.

Patriarchal society

According to a 2017 study by the National Institute for Lifelong Education, 67.7% of South Koreans aged 80 or older were unable to read or write.

The phenomenon is significantly more pronounced among women – Korea has been a patriarchal society for centuries and many families kept girls from school even into the mid-20th century, as the country began its rapid industrialisation.

"My grandmother used to say a woman with knowledge always ends up rebellious," said Jang Seon-ja, 75, at a library in Suncheon.

"So she forbade me from school," she explained.

Beating the odds: Elderly South Korean women attending a class at a city-run library in Suncheon. ▪ AFP

It is a marked contrast from the present day, when families put enormous emphasis on education and children – whether boys or girls – study for long hours, including extra after-school tuition, in a high-pressure contest for the best possible opportunities.

Ms. Jang is one of 20 grandmothers in a writing class at the library in Suncheon, 320 km southeast of Seoul.

Collection of memoirs

Sitting in rows with pencils in their hands, the grey-haired women summon recollections of their mothers and try to put them into words.

Since the programme began three years ago, they have co-written a collection of memoirs entitled "We didn't know how to write, but we knew how to live", which conveys stories that bear witness to their country's historical turmoil.

More than 7,000 copies have been sold since it was published in February, library director Na Ok-hyeon, who is seeking an English-language publication and has taken three of the authors on a tour of the U.S.,said. "I was at first worried whether the translation would capture subtle nuance expressed in Korean," Ms. Na said, but added: "Then I saw many with tears in their eyes."

One entry in the book by Kim Young-bun, 80, recalls her family's flight during the Korean War, when she was 11.

"While fleeing, my younger brother died," she wrote. "Seeing nowhere to lay him to rest, I couldn't just leave him so I carried him on my back all day long.

"To this day, I cannot forget him."