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MILESTONES
IN EDUCATION

WORLD 12
STATE DEPT WILL FOLLOW LAW
ON TRUMP IMPEACHMENT: POMPEO

SPORT 15
INDIA BEAT SOUTH
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13 VIVACITY

NC non-committal on poll participation

Delegation calls on NC bosses, seeks their release; PDP leaders allowed to meet Mehbooba today

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After 62 days of "house arrest" National Conference president and sitting parliamentarian from Srinagar Farooq Abdullah for the first time met a 15-member delegation of Jammu-based party leaders at his "fortified" Gupkar Road residence in Srinagar on Sunday.

In another significant development, the State administration has also given permission to a 17-member PDP delegation to meet party chief Mehbooba Mufti in Srinagar on Monday.

Ever since these leaders were detained, they were not allowed to meet political delegations. Only their family members were permitted to meet them.

The State administration had earlier given permission to the delegation led by former MLA and Jammu provincial president of the National Conference Devender Singh Rana to meet detained leaders.

Before meeting Abdullah, National Conference leaders from Jammu also called on former Chief Minister and party vice-president Omar Abdullah at Hari Niwas guest house.

The delegation discussed developments in the State and upcoming local body polls during the separate meetings with the two leaders.

Though images of Abdullah, flashing victory sign, standing in the company of his



National Conference president Farooq Abdullah, his wife Molly Abdullah, party leaders Mohammad Akbar Lone and Hasnain Masoodi wave towards mediapersons at their residence in Gupkar, Srinagar on Sunday

wife Molly Abdullah and two senior Parliamentarians from Kashmir Valley hogged lime-light throughout the day. Omar Abdullah, sporting a beard, was seen clicking a selfie with party leaders.

After meeting the party president and the vice-presi-

dent, NC leader Devender Singh Rana told reporters, "Let them be released, then the working committee of the party will meet and discuss and then we will formulate a strategy for the future."

He, however, remained non-committal on participat-

ing in the BDC polls at this juncture. In response to a question whether NC is going to participate in the BDC polls, Rana said, "If the political process has to start then these members have to be released."

On his return, Rana once again told reporters in Jammu,

"The party leadership in Kashmir Valley is behind bars. Even if the mandate has to be signed it will be signed by the party president and proposed by the general secretary."

He said, at present, both of them are under detention. Therefore for the political

LOCAL ELECTIONS AMID LOCKDOWN

○ In response to a question whether the NC is going to participate in the BDC polls, Jammu provincial president of the National Conference Devender Singh Rana said, "If the political process has to start then these members have to be released."

○ Party delegation's was the first meeting of Farooq and Omar after they were detained on August 5, a day when the Centre announced abrogation of Article 370

process to start it is imperative that all the mainstream political leaders, who are under detention, are released and a conducive atmosphere is created, he said.

Referring to their meeting with Farooq and Omar, Rana told reporters, "We are very happy, both the leaders are well and in good spirits. Of course, they are pained and anguished about developments, particularly lockdown of the people."

He said the party, which has a legacy, history and a chequered track record, was of unanimous view that it would continue to strive for the welfare of the people and shall continue to work for communal harmony, brotherhood, togetherness and keep the secular fabric of the State shining.

Urgent hearing in SC over tree felling in Aarey

Tree cutting on; Sec 144 clamped; Prakash Ambedkar detained, released

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

As the felling of trees in Aarey Colony in Mumbai continued amid prohibitory orders for the second day on Sunday to make way for a Metro car shed, the Supreme Court on Sunday constituted a special Bench for an urgent hearing against the cutting of the trees on Monday.

The SC set up a special Bench on the basis of a letter addressed to the Chief Justice of India by one Rishav Ranjan against the cutting of the trees. The top court decided to register the letter as a public interest litigation.

Meanwhile, Dalit leader Prakash Ambedkar was detained when he tried to enter Aarey Colony where heavy security has been deployed at its five entry points, including the key connecting road near the Western Express Highway, to prevent people from going towards the area and to avoid any untoward incident.

The police official said the situation was expected to



become normal soon. Patrolling was stepped up in the tribal hamlets located in Aarey area and those found assembling there were being taken into custody, but later let off after proper verification, he said.

On Saturday, clashes broke out between the police and green activists who tried to stop tree cutting by Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) in Aarey Colony, leading to arrest of at least 29 people.

The MMRCL started hacking trees from Friday night to make way for the car shed, hours after the Bombay High Court dismissed four petitions challenging the decision to allow felling of nearly 2,700 trees in the prime green lung of the city.

CAPSULE

2 TRAINEE PILOTS KILLED IN TELANGANA CRASH

Hyderabad: Two trainee pilots, including a woman, were killed after their aircraft crashed in a field in Vikarabad district on Sunday, police said. The incident occurred in Bantwaram mandal of the district resulting in the death of the two pilots, they said.

RAJNATH TO PERFORM SHASTRA PUJA IN PARIS

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will on Tuesday perform "Shashtra Puja" (worship of weapons) on the occasion of Dussehra in Paris where he will receive the first Rafale fighter jet, officials said.

MONSOON WITHDRAWAL FROM OCTOBER 10: IMD

New Delhi: The monsoon is likely to begin its retreat from October 10, a delay of more than a month, the India Meteorological Department said (IMD) on Sunday. This is the longest delayed withdrawal of monsoon recorded by the IMD. The monsoon was "above normal" this year.

FOUR-TIME CONG MLA SAWHNEY JOINS AAP

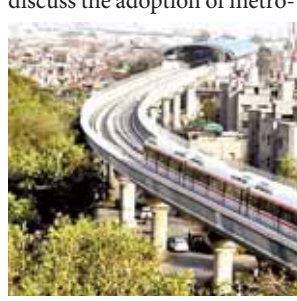
New Delhi: Four-time Congress MLA Parlad Singh Sawhney joined the Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday in the presence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Delhi Metro Ph-IV may give way to budget metrolite for 3 corridors

Centre's move aimed at cutting project cost by up to 40 per cent

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to reduce cost by 25 to 40 per cent compared to the existing Metro system, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is planning to introduce metrolite system for the remaining three corridors of Delhi Metro Phase-IV project.



lite standards for remaining three corridors of Delhi Metro Phase-IV project, which include Inderlok to Indraprastha, Lajpat Nagar to Saket G Block and Rithala-Bawana-Narela covering 42.28 km. Senior officials of Delhi Metro, DDA and National Highways Authority of India attended the meeting.

Delhi Metro asked DDA to provide population details along the Rithala-Narela corridor and also the estimated population increase in the next 30 years for assessing the traffic projection of the corridor. Also, the DDA was asked to fund the project.

"The maximum operational speed of the Metrolite is 60 km per hour... In any case, even with failure of on-board signalling, the speed is restricted to 25 km per hour. The train is to accommodate around 300 passengers," sources said.

The Ministry has recently issued standard specifica-

tions of the metrolite system which will be developed on surface and elevated stretches with stainless steel or aluminium bogey. With three non-separable coaches and low floor height of about 300-350 mm, the train's unit length should be of minimum 33 m.

The Ministry said the metrolite with a dedicated path will also act as feeder system to high capacity Metro.

If the road width in the cities does not permit to have both lines, one line can be provided on a particular road and the other line on a parallel road, said sources, adding that as an alternative, the entire road can be closed for road transport and only train can be operated with pedestrian plazas, as per proposals made by the Central Government.

The metrolite system will have shelter platforms but won't have AFC gates, platform screen doors, X-ray and baggage scanner.

"Ticket validators could be installed inside the metrolite train and shelter with NCMC/other ticketing systems," it said.



A girl dressed up as goddess Durga for Kumari Puja as part of Maha Ashtami celebrations during the ongoing Durga Puja in Agartala on Sunday

CNG, piped gas prices cut in Delhi, Noida

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prices of CNG and piped cooking gas in the national Capital and adjoining cities have been cut after a 12.5 per cent reduction in input natural gas rates, Indraprastha Gas Ltd said.

CNG sold to automobiles has been reduced by ₹1.90 per kg in Delhi and by ₹2.15 per kg in Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad, the company said in a statement.

The new consumer prices will be ₹45.20 per kg in Delhi and ₹51.35 per kg in Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad, it said. "The price of CNG being supplied by IGL in other areas shall remain unchanged as of now."

Separately, through text messages, IGL informed its piped natural gas customers that rates have been reduced by ₹0.90 per cubic metres in Delhi and by ₹0.40 in towns of UP.

It also announced a new cashback scheme of ₹0.50/kg for CNG fuelling at IGL Smart Cards from 11 am to 4 pm and from 12 am to 6 am.

Jobless two-timer poses as ISRO scientist, Netflix a/c helps wife nail him

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A PhD student in Delhi has alleged her husband had impersonated an ISRO scientist to marry her and she found about his lies after tracing his location to Gurugram through their shared Netflix account, police said on Sunday.

She also found that the man was already married to another woman, they said. The man and his family have been absconding after his lies were busted. In her police complaint on October 1, the woman alleged Jitender posed as an ISRO scientist before her family and married her.

He claimed he had an MTEch degree from IIT-Kharagpur and showed them bogus documents to prove he

had worked in DRDO as a scientist, before joining ISRO, a police official said.

The woman's family had visited Jitender and his family in Rewari before the marriage, he said. After the wedding in May, Jitender claimed he was going to join American space agency NASA to train as an astronaut. The woman's father dropped him at the airport, and after "returning" from the US, he told the woman he was going to Bangalore for work. But his wife found that he was using Netflix from a location in Gurugram, the officer said.

When confronted, Jitender disclosed he was unemployed and was already married. He did not visit the US or Bangalore and was in Gurugram the whole time.

MP bungalow squatters invent excuses

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Squatters continue to keep Sallotees (newly elected Members of Parliament) away from houses on lame excuses in Lutyens' Delhi. Despite repeated reminders, as many as 50 former MPs have not vacated their Government accommodations even five months after the dissolution of the previous Lok Sabha.

In some cases, the caretakers/servants have gone missing with the keys to the bungalows or flats. In one case, a senior bureaucrat has been found residing in an MP bungalow, while in another case, a former MP is residing in an MP's flat as a guest.

In yet another case, a newly-elected MP has sought the allotment of the bungalow that earlier housed his spouse, who failed to retain her seat. Sources in the Ministry

said over four dozen newly elected MPs have been waiting for official accommodations and staying at temporary houses. "Notices have been sent to these former MPs, asking them to vacate their bungalows

which had been allotted to them in 2014.

The list of MPs who have not vacated their bungalows and flats include Pappu Yadav, Ranjeeta Ranjan, Depender Singh Hooda, HD Deve Gowda

and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma. Former BJP MP Shahnawaz Hussain is also residing at Pant Marg bungalow. Shahnawaz had lost Lok Sabha polls in 2014 and he was not given ticket in 2019.



The interesting case is that of BJP MP from Ladakh Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, who was allotted flat no 16-18 at South Avenue. The said flat was occupied by Asaraf Haque, an MP from Bihar, who died last year. After his death, the caretaker/servant of the flat refused to vacate it citing emotional attachment. "Whenever the estate department team visited the flat, it was found locked and the servant gone missing with the key. A showcase notice was issued on September 6. After that, showcase notice was duly affixed at the outer door on September 17. Finally the officials managed to vacate the flat from the servant. Now it is being handed over to Namgyal," said the sources.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had asked the Lok Sabha Housing Committee to allocate residential accommodation to

Namgyal. Namgyal came into limelight during his speech in the Lok Sabha on the abrogation of Article 370.

Sources said that it was also found that a senior bureaucrat is residing at bungalow number 23 in South Avenue. The bungalow was allotted to MI Shahnawaz, who died last year.

Sources said former MP Kameshwar Singh was found residing at South Avenue bungalow no 77. The said accommodation was allotted to an MP in 2014 who allowed Singh to stay as a guest. Now Singh wants to stay in this bungalow citing his poor health. Singh had won the LS polls in 1967.

In another case, Conrad K Sangma, who is now the Chief Minister of Meghalaya, is seeking to retain a type VIII bungalow under the State Government quota, allotted to his father late PA Sangma.

Continued on Page 4

दिल्ली सरकार

आप की सरकार

फ़रिश्ते बनिये

**YOU TAKE ROAD ACCIDENT
VICTIMS TO THE HOSPITAL,
WE PAY FOR THE TREATMENT**



DELHI GOVERNMENT BEARS COMPLETE EXPENSES FOR TREATMENT OF ROAD ACCIDENT VICTIMS

UNDER THE DELHI GOVERNMENT'S FARISHTEY INITIATIVE:

- As soon as an accident takes place, take the victim to the nearest hospital, irrespective of the cost of treatment. The chances of a victim's survival increases manifold if they are taken to the hospital at the earliest.
- Delhi Government will bear the complete expenses of the victim's treatment, since every life is precious
- Victims of any road accident that happens within the boundaries of Delhi will be eligible for this scheme
- The person who takes a victim to hospital will be rewarded and felicitated with a Farishtey Certificate.
- Road accident victims will be admitted for treatment in any hospital without any questioning.

“I salute you - Dilli ke Farishtey”

- Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi



Remove sedition case against celebs: Parties, film bodies

New Delhi: More political parties and film bodies on Sunday demanded the withdrawal of the controversial sedition case filed against 49 celebrities after they had expressed concern over rising incidents of mob lynching in an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The CPI(M) and the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy joined the DMK, the Congress and others in condemning the filing of the case against celebrities like Aparna Sen, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Ramchandra Guha, Mani Ratnam, Anurag Kashyap and Revathi.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) said this reflects the "growing authoritarianism" in the country. "This is tantamount to punishing all those who have a dissenting opinion on the policies of the present Government. This is a complete negation of democratic rights and reflects the growing authoritarianism in the country," the Left party said.

The Kerala State Chalachitra Academy called it a "blatant violation" of the freedom of expression guaranteed under the Constitution.

The case was registered after a chief judicial magistrate in Bihar's Muzaffarpur passed an order on a plea by a lawyer alleging that the celebrities had tarnished the image of the country through their open letter.

Asked about the case, Union minister Prakash Javadekar Saturday said the Government has nothing to do with it. "An individual went to the court which has passed an order." But Gopalakrishnan,



one of the writers of the letter, has said the registration of a sedition case is a "matter of great concern".

The filmmaker cited an incident where, he said, a woman and her followers were found shooting at Mahatma Gandhi's effigy on January 30. "None of them have been labelled as anti-nationals, with even some of them managing to become MPs."

On Saturday, DMK chief M K Stalin, Congress leader Digvijay Singh, RJD national vice-president Shivanand Tiwary and the CPI had demanded that the sedition case be withdrawn.

A day before, the Congress party had urged "all right-thinking progressive" parties to collectively "fight this growing spectre of authoritarianism".

"Where is this country headed? People of India need to seriously think, need to seriously apply their minds to what is happening to this country in the past 120-odd days ever since the NDA-BJP Government assumed office," Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari said.

Stalin said labelling celebrities anti-national for expressing their concern was unaccept-

able. "How can seeking to uphold the basic tenets of the Constitution like tolerance and communal harmony be construed as anti-nationalism," he asked in a statement.

The CPI said it firmly stood for independent judiciary but cases like this were bound to strengthen the apprehension that judicial systems are used to harass and intimidate the critics of the present Government.

"Adoor Gopalakrishnan is someone who has always upheld human values through his movies. The act of registering a case against those who had expressed concern over the growing action against humanity does not go well along with a civilised democratic society," the Kerala Chalachitra Academy said.

RJD's Tiwary, who was formerly with the JD(U) headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, said in a statement that historian Guha had raved about Kumar as a leader fit to become the prime minister.

"It is ironical that Guha finds himself booked for sedition in the very State ruled by Kumar. I would urge Kumar to seek legal opinion and get the case annulled," he said. **PTI**

6 architecture firms race to be consultant in redevelopment of Central Vista, Parliament

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Six architectural firms have submitted bids to become consultants for the architectural and engineering planning for the Centre's ambitious plan to redevelop the Central Vista and Parliament, and develop a common Central Secretariat for ministries. No foreign firm has submitted consultancy bid in the project.

According to the sources in the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, six Indian architectural firms have submitted bids for the project. "We were also expecting foreign architectural firms to submit bids as it is a very big project of the central Government. However, no international firm has submitted bids for it," the sources said.

On September 2, the Ministry had invited request for proposal (RFP) from national and international design and planning firms for the ambitious project of the Modi Government. The last date of submitting bids was September 30.

The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has invited Indian and international firms to bid for the project, which paves the way for the redevelopment of the existing Parliament building or construction of a brand new, potential demolition of Central government offices to make way for a common Secretariat for all ministries and the revamp of the 3-km Central Vista that stretches from Rashtrapati Bhawan till India Gate. While the Government had not spelt out which buildings would be demolished and which would be refurbished,



Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri had said Parliament and North and South Blocks would not be torn down, but could be renovated and/or used for other purposes, like to house museums.

The sources, however, said that in the RFP, there is also a provision according to which selected architectural firms can associate sub-consultant, including foreign firm, which has domain specific specialisation during the execution of the ambitious project. There was no immediate reaction available from the Central Public Works Department.

Among six Indian architecture firms, Hafeez Contractor is learnt to have submitted bids for the ambitious project.

A committee of experts will now evaluate the technical proposals submitted by firms. Financial proposals of only those bidders qualifying in the technical proposal will be opened.

The Government has so far not publicly shared the estimated cost of its project.

According to the plan, the government would redevelop the 3 km-stretch of the Central Vista spanning from Rashtrapati Bhawan to India Gate. The Ministry said the

entire project will be completed by 2024.

Terming it a "dream project" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri had recently said that redevelopment or development of Parliament would be done by 2022.

For the redevelopment of Central Vista and development of Common Central Secretariat for various Ministries, several buildings like hastri Bhawan, Transport Bhawan, Udyog Bhawan, Nirman Bhawan and Krishi Bhawan may be razed.

However, the Government will take a final decision on it only after designs to be submitted by architectural firms are selected.

On September 18, Puri had said buildings that had been built in 1960s and 70s should have been torn down many years ago. "Something went wrong there," Puri had said. Using cricket terms to take a dig at earlier Governments, the minister had said, "Either we (CPWD under previous governments) lowered the standard or we took eyes off the ball. We wanted to spin the ball but something else happened and in the process it was a hit-wicket."

Only 75 MLAs asked questions in 13th Legislative Assembly of Haryana: ADR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Haryana is ready to polls on October 21, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has analyzed the performance of MLAs of the 13th Legislative Assembly, found that out of 91 MLAs analysed, only 75 MLAs have asked questions in the 13th Legislative Assembly of Haryana.

If asking questions is the parameter of performance, Congress MLA from Tosham constituency Kiran Choudhry has fared on top with 225 starred questions. She is closely followed by Indian National Lok Dal's Naina Singh Chautala from the Dabwali constituency. In fact in the top ten performer, in terms of asking questions, there's only one MLA from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - Prem Lata.

There are 16 MLAs who haven't bothered to ask even a single question, be it about the state or raising issues pertaining to their respective constituencies. Congress' national face Randeep Singh Surjewala and BJP spokesperson Captain Abhimanyu are among them.

"I don't know why they are not keen to ask questions... In fact, bills are passed without much discussions. It's not a happy state (of affairs)," said Maj. Gen. Anil Verma (retd.), who heads the ADR.

According to ADR, though, of 174 bills, 170 were passed, which is an impressive 98 per cent, it also highlights the brute majority of the BJP in the house, and a scattered

THERE ARE 16 MLAS WHO HAVEN'T BOTHERED TO ASK EVEN A SINGLE QUESTION, BE IT ABOUT THE STATE OR RAISING ISSUES PERTAINING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE CONSTITUENCIES. CONGRESS' NATIONAL FACE RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA AND BJP SPOKESPERSON CAPTAIN ABHIMANYU ARE AMONG THEM

opposition. While overall, there is not much mismatch between the number of sittings of the house planned and held, there are MLAs who did not fare well.

But what's surprising is information on Haryana MLAs' attendance were refused when sought by the poll watchdog. Verma laments: "I don't know what's so secret about that?"

The ADR report also said that 75 out of the 90 sitting MLAs in Haryana possess assets worth more than one crore rupees.

According to the ADR report, the average of assets per sitting MLA in Haryana was ₹12.97 crore.

Party-wise, the average assets per MLA for 48 BJP MLAs analysed was Rs 10.34 crore, while for 18 MLAs of the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), the average assets stood at ₹13.63 crore.

MHA asks BSF to adopt anti-drone technologies

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Ministry has asked the BSF to identify anti-drone technologies including offensive drones with features like "fire and forget" technology to counter threats emanating from Pakistan that is suspected to have recently dropped arms and ammunition via drones in Punjab.

The Indian army already possesses such technologies. The BSF guards the Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh borders. The Government has also the BSF to send a proposal in a time-bound after identifying suitable anti-drone technologies for further action.

The directive to the BSF comes in the backdrop of arms dropping incident in Punjab through a heavy-duty drone, suspected to be the handwork of Pakistan Army-ISI combine.

The Government has asked the BSF to look for all technological capabilities to counter threats from drones of the adversaries.

The instruction was issued during the meeting with the chiefs of the border guarding forces during a security review meeting, chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Other border guarding forces have also been asked to identify gaps in securing the bor-



ders in their respective jurisdiction and flag technological solutions, sources said.

Besides the directive for technological solutions to plug the gaps in border guarding,

the chiefs of the border guarding forces have been asked to spend more time with regular visits to the field units rather than remaining ensconced in the headquarters based in the national capital, the sources further said.

The Director Generals (DGs) of Border Security Force (BSF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Assam Rifles have been given a time-frame to come out with a plan to acquire the desired technological solutions to prevent any arms dropping incident like Punjab.

As part of fortification of the border defences, the forces will also need to identify vulnerable points, both geographically and in terms of present capabilities. The forces will need to strengthen the defences in a phased manner and make the international borders full proof from the security standpoint.

The chiefs of the forces, who attended the review meeting at the North Block, were told that the Minister would again review the progress made on the directives issued during the recent meet, officials added.

States criticise NEP on financial ambiguity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The New Education Policy (NEP) has come under the scrutiny of the stakeholders including States who have criticised it for ambiguity in financial management. The issue came during the meeting of the of the HRD Ministry's Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). Education Ministers and representatives of states attended the meeting.

According to the minutes of the meeting, the States like Delhi, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka flagged the funding issues in proposed NEP by the HRD Ministry, saying the draft has some good proposals but no "financial plan of action for implementation."

The panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chief K Kasturirangan had submitted the draft of the new NEP to HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. The draft was then put in public domain to seek feedback from various stakeholders and over two lakh suggestions were received by the HRD Ministry about the same. Draft NEP has since seen three HRD Ministers-Smriti Irani, Prakash Javadekar and the incumbent Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank.

"Finance is very impor-



tant to implement this policy and the draft policy has not spoken much about the financial plan of action for implementation. The extension of Right to Education (RTE) act will further burden states in terms of funds and the centre should bear the brunt for it," KN Prasad Verma, Bihar's Education Minister, recorded in the meeting.

While Karnataka's Education Minister C N Ashwath Narayan, said "finance is important in proper implementation of schemes and programmes but most of the revenue goes into the recurring grants", Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia recorded that the policy is a "wishful" draft and has no mention of how it will be implemented and what needs to be done in the run up to the implementation.

"The Indian education sys-

tem is highly regulated but poorly funded," sources said quoting Sisodia in the CABE meeting. Arun Kumar Sahoo, Odisha's Education Minister, pointed out that, "more funds are required for the implementation of the policy in the states so a proper financial plan should be prepared for the implementation of the policy," said.

Sahoo suggested a "Give back to roots" programme and ways to involve alumni in generating more funding. Andhra Pradesh's Education Minister Audimulapu Suresh also stressed on the need of budgetary provisions.

"More funds are required and a proper allocation is necessary to implement the policy. Some of the initiatives like pre-primary education and about anganwadi workers are good but it is not possible for States to do it alone and Centre should provide funding,"

Minister of State for School and Mass Education Odisha Samir Ranjan Das.

Prabhuram Chaudhury, Madhya Pradesh's Education Minister demanded extra funds from the state and suggested that centralisation should be avoided. Lal Chanda Ralte, Minister of State for School Education in Mizoram, said. There are limited resources available to his state and interest of every stakeholder must be ensured in the NEP.

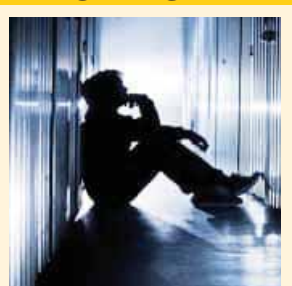
The existing NEP was framed in 1986 and revised in 1992. A new education policy was part of the Bharatiya Janata Party's manifesto ahead of the 2014 general election. The drafting experts also took into account the report of a panel headed by former cabinet secretary T S R Subramanian and formed by the HRD Ministry when it was being headed by Smriti Irani.

WHO to launch '40 seconds of action' campaign on World Mental Health Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

KEY FACTS

- Close to 800 000 people die due to suicide every year
- For every suicide there are many more people who attempt suicide every year. A prior suicide attempt is the single most important risk factor for suicide in the general population
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds
- 79% of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries



Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally

Globally, close to 800 000 people die by suicide every year. Furthermore, for each suicide, there are more than 20 suicide attempts. Suicides and suicide attempts have a ripple effect that impacts on families, friends, colleagues, communities and societies, as per the WHO statement issued recently. Stating that suicides are preventable, the WHO notes that much can be done to prevent suicide at individual, community and national levels.

"Much can be done to prevent suicide," said an official from the WHO. The global health agency has recommended four key interventions which have proven to be effective. These are restricting access to means, helping young people develop skills to cope with life's pressures, early identification and management of people who are thinking about suicide or who have made a suicide attempt, keeping follow-up contact in

the short and longer-term. The WHO is also working with the media to ensure responsible reporting of suicide. Collectively, WHO's approach to suicide prevention is known as LIVE LIFE (leadership, interventions, vision and evaluation). This approach is the basis on which comprehensive national suicide prevention strategies should be developed, said the official.

MP...

From Page 1

After PA Sangma's death, the Ministry had been asking him to vacate the bungalow since 2016.

In another case, one of the MPs has asked the Ministry to allot her Pandara Road accommodation to his husband who

is also an MP.

According to rules, former MPs have to vacate their respective bungalows within one month of dissolution of the previous Lok Sabha. President Ram Nath Kovind had on May 25 dissolved the 16th Lok Sabha with immediate effect on the recommendation of the Union Cabinet after the Modi Government was formed for a second term.

On August 19, the Lok Sabha Housing Committee headed by CR Patil had ordered around 200 ex-MPs, who did not vacate their bungalows, to give up the facility within a week and disconnected their power, water and cooking gas connections within three days.

Since the committee's order, most of the ex-MPs have vacated their official bungalows. But, 50 former MPs are, however, yet to vacate their bungalows.



IAF personnel perform a drill with rifles during the 87th Indian Air Force Day celebrations at Hindon Airbase, Ghaziabad, on Sunday

Monsoon withdrawal from Oct 10, says IMD

New Delhi: The monsoon is likely to begin its retreat from October 10, a delay of more than a month, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Sunday.

This is the longest delayed withdrawal of monsoon recorded by the IMD.

The monsoon was 'above normal' this year with the IMD recording precipitation of 110 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA). The LPA between 1961 to 2010 is 88 centimetres.

"Due to likely formation of an anti-cyclonic circulation over Rajasthan at 1.5 kilometres above mean sea level around October 6, the withdrawal of southwest monsoon is likely to commence from northwest India around October 10," the IMD said in its forecast.

Rains are likely to stop in northwest India after October 7 and conditions are ripe for withdrawal of monsoon, Mahesh Palawat, Vice President (Meteorology and Climate Change) of Skymet Weather said. Normally, monsoon starts withdrawing from



west Rajasthan from September 1. **PTI**

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I Rajpal Singh S/o Sh. Balbir Singh R/o H.No. 202 sector 15 part 1 Gurugram inform to change my name from Rajpal Singh to Rajpal Singh Yadav for all future purposes

DELHI'S AIR GETS CLEANER! POLLUTION DOWN BY 25%

HEAVY FINES ON VIOLATION OF DUST CONTROL NORMS



25% प्रदूषण
हुआ कम
आओ मिलकर
100%
कम करें हम

DIP/Shabdarth/D/0163/19-20

WHAT BROUGHT DOWN POLLUTION?

- 24x7 electricity supply brought generator usage to near zero
- Heavy fines on construction sites in violation of dust control norms
- Implementation of Hon'ble Supreme Court's 'Graded Response Action Plan'
- Closure of Rajghat and Badarpur Thermal Power Plants
- Eastern-Western Peripheral Expressways reduced vehicular traffic
- Increase in Green Cover in Delhi

Year	PM 2.5 Levels*
2012-14	154
2016-18	115

*Source: Central Pollution Control Board, Government of India

But we can't stop here! We have to make every possible effort to make Delhi pollution free



Patna waterlogging exposes sewerage failure, graft: Tejashwi

PTI ■ PATNA

Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly, Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, has attacked Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for the recent waterlogging in the city, saying it not only exposed the failure of the drainage system but also the corruption involved in it. Yadav also termed as 'shameful' Kumar's blaming of 'nature's fury' and "Hathiya Nakshatra" (constellation) for the deluge.

"The entire city has been inundated with rainwater. It is a complete failure of the drainage system and tells about the huge scam (involved in it)," Yadav, the former chief minister, told reporters here on Saturday. Many parts of the Bihar capital were inundated

"Now, Nitish Kumar is saying that the inundation happened because of nature's fury and hathiya nakshatra. It is a shameful statement"

following downpour for three consecutive days from September 27 onwards.

"Now, Nitish Kumar is saying that the inundation happened because of nature's fury and hathiya nakshatra...It is a shameful statement," he said.

Officers responsible for the deluge have suddenly disappeared, the RJD leader said, adding they are either abroad or have taken "sanyas" (renunciation).

The former deputy chief minister termed the ongoing war of words between the BJP and the JD(U) as "a fight between animals".



Bihar rain: Major rivers receding; toll rises to 97

PTI ■ PATNA

The water level of Punpun and Ganga rivers in Bihar continued to recede on Sunday, even as the death toll rose to 97 from 73 in 15 flood-affected districts of the State, officials said.

Other rivers including the Burhi Gandak, Kamala Balan, Bagmati, Mahananda are also showing a declining trend in water level, they said.

Punpun river's water level is receding at the rate of 3 cm

per hour at Sripalpur, Patna District Magistrate Kumar Ravi said. It has seen a fall of 90 cm since Saturday, he added.

Meanwhile, the death toll increased to 97 from 73 in the past 24 hours, as people lost their lives in the affected districts due to incidents of drowning, electrocution, house collapse and falling of trees, a disaster management department release said. The number of dengue cases, too, have seen a sharp rise post the heavy downpour in the state capital,

a release issued by the health department said.

A total of 409 cases of the vector-borne disease were reported in Patna between January to September 27, it said, adding the number jumped to 640 till October 5. In order to check the spread of dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases, sprinkling of larvicide temephos and fogging of insecticide malathion are underway in the worst-affected districts, the release said.

Teenager raped by two in Muzaffarnagar, one held

PTI ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR

A 17-year-old girl was allegedly raped by two youths in a sugarcane field at Kawal village in the district, police said on Sunday.

The incident allegedly happened on Saturday when the girl went to dispose of rubbish near her house in the area falling under the Jansath police station limits, Station House Officer Yogesh Sharma said. According to a complaint lodged by the victim's father, Bijender and Rabhal raped his daughter and



threatened her not tell anybody about the incident.

Rabhal was arrested and efforts were made to nab the other accused, the SHO said.

The girl had been sent for a medical examination, he added.

Ramakant Yadav joins SP

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Four-time MP from Azamgarh Ramakant Yadav joined the Samajwadi Party on Sunday, days after he was expelled from the Congress for "anti-party" activities.

The 62-year-old leader, who joined the SP in presence of party chief Akhilesh Yadav, said "this is my home coming after 15 years".

Welcoming him to the party fold, Akhilesh Yadav said his presence will strengthen the SP.

"People are joining the party and we will ensure that our Samajwadi Party grows and uproots the BJP Government from power in 2022," Akhilesh



Yadav said. Rukmini Devi Nishad, sister of slain party MP Phoolan Devi, and a number of BSP leaders also joined the Samajwadi Party on Sunday. The Congress expelled Ramakant Yadav last week over news reports that he would be

joining the SP.

Ramakant Yadav fought the 2014 Lok Sabha election from Azamgarh on a BJP ticket, but lost the seat to SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav.

He quit the BJP, which he joined in 2008, and switched to the Congress earlier this year. He had left the SP in 2004 to join the Bahujan Samaj Party.

Ramakant Yadav made his debut in the Lok Sabha from Azamgarh seat in 1996 on a SP ticket and again won the constituency in 1999. He won the 2004 parliamentary elections to the seat on a BSP ticket and later in 2009 for the BJP.

Akhilesh confident of returning to power in 2022

PIANS ■ LUCKNOW

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said on Sunday that he is confident of forming the Government in the State in 2022.

"The SP family has grown and we will surely form the Government in the State in 2022," he said and added that more leaders from other parties were keen to join the SP.

"People have seen through the BJP's game of making false promises. The BJP has been fooling people but has not delivered. There is anarchy all over. The economy is going lower and the youth are unemployed," he said. Assembly elections in UP are now due in 2022. Akhilesh Yadav also criticized the



State Government for 'eating up' one crore jobs by putting restrictions on the work of DJs in the State.

He also said that the land for All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rae Bareilly and Gorakhpur was allotted under his government during 2012-2017.

He said that the BJP wanted to adopt Swadeshi and now they are engaged in depriving the backward people of their rights. He said that the decision of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) to privatize the dairy industry is wrong.

Akhilesh Yadav went on to say that the BJP could not fight the election on its own in Maharashtra and is, therefore, engaged in divisive politics there.

Rajasthan HC Chief Justice sworn-in

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Governor Kalraj Mishra on Sunday administered the oath of office to newly appointed Rajasthan High Court Chief Justice Indrajit Mohanty.

Singh, who is now the 37th Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court, took the oath in English.

Chief Secretary D B Gupta read out the appointment warrant issued by President Ramnath Kovind.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Assembly Speaker C P Joshi, members of the state cabinet and Government officials were present on the occasion.

Nitish's wishes on Ashtami: Peace, prosperity of Bihar

PTI ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar performed puja at various temples in the city on the occasion of 'Maha Ashtami' on Sunday and prayed for peace, prosperity and progress of the State and its people.

Kumar performed puja at Sheetal Mata, Badi Patandevi and Chhoti Patandevi temples in the Bihar capital, an official release said.

He also paid obeisance to Goddess Durga at Shri Badi Deviji and Shri Shri Dalhatta

Deviji temples at Maroofganj area in the city, it said.

Kumar was accompanied by state Road Construction

Minister Nand Kishore Yadav, MLAs Ranvir Nandan, Lalan Sarraf and Patna Municipal Corporation Mayor Sita Sahu.

Bihar State Disaster Management Authority member Udaykant Mishra and the chief minister's Secretaries Manish Kumar Verma and Anupam Kumar were among officials who accompanied the Chief Minister.



A priest prays before sacrificing a buffalo at a temple of goddess Durga at Rani village on the outskirts of Gauhati on Sunday AP

Anything is possible in politics: Sawant

PTI ■ PANAJI

Nearly three months after 10 Congress MLAs joined the ruling BJP in Goa, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has not ruled out the possibility of more Opposition leaders following suit.

While attending the 50th birthday celebration of Congress MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco here on Saturday, Sawant said "anything is possible in politics".

During the birthday celebration, Goa Ports Minister Michael Lobo claimed that Lourenco "may become the state's deputy Chief Minister in near future", but did not elaborate any further.

Later talking to reporters, Sawant did not deny the possibility of Lourenco joining the BJP in near future.

"Lourenco is doing a good job in the opposition. He is helping us in good governance as a good opposition is required (in democratic functioning)," he said.

Asked about Lobo's claim that Lourenco may become the deputy Chief Minister, Sawant said, "Anything is possible in politics. You never know. I said anything is possible." However, Lourenco, the MLA from Curtorim who on many occasions earlier criticised the BJP-led Government in Goa Assembly, ruled out any move to join the ruling party.

Providing good governance is top priority: Rajasthan CM

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday said providing good governance to the people is the top priority of the State Government and asserted that transparency and accountability is being ensured at every level.

Gehlot was addressing the people at the foundation stone-laying ceremony for Digambar Jain Girls Hostel in Durgapuri district's Sagwara.

He appreciated the effort towards promoting education



for girls. The Chief Minister said the State Government is promoting higher education for girls. In this budget, the Government has announced to open 50 colleges, including those for women. Gehlot said all-round

development is possible only with social harmony and by following the ideals and principles of Mahatma Gandhi. He said the Government is committed to the upliftment of every class and public welfare decisions are being taken.

He said in his last tenure, the 'Chief Minister's Free Medicine and Screening Scheme' was started, which was a "huge success". Now, the Government will open a Nandishala in every Panchayat Samiti for the conservation and promotion of cow progeny, Gehlot added.

Kerala Govt forms panel to probe hammer throw incident

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A three-member committee has been formed by the Kerala Government to probe the incident wherein a student suffered a serious head injury after being accidentally hit during a hammer throw at a junior athletics meet in Kottayam.

"Former physical education director of Kerala University KK Venu, former athletics coach of Sports

Authority of India MB Sathyanandan and Arjuna awardee V Diju are the members of the panel," a Press release from the Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs said on Saturday.

Aphel Johnson, who was a volunteer, was struck when one of the competitors threw the hammer, a heavy iron ball, while he was reportedly removing a javelin from one side of the stadium on Friday.

Cong meet to decide K'taka Opp leader sees many claimants to post

Bengaluru: Factionalism in the Karnataka unit of the Congress came to the fore on Sunday with a meeting convened by senior party leader Madhusudan Mistry to decide the Leader of the Opposition seeing many contenders staking claim for the post.

The meeting in a private hotel to decide on who would be the Leader of the Opposition saw many contenders staking claim for the coveted post, Congress sources told PTL.

With just four days left for the three-day assembly session starting from October 10,

Congress, the principal opposition party has not yet decided its leader in the Assembly to take on the ruling BJP.

Besides former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who was the Congress Legislative Party leader during the tenure of the erstwhile Congress-JD(S) coalition Government, former minister H K Patil and former deputy Chief Minister Dr G Parameshwara were among those who laid claim for the post, the sources said.

While some legislators backed Siddaramaiah as the opposition leader, others object-

ed to it, especially former Lok Sabha member K H Muniyappa. After the meeting Patil told reporters that Mistry had a discussion with the leaders on selecting the Congress leader in the Assembly as well as strengthening the organisation and internal democracy.

"He (Mistry) sought the opinions of all the individuals separately. Mistry was the in charge of the Karnataka Congress. He understands the prevailing situation in the state. He will submit a report to our party president Sonia Gandhi," Patil said. PTL

Indian Railways aims to complete pending projects by 2022

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH ■ KATRA (JAMMU)

With 'Vande Bharat' Express having a smooth run between New Delhi to Katra in Jammu region, the Indian Railways has set its eyes on completing all its pending projects by 2022, the 75th year of Independence. Vande Bharat express that was launched by the Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday (October 3, 2019), is the second such super fast and modern train to run on the rail tracks, the first one being the New Delhi to Varanasi route, launched some eight months ago by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Success of Vande Bharat coupled with people's enthusiasm towards modern equipped trains with less travelling time, has also provided option for the

Indian Railways to start running privately operated Tejas express trains. According to the Railways, 40 new Vande Bharat trains will start running to different places. This is a priority area and different aspects of these new trains and routes are being worked out.

Minister of Railways Suresh C Angadi who travelled all the way from New Delhi said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed the Indian Railways to complete all its pending projects and works by 2022, the year in which India would be celebrating 75 year of Independence. All our energies are focused on speeding up work on the ongoing projects and also review projects that have not met the deadline. We are modernizing passenger services along with introducing state of the art trains such as Vande Bharat and Tejas.

Electrification, installation of CCTV cameras, advanced signaling system and augmenting the capacity of railway tracks, adding that new projects will be commissioned only after the pending projects are completed.

Construction of Dedicated Freight Corridor, electrification of railway tracks, doubling of tracks are some of the major projects that have been running behind the schedule. "We have reviewed the progress of these ambitious projects and are determined to complete it by 2020", Angadi said.

Talking to The Pioneer, the minister said, "While fast tracking railway projects, the safety of the passengers will be accorded topmost priority. We want to provide world class, safe and less time consuming rail services to the passengers." "Earlier, there were only



two news channels, that too government channels. But later private channels were also allowed to operate", Angadi said adding that private operators and Indian Rail Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) are the new channels that have been brought into to make more competitive and also run advanced trains successfully.

Ministry of Railways has proposed to allow private oper-

ators to operate trains on long distance or overnight journey trains on Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Lucknow, Delhi-Jammu/Katra, Delhi-Howrah, Secunderabad-Hyderabad, Secunderabad-Delhi, Delhi-Chennai, Mumbai-Chennai, Howrah-Chennai and Howrah-Mumbai routes, he said.

When asked about advancement made by China and Japan in running bullet

trains that touch the speed of 400 kms an hour, the minister said that Railways are aware of this fact and are making sincere efforts and effecting suitable changes to run high speed trains. "Trains in our country are not running even at 160 kmph and a lot of work needs to be done before high speed trains could be launched", he added.

"Modernization of the countrywide rail network is a challenging task and it requires a large scale investment. We are open to private operators and agencies interested in investing in developing rail infrastructure and running high tech trains", the minister said.

"Lucknow-New Delhi and Mumbai-Ahmadabad that witness heavy traffic have been awarded to the IRCTC for operations while Railways has initiated the process to award

new train routes to the private operators on inter-city services on 14 routes. Apart from these, there are 10 overnight and long distance services and four suburban services that will see private operators entering into the fray", said a senior official of the Indian Railways.

There is another significant plan by the Railways to corporatize the Rae Bareilly Modern Rail Coach Factory (RCF) in Uttar Pradesh. It will be followed by the corporatization of other RCF units at Kapurthala and Chennai.

"Plan is afoot to create a Public Sector Unit (PSU) that would invite investment from the public and business houses as well. This is still in initial stages but will be set rolling once the concept note prepared by the Railways in this regard, gets the Union Cabinet's nod", said the official.

'PM committed to improve infrastructure in J&K'

The launch of Vande Bharat Express between New Delhi to Katra is aimed at catering to the pilgrims going to Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. It has also to do with the decision of the Union Cabinet to do away with Articles 370 and 35. Developing rail network in Jammu and Kashmir is top of the agenda of the Government. "Prime Minister is committed to improve the infrastructure and further develop railway network in Jammu and Kashmir. Vande Bharat Express will not only provide comfortable and fast service to the pilgrims to Vaishno Devi shrine, it will also boost the economy of the state", said minister of state (Railways) Suresh C Angadi.

MAHARASHTRA ASSEMBLY POLLS

Parties try to get rebels to withdraw from fray

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Parties in poll-bound Maharashtra are busy trying to convince rebels to withdraw nominations, the last date of which is Monday, as failure to do so could cause a split in committed votes and possible loss.
The ruling BJP is the worst hit with 114 of its leaders throwing their hats in the poll ring against official candidates in 27 constituencies.
The BJP's efforts to rein in the rebels are being led by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and State minister Chandrakant Patil.
Similar efforts are also being made by the Shiv Sena,

The ruling BJP is the worst hit with 114 of its leaders throwing their hats in the poll ring against official candidates in 27 constituencies

part of the ruling alliance, and the opposition Congress and NCP.
In Pandharpur Assembly segment, local Congress leader Shivajirao Kalunge has filed his nomination as an Independent though sitting Congress MLA Bharat Bhalke, who joined the

NCP is the official candidate of the opposition combine.
The seat was won by the Congress in 2014 but was handed over to the NCP as part of the seat-sharing deal between the two parties for the 2019 polls, a leader said.
In Shirol, where Congress-NCP is officially supporting Anil Madnaik, senior NCP leader Rajendra Patil Yadavkar has rebelled and filed his nomination, with leaders claiming efforts to get the latter to withdraw from the fray were underway.
After scrutiny on Saturday, the nominations of 4,739 candidates were found valid.
Nominations can be withdrawn till 3pm on Monday.

1,905 nominations filed in Marathwada region

PTI ■ AURANGABAD
A total of 1,905 nominations have been filed across 46 Assembly constituencies in eight districts of the Marathwada region for the October 21 Maharashtra elections.
As per the data made available by the Election Commission on Saturday, the highest number of nominations were filed in Nanded district (492), which comprises nine constituencies, while the lowest number of nominations (83) were filed across three assembly segments in Hingoli district.
Besides Nanded and Hingoli, Aurangabad, Beed, Jalna, Parbhani, Latur and

Osmanabad districts are part of the Marathwada region.
Constituency-wise, the highest and the lowest number of nomination papers in the region were filed in two assembly segments in Nanded district.
The highest number of 147 nominations were filed in Bhokar constituency, where former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan is contesting as a Congress candidate, while Mukhed constituency in the same district received only 15 nomination papers.
As per the EC data, as many as 1,309 nominations were filed on the last day of filing of forms on October 4. The last date of withdrawal of nominations is October 7.

PM to address 9 rallies in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address nine public rallies, while BJP national president Amit Shah will hold 18 rallies during the 15-day long campaign for the Maharashtra Assembly polls scheduled for October 21.
Announcing this on Sunday, Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil said: "Since the Prime Minister will also be addressing rallies in Assembly poll-bound Haryana as well, he has agreed to address nine public rallies during the campaign period in Maharashtra."
Of the total rallies, Modi will address two elections in Satara and Pune on October 17. "We are looking for a venue for the Prime Minister's rally in Pune," Patil said.
At Satara, Modi will address the public rally for

Udayanraje Bhosale, 13th direct descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji, who quit the NCP and joined the BJP on September 14, and other party candidates in the district. In Pune, he will campaign for State BJP president Chandrakant Patil, who is contesting from the Brahmin-dominated Kothurd constituency, and other party candidates.
Patil said that the BJP had not finalised dates and venues for Shah's election rallies in Maharashtra. "He will in all address 18 public rallies in the state. We would like him to address rallies in all the regions of the state," the State BJP chief said.
The BJP is miles ahead of the Opposition parties in its campaign. On his part, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis - who is leading the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena alliance into the

Assembly polls - has crisscrossed the State as part of his 4000 km-long campaign tour 'Mahajanadesh Yatra'.
Besides Modi and Shah, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, party's working president J P Nadda, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Ministers like Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal, Prakash Javadekar, Smrutti Irani, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Purushottam K. Rupala, Raosaheb Patil-Danve and G. Kisan Reddy will be among other key campaigners for the BJP in the State Assembly polls.
Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, Karnataka's deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi, his counterpart from Uttar Pradesh Keshavprasad Maurya, BJP's Vice-President Vasundhara Rajje Scindia, key functionaries like V Satish, Saroj Pandey, Bhupendra Yadav will be other key campaigners.

JeM terrorist arrested in Baramulla

PTI ■ SRINAGAR
A Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist was arrested in Baramulla district of north Kashmir on Sunday, a police spokesperson said.
Mohsin Manzoor Salhea, a resident of Arampora-Azadgunj area, was arrested on a credible input during an anti-militant operation in Baramulla town, he said.
According to the spokesperson, Salhea was affiliated with proscribed terror outfit JeM and was wanted in two cases registered at the Baramulla police station this year.
Salhea was part of a group involved in planning and executing terror attacks in the area, he said.
Incriminating material, including arms and ammunition, were recovered from his possession, the spokesperson said.

Kashmiris throng weekly flea market in Srinagar

PTI ■ SRINAGAR
People thronged the weekly flea market in Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital on Sunday even as some shops in the city opened in the morning hours, officials said.
However, main markets across Kashmir were shut and most of the public transport was off the roads as normal life remained affected in the valley for the 63rd consecutive day, they said.
The weekly flea market, locally known as Sunday market, was open as several dozen vendors had put up stalls on the TRC Chowk-Lal Chowk road, the officials said.
They said the market witnessed huge rush of customers as people thronged it to buy clothes and other items in view of the approaching winter.
The officials said other markets and other business establishments in Kashmir remained shut, even as some shops in the city here were open till 11 am, but downed



their shutters afterwards.
They said auto-rickshaws and few inter-district cabs were seen plying here, but other modes of public transport were off the roads.
The movement of private cars was lesser on Sunday as compared to Saturday, they added.
Mobile services remained suspended in Kashmir except in Handwara and Kupwara areas in the north, while Internet services -- across all platforms -- continued to be snapped in the valley since the night of August 4, the officials said.

Will corner Maha Govt over various fronts: Kharage

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI
Senior Congress leader and AIICC general secretary in-charge of Maharashtra Mallikarjuna Kharage said here on Sunday that his party would corner the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena alliance on issues the State Government's failure to tackle drought, floods, continued farmer suicides, unemployment and economic recession, during its campaign for the State Assembly polls.
Talking to media persons after inaugurating the Congress' war room for the State Assembly polls at the party headquarters "Tilak Bhavan", Kharage said: "Maharashtra has denigrated markedly during the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance's five-year rule in the State. During our campaign for the State Assembly polls, we will corner the BJP-led saffron alliance over its failure to tack-



Senior Congress leader & AIICC general secretary in-charge of Maharashtra Mallikarjuna Kharage with State party leaders at a war room set up to plan and coordinate campaigning and strategy for the State Assembly polls, at the party headquarters "Tilak Bhavan" in Mumbai on Sunday. Pioneer photo

le drought, continued farmer suicides, unemployment and economic recession".
Kharage came down heavily on the Devendra Fadnavis government for using police force and mid-night cover to fell trees at Aarey colony in north Mumbai to pave way for the construction of a Metro car shed. "Mumbaikars, students

and environmentalists who opposed the cutting of trees were arrested and thrown behind the bars. Modi had narrated one incident in television programme 'Man vs Wild' to reveal his sensitivity towards Nature, the same Prime Minister should tell his favourite chief minister Devendra Fadnavis to release

youngsters arrested for resisting the large-scale tree felling at Aarey Colony.
When his attention was drawn to the statement Congress' former Mumbai unit president Sanjay Nirupam who among things said that he would not campaign for the party, the party would lose all but three to four seats in Mumbai and spoke about a conspiracy within the Congress to throw out people close to Rahul Gandhi, Kharage said: "We would action after the receipt of a report from the Maharashtra Congress committee".
Asked as to why the names of Sanjay Nirupam and Milind Deora did not figure in the list of the party's star campaigners, Kharage said: "We have not removed any name from the list of star campaigners. The list has been prepared by the state Congress committee".



Devotees at the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, in Prayagraj on Sunday. AP

Trainer Aircraft crashes near Hyd, 2 trainee pilots killed

Hyderabad: Two trainee pilots were killed when a trainer aircraft crashed in Vikarabad district near Hyderabad on Sunday, police said.
The accident occurred in the afternoon when aircraft crashed during a training sortie in the cotton fields at Sultanpur village, about 100 km from Hyderabad.
Both trainee pilots including a woman were killed. One of them was identified as Prakash Vishal.

Both were students of Rajiv Gandhi Aviation Academy. The aircraft had taken off from Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad and was on a training sortie.
The pilot apparently lost control of the aircraft as it toppled in the air several times before crashing into the fields.
Police rushed to the scene and cordoned off the area. Officials of the Aviation Academy also rushed to the accident site. IANS

MP's plan for intake well near Chambal to endanger species

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI
In a move that would further decline the already receding water level in National Chambal Sanctuary and threaten the survival of the endangered species like crocodile, gharial and turtles, the Madhya Pradesh Government is mulling to construct an intake well near the banks of river Chambal to meet water needs of the people in the Sheopur district.
In its pursuit to construct the structure, it has chosen to ignore the concerns raised by the State Chief Wildlife Warden and Wildlife Institute of India (WII) that such a structure will not only adversely impact the habitat, nesting and basking site of the aquatic species located on both sides of the river bank but also affect the fragile ecosystem.
In fact, the region is the last abode of gharial, Batagur turtle, Indian skimmer and also have significant population of national aquatic animal Gangetic dolphin, state fish Golden Mahasheer, most of these being critically endangered schedule I species.
The MP State Wildlife Board last year gave green signal to the 'Water Supply Scheme for Sheopur town' proposal and forwarded it to the Standing committee of the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) of the Union Environment Ministry for its approval.



According to sources in the Ministry, the proposal pertains to carving out of 1.267 hectares of land including 635 hectares of protected area from the Sanctuary for construction of the intake well from where water will be supplied through a pipeline to meet water needs of the Sheopur district.
"The water shall be carried through approach bridge and further through pipeline along the alignment of the road within the width of existing road shoulder," said the MP Government.
During discussion, the members of the NBWL's Standing Committee in its recent meeting noted that State Chief Wildlife Warden had not recommended the proposal on the ground that it was in the close proximity of the habitat of crocodile, gharial, Indian skimmers, turtle and dolphin and that it would adversely affect natural habitat, nesting and basking sites of the aquatic species.
A report prepared by a team led by the Superintendent, National Chambal Sanctuary, Sheopur which inspected the site on 4 July, 2019 (a copy is

with The Pioneer) too has flagged the project. It pointed out that the construction might affect the nesting sites of gharial, turtle and mugger which are almost 800 to 1000 meters upstream from the proposed location of the intake well.
Intriguingly, this report is yet to be submitted to the NBWL.
The team also noted that the site is routinely visited by many birds. "After lifting the water with this project, the migration of aquatic species may stop due to the low flow of water in summer season. This will affect the breeding, spawning and migration of prey base, thus feeding of the endangered species."
The report further reads that the "current flow of the sanctuary is already below the minimum required ecological flow... Any further disturbance in the minimum ecological flow, all these endangered aquatic animals will be affected adversely."
In fact, the WII in its study conducted in 2011, had said that the minimum flow required to sustain the ideal habitat for gharial in Chambal river is 151-165 m³/sec and for the dolphin the minimum flow required to sustain the ideal habitat is 266.42 - 289.67 m³/sec.
In December 2017, when WII again monitored the discharge of the Chambal river, it found that the flow has declined to 67 m³/sec.

DMK urges TN Govt to act on war footing to curb dengue

PTI ■ CHENNAI
DMK Chief M K Stalin on Sunday urged the Tamil Nadu gGovernment to take steps on 'war-footing' to check the spread of dengue fever in the state.
After visiting patients suffering from the fever at the Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital here, Stalin appealed to the state government to take steps to control the spread of the virus and ensure

that those affected with it received 'appropriate treatment'.
"Thirty one people hailing from Chennai, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts are getting treatment here. There are reports of thousands of people being affected by the fever (across Tamil Nadu)," he claimed.
Recently, Health Minister C Vijayabhaskar had reportedly instructed health department officials to provide proper medical care to dengue-affected patients.

BSF, B'desh Guards agree to strengthen border

PTI ■ KOLKATA
The Border Security Force (BSF) and its Bangladesh counterpart BGB on Sunday agreed to further enhance sharing of information and cooperation in all fields to bring an effective border management system to fight the menace of transborder crimes, smuggling of drugs etc, said a press statement from BSF.
"While appreciating efforts made by either border guarding force that resulted into decline in transborder crime, both sides agreed to pursue the construction of developmental projects in the respective border areas. Both the border guarding forces agreed that the confidence build-

ing measures have improved the understanding between both the forces," the statement said.
According to BSF sources, the issue of local intelligence exchange to thwart attempts by criminals and terrorists to cross over to either side and the need to increase patrolling in the riverine border areas of Sunderbans were also discussed during the meeting which concluded on Sunday.
BSF South Bengal Frontier Inspector General Y B Khurania had said the interactions between company commanders of both the forces would be increased.

Where are jobs: TN Cong leader to EPS

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI
Edappadi Palaniswamy, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, who recently created a sensation with his fortnight long tour to UK, USA and West Asian countries to woo investors to the State has been thrown a sporting challenge by a senior Congress leader.
The latter has asked the Chief Minister to come out with details of the AIADMK Government's achievements over the last eight years in opening industries and creating jobs.
The Chief Minister signed 41 Memorandums of

Understanding with various industrial groups and entrepreneurs during his visit to the above mentioned countries. The AIADMK Government held two Global Investors Meets (GIM) at Chennai in 2015 and 2017 which it had claimed as path breaking initiatives.
M K Stalin, leader of the opposition, who also is the head of the DMK, has been demanding a White Paper on the Chief Minister's foreign tour and has been terming the whole exercise a waste. "The State is undergoing unprecedented unemployment and closure of industrial units as a fall out of the wrong economic policies followed by the Centre,"

the DMK chief had charged.
But CD Meyyappan, senior Congress leader went one step ahead and asked the AIADMK Government to furnish the entire details like number of industries set up house in the State as well as the details regarding the number of employees hired by them.
"Let the Chief Minister come out with details of the companies/ventures which were set up in the State as part of the GIMs. We would also like to know the number of persons employed in these companies and the districts from where they have been hired," said Meyyappan, former president of the Youth Congress who

himself is an industrialist.
Meyyappan said the first GIM was held in 2015 and it is almost four years since the MOUs were signed between the State and the participants. "The AIADMK Government had claimed that all applications for setting up industries in the State would be cleared through a single window system and entrepreneurs would get all approvals and licenses within weeks. Now is the time for the AIADMK Government to tell the world about the number of industries set up in the State by industrial groups which participated in the 2015 GIM," said Meyyapan.
The first ever GIM held in

2015 under the patronage of the then Chief Minister Jayalalitha was described as a resounding success by Jayalalitha herself. She had declared on the concluding day of the event that the total investment of ₹2,42,160 crore realized in the GIM surpassed the cumulative investment made in Tamil Nadu during the two decades from 1991 to 2011.
"Out of the total investment realized in the GIM, ₹1,0,4286 crore is in the manufacturing sector. More than 50 per cent of this is being invested in the southern districts which are economically as well as industrially backward," Jayalalitha had said.

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Online bids are invited for the following works up to 29-10-2019 at 17:30 hours

S. No.	System Tender No.	Name of work	Probable amount of contract (Rs. in Lakh)	Earnest Money (Rs. in Lakh)	Class of Contractor
1	57193	1. Design, Construction, water tightness Testing, Commissioning of 02 No. of Circular Overhead Service Reservoirs of Capacity of 2500 KL & 2000KL @ 20 m staging height (including RCC slab at 3.5 m height & artistic painting of OHSR structure in Labandhi & Funder respectively in Raipur city 2. Design & Construction of allied civil works such as Compound wall including Steel Main and wicket gates, Guard Rooms complete under Raipur Municipal Corporation, And including 12 months Defect Liability period.	245.63	1.23	Class B & above (Unified Registration System E Registration & Firms of repute)

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Why we need Bangladesh

With China breathing down on an energy-strapped Dhaka, the rant on infiltrators here is not taking ties to a new level



On the face of it, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured India of respecting the organic nature of historic ties and soothed anxieties over the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise in Assam. But by foregrounding economic cooperation, one that spans connectivity, investment, power and infrastructure projects in her home country, she has also redefined the rules of bilateral engagement. The new reality has put us in a competitive slot *vis-à-vis* China, which has become one of the top trading partners of Bangladesh over the last couple of years. And in a multi-lateral world, where each nation is negotiating deals most beneficial to it and will not just pay obeisance to history, we can no longer afford to touch a raw nerve. Nepal and Sri Lanka have shown how smaller nations gain in the competitive powerplay and easily rotate their axis. And China is doing that successfully, wooing the smallest of nations with infrastructure aid, creating debt economies and buying support. To that extent, the difference of opinions on NRC did raise concern in Bangladesh. Particularly the idea that all "infiltrators" were "Bangladeshi", repeatedly in speeches by politicians, has not gone down with it. Besides, the divergence between Home Minister Amit Shah's remark that all infiltrators would be sent back to Bangladesh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's assurance that the NRC blacklisted won't has left our neighbouring nation confused. While many understand the difference between the political necessity of posturing and the diplomatic value, the overtly aggressive Hindutva messaging hasn't quite sat easy with Bangladesh. In fact, the usage of words like "termites" to describe Bangladeshi infiltrators is being seen as insulting in a nation which India helped liberate in 1971. There is no agreement on sharing waters of the Teesta. India's silence on the forced exodus of Rohingyas from Myanmar, which Bangladesh has been drumming up support against, has rankled, too.

A certain stagnation on these fronts has put the relationship under stress and strain, it being assumed as India taking a neighbour for granted. But it must be said that Bangladesh is a key pillar in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's neighbourhood diplomacy, what with it being a littoral nation and crucial to our role in the Indian Ocean. China has been eyeing the Chittagong port for quite a while for its maritime Silk Road. Bangladesh has also stood apart from most Islamic nations by supporting India's call for a "zero-tolerance" approach to terrorism when Modi and Hasina met on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. It supported India's decision on the abrogation of Article 370 as an internal matter. It is key to the Modi government's push on the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIM-STEAC) fora. And with Nepal and Sri Lanka having drifted towards China, we need Dhaka. In fact, Nepal has stepped up anti-India rhetoric a bit recently, even calling for reducing dependency on us. China has been quick to tap into the acute shortage of power in Bangladesh and has already taken up two mega power projects, hoping to enhance its presence in the energy market there. And while India is also a player in the power sector, it is difficult for Bangladesh to overlook China given its energy demands. In this respect, Sheikh Hasina has done a tight-rope act of equidistance so far, timing her visit to India at the right juncture and categorising China as an economic and India as a geo-political partner. But translating that reality on the ground could prove to be a tricky business. China doesn't invest unless it serves the interest of its Belt and Road Initiative, and Bangladesh may not be in a position to avoid a debt trap and not appear beholden to an economic imperialist in the region. It could very well find itself in a sticky situation if under debts, it is expected to take a stand in China's diplomatic standoffs with India. Which is why Sheikh Hasina is also hoping for widening India's ambit of economic cooperation beyond core sectors, calling for investment in the knowledge and tech economy. If the Modi Government wants to make a success of its Act East policy, then Bangladesh will be a cornerstone of that project. But it needs that reassurance not silently, but more volubly now.

The bank problem

Until now, the scale of NPA crisis has not impacted average bank account holders. The PMC scandal may change all that



On the face of it, the Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative Bank Limited (PMC) scandal is much smaller than the one that the devious diamante duo of Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi orchestrated on the Punjab National Bank. It is even smaller in scale when compared to the bad loans that have engulfed the State Bank of India, which it forwarded to the collapsed airlines — Kingfisher Airlines and Jet Airways. But given the stupendous nature of the loans involved and the *modus operandi* used — which meant almost all the bank's assets were linked to a single developer that the Wadhawan family promoted, HDIL — it seems difficult to believe that such a scam could have been concealed or orchestrated to the extent of allegedly having 21,000 bogus account holders. The scale of the loans to the developer, which constituted over 70 per cent of the bank's loan book, has meant that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has effectively put the bank under its guidance. It also put a cap on customer withdrawals — first to ₹1,000 and then after mounting pressure from account holders to ₹10,000 and then to ₹25,000. Yet, thousands of account holders are left holding the can. Thousands of customers are eyeing lakhs of rupees of savings, for marriages, education and even houses, all of which are locked up. It even appears that before the clampdown, several high-profile account holders made massive withdrawals. This made matters worse.

Undoubtedly, the RBI could have handled matters better. The ham-handed nature of the way things were communicated by the Central bank made customers of other banks jittery. With the news of Yes Bank facing troubles, thanks to its bad loan problem, online banking channels of most banks collapsed over the festive period as customers rapidly moved to withdraw money or transfer it to what they consider "safer banks." RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that no banks are in trouble and that he would not let any co-operative bank collapse. But consumer confidence in banks is at an all-time low. To be fair, there has not yet been a "run" on the banks in the traditional sense of the word. However, the fallout of the PMC scam will be felt for a long time. One good thing is that possibly, there will be a crackdown on co-operative banks. It has been suspected that these banks, with their lax standards, have helped funnel money for politicians. It is almost certain that some big political names will tumble out of the PMC scandal, even though PMC bank managing director, Joy Thomas, is trying to take all the blame.

opinion

Learning does not just mean textbooks, transaction and evaluation. It has to also achieve an attitudinal transformation, needed to ensure the very survival of humanity



JS RAJPUT

A couple of decades ago, during an international conference on education and teachers' development, a much-admired and sought-after speaker summarised learning, its transfer, acquisition of knowledge and its utilisation in four simple queries: Who to teach; whom to teach; what to teach and how to teach. As a new entrant in the area of teaching, switching over from research to teaching Physics, I was listening with rapt attention to every word uttered by the speaker. I recalled how all those, who were attempting to extend and expand education to one and all in the early 50s and 60s, had to regularly respond to a serious question: Why should I teach my children? The most serious question, however, was: What purpose will it serve if we send our girls to schools? The toughest poser from several communities before educators in the mid-20th century was: Why educate? Recalling such experiences, I asked the speaker whether his articulation would appear more comprehensive if "why to teach" could also be included. To my surprise, the speaker and others agreed with me and included it. Most participants from developing nations had similar experiences that a large number of people were reluctant to send their wards to schools. Human traits of curiosity, exploration and creativity have suffered invasions of ignorance but have continuously scaled greater heights in exploring the secrets of nature.

Education is a process that organises, synthesises and harmonises such human endeavours and infuses the requisite dynamism to enhance the process of civilisational advancement. Knowledge quest remains an eternal human pursuit. As human beings advance ahead in their comprehension of the secrets of nature, new avenues and challenges emerge before them and that requires reshaping of education policies. India is already in the process of doing so. But education policies must be based on sound epistemological base and articulated in the idiom of the day. The deliberations of the conference mentioned above were attempting the same: Know the learner, study, analyse and envision needs; evolve the right and appropriate pedagogy; practice the transaction strategies and prepare the learner to face life and above all, add to the acquired knowledge and put it to the right use. Teachers, researchers and all those engaged in the process of transfer and creation of new knowledge and skills are categorised as knowledge workers in current parlance. This tells us that we all are living in a "knowledge society that concentrates on knowledge economy." Policies must remain conscious of this responsibility to prepare knowledge workers.

We acquire and continue to receive more knowledge; we transmit it to the new generation and expect them to excel us; we expect the younger lot to contribute to knowledge creation and its utilisation. There are two basic premises that characterise the Indian tradi-



tion of knowledge quest: *Yavadjeevait adhiyate viprah* — the wise continue to learn throughout life — and *sarva bhuta hite ratah* — strive for the welfare of one and all. The *Quran* directs to acquire knowledge even if one has to travel to China — face arduous roughness and toughness. *Ilm* (knowledge), I am told, is the second most used term in the holy book after the "Lord." Indian civilisation has given the highest respect to *gyan* (knowledge) and the guru, the giver of *gyan* who leads an individual learner and takes him/her into the realm of the unknown to unravel secrets of the universe and beyond — from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

Nothing, it is said, is accepted by a thinking, analytical and critical mind without adequate scrutiny; posing queries; and searching for answers. It applies to knowledge, too. Here, I am reminded of a quote by Bertrand Russell: "Man has no chance of survival if knowledge remains only knowledge. But if we could transform knowledge into wisdom, one would not only survive but would be able to ascend to greater and greater heights of achievements." In fact, Russell is making the distinction between *gyan* and *vivek* (discretion). He emphasised on the power of ideas and imagination when he

said: "The reasonable man expects to conform to society. The unreasonable man expects society to conform to him. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

To illustrate why Russell is correct, I will cite an example. Think of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and what happened there. Modern scientific knowledge was at its highest peak — human beings could prepare an atom bomb, a great scientific and technological achievement. Those involved were the most brilliant of minds on earth, admired for their unparalleled dedication and devotion to their profession. They were distinguished scientists, academics, scholars, explorers and innovators. There was no suffocating hierarchy between them, they respected each other and mind power ruled there, in Los Alamos. They were linked to their peers elsewhere, with riders, of course. They were, however, expected to hurry up as the enemy elsewhere was also keen to reach the same destination — both wanted an atom bomb before the other. Scientists were assigned to prepare the bomb but its use and misuse wrested with political power wielders. Knowledge was there, its possible usage in human welfare was clear before scientists. Even the general public was aware of it.

Decision-makers did not use wisdom — *buddhi* (wisdom) and *vivek* — and shamed humanity by bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Clearly, education does not just mean textbooks, transaction and evaluation but much more. It has to achieve an attitudinal transformation, needed to ensure the very survival of humanity. When Swami Vivekananda said that education without character building is meaningless, he was only expressing how it is imperative on part of education systems and policies to ensure "man-making education." This is what India's new education policy must aim at. It must attempt to articulate how to move ahead towards that goal.

Education is very rightly termed as "a necessary utopia." There can be no limit to expectations from education, educational systems and educated human beings. At the current juncture of human civilisation, characterised by the "pace of change", the guiding factor must be nurturing and nourishing intellectual vitality. Educational institutions, right from initial stages, must realise their responsibility to offer free passage to curiosity, creativity, natural flight of ideas and imagination.

Unfortunately, our systems have become so prescriptive and restrictive that all these four fac-

tors are impeded at every stage, rather everyday. Our system is characterised by debilitating school bags, innumerable textbooks and a series of weekly tests, board examinations with total focus on marks. Policy-makers usually work around these aspects, suggest some half-hearted changes and are often bogged down by the system to suggest only such changes that they consider pragmatic and practical. In such a process, there is little scope to encourage, inspire and nurture the faculties of imagining, thinking, reasoning, expressing, creating, inventing and postulating. We all know how these are systematically impeded, often beyond repairs. A nation actively engaged in inclusive growth and development cannot allow the erosion of its cognitive capital. The visionary in Vivekananda had exhorted us to realise that "education is a manifestation of perfection already in man", which clearly indicated that every individual could be nurtured to discover the "treasure within" and unearth as much as possible out of inexhaustible treasure. His prescription was: "The brain and muscles must develop simultaneously. Iron nerves and intelligent brain — and the whole world is at your feet."

Over the last seven decades, we have moved ahead only in bits and pieces in bringing quality educational reforms. Now that elementary education has practically been universalised, at least in enrollment and participation, we must focus on transforming every learner "from a person to a personality." That could also be comprehended in terms of the famous Gandhian articulation of "bringing the best out of body, mind and spirit." Once all the three get the proper environment to flourish and the interest of the child watched precisely, the right direction could be delineated on the path of vitality, including self-assurance and confidence.

Yes, teachers would have to accept what Sri Aurobindo had taught us: That nothing can be taught and that mind must be consulted in its development. Once education puts the learner on the path of his/her own liking and special interest, it would be possible to expect, in the words of Vivekananda: "The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work like a master and not like a slave; work incessantly but do not do a slave's work...work through freedom; work through love. That is what education must achieve: Every learner internalises the values of truth, peace, non-violence, righteousness and conduct and love.

(The writer is the Indian Representative on the Executive Board of UNESCO)

SOUNDBITE

Modi is heading a fascist regime. His administration is similar to that of Adolf Hitler. Nobody dares to speak against him.

Former Karnataka CM — Siddaramaiah



I always feel if there is a person only for item songs or whatever, if she really tries and invests in a script, why won't people take her seriously?

Actor — Richa Chadha



Anyone crossing the LoC to provide humanitarian aid for Kashmiri struggle will play into the hands of the Indian narrative.

Pakistan Prime Minister — Imran Khan



I would say the entire neighbourhood, minus one, has actually been a fairly good story of regional cooperation.

External Affairs Minister — S Jaishankar



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Preserve language

Sir — The Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu, recently underlined the importance of preserving local languages. He is reported to have said that when a language dies, culture, traditions and customs associated with it are also lost. His statement is important, especially since it comes at a time when the present ruling dispensation seems to be keen on pushing the case to declare Hindi as the official language of the country.

Language truly is the lifeline of culture, tradition and customs of people living in a particular region and the best way to preserve or promote any language is to use it extensively. Naidu exhorted people to start using their native languages at home and in the community. In my opinion, the promotion of the mother tongue should begin at the primary school level. But the recent comments of Union Home Minister Amit Shah have stoked tension. "One nation, one language" would slowly kill India's regional languages.

While preserving local languages is important, it must also

Clean India is a work in progress

This refers to the editorial, "The ODF challenge" (September 4). Prime Minister Narendra Modi's declaration that rural India, its villages have declared themselves Open Defecation Free (ODF) was excusable but rather premature. Many people across the country are still to break the habit of defecating in the open. According to a study by the Research Institute for Compassionate Economics, 44 per cent of people living in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan still follow this practice. The situation cannot be very different in other parts of the country.

Credit must be given to the Modi Government for launching the Swachh Bharat mission that led to the building of more than 110 million toilets in a span of just five years. But all these low-cost toilets cannot be said to be conveniently located, accessible, self-contained with essentials like toilet seats and tapped water. It should not be forgotten that many people in our country are still homeless. Going forward, a lot more needs to be done on several fronts to make India fully free from open defecation. Behavioural change



is of prime importance. An improvement in the overall economic condition of poor people that raises their standard of living will surely go a long way. Making India fully free from open defecation is a "work in progress" and it should continue till the attainment of the goal.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

be acknowledged that a *lingua franca* is needed to ensure the smooth flow of information across the country. English would be the best choice since it can help a person interact on an international platform as well

TK Nandanai
Chennai

Unhealthy practice

Sir — Five Supreme Court judges, including the Chief Justice of India, have recused themselves from hearing activist Gautam Navlakha's plea for quashing of an FIR lodged against him in the

Koregaon-Bhima case till date without providing any explanation.

Judges recusing themselves from hearing a case is not something new. Such recusals lead to the formation of new benches, which results in unnecessary delay in hearing of the cases. While the judges may be right to

avoid hearing of a case in case of conflict of interest, what they forget is that this gives rise to doubts about the judiciary itself. That the judges have not given any reason, makes it appear that they fear backlash. It should be compulsory for judges to record their reasons with complete details to seek recusal. In fact, they must discharge their duties to the best of their abilities.

Madhu Agrawal
Delhi

Economic revival

Sir — The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has slashed repo rate for the fifth consecutive time and slashed growth projections for this year from 6.9 per cent earlier to 6.1 per cent now. The problem faced by the economy is not of liquidity crunch. Unless there is a revival plan, companies will invest in expanding capacity. Fresh resources need to be made available.

Srishti Mathur
Ujjain

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Time to take the winnings and go

Protesters in Hong Kong have won the withdrawal of the extradition law but their other demands will never be met by the Communist Party of China



GWYNNE DYER

After the 17th consecutive weekend of increasingly violent protests in Hong Kong, the first protester was wounded by a live bullet last week. The 18-year-old student, Tsang Chi-kin, one of a group of about a dozen students attacking a policeman who had become separated from his comrades, was shot in the chest as he struck the man with a metal pole. He is expected to survive.

A hundred other Hong Kongers, civilians and police were treated in hospitals on the same day for injuries incurred during what the Beijing regime calls "riots." The violence has grown over the months and sometimes that is an accurate description of what is going on in the streets. Even if the protesters are in the right, they are definitely a lot less non-violent than they were at the start.

What is remarkable (though rarely remarked upon) is the restraint shown by the police, who, although employed by the Hong Kong city Government, ultimately serve the repressive dictatorship in Beijing.

It's only relative restraint, of course — we are not talking about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or 'kindly British bobbies' here — but during months of escalating violence, they have still managed not to kill anybody.

Even last week, when the rest of China was marking the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic, the protests in Hong Kong continued and nobody died.

To understand how remarkable this is, ask yourself this: How many protesters would American police have killed by now if equally violent protests had been taking place in the streets of a major US city every weekend for the past four months?

This is not proof of how nice China's rulers are. It's evidence of how worried they are. They dare not make too many concessions to the protesters but they want to avoid using major force against them — doing another Tiananmen Square massacre, so to speak — because they think the price would be very high. They are right about that.

When Britain returned the colony of Hong Kong to China in 1997, it was China's main financial window on the world. That's why it was granted a special status in China ('one country, two systems') for the next 50 years. It has free speech, the rule of law, all sorts of privileges that do not exist in the rest of China — but ultimately it must bow to Beijing.

Two decades later, its status as a global financial centre remains a major asset for the regime but there are red lines that President Xi Jinping will never cross, like letting Hong Kong people choose their own Government in a free election. This is now one of the protesters' demands (although it wasn't at the start) but it simply is not going to happen.

The Communist Party of China rules through carefully chosen, mostly non-Communist puppets in Hong Kong but it does rule. As Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's Chief Executive, explained in a private meeting with business leaders last month, her freedom of action is "very, very, very limited."

She got into trouble in the first place by putting forward a new extradition law that would have allowed Hong Kong residents to be tried in Chinese courts, where accused people have few rights and the conviction rate is 99 per cent. She probably did it against her own better judgement but the orders came from above.

When the public pushed back, sensing that this could be the beginning of the end for Hong Kong's relative freedom, Lam probably wanted to drop the matter but it took her months to persuade Beijing to let her do it. In June she shelved the law, in August she said it was "dead" but only in early September did she actually get Beijing's permission to withdraw it.

Too little, too late! By then the protests had escalated far beyond the specific law to sweeping demands for democracy in Hong Kong. Most people outside China will sympathise but it cannot happen. The communist regime's first priority is its own survival so it will not permit such an example to flourish on Chinese soil.

The protesters have won what they originally came out for: The withdrawal of the extradition law. Their other demands will never be granted because they impel the ultimate authority of the communist party. It's time to collect their winnings and step away from the table.

If they don't, Beijing will ultimately crush the protests no matter how much economic and reputational damage that does. In August it doubled the number of troops it keeps in Hong Kong under the guise of "rotating" the garrison: The replacements came in, but the others didn't actually leave. Sooner or later, if things go on like this, they will be used.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work'.)

TO ERASE ANY INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC ON THE ROADS DUE TO RAIN, THEY ARE BEING INSPECTED ON SUCH A LARGE SCALE.

—DELHI CHIEF MINISTER
ARVIND KEJRIWAL

POINT COUNTERPOINT



BABUJI DHEERE CHALNA, BADE GADDE HAIN IS RAH MEIN (GO SLOW, THERE ARE A LOT OF POTHOLE). WE KNOW THE REALITY OF DELHI'S ROADS.

—BJP MP FROM EAST DELHI
GAUTAM GAMBHIR



A new pattern of progress

It is now being universally acknowledged that if we want to move the needle on tough problems, reusing the same old frameworks is not good enough



MOÏN QAZI

One of the most dispiriting features of the modern development agenda is the strong and pervasive influence of elitism in policy circles. There is a mountain of scholarships and a huge circuit of academics and researchers wracking their brains and pontificating. Despite all this, the results are far from impressive.

It is now being universally acknowledged that if we want to move the needle on tough problems, reusing the same old frameworks is not good enough. One must understand that it is an arduous task to discover and practice true development, one that can be transformative for people.

There is common strand in the conventional advancement paradigm: That the system is rigged against people whose condition it promises to transform. Perhaps this is the reason why we see constant resentment among commoners against "the system" because people expect it to be a harbinger of societal progress. Instead, it has been organised to siphon off the gains of development to the elite. There is firm opinion on both sides of the ideological divide that the system is broken and it needs to radically change. The people who are most likely to lose from genuine social change — the elite — have placed themselves in charge of this change, often with the passive assent of those most in need of it. They have devised myriad subterfuges to show they are changing things on the surface while at the same time ensuring that in reality, nothing changes and the status quo is very cleverly achieved. The culture of the rich is inward-looking and defensive. The whole apparatus that it has erected isolates it from the majority.

The development community: Most advancement academics and professionals are researchers with little real-world experience. The underdeveloped and marginalised communities are highly stratified, with each one different from the other and need experts who understand the subtle nuances of the dynamics at play in these communities. Intellectual sophistry cannot become a substitute for local-level social engineering.

They stress world goals over the autonomy of societies to choose their own path, implying thereby that there is only one correct answer. They do not tolerate dissent and also don't want to grant freedom to individuals and societies to choose their destinies. They see poverty as a purely technological problem, to be solved by engineering and the natural sciences, to the exclusion of social sciences such as economics, politics and sociology.

In a system of multiple elites, no major party has a strong incentive for ensuring that growth is inclusive. Those left behind by the progress train are now seeking alternatives. There is a tribe of development professionals — mostly locally bred intellectual activists — who question the relevance of Euro-US advancement policies. They're not just talking about individual, misguided projects but the entire model. They believe that aid merely exports those countries' notions of poverty, consumerism and wealth to traditional communities, creating an unhealthy dependency. They argue that such aid does more to boost the donors' economies than to improve the lives of the people it is assumed to help. This development fraternity, which represents an alternative ideology, feels that in order to check inequality's current trajectory, ordinary people need to take control, as opposed to being on the receiving end of economics. The elite com-

“ IN THE NEW DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, DECISION-MAKING CANNOT BE PLAYED OUT IN THE SAME WAY THAT BOARDROOM ECONOMISTS HAVE PERCEIVED THE POOR: AS DESPERATE CITIZENS WHO NEED TO BE RESCUED BY THE PRIVILEGED BOARDROOM ELITISM WILL HAVE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT PEOPLE ARE DOING TO IMPROVE THEIR HUMAN CONDITIONS RATHER THAN HASTILY PROPOSING TEMPLATES THAT SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE RICH ”



munity seems constantly and restlessly in search of a singular approach. The flaw in this system is that each new approach fails to break out of the underlying technocratic and specialised paradigm. The contrast between India's economic might and the reality of its crumbling betterment sectors — with India ranked among the lowest in the Human Development Index — points to what is wrong with our paradigm.

What are the ends of development? To grow what is called the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or to enhance people's capabilities and widen their choices and freedom? It is now being increasingly recognised that growth is, in fact, rather weakly correlated with indicators of broader social inclusion, such as employment and inequality. History proves how much good can come from individuals who both bear the costs and reap the benefits of their own choices when they are free to make them. A committed practitioner must use his/her own natural instincts to bring together authentic rural voices in unfamiliar milieus.

The truth of a marginalised community can come out only with time. It takes time for trust to build between them and the outsider, so the latter can peel away the layers and approach the truth. Even though the poor constitute a vast majority of Indian voters, they have been shut out of public discourse by being trapped in a system that is rigged against them.

We must understand that there is no precooked blueprint ready to be replicated. Individuals can make a difference in fighting poverty when ways are found to institutionalise creative ideas. But along a factory model, the replication of successful models continues to be the guiding mantra of development programmes.

We must also recognise, when examining specific experiences with replication in mind, that the personal charisma and passion of inspirational leaders

cannot be transfused. The imposition of unwilling leaders has been the bane of most developmental programmes.

Role of professionals: Poverty reduction is not a discipline. You can't just get somebody from a university who has done a PhD in poverty reduction. Nor is there a talisman for eradicating it. Leadership in rural development programmes is a clinical art and people need the experience to learn it.

From their own experience, veterans can spell out the ingredients one may need to be successful. But the practitioners will still have to work out their own recipes for blending these ingredients in the right proportions. There is so much cultural diversity even in neighbouring villages that a blueprint for one village may need a drastic change for the next.

Often professionals show disdain for people living in low-income communities or show pity for their misery but there's rarely a sense of equality or connectedness with them. It is only through engagement with these communities that a development professional may gain a correct perspective. This will also improve the outcome of our actions with these communities.

It will deepen our understanding of human nature, social structures and change and help us to engage better with them. People gather courage by coming together. Collective risk is both possible and incredibly powerful because nobody is fighting alone. Individuals alone cannot make a difference but together, they can. It is time we place human agency at centre stage and stress the complementary roles of different institutions (economic, social and political) in enhancing effective freedoms.

Consultants have for long been the key people in policy mechanics and there are many instances of glaring overdependence on them. But it is necessary to moderate the reports and prescriptions of consultants with the realities on the

ground. For some, the old adage about teachers applies: "Those who can, do. Those who cannot, consult."

Elitism has given rise also to smug techno-utopians, who see potentially revolutionary possibilities in the proliferation of cell phones and other shiny gadgets that appear and vanish with the rapidity of fashion. The promises are very seductive. Why is the international development community having a love affair these days with the mobile phone and other new technological apps? The reality is much harder than we imagine. It is easier to spread technology than to bring about extensive change in social attitudes and human capacity. It is easier to purchase a thousand computers than to provide real education for a thousand children. It is much less agonising to run a text-messaging health hotline, than to convince people to boil water before drinking it. The "technological layer" is only another tool — the means to an end — and not a solution in and of itself.

We must not forget that we are working with a constituency which is both politically and socially mute. At any rate, we cannot hear it. The poor are rarely visible because the well-off urban developers have little interest in their lives. In a country with more poor people than the 25 poorest African countries combined, this apathy is a failure not merely of intellectual curiosity but of moral values.

In the new development agenda, decision-making cannot be played out in the same way that boardroom economists have perceived the poor: As desperate citizens who need to be rescued by the rich. Boardroom elitism will have to understand what people are doing to improve their human conditions rather than hastily proposing templates that serve the interests of the privileged.

(The writer is Member, NITI Aayog's National Committee on Financial Literacy and Inclusion for Women)

The politics of climate strife

The effects of climate change have aided environmentalism as an idea to enter international political and economic discourses. But perhaps the most alarming aspect is how it might actually be causing civil unrest and violence within countries

tic climatic changes, namely global warming and its cascading effects. This has aided environmentalism as an idea to enter international political and economic discourses.

As a concept (and a global movement) environmentalism puts the blame of global warming on the reckless exploitation of the Earth's natural resources by Governments and business ventures. This claim often draws a sharp reaction from those who believe that climate change is a natural occurrence. However, due to the noticeable impact of the current bout of climate change, more people are now responding to the concerns raised by environmentalists than ever before.

To me, perhaps the most alarming aspect of climate change is the one that many environmentalists have not yet delved deeper into, that is how it might actually be causing civil strife within countries. The June 2019 edition of the academic journal, *Nature*, published a study that demonstrated

how droughts, floods, natural disasters and other climatic shifts have influenced approximately 20 per cent of armed conflicts over the last century.

The study concluded that in the coming years, one in four armed conflicts around the world will be caused by global warming. It gave the examples of civil wars in Syria and in various African countries, thus reinforcing the findings of a March 2015 study conducted by America's National Academy of Sciences. Both the studies noted that increasing temperatures trigger unpredictable climatic shifts, which result in failed crops. This forces farmers to migrate to urban centres. Cities that have already been experiencing rising populations and a resource crunch do not react kindly to such migrations. This causes



Dam in the Helmand province of Afghanistan. Its construction and the devastation that it caused is discussed in some detail in BBC's 2015 documentary, *Bitter Lake*, made by the brilliant British documentary filmmaker Adam Curtis; and in the 2010 book, *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*.

In the 1950s, King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan initiated a developmental programme in his country to modernise its agriculture and economy. This also included the construction of dams. On the advice of American experts, one such dam was to be built in the country's Helmand province.

American engineers and geologists arrived and began to construct the dam — the Kajaki Dam. Construction work displaced hun-

dreds of peasants and herdsmen. In 1953, as the dam neared completion, some observers warned that it may cause waterlogging and salinity in the surrounding areas, sully the fertile soil of the area. But the warnings were not heeded and the problem not addressed. According to Curtis, the then Prime Minister, Daoud Khan, encouraged the expansion of the dam because being a staunch Pashtun nationalist, he wanted more Pashtun families to settle in Helmand that borders a Pashtun majority area of Pakistan's Balochistan province.

By the time Daoud toppled King Zahir in 1973, the salinisation problem caused by the dam had compounded. Despite the availability of irrigated water, the soil became problematic to harvest cash crops such as cotton.

Instead, it became perfect to grow another cash crop poppy. The economy of the area thus began to revolve around poppy, which is used to prepare the highly-addictive narcotic heroin. For this very

purpose, Helmand became extremely important to warlords fighting Soviet forces in the 1980s and then against the fanatical Taliban regime.

Curtis describes Helmand as one of Afghanistan's most violent and corrupt regions, mainly due to the poppy that is grown there in abundance.

Ironically, despite the fact that the Taliban regime attempted to eradicate poppy farms in the country, after the regime was removed in 2002, Taliban insurgents regularly interact with Helmand's poppy growers and corrupt Afghan officials to sustain the area's poppy farms (irrigated by the dam). The poppy crop sustains the growers, enriches the officials and helps finance the Taliban's insurgency against US forces.

The dam thus became a man-made environmental disaster that instead of enhancing a country's agricultural fortunes, became the harbinger of corruption, violence and war.

(Courtesy: *The Dawn*)



NADEEM PARACHA

On September 20 this year, environmental activists and sympathisers in over a hundred countries participated in an international "climate strike." Protesters — including in Pakistan — demanded urgent action to stem the tide of climate change, which according to environmentalists, is being caused by human negligence and by various economic and developmental policies being implemented by Governments and business enterprises across the globe.

There is now sufficient scientific data to prove that indeed, the average temperatures of the planet have been rising, causing dras-

Decks cleared for BPCL privatisation

Nationalisation Act repealed in 2016

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of a proposed move to fully privatise State-owned fuel retailer Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), the Government had quietly repealed the legislation that had nationalised the company, doing away with the need to seek Parliament nod before selling it off to private and foreign firms.

The Repealing and Amending Act of 2016 had annulled "187 obsolete and redundant laws lying unnecessarily on the Statute-Book" including the Act of 1976 that had nationalised erstwhile Burmah Shell. "The Act has been repealed and there is no need for a Parliament approval for strategic sale of BPCL," a senior official said.

Keen to get multi-nationals

in domestic fuel retailing to boost competition, the Government is mulling selling most of its 53.3 per cent stake in BPCL to a strategic partner.

Privatisation of BPCL will not just shake up the fuel retailing sector long dominated by State-owned firms but also help meet at least a third of the

Government's ₹1.05 lakh crore disinvestment target.

BPCL at the close of market on October 4 had a market capitalisation of about ₹1.11 lakh crore and a government stake sale could get upwards of ₹60,000 crore including a control-and-fuel-market-entry premium, officials said.

PSU stake sales may be placed for Cabinet nod by Nov-end

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In the first lot of big-ticket disinvestments, the Government is aiming the stake sales of PSUs, including BPCL, SCI and Concor, among others, which have recently been cleared by the Amit Shah-led panel, at the earliest and they could be placed for Cabinet approval by November-end.

Sources said that out of the three, BPCL holds the key as the government with just ₹12,357 crore sell-off proceeds so far is far away from the ambitious target of ₹1.05 lakh crore.

Then there is the strategic sale of Air India which is also on the agenda, but the possibility of it reaching the cabinet is not so early.

Seven of top 10 cos lose over ₹1L cr in m-cap

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seven of the 10 most valued domestic companies suffered a combined erosion of ₹1 lakh crore in their market valuation last week with HDFC Bank taking the biggest hit by losing over ₹30,000 crore.

Besides HDFC Bank, the other losers included Reliance Industries (RIL), Hindustan Unilever (HUL), HDFC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finance.

On the other hand, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys and ITC are among the top 10 firms that saw rise in their market valuation for the week ended Friday. Market capitalisation (m-cap) of HDFC Bank dropped the most by ₹30,198.62 crore to ₹6,50,446.47 crore.

ICICI Bank's market value slid by ₹22,866.93 crore to ₹2,67,265.32 crore and Kotak Mahindra Bank tumbled by

₹15,624.6 crore to ₹2,98,413.27 crore. Similarly, market valuation of HUL tanked by ₹14,287.76 crore to ₹4,20,774.52 crore, while HDFC lost ₹10,178.84 crore in its m-cap, standing at ₹3,41,349.33 crore.

Besides, Bajaj Finance dropped by ₹9,437.91 crore to ₹2,26,309.37 crore and the valuation of RIL stood at ₹8,28,808.67 crore, a loss of ₹824.08 crore. In contrast, valuation of TCS jumped ₹8,236.49 crore to ₹7,79,989.45 crore and that of Infosys rose ₹4,681.59 crore to ₹3,40,704.24 crore.

The m-cap of ITC advanced ₹5,344.62 crore to ₹3,16,069.96 crore. In terms of ranking of top-10 firms, RIL retained its top position, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, HUL, HDFC, Infosys, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finance, which pipped State Bank of India to acquire the tenth position.

Auto sector cuts losses as Govt schemes, discounts attract buyers

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

Sagging auto sector sales showed signs of revival in September on account of depreciation benefits and heavy discounts.

"Depreciation benefits and discounts have helped a little bit in increasing sales in September in comparison to August," said Sridhar V, Partner, Grant Thornton India LLP.

"New introductions have also been instrumental in the slight recovery in passenger car and two-wheeler sales in September 19 over August 19, while the YoY numbers indicate the extremely cold nature of the market. The market is yet to see the recovery mode set in."

Additionally, the immediate price reduction due to lowering of effective corporate tax rate to 25.17 per cent (inclusive of all cess and surcharges) from 30 per cent for all domestic companies has helped to deepen discounts and drive-in

some extra sales numbers.

In August, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced several measures to boost the sector, including lifting a ban on purchase of vehicles by government departments, and allowing additional 15 per cent depreciation on vehicles bought till March 2020 among others. The decisions are likely to sustain the trend for a few more months.

According to Fitch Ratings Associate Director Sneheep Bohra, the recent interest rate cut and lower base effect will help stabilise the YoY auto sales in October.

"What is really important is to pass on the interest rate cut to the customers. New launches ahead of the festival season, including BS6 compliant versions, are also going to support the sales momentum," said Bohra.

However, some industry insiders contend that mitigated decline in sales on a MoM basis has been caused due to wholesale adjustment, since

dealerships were over-stocked for the last couple of months. Effectively meaning that the dealers stopped buying from OEMs to reduce the stock pile-up.

The auto industry is facing a severe demand slowdown on account of high GST rates, farm distress, stagnant wages and liquidity constraints.

The sales and production have plunged dramatically, leading to job losses. In August, all major Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) comprising passenger, commercial, two and three-wheeler manufacturers reported massive decline in domestic sales.

As per the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) August sales figures, the overall sectoral offtake in the domestic market plunged 23.55 per cent to 1,821,490 units, from 2,382,436 units sold during the corresponding month of the previous year. September sales results are awaited.

RBI may slash interest rate again in Dec: Goldman Sachs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The RBI is likely to cap its record interest rate cutting sphere with another 0.25 percentage points reduction in December before hitting a pause button, according to brokers.

The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) reduced repo rate by 25 basis points on Friday to 5.15 per cent and decided to maintain the accommodative stance "as long as it is necessary to revive growth, while ensuring that inflation remains within the target".

"We see a high probability for the RBI MPC to deliver a final 25 basis points cut to bring the repo rate to 4.9 per cent in December. It would be consistent with our forecasts of an

additional rate cut by the (US) Fed in October," Goldman Sachs said in a report post Friday's decision.

It expected the easing cycle to pause after the December meeting due to expectation of headline consumer price inflation to stand at close to 4 per cent diminishing a case of further rate cut, and the MPC may wait to see the monetary easing cycle, as well as the series of announcements by the government, filter through the economy.

"What would it take for the RBI to pause or end the easing cycle before the December meeting? We suspect it would require better high frequency data on economic activity, and a significant improvement in the global environment.

'Sluggish digital payment growth in small town India'

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Digital payment has been one of the key features of the Government's 'Digital India' initiative and online payment platforms and services have indeed spread themselves in the country. However, its penetration and acceptance in the tier-II and tier-III cities still face some obstacles, market players said.

According to Credit Suisse report, India's mobile payments market is likely to touch \$1 trillion by 2022.

Post the demonetisation, whereby Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 8, 2016 declared that Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 denomination notes would become invalid,

digital transactions shot up tremendously. The Unified Payment Interface (UPI) also has been accepted well.

Despite the rise in the number of platforms that enable businesses to offer online payment experience to their customers regardless of location, instrument or mode, still there is a long way ahead as the penetration has mostly been in tier I cities.

RBI expects the country will have five million active point of sale (PoS) machines by the end of 2021. However, to achieve it, there are several hurdles to be crossed.

"Although the awareness and adoption of digital payments is increasing, the digital infrastructure needs to be

strengthened further to ensure consistent reach and penetration across the Tier II and Tier III cities along with rural areas," says, Sunil Khosla, Head Digital Business, India Transact Service Limited.

According to Manish Patel, Founder and CEO of Mspire there is a need for easy and cost-effective payment acceptance tools for small and medium enterprises, micro-merchants, especially in tier-III and III cities as a segment, is still under-penetrated.

"They need acceptance tools that are cost-effective and easy to enable. In many cases, it is cumbersome for a micro-merchant to keep tabs of different means like wallets, UPI and bank apps," Patel said.

Yes Bank files complaint against fake news on its financial health

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Yes Bank on Sunday said it has lodged a complaint with Mumbai Police and Cyber Cell against some fake news and rumours about the bank's financial health on social media.

The complaint has come against the backdrop of promoters cutting their stake, shares of the company witnessing heavy beating at stock exchanges during the last few days. "Yes Bank has lodged a complaint with Mumbai Police, Cyber Cell against the dissemination of fake news and spread of rumours about the bank's financial health on WhatsApp and other social media platforms," the bank said in a regulatory filing.

FinMin to kick-start budgetary exercise from October 14

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry will kick-start the exercise to prepare annual Budget for 2020-21 from October 14. Which, among other thing, will have to address critical issues pertaining to slowdown in growth and subdued revenue collection.

It will be the second Budget of both the Modi 2.0 Government and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. "The pre-Budget/RE (Revised Estimate) meetings will begin on the October 14, 2019. All financial advisers should ensure that the necessary details related to these meetings contained in the RE module of the UBIS (Union Budget Information System)," according to a Budget Circular (2020-21) of the budget division of the finance ministry's Department

of Economic Affairs.

The Budget Estimates for 2020-21 will be provisionally finalised after the expenditure secretary completes discussions with other secretaries and financial advisers. Pre-Budget meetings will begin from October 14 and continue till the first week of November, it said.

"Some of the new inclusions in the Circular relate to instructions regarding filling up of scheduled caste sub plan and tribal sub plan, gender, child budget statements, etc.," it said. The Budget 2019-20 is likely to be presented on February 1.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government scrapped a colonial-era tradition of presenting the Budget at the end of February. Then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had for the first time presented the annual accounts on February 1, 2017.

BIGGER AND BETTER

RAKESH KUMAR, chairman and managing director of NLC India Limited, says that the company is taking self-sustaining, motivating and revenue-generating initiatives to enhance the quality of life of its employees and stakeholders. In conversation with **JETENDER RAWAT**



Q Could you elaborate on the growth plans of NLC India Limited?

When I joined the organisation back in 2012, I saw that there was a big potential to leverage the debt equity ratio for its advantage. Therefore, we formulated an ambitious growth plan. In 2015, we set a target to enhance our power generation capacity. It was less than 3,500 megawatt at that time and we dreamt of reaching beyond 20,000 megawatt. We had set the standard high but we were also confident enough to achieve it. Since then we have been progressing well. We have been able to leverage our debt equity ratio and use it optimally.

Q You have completed more than a year as the chairman of the company. How would you describe your journey?

I joined on September 28 last year. It has been a wonderful experience since then. We have built a strong connection with the stakeholders and our team is motivated to take up higher goals. Our people are able to show positive results in many spheres. For example, our latest 709 megawatt solar power project is progressing very well. Our team is working at the site and our SDOs are committed to their job. We are very much satisfied. We reached out to Andaman and Nicobar for completion of unique battery-based solar power project of 20 megawatts and it was completed in a record time of two-and-a-half-months from October 2018 to December 2018. We have an ambitious project of 1980 megawatt coal-based power plant in Ghatampur near Kanpur district, which is also progressing quite well. Now we are target to commission the first unit by November 2020. There are three units of 360 megawatt. We are hopeful that we will be able to complete that project on time. We are also proactively resolving the issues which are being faced in between the work. We are working on 1,000 megawatt lignite-based power plant in Neyveli. This is going to be the first-of-its-kind as it's the first time in India. The efficiency is such that the 1,000 lignite-

based power plant can replace the 600 megawatt one (this implies that the quantity of lignite which was used for 600 megawatt will be sufficient for 1,000 too). It has been a great experience overall.

Q Sustainable development is an important part of your approach at NLC. Are there any new programmes in the offering?

Sustainable development is the need of the hour, especially in lignite and coal mining. So we are focussing on the mined out land by reclaiming its bio fertility. To do that, we are deploying various techniques, one of them being Israeli technology. It has an excellent impact. If we talk about its advantages, it is multi-dimensional. First, we are able to fulfill the legal and moral obligations. Second, we feel this plays a huge role in providing employment opportunities. Third, the surplus land which was lying idle is deployed to generate revenue which in turn reduces the cost of mining. Fourth, we are able to develop the skills of people who are otherwise marginalised. The farmers or workers do not have enough resources, technology and risk bearing capacity. All these measures enable them to take a leap forward in agriculture and other trades.

Neyveli has a long history of dealing with environment very friendly. If you see our afforestation and mining activities, we have been very conscious to the environment. In fact, if you see the township from a certain height, you will not find a single house there. You'll see a green carpet. We are continuously focussing on the plantation and reclamation of land in a big way. Every year the effort is much bigger and turns out to be better. In future, we are sure that we will be able to show it to the whole world - how mining, especially of lignite and coal, can be viewed as environment friendly rather than being hazardous.

Q Are you planning to expand to other projects like renewable energy?

We are focussing more on solar projects because we have tasted it's success after having completed 10 megawatt and 130 megawatt in Neyveli, 400 megawatt in Tamil Nadu (now 709 megawatt in Tamil Nadu). We are proceeding in terms of solar and we have been mandated by MNRE (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy) for ultra-mega solar power park in Tamil Nadu. So we are actively discussing that with the State Government. They are also very keen for the project. This will be the first solar park by NLC (if happens). We are very hopeful.

Q In 2015, there was a 32-day strike by workers. How did it affect the company and how did you handle it?

It all depends on how we interact with the workers, how much expectations we fulfill, how do we involve them in the main process and make them our important stakeholders. It is not always necessary to give them rewards financially. Involving them at every step of decision making matters. They should feel like they are an important part of the company. We always try to motivate. There are regular discussions on various topics and even on the pay front.

Q You have received so many awards in the past. How do they matter to you?

Awards are just the side results of our activities. They are not something that we measure my work by. Prizes are just the fruits borne out of the dedication and the hard work that we put in.

Q What is your expansion plan? Is NLC planning to acquire coal mines abroad?

During the recent visit to Russia, where our Prime Minister, Narendra Modiji also visited, he motivated us. And we found some opportunities after discussing with various organisations that we can try to have some ventures either alone or with Coal India Limited. Progress is going on some fronts but we are yet to get concrete results. Only after

that we'll be able to share.

Q How did you manage to get approval for mega projects in record time and start the work?

Are you talking about the Talabira mines? Well, yes, we got the approval for Talabira mines really fast. I would definitely credit the team. We had to work with the government departments, take them into confidence and share all the details. These measures help to bring all the stakeholders on the same platform.

Q Any projections for the year 2019-20...

The year 2019-20 has been a challenging one so far. Majorly because of the replacement of our oldest power plant in Neyveli. The work is going in full swing. In 2018-19, we reached all-time high capex and this year, we are targeting to reach the level of more than 8,000 crore capex, which means that we want to take the excess equity out of operations which is to be replaced by the interest bearing working capital loan. Therefore, financial impact on the profitability is the natural thing to happen. But we are not disappointed, we know that we are investing for the future and it is a transition phase only. Our solar and Talabira mines project are in progress and I have faith that it will soon start generating revenues.

Q Are there any plans to promote wind energy projects in Rajasthan?

Although we had plans for setting up 250 megawatt of wind power project but so far we have not got any great success on that front after completing 51 megawatt in Tamil Nadu. We will be keenly watching for the opportunities.

Q Any other important insights on your work that you would like to share...

We are open to all the areas. We are trying to take initiatives which should be self-sustaining, motivating, revenue generating, bringing excellence and quality of life to our employees and other stakeholders. We want to move forward not only taking our employees or contract workers into the mainstream but also the project related people for which we are trying to do something bigger and better. Recently, after signing the MoU with Annamalai University, we could secure 50 per cent seats for project related people in the diploma course for which we constructed the building and infrastructure. Now the course is almost completed. We have decided to engage those diploma holders as a trainee in our mines for a period of two years. We will be ensuring that they gradually attain excellence in the mining skills and are able to get the employment at their own or in our mines.

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT ENQUIRY

State Dept will follow law: Pompeo

Washington: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said that the Department of State will follow the law in the impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump and defended his boss' attempts to push Ukraine to investigate former vice president Joe Biden.



Pompeo's remarks came after the State Department missed a Friday deadline to comply with a subpoena issued by House Democrats to hand over documents related to the department's dealings with Ukraine and Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani.

Democrats in the US House of Representatives are examining whether there are grounds to impeach Trump, a Republican, based on a whistleblower's account that said he asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a July 25 phone call to help investigate Democratic political rival Biden.

Pompeo, who is travelling to Greece, told reporters that the department had sent a letter to Congress, "which is our initial response to the document."

"We'll obviously do all the things we're required to do by

law," Pompeo said in response to a question. "I was a member of Congress once; Article I has a certain set of powers, and Article II has an obligation to make sure that we protect officials at the State Department," he added.

"And sadly, there have been congressional inquiries that have harassed and abused State Department employees by contacting them directly and seeking to have them provide documents - documents that belong to the State Department, that are official US Government records - and ask them to do so without - saying, hey, don't bother calling the State Department

lawyers; just talk to us directly," he said.

"That's harassment, and I'll never let that happen to my team," he asserted.

Pompeo alleged that the previous Obama administration was not responsive to the documents being sought by the US Congress and its committees.

"I remember once when I was on that side and we were looking for documents, I remember precisely how long it took for those documents to come across. We're going to beat that. We're going to be more responsive than the Obama administration was in the years preceded this particular congress," he said.

Responding to a question on appropriateness of the investigation against Trump, Pompeo alleged that "there's clearly politics involved" in it.

Pompeo supported the administration's demand that Ukraine open inquiries into alleged corruption that could target Biden's son and alleged interference in the 2016 US presidential election.

The Trump administration, he said, was incredibly focused on making sure that they worked with Ukraine in a way that was appropriate. *PTI*

Lawyer says representing 'multiple' whistleblowers

Washington: A Washington lawyer said on Sunday his firm is representing "multiple" whistleblowers related to an original abuse of power accusation that triggered the impeachment investigation of President Donald Trump.

The lawyer, Andrew Bakaj, represents the anonymous intelligence official who accused Trump of using the powers of

his office to pressure Ukraine's new president to investigate political rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter.

"I can confirm that my firm and my team represent multiple whistleblowers in connection to the underlying August 12, 2019, disclosure to the Intelligence Community Inspector General. No further comment at this time," Bakaj said on Twitter. *AFP*

Trump calls for impeachment of Republican Senator Romney

Washington: US President Donald Trump on Saturday called for the impeachment of his bitter critic and prominent Republican Senator Mitt Romney, using a hashtag on Twitter in all capital letters.

"I'm hearing that the Great People of Utah are considering their vote for their Pompous Senator, Mitt Romney, to be a big mistake.

I agree! He is a fool who is playing right into the hands of the Do Nothing Democrats! #IMPEACHMITTROMNEY," Trump tweeted.

Trump's tweet came a day after Senator Romney, who during the 2016 presidential elections had called the president a "con artist", criticised him for his handling of the Ukrainian issue. *PTI*

UK signals it could soften Brexit stances amid EU pressure

London: Britain hinted on Sunday that it could be open to changes to its latest Brexit proposals for Northern Ireland, as European leaders piled pressure on Prime Minister Boris Johnson to revise the plans.

Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay reiterated that the ideas formally submitted to Brussels this week were "a broad landing zone" to be discussed during "intense negotiations in the coming days".

He urged the bloc to show "creativity and flexibility" to secure a deal ahead of October 31 -- when Johnson has vowed Brexit will end its 46 years of EU membership with or without an agreement.

"We've set out very serious proposals including compromise on our side," Barclay told the BBC.

"We do need to get into the intense negotiations on the text to clarify what the deal is."

Barclay added the government was considering holding a parliamentary vote ahead of a make-or-break EU summit on October 17-18 to show bloc leaders that Johnson's plans have MPs' support.

But European leaders, who have reacted tepidly to the propositions and urged London to offer a revised, viable way forward, are yet to agree even to ramp up negotiations.

Brussels reportedly balked at Britain's request to keep initial discussions on the proposals going through the weekend, and they will resume Monday.

The EU instead want reworked plans submitted by the end of the week, with time running out ahead of the summit.

"If the offer from the UK turns out to be a take-it-or-leave-it, it's going to be very difficult," Latvian Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins told the BBC on Sunday.

"It's fully dependent on the will of Mr Johnson because from the European side, we're always open and looking towards a deal."

Johnson began phoning European leaders this weekend to sell his proposals, but has so far received scant encouragement for a deal based around them.

Dutch Premier Mark Rutte tweeted he had told Johnson "important questions remain about the British proposals" and "there is a lot of work to be done ahead" of the summit.

Meanwhile the EU's top negotiator Michel Barnier told an event Saturday organised by French newspaper Le Monde that while an agreement was still possible it "will be very difficult to reach".

The British leader is hoping the threat of a messy no-deal departure in less than three weeks could force the EU to compromise.

That comes despite British MPs passing a law last month that requires him to seek another Brexit delay if he fails to secure an agreement by the end of the summit.

Barclay reiterated Sunday that the government would comply with the legislation.

But in identical articles for two Brexit-backing British tabloids, Johnson insisted the country will leave the bloc later this month.

"They should be under no illusions or misapprehensions," he wrote in the Sunday Express.

"There will be no more dither or delay. On October 31 we are going to get Brexit done."

The British proposals submitted to Brussels on Wednesday centre on how to manage the post-Brexit border between British province Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland. *AFP*

Saudi eases restrictions on women taking hotel rooms

Dubai: Saudi Arabia has lifted some restrictions on women traveling in the ultraconservative Muslim kingdom, its tourism authority said on Sunday, with new guidelines allowing women to rent hotel rooms without a male guardian's presence, and foreign men and women to share a room without proof of marriage.

The easing of stringent regulations governing social interactions comes after Riyadh launched its first tourist visa scheme, as part of efforts to open up the country to foreign visitors and diversify its oil-reliant economy.

The Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage posted the new requirements on Twitter Sunday, confirming a Friday report by the Saudi daily

Okaz. The commission said women will be allowed to rent hotel rooms with proof of identity -- an ID card for Saudi women, residency card for foreign residents living in the kingdom or passport for tourists.

The same would be required of foreign couples, without the need for them to present a marriage certificate. Previously women needed permission from a male guardian to rent a hotel room.

Women will also be allowed to rent hotel rooms without any form of identification if they have a male guardian present who does have proof of identity, it said.

The move comes amid deep reforms over the past year by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman which has lifted a ban on

movie theaters in the kingdom and the world's only ban on women driving.

Critics note there are limits to the reforms, and point to last year's killing of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul and the reported torture of several detained women's rights activists.

Saudi announced the new tourist visa scheme last week, saying it was aiming to increase tourism to contribute up to 10 per cent of gross domestic product compared to 3 per cent currently. For the launch of its new visa, the country was highlighting five UNESCO World Heritage sites, contemporary art sites and natural sites including the Red Sea, desert and mountains. *AP*

4 killed in shooting at Kansas city bar

Kansas City (US): Two men opened fire inside a bar in Kansas City, Kansas, early Sunday, killing four people and wounding five others in a shooting believed to have stemmed from an earlier dispute, police said.

Authorities were searching Sunday for the two gunmen, said Officer Thomas Tomicic, a police spokesman.

He said the two men had apparently gotten into some sort of disagreement with people inside Tequila KC Bar, left, then returned with handguns.

"We think there was something that happened in the bar earlier probably," Tomicic said.

"Unfortunately, they left and decided to take it to another level, came back and started shooting."

Around 40 people were inside the small bar when

gunfire erupted around 1.30 am, Tomicic said.

The gunfire sent people running for the exits, with the injured leaving trails of blood as they fled.

One of the injured was trying to get a ride to the hospital when ambulances arrived.

"It's a pretty small bar, so if you have two guys come in and start shooting, people are just running, running anywhere they can," Tomicic said.

All four men who were killed were Hispanic, but Tomicic said authorities do not believe the shooting was racially motivated.

The shooting happened in a neighbourhood with a large Hispanic population.

Tomicic cautioned that police were still investigating exactly what happened. *AP*

No talks unless US stops hostile policies: N Korea

Seoul: North Korea said on Sunday it has "no intention" to continue nuclear talks unless the United States takes steps to end hostilities, a day after negotiations in Sweden broke down.

The discussions in Sweden followed months of stalemate following a February meeting between the North's leader Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump, and came after Pyongyang's defiant test of a sea-launched ballistic missile on Wednesday.

The North walked away from the Sweden talks saying it was disappointed at the lack of "new and creative" solutions offered by Washington, although the US insisted it was willing to meet again in two weeks.

But a spokesman at the North's foreign ministry said Washington's claims about another meeting was "ungrounded".

Fresh violence in Hong Kong as thousands defy mask ban



Members of the media run after being hit by flames during clashes with police in Wan Chai, Hong Kong on Sunday. *AP*

Hong Kong: Hong Kong was rocked by fresh violence on Sunday as tens of thousands hit the streets to defy a ban on face masks, sparking clashes with police, street fights and vandalism across the strife-torn city.

Large crowds marched through torrential rain in peaceful but unsanctioned rallies on both sides of Victoria Harbour, condemning the government for deploying emergency powers to ban face masks at public gatherings.

But violence erupted as police dispersed crowds with tear gas, and then battled hardcore protesters in multiple locations -- plunging the finance hub into chaos once more.

In one incident, a taxi driver was beaten bloody in the district of Sham Shui Po after he drove into a crowd that had surrounded his car.

"Two girls were hit by the car and one girl was trapped between the car and a shop," a witness, who gave his surname as Wong, told AFP, adding the crowd managed to push the car off the wounded woman.

An AFP photographer saw volunteer medics treating both the driver and the injured woman before paramedics and police arrived. Protesters smashed up the taxi.

Earlier, a crowd ransacked nearby government offices, while multiple Chinese banks and subway stations were vandalised across the city.

Activists have staged three straight days of flashmob rallies and sprees of vandalism after Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam outlawed face coverings by protesters, invoking colonial-era emergency powers not used for half a century.

Pro-democracy lawmakers went to the High Court Sunday morning seeking an injunction against the ban, arguing the emergency powers bypassed the legislature and contravened the city's mini-constitution.

But a senior judge dis-

missed their case.

The law allows Lam -- who has record-low approval ratings -- to make "any regulations whatsoever" during a time of public danger.

She warned she would use the powers to introduce new regulations if the unrest did not abate.

The ban was welcomed by Government supporters and Beijing, but opponents and protesters saw it as the start of a slippery slope, tipping the international finance hub into authoritarianism. *AFP*

Video of mainland assaulted in Hong Kong sparks outrage in China

Hong Kong: Video of a Chinese office worker being punched by a Hong Kong democracy supporter as a crowd chanted "go home" has caused outrage on the mainland, highlighting widening polarisation in the financial hub.

Footage shot by both reporters and protesters showed a white-shirted man being punched repeatedly outside the entrance to JPMorgan by a single masked protester on the sidelines of a rally in Hong Kong's commercial district on Friday.

Bloomberg News reported that the man worked for the

American bank, which said it was boosting security outside its offices in an internal memo sent to staff.

It is not clear how the altercation started.

Footage begins with the man, who speaks Mandarin, surrounded by media photographers as an angry crowd chants "go back to the mainland".

He makes his way through the press scrum to the door of his office building before turning to the crowd and shouting "We are all Chinese".

Shortly after a masked man punches him multiple times, knocking off his glasses. *AFP*



Iraqi Army troops deploy at a site of protests in Baghdad, Iraq on Sunday. *AP*

Iraqi PM pledges reforms to calm angry protesters

Baghdad: The Iraqi Government announced a series of reforms early Sunday after an "extraordinary" session overnight in response to sweeping anti-government rallies that have left nearly 100 dead in less than a week.

The United Nations on Saturday urged an end to violence in Iraq, after five days of protests calling for the Government to resign.

Confronted by its biggest challenge since coming to power just under a year ago, Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi's cabinet issued a decree including 17 planned reforms,

such as land distributions and increased welfare stipends for needy families.

The decree ordered construction of 100,000 new housing units. In September, local authorities launched demolitions of houses in informal settlements, home to three million Iraqis across the country.

In response to staggering youth unemployment, which has reached around 25 per cent according to the World Bank, the Government said it would create large market complexes and boost benefits for those without work. *AFP*

Kosovo votes amid pressure to reboot talks with Serbia

Pristina: Kosovo went to the polls on Sunday in an election that could usher in new leadership at a time when stalled talks with former war foe Serbia are a source of instability in Europe.

Whoever takes the reins will be under heavy pressure from the West to renew dialogue with Belgrade, which still rejects the independence its former province declared in 2008.

However, for many of Kosovo's 1.8 million citizens, high unemployment, widespread corruption and poor healthcare are more pressing concerns than the talks. "We need freedom, a state gov-

erned by the rule of law, prosperity, economic development," voter Mentor Nimani, 47, told AFP in the capital Pristina shortly after polling began at 0500 GMT.

For the past decade Kosovo has been dominated by members of the guerrilla forces who waged an insurgency against Serbian repression in the late 1990s -- a war that cost 13,000 lives, mostly Kosovo Albanians.

Sunday's snap poll was called after then prime minister Ramush Haradinaj resigned in July to face questioning by a special court in The Hague investigating war crimes from that era. *AFP*

Trend
Slazer

Scuba diving is a detox: Parineeti

Actor **PARINEETI CHOPRA** is a scuba diving enthusiast and she says that the water adventure sport is like a detox programme for her that lets her forget all worries.

She says, "What I like the most about diving is that there is no phone network under water. Nobody can call me, even my manager cannot call and talk about work."

She adds that she used to hear that scuba diving is like a meditation. Some people say it's as good as a drug, and that it's the most peaceful thing.

Her love for scuba diving came to the fore at an event where she was announced as the brand ambassador for Adex India-Mumbai Dive show Ocean Festival.



'I'm a constant learner of the craft of acting. I'm always looking out for films that

make me better, challenge my thinking, my beliefs and opens me up to absorb new things. Andhadhun has been one such film that has shaped me as an actor today. It taught me to challenge my inhibitions and showcase a different side to my craft.'

—Ayushmann Khurrana

Actor **BHUMI PEDNEKAR** has won the Face of Asia Award at the 24th edition of Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), and she is very proud of it.



Bhumi, who is in South Korea for the screening of her film *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare*, says, "I am humbled and touched that my work has resonated with audiences and critics in Busan. It's my first international win so I am very proud of it. I have aspired to act in films that have something important to say and have worked sincerely to deliver convincing performances."

Teigen gets new tattoos

Model **CHRISSEY TEIGEN** thinks she is a cool mom because she has had her family's birthdays tattooed on her arm.

Teigen took to Instagram, where she shared a series of photographs flaunting her new tattoo. In the first, she could be seen putting on a brave face while the work is being done, while the second picture featured a close-up of Daniel finishing off the piece.

In the final photo, Chrissy showed off her new tattoo, which has the dates of her father Ron Teigen, mother Vilaluck Teigen, husband John Legend and their children Luna, three, and Miles, 16 months.



BANISHING EVIL OF POLLUTION

Ravana effigy makers around the city are doing their bits to save the environment during its burning on Dussehra, discovers **TEAM VIVA** while **PANKAJ KUMAR** captures it

Lying in various colours — pink, green, orange and silver with paper-mache and stout bamboo frames — are the heads of Ravana in Titarpur, Dwarka and Tagore Garden. It's that time of the year again, when people mark the victory of Lord Rama over the ten-headed demon by burning his effigies. While some associate Dussehra with the battle in *Ramayana*, others do so to commemorate goddess Durga's victory over Mahishasura. One can witness grand celebrations taking place in every street and people huddling together to enjoy the day with much colour and splendour. Well, the tradition of burning his effigies has stayed for years and continues to excite people — not just the viewers but the creators as well.

Explaining the process of building an effigy, Dhyananand, who hails from Dwarka Shree Ramlila Society, says that the height of an effigy might vary, depending upon the customer's demands. "The framework is built with bamboo sticks, which are bound using steel wires. This is followed by wrapping the frame with old cloths on the main parts to give it a support and later with *khaki* paper. Coloured papers are then pasted through glue or often painted and decorated once it dries," he tells us.



Dussehra is surely a sight, but amid all the gala, the environment and people's health is left behind. And with the growing debates around sustainability, many voices have been raised to abolish the practice of burning Ravana's effigy as part of the festival. Though now, the usage of toxic chemical and unnatural paints have been witnessing a decline with the

growing awareness as some effigy makers are doing their bits for the environment. An effigy maker from Titarpur, who has been creating these idols over the past 20 years, says that previously, the makers used to put any kind of waste material like crushed newspapers, torn clothes or even used plastic to fill up the idol. He says, "However, now, we make sure that

such toxic waste is not used anymore and disposed off carefully." Dheeraj Tanwar from Tagore Garden says that he avoids the use of crackers while making the Ravana effigies, which are usually filled with fireworks and are burnt down with flaming arrows. However, he says, "If people demand, we use green crackers, which do not contain harmful



chemicals as compared to other conventional firecrackers." Ask him why? He refers to the tragedy in Amritsar, Punjab, in 2018, when around 60 people were mowed down by a train after a crowd of Dussehra revelers had spilled onto railway tracks as it offered them a higher vantage point while watching the Ravana effigy getting burned. They were so busy recording the effigy go up in flames with their mobile phone cameras that amid the noise of the crackers and cheers from the crowd, they couldn't notice the Jalandhar Amritsar DMU speeding towards them.

Well, celebrations and festivals cannot be stopped, but necessary steps can be taken to minimise the pollution caused. Over the years, many parts of the country have resorted to celebrating the festival in a greener way. Here is an example to sustain the nature's health during festivities: A laser light show that depicts an animated story of Ravana *dahan*, in which the laser can replace the traditional bow and arrow to burn the effigies, thus minimising the pollution and maximising the fun. This could also be educative for kids, informing them of the importance of preserving nature when abiding by the nation's culture and traditions.

TECH TALK

Slash the emissions?

Big Tech's eco-pledges are not slowing its pursuit of Big Oil



Employee activism and outside pressure have pushed big tech companies like Amazon, Microsoft and Google into promising to slash their carbon emissions. But there's another thing these tech giants aren't cutting: Their growing business ties to the oil and gas industry.

When Microsoft held an all-staff meeting in September, an employee asked CEO Satya Nadella if it was ethical for the company to be selling its cloud computing services to fossil fuel companies, according to two other Microsoft employees who described the exchange on condition they not be named. Such partnerships, the worker told Nadella, were accelerating the oil companies' greenhouse gas emissions.

Microsoft and other tech giants have been competing with one another to strike lucrative partnerships with ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, BP and other energy firms, in many cases supplying them not just with remote data storage but also artificial intelligence tools for pinpointing better drilling spots or speeding up refinery production. The oil and gas industry is spending roughly \$20 billion each year on cloud services, which accounts for about 10 per cent of the total cloud market, according to Vivek Chidambaram, a managing director of Accenture's energy consultancy. It's not yet clear whether the extraction industry is getting its money's worth, although experts remain bullish about the application of advanced technology to oil and gas exploration.

Nadella sought to assuage employee concerns at the September 12 meeting, first by reiterating Microsoft's internal efforts on environmental sustainability, according to the workers, who asked for anonymity because they feared retaliation for speaking about an internal meeting. The employees said Nadella also defended Microsoft's energy partners, pointing out their investments in researching and developing more sustainable energy production methods. "There's no fossil fuel CEO who sits there and says, 'You know, I'm just going to deny climate change,'" Nadella said, according to the employees' transcript of his remarks. "If anything, they're all saying, 'Let us have, in fact, the regulation, the pricing mechanisms that get us to this future.'"

Microsoft said in an emailed statement that it is "focussed on helping companies of all kinds become more efficient, including energy companies." It declined to comment on Nadella's remarks, which were part of a regularly scheduled "all-hands" gathering in which the CEO wel-

comes questions on a range of topics.

Less than a week after that exchange and days before a planned worldwide protest over climate change, Microsoft announced yet another major deal for its Azure cloud computing platform — this time with Chevron and oilfield services giant Schlumberger. The timing of the announcement ahead of the climate protest and United Nations climate action meetings angered some environmentally-minded Microsoft workers and caught the attention of outsiders.

"It is unconscionable that amid global climate protests, tech giants like Microsoft are announcing major partnerships with Big Oil," said Democratic presidential candidate and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, in a tweet that coincided with the September 20 global climate strike. "We must hold them accountable, demand they break ties with the fossil fuel industry, and move rapidly to sustainable energy."

Echoing that message was a small group of Microsoft employees who carried cardboard signs to a lunchtime protest that day outside of Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Washington. "No Azure For Oil," said one of the signs. After months of employee activism, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos said he was pushing his company to the forefront on sustainability, committing it to have 100 per cent of its energy use come from solar panels and other renewable energy by 2030.

But he also defended Amazon's work with the oil and gas industry, arguing that "we need to help them instead of vilify them." Some experts say AI and cloud services could actually play a role in curbing emissions. Denying cloud computing services to the oil and gas industry would do little to address the bigger problem of the world's ongoing dependence on fossil fuels, said Aseem Prakash, director of the Center for Environmental Politics at the University of Washington.

"We would not want to collapse the fossil fuel industry," Prakash said. "We would want a soft landing." If anything, he said, an oil company's shift to another company's cloud platform may have some environmental benefits because it is more efficient than running its digital operations on its own servers. Driving down costs could also help open the door to investments in other, less polluting methods for generating energy.

It's less clear whether AI is mitigating pollution or worsening it. In their pitches to work with oil and gas companies, cloud providers such as Amazon and Microsoft have boasted of advanced machine-learning tools that can sift through huge troves of geologic and seismic data to help make decisions about where to extract resources. IDC oil analyst Gaurav Verma said AI is a critical technology for oil and gas companies that want to learn from that data to study oil reservoirs or predict when maintenance is

needed on a pipeline.

Earlier this year, ExxonMobil struck a deal to tap into Microsoft's technology to capitalise on the shale oil boom in Texas and New Mexico. Microsoft has said that real-time data collected from a region spanning hundreds of miles would enable ExxonMobil "to make faster and better decisions" on drilling and well completion and support production growth by as much as 50,000 oil-equivalent barrels per day by 2025. An unsigned statement from Microsoft's protesting workers said they've been "made complicit" by the company's role in warming the planet. "Microsoft makes millions of dollars in profits by helping fossil fuel companies extract more oil," the statement said. But it's not clear if tech giants are actually helping that much — in part because they may be overstating their own role in transforming Big Oil with AI.

"The sundae they're selling is the cloud," said Chidambaram, the Accenture analyst. "The cherries they're putting on it is the analytics." Chidambaram said that's because oil industries are still cagey about sharing what they know about underground reserves and don't want third parties analysing that data. Chidambaram said in the long run, however, AI could actually help meet climate goals. "Data can be used in many ways," he said. "It's about how it's being used."

—AP

WEBBED



UPSTARTS

Hoping to do good while making millions, three college graduates create a startup. But as business begins to flourish, their own bond starts to fray. Starring Priyanshu Painyuli, Chandrachor Rai and Shadab Kamal, the film releases on October 18 on Netflix.



LIVING WITH YOURSELF

Burned out on life, Miles undergoes a strange procedure at a strip mall spa and wakes to find he's been replaced by a better version of himself. Created by Timothy Greenberg and starring Paul Rudd, Aisling Bea and Destin Borges, the series will release on October 18 on Netflix.



WOUNDS

When a New Orleans bartender picks up a cell phone dropped in a brawl, he begins to receive ominous messages and finds his sanity slowly unraveling. Starring Armie Hammer, Dakota Johnson, Zazie Beetz, the film releases on October 18 on Netflix.

A FIGHT FOR DREAMS

NASEEMA, a resident of Akbarpur village, Bihar, has become an inspiration for the native women as she fought against all odds to educate her daughters. By SADAF ZAREEN



It is ironical that the society reveres and worships goddesses, and at the same time, subjects women to all forms of oppression. They have been looked at as the weaker section. However, women like Rani Laxmi Bai, Razia Sultana, Aruna Asif Ali, Kiran Bedi, Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, and thousands of other women are examples that women are not meant to be incarcerated behind the walls of their homes as they have the same courage as men. If they can be loving and compassionate, they could be fierce and protective too.

One such example has been set by Naseema, a resident of Akbarpur village in Rohtas district of Bihar, who has not only faced the sting of being married and widowed at an early age, but has also educated her daughters, leaving behind the orthodox views of the society she lives in. All women who consider their life as a failure, can learn from her struggles.

Being the only sister among seven brothers and belonging to a poor family, Naseema was 12 when her family married her to a man twice her age. She did not have the slightest inkling about her marriage then. Her illiterate parents had clinged on to old customs and traditions. She says, "I was very happy when I became a bride because I did not know what marriage was. I just knew I was getting a lot of new clothes and jewellery as wedding presents. When my in-laws arrived, I saw

a dark middle-aged man in the room. I got very scared. I was not aware about marital relationships."

A few months after the marriage, Naseema got pregnant. She came to her mother's home during delivery time, and refused to go back to her husband's house. Soon after she gave birth to a daughter, her husband passed away in a railway accident. Prior to his death, she had been preparing herself mentally to go back to her in-laws.

By the time she turned 18, her family married her off to Mohammed Abdul from Palamu, Jharkhand. She would look after the family with the income generated from her sewing and embroidery work. As Naseema grew older, she became a more sensible individual. Life was good with her daughter and husband at her new home. She gave birth to two more daughters. But fate had a different plan. Her husband's health began to

deteriorate, and the responsibility of the family fell upon her shoulders because he couldn't work. Soon, she gave birth to her fourth daughter, even though the family expected a son. Gradually, her husband's health worsened, and in a few years, she was widowed once again.

Naseema returned to her parents' home with her daughters. People made jokes about her fate. Her parents also died in quick succession, but she did not give up on life. She started sewing clothes in order to nurture her four young daughters. "Being widowed twice and with the death of my parents, I was devastated. But I was determined to give my daughters a bright future," says Naseema. Though, she was illiterate, she always knew the importance of education. She took it upon herself to educate all her daughters under any circumstances.

A few years later, when all her

brothers got married, it became difficult for Naseema and her daughters to continue living with them because of lack of space in the house. She started living in a hut outside a relative's house. She somehow eked out a living for herself and her daughters by stitching people's clothes. Naseema was elated and relieved when a social worker and a local teacher of the village, Zarina Khatoun, helped her get a cook's job in a government school. The teacher also arranged for her daughter's education and their uniforms. Her employment at the school not only enabled her to generate more income for her family, but it also helped her take care of her daughters' education.

Today, Naseema's daughters are well-educated and hence, receiving good marriage proposals. The daughters are proud of their mother who has never let them feel the absence of their

father. "Due to lack of education, I had to face many adversities in life. But I was determined to give them education first before giving their hands for marriage. Zarina madam was quite instrumental in fulfilling these wishes of mine," she says.

For a woman, living alone in society has never been easy. Naseema had to endure physical and mental torture at every step of her life. But she fought against all odds and inspired her daughters to live with self-respect. She, who has steadfastly stood up against such hardships, has become an inspiration for other women in her village today. Despite being illiterate, she has proved that by fighting against the stereotypical thoughts and restrictions that the society imposes on women, they can still move ahead in life by fighting against the struggles and emerge victorious.

—Charkha Features



Ravana, still alive?

The fact that every year people burn effigies of the ten-headed demon points to the subtle truth that he still exists in our conscience and the evil continues to grow, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Dussehra, also known as Vijayadashmi, is one of the most important Hindu festivals celebrated in various forms across the world. It has a deep spiritual significance as it marks the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasur. On this day, people also burn effigies of Ravana, who, according to Hindu mythology, was the demon king of Lanka. The myth goes that Ravana had abducted Sita, the consort of Lord Rama. Supported by an army of monkeys, Rama defeated Ravana and rescued Sita. The killing of Ravana by Rama is hence celebrated.

Dussehra stands for *dus* (ten) + *hara* (conquer). Ravana is known to be a demon with ten heads to symbolise the conquest of ten vices, of which five are in men and five in women. The five vices are — lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. And the word *Vijayadashmi* means the tenth (dashmi) day of victory (vijaya) of Rama over Ravana, which is symbolic of the victory of virtue over vices by men and women who follow the path of self-purification to attain spiritual perfection.

It is celebrated on the tenth day of the month of *Ashwin* according to the Hindu lunisolar calendar which corresponds to September or October of the Gregorian calendar. The first nine days are celebrated as Maha Navratri or Sharada Navratri and culminates on the tenth day as Dussehra.

Ravana represents all that is evil and Rama symbolises everything that is good. Usually, people burn the effigy of a person whose actions they dislike. The fact that every year people burn larger and larger effigies of Ravana points to the subtle truth that he is still alive and the evil continues to grow in the present times.

Today, many people celebrate this festival without knowing its true significance. With the increasing stress in our society, festivals have become an escape route for people to forget their worries and dance for 10 days without paying attention to its importance.

So how does one celebrate this festival in its true spirit? One must understand that we would be able to celebrate it only when all the human beings become pure, that is, when the vices of lust, anger and greed are completely eliminated from human minds so that Ravana, symbolic of evil, is defeated forever. Until and unless we don't understand this, it would be just a 10-day merry-making carnival without any effective purpose.

True knowledge imparted by almighty dispels all spiritual ignorance. He says that like Sita, all human souls have been enslaved by Ravana, that is, by the five vices today. Therefore, this world is like a kingdom of Ravana where evil activities prevail despite the religious teachings. But in the present times, there is Rama too who rescues the souls from the clutches of vices and gives spiritual wisdom and power. He guides them to become pure and defeat the vices.

So, we must make efforts to burn the Ravana that's lurking deep inside our minds and conscience. The easiest way to do it is through *Rajyoga*. It connects us with the Supreme and help us to regain self-sovereignty, that is, control over our mind and senses and thus, conquer the Ravana within.

So, this year, burn the Ravana within you so that the evil can never raise its head again. It is yet another chance to uproot the devil for good.



While your local pound works to find forever homes for many cats, dogs and other animals, volunteering is an easy way to improve their lives while they wait.

Becoming a volunteer generally starts with an application. You can choose the kinds of activities that interests you, whether that's walking dogs, cleaning kennels, reading to cats or creating social-media posts, to name some of the options. There might be a short informational session or, for specific skills, some hours of on-site training.

Many shelters ask volunteers to commit a certain number of hours per month, but even the smallest act is appreciated. "A successful volunteer is someone who loves animals and appreciates the fact that no matter what they do, how small their role might seem, it has a huge impact on the pets here at the shelter. Someone who is just really open to not being intimidated by a pet that doesn't immediately warm up to them, but who is willing to give it time and a little bit of love. And that kind of friendship and trust can roll over into that pet being adopted and having a better relationship with its new owners," says Callista Pearson, marketing and development manager for Salt Lake County Animal Services in Utah. Here are five ways to volunteer:

ENRICHMENT
Shelters are boring for animals. There's lots of noise but lit-

Pause for paws

From reading to cats to taking the dogs for a walk and cleaning kennels, here is how you can volunteer at animal shelters to help them



tle to do. Enrichment activities to keep them occupied include making and delivering food-puzzle toys, reading to them, sitting and petting them, or taking them on walks.

Volunteer dog walkers will probably be trained in leashing dogs, getting them in and out of their kennels, and managing

them around other dogs. At Maricopa County Animal Care in Phoenix, volunteers with the Petite Pet Project simply sit in a room with dogs and give them small treats and toys, letting the dogs socialise at their own pace. "I love seeing them learn, it's okay to come out. The socialisation of the dogs, getting them

used to touch is like a dog therapy. You're committed to help the dogs find their best self," says volunteer Julie Jo Hughes.

Cats might need help getting acclimated to a shelter so they won't be nervous when potential adopters come by. Just by checking in on and petting cats, volunteers can help them

learn to be calm during interaction with humans.

"The more comfortable a cat is with a person approaching the cage and putting their hand in there, the more likely they are to get adopted," says Katy Hansen with the Animal Care Centers of New York City.

FOSTER
Fostering an animal can be great for someone who loves having a pet in the house but can't guarantee a forever home. Fostering programmes vary, but usually start with a conversation with the coordinator about the level of involvement and commitment they're willing to make. Fosters can take a dog for the afternoon, the weekend, or until they are adopted.

Pearson says the shelters homes admit around 9,000 animals a year, and the constant noise and activity can be stressful for dogs. Having a quiet home to escape for the day can help the dogs to relax.

Shelters also use fosters to house animals recovering from surgery or illness. "They'll recover faster in that home than in the kennel," Pearson says.

She adds that fostering kittens or puppies, while time-intensive, makes it more likely that those animals will be adopted quickly "because they've been now handled by people," and "socialising pets is a huge thing."

CLEANING
An important part of making shelter animals happy and healthy is keeping kennels clean.

"We all have to be willing to do some dirty work, because with over 700 dogs in our care on a daily basis, there is a lot of cleaning to do," says Samantha Wessel, volunteer engagement coordinator. A clean blanket for each animal means a lot of laundry.

Terri Sharp, a retiree who has volunteered at the Phoenix shelter for more than two years, starts her day checking on all the linens in the kennels.

She says, "We also mop and clean as we go. It helps them thrive. We want to give them every opportunity to succeed."

DONATIONS
Shelters always need donations, so consider setting up a collection box or fundraiser for much-needed goods. Consider bringing in a box to work or school and collecting toys, blankets and other items.

"They can be new or used and washed," says Hansen. "The only thing we can't take is open or expired food or treats." Lots of shelters have online wish lists too.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Another way to help from home is by joining a shelter's social media team, sharing or helping to run social media pages. Answering questions people post, writing bios is very helpful," says Hansen. Volunteers can design flyers, create templates and share ideas. "Good flyers can get shelter pets adopted quickly," says Karen Hirsch of Lifeline Animal Project in Atlanta.

—AP

Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love. —Mother Teresa

APP TO DETECT EYE DISEASES DEVELOPED

Researchers have developed a smartphone app to help parents detect early signs of various eye diseases in their children such as retinoblastoma, an aggressive pediatric eye cancer.

The CRADLE app (Computer-assisted detector leukocoria) searches for traces of abnormal reflections from the retina called leukocoria or white eye, a primary symptom of retinoblastoma, as well as other common eye disorders. The app can be downloaded for free and can be found under the name — White Eye Detector.

The study published in the journal *Scientific Advances* found that the app is an effective tool to augment clinical leukocoria screenings, allowing parents to efficiently and effectively screen their children more often throughout their development.

"We suspected that the app would detect leukocoria associated with other more common disorders and some rare ones. And we were right," said study researcher Bryan F Shaw from Baylor University in the US.



MORNING SICKNESS CAN LEAD TO AUTISM RISK

Children whose mothers had hyperemesis gravidarum, a severe form of morning sickness during pregnancy, were 53 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, a study said.

Hyperemesis gravidarum occurs in less than five per cent of pregnancies. Affected women experience intense nausea and are unable to keep down food and fluids. This could lead to dangerous dehydration and inadequate nutrition during pregnancy.

"This study is important because it suggests that children born to women with hyperemesis may be at an increased risk of autism. Awareness of this association may create the opportunity for earlier diagnosis," said the study's lead author Darios Getahun, Kaiser Permanente Southern California Department of Research and Evaluation.

For the study published in the *American Journal of Perinatology*, researchers reviewed the electronic health records of 500,000 pregnant women and their children born between 1991-2014 in Southern California.



LOW BIRTH WEIGHT LINKED TO HEART DISEASE

Low birth weight was linked not only to poor health outcomes in the beginning but also to chronic health conditions later in life, researchers have warned.

Low birth babies are either associated with congenital heart disease or on a long term basis, has increased risk of cardiovascular morbidities such as myocardial infarction," said Prashant Patil, Consultant Paediatric Cardiologist, Kamineni Hospital in Hyderabad.

According to the study published in the *Journal of Developmental Origins of Health and Disease*, West Virginia University researcher Anna Umer explored how low birth weight correlates to cardiovascular risk factors in childhood. The research team assessed data of 20,000 fifth-graders born in West Virginia. They discovered that children with a low birth weight are more likely to exhibit cardiovascular risk in fifth grade. "It was thought that risk factors for cardiovascular diseases were only observed in adults, but in the past few years we've seen that they are observed in children also," Umer said.



DROPS IN INCOME CAN HARM YOUR BRAIN

Young adults who experienced annual income drops of 25 per cent or more might be more at a risk of having thinking problems and reduced brain health in middle age, a study said.

"Our exploratory study followed participants in the US through the recession in the late 2000s when many people experienced economic instability. Our results provide evidence that higher income volatility and more income drops during peak earning years are linked to unhealthy brain ageing in middle age," said the study's lead author Leslie Grasset from the Inserm Research Centre in France.

The study published in the journal *Neurology* involved 3,287 people who were 23-35 years old at the start of the study and were enrolled in the Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults (CARDIA) study, which includes a racially diverse population.



AIR POLLUTION CAN MAKE YOU AGGRESSIVE

Researchers have found that breathing polluted air does not only make you sick, but it could also make you more aggressive.

The research team from the Colorado State University found that strong links between short-term exposure to air pollution and aggressive behaviour in the form of aggravated assaults and other violent crimes across the continental US.

The results were derived from daily Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) crime statistics and an eight-year detailed map of daily US air pollution. "We're talking about crimes that might not even be physical, you can assault someone verbally when you're exposed to pollution, you become more aggressive, some things that may not have escalated, do escalate," said the study's researcher Ander Wilson. For the study, researchers cross-analysed three highly detailed datasets of criminal activity, county-level air pollution wildfire smoke plumes from satellite imagery.



India win to go 1-0 up

Shami (5/35), Jadeja (4/87) star to trigger South Africa's top-order collapse & secure 203 runs win



Mohammed Shami returns to pavilion with broken stump after India beat South Africa in the 1st Test PTI

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM
Mohammed Shami's lethal spell of fast bowling was beautifully complemented by Ravindra Jadeja's guile as India recorded a resounding 203-run victory over South Africa in the opening encounter of the three-Test series here on Sunday.

The victory consolidated India's position in the ongoing World Test Championship with another valuable 40 points added to their kitty. India maintain their lead with 160 points.

Chasing an improbable 395-run target, South Africa were expected to put up a fight like they did in the first innings but

Shami's (5/35 in 10.5 overs) fifth five-for topped up by Jadeja's four-wicket burst saw South Africa dismissed for 191 in 63.5 overs.

Debutant Senuran Muthusamy (49 not out) and Dane Piedt (56 off 107) delayed the inevitable with a fighting 91-run stand for ninth wicket after South Africa collapsed to 70 for eight in the morning.

The pitch, which had played fairly for the first four days with the odd ball surprising the batsman, turned tricky on day five.

The spinners got the ball to turn sharply and the variable bounce also helped the pacers.



Ashwin matches Muralitharan's feat

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

India's premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Sunday became the joint fastest to take 350 wickets, matching Sri Lankan great Muttiah Muralitharan's feat in his 66th Test.

Ashwin, who had taken his 27th five-wicket haul in the first innings, castled Theunis de Bruyn with one that turned back sharply from wide outside the off stump for his milestone wicket on day five here.

"Obviously, these things happen over a period of time, we can't plan for any of these things. I am very lucky in terms of where I got in my career, in terms of racing up in all these records. But it is important to stick to the process and basics, keep it as simple as possible," Ashwin told BCCI.TV.

Talking about his preparation, Ashwin said: "I want to keep it as straight forward and simple as possible. I want to be as prepared as possible, trying to tick all the boxes ahead of a game, trying to be in the best possible mental and physical space getting into a match."

"All these are things that I play inside my head and be as prepared as possible getting into a game," added the wily off-spinner, who has answered his critics with a stellar show in the first Test of the home season.

The collapse began in the second over of the day when Ravichandran Ashwin castled Theunis de Bruyn (13) with one that turned back sharply from wide outside of the off-stump.

After Ashwin provided the early breakthrough, Shami castled Temba Bavuma (0), Faf du Plessis (13) and first innings centurion Quinton de Kock (0) in two short bursts to break the backbone of South African batting.

Bavuma stayed back to a delivery that kept low while jaggling back in while Du Plessis offered a leave to another one which also cut back in, only to see his stumps rattled. Shami got rid of De Kock with a delivery that held its line after pitching.

'Shami has mastered art of reverse swing'

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Mohammed Shami's mastery over reverse swing has been one of the big plus points for the Indian team while playing on slow unresponsive pitches, feels India opener Rohit Sharma.

"We have seen him (Shami) in these conditions not just today but earlier also. I still remember our debut together in Kolkata (2013), where the pitch was not exactly like this but on day four and five, it was slightly lower and slower," Rohit said.

"He knows how to bowl on these pitches, gets reverse swing straight into play once he knows there is some help on offer," said Rohit.

Executing reverse swing is easier said than done, feels the stylish Mumbaier.

"It is not easy to bowl when the reverse is happening. You need to pitch in the right areas, need to make sure the ball is just around the off-stump and it comes and hits the middle-stump. He has mastered that art now, bowling with the old ball and getting it to reverse."

The conditions in Visakhapatnam were ideal for him as the Bengal speedster got the ball to reverse both ways.

"Yes these type of conditions are pretty ideal for him. He makes them play all the balls and it is tough for the batsmen on a pitch like this, where the ball was doing something from the cracks. It keeps you in the game."

"Batsmen doesn't know which way it will reverse swing. I would say he has mastered how to bowl with the old ball," he added.

Rohit made a dream start as a Test opener and shattered multiple records. However, he is not getting ahead of time and said it is still early days for him.

"That communication (on opening) between management and myself happened long time ago that I might have to do past at some stage. So for the past two or three years I was prepared for it mentally."

"Whenever I was not playing a Test match, in the nets I was batting with the new ball trying to be ready if the opportunity come. It's a great start and I have long way to go. It's not the end, it's the start. Good things are about to follow," said Rohit.

"All those things are nice to happen along the way but have said many times I am not here for records. I just want to enjoy the game. I know it might be boring but that is what it is."

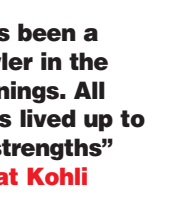
"We fought well but the second innings was tough. I thought up until this morning we competed really well!"

—Faf du Plessis



"Shami has been a strike bowler in the second innings. All the guys lived up to their strengths!"

—Virat Kohli



Record for most sixes

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The opening game between India and South Africa broke the world record for the most number of sixes in a Test match on Sunday.

A total of 37 sixes were hit in the match with South Africa's Dane Piedt registering the record-breaking 36th hit over the fence in the 35th over on the fifth day.

The earlier record for the most sixes was set during the 2014 New Zealand versus Pakistan Test played in Sharjah. That match saw a total of 35 sixes being scored.

On Saturday, Rohit Sharma broke the record for most sixes in a Test with 13 hits over the fence, surpassing Pakistan great Wasim Akram who smashed 12 in a game against Zimbabwe in 1996.

one hour after lunch with India unable to find to break their stand.

Shami, who provided three quick wickets in the morning, was brought back into the attack noticeably late into the second session and struck on the very first ball with Piedt playing on to this stumps. It was a loosener but potent enough to break the off-stump.

AFP ■ BEIJING

An emotional Naomi Osaka said that she had atoned for the disappointment of the US Open after beating world number one Ashleigh Barty in the China Open final on Sunday.

The 21-year-old Osaka has had a turbulent year, winning the Australian Open but then suffering a dip in form which included exiting Flushing Meadows in the last 16.

But the two-time Grand Slam champion from Japan surged back to win her home Pan Pacific Open last month and made it back-to-back titles with victory in Beijing.

Osaka defeated teenage US Open champion Bianca Andreescu and then French Open winner Barty on the way to the fifth crown of her young career.

Winning in Japan and China had been her aim after the US Open letdown, where she was the defending champion and top seed.

"I didn't want to say I planned (it), but I really meditated on it. It just feels like I accomplished what I set out to do," she said.

"I didn't play those two tournaments for myself, I kind of played them for my team because the US Open wasn't that great and I felt very apologetic."

But Osaka admitted that she had been driven to tears after going down in the first set to Australian Barty, before powering back to win the final 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

"In the first set all I could think about was how much I wanted to win and I was pretty emotional," said the former number one, now ranked fourth.

The Austrian Thiem defeated third seed Tsitsipas 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 for the men's crown. The 26-year-old beat former world number one Andy

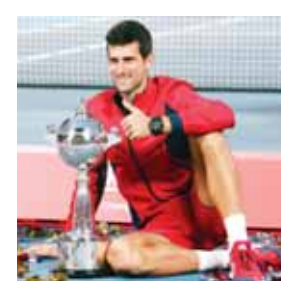
Osaka, Thiem take China title



NOVAK TRIUMPHS IN JAPAN

AFP ■ TOKYO

World number one Novak Djokovic clinched the Japan Open on Sunday, dispelling concerns about the shoulder injury that forced him out of the US Open. The Serbian star crushed Australian qualifier John Millman 6-3, 6-2 to mark his 10th win in a tournament main draw debut. Djokovic, playing in his first Japanese competition, dominated throughout the week, never losing a single set to claim the trophy. Beaming Djokovic, the winner of 16 Grand Slams, now goes to the Shanghai Masters, where he is the top seed. "I didn't drop a set, so I played a fantastic tournament. Everything is positive in my experience on and off the court, the way I feel and motivated for Shanghai, going there with great confidence," he said.



Murray on the way to the title and had also booked his spot in the prestigious season-ending ATP Finals.

Thiem strolled to the crown in the deciding set against Tsitsipas, who at 21 is a rising star of men's tennis.

Sarita, Nandini suffer defeat at Worlds

ULAN-UDE: Former champion Sarita Devi (60kg) was on Sunday knocked out of the World Women's Boxing Championships after being upstaged by Russia's Natalia Shadrina on a disappointing day for India.

The fourth seed, who got a first-round bye, frittered away a strong start to bow out with a 0-5 loss.

There was more disappointment for the country when in the last bout of the day, debutant Nandini (81kg) proved to be no match for Germany's Irina-Nicoletta Schonberger and was out-punched 0-5.

Sarita was chasing her maiden world medal in over a decade.

The Manipuri, who is also a mul-

ti-time Asian champion, was in control in the opening three minutes, logging more punches against a seemingly withdrawn opponent.

However, Shadrina fought back in the next two rounds and surprised Sarita to get the judges' nod.

Nandini, on the other hand, was jittery from the word go and struggled to keep pace with a technically superior Schonberger.

The nerves showed all through and Nandini also ended up being warned in the second round for hitting her rival on the back of the head despite repeated cautions. She also sustained a cut on her face during the bout.



Nandini (red) in action during World C'ship PTI

Bonkers evening for Manchester clubs

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City's Premier League title defence suffered another huge blow in a shock 2-0 defeat to Wolves, while Manchester United endured another miserable day in a 1-0 defeat at Newcastle on Sunday.

City now trail runaway leaders Liverpool by eight points after just eight games as Adama Traore punished a sloppy performance by the champions with two goals in the final 10 minutes at the Etihad.

"Today we were not at our level," admitted Pep Guardiola. "We had problems to make our game. We have faced many teams defending deep and found a solution, but not this time."

City badly missed the presence of injured duo Amieric Laporte and Kevin de Bruyne as Wolves soaked up plenty of possession from the hosts, but always looked the more dangerous side on the counter-attack. Raul Jimenez failed to make

the most of three breakaway chances before the break, but the Mexican made amends with a great run past the hapless Nicolas Otamendi to set up Traore's opener.

The same two players then combined in stoppage time as Traore raced through to seal a famous win for Wolves.

"The first thing you have to do is stop them and we did that because the players were running like crazy," said a proud Wolves boss Nuno Espirito Santo.

City have now dropped more points at home this season than the entirety of the previous Premier League campaign, but Guardiola is not yet giving up the title fight.

"The distance to Liverpool is big, but we must not think about the eight-point gap. We are still in October and there are lots of games and lots of competitions to play."

While City's off day came as surprise, United's defeats are



Adama Traore scores past Ederson during Premier League match at Etihad AP

becoming ever more routine as they dropped to 12th after failing to win on the road for an 11th straight game.

The Red Devils' lack of a

killer instinct in front of goal was again in evidence with Harry Maguire missing their best chance with a free header from a corner in the first-half.

But Newcastle hit back with devastating effect on the counter-attack 18 minutes from time when 19-year-old Matthew Longstaff sealed a dream debut by drilling the ball past David de Gea from outside the box.

ARSENAL, CHELSEA WIN

Arsenal were also far from convincing but did enough to edge out Bournemouth 1-0 thanks to David Luiz's first goal for the club to move into third.

While, Chelsea boss Frank Lampard was much happier after his side rounded off an excellent week with a 4-1 win at Southampton to remain just one point behind Arsenal in fifth.

Tammy Abraham and Mason Mount put the Blues in command early on at St Mary's before Danny Ings pulled a goal back for Saints.

However, N'Golo Kante quickly restored Chelsea's two-goal lead and Michy Batshuay came off the bench to round off the scoring and the Londoners' third win in eight days.

SINGLES

MARQUEZ SEALS SIXTH MOTOGP TITLE

BANGKOK: Marc Marquez sealed his sixth MotoGP world title in Thailand on Sunday after storming to victory in a heart-pounding final corner duel with Fabio Quartararo at the Chang International Circuit, but said it had not been an "easy" year as the frontrunner. The win in Buriram gives him an insurmountable lead over closest rival Andrea Dovizioso with four races left in the season. Spain's Marquez finished in 39min 36.223sec just ahead of 20-year-old rookie Frenchman Quartararo with another Spaniard Maverick Vinales third.

SANDEEP TAKES 7/19 IN PUNJAB'S WIN

VADODARA: Pacer Sandeep Sharma wrecked havoc with a career-best figures of 7 for 19 as Punjab beat Haryana by three wickets in a low scoring Elite Group B match of Vijay Hazare. Sharma alongside Sidharth Kaul (3 wickets) saw Haryana get bundled out for a paltry 49 runs in 16 overs. Opener Nitin Saini top-scored for Haryana with 22 runs while Sumit Kumar chipped in with 13. In reply, Punjab made hard work of a simple task. They lost wickets at regular intervals with pacer Ajit Chahal getting early breakthroughs for Haryana. The duo of Chahal 4/32 and Harshal Patel 2/12 claimed six wickets but the total turned out to be too low in the end. Opener Abhishek Sharma stood his ground and anchored his team to victory. He was the top scorer and remained unbeaten at 22.

TN REGISTER 6TH STRAIGHT VICTORY

JAIPUR: Abhinav Mukund (84) and Baba Aparajith (87) shone as Tamil Nadu thrashed Tripura by 187 runs for its sixth straight win in Group 'C' of the Vijay Hazare. After posting an imposing 315 for 8 in 50 overs riding on impressive knocks by Mukund and Aparajith, Tamil Nadu shot out Tripura for 128 in 34.3 overs with left-arm pacer T Natarajan taking three wickets to pocket four points. Spinners R Sai Kishore and M Ashwin pick up 2 scalps each as Tamil Nadu made short work of Tripura to take its tally to 24 points. Chasing 316 for victory, Tripura never seemed to be in the hunt as it kept losing wickets at regular intervals and slid for 105 for 4 to 128 all out in the 35th over.

PARDEEP STARS IN PATNA PIRATES WIN

GREATER NOIDA: Pardeep Narwal was at his scintillating best for Patna Pirates as his 36-point performance helped the three-time champions thrash semifinal-bound Bengal Warriors 69-41 in their final Pro Kabaddi League match of the season on Sunday. Pardeep Narwal's 36-point display in front of a packed audience at the Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Sports Complex also helped him cross the 300-point mark for the season (302) as Patna equalled their own record of highest points scored in a match. A total of 110 points, another Pro Kabaddi record, was scored in the free-flowing encounter between two sides who were playing with nothing to lose.

ATLETICO-VALLADOLID PLAY 0-0 DRAW

MADRID: Atletico Madrid lost ground on La Liga's early pace-setters Real Madrid after they were held to a 0-0 draw away at Real Valladolid on Sunday. Atletico will head into the international break three points behind their city rivals and with work to do after the stalemate means Diego Simeone's side have managed only two wins from their last seven games in all competitions. They could have lost if Valladolid's Sandro Ramirez had not missed a first-half penalty while Alvaro Morata squandered two good chances for the visitors and Angel Correa hit the post late on.

KROOS UNAVAILABLE FOR GERMANY

MADRID: Toni Kroos has withdrawn from the Germany squad and faces a race to be fit for the Clasico later this month after Real Madrid confirmed on Sunday he has suffered a foot injury. Kroos will miss Germany's friendly against Argentina and their Euro 2020 qualifier away to Estonia. Madrid will hope to have the midfielder back for their crunch La Liga game against Barcelona on October 26 at Camp Nou. A club statement read: "After tests carried out today on the player Toni Kroos by the Real Madrid medical services, he has been diagnosed with an injury to the adductor in his left foot. His recovery will continue to be assessed." Germany confirmed Kroos and FC Cologne's Jonas Hector have pulled out of the squad, with Schalke's Suat Serdar called up in their place.

M'BACH GO TOP OF BUNDESLIGA TABLE

BERLIN: Borussia Moenchengladbach moved top of the Bundesliga while Wolfsburg climbed to second place on Sunday after taking advantage of their Bundesliga rivals faltering with respective wins over Augsburg and Union Berlin. Marco Rose's Gladbach are in first place for the first time since the 2011-12 season, a point clear of Wolfsburg in a congested top half of the table, after thumping Augsburg 5-1. Champions Bayern Munich and RB Leipzig are among five teams another point behind. Unbeaten Wolfsburg meanwhile are right behind the new leaders after a tight 1-0 win over newly-promoted Union earned thanks to Wout Weghorst's 69th-minute strike.

AGENCIES



24x7 ELECTRICITY

LOWEST BILLS*

DELHI IS NOW THE CAPITAL OF LIGHTS

DELHI NOW HAS LOWEST TARIFFS

Upto 200 units/month		
City	Units	Bill**
Delhi	200	0
Noida	202	1374
Mumbai	194	1244
Bengaluru	175	1272
Punjab	188	1357

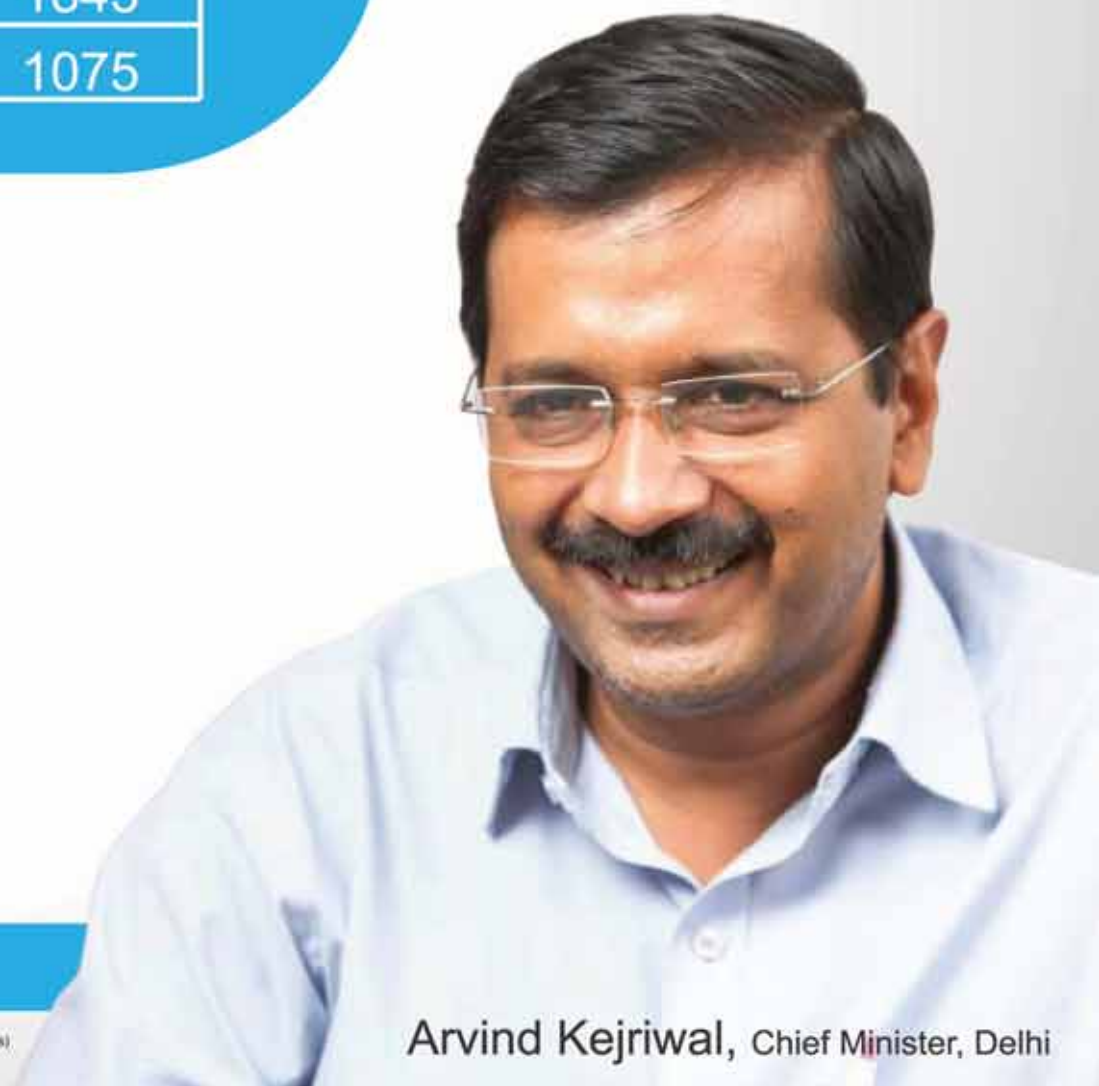
Upto 400 units/month		
City	Units	Bill**
Delhi	400	1319
Noida	331	2123
Mumbai	383	3095
Bengaluru	393	3385
Punjab	395	3122

SHARP DROP IN TARIFFS IN 5 YEARS

Consumption	100 Units	200 Units	300 Units	400 Units
2013	365	688	1265	1843
2019	0	0	527	1075



दिल्ली ने कर दिखाया



Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister, Delhi

* In comparison with Noida, Mumbai, Punjab and Bengaluru
 ** The bill amounts are from specific consumers with sanctioned load less than 5KW. The bills from Noida are of April-May 2019, Bengaluru are August-September 2019, Mumbai (194 units) from January 2019, Mumbai (383 units) from October 2018, Punjab (395 units/month) from November 2018-January 2019 and Punjab (188 units/month) from June-August 2019

Dip/Shabdanti/D0164/19-20