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NEARBY

Shah to head group to combat lynching

NEW DELHI

An empowered Group of Ministers constituted last year to suggest measures to combat lynchings will continue functioning. It will be headed by Home Minister Amit Shah, said a senior government official. The GoM had met on two occasions. Since the GoM was position-specific, there was no need to reconstitute it, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

NEWS ▸ PAGE 12

Priyanka ideal as Cong. chief, says Amarinder

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has pitched for Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to take over the party's reins, saying she was "a good bet" to replace Rahul Gandhi as party president. "Priyanka would be a perfect choice to take over the party reins but it would all depend on the CWC," he said

NEWS ▸ PAGE 12

It's official, Odisha is origin of Rasagola

BHUBANESWAR

The rasagola, a popular dessert of Odisha, has received the Geographical Indication tag from the Registrar of Geographical Indication after years of controversy around the sweet. "Happy to share that #Odisha Rasagola has received GI tag in Geographical Indication Registry," tweeted Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

NATION ▸ PAGE 9

Yediyurappa wins trust vote

Ramesh Kumar quits as Karnataka Assembly Speaker

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The three-day-old BJP government in Karnataka headed by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa proved its majority with ease in the Assembly on Monday by winning the confidence motion by voice vote.

Soon after the trust vote and the passage of the Finance Bill for a period of three months along with the supplementary budget, Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar, who had disqualified 17 rebel MLAs of the Congress and the JD(S) over the last few days, tendered his resignation.

A depleted House

The 17 disqualifications had put the BJP in a comfortable position in the passage of the confidence motion, with the effective strength of the House down to 208 where the BJP enjoys the support of 106 MLAs. This was in contrast to Mr. Yediyurappa's third term in 2018 when he had to resign on account of lack of numbers within 48 hours of being sworn in.

The Opposition Congress and JD(S) did not press for division of votes, while vociferously opposing the confidence motion, terming it "immoral and unconstitutional."

The desertions by MLAs, allegedly engineered by the BJP, brought down the Congress-JD(S) coalition government by reducing it to a minority.

Former CM and CLP leader Siddaramaiah said Mr. Yediyurappa would not be able to give a stable government given that he had come to power by 'luring MLAs.'

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 12

New bonhomie: B.S. Yediyurappa greets Congress leader Siddaramaiah in the Assembly on Monday. ▪ K. MURALI KUMAR

2 disqualified MLAs move SC

Two MLAs on Monday moved the Supreme Court against their disqualification from the Assembly under the anti-defection law. They said the Speaker had made the decision in "hot haste" at the behest of the Congress. They arraigned the Speaker, the State of Karnataka, Siddaramaiah and Dinesh Gundurao as respondents. ▸ PAGE 8

India has nearly 3,000 tigers, up by a third from 2014 count

The results of the census were made public by PM Modi

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

India has 2,967 tigers, a third more than in 2014, according to the results of a tiger census made public on Monday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Madhya Pradesh saw the highest number at 526, closely followed by Karnataka (524) and Uttarakhand (442). Chhattisgarh and Mizoram saw a decline in tiger population and all other States saw a "positive" increase, according to a press statement.

The survey, the fourth such since 2006, is a gargantuan exercise and conducted once in four years. The latest survey is the culmination of 15 months of forest officials surveying 3,81,400 square kilometres of forested habitat, installing 26,760 camera traps and wildlife biologists ferreting through 35 million images of wildlife – 76,523 of which were tigers (there can be multiple images of the same tiger). Nearly 83% of the estimated tiger population was captured in these images.

While the Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of tigers, the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu registered the "maximum improvement" since 2014, the statement said.

"We have to create a healthy balance between sustainability and development," Mr. Modi said in his address.

ECONOMIC VALUE OF RESERVES WORTH CRORES ▸ PAGE 9
PENCH, PERIYAR RATED TOP TIGER RESERVES ▸ PAGE 9

Field day

Shower of blessing: A woman planting paddy saplings in a field on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar after heavy rains on Monday. Though it has come as blessing for her, the showers have caused a flood-like situation in some parts of Odisha. ▪ BISWARANJAN ROUT

Mamata's 'Tell Didi' campaign goes live

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Aided by a battery of management professionals and communications experts, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched "a unique initiative" to reach out to the people of the State.

The initiative - *Didi Ke Bolo*, or Tell Didi (Ms. Banerjee) - has been developed as a platform with a phone number and website to communicate directly with the Trinamool Congress chief.

Mamata Banerjee

Besides, TMC functionaries will now have to visit specific pockets in cities and villages and even spend nights there as part of an enhanced public relations campaign, said Ms. Banerjee while addressing a press conference on Monday.

The Bharatiya Janata Party called it a "gimmick" of poll strategist Prashant Kishor.

"More than 1,000 elected representatives and party functionaries will visit more than 10,000 villages and urban habitations to listen to people. [They] will spend the night in those habitations and also listen to the important residents of the area," Ms. Banerjee said.

BJP MLA booked for murder over collision

U.P. govt. recommends CBI probe; faced repeated threats, says rape survivor's uncle

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government in a late night decision on Monday decided to refer to the CBI the investigation into the case of the Raebareli accident suffered by the Unnao rape survivor and her family. A formal request has been sent to the Centre.

Earlier in the day, jailed BJP MLA from Unnao Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who faces charges of gang rape, was booked for criminal conspiracy and murder in connection with the accident in which the survivor and her lawyer were seriously injured, while her two aunts were killed when a truck rammed the car they were travelling in.

Kuldeep Singh Sengar. ▪ PTI

The FIR against Sengar was lodged at the Gurbakshganj police station in Raebareli on a complaint from the survivor's uncle who has been in prison since February.

His wife was one of the victims of Sunday's fatal collision. The four persons were travelling to meet him when the accident took place.

The BJP MLA was booked for murder, attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy and criminal intimidation. The FIR mentions 10 persons including Sengar, his brother Manoj Singh Sengar and his aides, and 15 to 20 other unidentified persons.

In his complaint, the uncle said he and his family had faced repeated threats from the MLA and his men and were being intimidated to change their statements in court or reach a compromise with the MLA in the gang rape case. They have been threatened that if they didn't agree to a compromise, they would be killed one way or the other, the complaint said.

The uncle also said that whenever he went to Unnao for a hearing in his case, the MLA's men reminded him that "the government is with the MLA".

The uncle's complaint says the driver of the truck which hit the car in which his family was travelling, was associated with the MLA. The collision was orchestrated with an "intent to kill", he said.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 12
CONGRESS'S PLEA ▸ PAGE 13

Azam Khan apologises twice in LS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

SP member Azam Khan apologised twice in the Lok Sabha on Monday for his remarks against BJP member Rama Devi when she was presiding over the proceedings last week.

"... I want to say I had no such intention towards the Chair. I have been a nine-time legislator, a Minister and a Rajya Sabha member.... If people think that I committed a mistake then I am sorry for it," he said after the proceedings began.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 12

Quarmy the dog bags honour for taking on hunters

She patrols the Kaziranga National Park to curb poaching and illegal trade

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Hers is an unusual name for a female dog. But then, not all canines sniff poachers out in tiger territory and have a Facebook page.

Quarmy, a German Shepherd, was the odd one out at a congregation in Kohora – a tourist range of the Kaziranga National Park (KNP) – organised on Monday to felicitate the wards of forest officers and frontline staff who did well in the higher secondary exams for the 2018-19 academic year. The event was organised to mark Global Tiger Day.

She held her own as the winner of a special prize for patrolling the Biswanath Wildlife Division of the KNP to curb poaching and illegal trade of tigers. "Her name means a quarter of an army. She has virtually been many soldiers rolled into one ever since she became a part of our team in December 2017," Mukut Chandra Das, the division's Deputy Conservator of Forest told *The Hindu*.

Quarmy is many soldiers rolled into one.

He said Quarmy, four months short of three years, was formally told about her special prize for tiger conservation at the Kohora congregation. "We are expecting the certificate for her soon," he added.

On December 27, 2017, a week after joining the Biswanath Wildlife Division, Quarmy helped forest guards catch four rhino poachers. She also played a major part in nabbing 12 more rhino poachers by July 2018. "That was when we decided Quarmy needs her own Facebook page. She has quite a number of followers," Mr. Das said. Kaziranga, a major tiger reserve, is spread across 1,080 sq km.

The Trade Record Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce (TRAFFIC) had announced the winners of the first Canines for Felines, a special contest for wildlife "super sniffer" dogs trained under a TRAFFIC and World Wide Fund-India programme in India.

The competition received 12 entries from across India. Among them, the 12 super sniffer contestants have helped enforcement agencies solve 131 wildlife cases. The overall winner was Nirman, a super sniffer from the Tiger Strike Force in Satna, while Myna, his counterpart in Indore, took the second spot. Both dogs belong to the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department.

IN BRIEF

Army Captain found dead on railway track

NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old Army Captain was found dead on a railway track at Old Delhi railway station on Monday morning, the police said. He allegedly jumped before a train at 11.20 a.m. On the basis of Aadhaar card, which was recovered from his wallet, he was identified and his family was informed, they said.

Odisha Minister attends happiness class

NEW DELHI

Education reformer Sonam Wangchuk and Odisha Education Minister Sameer Ranjan Das on Monday experienced a happiness class at a government school here and said the curriculum should be rolled out in other States as well. Mr. Wangchuk said: "The Delhi's government school infrastructure is commendable."

HC defers hearing on cannabis petition

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday deferred the hearing, on a plea to bring an end to various existing laws in India that prohibit and criminalise the use of cannabis, for August 19. The plea filed by a Bangalore-based cannabis advocacy group.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	65	Gurugram	39
Ghaziabad	60	Faridabad	37
Noida	48	Greater Noida	67

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

DELHI TODAY

Dance: India International Rural Cultural Centre (IRCEN) presents a Bharatanatyam dance recital by Revathi Srinivasraghavan at Govt. Girls Senior Secondary. School, No.3, Sarojini Nagar, 9 a.m. and Raja Ram Mohan Rai Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Hauz Rani, 11 a.m.

Exhibition: A solo painting show by Nitin Gupta, at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "+ - Iconic Forces", a solo painting exhibition by Suman Sen Gupta. The exhibition portrays the co-existence of duality throughout human history at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Khwabeeda: A dreamer", a solo painting show by Nandita Richie at Open Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "The Food Diplomacy Makan Ngga Makan Asal Kumpul", a group art show by curated by M. Haryo Hutomo at Exhibition Gallery, Korean Cultural Center, A-25, Lajpat Nagar IV, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Theatre: "Lamhon ki Mulaqat", a Urdu drama will be staged as part of the ongoing Urdu Drama festival organised by the Ghalib Institute, at Ghalib Auditorium, Aiwan-e-Ghalib Marg, 6:30 p.m.

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

Regularisation policy encourages wrongdoers, sealing panel tells SC

Slams Land and Development Office for inaction against illegal constructions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Land and Development Office (L&DO) policy for regularising unauthorised construction and encroachment encourages the "wrongdoers" to further encroach upon government or public land, the monitoring committee on sealing told the Supreme Court on Monday.

The apex court-mandated committee said these unauthorised structures and encroachments are in existence since 2002 in Lajpat Nagar here but L&DO, instead of taking any action, waited for the Supreme Court to give directions.

"L&DO has placed on record laid-down procedure for regularisation of the unauthorised construction and encroachment carried out by the owners/occupiers over the years," the committee said in its recent report.

The matter came up for hearing before a Bench of

Justices – Arun Mishra and Deepak Gupta.

Senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in the Delhi sealing matter, told the Bench that the committee has filed its reply to the affidavit of the L&DO. The Bench said it would hear the issue next week.

'Blanket protection'

The report added that the L&DO has taken the plea of protection under the Delhi Laws Special Provision Act (as amended), knowing fully well that the protection is not available to the encroachments.

It said "blanket protection" cannot be granted to public at large as each case has to be examined by the field staff with respect to construction, encroachment and misuse.

The committee requested the court to pass necessary directions to the L&DO and South Delhi Municipal Corporation for taking action against such properties, saying they are not covered under the Delhi Laws Special Provision Act (as amended).

The L&DO had earlier told the Bench that it was not obstructing the sealing drive here in any manner.

The submission by L&DO had come after the monitoring committee had filed a report in the top court claiming that L&DO had stalled the sealing drive in Amar Colony area "at the last moment to appease the political leaders".

The committee, in its earlier report regarding non-cooperation of L&DO in carrying out sealing operations in Amar Colony area scheduled from June 25, claimed that L&DO had filed an affidavit in the apex court stating that a complete survey of properties in the area was conducted with the assistance of concerned officers of municipal corporation.

It said that as per L&DO's affidavit, the areas surveyed are – Andha Mugla, Motia Khan, Sarai Rohilla and Amar Colony – and total number of properties/ tenements in these four areas comes to 2,354. "In the process of survey, violations in the nature of encroachments, misuse and unauthorised constructions were noticed and compiled," it had said.

The top court is seized of the issues regarding validity of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Act, 2006 and subsequent legislations which protect unauthorised constructions from being sealed.

Won't allow anybody to charge for residential parking: apex court

Delhi govt. has raised concerns regarding EPCA suggestion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said it is not permitting anyone to charge people right now for parking vehicles in their residential areas while taking note of the government's reservation on the Environment Pollution Control Authority's suggestion in this regard.

A Bench comprising Justice Arun Mishra and Justice Deepak Gupta said this after the counsel appearing for the government expressed reservation over the EPCA suggestion that parking permits can be issued to the residents based on a monthly lump sum to be decided in consultation with the resident welfare association.

"We are not permitting anybody to charge anything from anybody right now," the Bench told the counsel representing the Delhi government. The EPCA, in its report filed in the apex court, has said the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has initiated a pilot project on parking area

The EPCA said the south civic body has initiated a pilot project on parking area management that needs to be implemented across the city. ▪ FILE PHOTO

management plan in Lajpat Nagar that encompasses both commercial area of central market and adjacent residential colonies there.

Referring to the project, the EPCA has said it shows how the parking management area plan will be needed to be developed and then implemented in different zones and colonies of the city. "In addition, parking permits can be issued to the resident based on a monthly lump sum to be decided in consultation with the resident welfare association. These stickers will help to distinguish resident's cars from the cars coming to commercial centres/market," the EPCA has said in its report.

"The permits can also be used to restrict the numbers of vehicles by charging more or by not allowing residents to park addition cars in front of their houses but instead in the alternative sites," the report said. Senior advocate Aparajita Singh, who is assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in pollution matter, told the bench that the three municipal corporations in the national Capital have agreed to implement the pilot project.

NGT seeks report on 'illegal construction' in green belt

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal sought a report from the Forest Department over a plea alleging illegal construction by the Delhi Development Authority in a green belt in Mayapuri.

Within one month

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the government's Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) to submit a factual and action taken report, which is to be furnished within one month.

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Jitender Dhir, who alleged that the DDA was carrying out illegal constructions in an area which was recorded as a green belt in Mayapuri.

"This green belt is around five acres of forest area and was declared protected under the 1980 forests notification," the plea said.

NBCC willing to oversee Unitech projects: Centre

Relief for 16,000 homebuyers; construction work to be done through other agencies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

In a ray of hope to over 16,000 harassed homebuyers, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Monday that the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) was willing to take up the stalled housing projects of the cash-strapped real estate major Unitech Ltd.

A Bench was informed by Attorney General K.K. Venugopal appearing for the Centre, that State-owned NBCC was ready to act as a project management consultant for the stalled housing projects of Unitech.

The top law officer said the Centre has proposed a high-powered committee, headed by a former High Court Judge to oversee the construction of the stalled projects and the panel can also have a retired technocrat who would assist it in its functioning.

The Bench then asked lawyer Pawan Shree Agrawal, who is assisting the court as an amicus curiae, to post the proposal of the Centre on the homebuyers' portal prepared by him to enable the homebuyers to mail their suggestions to him.

The amicus curiae would then collate the suggestions of the homebuyers and apprise the court about them on August 9 when the court would pass a formal order and may appoint a committee and ask the NBCC to take up the housing projects, the Bench said.

The NBCC said it will not do the construction work itself, but get the work done through other agencies or private players to whom the work would be assigned in a fair and transparent manner.

The top court has also sought names of the persons, including the former HC Judge and from the parties for selecting the members of the panel.

Teachers start campaign against CCS rules

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Several teachers from universities across the country have started an online signature campaign to show solidarity with the 48 teachers of Jawaharlal Nehru University who may face disciplinary action as they have been pulled up by the institution's administration on the basis of Central Civil Service (Conduct) Rules.

The JNU teachers had participated in a protest in July 2018 against the universities "anti-teaching-learning policies". Theysaid the attempt to impose CCS rules have wider implications for all college and university teachers and they oppose it being made applicable to universities. The rules can have the effect of putting a blanket ban on freedom of speech, in research papers and articles, and in public life, they alleged.

"Indian academics will not be able to engage in any critiques of government policy and also not fulfil professional duties freely – editorships and membership of editorial boards of reputed journals are a matter of prestige in many disciplines, but teachers will not be allowed to accept them without prior sanction," the academics said.

HC rejects petition to regulate education

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday rejected a plea to regulate education imparted in madrasas and gurukuls in the country, saying it is akin to vocational or coaching classes and one can always opt-out of it.

"These are like tuition or coaching classes. There are drawing classes also. Then there are so many vocational classes. They are imparting some education. Take it or do not take it," a Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar said.

The court said that governing or regulating such classes within the powers of the Centre. Any policy for regulating such entities has to be framed by the government, and there is no reason for the court to provide any guidance, it added.

"We see no reason to entertain the petition and do not want to give any direction to the government with regard to framing of policy," the Bench said while dismissing the petition by a Congress MLA from West Bengal.

'Oral history programme' next week

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The government will launch an 'oral history programme' on August 5. This is a project undertaken by the Delhi Archives in collaboration with the Ambedkar University, Delhi.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said the programme was being undertaken to document the stories and experiences of Delhiites. "With the documentation of oral history through anecdotes, stories and experiences of citizens, the Delhi Archives shall bring forth the true voice of Delhi," he said.

10 monuments to stay open till 9 p.m.: Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Ten historical monuments across the country, including Humayun's Tomb and Safdarjung Tomb in Delhi, will be open to the public from sunrise till 9 p.m., said Union Minister of State (independent charge) for Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel on Monday.

The extended hours will be considered for other monuments as well, he said, adding that these monuments were currently open from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

The decision to open the monuments for longer periods has been taken so that tourists have more time to

Humayun's Tomb

enjoy the sites, he added.

The extended hours also apply to Rajarani Temple Complex in Bhubaneswar, Dulhadeo Temple Complex in Khajuraho, Sheikh Chilli Tomb in Kurukshetra, the group of monuments at Pattadakal, Gol Gumbaz in Vijayapura, the group of temples at Markanda, Man Mahal in Varanasi, and Rani-ki-Vav in Patan.

Selfie With Daughter campaign focuses on single mothers

Organisers hope to encourage adoption of girl child

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Anita from Nuh divorced her husband over two decades ago because of her in-laws' persistent demand for dowry. She then decided to stay alone to take care of her ailing father and adopted a six-month-old Muslim girl. Despite stiff opposition from relatives and society, she stood by her decision. The girl, in her teens now, is studying at a prominent school in Gurugram.

Many such inspiring stories of single women fighting the stereotype mindset to adopt or raise their own girl child have come to fore in response to "Selfie with Daughter" campaign for single women launched by Sunil Jaglan, a former Sarpanch of Haryana's Bibipur village, a week ago. Mr. Jaglan is the initiator of widely appreciated "Selfie With Daughter" campaign launched in 2015.

He said his "Selfie With

A selfie clicked by Anita with her daughter Khushi. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Daughter" campaign earlier had been successful and over a lakh selfies were received but a vast majority of them - around 95% - were sent by men.

On social media

"Therefore, we kicked off a campaign only for single women, such as widows, lesbians, those in live-in relationships and divorced, to post or upload their selfies with their daughters on online social media museum www.selfiewithdaughter.world or with #selfiewithdaughter," he added.

Mr. Jaglan added the objective of the campaign was to give a special identity to and empower the single mother. Apart from it, the campaign would impetus adoption of girl child by the women who are lesbians, staying in a live-in relationship or are divorced. He said the campaign was an opportunity for such women to come forward and send across a message that there was nothing wrong in adopting and raising a girl child.

He added that he had received more than 400 selfies across the country, with half of them from the Northeastern States since the launch of the campaign.

Shanti Devi (33), a widowed mother of two girls from Bibipur village said, "After being a widow, society starts ignoring such women, therefore this campaign encourages them to come forward".

Centre barred from making appointments to NDMC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has restrained the Centre from making appointments to the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) following a petition which alleged the process was being carried out without consulting Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Justice Vibhu Bakhru imposed an interim stay and directed NDMC and the Centre not to make any appointments to the post of chairperson, vice-chairperson and other members of the council till August 13.

"It is clarified that till the next date of hearing, no appointment shall be made under Section 4(1)(a), 4(1)(d) and 4(4) of the said Act," the High Court said in a recent order.

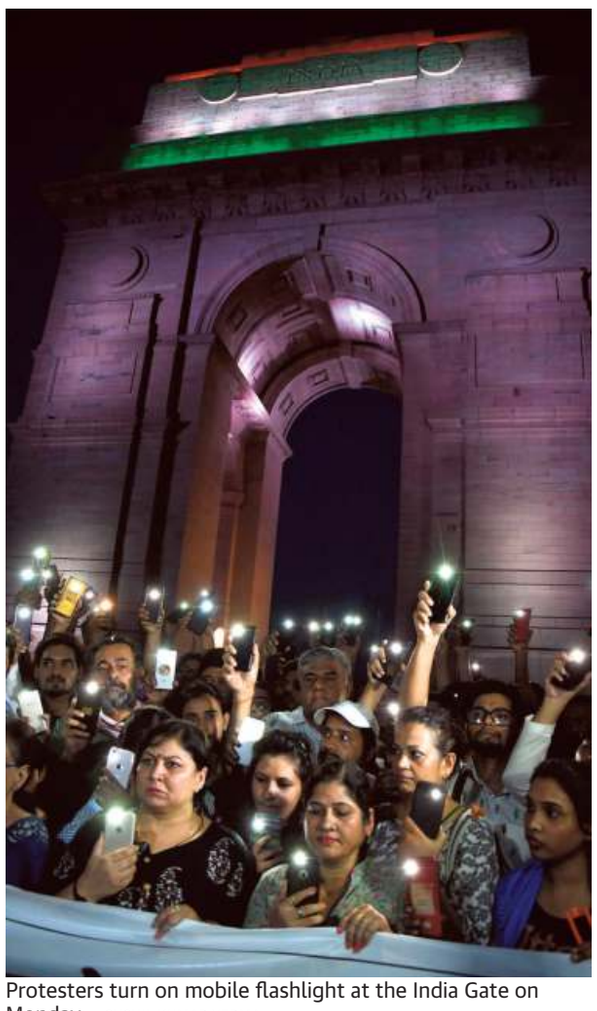
NDMC Act

As per the NDMC Act, 1994, it is necessary for the Centre to make consultation with the Chief Minister for making the aforesaid appointment.

The High Court said it would examine the matter and the controversy involved in the present petition is limited and only relates to the manner in which the consultation has to take place.

It said the necessity for the Central Government to have consultations with the Chief Minister for making the aforesaid appointment is not disputed; however, the petitioner claims that no such consultation has taken place.

The submission was opposed by the counsel for the Centre who asserted that the necessary file had been sent to the Chief Minister of Delhi for consultation.



Protesters turn on mobile flashlight at the India Gate on Monday. ▪ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Delhi stands in solidarity with Unnao rape survivor

Protesters question if recent incident was an accident

ANANT KAUR
EVA THAKUR
NEW DELHI

While the survivor in the Unnao rape case is battling for her life after a car she was travelling in along with her family and lawyer was hit by a truck, several Delhiites, who gathered at the India Gate here in solidarity, wondered whether it was a mere accident or there was more to it.

Several protesters demanded government's intervention in the matter. "We want BJP to expel MLA Kuldeep Senger who is an accused in the case. All stood for Rama Devi when someone made a provocative remark, but nobody did so for the Unnao rape victim. BJP makes big hue and cry about 'Beti Padhao Beti Bachao' aandolan but do not act accordingly," said Pooja Tripathi from the All India Mahila Congress.

Activist and founder of Swaraj India, Yogendra Yadav, recalling the protests held seven years ago after the December 16, 2012 gang rape incident in the Capital, said: "We were here to protest for Nirbhaya but were lathi-charged. Back then, we believed that such a brutal incident would not be repeated again. But a 17-year-old minor girl was brutally raped and her father is framed as a culprit.Her father was beaten to death in jail. All the witnesses are being killed one after the another." This is a silent protest to fight for the innocent girl who is battling for life and to raise questions as to why she was not provided protection, he said.

Sailesh Jain, a tourist from Gujrat who participated in the protest, said: "It's the media from where I got to know about this case today. I believe women are not safe in Delhi and UP. As we speak, there is probably some women being assaulted. In Surat, however, women are safer.

Nishkant Hashmi, who works in an IT company said: "If government representatives are involved in such cases how will women ever feel safe? I also have women in my family who do not feel safe."

Attempts to eliminate her could be a conspiracy: CM

NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wrote on Twitter: "Systematic attempts to eliminate the Unnao rape victim and her family appear to be a pre-planned conspiracy and mockery of rule of law. How can any civilised society allow such state sponsored barbarism? [sic]."

Doctors and students protest against the NMC Bill outside Nirman Bhawan in New Delhi on Monday. ▪ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Doctors, medical students protest against NMC Bill

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Doctors and medical students under the Indian Medical Association (IMA) held a protest march from All India Institute of Medical Sciences to Nirman Bhawan on Monday against the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2019, calling it anti-poor and anti-student in its current version.

"The NMC is the worst Bill ever introduced in the medical education system and unfortunately a Health Minister, who is also a doctor, is adamant in destroying his own education system. We will not accept this atrocity at any cost. The proposed Bill is anti-people, anti-poor, anti-students, anti-democratic and draconian in nature," stated a release by the group.

IMA national president Santanu Sen noted that medical students being the part of this pious education system have also joined hands to protect our education system and uproot the Bill.

The protestors were detained from near Nirman Bhawan and later let off.

Share building plans with fire dept. for audit, High Court tells north civic body

DFS will be identifying fire-prone areas in Karol Bagh

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday directed the North Delhi Municipal Corporation to share building plans with the Delhi Fire Service (DFS) so that a fire audit can be done on priority basis.

Taking note of fire incidents in Karol Bagh, resulting in loss of lives and goods, a Bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Asha Menon asked the North civic body and the DFS to appoint nodal officers for regular interaction and communication so that fire audit is given priority.

The fire department told the High Court that it will need the building plans of all the properties which was with the North civic body to carry out a fire audit in Karol Bagh and to locate fire-prone areas there.

The counsel for the North Corporation submitted that it was willing to cooperate and share the building plans and give assistance.

Petitioner Neena Narang, who had approached the High Court regarding problems caused by illegal parking, drew the Bench's attention to an earlier order by which the DCP concerned was directed to ensure that police barricades are not left unmanned on the roads that might create hurdle for fire tenders.

The court was also informed by Delhi Police that it has enforced the court's earlier order of banning loading and unloading of goods in Karol Bagh market during the day besides in 13 other markets to decongest the city.

The counsel for Delhi Police said the traffic police had also taken action against improper, unauthorised and obstructive parking in the markets. The court listed the case for further hearing on September 24.

EC seeks permission to shift EVMs of North West LS seat

Plea challenges election of Hans Raj Hans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission sought permission of the Delhi High Court on Monday to shift from a college the EVMs of Lok Sabha election in the North West Delhi constituency. MP Hans Raj Hans had won from the seat.

The EC application was filed in a pending petition challenging the election of Mr. Hans to the Lok Sabha on the ground stating that he had filed affidavit with false information with his nomination for the 2019 elections.

The plea came up before Justice Jayant Nath who said it would be heard along with the main pending which is already listed for September 18.

The main election petition has been filed by Congress leader Rajesh Lilothia against Mr. Hans.

The EC, in its plea, sought permission to relocate the EVMs and Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails from the college, saying it was urgently required for restoring educational activities that are being hampered because of their storage. It was required to be relocated for recording of votes in the elections to be held in future, the EC said.

IN BRIEF

'Rename Signature Bridge after Dikshit'

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Monday wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal requesting him to rename Signature Bridge in the memory of Sheila Dikshit. The Delhi Congress said that "Signature Bridge was one of her greatest contributions to the people of Delhi which was constructed under her direction and supervision". Dikshit, a three-time CM of Delhi and a senior Congress leader, died on July 20.

Man wanted in murder case arrested

NEW DELHI

A man identified as Arif alias Ikram who was wanted in a Punjabi Bagh murder case, reported earlier this month, was arrested by Delhi Police Special Cell on Monday. The police said that the accused, who has 35 cases registered against him, had attacked one Raees over personal enmity but the bullet hit Raees' brother Salim.

About 50 health facilities get closure notice

For failing to register under Bio-Medical Waste Rules; asked to pay fine ranging from ₹2 lakh to ₹14 lakh

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has issued closure directions to at least 50 healthcare facilities in the city for failing to register with them under the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016.

Power supply

The establishments which include, nursing homes, dental clinics, and blood collection centres, have also been imposed fines ranging from ₹2-₹14 lakh each and orders have been issued to cut their power supply.

In the first week of June, the DPCC had asked all such facilities to register with them by June 15 and subsequently carried out inspections.

"During inspections, we issued closure directions to the establishments which had not even applied to register with us," a DPCC officer told *The Hindu*.

The official said that the action was following National Green Tribunal (NGT) orders to regulate such facilities. Earlier this month, the NGT had directed all States to furnish a report on the generation of biomedical waste within two months. The NGT had also said that in case of non-compliance, a cost of ₹1 crore per month will be imposed on each State.

The officer said that about 3,700 applications have been received from such facilities and they are being processed. It also added that about 4,000 were earlier registered. These units will now be inspected by the DPCC before registering them.

The fine has been imposed based on the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) guidelines depending on the nature of the establishment and the period for which it has been operating, among others factors.

The facilities which have been issued closure notices will have to pay the fine and then apply for registration and complete the procedure to start functioning again.

75 illegal plastic recycling units sealed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

At least 75 illegal plastic recycling units, which segregate and process plastic, have been sealed in about 13 villages in the Capital, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) said on Monday.

"The DPCC and Sub-Divisional Magistrate of North Delhi Municipal Corporation carried out a major sealing drive in the villages of Tikri Kalan, Mundka, Nangloi, Kammruddin Nagar, Baprola, Hirankudna and Neelwal from July 25 during which 75 plastic recycling units, operating illegally without any licence or consent from DPCC, were identified, sealed and electric connections were disconnected," an official statement read.

The Hindu had on July 21, reported about these illegal plastic segregation and melting units operating on residential and agricultural land in the same villages in outer Delhi and also in Bahadurgarh of Haryana.

A view of PVC segregation units operational in Tikri Kalan, Delhi. ▪ FILE PHOTO

NGT order

On July 22, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) rapped the Delhi government on the issue.

"Even though an action-taken report has been filed, the action hardly meets the magnitude of violation. It is also not clear whether the polluting activities have been stopped," the NGT had said.

In December 2018, the tribunal had imposed a ₹25-crore fine on the Delhi government for failing to crack down on illegal plastic markets in Tikri Kalan and nearby villages.

Since July 25, about 210 premises were inspected and 75 units were sealed.

"District administration of Bahadurgarh has also been apprised about the issue of plastic waste storage and handling on the agricultural fields in Haryana and has been requested to take immediate action as per the directions of NGT from time to time," the statement read.

The DPCC said that the illegal units are spread across three districts, West, North West and North, and action would be taken against them in three phases from July 25 to August 8.

Children survive attempt on life, father kills self

No note recovered, say police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old man allegedly tried to kill his two minor children before consuming poison in Outer Delhi's Mundka on Sunday, the police said on Monday. While the man succumbed, the children are undergoing treatment.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Seju P. Kuruvilla said that the man, a resident of Bakkarwala, an was employee in a private firm. No note has been recovered, he said.

Marital discord

The police said that they received the information about the case from the hospital. "Preliminary enquiry revealed that the man's wife had gone to her mother's place about a month and a half ago because of a discord. The incident appears to be a result of that," Mr. Kuruvilla said.

On Sunday, the man poisoned the milk and fed his children and later consumed the same. The children, a son and daughter aged 10 and 12, puked because of which they survived. They are undergoing treatment," Mr. Kuruvilla said.

The police have registered a case under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code and are investigating the matter further.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

Robbers who gave electric shock to victims nabbed

Cash, jewellery, wristwatches recovered

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three men were arrested for allegedly robbing people by giving them shock with an electric torch in central Delhi, the police said on Monday.

The accused, Prince Vinod (35), Pradeep Mantosh (22) and Kanak Ratnam (39) are former members of 'Thak Thak gang', the police said.

Other cities

Vinod and his accomplices started robbing people after giving them electric shock. Once the victim became unconscious, they robbed him of his cash and other belongings.

The gang have also operated in many other cities, including Mumbai, Indore, Surat, Ahmedabad and Jaipur, the police said.

With their arrest, cash worth ₹15.30 lakh, jewellery, 20 wristwatches, a country-made pistol, a car and a motorcycle was recovered.

According to police, the matter came to light after an accountant working in a private firm at Chandni Chowk reported that he was robbed by the accused while he was returning to office in an auto after collecting the company cash from Karol Bagh on July 12.

When he reached Guru Nanak Chowk near Kamla Market, suddenly a person wearing a helmet walked towards him and immobilised him by giving a electric shock with an object and robbed his bag carrying ₹21.69 lakh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Mandeep Singh Randhawa said.

About 70 CCTV cameras were scanned to identify the accused.

Vinod was apprehended on July 27 from Inder Puri, the officer said.

Subsequently, the other two accused were also arrested from Madangir, the officer added.

Interrogation revealed that Vinod used to keep a track of people who carried cash bags and informed his accomplices to follow them.

When the victim got stuck in traffic jam, they took advantage of the opportunity and robbed them after giving him electric shock, the DCP said.

Court grants relief to Kamal Nath's kin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday extended by a day protection from arrest granted to Ratul Puri, nephew of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, in the VVIP chopper scam related money laundering case.

Special Judge Arvind Kumar extended the protection till Tuesday, earlier granted for two days by another judge on Saturday, as counsel for the accused could not conclude argument on his anticipatory bail.

Mr. Puri's counsel argued that there was no requirement for custodial interrogation of his client as he had been cooperative with the probe agency since his name surfaced in the case. He had appeared 25 times before the Enforcement Directorate for interrogation till date, he submitted.

2 held for phone snatching

Used to dismantle parts and sell them at repair shop

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two persons were arrested for snatching phones, dismantling them and selling it to customers who visited their shop for mobile repairing in Wazirabad, the police said on Monday.

DCP (North) Nupur Prasad said that the arrested are identified as Tushal and Harish. They are residents of Wazirabad. They confessed to committing more than 50 cases of snatching across the city.

Ms. Prasad added that the police have recovered 10 stolen mobile phones along with several dismantled mobiles and a stolen motorcycle used in the commission of crime, from their possession. "On July 26, a patrolling team in Hardev Nagar spotted two persons on a bike. The bike was flagged down to stop and on enquiry it was found to be stolen from Sarai Rohilla. When the riders were frisked, three mobiles phones were recovered from their possession," said Ms. Prasad.

They admitted that the recovered mobile phones were snatched by them till a few hours ago. They disclosed their involvement in more than 50 cases of mobile phone snatching. To dispose the snatched phones, Tushal used to dismantle the phones and sell it to his customers.

The accused in police custody. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Tushal runs a mobile phone repair shop and he used to sell the parts of snatched mobiles such as display, camera and other hardware components to prospective costumers. He also used to replace the out-of-order parts of mobiles phones with the parts of the stolen phones during repair," said Ms. Prasad.

"The other accused Harish used to get a certain amount for the mobile phones he provided to Tushal. His share depended upon the model and make of the snatched phone," said Ms Prasad.

Govt. school teacher shot at in Outer Delhi

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 50-year-old government school teacher was shot at by two unidentified men in Outer Delhi's Kanjhawala area on Sunday, the police said on Monday.

A senior police officer said that the victim identified as Mahavir Singh was playing cards with a few neighbours outside his house when the incident happened. "Preliminary investigation revealed that two men wearing masks came on a bike and shot at the teacher. The bullet hit his shoulder. He was rushed to the hospital where he is undergoing treatment," the officer said.

The police said they are yet to ascertain the motive behind the attack. Mr. Singh allegedly told the police that he has no personal enmity with anyone. "It's suspected that the attackers wanted to target someone else but the bullet hit the teacher. The matter is being investigated. An attempt to murder case has been registered," he said.

BJP for yoga centres in trans-Yamuna area

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari on Monday said he has sent a proposal to the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) regarding the opening of yoga centres at 11 parks and green belts in the trans-Yamuna area.

The North East Delhi MP said his proposal would help popularise yoga among people visiting parks for morning walks.

Mr. Tiwari has sent the proposal to DDA Vice-Chairman Tarun Kapoor.

The parks mentioned in the proposal include the District Park Nand Nagri, Green Belt Hanuman Vatika near Mandoli, Jail Bagh Smriti Park Gaon, Gadhi Mandu Panchwati Park Ghonda, Multi Gym Park Subhash Mohalla, G.D. Rathi Mills, K.L. Rathi Mill Park, Loni Road District Park, Shastri Park, Picnic Park, MIG Flats Loni Road, Link Chain Park in Dilshad Garden and the DDA plot near Khajuri Khas police station.

SHO refuses to register case, transferred

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Station house officer (SHO) of Mukherjee Nagar police station, Ramesh Singh, was allegedly removed from his post on Monday. This comes after he refused to act against restaurants serving liquor without a licence.

Mr. Singh has been transferred to PCR unit of Delhi Police.

In a letter, Deputy Commissioner of Excise wrote to Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik on July 12 mentioning that Mr. Singh had refused to register the case.

On July 9, the Excise Department had raided a restaurant in Mukherjee Nagar and found that liquor was being sold by the restaurant without a valid liquor licence.

Govt. set up 173 kanwar camps this year: CM

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday claimed the Delhi government has set up 173 kanwar camps across the city to facilitate the pilgrims.

He also offered prayers as the kanwar camps marked its silver jubilee at the Kanwar Camp organised in east Delhi's Dilshad Garden here.

DELHI Timings

TUESDAY, JULY 30			
RISE	05:42	SET	19:14
RISE	03:28	SET	17:45
WEDNESDAY, JULY 31			
RISE	05:42	SET	19:13
RISE	04:29	SET	18:43
THURSDAY, AUG. 01			
RISE	05:43	SET	19:13
RISE	05:37	SET	19:33

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	36	27
Safdarjang	36	27
Palam	34	27

Delhi Palam Today
36ºC Hazy, comfortable morning. Day will be warm and humid. A spell of light rain or thundershower to occur at few places.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
32ºC Few spells of rain/thundershower associated with gusty wind will occur over Delhi and NCR. Drop in day temperature.

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'Provide details of mosques in Valley'

Regular exercise to update data, say police; RPF officer behind 'ration letter' transferred from Budgam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has ordered the police to immediately provide details of the mosques in the Valley. On Sunday night, it issued an order directing five zonal Superintendents of Police in the Valley to provide a list of mosques in the city and its management committees, while another, which has made its way to the social media, asked police officers in Srinagar to collect information about passenger capacity of taxis and fuel capacity of petrol pumps.

"Please provide details of mosques and their managements falling within your jurisdictions as per enclosed proforma for onward submission to higher authorities," according to the order issued by the Srinagar Senior Superintendent of Police. "The exercise is being carried out to update the data. It is part of normal policing," clarified Srinagar SSP Haseeb Mughal. Besides this, the officers have been asked to provide information about the ideological affiliation of the mosque committee.

In another development, Railway Protection Force Director General Arun Kumar said that the officer in Budgam who had issued a controversial letter about "deteriorating situation" in the State has been transferred.

> **It is a calculated, deliberate, consulted response to the security grid available here**
>
> K. VIJAY KUMAR
> Governor's adviser on Home Affairs

In the letter, RPF Assistant Security Commissioner (Budgam) Sudesh Nugyal asked employees to stock ration for at least four months, store drinking water for seven days and fill vehicles fully to deal with the issue of law and order for a long period as there is a "forecast of deteriorating situation" in Kashmir.

Officer replaced

"A senior officer has been brought in to take charge," the RPF DG said. Moradabad Senior Divisional Security Commissioner Sandeep Ravivanshi has now been posted in Srinagar, Mr. Kumar said.

The DG said the report of RPF IG Sanjay Sankrityayan, who is on a tour of the State, is awaited for further action.

The developments come amid criticism of the Centre by a section of Kashmiri leaders for its decision to send 100 more companies of the Central Armed Police Forces to the State. Construction of new security pickets in the city is also seen in the backdrop of the new deployment of CAPF. Several bunkers have come up in the old city and areas frequented by tourists, including the Boulevard Road along the Dal Lake.

Governor Satya Pal Malik's adviser on Home Affairs K. Vijay Kumar sought to allay apprehensions. "It is a calculated, deliberate, consulted response to the security grid available here. There was a reduction of the security grid due to our focus on the Amarnath Yatra. Therefore, the need arose to requisition little more forces," he said.

(With inputs from Special Correspondent)

Police disregard religious angle in Chandauli case

Youth set himself on fire, says SP

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

A Muslim youth in U.P.'s Chandauli district was allegedly set on fire by four persons after he refused to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'. The police, however, after investigation, dismissed the theory, saying he actually set himself on fire and concocted the story. "The incident was investigated and found to be baseless, fabricated and malicious," the police said, threatening legal action against rumour-mongers on social media.

The youth suffered 45% burns, the police said.

According to the victim, identified as 17-year-old Khalid Ansari, he had gone for a stroll to Dudhari bridge in the early hours of Sunday when four persons, with their faces covered, "kidnapped" him and sprayed kerosene on him and set him ablaze.

"Two of them caught hold of my hands. One of them said 'Sunil, spray kerosene on him and light a match. He will die on his own'," the youth said from his hospital bed in Varanasi.

Asked why he was attacked, he said: "They were asking me to say 'Jai Shri Ram'. I did not say it."

'Youth tutored'

Chandauli SP Santosh Kumar Singh said "anti-social elements" had tutored the youth and his mother to add the 'Jai Shri Ram' chant part so that the issue gets more mileage. "It is a fake story," Mr. Singh said.

According to Mr. Singh, the youth's statements over the incident have been inconsistent. The sequence of events and location of the incident changed in each narration, the police said.

He said the youth first told a police response vehicle team that he had gone for a run in the morning and near Manrajpur village he came across four persons who dragged him to the field and set him ablaze.

"When I spoke to him at the district hospital Chandauli, he told me a different location, Chateen village, in the opposite direction to Manrajpur and 1.5 to 2 km away. That's what he told the doctor too," said the officer.

'Changed versions'

While on his way to BHU hospital in Varanasi, the youth again changed his version, Mr. Singh said. This time he allegedly told the escorting sub-inspector that he was near Dudhari bridge when four persons came on a motorbike and forcibly took him to Bhatija More, where he was dragged to a field and set ablaze.

"It appears that he was tutored. We checked the CCTV cameras on all three routes. But he was not found to be coming or going from any of those," said Mr. Singh.

A private CCTV footage on the west side of the alleged place of incident had revealed that the youth was seen walking in a gully in a burned state at 5.15 a.m.

Around 1.5 km from the spot, the police team found his burnt clothes. A newspaper hawker then told the police that at 4.25 a.m., he saw the youth set himself on fire and run away from the spot.

Punjab mulling policy for one-rank promotion

Committed to welfare of soldiers: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

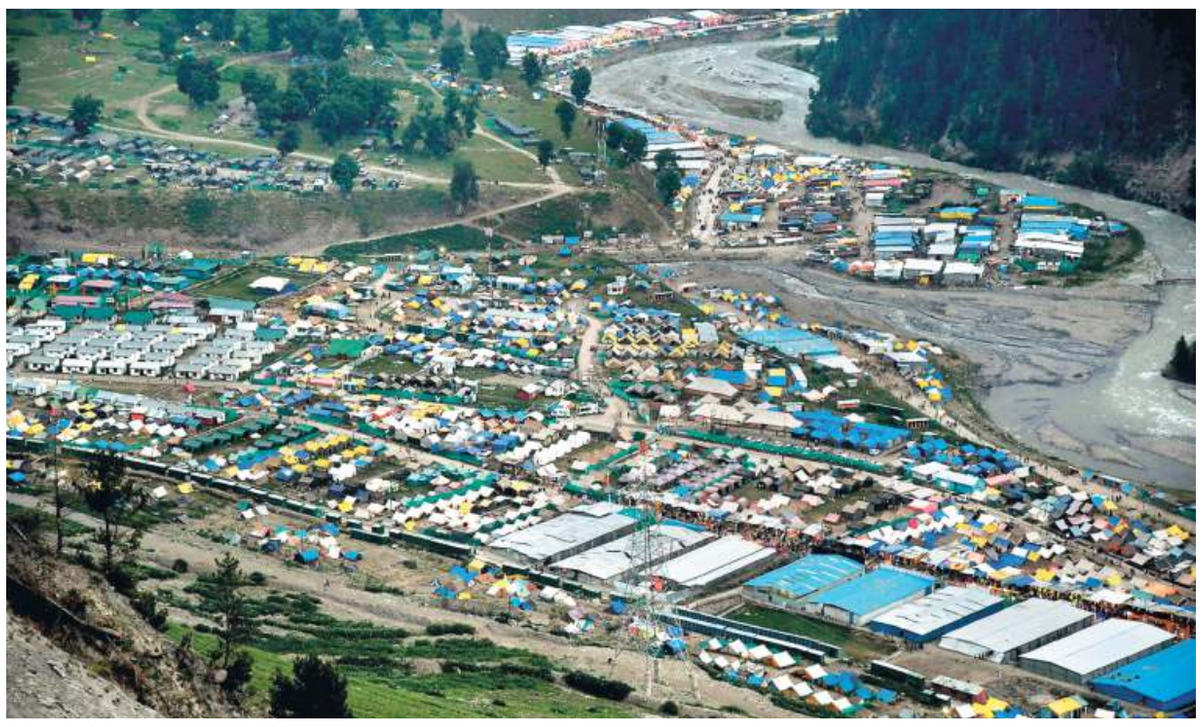
The Punjab government is mulling over formulating a policy to award a one-rank promotion for any defence or police personnel or officer from the State winning a gallantry award in war or in peace time.

Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday said if any such officers or personnel wish to join the Punjab Police, their service and bravery would be given due recognition.

The Chief Minister said the policy to be drafted by his government will leave no scope for injustice, making it clear that it would cover police gallantry award winners, including JCOs and NCOs, in addition to the jawans of the defence forces.

"The State government is committed to the welfare of soldiers and ex-soldiers, whose sacrifices for the nation and its people could not be allowed to go unrecognised," he said.

Base camp



A view of the camps for Hindu pilgrims in Baltal on Monday, during the annual Amarnath Yatra. ▪ NISSAR AHMAD

Rajasthan Speaker organises tours for tribal children

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi has organised two tours of tribal children of his constituency, Nathdwara in the Rajsamand district, for visiting important places in six States to give them exposure and educate them about the country's rich cultural and historical heritage.

The students of Class XII, from schools in about a dozen village panchayats of the constituency, will leave for the week-long tours in two groups on August 1 under the "Nathdwara-Bharat Darshan Yojana" introduced by Mr. Joshi.

The scheme will be financed by the district administration and the MLA's local area development fund and would also invite contributions from donors and philanthropists.

Seven boys drown in pit in Bihar's Saran district

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHHAPRA

Seven minor boys drowned in a water-filled pit in Bihar's Saran district, police said.

Two others were rescued by some local residents who rushed to the spot near Doila village under Isuapur police station limits on Sunday, Saran Superintendent of Police Hari Kishore Rai said.

Spotted by two children

"The boys were spotted by two children who were cutting wood near the pit, which was dug for extracting mud. They ran towards the village to inform its residents," the SP said.

Locals fished out the bodies from the pit, he said. The deceased were aged between eight and ten years.

The rescued boys were rushed to a nearby hospital in a critical condition. "They are now out of danger," hospital sources said.

The deceased were identified as Satyam Nat, Raja Nat, Teeman Nat, Arjun Nat, Suraj Nat, Bittu Nat and Chandan Nat.

CSE rates fertilizer plants in India

Several of these are getting old, slacking on water use efficiency: report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's fertilizer industry is improving on energy efficiency and cutting on greenhouse gases. However, several of them are slacking on water consumption and water pollution parameters. Some plants are also getting affected because of lack of water and their water sources are getting depleted and disappearing very fast.

Several of these plants are ageing and, in spite of performing "reasonably well" in meeting health and safety standards, most of them need to upgrade on site and off site disaster management plants.

These findings are part of an 18-month-long process, wherein the country's fertilizer sector was rated on more than 50 parameters by the Centre for Science and Environment. The rating covered all the 28 operational plants in the country. About 57% of the plants voluntarily participated in the rating programme by disclosing information and allowing teams to verify them on site.

The remaining plants were rated on the basis of information available in the public domain and stakeholders' surveys.

Refused to participate

National Fertilizers Limited and Indian Farmers' Fertilizer Cooperative Limited, the biggest public sector companies, refused to voluntarily participate in the process.

The top rated plant was Grasim Industries Ltd's Indo-Gulf Fertilizers unit at Jagdishpur, U.P. "This plant, with 61% score, has received the coveted Four Leaves award for its superior performance in energy use and GHG emissions, its good EHS (environment, health and safety) measures, and social responsibility, and above all, its transparency in sharing information," the CSE said in a statement.

The next three winners were Hazira (Gujarat) unit of Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd., the Panambur (Karnataka) unit of Mangalore Chemicals & Fertilizers Ltd. and the Babrala (U.P.) unit of Yara Fertilizers India Pvt. Ltd.

The fertilizer industry contributes to two major environmental challenges – imbalance in the nitrogen cycle and climate change. The efficiency of fertilizer use in India is poor: nitrogen use efficiency is a mere 35% for lowland rice and under 50% for upland crops. Nitrogen pollution of surface and groundwater in the country has reached alarming proportions. The imbalanced application of these fertilizers was leading to widespread soil sickness, the report added.

Rape survivor dies after self-immolation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

A rape survivor, who immolated herself at the Vaishali Nagar police station on Sunday alleging inaction in her case, succumbed to burn injuries at Sawai Man Singh Government Hospital here on Monday.

She had registered an FIR last month accusing her husband's cousin of sexually assaulting her several times since 2015.

The 36-year-old woman reached the police station along with her son on Sunday and set herself on fire after pouring an inflammable liquid. A police constable was injured while trying to douse the flames. The woman was rushed to SMS Hospital with over 75% burn injuries.

'Protecting accused'

The woman, who used to visit the police station almost daily after the FIR was registered, had alleged that the police officers were trying to protect the accused and putting pressure on her to withdraw the case.

The police said the woman died during her treatment early on Monday, while the investigation into the case was in progress.

The Opposition BJP leaders, led by the party's Jaipur city unit president Mohan Lal Gupta, staged a demonstration and demanded stringent action in the matter, while alleging a complete breakdown of law and order in the State capital.

Crocodile enters house in M.P.

Villagers tie up the reptile; forest officials release it into river

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DAMOH (M.P.)

A crocodile came out of a flooded river and crawled into a house at a village near here in Madhya Pradesh, causing panic among local residents, the police said on Monday.

Forest officials caught the 10-foot-long crocodile from Ghat-Pipariya village and released it back into the Sunar river, 26 km from the district headquarters, on Monday morning, said Hindoria police station inspector Vijay Mishra.

According to Ghat-Pipariya sarpanch Rohit Jain, the huge reptile entered the house of Kandhi Lal on Sunday night when it was raining heavily, creating panic among the family and other residents of the village.

Mr. Lal informed the forest officials and the police, he said. When they did not turn up, the villagers tied the reptile with ropes and put it on a road, Mr. Jain added.

Forest officials came to the village on Monday morning, caught the crocodile and put it back into the river, he said.

Apparently, the crocodile came out of the river after the water level increased following heavy rain, Mr. Mishra said.

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Cuttack murders: police detain suspect

CORRESPONDENT
CUTTACK

The city police on Monday said they have detained a suspect likely to be involved in three back-to-back murders committed in the city within 24 hours last week.

Cuttack DCP Akhileshvar Singh said the suspect has been identified as Narayan Sahu (30) of Ganjam district. He was seen wandering on the roads near OMP Square, College Square and Ranihat in the city for around three to four months now.

"A special squad apprehended the suspect from a place outside the city on Monday morning and he is now being questioned by a team of investigating officers," said Mr. Singh. The DCP said that after hour-long questioning of the suspect it prima facie appeared that "the person was not a psychopath as was widely perceived".

Mr. Singh said that due process of criminal law, including medical examination, would be followed in the event of his arrest.

Three bodies were recovered from three different places in the city on July 23 and 24 morning. All the bodies had similar wounds on their throat and head and all of them were homeless persons sleeping on the footpath.

Walk on water: People walk through a flooded area after the Pahumara river overflowed in Barpeta district of Assam. ▪PTI

Four more die in Assam floods, toll rises to 86

Water level in all 17 affected districts showing receding trend

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Four more people died on Monday due to floods in Assam, mounting the toll to 86 this monsoon season.

The overall situation, however, has improved with the water level in all 17 affected districts showing a receding trend since Sunday, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority said.

Of the four deaths, two were reported from Barpeta and one each from Kokrajhar and Dhubri districts.

Altogether 1,348 villages in 50 revenue circles of 17 districts are still deluge-hit, the ASDMA said.

The affected districts are Dhemaji, Sonitpur, Darrang, Baksa, Barpeta, Nalbari, Chirang, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Goalpara, Kamrup, Kamrup (Metro), Morigaon, Nagaon, Golaghat, Jorhat and Cachar.

Over 50,000 in camps

About 50,470 inmates are still in 522 relief camps while 28 relief distribution centres are operational in various districts of the State, the ASDMA said.

The rivers flowing above the danger level include the Brahmaputra at Neamatighat in Jorhat and Dhubri, Disang at Nanglamuraghat in Sivasagar, Jia Bharali at NT Road Crossing in Sonitpur and Kushiara at Karimganj.

The Federation of Industry and Commerce of North Eastern Region on Monday made a contribution of ₹10 lakh to the Chief Ministers Relief Fund, officials said.

Office-bearers of the Kamakhya temple have also donated ₹5 lakh to the fund, they said.

Scribe to head Rammohun Roy library foundation

Decision taken 'at a higher level'

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The Union Culture Ministry has appointed journalist Kanchan Gupta the chairperson of the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation till May 2020, weeks after Union Culture and Tourism Minister of State (independent charge) Prahlad Singh Patel was nominated to the post.

On July 3, Mr. Patel had been nominated to the post of chairperson of the foundation, which is headquartered in Kolkata, with effect from May 16, 2019 till the tenure of the foundation. In a notification on July 25, the Ministry partially modified its July 3 notification, nominating Mr. Gupta with immediate effect till May 15, 2020 or till further orders, whichever is earlier.

According to an official of the Culture Ministry, the decision to nominate Mr. Gupta was taken "at a higher level" and did not emanate from the Ministry as it was a political call. A senior Ministry official, however, said the Minister was "too busy" anyway. Mr. Patel declined to comment on the matter.

Earlier association

A senior journalist, Mr. Gupta was associated with the first NDA government, having worked in the PMO of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. As of Monday evening, Mr. Gupta's name and photograph could be seen on the chairperson's page on the foundation's official website.

The foundation, which is an autonomous organisation funded by the Culture Ministry, is the Centre's nodal agency for supporting public library services and promoting the public library movement in the country.

Odisha Secretariat renamed Lok Seva Bhavan

Naveen makes the announcement

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday announced in the State Assembly that the Sachivalaya or Secretariat building in Bhubaneswar will now be called 'Lok Seva Bhavan'.

"In a democracy people are masters and we all exist to serve them," said Mr. Patnaik while making the announcement during the budget discussion on the expenditures of the home and general administration departments.

"If our State has grown at a rate higher than the national growth rate, if the State has attracted investment worth crores of rupees, it is because of the peaceful law and order situation here," said Mr. Patnaik.

Observing that the people of Odisha had blessed the BJD government for the fifth consecutive time because of the faith they have reposed in their governance model, Mr. Patnaik said he will continue to work hard to fulfil the aspirations of the people.

He said his government is committed to maintain transparency in administration and for that the office of the Lokayukta has started functioning since March 20 this year. The State government has taken a number of steps for modernisation and capacity building of the State Vigilance and it will take steps to pass the Police Act at the earliest, he said.

All schools, colleges in Mizoram to have nutrition gardens

Lawngtlai district project made model for all institutes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

'*Kan Sikul, Kan Huan* (My School, My Home)', a project of Mizoram's Lawngtlai district administration for turning schools into nutrition gardens, has been made the model for all schools and colleges in the State to follow.

The Hindu had reported about the project, the brainchild of the district's Deputy Commissioner Shaskanka Ala, that seeks to fight malnutrition among children by letting them grow their own fruits and vegetables in their schools with the help of teachers, parents and community members.

Referring to the Lawngtlai project and attaching a presentation on how Ms. Ala developed it, Mizoram's Directorate of School Education on July 26 wrote to the district heads to guide and help educational institutions in their jurisdiction in making reliable kitchen or nutrition gardens with the involvement of other departments.

₹66 lakh approved

"It may be stated that the Ministry of Human Resource Development, having realised the contribution that these kitchen gardens, has decided to take up kitchen garden on a wider scale from the financial year 2019-20 and has introduced flexi fund of 5% over and above the annual work plan and budget for providing additional items for supplementary nutrition over and above the existing provisions and for developing kitchen gardens," said Lalzarmawii, the State's Director of School Education and State Nodal Officer for Midday Meal.

"This year, ₹66 lakh has been approved for developing 1,320 kitchen gardens at the rate of ₹5,000 per school," the Director added.

Journalist killed in suspected hit-and-run

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A television journalist was killed in Assam's Silchar in a suspected hit-and-run case on Sunday night.

Police said 43-year-old Malin Sarma, a reporter with Barak Television Network, died on the spot after a truck hit his two-wheeler near a police station. He is survived by his wife and a 13-year-old daughter.

Police said they were investigating whether Sarma was a victim of a planned murder or an accident.

Colleagues said Sarma was a simple person who rode a bicycle for most part of his 15-year television career.

Former Gujarat MP Vitthal Radadiya dies in Ahmedabad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD

Vitthal Radadiya, one of Saurashtra's prominent politicians and former Member of Parliament from Porbandar, died at his residence in Ahmedabad on Monday morning.

He was 61 and had been unwell since the last one year.

His mortal remains will be kept at a hostel at Jamkhandorna in Rajkot district on Tuesday between 7 a.m. and 12 noon for people to pay last respects, said his son and Gujarat Tourism minister Jayesh Radadiya.

"Saddened to hear about the demise of former Porbandar MP Vitthalbhai Radadiya. Gujarat has lost a powerful farmer leader. He will always be remembered for his contribution in the field of cooperative, education, and political sphere. May God give strength to the family members to bear the loss," Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted.

Opposition leaders meet to discuss strategy over EVMs

Raju Shetti, NCP leaders invite Raj Thackeray to join August 9 anti-EVM march

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Leaders of opposition parties on Monday held a meeting with Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray to discuss the strategy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) in the Assembly polls.

Former MP and farmers' leader Raju Shetti along with leaders of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) met Mr. Thackeray. At the meeting Mr. Shetti invited him to join the August 9 programme against the use of EMVs in Indian elections.

"People are questioning EVMs everywhere. Be it in the villages or cities. Any discussion on politics revolves around the use of EVMs and whether those can be manipulated in favour of a particular party. The EVMs are posing a threat to democratic process and we are think that they should not be used," said Mr. Shetti.

Former MP Raju Shetti joins other politicians to demand use of ballot papers in the Assembly elections. ▪ FILE PHOTO

The NCP and Congress have already challenged the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in the State to hold the coming polls on ballot paper instead of EVMs. Replying to this demand by the Opposition, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had, during the proceedings in the recently-concluded monsoon session of Assembly, said instead of blaming the EMVs, they should concentrate on finding reasons for their losses.

Mr. Shetti said on Monday that he had invited Mr. Thackeray to join the people's movement against the EVMs. The MNS chief had recently called on the Chief Election Commissioner of India in New Delhi requesting use of ballot papers instead of EVMs.

On Tuesday, an all-party press conference to demand 'back to ballot for Maharashtra elections', will be held in Mumbai by the EVM Virodhi Rashtriya Jan Andolan (EVRJA). On August 9, a long march demanding dropping of EVMs from the electoral process will be held in Mumbai from August Kranti Maidan to Chaityabhoomi.

"I also met Narayan Rane on Sunday with this proposal. He too has doubts over the use of EVMs in elections, but did not confirm whether he will be part of the anti-EVM movement," said Mr. Shetti.

Mr Rane, after quitting Congress has formed his own party, the Maharashtra Swabhiman Party (MSP), but is a Rajya Sabha member from the BJP.

NCP's State unit president Jayant Patil, who was also present at the meeting, said he would not be divulging details of the meeting with Mr. Thackeray, giving rise to speculations of a pre-poll alliance between both parties.

Exodus of leaders continues from Congress, NCP

Navi Mumbai's powerful Naik family tipped to join BJP

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Senior leader of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and former Maharashtra minister Ganesh Naik is all set to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), adding to the growing list of leaders quitting the opposition and joining one of the two ruling coalition parties in the State.

In a related development Kalidas Kolambkar, Congress MLA from Wadala constituency in Mumbai, also resigned from the party on Monday and is likely to join the Shiv Sena.

Kalidas Kolambkar, Congress MLA from Wadala constituency, resigned on Monday and is likely to join Shiv Sena. ▪ FILE PHOTO

NCP corporators from the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) held a meeting at the mayor's bungalow on Monday and, according to sources, unanimously decided to join the BJP to bring development to Navi Mumbai.

"All corporators agreed that it is important to be on the government's side if you want to bring development in the region. They will be meeting Ganesh Naik on Tuesday to pursue him to join the BJP," said an NCP leader from Navi Mumbai.

Mr. Naik's younger son Sandip is an MLA from Airoli and he along with his brother and former Thane MP Sanjiv Naik are likely to join the BJP. Sandip Naik on Sunday had rejected reports about his family joining the BJP and said that he will remain with the NCP.

According to sources within the NCP, the Naik family is trying to create an impression that they are being forced to quit the NCP to join the BJP. "There have been attempts by the Naiks to quit NCP even in the past, but it was Sharad Pawar who stopped them then. Now, they want to create a scenario where they are being pressurised by party workers to join the BJP," said a senior NCP leader.

The Naik family single-handedly controls the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation and their defection would also mean that the entire civic body will be under direct control of the BJP. Ganesh Naik, known for his muscle and money power, lost the 2014 Assembly election from Belapur to BJP's Manda Mhatre. Interestingly, Ms. Mhatre too had joined the BJP, days before the elections, after quitting the NCP.

Open defiance

After campaigning for the Shiv Sena candidate in the recent Lok Sabha polls, Mr. Kolambkar officially quit the Congress on Monday. He had put up banners thanking Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for solving the issues plaguing his constituency. Mumbai Congress working president Eknath Gaikwad was unavailable to comment on today's development.

A former Sena leader, Mr Kolambkar had earlier quit the party along with former Chief Minister Narayan Rane to join the Congress.

Mixed scenario: Continuous rain since July 25 has seen water stock in dams across Maharashtra rise to 35.2% as on Monday, but it is far less than the 55.03% water stock that was available on July 29 last year. ▪ FILE PHOTO

Water stock goes up by 8%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Strong south-west monsoon rains since July 25 has increased water stock in Maharashtra's dams by 8%, but it is still 20% less than what it was during the same period last year.

The water stock went up from 26.87% on July 25 to 35.2% as on Monday, a rise of 8.33%, according to available data. However, the water stock in dams on July 29 last year stood at 55.03%, or 19.83% more than what is available currently.

Except Konkan (84.32%) and Pune (53.99%), the other four revenue divisions of the State have low dam water stock, an official from the State Water Resources Department said.

He said Aurangabad revenue division has only 0.31% stock in its dams and this has remained unchanged in the past four days.

Pune and Nashik have shown rise of 13.84% and 8.9% respectively in the last four days, he said, adding that intensity of showers have remained limited.

The food grain producing Marathwada region is still waiting for good rains, the official said.

Smriti Irani meets officials, takes stock of Central schemes

Expresses satisfaction with steps taken to reduce malnutrition

SHARAD VYAS
MUMBAI

Union Cabinet Minister for Textiles and Women and Child Development Smriti Irani held meetings with government officials in the city on Monday to take stock of Central schemes in the State. Senior officials said Ms. Irani expressed satisfaction with the steps taken by the government to reduce malnutrition in rural, semi-urban and urban areas while urging the need for more work on bringing down child deaths. The Member of Parliament from Amethi Lok Sabha constituency also reviewed the Centrally-funded Smart Anganwadi programme for rural areas, the immunisation programme for children, efforts to bring down child deaths, progress in POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) cases and other awareness programmes in the meeting, said officials.

Smriti Irani

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and senior secretaries of the respective departments were also present during the meetings. The Maharashtra team appraised the minister of the mother and child healthcare initiatives taken by the State Government in the past five years. "The Chief Minister briefed her on various initiatives and programmes of the government for eliminating malnutrition and on mother and child healthcare. The minister appreciated Maharashtra's consistency in keeping all the programmes on track," said an official from the Chief Minister's Office.

Ms. Irani said she was satisfied with the progress made by the government in implementing the programmes. "I have met and discussed with the Maharashtra Chief Minister nutrition programmes and initiatives. The development of anganwadis and programmes for eliminating malnutrition in rural, semi urban and urban areas is satisfactory and the work of the State government is commendable," she said.

The State Health Minister had last week announced successful implementation of health measures and a dip in malnutrition deaths. Severe acute malnutrition is down to 219 in June 2019 from 861 in 2016, and moderate malnutrition to around 2,000 in June 2019 from 4,315 in 2016, he said.

Woman naxal killed in encounter

PRESS TTRUST OF INDIA
NAGPUR

A woman naxal was killed on Monday in an encounter with elite C-60 commandos in Gadchiroli district, the police said, adding that the number of Maoist fatalities might rise.

As per preliminary information, the gun-battle broke out around 12 noon when a commando team was on an anti-naxal operation in the Kothami forest in Ettapalli taluka of the district, around 170 km from Nagpur.

"Search operation is still underway in the forest," said an official of Gadchiroli police.

Pune residents, activists want mass transit project scrapped

Say it will destroy green cover, give precedence to private four-wheelers

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

To preserve Pune's green cover, citizens have started an online campaign against the proposed 36-km High Capacity Mass Transit Route (HCMTR) passing over 34 junctions in the city. They contend that the project, pegged at more than ₹5,000 crore, is a misguided attempt by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) at 'development' that will severely damage the environment by destroying the city's heritage green spots.

Activists fear that the Pune Municipal Corporation's ₹5,000-crore project will destroy the city's heritage green spots. ▪ FILE PHOTO

An online petition by city-based economist Sumita Kale said the project violates principles of "sustainable development" while going against its objective of enhancing public transport and accommodating private four-wheelers instead. "The project, as proposed in the 1987 Development Plan (DP) was a rail and bus public transport solution to bypass the city as it existed then, 30 years ago. Unfortunately, the proposed HCMTR project now has only two lanes for public transport in the form of the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS), but four lanes for private four-wheelers with no thought for cycles," said Ms. Kale's petition.

The petition said the proposed project route will lead to the destruction of more than seven hectares of reserved forest land, while nearly 2,000 mature trees will be cut on the city's hills. "The project will afflict the city's precious water recharge zones as nearly a third of Pune's watersheds have their catchment sources in the Vetal-Hanuman Tekdi-Chatushringi Complex [which forms part of the HCMTR route]," said Ms. Kale.

According to activist Sujit Patwardhan, founder of the non-governmental organisation Parisar, the basic objective of the HCMTR project, as proposed in the draft DP of 1982 and sanctioned in the final DP in 1987, was to substantially enhance the level of public transport in the city and give public transport a dedicated route to connect with the congested parts of the city and its newly-developing localities. "The location and alignment of this ring road was based on data and traffic studies carried out during the preparation of the Draft Plan of 1982. Unfortunately, this was never taken into account by the PMC, which capriciously decided to revive the project after 30 years," said Mr. Patwardhan, a long-time campaigner against the HCMTR project.

Urging the PMC to scrap the project, he said several members within the corporation were actively pushing for it without being clear as to what its objectives were. "Will the HCMTR be for public transport only or will other traffic be allowed? If the PMC is not going to take into account the substantial geographical changes that have taken place in the city, then why is it being built at all?" Mr. Patwardhan said. Permitting private vehicular traffic on the HCMTR violated the fundamental basis for the proposal as conceptualised in 1987 and confirmed again when the Development Plan was revised in 2017, he said.

IN BRIEF

Former A.P. Minister Mukesh Goud dead

HYDERABAD

Former Congress Minister M. Mukesh Goud, 60, passed away on Monday at a hospital here. He is survived by wife, two sons and a daughter. He was undergoing treatment for cancer. He made his debut in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly in 1989 from the Maharajgunj constituency. He served as BC Welfare and Marketing Minister in Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy and Kiran Kumar Reddy Cabinets.

Body of Kerala custodial torture victim exhumed

KOTTAYAM

A second post-mortem of the custodial torture victim, Rajkumar, at the Kanjirappally GH in Kerala on Monday revealed more injuries on the body than recorded in the first autopsy. This was revealed by K. Narayana Kurup, who heads the judicial commission probing the case. The body was exhumed from a cemetery in Idukki earlier in the day. Rajkumar, held in connection with a financial fraud case, was in illegal custody at the Nedumkandam police station in June. He died at a hospital later.

Residents vent ire on murder accused

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The police team, investigating the murder of the Poovar native Rakhi, was on tenterhooks on Monday when they escorted the prime accused Akhil to his hometown in Amboori here in Kerala for evidence collection. With the local residents shouting at the accused and some hurling stones, the police had to stop the collection of evidence midway. The locals wanted Akhil's parents also to be taken into custody for their alleged role in the murder.

Karnataka Speaker exits House with plea for electoral reforms

'Tenth Schedule does not have sufficient provisions to prevent defections'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

With a new government taking charge in Karnataka, Legislative Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar tendered his resignation on Monday, after making a strong plea for electoral reforms and strengthening of the anti-defection law.

Soon after the trust vote and passing of the Appropriation Bill, Mr. Kumar announced to the House that he was resigning as the Speaker with immediate effect. He handed over his resignation letter to Deputy Speaker J.K. Krishna Reddy.

Mr. Kumar, who ordered the disqualification of 17 rebel MLAs in the last few days, said the root of corruption was the enormous expenditure during elections. "If we speak of rooting out corruption without electoral reforms, it will only be hypocrisy. I request the House to discuss the issue of electoral reforms and send a resolution to Parliament."

He said he had no illusions about creating history. "The Tenth Schedule needs a total re-examination. The law is not equipped with sufficient provisions to prevent defections. This House can ask Parliament to take a relook at it. If we do it, we will be putting moral pressure for an amendment," he said.

The outgoing Speaker also called for effective implementation of the Karnataka Lokayukta Act. He said dynastic politics was a dangerous trend and that "we must re-examine the Representation of the People Act." Though the Lokayukta Act made it mandatory for all elected representatives to declare their assets before June 30, there was no penal provision. "Why keep such a law? Moreover, the Election Commission too is silent on declaration of assets by candidates that runs into hundreds of crores of rupees," he said.

'No mandate'

Earlier during the debate in the Assembly, Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah said the Bharatiya Janata Party had no mandate to form the government and termed it "unconstitutional and unethical." Unfortunately, Mr. Yediyurappa had become the Chief Minister four times without a mandate, he said. "We desire that your government completes rest of the term. But there is no guarantee. You have to depend on dissidents," he said and expressed doubts about its longevity.

Mr. Kumaraswamy took strong exception to Mr. Yediyurappa's allegation that the administrative machinery had collapsed and said it was "baseless".

Eventful term: K.R. Ramesh Kumar leaving the Karnataka Assembly in Bengaluru after handing in his resignation as Speaker. ▪K. MURALI KUMAR

Two disqualified MLAs move SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Two disqualified Karnataka legislators on Monday moved the Supreme Court against their ouster from the Assembly under the anti-defection law, saying the Speaker's decision was made in "hot haste" at the behest of the Congress.

Ramesh Jarkhiholi and Mahesh Kumathalli said Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar, spurred by elements in the Congress, revived a February 2019 disqualification proceeding against them in a bid to subvert a decision on their pending resignation letters of July. The Speaker, the legislators said, quickly disqualified them with hardly a thought for the principles of natural justice.

The petition has arraigned, besides the Speaker and the State of Karnataka, Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah and State Congress president Dinesh Gundurao as respondents. More legislators, including R. Shankar, who have been disqualified may approach the Supreme Court for relief. In the present petition, the two legislators urged the court to set aside the July 25 decision of the Speaker to disqualify them from the Assembly. They challenged the Speaker's conclusion that their resignations were neither voluntary nor genuine.

Undergo DNA test, Bombay HC directs Binoy Kodiyeri

Court tells police to submit the report in a sealed cover

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Monday directed Binoy Kodiyeri, son of CPI(M) Kerala State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, to undergo a DNA test in connection with a rape case.

A Division Bench of Justices Ranjit More and Bharati Dangre was hearing a plea filed by Mr. Binoy on July 16 to quash the FIR against him.

On July 3, the Dindoshi sessions court granted him anticipatory bail and directed him to submit a blood sample to the Oshiwara police station for a paternity test. Senior counsel Shirish Gupte, appearing for Mr. Binoy, told the Bench there were many conditions imposed on him while granting the anticipatory bail and the lawyers were in the process of challenging the lower court's order directing him (Binoy) to give submit a DNA sample.

Binoy Kodiyeri

The Bench, however, said the lower court's conditions would have to be followed.

Mr. Gupte then said his client would appear before the police station and give his blood sample and added: "Our only request is that the test report be kept in a sealed cover and not revealed to the complainant."

The court agreed to this and directed the police to submit the report in a sealed cover and adjourned the hearing to August 26.

The complainant, a 33-year-old woman has accused Mr. Binoy of cheating her into a long-term connubial relationship by promising marriage. She has also claimed that the couple had a child and that he had abandoned them in 2018 and pleaded inability to provide maintenance.

Suspension of Kerala IPS officer set aside

Jacob Thomas was accused of graft

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), Ernakulam Bench, on Monday set aside the suspension of former Vigilance & Anti-Corruption Bureau director Jacob Thomas and directed the Kerala government to reinstate the IPS officer forthwith.

The government had suspended Mr. Thomas on charges of corruption in the procurement of cutter suction dredger when he was Director of Ports in 2010-11.

The Bench of Ashish Kalia, Judicial Member, and E.K. Bharat Bhushan, Administrative Member, also directed the government to assign him a post equivalent to his present rank of Director General of Police.

The order came on an application filed by Mr. Thomas who challenged his suspension, citing an earlier probe report that found no wrongdoing. He was earlier suspended on December12, 2017 for allegedly criticising the government's handling of Cyclone Ockhi.

The suspension stood automatically revoked after a year – on December 19, 2018. The very next day, he was suspended in the dredger case.

Welcoming the order, Mr. Thomas said it was "a morale booster for those who have taken a clear stand against corruption".

Hundreds bid farewell to Jaipal Reddy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Hundreds of people bade farewell to former Union Minister S. Jaipal Reddy, who died on Sunday, when the cremation took place on the banks of Hussainsagar in Telangana on Monday afternoon.

His elder son Arvind Reddy lit the pyre. A large crowd comprising Congress leaders, including former Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar, AICC representatives Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mallikarjuna Kharge, K.C. Venugopal and P.C. Chacko were present. Mr. Kumar and Mr. Siddaramaiah broke down as they carried the Congress leader's body for cremation.

More community radio stations soon

Centre has cleared 113 applications

TIKI RAJWI
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Community radio stations (CRS) might not overtake television anytime soon in terms of popularity, but their numbers are on the way up, with at least a 100 new stations expected to take to the airwaves by year-end across the country.

An expert panel of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting recently cleared 113 applications for setting up new radio stations, a senior ministry official said here on Monday.

From 41 stations in 2003, the number of stations had jumped to 247 in 2018 and 251 in 2019, according to a study conducted by the ministry in August 2018, according to S.R. Yadav, Deputy Secretary (CRS), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, who was in the city for a workshop on the role CRS in disaster response.

T.N. tops list

With 34 stations, Tamil Nadu has the highest number of operational community radio stations, according to Ministry figures. Uttar Pradesh is second with 29, followed by Maharashtra with 22, and Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh with 18 each. Kerala has 11 stations.

"These are low-power FM stations with a range of only 15 km. They are the voice of the voiceless. They had provided valuable services during the floods in Kerala and Chennai and in Odisha during Cyclone Fani," Mr. Yadav said. There is a push to allow such stations in coastal districts, as they are vulnerable to natural calamities.

Season's first

Fish eye: Villagers fishing in a stream after heavy rain near Birsaipet in Adilabad district, Telangana, on Monday. ▪S. HARPAL SINGH

Generic section in drug stores soon

Kerala plans to tackle rising demand

A.S. JAYANTH
KOZHIKODE

Drug stores in Kerala may soon have a separate section for generic drugs.

The All-Kerala Chemists and Druggists Association (AKCDA), the largest network of medicine distributors in the State, has come up with this proposal to tackle the rising demand for non-branded medicines at affordable rates.

A.N. Mohanan, president, AKCDA, claims that the Union government had been pushing the sale of generic medicines through Jan Aushadhi stores. The State government has been promoting the Kerala generics brand of medicines through Karunya community pharma outlets as well. There are over 400 Jan Aushadhi stores in the State and the Centre plans to set up more such shops.

'Business hit'

"Opening of Jan Aushadhi stores has hit our business. Many medical shops have shut down. The rising demand for quality-assured generic drugs made us think of setting up separate sections for them," he points out. "More than 90% of the ₹10,000-crore worth medicines, a majority of them branded generic drugs, being sold in the State annually are not manufactured here," Mr. Mohanan says.

The medical community, however, is not very enthusiastic. N. Sulphi, State secretary, Indian Medical Association, told *The Hindu* that almost 98% of generic drugs in the country is of low quality.

Amphibious ship LCU L-56 joins Navy

It will be used for search and rescue, disaster relief, patrolling, says Vice-Admiral

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM

LCU L-56, the sixth of the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) MK IV class ships, was commissioned into the Navy by Vice-Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, at an impressive ceremony held at the Naval Dockyard here on Monday.

Commissioning the ship, the Vice-Admiral congratulated the GRSE (Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers) for being the first shipyard in the country to have built the 100th warship.

"The induction of LCU 56 will add to maritime and HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) capability of ANC (Andaman Nicobar Command), as the ship will be deployed for multi-role activities such as beaching operations, search and rescue missions, disaster relief, coastal patrol, and surveillance operations along the Andaman and Nicobar Islands," he said.

Made in India: The new ship being commissioned into the Navy in Visakhapatnam on Monday. ▪K.R. DEEPAK

The inaugural address was delivered by Rear Admiral V.K. Saxena (retd.) CMD, GRSE, Kolkata, followed by Commodore Ashutosh Ridhorkar.

Later, the commissioning warrant of the ship was read out by the Commanding Officer, Lt Commander Gopinath Narayanan. Subsequently, the Naval Ensign onboard was hoisted for the first time.

Based in Port Blair

LCU 56 is an amphibious ship with its primary role being transportation and deployment of main battle tanks, armoured vehicles, troops and equipment from ship to shore. The ship would be administered and based in Port Blair under the NAVCC in ANC.

With a displacement of 900 tonnes, the ship measures 62 metres in length. It is manned by a team comprising four officers and 56 sailors and is also capable of carrying 150 troops.

Attack on cattle triggers panic in A.P.

Forest department mounts vigil after villagers claim seeing a leopard

STAFF REPORTER
CHITTOOR

Half-a-dozen cattle and sheep were attacked at Dommara Agraharam and Peddagopana Palle villages located near a forest in Kuppam mandal of Andhra Pradesh on Monday, allegedly by an unknown animal.

There was commotion in the villages following the mysterious attacks on livestock with locals remaining divided over the animal responsible for the attack. Some claimed that they had spotted a leopard, while another group said it was a hyena. Some women said it was a tiger.

The injured livestock bore abrasions on back, hind legs and udder.

Forest Range Officer Kalappa Naidu and his team rushed to the villages and took stock of the situation. After a three-hour search in the surroundings of the attack sites, the team could not find any pugmarks of the big cat. Some marks and scratches on the ground suggested the movement of a hyena, but the presence of stray dogs nearby led to a confusion, said the officials.

What baffled the search party was the version of an elderly woman that she saw a tiger attacking a goat. She said the animal was "dark yellowish orange" and had black stripes. Some other villagers said they had spotted a leopard on the forest fringes a couple of days ago.

A woman showing an injured sheep at a village near Kuppam in Chittoor district, A.P., on Monday. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'It could be hyenas'

Mr. Naidu felt that going by circumstantial evidence, one or two hyenas could be behind the attack.

He ruled out the presence of a tiger in the area, saying it was next to impossible. "Leopards are there in the neighbouring Tamil Nadu forests, but the possibility of their entering the fringes was remote," he said.

"We are going to keep vigil and capture the animal behind the attacks," Mr. Naidu said.

IN BRIEF

DGCA grounds two SpiceJet pilots for a year

NEW DELHI

The DGCA on Monday suspended two SpiceJet pilots for a year after their plane overshot the runway while landing at the Mumbai airport earlier this month. The Boeing 737 aircraft overshot the runway and got stuck in slush resulting in the hampering of flight operations at the airport.

Suspected of childlifting, man lynched in Bengal

KOLKATA

One person was lynched to death on the suspicion of being a child lifter in Alipurduar district in north Bengal on Sunday. A police official said that more than 200 people lynched the man who died on way to local Birpara hospital. Seventeen persons have been arrested. Over the last week at least four cases of alleged lynching had been reported from north Bengal.

Death sentence of Pune rape accused commuted

MUMBAI

Twelve years after the incident, the Bombay High Court on Monday commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment of two convicted for the rape and murder of a BPO firm employee in Pune. A Division Bench was hearing petitions seeking a stay on their execution that was originally scheduled for June 24.

Fishermen torch four boats near Cuddalore

CUDDALORE

Tensions prevailed near Cuddalore after four fishing boats were torched at the Parangipettai coast following a scuffle between two groups of fishermen over the use of banned purse seine nets. A meeting of representatives had recently called for a blanket ban on purse seine fishing since it affected the traditional fishing grounds.

Pench, Periyar rated top tiger reserves

They are billed as the best managed sanctuaries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Madhya Pradesh's Pench sanctuary and Kerala's Periyar sanctuary emerged as the best managed tiger reserves in the country, according to an evaluation of India's 50 tiger sanctuaries released along with the 4th National Tiger Estimation (Tiger census) on Monday.

The Dampa and Rajaji reserves, in Mizoram and Uttarakhand respectively, were left at the bottom of the ladder with a score of 42.97% and 44.53% respectively. The top performers scored 93.75%. A score of 41% and above was marked as 'fair' and those 75% and above rated 'very good.'

The sanctuaries, which spanned 80 States, were divided into five geographic clusters. On the whole, the Western Ghats cluster comprising reserves in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka scored an average of 81%.

Kerala had the best kept reserves followed by Madhya Pradesh. Chhattisgarh was the 'least performing State' in reserve management.

The big cat count

The table shows the tiger population in India since the first tiger census in 2006. The Central India and Eastern Ghats landscape has seen the highest increase in tiger population since the 2014 cycle

Landscape	2006	2010	2014	2018
Shivalik Hills and Gangetic Plains	297	353	485	646
Central India and Eastern Ghats	601	601	688	1,033
Western Ghats	402	534	776	981
North East Hills and Brahmaputra	100	148	201	219
Sundarbans	NA	70	76	88

3.81 lakh sq. km. – Forests surveyed for tiger signs | **5.23** lakh km – Foot surveys | **5.94** lakh – Man-days effort | **76,651** Photographs of tigers

While tiger occupancy has increased in Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, it has seen a sharp decline in Chhattisgarh since 2014 and has stagnated for Odisha

A white tiger at Alipore Zoo in Kolkata ▪ ASHOK BHAUMIK

Pench was a well-managed reserve because it had a season-wise biodiversity plan as well as flying squads and tactical patrolling for managing security. There were regular meetings with local communities and funds collected from tourism were largely making it to the authorities for conservation purposes, the report added.

Economic value of reserves worth crores

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

Along with the tiger count, the government also commissioned a study to gauge the economic value of tiger reserves.

Based on an analysis of 10 of them, the government claimed that the cumulative benefits – from the carbon and timber conserved, livelihood to those who depend on forest and tourism – were anywhere from ₹4,200 crore to ₹16,000 crore annually.

Since 2006, the Wildlife Institute of India – an Environment Ministry-funded body – has been tasked with coordinating the tiger count. That year, it emerged that India had only 1,411 tigers. This rose to 1,706 in 2010 and 2,226 in 2014 on the back of improved conservation measures and new estimation methods.

Response sought on sexual offenders

Plea to protect identity of accused

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought response from the Centre on a plea to frame guidelines to protect the reputation and dignity of persons accused in sex offence cases.

A Bench led by Justice S.A. Bobde issued notice to the government on a clutch of petitions, including one by Youth Bar Association of India, arguing that a person is considered innocent unless proven guilty by a court of law and undertrials in sex offence cases should not be exposed to any situation which violate their right to life and dignity.

If a person has been falsely accused, his reputation is lost forever and exposed to public ridicule for no fault of his. This is a violation of the fundamental right to life enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution, the petitioner argued.

"It does not only destroy an individual's life but creates a social stigma to the family members too... Need of the hour demands that some preventive measures must be taken to avoid and to deal with such situations in the interest of justice," the association submitted.

Reputation is lost forever even if the charge is false, says petition.

Disclosure of his identity, especially during trial, leads to media trial. Besides, considering the widespread tentacles of social media, the person's name and even that of his family, which may include minors, would be exposed. This would be a violation of their fundamental right to privacy.

"Previous identification as a suspect will endure in the public sphere," the petition said.

Narendra Modi enters the wild with Bear Grylls

Modi to feature in Discovery programme shot in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will feature in a special episode of Discovery's "Man vs Wild" which will highlight "issues related to environmental change".

According to a statement from the channel, the episode, featuring adventurer Bear Grylls and shot in the Jim Corbett National Park, will be a "frank and free-wheeling journey" which will throw light on wildlife conservation.

The episode will premiere on August 12 and will be showcased across the world on the Discovery network of channels.

"For years, I have lived among nature, in the mountains and the forests. These years have a lasting impact on my life. ," the PM said. "For me, this show presents a great opportunity to showcase to the world India's rich environmental heritage and stress on the importance of environment conservation. It was a great experience spending time in the jungle once again, this time with Bear, who is blessed with indefatigable energy and quest to experience nature at its purest," he added.

Mr. Grylls said it was a privilege to take the PM "on an adventure into the Indian wilderness."

"I feel truly honoured to get to spend time with this remarkable world leader. I am so excited to spend time with the PM and to get to know the man who leads this great nation," he added.

Narendra Modi and Bear Grylls in a still from TV show *Man vs Wild* filmed at Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand. ▪ ANI

T.N. to grant special leave for cancer treatment

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

In a special gesture, the Tamil Nadu government has decided to grant 10 days' special casual leave to employees undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy for cancer.

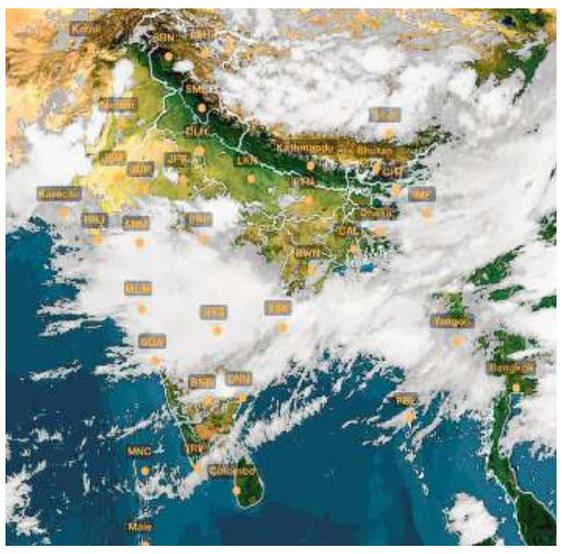
The privilege would be extended every time the government servant goes for treatment.

Accepting a proposal of the Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine that a leave of 10 days, starting from a day before the commencement of chemotherapy, can be granted to government employees, the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms issued an order granting the special casual leave for cancer patients over and above the other leaves that they are entitled to as per existing rules.

The 10 days' duration was finalised taking into consideration the fact that the patients have to report one day prior to the commencement of chemotherapy/radiotherapy, a day's treatment and eight days for recovery.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely over Chhattisgarh, Telangana, central Maharashtra, Gujarat , Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, coastal Karnataka, Goa, Odisha, Rajasthan, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	–	35.7	26.0	Kozhikode	9.1	32.0	25.7
Ahmedabad	13.0	29.7	25.0	Kurnool	–	31.1	24.6
Aizawl	3.0	28.5	22.7	Lucknow	0.2	33.3	26.8
Allahabad	3.6	32.9	27.5	Madurai	–	38.8	26.2
Bengaluru	0.1	28.2	20.8	Mangaluru	5.4	30.7	23.6
Bhopal	33.9	29.1	23.5	Mumbai	0.5	29.4	27.4
Bhubaneswar	9.7	29.6	24.2	Mysuru	0.0	29.9	20.6
Chandigarh	–	34.8	27.2	New Delhi	6.2	36.1	27.1
Chennai	–	34.1	26.4	Patna	–	33.4	27.4
Coimbatore	–	34.3	23.2	Port Blair	8.5	29.4	23.8
Dehradun	–	34.7	25.4	Puducherry	0.4	36.1	25.2
Gangtok	8.7	22.2	17.5	Pune	3.8	25.3	22.3
Goa	14.2	28.4	23.6	Raipur	40.6	27.2	24.8
Guwahati	–	35.2	26.8	Ranchi	9.8	27.5	22.2
Hubballi	–	25.0	22.0	Shillong	1.1	24.6	17.1
Hyderabad	9.2	25.6	22.4	Shimla	0.4	22.0	17.5
Imphal	–	30.7	22.5	Srinagar	3.2	29.3	18.5
Jaipur	27.3	32.0	24.7	Thiruvananthapuram	–	30.6	24.5
Kochi	–	30.6	26.0	Tiruchi	–	37.4	27.6
Kohima	16.8	25.4	18.0	Vijayawada	2.2	29.4	25.0
Kolkata	23.7	30.5	25.7	Visakhapatnam	22.4	28.2	25.0

(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	89	54	–	98	–	Good
Bengaluru	9	51	76	36	69	Good
Chennai	8	12	61	109	–	Moderate
Delhi	13	23	102	33	79	Moderate
Hyderabad	2	15	26	14	28	Good
Kolkata	3	22	49	17	18	Good
Lucknow	8	26	62	32	–	Good
Mumbai	12	19	103	–	48	Moderate
Pune	68	8	67	44	44	Good
Visakhapatnam	–	–	35	–	–	Good

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Jodhpur, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 269 indicating a hazardous level of pollution. In contrast, Haldia, West Bengal recorded a healthy AQI score of 15

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

Rajasthan sees exam without invigilators

It comes as a first of its kind 'dual test' of students' intellect and honesty

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

In a first-of-its-kind exercise, about 1 lakh students of government colleges in Rajasthan on Monday appeared in an examination which was virtually a test of their honesty. The newly introduced monthly academic test was conducted without invigilators, while no equipment, such as CCTV cameras, were installed in the classrooms to monitor the activities of students.

The test, scheduled for the 29th of every month in the 2019-20 session, will not only assess the academic knowledge of the students but also their honesty, truthfulness, self-control and self-confidence. Teachers left the classrooms after distributing question papers and came back after an hour only to collect the answer sheets when the time was up.

"The students' response was overwhelming in all the 237 government colleges across Rajasthan. Their enthusiasm showed how important it was to inculcate ethical values among youths," Pradeep Kumar Borad, State Commissioner (College Education), told *The Hindu*. He said the exam was a "dual test" of the students' intellect and honesty, both of which were important for their success.

The monthly tests have been introduced for the first time this year as part of the 'Akashi Calendar' for higher education, which has scheduled various activities during the session that started on July 1. Mr. Borad said a test of general knowledge on July 13, in which 31,097 students appeared, was also praised for its objective of widening the horizons of students.

The test will also strengthen the moral principles among the students in an unmatched way. ▪ SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mr. Borad, who is also Special Secretary-Higher Education, said the activities of organising coaching classes, formation of student houses, and a tree plantation drive, would be taken up in the due course, but the single most significant initiative was the invigilator-free monthly tests, which would strengthen moral principles among the students in an unmatched way.

'Self-analysis'

Alka Agarwal, Principal of the Government Girls' Post-Graduate College, Jhunjhunu, said all the 1,400 students of her college wrote the exam and gave a positive feedback. "Such an activity is important for our students, who come from nearby villages and remote hamlets. The self-analysis of their performance will help them achieve academic excellence," she said.

Another significant aspect of the test is that its result will not be announced publicly.

Mr. Borad said the students would be apprised of their performance individually after their answer sheets were checked. "When the students know that the results will not be put on the college's notice board, they will give the test honestly and analyse their own performance. The tendency to cheat will decrease."

The college concerned will maintain the record of performance of each student, but the marks obtained in the monthly tests will not be added in the final result.

3 held for rape of teenage girl in Rajasthan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

A 14-year-old girl was raped allegedly by two men in Barodameo village of Rajasthan's Alwar district and her photographs were circulated on social media. Police have arrested three persons, including the wife of an alleged rapist, in connection with the crime.

A woman named Raunak, staying in the neighbourhood, took the girl to her home where she was allegedly raped by one Rahul. Police said Raunak's husband Jaikam also raped the victim and clicked her photographs after Rahul left.

A few days after the incident, another man blackmailed the girl into meeting him in private and threatened to circulate her photographs.

List of 'iconic tourist sites' may be reviewed

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The government's plan to develop 17 'iconic tourist sites' could see some changes, with Union Culture and Tourism Minister of State (independent charge) Prahlad Singh Patel ordering a review of the sites included in the project.

Mr. Patel ordered the setting up of a committee to look into the sites included in the plan, Ministry officials said on Monday.

Changes sought

Last week, Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan wrote to Mr. Patel asking him to include Odisha's Konark Sun Temple and Jagannath Temple, Puri.

In July 2018, then Tourism Minister K.J. Alphons had said 17 'iconic tourist sites' would be developed. These were Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri in Uttar Pradesh, Ajanta and Ellora caves in Maharashtra, Humayun's Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar in Delhi, Colva Beach in Goa, Amer Fort in Rajasthan, Somnath and Dholavira in Gujarat, Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, Hampi in Karnataka, Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, Kaziranga in Assam, Kumarakom in Kerala and Mahabodhi in Bihar.

In her Budget 2019-2020 speech on July 5, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had mentioned the project again.

It's official, Odisha is origin of Rasagola

The sweet bags GI tag after State asserts that it has been part of its culture

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

The rasagola, a popular dessert of Odisha, has received the Geographical Indication tag from the Registrar of Geographical Indication after years of controversy around the sweet.

The registration was conferred on 'Odisha Rasagola' under Section 16(I) or of authorised Section 17(3)(c) of Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999 on Monday. The GI number 612 has been registered in favour of Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (OSIC Ltd.), a Government of Odisha undertaking and Utkal Mistanna Byabasayee Samiti, a traders' organisation, in the foodstuff category.

"Happy to share that #Odisha Rasagola has received GI Tag in Geographical Indication Registry. This mouthwatering culinary delight made of cottage cheese, loved by Odias across the world, is offered to Lord Jagannath as part of bhog since centuries," tweeted Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

According to the application submitted to the Registrar of GI, 'Odisha Rasagola' is a sweet from the state of Odisha made of chhena (cottage cheese) cooked in sugar syrup, which is very soft to feel, is juicy and non- chewy in consistency and can be swallowed without teeth pressure.

Rasagolas are prepared by caramelisation of sugar.

Colour development of the 'Odisha Rasagola' is very specific, where without addition of external colour, various intensely-coloured rasagolas are prepared using the principle of caramelisation of sugar with specific methods of preparation, the application said.

Both Odisha and West Bengal have been contesting the origin of the rasagola. Historical records submitted say the 'Odisha Rasagola' has an age-old tradition and is associated with world famous Puri Jagannath Temple.

In governance mode

The government in Karnataka should focus on development despite political uncertainty

The BJP government in Karnataka won a trust vote in the Assembly on Monday, but that does not end the political instability. B.S. Yediyurappa, who has become Chief Minister for the fourth time at the age of 76, can breathe easy for six months now. The irony of his trust vote victory is that his government does not have an absolute majority of the total strength of the House. The exact numbers in favour of the government were not clear as there was no division of votes on Monday, but it is apparent that the BJP is short of the halfway mark of the Assembly's full strength, which is 225, including one nominated Anglo-Indian representative. Winning 105 seats, it had fallen short in the 2018 Assembly election but Mr. Yediyurappa had never conceded defeat. Supreme Court intervention ended his third tenure as CM in just three days then, but he is back in the saddle 14 months on, riding a rebellion in the ranks of the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) which had formed a post-poll coalition and government in 2018. While the coalition had inherent contradictions that weakened it from the very start, it was the BJP's relentless and amoral pursuit of power that led to its collapse. The BJP is evidently elated, and Mr. Yediyurappa said he believed in the principle of "forget and forgive".

Many other characters in the months-long political drama in Karnataka may not be able to "forget and forgive" the machinations that preceded the vote. K.R. Ramesh Kumar, who resigned as Speaker on Monday, disqualified 17 rebels from the Congress and the JD(S) under the anti-defection law. By disqualifying them for the Assembly's remaining tenure, he sought to preempt their inclusion in the new government, but the issue is headed for the courts. It might be a while before by-polls are held, and those could alter the Assembly's composition. The bitterness among political parties will linger, and the government will have uncertainty hanging over it. The State houses some of the best companies and has built for itself a reputation as a destination for investors and job-seekers. A dishonourable political culture that involves rent-seeking, high-handedness and rapacity by leaders has dented that reputation in recent years. Karnataka continuing its success as an economic powerhouse is in the interest of the country. While these are medium-term concerns, the State has some immediate challenges to tackle, particularly water scarcity and urban management. With such tasks ahead, the Chief Minister will need all the time and focus he can possibly garner for governance. Now that Mr. Yediyurappa has realised his dream and taken command, he should ensure that his rivals who ended with bloody noses in this battle are drafted for better governance and the progress of Karnataka.

Talks and terror

Afghans suffer from the effects of war even in the middle of peace talks

The attack on Afghan vice presidential candidate Amrullah Saleh's office in Kabul on Sunday that killed at least 20 people and injured 50, including Mr. Saleh, is a grave reminder of the crisis the war-torn country is going through even amid attempts to find peace. Mr. Saleh, a former intelligence chief and a strong critic of the Taliban and Pakistan, is President Ashraf Ghani's running-mate for the September 28 election. And the irony is that the assault occurred a few hours after President Ghani officially launched his campaign in which he promised that "peace is coming". The message the insurgents are trying to send is that even the most fortified political offices in the country or its top politicians are not safe. The insurgents have made it clear they will carry out their offensive irrespective of the peace process, especially when Afghanistan gets down to a full-fledged election campaign. In recent months, even when the U.S. and Taliban representatives have held multiple rounds of talks in Doha, Qatar, insurgents have kept up attacks, both on military and civilian locations. The Taliban appears to be trying to leverage these assaults to boost its bargaining position in talks with the U.S. And the Kabul government's inability to prevent them and the U.S.'s apparent decision to delink the negotiations from the daily violence are giving the insurgents a free run in many Afghan cities.

Afghanistan's crises are many. Half of the country is either directly controlled or dominated by the Taliban. In the eastern parts, the Islamic State has established a presence and the group targets the country's religious minorities. The government in Kabul is weak and notorious for chronic corruption. Its failure to ensure the basic safety and security of civilians is in turn eroding the public's confidence in the system. At present, the government appears beleaguered. Its security agencies are strained by the prolonged war. It is true that Afghanistan needs a political settlement. The war has been in a stalemate for long. The government, even with U.S. support, is not in a position to turn the war around. The Taliban, on the other side, has expanded its reach to the hinterland, but not the urban centres. While a peace process is the best way ahead in such a scenario, the question is whether the U.S. is giving too much leeway to the Taliban in its quest to get out of its longest war. The decision to keep the Afghan government out of the peace process was a big compromise. The absence of a ceasefire even when talks were under way was another. The result is that Afghans continue to suffer even when the Americans and the Taliban talk. This has to change. There has to be more pressure, both political and military, on the Taliban to cease the violence. And the U.S. should back the Afghan government and the coming elections resolutely, while Kabul has to get its act together.

A straightforward lesson on resolution

By not sorting out conflicts between themselves, India and Pakistan are effectively outsourcing the role to third parties

HAPPYMON JACOB

U.S. President Donald Trump's claim last Monday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked him at the G-20 summit in June in Japan to mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir question may, for the moment, have been deftly handled by the two foreign policy establishments, but this is not a question that is likely to go away all too easily. Given that Mr. Trump made this rather out-of-the-blue statement during Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the United States, it has fuelled further speculation about what it implies.

A mixed bag

To be fair to the Indian establishment's traditional logic, third party mediation in Jammu and Kashmir might not be a useful idea simply because third parties typically come with their own agenda. Second, it might do more harm than good in an age of hypernationalism and frenzied media attention on anything to do with Kashmir. In a milieu where bilateral diplomacy on Jammu and Kashmir itself comes under intense scrutiny from domestic political forces, third party mediation is almost impossible to even consider. More so, past instances of third party mediation have had mixed results.

And yet, Kashmir is likely to be on the great power radar and will continue to attract international attention for a variety of reasons, not least because New Delhi refuses to invest in bilateral diplomatic measures to resolve Jammu and Kashmir.

Simla and after

Historically, New Delhi has had a love-hate relationship with third party mediation in Jammu and Kashmir in 1948. However, much of this overt third party intervention in Kashmir ended with the Simla agreement of 1972 which stated, at New Delhi's insistence, that Kashmir will be a bilateral issue thereby ending the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan's (UNMOGIP's) peacekeeping work in Kashmir, de facto, if not de jure. The current UNMOGIP involvement in Kashmir is neither encouraged nor recognised by India, something Pakistan continues to do. New Delhi believes that its UN experience *vis-à-vis* Kashmir has been an unsavoury one which partly explains the current distaste in India for any third party mediation. Then there is India's status-linked indifference to external opinion that comes with being a major economy and military power whose deep pockets and growing markets are of significance to those potentially desirous of talking about Kashmir. So theoretically, New Delhi has consistently, and successfully, blocked all third party mediation in Kashmir, except when it wants to let others play a role. And if anyone indeed makes a reference to Kashmir which New Delhi disagrees with, it either ignores it or strongly disapproves of it.

That is, in practice, there has historically been a great deal of third party attention on the larger Kashmir question some of which has been encouraged by India.

In order to understand this argument better, let us make a conceptual distinction between conflict resolution and crisis management. While both involve some amount of mediation, the former is focussed on a specific issue – Kashmir in this case – and seeks to address and resolve the root causes of the conflict. The latter involves mediation during an ongoing crisis with a potential for escalation. Crisis mediation unlike conflict resolution does not seek to resolve the political or root causes of a conflict.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Management and resolution

New Delhi has traditionally been averse to mediation in the form of conflict resolution while accepting more than once third party mediation during crisis events. Kargil is an example when India accepted third party mediation by the Clinton Administration in the U.S. This was also evident during the post-Pulwama military stand-off in February this year. While both Kargil and the February stand-off were directly linked to Kashmir, mediation by the third party did not seek to address anything beyond the immediate diffusion of tensions. Then there are other instances where third party crisis mediation took place even though they had no direct links to Kashmir such as the post-26/11 terror attacks.

For sure, crisis management is different from conflict resolution. And yet even when the focus is on crisis management, the larger conflict, which has given rise to the crisis comes into focus and become part of the conversations between the mediator and the conflicting parties. This is precisely what seems to underlie the current American interest *vis-à-vis* Kashmir. So even though New Delhi accepts crisis management, and not conflict resolution in the context of Kashmir, it is not easy to separate the two either during a crisis or when the conflict is crisis prone.

Put differently, given that crisis, at least in this context, is the function of a pre-existing conflict, crisis management by third parties and the attendant focus on the broader conflict is not easy to avoid.

More so, while New Delhi is loathe to having third party discussions on Kashmir, especially on the human rights situation, it actively seeks third party attention on terror emanating from Pakistan as well as the latter's sponsorship of violence in the Valley. While this might be a desirable distinction to New Delhi's mind, it is not easy to get a third party to focus on one part of the problem and ignore the other. In other words, New Delhi's efforts at getting other countries to condemn Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism in Kashmir while at the same time disparaging the reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the human rights situation in Kashmir is a difficult balance to maintain.

Impact of regional geopolitics

The unfolding developments in regional geopolitics could also have implications for third party interest in Kashmir. The U.S.'s desire for a deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan, in which Pakistan is key, is already beginning to have an impact on the frosty relationship between Washington and Islamabad. Besides Washington, Beijing, and Moscow, the European capitals will also eventually start courting Pakistan. This will invariably increase, albeit marginally, the global focus on Kashmir either at Pakistan's insistence or because third parties might see a link between Kashmir and regional instability. As a matter of fact, several people have in the past made a direct link between instability in Afghanistan and the Kashmir conflict. Such voices could potentially become sharper now. More so, if the rising concerns about the Islamic State's influence in Kashmir turn about to be not-so-misplaced, the heat on Kashmir is only going to increase.

What further ensures third party involvement in Kashmir is the lack of a conflict resolution process between India and Pakistan. The less the two sides talk on Kashmir, the more there is are likely to be crisis situations between them which would invariably lead to more third party involvement in the whole Kashmir quagmire. In other words, by not resolving conflicts between themselves, India and Pakistan are effectively outsourcing crisis management, and thereby conflict resolution, albeit in a limited manner, to third parties. The lesson then is a straightforward one: if you do not engage in a dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue, third parties will continue to meddle.

Happymon Jacob teaches at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, and is the author of 'Line on Fire: Ceasefire Violations and India-Pakistan Escalation Dynamics'

In Assam, basic dignity at stake

There are concerns over how the State government plans to solve the issue of stateless citizens after the NRC exercise

SANJOY HAZARIKA

The Supreme Court has extended the day of reckoning for the controversial exercise known as the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam from July 31 to August 31, giving a month's relief or another opportunity to those who are off the list to scramble and get into it. Thus, it has provided an equal time frame for those who say that many on the list shouldn't be there because they are not actually 'foreigners'.

With this extension, the Court rejected demands by both the Central and State governments which, concerned about the nationwide controversy about the drive, had said they wanted to reverify 10% to 20% of those on the list. In making such a request, the governments were expressing a degree of anxiety about the data quality of a process for which they themselves have pressed strongly since 2014.

The Court's decision was based on a declaration by the State Coordinator of the NRC, the officer whom it has mandated to run the NRC, that such a review was not necessary: his team had already re-verified 27% of the list. This again has roiled the waters – the local unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) says the officer, Prateek Hajela, had no business to do so. The State unit's president asserted that the party stood by its demand for a 20% re-verification: "Even if some more time is taken, we want a correct NRC."

The concern here is that many Hindu Bengalis will be left out of the NRC and hence also get disenfranchised in the process. This has happened numerous times in the ongoing exercise as also with members of traditional tribal groups in the State.

Identifying Indians

The goal of the gargantuan effort of the NRC appears simple: identify Indians living in Assam and by exclusion pick out the 'foreigners' or Bangladeshis. In this case, some 40 lakh people were left out of the NRC when the draft list was published last July. This led to an outcry by civil society groups, and media accounts showed how citizens had been left out, reportedly on religious and ethnic grounds, and due to bad data collection. In the past months, not less than 36 lakh or 3.6 million counter claims seeking inclusion were filed.

That is nearly 90% of those who were left out. In the last storm of data-driven efforts, the country's highest court allowed not less than two lakh complaints against people alleged to be "foreigners" by others whose identity was kept secret. Unknown entities tossed vague charges against people who had lived in India for generations.

REUTERS

The overall effort is to untangle what appears to be nothing short of a Gordian knot – to resolve the issue of illegal immigration from neighbouring Bangladesh into the region over decades. But each stage and layer appear to underline how challenging the problems remain, with issues of legal redress being acute.

The plight of the stateless

Concerns in Assam have been high over the purported influx post-1971 after the creation of Bangladesh. The effort is to calm local anxieties and also cater to a political agenda. Yet the question that is often asked but rarely answered is what happens to those individuals (and their dependents) who are deemed stateless after they find themselves off the list.

I have two questions: What becomes of them while applying to tribunals and courts for relief – all the way to the Supreme Court, a detailed, drawn-out process? How will the government deal with those who are declared non-citizens and if Bangladesh refuses to take them, saying they are not its nationals, as it has consistently held for decades?

In this context, the recent remarks of a senior BJP leader from Assam on the issue are important. For they outline a process which the government believes can help resolve the situation. In a recent television panel discussion, the BJP leader underlined his non-acceptance of the Assam Accord, which has been the *madhyam* (medium) for the issue of alleged migrants, and which enabled the conferring of citizenship on a distinct group of people after a cooling off period of 10 years.

About 75,000 persons who benefited from this process had migrated from then East Pakistan between 1966 and 1971; most of them were Hindus. The BJP leader said that such a cooling off period was unacceptable, that "there should be" push back" but "push back with dignity".

But it is significant, however, that what appears to be emerging is that until such expulsion, alleged foreigners must have access to rights that will enable their survival. These would include the right to education and health. But it would exclude the right to vote or to acquire property so that they did not have a role in political processes.

Is this an indication of how the governments, in Assam and the Centre, are thinking of resolving the issue? Could the "suspected" perhaps not be displaced from their locations but deprived of the right to vote and acquisition of property? As has been mentioned earlier, what also needs to be clarified is the status of lands on which they are living or have acquired. Will they be deprived of those? Would this amount to creating an enduring phenomena since Bangladesh refuses to take alleged illegals back?

Many of those who are off the list are poor, cannot afford lawyers and may not even know of their right to legal aid. At stake is the basic dignity of the weak, voiceless and vulnerable. The next few months will see how many of them will receive succour and how many will need to carry their bundles of documents from court to court in an unending and perhaps desperate search for hope.

Sanjoy Hazarika is International Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. 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.

A betrayal of trust

What has happened in Karnataka over the last few months is no drama – it comes as a very real insult to the mandate of those in the State. While B.S. Yediyurappa has won the trust vote, the people have lost the trust they had imposed in their MLAs. Monday's development may have given temporary closure to the political turmoil that kept governance in the State in a prolonged coma. But this doesn't rule out the fact that the disqualified MLAs may get another chance to enter the Assembly. Some of them may even contest from the very parties they deserted if denied tickets by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), giving this sordid saga another twist. To sum up, the crisis demonstrates that a mature democracy must allow people the right to recall their representatives if they fail to live up to their expectations (South page, "BJP expected to have a smooth sailing in Karnataka trust vote," July 29).

J. AKSHAY,
Bengaluru

■ Former Karnataka Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar acted in haste in disqualifying all the 17 lawmakers who had resigned and proved that he is more loyal to his party than to the Constitution ("Karnataka Speaker disqualifies 14 more MLAs before trust vote," July 29). This came nearly a month after the resignation letters submitted by the dissidents were put in cold storage by the Speaker, who later also told the Supreme Court that he cannot take hasty action. He was probably hoping that the MLAs will withdraw their resignations and save the government. However, after the fall of the government, he perhaps realised that a no-confidence motion would be moved against him. Therefore he hurriedly disqualified the MLAs. In doing so, he inadvertently did a favour to the BJP, which sailed through the no-confidence vote. However, the Speaker's move could act as a deterrent for future dissidents wanting to destabilise a government.

K.V. SEETHARAMAIAH,
Hassan, Karnataka

Insulting tweet

U.S. President Donald Trump's malicious tweet aimed at distinguished African-American lawmaker Elijah Cummings comes close on the heels of his attack on four Democratic Congresswomen, who he asked to return to "their countries". Mr. Trump ignores the fact that prior to the 'discovery' of America in the 15th century, only Native Americans and aborigines lived there. Immigrants and their descendents constitute the vast majority of the present U.S. population. Will the President choose to 'return' the U.S. to its original inhabitants? (World page, "Trump defends attack on black lawmaker as criticisms mount," July 29)

C.G. KURIAKOSE,
Kothamangalam, Kerala

A political titan

In the death of S. Jaipal Reddy, the country has lost one of its most-gifted sons (Front page, "Jaipal Reddy passes away," July 29). Ever since his student days in the Osmania University in the 1960s, Reddy had been a great debater, and a promising leader. Despite not having had his schooling in English medium, he acquired a matchless command over the language through grit and interest. His knowledgeable and thought-provoking write-ups and speeches won him many admirers and followers. Reddy was one of the few leaders who was never after post, position or purse and despite being in the Congress, was a great critic of dynasty rule. He also had a penchant for taking on biggies such as Reliance without being afraid of the repercussions. He belonged to a rare tribe of politicians who were 'in' politics but not 'for' politics.

M. SOMASEKHAR PRASAD,
Hyderabad

■ Jaipal Reddy was a thinking man's politician. Knowledge, coupled with sense of humour, made him a natural choice to be the spokesperson of the party or the government he represented. The Janata Dal, when it was facing a leadership crisis due to factional feuds, could count on his felicity with words. His death is a great loss to the country.

GUNDU K. MANIAM,
Bhandup, Maharashtra

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
www.hindu.com/opinion/letters/

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

It is a *16-member* pact: a front-page (July 29, 2019) report headlined "Govt. must convince industry of RCEP's benefits: Australia" erroneously referred to a *15-member* Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

In the report titled "Army's first Integrated Battle Groups to be structured by end of next month" (July 29, 2019), a sentence read: "Typically each Corps has about *three* brigades." Typically, there are three Divisions under a Corps and each Division has three Brigades. Therefore, there are *nine* Brigades under a Corps.

"Archer - the new weapon in England's armoury" (Sport, July 28, 2019) erroneously said that England had not lost a Test series at home since 2001. England has not lost to Australia at home since 2001, but lost to India in 2007, to South Africa in 2008 and 2012 and to Sri Lanka in 2014, at home.

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Trump and Johnson: two peas in a pod

How the two men assumed power through different alchemies of chance, pusillanimity and mendacity

RUCHIR JOSHI

When Boris Johnson finally achieved his life-long ambition of becoming the U.K. Prime Minister, U.S. President Donald Trump described him as "a good man" who will achieve "tremendous things". Mr. Trump also pointed out that many people call Mr. Johnson "Britain Trump, which they say is a good thing". I suppose one should feel glad that Mr. Trump explained that because, left unexplained, that comparison could be seen as an insulting epithet. But let's leave aside the jokes and examine the very different routes by which each man has managed to capture the top political post of his country.

Journey to the top

Donald Trump could never have occupied the top post leading a European style political party in government. That would have involved some kind of a career, politicking and manoeuvering within a party. It would have involved giving at least lip service to the idea of working in a team of equals, one or the other of whom at some point could be appointed leader of the team. It would probably have meant letting someone else have a go at the top job and waiting for him or her to fail before vying for the captaincy. All this would have been impossible for Mr. Trump. The only route he had to the presidency was from almost outside the Republican Party, by convincing a confused conservative conglomeration that it was a good idea for him to jump the queue. The only way he could do it was through a mixture of repeated monumental lies, luck, bluster, and the disgust that he had built up towards Hillary Clinton which allowed him to win despite getting three million fewer votes.

Boris Johnson could never have won a 'presidential' style election in the U.K. Even the Tory Party that has now inserted him into 10 Downing Street would never have had the temerity to present a man like Mr. Johnson to the larger voting public as their presidential candidate. Had they been foolhardy enough, Mr. Johnson's gloriously sorry record would have been torn apart by his opponents, not least his disastrous tenure as Mayor of London. The only way Mr. Johnson could move his way into the Prime Minister's post was by hunting down and killing every scruple and principle he could find, by taking shameless U-turns on positions, by back-stabbing almost every politician he allied with, and, like Mr. Trump, through luck, a matching lack of principle and moral courage on the part of his party leadership, and by constantly deploying a series of whopping lies.

"The U.S. and the U.K. have never been morally irreproachable." An artwork titled 'Doris Borump' depicting both U.S. President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on a wall in east London. ▪ REUTERS

Through quite different alchemies of chance, pusillanimity and mendacity, two wealthy white men, both fanatically devoted only to furthering their own ambitions, both with serious track records of espousing deeply racist, colonialist and misogynist views, both unbelievably blind and uncaring to the real problems facing their own people and the world, are now in charge of two of the most powerful countries on the planet. There are other men controlling other large nations who can run them very close – Vladimir Putin is certainly the current, long-standing champion – but there can be no two world leaders *more* dishonest, more anti-democratic and more contemptuous of human rights than Mr. Trump and Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Johnson are getting to paw the steering levers of nations that are not only rich and powerful, but that also claim leadership on democracy, human rights and social justice. So, do we now write off the U.S. and the U.K. in these terms? I think not. In fact, with Mr. Johnson's entry into Downing Street, things get really interesting. We must remember that the U.S. and the U.K. have never been morally irreproachable. The point about the two countries was never about who's in power but the checks and balances these flawed democracies managed to impose on their demi-despotic, skullduggerous leaders and power systems, about how the people managed to effect the ouster of various Presidents and Prime Ministers.

The obstacle course

Even as Mr. Johnson puts his Cabinet in place, former Special Counsel Robert Mueller underwent a grilling by the U.S. Congress. Though Republicans are trying to put a fantastical spin on his testimony, what has been made clear by the dignified and clearly spoken Mr. Mueller is that Mr. Trump has neither been cleared of collusion with agents of the Russian state or, equally damningly, of obstructing Mr. Mueller's investigation. Both are impeachable offences and Mr. Trump might yet be the first U.S. President after Richard Nixon to be forced to leave office for serious breaches of the law.

Mr. Johnson was greeted by a terse message from the president of the European Union who he will be dealing with over Brexit: "Dear Mr. Johnson, On behalf of the European Council I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I look forward to meeting you to discuss – in detail – our co-operation. Yours Sincerely, Donald Tusk." Even before Mr. Johnson took over, members of the Cabinet resigned, stating publicly that they will not serve under this man, something unprecedented in British politics. Among those Cabinet ministers resigning are many who have made it clear they will work from the backbenches to fight a reckless Brexit.

Autumn elections in the U.K. look highly likely. Mr. Johnson has done nearly a clean sweep of previous ministers and appointed what one commentator has called "a hammerhead shark of a Cabinet". We in the subcontinent should not be too enthused when we see names like Priti Patel and Sajid Javid in the Cabinet; this is a hard right-wing, pro-rich, racism-prone bunch of unelected reactionaries who have taken over from a barely elected and now self-ejected Theresa May. Mr. Johnson's booster rockets may be multi-coloured but they will combust in the same direction, propelling him to what he hopes will be an election victory in a presidential style contest against Jeremy Corbyn.

Across the Atlantic, Mr. Trump has already launched his own re-election campaign and he too will be hoping to overcome the obstacles he currently faces. We'll have to wait and see how American and British democracies react to these two men so nakedly bent upon dismantling the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, but there is one lasting image from the last few days: As Mr. Johnson drove to Buckingham Palace to be appointed Prime Minister, volunteers from Greenpeace including some children fanned out across the road, blocking his Jaguar and the police motorcycle outriders. The convoy stopped. The outriders came up to the activists and spoke to them. Other police appeared and pushed them aside. A few of the children came back, however, and the cars had to swerve to avoid them as they went past.

Ruchir Joshi is a writer, filmmaker and columnist

Not a 'Right' agenda

The BJP heavily leans Right on cultural matters, but still leans towards the Left on economic issues

PRABHASH RANJAN

The supremacy of the right wing in Indian polity was reaffirmed when the Narendra Modi government romped back to power with a colossal majority. But what is the real nature of the Indian Right? The Left often argues that the Right represents religious majoritarianism, combined with a neoliberal economic agenda. But is this true?

India has definitely witnessed a surge in majoritarianism in the last five years. Religious polarisation has increased; instances of lynching and violence in the name of religion have been on the rise; and brazen display of religious nationalism has become the new normal. However, the economic agenda has been anything but neoliberal.

Typically, a right-wing government is one that supports free-market capitalism – it has a doctrinal belief in a small government, privatisation, and low tax regime; looks at private (not public) investment and exports as key engines of economic growth; makes availability of land and labour easier and cheaper; and relies less on welfare doles and more on economic growth to help the poor.

Not quite market friendly

The first Narendra Modi government was not quite market friendly if one evaluates its performance based on the above mentioned factors. Many examples prove this. The only engine of economic growth that was fired from 2014 to 2019 was public or government investment. Domestic consumption, private investment and exports remained sluggish. Despite the government enjoying massive political capital, land and labour laws were not reformed; neither were public sector undertakings privatised – only profitable PSUs were forced to buy shares of loss-making PSUs to make the fiscal math look good.

A hugely compromised GST with multiple tax slabs was adopted. Economic populism through measures like building toilets and providing gas cylinders, reminiscent of a patriarchal state, became the mainstay of governance. All this was a far cry from the promise of generating productive jobs in the private sector. Demonetisation was the biggest surgical strike on markets, on private property and on the integrity of money – all key tenets of free-market capitalism.

Even in the second term – if the recently presented general Budget is anything to go by – the trajectory of the economic approach has not changed. To appear 'pro-poor', the government has hiked income tax rates on the 'super rich'; import tariffs have gone up that makes 'Make in India' look like the dreaded import-substitution industrialisation of the bygone socialist era; a 'super-rich tax' on foreign portfolio investors has spooked the markets; nothing has been said on amending the Land Acquisition Act; and welfare populism has got more entrenched with PM-Kisan. All this would have made a statist government proud!

Looking at the BJP's roots

This cleavage, between pursuing a social and cultural rightist agenda on the one hand and not pursuing an economic right-wing agenda on the other, can be understood by looking at the ideological roots of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP, formed in 1980 as a successor to the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, is the political arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The RSS's mission, best captured in the words of its founder K.B. Hedgewar, is "to organise the entire Hindu society from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas". He had said that to protect Hindustan, Hindu culture has to be nourished. Thus, the agenda was always cultural and never economic.

This variety of Indian right-wing was very different from the right-wing politics that the Swatantra Party represented. Founded by C. Rajagopalachari and Minoo Masani, two secular icons, it was premised on a plea for a "market economy for India" because policies "based on the socialistic pattern of society would lead the country to bankruptcy", wrote Masani. Cultural and religious goals were never part of their agenda. They too critiqued Jawaharlal Nehru, but for his economic socialism and not for his cultural syncretism or liberal, secular outlook.

The RSS considers both free-market capitalism and socialism as alien to Indian culture. Its focus has been on the *swadesi* or the indigenous, with strong cultural overtones. While the BJP, being a political party, is compelled to have a more nuanced approach, it cannot cut itself away completely from its roots. This explains why, for the Indian Right, economics is an "incidental extra", as MP Swapan Dasgupta writes in his book. Thus, though the government heavily leans Right on cultural matters, when it comes to economics, it still leans towards the Left. It may, for political expediency, adopt policies that suit select business houses. However, this cronyism should not be construed as 'right-wing' economic agenda.

Prabhash Ranjan teaches at the South Asian University, New Delhi. Views are personal

No detente on the horizon

Just like in 2016, tensions with Iran will provide vital source material to Trump's campaign team

EJAZ AHMED

Recently, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that his country's warship had destroyed an Iranian drone in the Strait of Hormuz. The *USS Boxer*, an amphibious assault ship, brought down the drone reportedly after the latter came within its proximity despite multiple warnings.

The U.S. has since called for other countries to condemn this as an act of gross escalation in the region, an act that Washington sees as Tehran's way of disrupting oil trading routes.

Earlier, in June, Iran had shot down a U.S. drone that allegedly entered its airspace, an exchange that led to a major escalation between the two adversaries, so much so that the American security establishment was on the verge of taking retaliatory military action against three Iranian targets. The crisis appeared ready to explode until Mr. Trump stepped in to call off the attack.

Iran has been Mr. Trump's pet peeve for some time now. His remarks, ever since the campaign days, have regularly featured Iran and its alleged insidious tactics across the West Asian region. This preoccupation with Iran has been a constant feature throughout his presidency and resulted in a U.S pullout from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, despite certifications from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Tehran was complying with the deal.

A non-interventionist leader

However, it must be noted here that Mr. Trump is as much a non-interventionist as his predecessor Barack Obama – and this despite the massive difference in their respective rhetorical positions. Mr. Trump has pulled out a substantial number of American troops from Afghanistan and has shied away from direct military intervention in Syria.

Ironically, this approach of 'no new interventions' has been possible despite the presence of policy hawks such as John Bolton and Mike Pompeo in the administration. Perhaps what the global security architecture is struggling to comprehend is that 'Trumpian politics' has a distinct style when it comes to foreign policy: escalate and then de-escalate with the aim of securing a deal, an approach consistent with Mr. Trump's projected image of being the "ultimate dealmaker."

Projection of strongman image

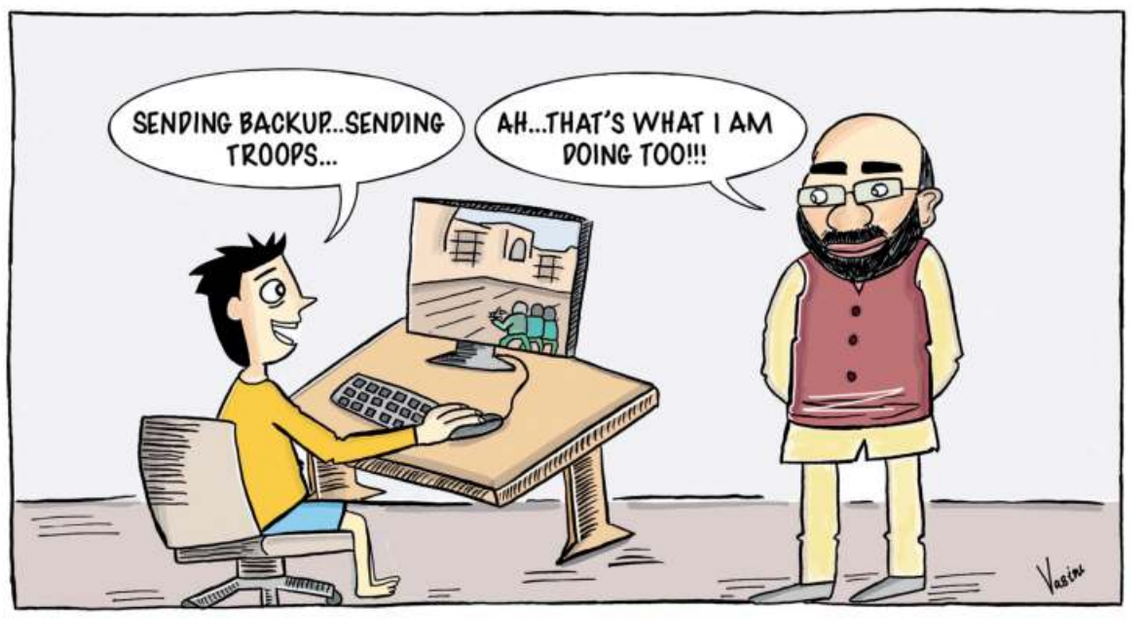
However, with the 2020 U.S. elections around the corner, Mr. Trump is unlikely to let go of the Iranian issue because it is – as it was in 2016 – a source of much election campaign material. Back then, it was the JCPOA; this time, it will be Tehran's alleged belligerence and sabotage on the high seas. Invariably, Mr. Trump's election campaign team will be hoping to portray that it is only Mr. Trump, with his strongman image, who can effectively bring Iran to heel and thus secure the U.S.'s vital security concerns in the region.

On its part, the Iranian government appears to be waiting out the tensions, hoping that it can mend ways with the next administration. But has it reckoned with the fact that Mr. Trump's approval ratings have been somewhat on the ascendant?

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in his interaction with the press at the UN, hinted at engaging diplomatically with the U.S. to defuse tensions. He even went on to offer an additional protocol agreement, which would grant the IAEA further inspection rights that would not only be comprehensive but also even more intrusive than before.

Perhaps Tehran has come to grips with the reality that 'waiting out' and 'strategic sabotage' on the high seas alone will not work in the long term. However, its offer to defuse tensions has been met with scepticism in Washington, and this portends a continuation of hostilities as the search for a common ground goes on.

Ejaz Ahmed is a researcher with the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi

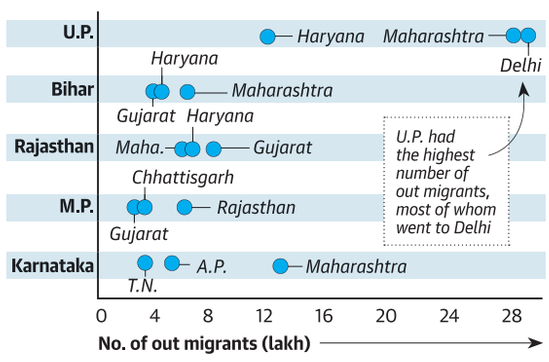


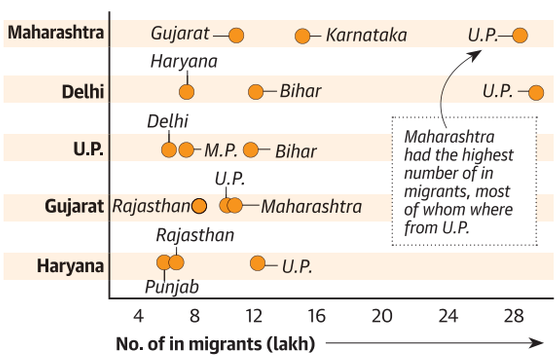
DATA POINT

India on the move

As of 2011, Maharashtra was home to the highest number of internal migrants, most of whom hailed from Uttar Pradesh, the State which recorded the highest outmigration. People mostly migrated from one rural area to another. Most international migrants were from Bangladesh. By **Varun B. Krishnan** and **Sumant Sen**

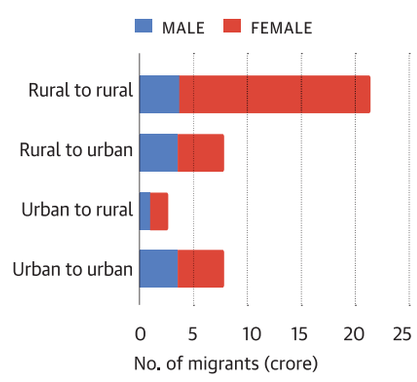
From where to where | Chart 1 shows the top five States which had the highest number of outmigrants and the States the migrants headed to. Chart 2 shows the top five States which had highest number of in migrants and the States of their previous residence





Demographic dynamics

People moving from one rural area to another accounted for over half of the total internal migrants, while rural to urban and urban to urban migration accounted for about 20% each



From a foreign land | Migrants from Bangladesh to West Bengal accounted for over 30% of the total international migrants, the highest by a large margin

Country	State	Migrants (lakh)	% of total
Bangladesh	West Bengal	18.97	34.55
Nepal	Bihar	2.60	4.74
Bangladesh	Tripura	2.15	3.92
Pakistan	Punjab	2.01	3.67
Sri Lanka	Tamil Nadu	1.40	2.56
Nepal	U.P.	1.25	2.28
Pakistan	Delhi	1.17	2.14
Pakistan	Haryana	1.08	1.97

Source: 2011 Census

The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 30, 1969

No judicial probe into murder

The Union Home Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, turned down in the Lok Sabha to-day [July 29, New Delhi] a demand for the appointment of a judicial commission to inquire into the murder of the Jan Sangh leader, Mr. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. (The Special Sessions Judge has acquitted the accused of the charge of murder). The question of appointment of a judicial commission or committee would arise only after the U.P. Government decided whether to go in appeal against the Special Session Judge's verdict or not, Mr. Chavan said while replying to a calling attention notice tabled by Mr. A.B. Vajyapee and four other members. The notice reminded the Home Minister of the demand made by more than 70 members of Parliament that a judicial commission vested with necessary and effective powers should be appointed to find out the facts regarding the murder. Mr. Chavan told Mr. Vajpayee that it would be an embarrassing situation if the U.P. Government were to go in appeal to a higher Court after the Centre decided to appoint a judicial commission. The Centre had examined the judgement of the Special Judge and forwarded its view to the U.P. Government.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 30, 1919.

Paddy Prices Up.

Paddy is again selling fearfully dear [in Nellore]. What was 105 Rupees a putty three weeks ago has become 130 Rupees a putty; and enquiries appear to be brisk even at that rate. Second sort paddy has flown up from 64 Rs. to Rs. 100. To the public these frequent rises are very difficult to understand. Since their memorial to Government last March about the situation in food stocks and prices, the Government appear to have put restrictions upon exports of rice from this district by rail. What stock there then was, assuming that our local administrators had fully and vigilantly prevented smuggling out - one speculator alone is reported to have purchased 70,000 Rs. worth of paddy for export the other day - has been augmented by the second crop harvest in the delta taluks which has just come in. Further, during May, a few consignments of Rangoon rice had been allowed into the local market by the Director of Civil supplies. Under these circumstances, we had thought we had fairly enough to keep us going on for some more time easily and without any catastrophic fluctuations of price.

FROM PAGE ONE

Yediyurappa wins trust vote in Karnataka

The Chief Minister, on the other hand, argued that the 14-month rule of the coalition had seen the administrative machinery "collapsing", which saw his predecessor H.D. Kumaraswamy hitting back demanding proof of his allegation.

Soon after the trust vote, making a brief speech before tendering his resignation, Mr. Ramesh Kumar made a plea for electoral reforms and a relook into the anti-defection law.

He urged the House to discuss the issue of electoral reforms and send a resolution to Parliament.

"If we speak of rooting out corruption without electoral reforms, it will only be hypocrisy," he said.

Arguing that the Tenth Schedule needs a "total re-examination", he said the law in its current form is not equipped with sufficient provisions to prevent defections. The House should put "a moral pressure" to amend it, Mr. Ramesh Kumar urged.

BJP MLA booked for murder over collision

In a separate application, the uncle of the survivor requested the Uttar Pradesh government to transfer the Rae Bareli accident case to the CBI. The agency is already probing the gang rape case and the custodial death of the survivor's father. Kuldeep Singh Sengar is the main accused in all cases.

ADG Lucknow Rajeev Krishna said the truck driver, owner and cleaner were taken into custody and a forensic probe was on to ascertain the exact sequence of events.

This would include eyewitness statements, tyre marks and other evidence, the officer said.

Azam Khan apologises twice for his remarks

Mr. Khan, along with party chief Akhilesh Yadav, met Speaker Om Birla before the start of the session.

But the apology was not acceptable to many members of the Treasury Benches since the word "sorry" was barely heard.

"Considering the disrespect which has been meted out to all women parliamentarians and to the women community, he should apologise properly to finish this," said Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi.

Mr. Yadav stood up in defence of his colleague and said he has already apologised once. Instead, Mr. Yadav said, the BJP should apologise for the 'atrocities against women in Uttar Pradesh and the worsening law and order situation.'

Mr. Yadav referred to the suspicious car accident of the Unnao rape survivor. "Minister you see this but see what happened with our daughter from Unnao...BJP people say 'Jai Shri Ram', they don't say 'Sita Ram'," he said in response to the Minister.

Mr. Birla, however, asked Mr. Khan to apologise once again. "I had said before also that she is like my sister. Whether I say it once or a thousand times, it will remain the same. It is not possible for me to have any hurtful sentiments for the Chair. I apologise again," Mr. Khan said.

The BJP MP, however, was agitated, but made it clear that she accepted the apology out of respect for the Speaker's Chair.

Kolkata court issues arrest warrant against Mukul Roy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

A city court on Monday issued an arrest warrant against BJP leader Mukul Roy in connection with a cash recovery of Rs.19 lakh from a person in Burrabazar area last year.

The Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Kolkata, issued the warrant against Mr. Roy on a prayer by the Burrabazar police station, alleging non-cooperation on his part in investigation into the case.

Investigating officers had served Mr. Roy with a notice earlier this year to appear at the police station for interrogation in connection with the recovery, his lawyer Subhasish Dasgupta said.

Mr. Dasgupta said a petition by the BJP leader challenging the notice is already pending before the Delhi High Court.

Minorities panel draws its remit

Only the Centre has the power to declare new groups, says Commission

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The National Commission of Minorities (NCM) has refused to entertain a plea to declare Hindus a "minority community" in those States where they do not form a majority of the population.

A report of its sub-committee, which was approved and adopted by the NCM on July 26, said the role of the minorities commission was not to declare new minority communities but to, instead, work and ensure the progress and development of minorities and protect their religious, cultural and educational rights.

The NCM was responding to a petition filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay to either frame guidelines for identification of minorities at the State level or use the powers under Section 2(c) of the NCM Act of 1992 to declare Hindus a minority in States where they do not form the majority of the population.

Mr. Upadhyay had approached the NCM on the basis of an order by the Supreme Court to the Commission to consider his plea.

Clear stand

- NCM committee says that only the Centre is empowered to notify a community as minority
- Clarification comes after SC had asked the NCM to look into a petition asking for Hindus to be declared a minority community in States where they are not in the majority
- The committee, comprising George Kurian, Manjit Singh Rai and Atif Rasheed, met five times between February and April to deliberate on the issue
- NCM committee report draws on SC judgment in the *Bal Patil vs Union of India* case of 1999
- Judgment had said the NCM's role was to maintain the unity and integrity of India by eliminating the need for identifying communities as majority and minority

Sub-committee formed

The NCM formed a sub-committee of George Kurian, Manjit Singh Rai and Atif Rasheed, which met five times between February and April to deliberate on the issue.

The committee report said the priorities in Mr. Upadhyay's plea were misplaced. The NCM has no such jurisdiction to declare minorities. The repository of such powers to declare a community as minority lies with the Central government. It cannot be usurped by the NCM, the report said.

Besides, Section 2(c) of the NCM Act itself clearly states that a community is notified as "minority" only by the government.

The NCM said the function awarded to it was not to identify a community as "minority". The report refers to the Supreme Court's own judgment in 1999 in *Bal Patil vs Union of India* which detailed the function of the NCM.

Constitutional goal

The court had said the constitutional goal of minority commissions is to "create social conditions where there remains no necessity to shield or protect the rights of minorities".

The minority commissions have to direct their activities "to maintain the unity and integrity of India by eliminating the need for identifying communities as majority and minority", the 1999 judgment said.

One group would vie with another for minority status if it is solely given on the basis of claims of religious thoughts, less numerical strength, lack of health, welfare, education or power or social rights made by a section of the society. Conflict and strife would ensure, the judgment had added.

BJP's core group on J&K to meet today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR

The BJP's core group on Jammu and Kashmir will meet here on Tuesday, ostensibly to discuss prospects of the Assembly election in the State and the current political situation.

However, speculation is rife that the Centre could be preparing to take some strong steps after it moved 10,000 paramilitary personnel to the State.

BJP working president J.P. Nadda will hold the meeting, which will be attended by party general secretary in charge of the State Ram Madhav and the State unit office-bearers.

NC calls all-party meet

On Monday, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti initiated an all-party meeting over the ongoing security measures and apprehensions about abrogation of Article 35A, granting special rights to Kashmiris.

"There is panic in Kashmir... More forces are deployed and mosques are under scrutiny," said Mr. Abdullah.

Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Jitendra Singh said the reactions of the (NC) and the PDP to the movement of troops and any possible decisions on the repeal of Article 35A and Article 370 of the Constitution betrayed their "nervousness".

"All noise is being made by the NC, the PDP and others because they can feel that they are losing the people's mandate. They have been carrying forward their legacy with 8-10% voter turnout. They are scared that if the situation changes, their sovereignty built in the last 30-40 years will finish.

"Secondly, action is being taken by the Modi government against scams, hawala transactions and in connection with Jammu and Kashmir Bank. Big names are about to come up and they are distressed about that," the Minister said.

Shah to head group to combat lynching

Ministers yet to meet in second term

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

An empowered Group of Ministers (GoM) constituted last year to suggest measures to combat lynchings will continue functioning. It will be headed by Home Minister Amit Shah, said a senior government official.

The GoM had met on two occasions. Since the GoM was position-specific, there was no need to reconstitute it, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. The new GoM is yet to meet.

The members of the GoM are External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot.

Amit Shah

SC notice

Last week the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Centre, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the State governments to a plea seeking the implementation of its July 2018 judgment laying down several preventive, remedial and punitive measures to combat the crime of lynching.

On July 24, Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy had informed the Rajya Sabha that the "Government constituted a GoM to deliberate" on incidents of lynching and make recommendations.

He said the GoM had since met and was seized of the matter.

A high-level committee headed by Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba submitted its report to the GoM in September 2018, suggesting measures such as tightening of the law by inserting clauses in the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure through parliamentary approval.

After the Home Secretary's report, the Centre held a series of meetings with social media platforms and asked them to take concrete steps to take down content that fuelled rumours and contributed to lynching.

In May and June of 2018, more than 20 people were lynched based on fake posts or rumours of child lifting floating on various social media platforms. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) does not maintain data with respect to lynching incidents in the country and it is counted among crimes like murder.

Opposition not gagged: Venkaiah

15 MPs alleged that their voices are smothered and Bills passed without scrutiny

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu on Monday rejected the allegation by 15 MPs that the voice of the Opposition was being "smothered", saying empirical evidence proves that the complaint does not stand scrutiny.

During Zero Hour, Mr. Naidu said the members sent him a letter on July 25 conveying what they called their anguish and concern over passing of Bills without scrutiny by either parliamentary standing or select committees.

"If their complaint is that Bills first introduced in these Lok Sabha sessions were not referred to parliamentary committees for scrutiny, that is not certainly in my domain as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha... During the last five sessions that I presided (244th to 248th sessions), 10 Bills have been first introduced by the government in the Rajya Sabha. I have referred eight of those to respective department-related standing committees, though it is not mandatory to do so," he said.

The other two Bills that were not so referred related to inclusion of some more groups in the category of the Scheduled Tribes as they did not warrant a detailed scrutiny by a standing committee.

Further, one more Bill – the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill – as received from the Lok Sabha after detailed scrutiny by the standing committee concerned and passage by the other House was again referred to the select committee of the Rajya Sabha. "I hope that all of you would agree that such a record would not justify the allegation if it is so intended that the Rajya Sabha is a party to hurried legislation," Mr. Naidu said.

M. Venkaiah Naidu

Trinamool not satisfied

Trinamool Congress leader Derek O' Brien said that Mr. Naidu had failed to answer the questions raised by 17 Opposition parties in their joint letter to him questioning the "hurried legislation" without due Parliamentary scrutiny. "The Chairman is an honourable man, our letter was not limited to his tenure. It is a fact that 14 Bills have been cleared without Parliamentary scrutiny," Mr. O'Brien added.

Medical Commission Bill passed

Opposition says it's 'undemocratic'; Harsh Vardhan calls it revolutionary

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Monday passed the National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 (NMC) with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan assuring the House that the Bill, which seeks to repeal the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, will go down in history as the most revolutionary step taken to improve medical education in India.

According to him, no powers of the State government will be taken away by the Centre through this Bill. Dr. Vardhan said: "We have also withdrawn the suggestion of a bridge course.''

A motion for consideration of the Bill was passed by 260-48 votes after a division of votes was sought and the Bill was then passed by a voice vote.

Speaking about the exit-examination during the four-hour debate which saw the participation of 32 MPs across parties, Dr. Vardhan said: "We are bringing this to ensure good standard of medical students and colleges and to bring in transparency." The Minister added that the State governments would be fully involved with the running of the councils

The Bill was opposed by several Opposition MPs. While Vincent Pala of the Congress asked the Minister to explain what happens to MBBS students who don't pass the NEXT or the national exit exam, DMK's A. Raja called the Bill a 'joke' and 'undemocratic.'

Trinamool leader Dr. Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar said many students who study in the regional language find it difficult to clear NEET. She also described the Bill as going against the federal structure of the Constitution.

IMA stages protest

Doctors and medical students under the Indian Medical Association (IMA) held a protest march from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences to Nirman Bhawan on Monday, calling the Bill anti-poor and anti-student.

Goyal backs out of RCEP meet in China

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has backed out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Intersessional Ministerial meet in China in order to participate in the extended session of Parliament that will now run till August 7.

"The Minister will not be attending the RCEP meeting in China, since he is the Deputy Leader of the Rajya Sabha and there are many important Bills that need to be passed that require him to be there," an official in the Commerce Ministry told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Goyal's decision to not go for the RCEP meeting comes as a surprise since the decision that he would attend was announced as recently as Friday. India will be represented at the RCEP meeting on August 2 and 3 by Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan.

Dam Safety Bill runs into Opposition criticism

Several MPs say Centre is encroaching on a State subject

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Opposition MPs in the Lok Sabha on Monday expressed deep reservation about the Centre's decision to introduce the Dam Safety Bill, 2019, saying that the legislation, which is ostensibly aimed at providing uniform safety measures across the country, will undermine the powers of the State governments since water is a State subject.

Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who introduced the Bill, argued that the Centre was empowered to enact a law on the subject, especially as 92% of the dams involved two or more States, and Article 246 and 56 empowered the Centre to intervene.

Several members, including four from the Congress – Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari and Gaurav Gogoi – voiced their apprehension about the Bill. The Biju Janata Dal's B. Mahtab said while there could be no disagreement over the basic concern of dam safety, the Centre was trying to "appropriate" the powers of the State in the case of this particular legislation and urged it to reconsider the move.

Inter-State issue: A view of the Mullaperiyar Dam on the Periyar in Kerala. ▪ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Trinamool member Saugata Roy, the RSP's N.K. Premachandran and the DMK's A. Raja questioned Parliament's competence to enact such a law.

Mr. Chowdhury, who leads the Congress in the Lok Sabha, said the Bill was too focused on structural safety and not on operational safety.

Asserting that the Centre had not done anything to take away control from the States, Mr. Shekhawat said the was matter examined by the Solicitor-General, who had given the go-ahead.

Bill against ponzi schemes gets RS nod

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha unanimously passed the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019, that seeks to regulate unregulated schemes which have in the past spiralled into ponzi and chit fund scams that cheated lakhs of depositors of their hard-earned savings.

The Bill had already been passed in the Lok Sabha. CPI(M) leader Elamaram Karim sought to have the Bill sent to a select committee. Asserting that he did not question the merit of the Bill, Mr. Karim said it was not a good practice to bypass parliamentary procedure and bring an ordinance.

BJP MP Suresh Prabhu said the Bill would help in regulating small savings in unregulated schemes.

The savings rate could be improved if the intermediaries were regulated, Mr. Prabhu added.

RS clears changes to Insolvency Code

Offers relief for homebuyers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Monday passed an amended version of the three-year-old Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The amendments seek to end ambiguity and streamline the resolution process further. It also gives homebuyers the status of a creditor giving them a say in the resolution in case a housing project goes bust.

Replying to the debate on the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2019, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the changes were in response to events that eroded the legislative intent of the IBC.

"The Bill seeks to amend seven sections of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. They are largely to remove ambiguities and to facilitate a smooth conduct of the corporate and insolvency resolution process for maximising the outcomes in line with preamble of the code," Ms Sitharaman said.

Nirmala Sitharaman

Essar case

She referred to the Essar Steel insolvency case where the lenders and operational creditors have been treated at par by the bankruptcy court for distribution of auction proceeds.

The Bill also fixes a deadline of 330 days for resolving cases referred to the IBC. These changes are in response to "newer challenges coming up," the Minister said, adding that the government speedily came up with the amendments.

Priyanka ideal as Cong. chief: Amarinder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has pitched for Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to take over the party's reins, saying she was "a good bet" to replace Rahul Gandhi as party president.

"Priyanka would be a perfect choice to take over the party reins but it would all depend on the Congress Working Committee (CWC)," said Captain Amarinder responding to Congress leader Sashi Tharoor's remarks that Ms Vadra would be a good choice to lead the party.

Referring to Mr Tharoor's concerns over the uncertainty in the party after Mr Gandhi's resignation, All-India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary K.C. Venugopal said, the party has not become leaderless and that a decision to convene the CWC had been taken.

Cong. urges SC to take over Unnao probe

Rajya Sabha adjourned as Opposition raises issue of collision that seriously injured rape survivor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday appealed to the Supreme Court to take notice of the suspicious accident involving the Unnao rape survivor, and urged it to take over the investigation into the rape case.

Protests from the Opposition members over the issue led to a brief adjournment in the Rajya Sabha. Six Congress members in the Lok Sabha moved an adjournment motion to discuss the law-and-order situation in Uttar Pradesh. The motion was disallowed by Speaker Om Birla.

Kuldeep Sengar, Uttar Pradesh MLA from the BJP, is the main accused in the rape case and is charged with assaulting the 17-year-old girl two years ago.

On Sunday, the rape survivor was seriously injured after a truck hit the vehicle in which she, along with her lawyer and her two aunts, were travelling to Rae Bareli. The two older women were killed in the accident. The personal security officer assigned to the survivor was not accompanying her.

Mysterious incident: The lorry that hit the car of the Unnao rape survivor near Rae Bareli. • PTI

The number plate of the truck was smeared with black paint, making identification difficult.

Tacit support

"All this indicates that without the support and encouragement of the Uttar Pradesh government, nobody will dare to do this... We want the Supreme Court to take *suo motu* notice and take over the investigation," Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari said.

Raising the matter during the Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, Samajwadi Party member Ram Gopal Yadav alleged that an attempt was made to "kill" the rape victim.

As soon as Mr. Yadav raised the issue, almost the entire Opposition members, including those of the SP, the BSP, the Congress and the AAP, were on their feet.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu said he had asked the Home Minister to take note of the matter but as the protesting members did not yield, Mr Naidu adjourned the House till noon. "This has caused a national outrage and raises fundamental question about the rule of law in U.P. What has happened is extremely cruel and unacceptable," Congress Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma told *The Hindu*.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi took a dig at the Modi government's "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" scheme. "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao. A new special education bulletin for Indian women. Don't ask questions if a BJP MLA is accused of having raped you," Mr. Gandhi tweeted and tagged a media report on the accident.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary for eastern U.P., asked why the BJP had not yet expelled the accused. "What is the BJP waiting for? Why has this man not been expelled from their party even when his name is in the latest FIR in the Unnao rape case," she asked in a tweet. The Congress raised the issue of a former Army captain being beaten to death in Amethi.

NCW writes to U.P. police chief for free, fair probe

Commission wants to be kept apprised of the investigation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women on Monday wrote to Uttar Pradesh Director-General of Police O.P. Singh seeking a "free, fair and speedy" investigation into the road accident involving the Unnao rape survivor.

"The commission is seriously concerned about the unfortunate incident. Considering the gravity of the matter, it is required to ensure absolutely free, fair and speedy investigation into the matter and take action deemed appropriate for the crime committed. The commission also demands that it be kept apprised at every stage of the investigation," NCW Chairperson Rekha Sharma wrote in her letter.

Delay in cases

Vrinda Grover, senior Supreme Court lawyer and women's rights activist, says it is the delay in disposing of cases that renders victims extremely vulnerable.

Rekha Sharma, the chairperson of NCW

"Where a perpetrator is powerful and the victim is from a vulnerable group, it is apparent that that the law is not going to take its own course and the police are not going to act in accordance with the law. So, extraordinary measures will have to be taken to ensure the girl gets justice. I have always maintained that the best form of victim protection is a speedy trial. The chargesheet in the case was filed last July, but the case has not been adjudicated yet, while the survivor's uncle has been framed in several cases which are moving by leaps and bounds. This is a classic textbook case of what happens when a victim comes from a very vulnerable group and seeks justice," Ms. Grover said.

She said if there was any political will to ensure a decline in crimes against women and girls, which the party ruling at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh so often talks about, the accused BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar would have been suspended.

White Paper

Ms. Grover says the government must issue a White Paper providing details of what stage the case was at, why was there a delay in disposing it of, who got adjournments, what reports were sent by the court to the district judge and what was the supervision being done by the High Court of such cases. According to the last NCRB report for 2016, 89.8% cases of crimes against women brought before courts remained pending.

Akhilesh and Mayawati demand probe into Rae Bareli accident

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL
NEW DELHI

A day after Unnao rape survivor was injured in a road accident, a political battle has intensified over the issue with two former Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh demanding an investigation into the incident and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra questioning the role of the BJP government.

CBI probe sought

Speaking to ANI, former Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said, "We are demanding a CBI investigation into the Unnao accident and I will also raise the issue in the Lok Sabha. Our party's Rajya Sabha members will also raise it in the Upper House."

Mayawati

BSP chief Mayawati alleged a conspiracy in the accident and demanded the Supreme Court to intervene.

"The accident prima facie looks like a conspiracy. The Supreme Court must take cognisance of the issue and must ensure strict action against the accused," she said.

Ms. Vadra also raised the question over the accident and the ongoing enquiry of the case.

Taking to Twitter, she wrote, "Road accident of the rape victim is shocking. Where has the CBI enquiry of this case reached so far? Why is accused MLA still in BJP? Why there is laxity in the security of victim and witnesses of the case.

"Without an answer to these questions, we cannot expect justice from BJP government."

'Rape survivor critical, should be airlifted to Delhi'

Delhi Commission for Women chief Swati Maliwal at a hospital in Lucknow to meet the Unnao rape survivor. • PTI

DCW chief meets woman, writes to U.P. CM

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal on Monday met the Unnao rape survivor at a hospital in Lucknow where she was admitted following a road accident on Sunday.

Stating that the survivor is in a "critical condition", Ms. Maliwal said that the survivor should be airlifted to Delhi for treatment.

In a letter to UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Ms. Maliwal demanded that BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar, who is an accused in the case, be removed from the party and disqualified from the Assembly within 24 hours.

"The most shameful has been the fact that till date Kuldeep Sengar happens to be an MLA. Neither has he been removed from the party nor from the legislature. I appeal to you in the interest of humanity to ensure that he is immediately removed both as a member of the BJP and from the UP legislative assembly," read the letter to the CM.

The women's commission chief also alleged that Sunday's incident was a "conspiracy" and not "a mere accident".

"First her father was killed inside the jail, then an eyewitness in the case and now two of her aunts have been killed. Presently, she and her lawyer are battling for their lives in the hospital," Ms. Maliwal wrote. She said while all the evidence hint at a conspiracy, the UP police are trying to brand the incident as a mere accident and is taking no steps to investigate into the matter.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted: "Systematic attempts to eliminate the Unnao rape victim and her family appear to be a pre-planned conspiracy and mockery of rule of law. How can any civilised society allow such state sponsored barbarism? [sic]."

Infant injured in Pak. firing in Poonch dies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

A 10-day infant injured in a cross-border firing in Poonch sector on the Line of Control on Sunday night died of his injuries in a hospital.

"The baby was undergoing treatment but unfortunately, he succumbed [late on Sunday]," Deputy Commissioner of Poonch, Rahul Yadav, said.

The infant's mother, Fatima Jan, was also injured. The baby was yet to be named, according to the family.

According to officials, the Pakistani army dispatched mortar shells around 7.30 p.m. in Bandi Chechian, Karmara and Kerni in Poonch. "Three persons were treated at the Poonch hospital," Mr. Yadav said.

Supreme Court to hear Mallya's petition on Friday

Plea against move to declare him fugitive offender

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear on August 2 a petition by absconding businessman Vijay Mallya against a move to declare him a fugitive under the Fugitive Economic Offenders (FEO) Act of 2018 and confiscate his assets worth crores of rupees.

Last December, the court issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Mr. Mallya's plea while refusing to stay proceedings under the 2018 Act to attach a "fugitive" tag to his name.

Mr. Mallya, represented by senior advocate Fali Nariman, has argued that the seizure of his assets on being declared a fugitive economic offender under the FEO Act would hamper his efforts of clearing his dues.

Vijay Mallya

Mr. Mallya argued that confiscation of his property foreclosed his ability to pay his creditors, probably under a revised offer.

The FEO Act is meant to prevent loan defaulters from fleeing the country to evade legal action. It came into existence last April. Mr. Mallya left the country in March 2016.

A fugitive economic offender is a person who has a warrant of arrest under a scheduled offence but has fled the country to evade prosecution.

On November 22, the Bombay High Court dismissed Mr. Mallya's appeal for stay on the ED proceedings.

He had sought a stay on the ground that the Appellate Tribunal for Foreign Exchange had ordered status quo on the attachments in Prevention of Money Laundering Act case by the State Bank o f India.

ED questions close aide of Vijay Mallya

DEVESH K. PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate questioned V. Shashikant, former MD, United Breweries Holding Limited (UBHL), in connection with the Vijay Mallya case on Monday.

On July 24, the agency raided the business and residential premises of Mr. Shashikant in Bengaluru under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act. He was an employee of the Mallya Group till February 2017, and worked as his executive assistant for nine years. "He was questioned in Mumbai on Monday," an official said.

It is alleged that Mr. Shashikant incorporated United Branding Worldwide in Bengaluru after Mr. Mallya left the country and UBHL was liquidated.

MHRD gets 77,000 letters on draft NEP

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

The Human Resource Development Ministry has received more than 77,000 comments and letters on the draft National Education Policy (NEP), according to Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. The extended deadline for accepting feedback from the public ends on Wednesday, July 31.

"About 5% of the feedback received so far is useful, and will be taken into account," said a senior Ministry official. The Centre has been sifting through the recommendations and will take the next few weeks to make changes to the draft before it is submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

According to Ministry sources, the largest number of letters received so far – about a quarter of the total – came from a campaign opposing the draft NEP's proposal to change school teacher recruitment norms.

The draft policy is scathing in its assessment of teacher recruitment procedures. "Current teacher recruitment does not involve any interviews or classroom demonstrations that assess motivation and passion; written examinations such as the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) often have little correlation with teaching ability," it said.

Recommending a complete overhaul of the system, the draft NEP says that the TET must be strengthened "through improved test material correlated to capacities of outstanding teachers, both in terms of content and pedagogy."

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HC asks trial court to hear Anbumani case afresh

Lower court had ordered framing of charges in graft cases

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday quashed a trial court's decision to frame charges against former Union Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss and several others in two corruption cases for allegedly showing favours to medical colleges.

Justice I.S. Mehta remanded back the case to the lower court with a direction to hear the matter afresh. The High Court listed the case before the trial court on August 19.

The HC set aside the October 7, 2015 order of the trial court which had ordered framing of charges against Mr. Ramadoss and others for various alleged offences, including criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery for the purpose of cheating and using forged documents as genuine under the IPC and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act relating to public servant abusing official position.

The two graft cases relate to alleged favours shown by Mr. Ramadoss and other accused to a private medical college, Rohilkhand Medical College and Hospital (RMCH), Bareilly, in Uttar Pradesh and Indore-based Index Medical College Hospital and Research Centre (IMCHRC).

Favouritism alleged

The accused were chargesheeted for allegedly showing favours to RMCH in grant of renewal for admissions in MBBS course in 2008-09.

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China warns protesters in Hong Kong

'Don't harm national security, don't challenge Basic Law and don't use city to undermine nation'

ATUL ANEJA
BEIJING

China on Monday made it plain that the rules governing Hong Kong were cast in stone and warned protesters, who have been pouring into the streets, that it fully backed the local authorities in confronting violent protests and defending the "rule of law".

In a media conference in Beijing, following weeks of protests, marked with sporadic violence, the spokesperson for Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of China's State Council, Yang Guang, asserted that there could not be any compromise with the enforcement of rule of law. He stressed that governance by law was the foundation of Hong Kong's sound business environment, and an important cornerstone for the region to maintain its prosperity and stability.

Crowds have been pouring into the streets, especially during weekends, for eight weeks to slam an extradition bill – now suspended – that would have cleared transfer of criminal suspects in Hong Kong to courts in China.

Spelling out China's zero-tolerance towards unlawful protests, Mr. Yang said: "We cannot just sit by and watch a small group of people recklessly trample on the rule of law." He added that if the backbone of rule of law was shaken, the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong would be in jeopardy.

Firm support

The official also made it explicit that there were no differences between central and local atrocities in Hong Kong which protesters and their backers could exploit. "The central government firmly supports Chief Executive Carrie Lam leading the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government in the law-based governance, supports the Hong Kong police in their strict law enforcement, supports relevant departments of the SAR government and judicial organs in punishing the violent criminals in accordance with the law, and supports the people who love both our country and Hong Kong in their action to defend the rule of law in the region," he observed.

Chaos on streets: A protester throwing a tear gas canister back at the police in Hong Kong on Sunday. ▪AP

On Monday, Beijing also hammered home the red-lines, defined by the one country-two system formula, which allows Hong Kong substantial autonomy, in defining and executing judicial, administrative and financial rules, while remaining a part of China.

Mr. Yang was unambiguous in listing three bottom lines – "no harm to national security, no challenge to the central government's authority and the Basic Law, and no using Hong Kong as a base to undermine China", while spelling out Beijing's most comprehensive response to the protests so far.

Asked whether the Hong Kong garrison of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would be deployed to quell the protests, Mr. Yang said: "The Basic Law has clear statements on that question, and I have nothing to add."

Another Chinese official, Xu Luying who addressed the media conference signaled that mainland China and Hong Kong's future, based on economic integration, was inextricably tied.

Afghan presidential hopefuls fear for safety after Kabul blast

On Sunday, the office of Amrullah Saleh came under attack

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Candidates jockeying to become Afghanistan's next President lashed out at the incumbent Ashraf Ghani on Monday after deadly violence cast a shadow over the first official day of campaigning.

At least 20 people – most of them civilians – were killed and 50 others wounded on Sunday when a suicide attacker and gunmen targeted the Kabul office of Ghani's running mate, Amrullah Saleh.

The violence served as a grim reminder of Afghanistan's woeful security situation and the sort of mayhem and murder that have beset previous polls.

"The government has not paid attention to the candidates' security," said Qadir Shah, the spokesman for Hanif Atmar, one of the top contenders looking to stop Mr. Ghani securing a second term at September 28 elections.

Security forces inspecting the site of attack in Kabul on Monday. ▪AP

Mr. Shah said that he and 12 other candidates had delayed plans to launch their campaigns, primarily over security concerns but also because they see Mr. Ghani as using his office for an unfair advantage.

Mohammad Hakim Torsan, considered a long-shot candidate, said his supporters worry about a repeat of the kind of violence that marred previous polls, when insurgents launched frequent attacks.

"Most of the candidates are worried about the security, but they still have to campaign. The government must provide security for us and the people," Mr. Torsan said.

Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said security forces had been preparing for the elections for eight months and taken "serious measures" to protect candidates, including the provision of armoured vehicles.

Five Sudanese protesters shot dead ahead of talks

Four students among those killed

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KHARTOUM

Five demonstrators, including four students, were shot dead at a rally in Sudan on Monday, a day before protest leaders and ruling generals meet to resolve the remaining issues concerning the forming of a civilian administration.

The two sides have already signed a power-sharing deal that aims to set up a joint civilian-military ruling body which in turn would install civilian rule.

That is the main demand of a nationwide protest movement that led to the April ouster of long-time leader Omar al-Bashir and has since demanded that the military council which took his place cede power to civilians.

But ahead of the talks, five protesters were killed on Monday in Al-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan state, a doctors committee linked to the protest movement said in a statement.

"Five martyrs succumbed to direct wounds from sniper bullets during a peaceful rally in Al-Obeid," the committee said.

The reason for the rally was not immediately clear.

Trump calls black lawmaker 'racist'

He says calling his critic Cummings' district 'rodent infested mess' is not racist

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

Facing growing accusations of racism for his incendiary tweets, President Donald Trump is seeking to deflect the criticism by labelling a leading black congressman as himself racist.

In the latest rhetorical shot at non-white lawmakers, Mr. Trump said his weekend comments referring to Rep. Elijah Cummings' majority-black Baltimore district as a "disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess" where "no human being would want to live" were not racist. Instead, Mr. Trump argued, "if racist Elijah Cummings would focus more of his energy on helping the good people of his district, and Baltimore itself, perhaps progress could be made in fixing the mess."

"His radical 'oversight' is a joke!" Mr. Trump tweeted on Sunday.

Speaking in television interviews, acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said Mr. Trump was reacting in frustration to the Democrats' unrelenting investigations and talk of impeachment.

"I understand that everything that Donald Trump says is offensive to some people," Mr. Mulvaney said. But he added, "The President is pushing back against what he sees as wrong. It's how he's done it in the past, and he'll continue to do it in the future."

Elijah Cummings. ▪AFP

At a hearing last week, Mr. Cummings accused a top administration official of wrongly calling reports of filthy, overcrowded border facilities "unsubstantiated."

"When the President hears lies like that, he's going to fight back," Mr. Mulvaney said.

Mr. Trump's tweets on Saturday also charged that Cummings' district, which includes Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Social Security Administration and the national headquarters of the NAACP, is "considered the worst run and most dangerous anywhere in the U.S.."

Condemnation followed from Democrats over the weekend, including some of the party's presidential candidates.

U.S., China revive talks, keep expectations low

Delegations to meet in Shanghai today

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

Two months after U.S.-Chinese talks aimed at ending a tariff war broke down, both sides are trying to temper hopes for a breakthrough when negotiations resume on Tuesday.

"I don't know if they're going to make a deal," Mr. Trump said on Friday. "Maybe they will, maybe they won't. I don't care." He repeated his claim that the U.S. is prospering by "taking in tens of billions of dollars" from his tariff hikes on Chinese products. In reality, those are paid by U.S. companies and consumers who buy Chinese goods.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer are due to meet on Tuesday and Wednesday in Shanghai with a delegation led by China's economy czar, Vice Premier Liu He.

China is resisting U.S. pressure to roll back plans for government-led development of industry leaders in robotics, artificial intelligence and other technologies. U.S. complains those efforts depend on stealing or pressuring foreign firms to hand over technology.

ELSEWHERE

Putin opponent Navalny was poisoned: doctor

MOSCOW

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was "poisoned" by an unidentified toxic substance and doctors have sent him back to jail despite his condition, his lawyer and personal physician said on Monday.

Chinese 'cyber-dissident' given 12-year jail term

BEIJING

China's first "cyber-dissident", whose website reported on sensitive topics, including human rights, was sentenced to 12 years in prison on Monday for leaking State secrets, a court said. Huang Qi ran a website called "64 Tianwang". AFP

Death toll in Nigeria Boko Haram attack rises to 65

23 died in attack on a funeral, 42 killed as they chased jihadists

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GAJIRAM

An attack this weekend by Boko Haram fighters on a funeral in northeast Nigeria has left 65 people dead, almost triple the initial toll, a local official said on Sunday.

Dozens more bodies were discovered following the assault on Saturday by gunmen on a village close to the regional capital Maiduguri. "It is 65 people dead and 10 injured," local government chairman Muhammed Bulama said.

Mr. Bulama said more than 20 people died in the initial attack on a funeral gathering and dozens more died as they tried to chase away the jihadists.

Men carry a body for burial in Budu near Maiduguri. ▪AFP

The leader of an anti-Boko Haram militia Bunu Bukar Mustapha said 23 people were killed as they returned from the funeral and "the remaining 42 were killed when they pursued the terrorists".

Mr. Bulama said the attack may have been in retaliation for the killing two weeks ago of 11 Boko Haram fighters by local residents.

At least 52 dead in Brazil prison riot

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
RIO DE JANEIRO

At least 52 inmates were killed in a prison riot in northern Brazil on Monday as rival gang factions fought each other, an official said.

Sixteen of the dead were decapitated while others asphyxiated in the second major violence to rock the country's overpopulated and deadly prison system in as many months. Fighting broke out in the Altamira Regional Recovery Center at around 7:00 a.m. (1530 IST).

Two guards were taken hostage during the hours-long clashes, which were brought under control at around midday. They were eventually freed.

British warship arrives in Gulf to escort U.K.-flagged tankers

U.K. rules out swapping seized oil tankers with Iran

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

A British warship dispatched to the Gulf to escort U.K.-flagged ships amid heightened tensions with Iran has arrived in the region, the Defence Ministry said.

HMS Duncan was sent to help accompany vessels through the Strait of Hormuz after Iran seized a British-flagged tanker there earlier this month, in what London called an act of "State piracy".

The Royal Navy destroyer joins frigate *HMS Montrose*, which is due to undergo maintenance in nearby Bahrain in late August. It will be replaced by another frigate, *HMS Kent*, later this year.

Safe transit: The British destroyer, *HMS Duncan*, will support the safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz. ▪AFP

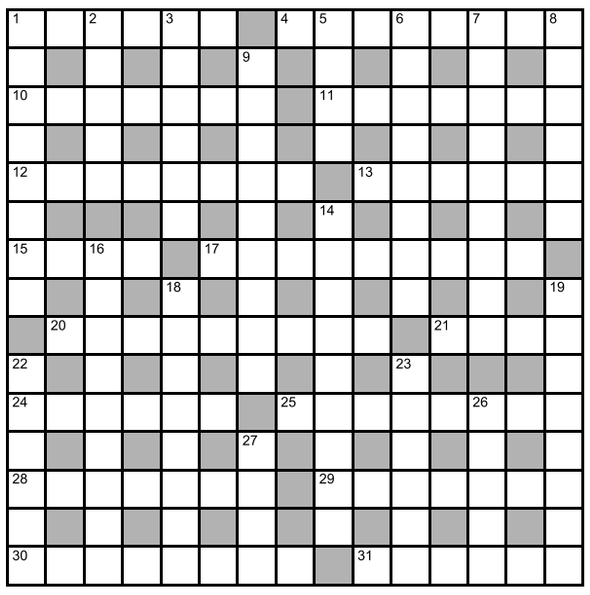
Britain has said it wants to establish a European-led maritime protection force in the Gulf to protect vulnerable shipping.

HMS Montrose has so far accompanied 35 merchant vessels during 20 separate transits, according to the Royal Navy.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has ruled out swapping seized oil tankers with Iran. "There is no quid pro quo," Mr. Raab said. "This is not about some kind of barter," he added.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12691

(set by Spinner)



ACROSS

1 Wordplay is hard to take advantage of (6)
4 A ball with very small proceeds (8)
10 Scrub bishop filled with filth (7)
11 Fractured season beginning to derail around first of January (7)
12 After six balls, near defeat! (8)
13 Handy fuel wasted by American (6)
15 Exploit group after money (4)
17 Style fest turned into medium for viral propagation in Africa (6,3)
20 Check fraud's caravan (9)
21 Spotted amongst returning brigade yesterday (4)
24 Everyone runs around the day before pre-university course (1,5)
25 Firm overwhelmed by extraordinary income of money (8)
28 Be suspended, having patched up bad clutch (7)
29 Perhaps a very small mark that's red? (7)
30 Awareness to retain differentiator, creating anticipation (8)
31 Cold reduced and fizzled out (6)

DOWN

1 Renders each version on point (8)
2 In part, snob leverages aristocrat (5)
3 Control ultimately helps one producing spells (6)
5 Physician's patent, say, for medical apparatus? (4)
6 Corrected exactly after commercial by editor (8)
7 Clue fairly complicated? Not Spinner's, precisely! (9)
8 Deal accepts demand draft for hamper (6)
9 Call to embrace theism destroyed by science (9)
14 Steps from affected castes gaining voice (9)
16 Solo needs tightening up of unresolved parts (5,4)
18 Piece together animal insignia missing tail (8)
19 Erudite is dead cute, somehow (8)
22 Cleans up wife's remains (6)
23 Mellow following England's win (6)
26 Beer poured into empty mugs for men (5)
27 Periods – a girl's everyday suffering, basically (4)

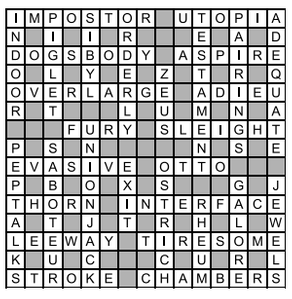
SUDOKU

			5					
				9	4	8		
2			8		1	6	5	9
3			4			7		2
9		1			2			6
8	2	6	7		9			3
		7	6	4				
					8			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

No.SS4430 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to puzzle 12690



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	5	9	1	2	4	6	3	7
7	1	4	3	6	9	8	5	2
6	2	3	5	8	7	9	4	1
3	8	5	2	7	6	1	9	4
4	7	2	9	1	5	3	8	6
1	9	6	8	4	3	2	7	5
5	4	1	6	9	8	7	2	3
2	3	8	7	5	1	4	6	9
9	6	7	4	3	2	5	1	8

FAITH

Avataras praised

Andal talks of Lord Mahavishnu's vibhava avataras in Her Thiruppavai, said Sujatha Raghavan in a lecture. In verse twenty-three, She describes His beauty in the reclining posture, and His majestic gait when He struts like a lion. The Lord is described as a lion that is asleep in a cave. When the slumbering lion wakes up, it shakes its thick mane, rolls its fierce red eyes looking around and comes out with a loud roar, befitting its stature as the king of beasts. "So must you come out, Krishna," the Gopikas in Andal's verse pray to Him. "Come out like the lion that You are, and be seated on Your throne. And then listen to us, as we place our request before You," say the Gopikas. The Lord is charming, whether He sits, stands or reclines, and this is brought out here. Krishna is as protective of His devotees as Narasimha was of Prahlada. Did Narasimha not come out of a pillar to take care of Prahlada, just as a mother rushes to protect her child?

Verse ten may be taken as a reference to Lord Rama, for Kumbhakarna is mentioned here. Kumbhakarna, the asura who spent most of his life sleeping, was defeated by Rama. In this pasuram, the Gopikas are trying to wake a girl who does not respond. The door remains closed, and she does not open it for her waiting companions. So, the other Gopikas ask her if Kumbhakarna had gifted to her his ability to sleep for many hours at a stretch.

In verse twelve, Andal talks of Rama as manathukku iniyaan – the One who is pleasing to the heart. Krishna killed Bakasura, and Rama vanquished Ravana. Whether He comes as Rama or Krishna, He destroys evil and establishes dharma. While Andal celebrates Lord's other avataras, it is Krishna avatar who is celebrated throughout Thiruppavai.

MARKET WATCH

	29-07-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	37,686	-0.52
US Dollar	68.75	0.20
Gold	35,720	-0.13
Brent oil	63.25	-0.03

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	373.85	-7.80
Asian Paints	1513.25	-13.20
Axis Bank	720.25	-9.60
Bajaj Auto	2487.65	-131.00
Bajaj Finserv	7120.85	-112.15
Bajaj Finance	3252.65	-11.95
Bharti Airtel	334.55	-0.35
BPCL	342.20	-1.60
Britannia Ind	2672.30	3.85
Cipla	522.25	-9.85
Coal India	205.40	-5.25
Dr Reddys Lab	2653.95	-51.00
Eicher Motors	16388.10	-798.45
GAIL (India)	131.40	-1.55
Grasim Ind	795.65	-79.30
HCL Tech	1015.45	14.00
HDFC	2149.00	-16.75
HDFC Bank	2244.30	-33.00
Hero MotoCorp	2404.55	-62.75
Hindalco	193.25	-4.75
Hind Unilever	1713.30	-17.35
Indiabulls HFL	559.70	-64.65
ICICI Bank	429.35	13.60
IndusInd Bank	1432.30	16.80
Bharti Infratel	256.50	-13.70
Infosys	791.45	4.45
Indian OilCorp	138.25	-3.55
ITC	267.75	-2.65
JSW Steel	241.40	-8.30
Kotak Bank	1502.50	-9.35
L&T	1371.50	-20.65
M&M	553.15	-11.30
Maruti Suzuki	5561.25	-244.40
NTPC	127.30	-1.50
ONGC	140.35	-1.55
PowerGrid Corp	207.90	-3.65
Reliance Ind	1210.95	-2.85
State Bank	343.80	1.20
Sun Pharma	431.05	-8.90
Tata Motors	137.55	-9.60
Tata Steel	433.45	-12.05
TCS	2130.00	20.95
Tech Mahindra	646.30	2.80
Titan	1078.90	-27.50
UltraTech Cement	4368.95	-131.60
UPL	584.55	-17.00
Vedanta	155.65	-8.45
Wipro	262.40	-1.20
YES Bank	94.75	-1.30
Zee Entertainment	387.15	-16.75

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 29

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	68.53	68.85
Euro	76.20	76.56
British Pound	84.23	84.63
Japanese Yen (100)	63.07	63.37
Chinese Yuan	9.94	9.99
Swiss Franc	69.05	69.38
Singapore Dollar	49.97	50.20
Canadian Dollar	52.04	52.29
Malaysian Ringitt	16.60	16.71

Source:Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

July 29 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	44.5	(44.8)
22 ct gold (1 g)	3324	(3330)

DIIs raise stake in listed firms

Value of domestic institutions' holding at record high of 13.78% in June quarter

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) are steadily increasing their stake in listed entities even as foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) continue to be the largest category of non-promoter shareholders in the Indian capital market.

In the quarter ended June 30, holding of mutual funds in companies listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) reached an all-time high of 7.35% by value, as per the latest analysis by NSE and Prime Database Group.

Further, holding of DIIs, which include mutual funds, insurance companies, banks, financial institutions and pension funds, also reached an all-time high of 13.78% by value in the quarter ended June 30, as per the analysis.

Differing pace: Over 10 years, FPI holdings rose from 13.6% to 19.8%, but that of DIIs went up marginally. ▪GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

However, the holding of mutual funds and DIIs, as a whole, is still lower than the overall FPI ownership, which was at a two-year high of 19.8% in the quarter ended June 30.

The widest gap between FPI and DII holding was seen in the quarter ended March 31, 2015, when DII holding was almost half that of their foreign counterparts. Over a 10-year period from June 2009, however, while FPI ownership has risen from 13.6% to 19.8%, DII ownership has gone up only marginally, from 11.66% to 13.78%.

LIC's holding across 303 companies, where it holds more than 1%, stood at ₹6.11 lakh crore for the quarter ended June 30. This reflected a decrease of 1.79% over the previous quarter though the insurance behemoth continued to command a lion's share – 78% – of investments in equities by insurance companies.

The holding of promoters in the NSE-listed entities stood at 54.46% as on June 30, increasing marginally from 54.08% in the previous quarter.

Promoter holdings fall

Over a 10-year period though, promoter ownership has decreased from 61.34% on June 30, 2009 to 54.46% on June 30, 2019.

Over 1,700 stocks end in red

Sensex falls 196 points; HDFC, Maruti among top losers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Equities started the week on a negative note as investor sentiment remained bearish amid heavy selling by foreign investors and weak corporate numbers. This, even as the U.S. Federal Reserve is scheduled to begin its two-day policy review meet on Tuesday.

Reports suggesting the Centre was not keen on reviewing its decision to levy a surcharge on high income entities, which in turn, spooked foreign investors, also acted as a catalyst.

The 30-share Sensex lost 196.42 points, or 0.52%, to close at 37,686.37. Earlier in the day, it touched a low of 37,519.16, 364 points lower than Friday's close. HDFC, HDFC Bank and Maruti Suzuki India were among the losers while contributing the highest to the index's losses.

▪GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

`Frontline heavyweights such as L&T, Axis Bank, ITC, Tata Motors, Bajaj Auto and Vedanta also lost ground. Broader market sentiment too was weak with more than 1,700 stocks in the red, as against only 766 gainers.

The broader Nifty lost 95.10 points, or 0.84%, to close at 11,189.20. The India VIX index rose 7.67% on Monday. The benchmarks had gained marginal ground on Friday after six successive days of losses – the longest since the start of May. Provisional data showed that foreign investors were net sellers at a little over ₹700 crore on Monday.

"Weak Asian markets combined with continuous outflow of foreign funds were weighing on the sentiment in early trades," said Ajit Mishra, vice-president – Research, Religare Broking.

"The selling pressure was widespread [and] auto, metal and media counters were thrashed. Markets are largely focussing on weak domestic sentiment while cues are mixed from the global front," he added. Indices of Hong Kong, Korea, Indonesia and Taiwan ended in the red on Monday.

E.I.D. Parry to shut down Pudukottai plant

Cites poor availability of sugarcane

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

E.I.D. Parry (India) Ltd. on Monday decided to shut down its mothballed sugar unit at Pudukottai in Tamil Nadu. President and CFO Sridharan Rangarajan said the decision was taken due to inadequate availability of sugarcane.

Besides, revival of cane cultivation in the areas where the unit was located was unlikely due to a number of reasons.

Transfer of assets

The company proposes to transfer the assets of the unit to its other units and also dispose of other assets as may be 'deemed appropriate'.

In May, Mr. Rangarajan had said that the Puducherry unit was closed down and two other units had been mothballed due to non-availability of sugarcane.

For the first quarter ended June 2019, the company posted a standalone net loss of ₹53.12 crore against a net profit of ₹54.43 crore.

Revenue from operations contracted to ₹387.99 crore from ₹455.85 crore. Cost of raw materials increased 92% to ₹148.42 crore.

"The performance of the company continued to be affected due to depressed sugar prices on account of higher sugar inventory and release order mechanism," said S. Suresh, managing director, E.I.D. Parry.

Dr. Reddy's Q1 net rises 42%

COO Erez Israeli named CEO, to assume office on August 1

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories posted a consolidated net profit of ₹676.5 crore for the quarter ended June 30.

An increase of more than 42% compared to the ₹476.1 crore a year earlier, it was boosted by a one-time receipt resulting from the settlement agreement pertaining to its generic version of a cancer drug with Celgene in Canada.

Other income helps

The ₹345.7 crore receipt that pushed up 'other income' helped the company shrug off a decline in revenue and gross profit in the Pharmaceutical Services and Active Ingredients (PSAI) and Proprietary Products segments.

Total income was 13.24% higher at ₹4,288.3 crore.

Erez Israeli

CEO and co-chairman G.V.Prasad said: "We grew in most of our key markets and hope to continue this momentum with a sharper focus on performance"

Saumen Chakraborty, CFO, said price erosion due to increased competition in "some of our key molecules in the U.S and Europe and lower sales from PSAI business" impacted the gross profit margin. Year-on-year revenue from emerging markets increased by 10%, with Russia driving the growth, while revenues from India and Europe were 15% and 19% higher.

DRL's COO Erez Israeli has been named as its Chief Executive Officer of the company. Announcing his appointment, Mr. Prasad said Mr.Israeli was being elevated and will assume office as CEO from August 1.

To media queries on whether this meant he was retiring, Mr. Prasad, who is the son-in-law of Dr. Reddy's founder K. Anji Reddy, said he was "not retiring, [Mr.Israeli] is going to be more active than me." The founder's son Satish Reddy is the chairman.

SBI reduces FD rates, BoB lowers savings rate

Paves way for lending rate cut, says SBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

There is bad news for savers with State Bank of India – the country's largest lender – deciding to cut interest rates on fixed deposits by 20 basis points (bps) to 75 bps across tenures, citing surplus liquidity and downward bias of interest rates.

Bank of Baroda has also lowered the interest rate on savings account deposits by 25 bps.

"MCLR is calculated based on deposit rates. So the impact of this rate cut will come into MCLR which will be reviewed by the asset liability committee when it meets next," P.K. Gupta, MD, SBI, told *The Hindu*. MCLR is the marginal cost of funds based lending rate – the benchmark lending rate to which all loans are linked.

"For lending rates to fall, deposit rate needs to be cut. Transmission of policy rate cuts are happening through this process," he added.

SBI has reduced fixed deposits with longer tenure by 20 bps for retail customers (for deposits up to ₹2 crore) and 35 bps for corporate clients. Interest rates have been slashed by 50-75 bps for time deposits with shorter tenors, i.e. up to 179 days. The new rates are effective from 1 August.

The bank said the decision to cut deposit rates was taken due to the falling interest rate scenario and surplus liquidity in the system.

Bank of Maharashtra net at ₹81 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Bank of Maharashtra reported a ₹81-crore net profit for the quarter ended June 30 – compared with a ₹1,119 crore loss a year earlier – due to improvement in both interest and non-interest income, even as interest expenses declined, the bank said.

But, asset quality deteriorated sequentially with gross non-performing assets rising to ₹16,649.58 crore or 17.9% of gross advances from 16.4% in the March quarter. Net NPA ratio was 5.98% (5.52%).

In February, the RBI lifted restrictions under the prompt corrective action framework (PCA) as capital infusion by the Centre was used to bring down net NPA ratio below 6% – one of the risk thresholds of the PCA, breach of which triggers restrictions.

The capital adequacy ratio declined to 11.69% from 11.86% reported at the end of March quarter. The bank also increased its operating profit by 40% to ₹658.45 crore year-on-year.

RBI fines Hip Bar, Mobikwik

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty on two Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) issuers for violating regulatory guidelines.

Mobikwik Systems Private Limited has been fined ₹15 lakh while Hip Bar Private Limited has been fined ₹10.85 lakh.

Hip Bar is a Chennai-based company, which had received the RBI's approval to operate a mobile wallet for online sale of alcohol. Mobikwik is a digital wallet for various online payments.

Yields decline as FM says 'no rethink' on raising foreign funds

Benchmark government bond yields drop 11 basis points

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Government bonds yields dropped sharply on Monday after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman clarified that there was no rethinking on issuing sovereign bonds to raise funds from abroad.

The yield on the 10-year benchmark government bond fell 11 basis points (bps) over the previous close, ending Monday at 6.41%.

"The main reason for bond yields to decline is the reassurance by the Finance Minister that there is no rethinking on the sovereign bond issue," said a treasury head of a large public sector bank.

Last week, following reports that the government would review the Budget announcement of issuing sovereign bonds after economists raised concerns over such a move, bond yields headed north.

Nirmala Sitharaman

Repo rate cuts

The bond market also cheered the Minister's comment on the need for sharp interest rate cuts from the Reserve Bank of India.

RBI has reduced the repo rate by 75 bps in 2019 and will announce the review of the monetary policy on August 7.

Economists, however, do not expect more than a 25 bps cut in the August policy review, as scanty rainfall so far could lead to a drought situation, which in turn will stoke inflation.

"We continue to expect the RBI MPC to cut 25 bps on August 7, pause with inflation going up temporarily on base effects/drought and cut 25 bps in February again as inflation abates," Bank of America Merrill Lynch said in a report to its clients.

"India is facing a severe drought, with rains 16% below normal. Thankfully, the Met sees rain revival over the next week," the report said.

Shares of Indiabulls HFL plummet 10.5%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Shares of Indiabulls Housing Finance fell 10.45% on Monday after it was reported that BJP MP Subramanian Swamy had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing the group of a ₹1 lakh-crore fraud.

However, Indiabulls Housing Finance has refuted the allegations.

The stock ended 10.44% lower on the BSE to close the day at ₹559. "Indiabulls Housing, in its history, has never taken any loan or refinancing facility from NHB," Indiabulls Housing informed the exchanges on charges of money laundering from finance availed from National Housing Bank. "The total loan book of Indiabulls Housing is approx. ₹87,000 crore," the mortgage lender said.

Govt. extends indemnity to successful bidders under IBC

To implement personal insolvency regulation 'in phases'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Extending indemnity to successful bidders of companies that have defaulted on loans, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the government would not initiate any criminal proceedings against those who buy out a bankrupt company and no tax claim would be raised against them after implementation of a resolution plan.

Replying to the debate on a Bill to amend the 3-year-old Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in the Rajya Sabha, she said the government would implement, in phases, insolvency regulations for individuals including those who give personal guarantees for loans taken by defaulting companies. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2019 makes it "binding on the government" that it will "not raise any further claim after resolution plan is approved," she said in her reply after which the House passed the legislation.

▪GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Under the IBC, loan defaulting companies are auctioned and the successful bidder, called resolution applicant, takes over such firms after paying an amount they had bid for.

However, Ms. Sitharaman – who is also the Corporate Affairs Minister – said criminal matters would continue to be pursued against individuals of the loan-defaulting companies.

"Criminal matters alone are proceeded against individuals, not a company. There will be no criminal proceeding against successful resolution applicant for fraud by previous promoters," she said.

The IBC, the Minister said, gives that comfort for all new bidders and they "need not now be scared" over taxmen coming after them for the faults of earlier promoters.

Bajaj slams Centre for falling demand, lack of investments

'Findings from IMF, World Bank show sluggish growth'

PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

Bajaj Auto chairman Rahul Bajaj on Monday criticised the Narendra Modi-led NDA government for lack of effort towards arresting falling demand and boosting private investments.

"There is no demand and no private investment, so where will growth come from? It doesn't fall from the heavens. The auto industry is going through a very difficult period. Cars, commercial vehicles and two-wheelers are going through a rough patch," said Mr. Bajaj, while addressing shareholders at the annual general meeting of the company.

When asked for comments, the 81-year-old told *The Hindu:* "Yes, I was critical [of the government] and spoke the truth but I was not angry."

Rahul Bajaj

"Like any government they would like to show a happy face, but reality is reality. The government may or may not be saying this, but there are clear cut markings from the IMF and World Bank, which show a decrease in growth," Mr. Bajaj added.

> **Like any government they would like to show a happy face, but reality is reality**
>
> RAHUL BAJAJ
> Chairman, Bajaj Auto

The auto industry has been one of the biggest casualties of India's current slowdown with recent monthly sales witnessing among the steepest volume contractions since 2000-01, affecting the auto components and steel industries.

Piling up of inventories

Several auto players are resorting to production cuts and seeing piling up of inventory. The Reserve Bank of India revised FY20 GDP forecast downwards to 7% from 7.2% in its April policy review .

'SEBI should handle proxy firms' disputes'

Regulator should first examine a dispute between companies and proxy advisers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A working group formed to look into issues related to proxy advisory firms has proposed that the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) should be the forum to handle disputes between such advisory firms and listed companies.

"Any dispute arising between corporate and proxy advisers needs to be first examined by SEBI to ascertain the non-compliance, if any, of the proposed additional Code of Conduct for proxy advisers. SEBI will give appropriate comments in the matter wrt. [with respect to] compliance of code of conduct by proxy advisor. Only thereafter the person may approach the court of law," stated the report.

The working group has suggested that the capital markets regulator should make the necessary changes in the Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements Regulations – which every listed company has to comply with – to make listed entities approach SEBI with their grievances.

First say: Only after SEBI gives comments in the matter, the party may approach the court of law, the report said. ▪REUTERS

Currently, there are no explicitly stated legal provisions to handle such disputes arising between a company and a proxy adviser. Proxy advisory firms, which advise shareholders – mostly institutional – on voting on various board resolutions are often found to be at loggerheads with companies. In perhaps the most famous instance, Uday Kotak, in August last year, publicly stated that global proxy advisory firms needed to be domestically regulated.

> **Proxy advisory firms which advise shareholders are often found to be at loggerheads with companies**

His statements were made in the backdrop of U.S. proxy advisory firm ISS advising shareholders to vote against the reappointment of Deepak Parekh as a director on the board of HDFC.

Avoiding 'conflict'

The report has also given recommendations on the ways to avoid any conflict of interest situations between the advisory firm and the company, and also ways to establish a 'Chinese Wall' if the proxy advisory firm also offers consultancy services.

First action heroes

Rachna Bisht Rawat's *Kargil* commemorates the 20th anniversary of the War with stories of courage of the men in uniform and those who loved them most

DEEPA ALEXANDER

The cordite-laced, desolate battlefields of Kargil were first beamed into our living rooms in the summer of 1999. It was the country's first prime-time war, and the poignant 'Last Post' became a familiar tune. For nearly two decades between, the War lived on only in the Memorial at Drass, forgotten under layers of snow, the geographical references of its peaks – Pt 4875, Pt 5140 – obliterated from people's minds. Not for septuagenarian Colonel Virender Thapar who has climbed a scree-scattered, rifle-shell-dotted 16,000-foot mountain every year since to keep a promise to his son Lt Vijayant Thapar, VrC of 2 Rajputana Rifles.

Vijayant, (Robin to his family) had written, 'If you can, please come and see where the Indian Army fought for your tomorrow,' in his last letter home, before he valiantly battled and fell to an enemy bullet, an act that earned him the Vir Chakra. The terrain is just a hiccup on the road to honour, which Virender travels, bearing a red dupatta sent by his wife to the sangar where Vijayant died and where his portrait now hangs alongside a goddess.

There's a glut of literature on the operational details, but Rachna Bisht Rawat's *Kargil: Untold Stories from the War* (Penguin) paints vignettes that involve the soldier's family and have fallen through the gaps in our memory.

Delhi-based Rawat, who has written three other popular books on war and life in uniform in consonance with the Indian Army, says, "I was reluctant because I had already written two war books and found them emotionally harrowing to work on – the soldiers were old, their memories had faded. But my Army-officer husband said that Kargil would be a good choice because many of the men who had fought were still serving, with vivid memories of the War."

Rawat worked on the book – which has in it a message from the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh – for a year-and-a-half, urging the Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGPI) to request units for citations that had not been awarded, stories of valour that had not been told. "Some Army units sent unusual stories. This time, I wanted to focus on the Army Medical Corps through the work of paratrooper and doctor, then Captain Vikram Grewal. He worked with five units at Muntho Dhalo, fashioning stretchers from rifles and running saline drips amidst shelling. Not a single man who reached him, including a Pakistani PoW, died."

While operational details had to be cleared by the Army, with Rawat relying heavily on General VP Malik's *From Surprise to Victory*, she says she was lucky to interview a man from the second patrol of 4 Jat. "The torture and deaths of Captain Saurabh Kalia's patrol party is well known. But this man, who had also been shot, helped reconstruct that terrain. It's a pity that the Kalias are fighting a lonely battle for justice. Also, Commanding Officers who had enthused their boys to conquer the peaks, having witnessed their deaths and the struggles of their families, now feel they would never want another war. For the families, the pain of losing a loved one is the same. The only difference is pride."

The stories swing between past and present, between the fighting in moonscapes where the cold is a constant companion and the chaos of modern India where the families keep vigil. Rawat travels to hill towns and villages amid sugarcane fields, cafes and cantonments to hear the stories – the gentle Buddhist warriors of the Ladakh Scouts, who thawed their jammed guns on stoves and rose to fight; the AIR station director, Leh, who sent her son to carry stores for the battlezone; the guitar-playing Capt Haneefuddin of Hindu-Muslim parentage who died on the borderlands between two countries that were separated on communal grounds; Naik Ikraj Nabi of 16 Grenadiers who trekked nine hours to give enemy soldiers an honourable burial; Pakistani Capt Karnal Sher Khan who was awarded Pakistan's highest gallantry award based on a citation by an Indian officer impressed with his bravery; Flying Officer Gunjan Saxena, Kargil's only woman warrior; the dark lonely work of the Special Forces; Meena Nayyar's regret that her son Capt Anuj went to his death hungry, not having eaten for days, and why a painting of a 'robin' lords over the Thapar drawing room.

While the book celebrates those who were awarded, it also upholds those whose stories we don't know of, but were just as brave.

Band of brothers (Clockwise from bottom) Soldiers of 17 Jat on Pimple 2; Rachna Bisht Rawat with her book; Fl Lt Gunjan Saxena ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND KULVINDER RUHIL

#DELHIMOVES

50 cities, 1,000 km

Ripu Daman Bevli will go plogging across the country in a bid to make widespread behaviour-change

SUNALINI MATHEW

Ripu Daman Bevli, 31, calls himself 'The Plogman of India'. Starting this month, he's going on a country-wide drive to 'plog' in 50 cities across two months, driving from city to city, coordinating with running- groups locally . "I will start plogging from the hotel at about 4-4:30 (a.m.), reach the meeting point, and then continue until about 11:30 , so people can come and go as they please," he says.

Sitting in Qahwa, a cafe in SDA market, the haunt of many after-run breakfasts, he remembers how it all started – with a newspaper report he saw in 2017. A running race had just taken place and three days later, the trash (mostly plastic bottles and promotional material) generated from it, was still littering the streets. He and a friend took some bags and cleared up the 4km stretch. He began doing this regularly, usually after a run, sometimes posting pictures on a Facebook group called My City = My Responsibility. This drew other runners into what was then a cool-down activity.

Soon they discovered that the Swedes had a name for this, and the world was embracing it: plogging, a combination of jogging and picking up trash.

"When you run in the morning, there's little traffic and few people, and all you see is the trash," says Ripu, who was named after one of Nabha's most famous kings. He says he's been chased by dogs and monkeys and has had people look at him oddly when he's going about it. "It's not in our DNA to pick up other people's litter, but in that one simple action of bending to pick up one piece, it's likely that you'll think before you throw something on the road again," he says.

Social-media activation Ripu believes amplification will get more people into the movement ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This year, he decided to quit his full-time job in IT and focus solely on this, reaching out to companies to do corporate workshops, helping them understand the bane of single-use plastic bottles, and encouraging them to take simple steps to keep our surroundings clean. He says the aim is "to change ingrained mindsets and behaviour."

You don't have to be fit or even a runner to plog – you just need to want to make a change in your life, he says. The focus is two-fold: to make India litter-free (facebook.com/RunToMakeIndiaLitterFree), while also keeping healthy yourself. "We're combining both Swachh Bharat and Swasth Bharat," he says. A by-product is to raise awareness about more sustainable sports events that are beginning to take place in the country.

The event kicks off from Delhi August 16 and will be back on October 2nd; contact: ploggerofindia@gmail.com

PLACES

A home overlooking a lake

Nalin Jha, a city-based Airbnb host, has won the company's "Superhost" title for five consecutive years

It has a balcony that opens up to a view of the Hauz Khas fort and lake. It's easy to picture yourself here, on a Delhi monsoon morning, with a chai and book.

This is an Airbnb apartment, whose host Nalin Jha, has been consistently ranked as one of the company's "superhosts". The programme, which recently marked its 5th anniversary, recognises hosts who qualify every quarter on the basis of four counts: a booking cancellation less than 1% of the times, a 90% response rate to enquiries, a 4.8 overall rating, at least 10 guests in a year, or in the case of a longer booking, at least three guests over 100 nights of stay.

Jha's managed to keep the title for all quarters in the five years of the Superhost programme. He started out with three studio apartments, expanding to this two-bedroom space. Eight months ago, someone else leased out three two-bedroom apartment nearby for Jha to run as Airbnbs.

The concept isn't new to him. Growing up in Bhagalpur in Bihar, there'd be a lot of guests visting. "People didn't stay in hotels then , and whoever my parents would host, they'd give them our best room," Jha recalls, noting that the experience has clearly stayed with him.

At Jha's Lake View Luxury Apartment, which is booked out for all the remaining days of this month, and already for two weeks the next, the decor is thoughtful: You enter to a sea-foam chevron patterned accent wall. The eye drifts to the pink couch in the hall. A built-in bookshelf is stocked with non-fiction, travel- and coffee-table books, and Jha says he's never noticed any books missing. "People have actually left books behind, as it happens during last-minute packing." A lot of the art, including paintings by Desmond Lazaro and works of French photographer Bernard Faucon (who was lately in the news for accusing the K-Pop group bts of plagiarising his work), he says are acquired from city-based galleries like Nature Morte.

"If 70% [of a good stay] has to do with the location and interiors, the rest is human interaction," he says. He loves Delhi with a passion, and despite the much-documented nature of the city's food and entertainment scene, it is his personal touch, of taste as well as keeping in mind a host's time constraints, for instance, that makes his recommendations to the guests valuable.

He's also gained much from the experience, he says. "I may have hosted over 4,000 people over the years, but every time I have a new guest, I'm nervous...each review left is the ultimate reward," he adds, recalling how meeting such a varied cross-section of people from different professions and cultures has left him with memorable and affecting experiences for a lifetime.

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

SHOUT-OUT

A call for plus-size models

Lakmé Fashion Week (LFW) will host its fourth season of the Delhi Plus Size Model Auditions for this year's event. Rina Dhaka will create a range for aLL PRIMERO, a plus-size Indian brand, which will be showcased at LFW in Mumbai, between August 21 and 25. Women with a waist size of 34 inches and over, and men with a waist size of 40 inches and over are welcome to audition. A panel of judges, including the designer will be at the auditions.

At Taj Mansingh, July 31, 11:30 a.m. onwards

For a listing, or to be featured here, email us at *delhimetro@thehindu.co.in*

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE

DANCE

Kathak recital

Guruvai Namah 2019, a two-day festival of Kathak is organised in memory of the late Kathak Guru Kundan Lal Gangani. Today's event will feature a Kathak duet by Mulla Afsar and Anisha Kaul. This will be followed by a solo performance by dancer Eleonora Petrova, and a duet by Pandit Chand Charan Girdhar and Ramni Kashyap.

VENUE: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre
TIME: 7 p.m.

FOOD

Tikka fest

House of Punjab, a restaurant that specilises in food from the frontier, has organised a Tikka Festival to celebrate the monsoon. In addition to their signature Cooker Meat, Atta Chicken and tawa items prepared in desi ghee, the festival offers Khumb Achari Tikkas, Kasturi Malai Tikka, Bhatti Soya Tikka, Paneer Tikka, and more.

VENUE: House of Punjab, Rajouri Garden
TIME: 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.

MUSIC

Aditi and Swati live

Singers Aditi and Swati will be performing at The Piano Man tonight. Aditi Malhotra is a contemporary vocalist and Swati Bhatt is a singer and composer. The two met at Swarnabhoomi Academy of Music in 2017, and decided to collaborate and make music together. They sing both Indian classical and Western contemporary.

VENUE: The Piano Man, Sector 15, Gurugram
TIME: 9 p.m. - 11:55 p.m.

GOURMET

Croissant special

Zing GourMET Shop has added a new dish to their menu, a French croissant spiked with Indian flavours. Meaning that the quintessential croissant is now paired with Indian snack staples like Aloo Chaat and Mutton Keema, or with dishes like Green Chilli Achari, Makhani, Saffron and Kadhai Chicken.

VENUE: The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa
TIME: 12 noon - 10 p.m.

THEATRE

Hinglish comedy

Three short Hinglish comedy plays, *Hunter*, *Hisaab*, and *Humdard*, will be staged tonight. *Hunter* is about a charming man, Peter, whose main preoccupation is to entice married women. *Hisaab*, is a father's attempt to cheat his children's governess, and *Humdard* is about a pandit's visit to the dentist.

VENUE: Akshara Theatre, Baba Kharak Singh Marg
TIME: 7 p.m.

Whose booking is it anyway?

Don't let scammers spoil your holiday and tread with caution while you are planning your vacation online

LIFFY THOMAS

Priyanka Verma* was browsing online for home-stay options in Coonoor and called one hotel to seek details. In less than an hour, she found her mobile phone flooded with photos and messages from other service providers she hadn't contacted.

Priyanka realised her number had been passed on by the staff at the first home-stay property she had enquired about. Later, to confirm her booking, she was asked to send her identity proof to a WhatsApp group that could be viewed by other vacationers at the home-stay.

This underlines the lack of information protection in online holiday booking, which sometimes can result in loss of money.

To put things in perspective, let's turn to some stats. According to a report from the British travel agents, Action Fraud and Get Safe Online, more than 5,000 people have reported being victims of online booking scams in 2018 in the United Kingdom, with an average financial loss of £1,380 per person. The numbers have increased from 2017, which witnessed 4,382 victims lose a total of £6.7m.

In India, we haven't come across any major study of travel-related scams, but such horror stories are reported. Just over the weekend, over 500 Haj pilgrims lost ₹15 crores, allegedly to proprietors of Mumbai-based travel agency Alfa Enterprises. To make matters worse, the tour operator dropped off the radar on July 8.

So, what are some of the common online scams? You booked a dream villa by the sea, but you arrive to find that there is no such place and the website that advertised it has disappeared.

Booking online is simple, but one needs to be wary of websites that come up with offers that sound too good to be true. Booking frauds are more common during the peak holidaying season.

"At the start of the holiday season, we see advertisements that promise holidaygoers the sky," says Sanjar Imam, president of the non-profit Karnataka Tourism Forum. He says there is no such thing as a free lunch and it's all built into the cost.

The other common complaint is a mismatch between promise and delivery, such as the website advertising that the property is near the beach and you find out a whole new interpretation of the word 'near'.

"Have a little bit of due diligence to check the background of the company," he says.

Other online threats

A McAfee and HomeAway research involving 8,000 respondents across eight countries, including the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, France and Germany, says that 54% worry about their identity being stolen while booking and purchasing travel and accommodation online. More than 25% do not check the authenticity of a website before booking a holiday. More than a quarter of holiday fraud victims have been scammed after spotting 'a great offer'. Other findings of the study are 46.3% of holiday scam victims say they realise they have been taken up a garden path only when they turn up at their holiday rental to find the booking isn't actually valid.

Another red flag is being asked to pay by bank transfer. If someone asks you to pay outside of the site, be more vigilant, says Amit Damani, co-founder, Vista Rooms.

Some scammers distract people to other sites, tempting them with better offers. While online transaction is much safer, it must be done after double checking, he says.

CON JOB

In the 1990s, the most common type of fraud reported was application fraud – when an account is opened using fake or stolen documents in your name.

Experts in the travel industry say that apart from creating awareness among holidayers, a redressal mechanism would also help.

OYO Hotels and Homes has an in-app SOS button feature that enables guests experiencing any emergency situation to receive the assistance of on-ground hotel staff, a trained 24x7 OYO Safety Response Team (SRT) and also initiate a call with the local law enforcement authorities.

The horror stories are rampant. But international campaigns are at the frontline. Earlier this year, industry-wide UK-based Secure Our Systems, spearheaded by Prevention of Fraud in Travel (PROFIT), aims to combat the growing menace of cybercrime relating to travel companies. Before you express your scepticism, the announcement comes just ahead of the launch of an industry 'blacklist' of known travel fraudsters, part of new anti-fraud system Fraud Intelligence Network (FIN), which is also being developed by PROFIT and will enable the reporting of travel fraud and vet job applicants.

FIN is a data-driven venture which enables its users to manage high-risk bookings, share data with other industry members, gain intelligence from fraud data, and report occurrences of fraud to the police. There's also a community aspect in which like-minded individuals are put in contact with each other, creating a forum for discussion with security experts.

**Name changed to protect identity*

WORTH THE WARINESS

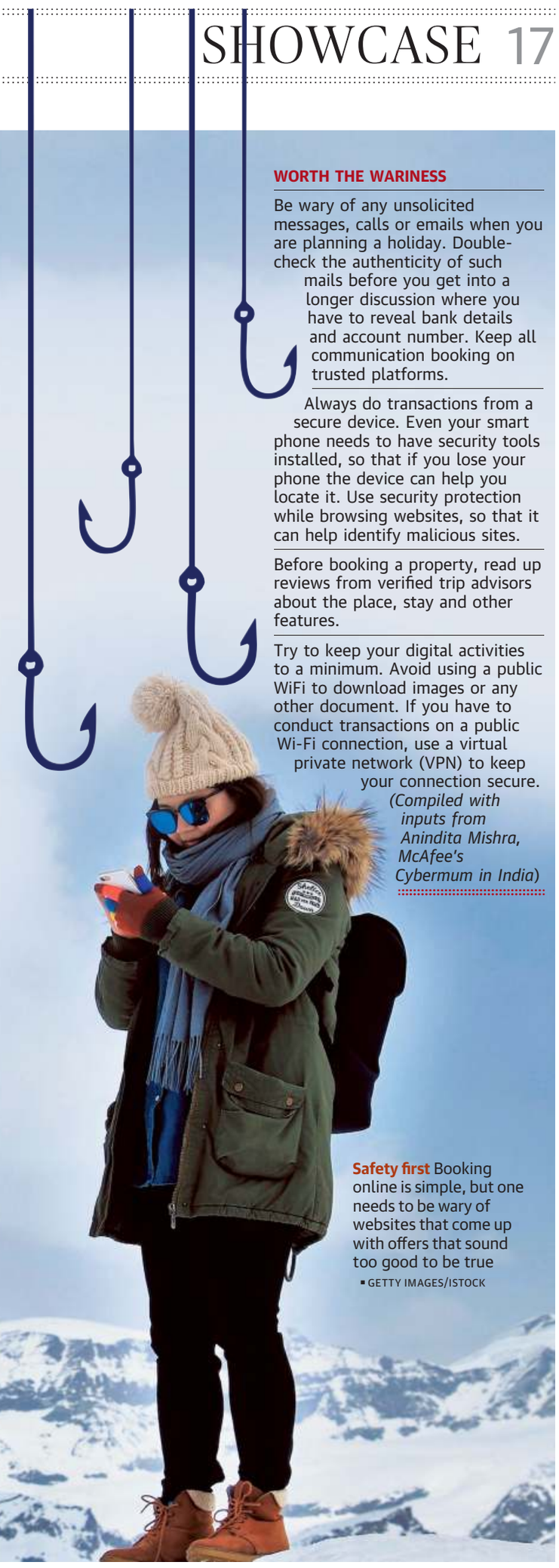
Be wary of any unsolicited messages, calls or emails when you are planning a holiday. Double-check the authenticity of such mails before you get into a longer discussion where you have to reveal bank details and account number. Keep all communication booking on trusted platforms.

Always do transactions from a secure device. Even your smart phone needs to have security tools installed, so that if you lose your phone the device can help you locate it. Use security protection while browsing websites, so that it can help identify malicious sites.

Before booking a property, read up reviews from verified trip advisors about the place, stay and other features.

Try to keep your digital activities to a minimum. Avoid using a public WiFi to download images or any other document. If you have to conduct transactions on a public Wi-Fi connection, use a virtual private network (VPN) to keep your connection secure.

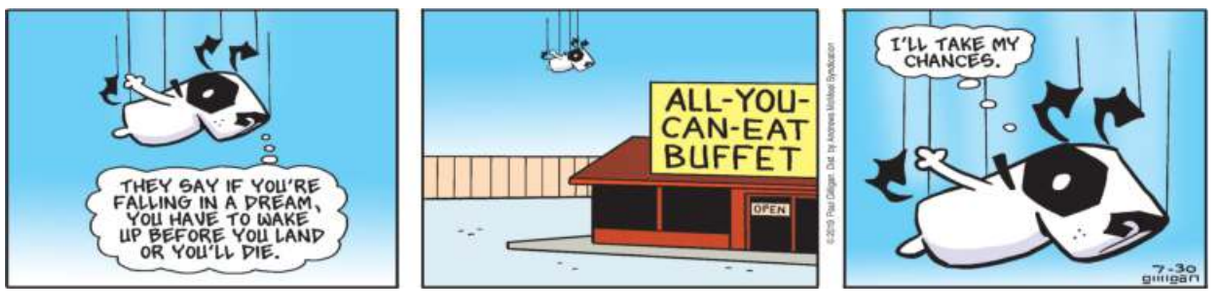
(Compiled with inputs from Anindita Mishra, McAfee's Cybermum in India)



Safety first Booking online is simple, but one needs to be wary of websites that come up with offers that sound too good to be true

▪ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS

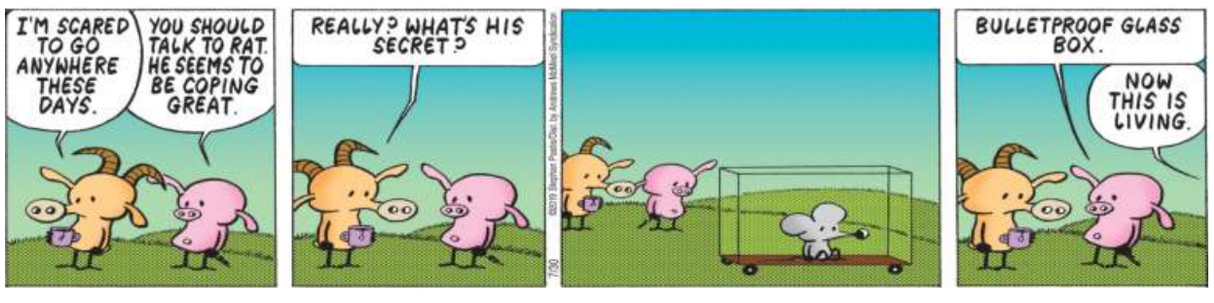
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

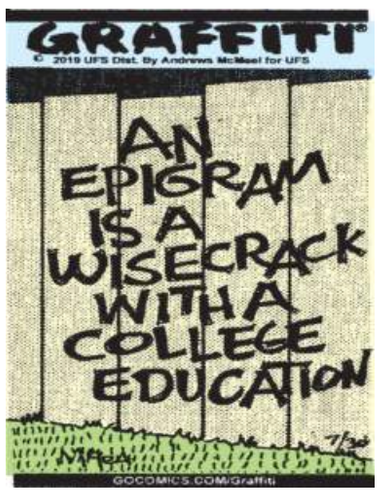
CALVIN AND HOBBES

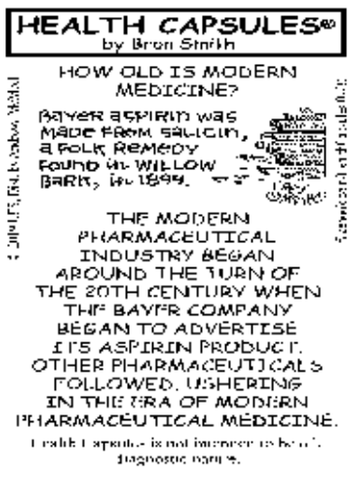
TIGER

WUMO

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE







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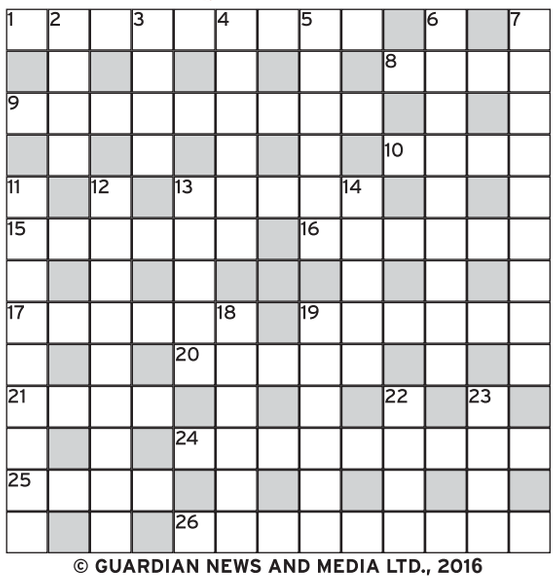

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Across
1 Condemnation (9)
8 Be brave enough (4)
9 Unexpected but vivid recall of a past experience (9)
10 Finished (4)
13 Alarm – temptress (5)
15 Soldier serving on land and sea (6)
16 Unearth (3,3)
17 Holiday centre (6)
19 Pinched (6)
20 Showing signs of wear and tear (5)
21 Kernel (4)
24 Fortifying alcoholic drink (slang) (9)
25 Badger's burrow (4)
26 Method of execution (9)

Down
2 Govern (4)
3 Nonsense (4)
4 Taxi driver (6)
5 Holy (6)
6 Latin American dance (4,5)
7 Contrite (9)
11 Inexact (9)
12 Lying face downwards (9)
13 Inhale a recreational drug (5)
14 Particularly good (informal) (5)
18 Gossip (6)
19 Repress – itself (anag) (6)
22 Put right (4)
23 Stitched up (4)

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated July 31, 2019.

Solution No. 13134

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'World Test Championship will be challenging, but all the more exciting'

Kohli believes the sport's longest format really needs a boost

INDIA IN WI

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The World Cup is now history. A disappointing semifinal defeat – India's second successive last-four exit from the quadrennial gala – ended an intense period of focus on 50-over cricket.

With the longest and shortest formats set to dominate the international arena for the next two years, it was natural that captain Virat Kohli was primarily looking forward to India's performance in T20Is and Tests as he boarded a flight to the United States to kick-start India's tour of the West Indies.

The first leg of the tour, which will have the three-match T20Is, will begin India's spree of 20 T20Is scheduled over the next six months with an eye on the World Twenty20 editions to be staged in 2020 (Australia) and 2021 (India). The month-long series will end with a two-Test series, which will be India's foray into the maiden World Test Championship (WTC).

Excited

It's no wonder then that Kohli was excited about both. While he was looking forward to the WTC since it will bring attention to Test cricket, he was upbeat about gelling with the youngsters who have blooded into the T20 arena.

"Test cricket really needed a boost. The players were always putting in the effort, but from a global point of view an incentive attached in a way which the Test Championship presents. I think for all the cricketers involved now, every session and every game will be more intense, there will be more on the line. So it will be challenging, but all the more exciting and all the teams I am sure are going to enjoy a lot through this whole journey of the Test Championships," Kohli said.

With India set to feature in six T20I series before the Indian Premier League next year, Kohli was keen on analysing the skill-set of the youngsters who could form the crux for the next two T20 World Cups. Moreover, with West Indies being a formidable T20 side, Kohli expected a tough test.

"I am particularly excited about the first three T20s because, as I said, a new lot of players coming in, some players have done really well in the format and shown great composure in tournaments like the IPL, and domestically as well," he said. "It is a great marker for all those guys and for us, as a team as well, to have them in the squad."

INDIA'S SCHEDULE

August-September 2019	West Indies (away) | 2 Tests
October 2019	South Africa (home) | 3 Tests
November 2019	Bangladesh (home) | 2 Tests
February 2020	New Zealand (away) | 2 Tests
November 2020-January 2021	Australia (away) | 4 Tests
January-March 2021	England (home) | 5 Tests

Caribbean jaunt: Kohli's men will play three T20Is and three ODIs before beginning their World Test Championship campaign. ▪ TRUPTI AREKAR

Skipper bats for Shastri

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The deadline for applications for the coach is yet to expire, but Virat Kohli has thrown his weight behind Ravi Shastri to continue to be the coach of India's team.

"The CAC hasn't contacted me yet. If they tell me 'we want your opinion', I will definitely go and speak to them. And with Ravi *bhai*, all of us have great camaraderie," Kohli said. "Everyone in the team shares mutual respect and we have done really well together as a group.

"We will definitely be very happy if he is continuing as the coach. But as I said, it's on the CAC to seek my advice or opinion if they want."

Shastri, along with other existing support staff members, have been given extension for the West Indies series after their contracts expired at the end of the World Cup. While the BCCI has invited applications till July 30, Shastri and the other incumbent members of support staff, are direct entrants for their respective posts. The Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), headed by former India captain Kapil Dev, will select the new support staff.

Kohli denies any rift with Rohit

'It's bizarre that people are creating this stuff from outside'

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

India captain Virat Kohli has categorically denied any rift with Rohit Sharma, his deputy in limited-over cricket. Kohli stressed that the team wouldn't have performed consistently for the last two-three years had the team environment not been conducive.

"It's baffling. It's absolutely ridiculous to read such stuff. I have been to a few public events, and people told me that we have played well and there's so much respect and here we are feeding off lies, overlooking facts.

Creating fantasies

"We are turning a blind eye to all the good things that's happened. We are creating fantasies in our head and we want to accept that it's the truth," Kohli said ahead of the team's departure for a full series against the West Indies.

Over the last week, sections of the Indian media have reported on the alleged fall-out between Kohli and Rohit, even dragging the cricketers' wives into the alleged feud. Kohli reacted strongly to it.

"I have seen this for too long now. Bringing personal lives is disrespectful. I have played for 11 years, Rohit has played for 10 years. It's bizarre that people are creating this stuff from outside," Kohli said.

"Come, see in the dressing room. See for yourself how (we speak to) Kuldeep Yadav or how we joke with a senior like M.S. Dhoni. Come and see the atmosphere. We can't show you videos here. It baffles you as a leader, as a coach and as a team when lies are floated around. They are made to look believable."

Baffling! Virat Kohli, seen sharing a light moment with Rohit Sharma, was miffed about rumours being spread about differences between them. ▪ AP

My face will show

When asked if he had discussed these reports with Rohit and whether there has been any awkwardness between the duo, Kohli said: "I will tell you something about myself, if I don't like a person or if I am insecure of a person then you will see that on my face or in my behaviour towards the person, that is how simple it is.

"I have always praised Rohit, whenever I had the opportunity because I believe he is that good. We have had no issues. As I said it is baffling, to be honest. I don't know who is benefiting from all of this.

"We are living, breathing and working towards getting Indian cricket to the top and here people want to get some pleasure in bringing it down. I don't understand how that works.

"Within the team it is there for everyone to see the kind of camaraderie and friendship, and it is evident on the field. You can't play with that kind of passion if people don't get along with each other.

Team interest first

Head coach Ravi Shastri had the parting shot. "The way this team plays, no individual is bigger than the game, not me, not him (Kohli), nobody in the team. The way they play, it is in the interest of the team. You cannot have the kind of consistency across all formats, if you have, like you mention rifts or divisions or whatever, it is not possible," said Shastri.

"I have been part of the dressing room for some time now, and none of that nonsense was there," he added.

Expect Windies to put up a fight: Richards

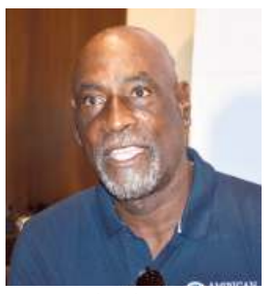
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

West Indies legend Vivian Richards expects the current team to pose a tough challenge to Virat Kohli's battle-hardened India in the upcoming assignments in the Caribbean.

India will play three T20s, as many ODIs and two Tests on the tour of the West Indies, starting on August 3 in Florida.

The two Tests will be played as a part of the ICC Championship.

"India-West Indies series have always seen explosive action and I don't expect anything less this time around. With the current form of the West Indies team, I look forward to them giving a tough competition to the Indian side," Richards was quoted as saying in a media release issued by official broadcasters Sony Pictures Sports Network.



Vivian Richards. ▪ FILE PHOTO

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar said he has "respect" for players from the Caribbean.

"West Indies will always hold a very special place in my heart since I started my career over there and have immense respect for their players," said Gavaskar.

Ashes to kick-start ICC's latest initiative to reignite five-day game

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

The opening day of the Ashes series between England and Australia at Edgbaston on Thursday will mark the beginning of the International Cricket Council's new World Test Championship (WTC).

The aim is to give individual Test series greater context and spark a worldwide revival of interest in the five-day game.

What is it?

The top nine nations will compete in a total of 72 Tests across a two-year period, with the aim of determining the best Test team in the world. The teams involved will be Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and West Indies.

The top two teams will play in the final at Lord's in June 2021, before a new cycle starts.

"Test cricket is the pinnacle of our sport," said James Anderson, England's leading Test wicket-taker, in an ICC statement.

Purists' delight

"It is the very essence of cricket and the majority of players want to strive to play the purists' form of the game.

Points System

Matches in series	Points for a win	Points for a tie	Points for a draw	Points for a loss
2	60	30	20	0
3	40	20	13.3	0
4	30	15	10	0
5	24	12	8	0

The essence: James Anderson feels that Test cricket is the pinnacle of the sport. ▪ GARETH COPLEY/GETTY IMAGES

Anderson could decide fate of Ashes: McGrath

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Australia great Glenn McGrath believes the form of England spearhead James Anderson could determine the course of the Ashes.

Australia holds the urn but heads into Thursday's opening Test at Edgbaston looking for its first series win in England since 2001.

Anderson, who turns 37 on Tuesday, has been battling to overcome a calf injury, but McGrath believes he could have a huge impact on the five-Test series if he stays fit.

"On home soil with the Dukes ball, he's the best in the world bowling in those conditions," said McGrath.

"He is a big player and if he has a big series for England, Australia will find it tough. If Australia bats well and can get on top of him, that'll make a massive impact on their chances."

The 49-year-old McGrath, working with online trading broker ThinkMarkets to encourage more young people to get into sport, added: "Jimmy is on his way to 600 Test wickets, which is absolutely incredible."

Anderson is now just 25 wickets shy of becoming the first fast bowler to take 600 in Tests, having surpassed former paceman McGrath's haul of 563 against India last September.

"Jimmy's got the record now and it won't be beaten," said McGrath. "For a fast bowler to beat whatever record he sets, they are going to have to play 150-plus Tests."

With the I-League and ISL, we struggle between the old and the new: Praful Patel

The AIFF president says a solution must be found so that it is a happy marriage between the two

EXCLUSIVE

AYON SENGUPTA
NEW DELHI

All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel is in an unenviable position as he tries to douse the flames of discontent that threatens to engulf Indian football. He, however, wants the conversation to move away from the usual debate of club structure to something more meaningful. "The debate is going in the wrong direction; the focus should be on grassroots. My satisfaction comes from that," Patel told the *Sportstar*. *Excerpts*.

You took over the AIFF reins in 2008 and your innings comes to an end soon. How has been the journey?

It has been exciting but at times turbulent. Football in India went through a bad phase and to recover from that was not easy. One good thing that has happened is we have been able to lay the foundation for a strong footballing culture and the genesis of a strong footballing nation.

What are the plans for grassroots development?

We had Robb Bann, a very seasoned technical director who gave us the Vision 2020 document, a master-plan which didn't exist before. We did well to implement most of it, the World Cup u-17 was part of it. We have now established baby leagues and many age-group tournaments which will pay dividends in the future.

World-over the sport is developed by clubs. Don't ISL and I-League clubs need to do more to promote grassroots football?

Clubs are participating and building teams at every level with baby leagues and other tournaments. We are spreading the role of development from the federation to the clubs. We must give the clubs some leeway as we can't expect them to do everything at one go. They are doing a lot of work.

Pleased as punch: Praful Patel is happy that the foundation for a strong footballing culture has been laid. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

How do you think five seasons of ISL has helped Indian football?

I would say many things are there. People look at the visible; suddenly you see a tournament and there's excitement. But ISL is not the ultimate of Indian football. My biggest satisfaction has been to bring the sport to a young generation.

That will be always important, you have a national team and a good coach who will mould it. You cannot shape a 25-year-old fully, but if you start with a 12 or 13-year-old, he/she can be moulded more effectively and that will be more sustaining.

The ISL's clubs, despite all the investment, have failed to create a strong fan-base compared to traditional clubs?

If Bengaluru FC can do it, why can't others. Study what they are doing. The primary difference is among fans – traditional fans support traditional clubs, but that's a myopic view. Why do people suddenly follow Barcelona, Real Madrid or Manchester United. Because they have such large investments and can reach out to more people.

FIFA's motto today is football must be financially viable. There is amateur and professional football and we are somewhere in between. With the ISL and I-League, we struggle between the old and the new.

Will the AFC agree to ISL and I-League coexisting for the next three seasons? They had asked the federation to merge them by 2019-20.

The ISL has a certain financial structure and the I-League a different one. You are talking about integrating it, but how will you integrate a club which is spending ₹2 crore a year with one which is spending ₹40 crore.

A solution must be found which is a happy marriage between the two. Otherwise, the club with ₹2-crore investment won't do well and will run out of steam.

Is it against the AIFF constitution to have officials from its commercial partner in Standing Committees?

Even in AFC and other boards there are many people who come and attend. They don't dictate Indian football. Everything cannot be made into an issue; if we want to get the best out of IMG-R, we need to get them involved. They have a mandate to support Indian football for a number of years aand we have to work with them to get the best.

What do you think should be the ideal long-term solution?

The ideal long-term solution will be one league with promotion and relegation. No FIFA or AFC will allow us a closed league. So, there's no need to worry for these I-League clubs.

Can we expect some tough decisions from the AIFF then?

It's a tough decision to say that I will speak to AFC and IMG-R. I haven't spoken to them yet. But, since they (six I-League clubs) have summarily dismissed my viewpoints, why should I discuss?

Both the Indian coach and the captain have recently said that players need to play more matches. What can be done to achieve this?

Their opinion is fair enough. Those are issues that can be looked into. We are reviving the Durand Cup and Western India Football Association is reviving Rovers. So players can have more games. I want them to benefit as we need a solid pool for the coach to choose from. Only then will the national team gain.

TV PICKS

UTT: Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.

IN BRIEF

Dalilah shatters 400m hurdles World record

DES MOINES

Olympic champion Dalilah Muhammad shattered one of the longest standing records in women's athletics, in the 400m hurdles at the US Championships on Sunday. The 29-year-old powered home in 52.20s, obliterating the 16-year-old World record of 52.34s by Russia's Yuliya Pechonkina in 2003. "I'm just shocked," Dalilah said. "My coach kept telling me (the record) was there. I just had to trust that and go for it." AFP

Momota, Yamaguchi raise Olympic hopes

TOKYO

World No. 1 Kento Momota said he was lifted by the crowd and can't wait to return for the Tokyo Olympics after he sealed a home singles sweep at the Japan Open.
Momota and Akane Yamaguchi gave Japan its first-ever sweep of the men's and women's singles titles on Sunday, raising Japanese hopes a year out from the 2020 Games. AFP

de Minaur is champion at Atlanta

WASHINGTON

Australia's Alex de Minaur captured his second ATP title in dominant style, dropping just 10 points on serve in a 6-3, 7-6(2) triumph over Taylor Fritz. Third-seeded de Minaur, 20, on Sunday became just the third player to win an ATP title without facing a break-point since the Tour began keeping stats in 1991. German Tommy Haas did it in Memphis in 2007 and American John Isner managed the feat in Newport in 2017. AFP

Sevastova fights back to win fourth WTA title

JURMALA (LATVIA)

Latvian top seed Anastasija Sevastova rallied from a set and a break down to win her home Baltic Open and fourth career title on Sunday with a 3-6, 7-5, 6-4 win over Polish qualifier Katarzyna Kawa. The 26-year-old Kawa, playing in her first WTA main draw, led 6-3, 2-0 at one stage and looked set for a shock triumph. However, World No. 11 Sevastova rallied to take victory after two hours and nine minutes, surviving a scare at 15-30 down in the final set. AFP

Asian men's u-23 volleyball team named

CHENNAI

The Volleyball Federation of India on Monday announced the squad for the Asian men's u-23 volleyball championship to be held at Nay Pyi Taw in Myanmar.
The squad: Amit (capt.), Shon Thanghalathil John, Gagan Kumar, Chirag, Himanshu Tyagi, Muthusamy Appavu, Saqlain Tariq Khan, Prince, Sonu Kumar Jakhar, Shikhar Singh, Ashwin Raj Mahesh, Hari Prasad Bevinakuppe Suresha (L) and Pritam Singh Chauhan (coach).

Sathiyan shows the way for Delhi

Helps the defending champion beat U Mumba and register its maiden win

Proving his worth: G. Sathiyan played his part, both in singles as well as mixed doubles, in the company of Bernadette Szocs. ▪COURTESY UTT

UTT

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

In a clash involving small margins, G. Sathiyan proved his worth by helping Dabang Delhi beyond U Mumba in the Ultimate Table Tennis league here on Monday.

With the tie-score locked at 3-3, Sathiyan lived up to the reputation of being the World No. 24. He played his part in the crucial mixed doubles with Bernadette Szocs and then blanked Manav Thakkar 3-0 to give Delhi the winning lead at 8-4.

In the last singles, Sutirtha Mukherjee defeated a tentative Krittwika Sinha Roy 2-1 to reduce the margin of defeat for Mumbai. The 9-6 result signalled defending champion Dabang's maiden victory and U Mumba's first loss this season.

Closely contested

The fact that seven games were decided on 'golden point' reflects how closely contested the match was.

Sathiyan was in his element in the doubles, especially in the opening game. Once Manav Thakkar and Doo Hoi Kem bounced back to level the score, Sathiyan assumed control in the decider.

Against Thakkar, Sathiyan was tested to the hilt but he kept his cool to win the golden points in the first two games. With the pressure somewhat off in the third, Sathiyan came out firing and the difference between the two was difficult to miss.

"I think Manav played really well today. I had to keep my cool during those crucial golden points. My 3-0 margin against Manav and my team winning five out of seven 'golden points' clinched it," said Sathiyan, the Delhi skipper.

Before Sathiyan held centre-stage, U Mumba took the lead with World No. 12 Doo Hoi Kem winning 2-1 against 19th ranked Bernadette. Delhi restored parity with the 72nd-ranked Jon Persson with a surprise 2-1 win over Kirill Gerassimenko. Persson – like Kem and Sathiyan – grabbed the 'golden point' twice. He bounced back from 0-4 in the first game and 7-10 in the second.

Unlucky

A luckless Gerassimenko, clearly the better player on the day, deservedly won the third game.

The results: Dabang Delhi bt U Mumba 9-6 (Bernadette Szocs lost to Doo Hoi Kem 10-11, 10-11, 11-8; Jon Persson bt Kirill Gerassimenko 11-10, 11-10, 7-11; G. Sathiyan & Bernadette bt Manav Thakkar & Doo Hoi Kem 11-2, 8-11, 11-8; Sathiyan bt Thakkar 11-10, 11-10, 11-7; Kwrittwika Sinha Roy lost to Sutirtha Mukherjee 4-11, 10-11, 11-8).

Testing times for the traditional format

Amir's decision to quit red-ball cricket has come as a shock

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

Unexpected: Mohammad Amir still had a lot of Test cricket left, but fell victim to the lure of T20s. ▪AP

It is a shock to the system. And a wake-up call. If the ICC and the different Boards do not respond now, Test cricket could be in peril.

And this at a time when the ICC is attempting to revive the five-day game and lend it a context with the World Test championship.

Mohammad Amir's decision to retire from Test cricket at just 27 – when he is at the peak of his prowess – has jolted the cricketing community.

The talented left-arm paceman had several years of Test cricket before him but succumbed to the lure of the various Twenty20 leagues.

He will be available for Pakistan in ODI and Twenty20 cricket but not in Tests which is the most demanding and the complete format.

Lure of the lucre

When the IPL first came into being, in 2008, followed gradually by the other leagues, it was said that there would be deterrents against international cricketers retiring early from Tests to play in the more lucrative shorter formats.

Over time, these idealistic views have been thrown out of the window. And West Indies cricket, the first casualty really, was torn apart.

Across the cricketing world, several players, particularly pacemen, called time on their Test careers to focus essentially on T20 leagues. South African cricket is staring at a full blown crisis with so many players leaving.

For a legend such as AB de Villiers, even a final World Cup appearance for his country is not enough motivation. He makes a feeble, cosmetic attempt towards the end, but the team rightly says no.

Yet, Amir's case is the most disappointing for he is just 27. And then he owes so much to cricket after being found guilty of corruption in the spot-fixing scandal of 2011.

He served time in a British jail, admitted his guilt and was part of ICC's anti-corruption programme. Amir was welcomed back to all forms of the game in 2015.

The Pakistan Cricket Board stood by him, so did the ICC; let's not destroy a young cricketer's career was their thinking.

And how does Amir pay them back? By taking an easy and many might call 'selfish' route out of Test cricket.

His wife is a British Pakistani and there are rumours that Amir plans to settle in England.

Not much impact

Mercifully, Indian cricketers have not been impacted by early Test retirements since the BCCI does not allow its cricketers to figure in leagues outside of the IPL.

And left-arm paceman Ashish Nehra did so well after his Test career was over.

Shining examples

And thankfully, there are several cricketers, the British pace pair of James Anderson and Stuart Broad being the shining examples, whose heart still bleeds for Tests.

But many other countries face a looming danger as they try to keep their Test flock together.

It's time for ICC and the various Boards to act.

If you are serious about the World Test championship, do not allow cricketers to desert the royal five-day game.

एच.एस.सी.सी HSCC A Miniratna Co.

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NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

NIT No. HSCC/PGCIL/NIMHANS-Bengaluru/2019 Dated: 26.07.2019

Online item rate bids are invited on behalf of **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited through e-tendering** from eligible contractors/firms who fulfill qualification criteria as stipulated in Vol.-I of NIT/PQ document for the works:- **Construction of Power Grid Vishram Sadan at National Institute Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, Karnataka and their maintenance during Defects Liability Period**. Estimated project cost is Rs. 18.66 Crore, Completion period is 18 Calendar Months & other details available on detailed NIT. Tender available online from 02.08.2019 and Last Date of submission of Bid is 20.08.2019 at 15:00 hrs.

The detailed NIT will be available on websites www.tenderwizard.com/HSCC and CPP portal. Corrigendum to this publication, if any, would appear only on said websites and not be published.

DGM (C), HSCC (India) Limited

Jaideep does it for Patna Pirates

Thalaivas' raid specialists find themselves overshadowed

On the prowl: Rahul Chaudhari plots his next move in the Pirates zone. ▪PRO KABADDI LEAGUE

PKL

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

Defender Jaideep grabbed the initiative for Patna Pirates with stunning tackles against Tamil Thalaivas' match-winning raiders in the seventh ProKabaddi League on Monday.

Seven tackle points from him, including two Super Tackles, saw Pirates win the neck-and-neck thriller 24-23. Hadi Ostorak was the next best contributor with two tackle points in a match that showcased top-quality defending.

Thalaivas' raid specialists, Rahul Chaudhari (five), Ajay Thakur (three) were overshadowed by Jaideep.

Manjeet Chillar (four points from six tackles) shone early on to put in-form Pardeep Narwal, one of PKL's crowd-pullers, in the shade.

Jaideep's timely charge forward and tackle on substitute Ajith Kumar, another of the many Super Tackles from Pirates, set the tone for the second half.

Thalaivas' main attackers could not escape, Monu single-handedly bringing down Chaudhari with an ankle hold near the centre line and keeping him off balance even as two teammates pulled the raider back.

Manjeet's double blow on Pirates raiders set the tone for a contest between sides brimming with experienced players. The Thalaivas tackler got a firm hold on Narwal early on, then shoved Jang Kun Lee off the court with a speedy burst and push.

The former's form in the defence kept the heat on Pirates as the tie picked up pace.

Ostorak's Super Tackle on Chaudhari inspired a fightback from Pirates, though reduced to three or two players at one stage. Monu came up with two raid points at a crucial stage, a back-kick to take Shabber Bapu by surprise deep in the rival half standing out.

In the second match, Bengal Warriors rode on Maninder Singh's exploits to outplay Puneri Paltan 43-24.

Tuesday is a rest day.

The results: Patna Pirates 24 (Jaideep 7, Hadi Ostorak 2) bt Tamil Thalaivas 23 (Rahul Chaudhari 5, Manjeet Chillar 4).

Bengal Warriors 43 (Maninder Singh 14, Mohammed Nabibaksh 8, Rinku Jaiswal 5) bt Puneri Paltan 23 (Manjeet 3, Sushant Sail 3, Girish Ernak 3).

Wednesday's matches: Haryana Steelers v Jaipur Pink Panthers, U Mumba v UP Yoddhas.

BCCI State units want to end impasse

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The State association representatives of the BCCI, on Monday, resolved to end the confrontation related to adopting the new constitution set by the Supreme Court.

At a meeting attended by 16 State units, it was decided to "move on", with an emphasis on getting rid of the Committee of Administrators (CoA).

The next hearing in the Supreme Court is slated for August 8.

The units that attended the meeting were Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Baroda, Saurashtra, Assam, Bengal, Sikkim, Manipur, Assam, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

The BCCI elections are scheduled to be held in October.

Bids invited

Meanwhile, the BCCI has invited bids for the title sponsor rights for international and domestic matches for the period commencing from Sept. 1, 2019 to March 1, 2023.

Dhruv is India u-19 skipper

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh's wicket-keeper-batsman Dhruv Chand Jurel will lead India under-19 in the Youth Asia Cup to be held in Sri Lanka from September 3 to 15.
The squad: Dhruv Chand Jurel (Capt. & wk), Suved Parkar, Thakur Tilak Varma, Nehal Wadhera, Arjun Azad, Shashwat Rawat, Varun Lavande, Salil Arora, Karan Lal, Atharva Ankolekar, Pankaj Yadav, Akash Singh, Sushant Mishra, Purnank Tyagi, and Vidyadhar Patil.

IN BRIEF

Patrice Evra retires, to focus on coaching

ROME

Former France and Manchester United defender Patrice Evra has called time on his playing career, according to the Italian daily *Gazzetta dello Sport*. "My career as a player is officially over," the 38-year-old told the newspaper. Evra made his name with Nice and Monaco before Alex Ferguson signed him for Manchester United in 2006. He went on to make almost 300 appearances for the club, winning five Premier League titles and the Champions League. He moved to Juventus in 2014, winning two Serie A titles, before spells at Marseille and West Ham. He also played 81 times for France and was captain at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. AFP

Ko Jin-young wins second Major of 2019

EVIAN

South Korea's Ko Jin-young won the Evian Championship on Sunday, her second Major of 2019. The 24-year-old, who captured the ANA Inspiration earlier this season, fired a final round 67 for 15-under for the championship and a two-shot victory. Third round leader and compatriot Kim Hyo-joo, China's Feng Shanshan and Jennifer Kupcho of the United States finished tied for second on 13-underOpar. AFP

Maiden USPGA title for Morikawa

LOS ANGELES

American Collin Morikawa birdied the final three holes to win his first US PGA title on Sunday at the Barracuda Championship in only his sixth start as a tour professional. The 22-year-old finished on 47 points, three more than US runner-up Troy Merritt in the only US tour event that uses the Modified Stableford scoring system. AFP

Anjum betters World record

Holds her nerve in a gripping final against Mehuli Ghosh

SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Anjum Moudgil is ever so relaxed. Even when she is on the firing lane, there is a certain calmness. Yet, she can conjure up an unmatched intensity to emerge champion, with smile intact.

The World Championship silver medallist, the first to win the Olympic quota for shooting for Tokyo, Anjum shot better than the World record to beat Mehuli Ghosh by 1.7 points for the women's air rifle gold in the 12th Sardar Sajjan Singh Sethi Masters shooting championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, on Monday.

In the absence of the World No. 1 and World record holder Apurvi Chandela (252.9) and junior World Cup gold medallist Elavenil Valarivan it was literally a two-horse race.

Shriyanka Sadangi did stir up interest before settling for the bronze.

After shooting the third best score in qualification, 0.3 point behind Mehuli, Anjum was a class act in the gripping final.

With five shots to go, Anjum had a 1.2-point lead. Then, she produced 10.7, 10.9, 10.8, 10.5 and 10.7 even as Mehuli did not flinch, and shot close to her best.

Mehuli's last seven shots were 10.5, 10.6, 10.6, 10.8, 10.6, 10.8 and 10.5, as she was just 0.1 short of the the men's World record of 252.3.

Interestingly, both the shooters had 10 points with all their 24 shots in the final.

Quite characteristically, Mehuli responded to the situation by winning the junior gold with 253, 0.6 point ahead of Elavenil.

This time, both the shooters were brilliant, but Mehuli handled the climax better, after Elavenil had led by 0.1 point before the last four shots.

Intense fight: Mehuli Ghosh, Anjum Moudgil and Shriyanka Sadangi. ▪ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

The results:

10m air rifle: Men: 1. Ravi Kumar 250.6 (628.8); 2. Kiran Jadhav 249.5 (627.4); 3. Deepak Kumar 228.8 (629.3).

Junior men: 1. Harshit Binjwa 249.0 (617.9); 2. Dhanush Srikanth 248.6 (627.6); 3. Surya Pratap Singh 228.3 (620.4).

Youth men: 1. Yash Vardhan 251.0 (629.3); 2. Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar 249.9 (621.0); 3. Dhanush Srikanth 227.7 (626.8).

Women: 1. Anjum Moudgil 253.9 (628.5); 2. Mehuli Ghosh 252.2 (628.8); 3. Shriyanka Sadangi 229.5 (625.5).

Junior women: 1. Mehuli Ghosh 253.0 (628.8); 2. Elavenil Valarivan 252.4 (628.7); 3. Zeena Khitta 230.5 (624.0).

Youth women: 1. Zeena Khitta 249.6 (624.0); 2. Kashika Pradhan 246.6 (618.0); 3. Vidisha Saxena 225.5 (618.9).

25m sports pistol: Junior men: 1. Udhayveer Sidhu 583; 2. Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu 582; 3. Dilshaan Kelley 581.

Bopanna-Paire duo bows out in qualifying

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
WASHINGTON

Top seeds Rohan Bopanna and Benoit Paire of France lost 2-6, 6-3, 10-7 to second seeds Matthew Ebden and Nicholas Monroe in the second and final qualifying round of the $2,046,340 ATP-500 tournament.

Leander Paes received a wild card into the main draw with Jack Sock of the U.S.

In the Challenger in China, Arjun Kadhe beat Blake Ellis of Australia 1-6, 6-3, 7-6(4) in the first round.

The results:

$2,046,340 ATP-500, Washington: Qualifying doubles (second and final round): Matthew Ebden (Aus) & Nicholas Monroe (USA) bt Benoit Paire (Fra) & Rohan Bopanna 2-6, 6-3, [10-7].

First round: Paire & Bopanna bt Nathan Pasha & Max Schnur (US) 6-4, 6-3.

$135,400 Challenger, Chengdu: First round: Arjun Kadhe bt Blake Ellis (Aus) 1-6, 6-3, 7-6(4); Matthew Christopher Romios (Aus) bt Sidharth Rawat 7-6(7), 6-4.

€46,600 Challenger, Liberec, Czech Republic: First round: Dragos Dima (Rou) bt Sasi Kumar Mukund 6-4, 3-6, 6-0.

Champion Bull wins feature event

HYDERABAD: M/s. Ashok Kumar Gupta, Sumeet Gupta & Rakesh R. Jhunjhunwala's Champion Bull (A. Sandesh up) won the Sri Ramakrishnam Raju Memorial Cup, the main event of the races held here on Monday (July 29). M. Srinivas Reddy trains the winner.

1 **REGENCY PLATE (DIV. II)**, (1,600m), 5-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **CITY OF SAILS** (Rohit Kumar) 1, Golden Hope (A.A. Vikrant) 2, Vijay's Empress (R. Ajinkya) 3 and On My Way (Aneel) 4. 2, 7 and 2-1/4. 1m, 41.71s. ₹19 (w), 9, 6 and 36 (p), SHP: 39, FP: 163, Q: 90, Tla: 2,916. Favourite: On My Way. Owners: M/s. K. Thirubhuvan Reddy & K. Vivek Reddy. Trainer: Satyanarayana.

2 **SET ALIGHT PLATE** (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms): **QUEEN RUNNER** (Suraj Narredu) 1, Exclusive Art (A. Sandesh) 2, Star Of Tiara (Umesh) 3 and Ashwa Calvari (B. Nikhil) 4. 1/4, 3/4 and 1/2. 1m, 29.35s. ₹20 (w), 8, 5 and 47 (p), SHP: 24, FP: 61, Q: 14, Tla: 921. Favourite: Exclusive Art. Owners: Mr. V. Narendar Reddy, Mr. N.V. Rohin Kumar & Mr. Ashok Rupani. Trainer: Faisal Hassan.

3 **SHIVAKUMAR LAL MEMORIAL CUP** (1,600m), 3-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): **MARK MY WORD** (Nakhat Singh) 1, Exclusive Blue (A. Sandesh) 2, Cape Kidnappers (P. Sai Kumar) 3 and Midnight Dream (Umesh) 4. 1/2, 4-1/4 and 4-1/2. 1m, 40.57s. ₹55 (w), 9 and 6 (p), SHP: 17, FP: 140, Q: 26, Tla: 266. Favourite: Exclusive Blue. Owner: M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust rep. by Mr. A.C. Muthuah. Trainer: Satheesh.

4 **FLOWERSOFTHEFOREST PLATE** (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **KIONIA** (Afroz Khan) 1, Angel Tesoro (P. Sai Kumar) 2, Southern Lady (Suraj Narredu) 3 and Kushi Kushi Kushi (Aneel) 4. Not run: Spiritual. 1-3/4, 4 and 3-1/4. 1m, 15.87s. ₹25 (w), 7, 8 and 5 (p), SHP: 194, Q: 77, Tla: 267. Favourite: Southern Lady. Owners; M/s. Meka Yugandhar, Derrick J. Rego & M. Rama Krishna Reddy. Trainer: L.D'Silva.

5 **VIJAYS CONQUER PLATE (DIV. I)**, (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III): **ESCALATING STRIKER** (Umesh) 1, Story Teller (Nakath Singh) 2, Mossad (Ajeeth Kumar) 3 and Blazing Speed (P. Sai Kumar) 4. 3/4, 1-3/4 and 3. 1m, 16s. ₹9 (w), 6, 8 and 9 (p), SHP: 20, FP: 33, Q: 27, Tla: 92. Favourite: Escalating Striker. Owner: Mr. A.K. Jaiswal. Trainer L. D'Silva.

6 **SRI S. RAMAKRISHNAM RAJU MEMORIAL CUP** (1,400m), 3-y-o & over, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II): **CHAMPION BULL** (A. Sandesh) 1, Be Sure (Nakhat Singh) 2, Meritocracy (B.R. Kumar) 3 and Starlight (Kuldeep Singh) 4. Not run: Newport. 1/2, 1-1/2 and hd. 1m, 27.91s. ₹13 (w), 5, 5 and 12 (p), SHP: 13, FP: 20, Q: 8, Tla: 77. Favourite: Be Sure. Owners: M/s. Ashok Kumar Gupta, Sumeet Gupta & Rakesh R. Jhunjhunwala. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

7 **REGENCY PLATE (DIV. I)**, (1,600m), 5-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **ACTUALLY** (Surya Prakash) 1, Avantika (B.R. Kumar) 2, Semira (Afroz Khan) 3 and Valee Tiger (G. Naresh) 4. Not run: Top Man. 1/2, 4-3/4 and 3. 1m, 43.29s. ₹11 (w), 5, 9 and 9 (p), SHP: 22, FP: 59, Q: 37, Tla: 207. Favourite: Acutally. Owner: Mr. M. Satyanarayana. Trainer: Deshmukh.

8 **VIJAYS CONQUER PLATE (DIV. II)**, (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III): **VALLEE IKON** (B.R. Kumar) 1, Country's Gift (Santosh Raj) 2, Rhine (Aneel) 3 and Diesis Dream (Umesh) 4. Not run: Run Runner Run. 1-1/4, shd and 3. 1m, 16.38s. ₹63 (w), 15, 6 and 8 (p), SHP: 17, FP: 250, Q: 72, Tla: 698. Favourite: Country's Gift. Owner: Mr. S. Khalid Qadri. Trainer: Sk. Waseem.

Jackpot: ₹15,935 (31 tkts.), Runner-up: 205 (1,031 tkts.), Mini Jkt: 1,783 (79 tkts.), Tr (i): 1,190 (40 tkts.), (ii): 620 (68 tkts.), (iii): 756 (115 tkts.).

Sindhu continues title quest

Shubhankar has a tough opening against top seed Momota

THAILAND OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BANGKOK

The successive losses to Japan's Akane Yamaguchi have been disappointing, but Indian ace P.V. Sindhu will have to put it all behind when she renews her chase for a maiden title this year in the Thailand Open badminton tournament, starting here on Tuesday.

The last two weeks have been an emotional roller-coaster ride for Sindhu as after finishing second-best at the Indonesia Open, she was shown the door in the Japan Open quarterfinals.

On both occasions, familiar foe Yamaguchi turned out to be Sindhu's nemesis. The Indian will be desperate to break her seven-month long title jinx.

Seeded fourth, Sindhu will open her campaign against unseeded Chinese Han Yue. Sindhu might face her first real test in the quarterfinals with a possible clash against sixth seed Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand.

Time to click: P.V. Sindhu, for whom the last two weeks have been an emotional roller-coaster ride, will look to make amends. ▪ MATT ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES

The other Indian in the fray, Saina Nehwal, seeded seventh, has been hampered by several injuries of late and has been pitted against a qualifier in the opening round.

In men's singles, Shubhankar Dey has a tough opening against top seed Kento Momota of Japan, while B. Sai Pranneeth is up against Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen.

If both the Indians manage to get past the first hurdle, they will face each other next.

Fifth seed K. Srikanth will take on a qualifier, while H.S. Prannoy will be up against Wong Wing Ki Vincent of Hong Kong.

Sameer Verma, seeded eighth, will face Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia while P. Kashyap will take on France's Brice Leverdez.

Sourabh Verma and Ajay Jayaram will have to go through the qualifiers.

Bhuvi inks deal with Baseline Ventures

SPORTS REPORTER
CHENNAI

India seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar on Monday inked a management deal with Baseline Ventures. In the recently concluded World Cup in England, the speedster finished with 10 wickets from six matches at an economy of 5.20.

The 29-year-old has claimed 128 wickets from 111 ODIs and joins the likes of Ravindra Jadeja, Prithvi Shaw, Smriti Mandhana, Radha Yadav and Jemimah Rodrigues. The other sporting stars managed by Baseline Ventures include P.V Sindhu, Pankaj Advani, Apurvi Chandela, K. Srikanth and G. Sathiyan.

Quess Corp to delink from East Bengal

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
KOLKATA

East Bengal's majority stake holder Quess Corp is looking to end its association with the club which is approaching its century.

This was made clear by Ajit Isaac, Chairman and MD, Quess Corp, at a conference call of his company last week. Quess came into the picture last year when East Bengal was looking for a patron for its senior team after the departure of its investor Kingfisher.

Quess Group's association with East Bengal club ran into rough weather earlier this year over the issue of participation in the Super Cup. Isaac, the Bengaluru-based Quess Corp chairman and MD, announced that the company will "monetise the asset" when he was asked by an analyst about the company's future with East Bengal.

"We (have) already started talking to our other stakeholders on how to monetise this asset. We have been also been talking to a few potential investors. It will take some time, but definitely by the end of this season, we will not be there with the club," said Isaac.

In a post on social media on Monday evening, Isaac wrote: "Some news reports have been published about the continuity of our relationship with EBFC about which more clarity will emerge".

Pelissari joins Gokulam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOZHIKODE

Brazilian Bruno Pelissari has joined Gokulam Kerala. The midfielder, who is no strange to India thanks to his ISL stints with Chennaiyin FC and Delhi Dynamos, has already begun training here with his new club.

The attacking midfielder has also played in Moldova, besides his native country, where he appeared in three seasons for Atletico Paranaense in Serie A (Brazil's top division).

"He is a wonderful player, who can create lot of chances," Gokulam coach Fernando Santiago Valera said. "It is great to see such a player in the team."

Durand Cup: Group-D matches shifted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The first edition of Durand Cup football, to be held in Bengal, saw a change in the fixtures with the Group-D matches shifted from Siliguri in North Bengal to Howrah near here. The date of the semifinals has also been postponed by a day.

The Group-D matches, featuring Gokulam Kerala FC, Chennaiyin FC, TRAU FC and Indian Air Force, were scheduled at the Kanchenjunga Stadium in Siliguri but had to be shifted as the ground was not ready following heavy rain during the last few days.

The matches will now be held at the Howrah Municipal Corporation Stadium.

This has forced the organisers to redraw the fixtures of almost all the groups and saw the semifinals postponed by a day to August 21. The final will held as scheduled on August 24 at the Salt Lake Stadium here.

Anika wins World deaf title

ANI
MADURAI

Tamil Nadu's Jerlin Anika won the gold in the World deaf youth badminton championships in Taipei recently. Anika bagged four medals, including two silver and a bronze. The 15-year-old is a 10th standard student of the Ouvaiyar Government School here.

Dressel — swimming's new golden boy

Invites comparisons with the legendary Phelps

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GWANGJU (SOUTH KOREA)

American superstar Caeleb Dressel has invited comparisons to Olympic legend Michael Phelps after lighting up a World swimming championships plagued by doping rows, a sexual harassment arrest and a fatal nightclub accident.

Dressel came away from Gwangju with six gold medals and two silvers, winning all four of his individual events and obliterating Phelps' 10-year-old 100m butterfly World record.

Shadows

But even the heroics of swimming's tattooed golden boy were often overshadowed by an explosive doping controversy, which was looming even before Chinese giant Sun Yang set foot in South Korea.

Above the fray, Dressel repeated in the 50 and 100m freestyle, as well as the 100m butterfly – but not before setting an eye-popping new World best of 49.50s to eclipse Phelps' old bodysuit mark by 0.32.

Inevitably, talk turned to next year's Tokyo Olympics and whether Dressel can emulate Phelps, who racked up a record eight gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Games.

Making waves: USA's Caeleb Dressel came away from Gwangju with six gold medals and two silvers. ▪ AFP

"If this is where we're at heading to Tokyo, we'll be very dangerous next year," added Dressel, after the United States once again topped the medals table with 14 golds – nine more than nearest rivals Australia.

Dressel said he had been "absolutely devastated" to hear that two people had died and several athletes injured when a balcony inside a Gwangju nightclub collapsed at the weekend.

Australian officials subsequently announced relay star Shayna Jack had tested positive for a banned substance before the championships – an opportunity for schadenfreude for the Chinese – before Hungarian swimmer Tamas Kenderesi was arrested on charges of sexual harassment after an alleged incident at a nightclub.

Like a film script

"The scriptwriters for 'Days of Our Lives' couldn't have written a better script for this world championships," said Australia's Cate Campbell, who won two relay golds and took silver behind American Simone Manuel in the women's 100m free.

In the pool, nine World records tumbled in Korea, Hungarian teenager Kristof Milak pulverising Phelps' 200m butterfly mark by a whopping 0.78s.

The stars who sizzled and fizzled

TOUR DE FRANCE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

A look-back at those who reached beyond the norm and those who failed to deliver what had been expected of them at this year's edition of the Tour which was won by Colombia's Egan Bernal on Sunday.

The TOPS

Julian Alaphilippe: Will go down in Tour history for an unrelentingly valiant ride with his bullet like supertuck downhill charge, and his uphill short-climb kick, had a human touch and sheer guts as he thrilled France with his unlikely 14 days in yellow.

Caleb Ewan: After winning his first sprint, Ewan said the photo-finish victory was 'almost worth leaving Australia for'. The 22-year-old ended the 2019 edition with three stage wins, one more than either Simon Yates or Alaphilippe.

Simon Yates: Yates came to the Tour having flopped at the Giro d'Italia and was riding under the radar as sherpa for his twin Adam.

He emerged from the shadows to close out a pair of breakaways and take his first two stage wins.

His next target is 2020 Olympic road race in Tokyo before turning his attention to the Tour in 2021.

Thierry Gouvenou: The course designer has to be given a certain amount of credit for putting together 21 stages that encouraged breakaways which ignited such a thrilling Tour and for placing the Alpine trilogy that ultimately decided the race right at the end, maintaining the suspense, even after the weather almost undid his work.

Mixed performances: Though Egan Bernal, centre, made the Tour his own, the locals were treated to some fine riding by Julian Alaphilippe, right, even as the king of the mountains Romain Bardet did not deliver as expected. ▪ AP

The FLOPS

Jakob Fuglsang: The Dane came into the Tour on the back of a Liege-Bastogne-Liege one-day win where, he said, he had decided to win or die, and a one-week Criterium du Dauphine triumph that suggested he was a potential Tour champion.

But the Astana captain built a reputation as a gripe when he moaned after losing time on the stage to Albi saying no-one had warned him about a crosswind, a claim that exasperated his bosses.

His disappointing Tour ended when he crashed out, through no fault of his own.

Adam Yates: Came to the 2019 Tour looking for a place in the top five or even the podium spot but struggled every time the going got tough on a climb.

He was also unable to keep up in a breakaway of lesser riders on the Galibier after the main contenders decided to ignore him and let him go.

Romain Bardet: In the end, Bardet just about redeemed himself with the king of the mountains jersey, but the man who finished on the podium spots in 2016 and 2017 was a flop having apparently overtrained and by Sunday was almost half an hour behind Bernal.

After losing more than a minute to the big guns on the first big climb, up La Planche des Belles Filles, he stopped at the finish line, wiped out.

He cut a sorry sight as compatriots Alaphilippe and Thibaut Pinot shone.